

Building with Off-Site Modular Construction Saves Time and Cut Costs Building Del Mar, California Custom Home

A caravan of flatbed trucks arrived in the early morning hours in Del Mar, California and delivered four modules that would be the basis for a magnificent custom home. A crane, in a matter of hours, placed the home modules on a concrete foundation that was built on site.

Then, over the next three months, a connecting structure was put in place and the appliances, fixtures and flooring were installed.

Time from start to finish: nine months.

Compare that with the 12 months or more it takes to build a comparable custom home and it's easy to see why building with Off-Site Modular Construction is the wave of the future as the U.S. home-building industry shakes off the recession.

"The overall housing market has seen a decline," said Tony Gacek, Executive Director of the National Association of Home Builders' Building Systems Councils. "But in this decline, I think builders are learning more and more that they need to find very cost-effective, streamlined ways to produce quality homes for consumers."

This home, located in prestigious Carmel Valley in Del Mar, CA is not like the Sears kit-built homes popular in the early 20th century. This house, containing 25 percent more lumber, made it strong enough to withstand the 750-mile journey from factory to Del Mar and the stresses that occur when the modules are lifted into place.

Designers, manufacturers and builders confirm that homes built with Off-Site Modular Construction are built with the same raw materials used in traditional on-site projects. The cabinetry, appliances, fixtures, flooring, paint and all other components are no different from what's found in any custom home. Homes built with Off-Site Modular Construction are built to the same building code as every other site built home and can include some energy-saving, environmentally sustainable features such as a solar-power system to bamboo flooring.

Proponents of Off-Site Modular Construction point out that building a custom house in a factory reduces waste; protects against rain, wind and other inclement weather and offers better quality control through constant in-house company inspection as well as the usual licensed inspectors who enforce California's stringent building code.

It's no secret that most homes built these days contain modular components — from building trusses to kitchen cabinets to window frames and plumbing fixtures.

The Architect, who has spent most of his career constructing standard, site-built homes, said he hopes this house will offer a new line of business for him and other builders.

The Architect said the costs should appeal to clients.

“You’re not going to find many custom builders that will sell a custom home for under \$200 per square foot,” he said. “They’re going to be between \$200 and \$300, depending on how nice they are.” This home will come in at about \$175 per square foot, not counting the “soft costs” for planning, inspection and site work.

Kelly Broughton, Director of the City of San Diego’s Development Services Department, said he and his staff are familiar with Off-Site Modular Construction and agree that it offers many advantages:

“Some countries have adopted it a lot more than the U.S.,” but it might gain popularity as more examples become available, Broughton said. He also said modular fits the city’s “green” and “clean technology” agenda.

For more information about Off-site Modular Construction or building a custom home contact USModular Inc. at 951 679 9907 or visit www.usmodularinc.com.