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## Instant houses could resolve property crisis



photo by Glenn Tucker Modular Housing A crane places pieces of a modular house that was raised in a single day in Hamilton.

At the crack of dawn there was nothing there but a concrete basement foundation. By the time the sun went down that same day a three-floor home had been created.

All that was missing was the roof space – that is likely to be completed within the coming days.

When it comes to building an instant home for only two-thirds of the cost of using normal construction methods the first offering from Island-based Design Source International is going to take some beating.

And it could open the way for a quick and relatively low-cost solution to Bermuda's emergency housing shortage. Pre-made room-size modules were shipped to Bermuda from the USA and pieced together like a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle in one working day to create a ground to roof home with three floors.

"It has been done in lots of other places. We have set up a plant in Pennsylvania to serve Bermuda and the installation has been done here by Bermudians," said Paul James, principal of Design Source.

He oversaw the building of the first Q2 home in Bermuda at Mount Hill in Hamilton. A crane was used to lift the modules into place around a steel structure, which is supported by a concrete base.

The idea of modular-built homes, which are quite different from pre-fab homes, was initially proposed as a way for the Government to address the Island's housing shortage, but the idea was not taken up by former Housing Minister Ashfield DeVent.

However, Mr. James is hopeful that now, with one of the concept homes built on the Island, there may be a change of heart. And he expects others seeking to build a quick and convenient home to take note of what a Q2 home can offer.

"We are at the threshold of a new way to build homes in Bermuda and we want the news to get out there," he said.

Mr. James estimates the cost of a Q2 home is around 25 to 30 percent less than a conventional house build in Bermuda. And then there is the added bonus of the speed with which one of the homes can be erected.

"This one has gone smoothly and the next door neighbours have taken a two week vacation which means they have missed the entire construction."

The homes have energy efficient design features not normally seen in Bermudian homes. They can also withstand hurricane force winds of 140 mph.

"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," said Mr. James.

"Another benefit is that they are very easy to remodel. A porch or room addition can be added at a later date, for example. The process is very easy."

He added: "These units are manufactured, but not mobile homes. They are permanent structures built off site and are arguably better engineered than a block home, and certainly more energy efficient."

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