



The Dwell Home Update

In our last update on the progress of the Dwell Home, we had high hopes that it would be manufactured early this year. But as is often the case with construction, delays pushed the process back a few weeks later than originally planned. At press time, when the modules were on schedule to be delivered to the site on April 19th, we spoke with Dwell Home architect Joseph Tanney of Resolution: 4 Architecture about the process.

What needs to happen now before the Dwell Home can go into production?

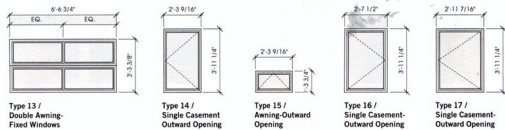
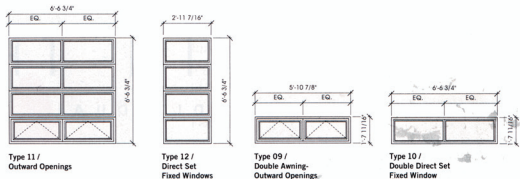
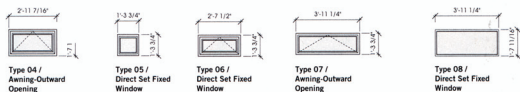
We've been in coordination with Carolina Building Solutions (CBS) to produce a set of engineering drawings from which they'll build the home in the factory. When you prefab something—whether it's a house or a cabinet—the manufacturer of that piece redraws it in what's called a shop drawing. Then the architect checks it, okays it, and sends it back to the manufacturer. It's a way to communicate to be sure that the manufacturer understands what's been proposed.

How are the shop drawings used?

The drawings are an instruction manual, so to speak, so that the guys on the floor know how to build the house. They build it in a week or two; it happens very quickly, so everything has to be very clear and precise.

What have been your biggest challenges?

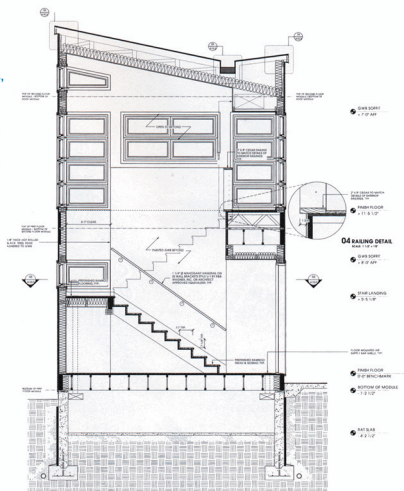
Part of the delay has been the dialogue back and forth between us and CBS. It's a comparable dialogue as it is ▶



From the architect's original rendering (top), detailed drawings are made by the architect (e.g., windows and sills, shown above) that are then redrawn by the manufacturer for production.

Dwell Home

"When you give a set of drawings to a manufacturer for the first time," Joe Tanney explains, "they don't know the impact it's going to have in terms of what it's going to take for them to modify their systems." Shown at right is a section of the stairs from the architect's drawings; window and sill details are pictured below.



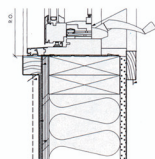
with a typical contractor, but it's a different language—as if we're speaking German and they're speaking Italian and we're both learning French so we can communicate. Plus, this particular manufacturer has never built modules 16 feet wide before, not to mention anything with this roof or type of layout. So it takes longer than their typical process.

You have ten other prefab homes currently in the works. Is the manufacturing process the same for each of the houses?

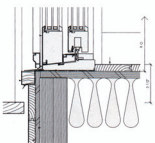
The homes are all on the East Coast—from Martha's Vineyard to Memphis to Long Island. A lot of people think that because you build the houses in a factory, it's one for all and all for one. But each house needs to be detailed and documented specifically—not only for each client, budget, and site, but also for the approval process of each jurisdiction. For example, on the West Coast, you worry about earthquakes, and on the East Coast, you worry about hurricanes. Construction is a very local industry. Modular homes still have to conform to local codes.

Will you be able to shorten the time frame with future prefab homes?

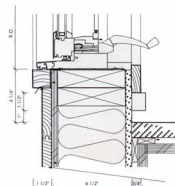
The entire process—from being told we won the Dwell Home competition to production completion—will have been about a year. There's a learning curve on the manufacturer's end to understand where we're coming from, and a learning curve on our end to understand where they're coming from. Once we do one house with each manufacturer, the second and third will get easier and easier. At least that's the assumption! ■



Window Sill Detail



Sliding Door Sill Detail



Kitchen Window Sill Detail