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## Affordable houses: Use all the resources out there says Swan



Picture: Glenn Tucker Built for speed: Construction workers get to grips with a section of the modular home that was built in just one day.

**OPPOSITION Senator Kim Swan is urging Government to "use all the resources out there" in its drive to increase the island's stock of affordable houses.**

The United Bermuda Party Shadow Housing Minister accused Government of failing to tackle the housing problem by examining new or alternative forms of construction.

Sen. Swan spoke out following revelations that a modular home – Q2 – was constructed in just one day in Hamilton last week.

The modular property, on Mount Hill, Pembroke, was bolted together by a team from Design Source International, which had the unit shipped in from the US. The three-storey home cost about two-thirds of the price of a similar-sized home built using conventional construction methods.

Yesterday, Sen. Swan said the latest development could be exploited to provide more affordable accommodation – if Government was prepared to at least carry out a feasibility study. And he said that a similar project was put together in the 1980s and proved highly successful. While Government's position on the matter is not known, former Housing Minister Ashfield DeVent rejected an earlier proposal for modular homes.

No response was received to questions e-mailed by this newspaper to Housing Minister David Burch and the Ministry's press officer.

"There has already been a precedent for modular housing developments – at Top Square in St. George's," Sen. Swan said.

"They were put there in the 1980s and have served the community well since. I remember the real urgency for affordable housing at the time but when the Progressive Labour Party was in Opposition, we took heed of some of their comments. You have to have the will to build and that just hasn't happened under this Government.

"The first thing Government needs to do is to find ways of tapping into other resources of people like this who are building modular homes. Unfortunately, this Government is in denial. It seems to be more concerned about making promises rather than getting things done.

"After seven years in office there needs to be a few more examples of homes being built. Where is the commitment and the understanding of the situation?"

Earlier this week, Paul James of Design Source said he was hopeful Government would re-examine the potential of "instant homes" following the successful completion of the Mount Hill model.

"We are on the threshold of a new way to build homes in Bermuda and we want the news to get out there," he told *The Royal Gazette*.

"Traditional construction has become so expensive. Our vision is to offer Q2 homes that will maintain the traditional look of Bermuda homes, with pastel colourings and slate roofs, but at much less expense to the home buyer."

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