

That house on a trailer is no trailer-home

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Posted by Rona Fischman July 30, 2008 04:44 PM

I used to think of modular homes as something that looks like a double-wide trailer. About ten years back, I saw a manufactured home that was not properly on its foundation (in the opinion of my client's home inspector.) It also had electrical problems and safety issues. That didn't help my opinion any. Like most people, I had not seen modern modular homes and I confused them with manufactured homes.

Modern modular homes are attractive. I am pleasantly surprised. Modular homes are not "manufactured homes" which offer little flexibility. A modular home can be in almost any design. I started seeing very attractive ones landing in Lexington and Needham over the past few years. After a little snooping around, I found they are all over the area.

There are several reasons why modular homes are becoming more popular and taking over a larger segment of the new housing market. Here's why, according to [Michael Zenga](#):

1. Better quality: Because modular homes need to be strong enough to be transported from the factory to your building site, they are built with 30% more material than a traditionally built home. Exterior walls use 2 x 6s instead of 2 x 4s; first floor ceiling joists don't double as 2nd story floor joists, which creates less noise and better insulation between floors.
2. Less expensive: Modular homes are built in a factory setting away from the weather. Working indoors saves labor time. There is also less waste and better use of materials which makes modular homes less costly than standard homes.
3. Saving time also means that a buyer can move in faster. In one study, identically designed homes were built on-site and in the modular factory. The entire process took 4 months from start to finish for the modular home, but 14 months for the site-built home.
4. With less waste and the ease of recycling in the factory, the modular home industry focuses on the environment. In addition, greener materials are easier to employ into the factory-style assembly as they become commercially available.