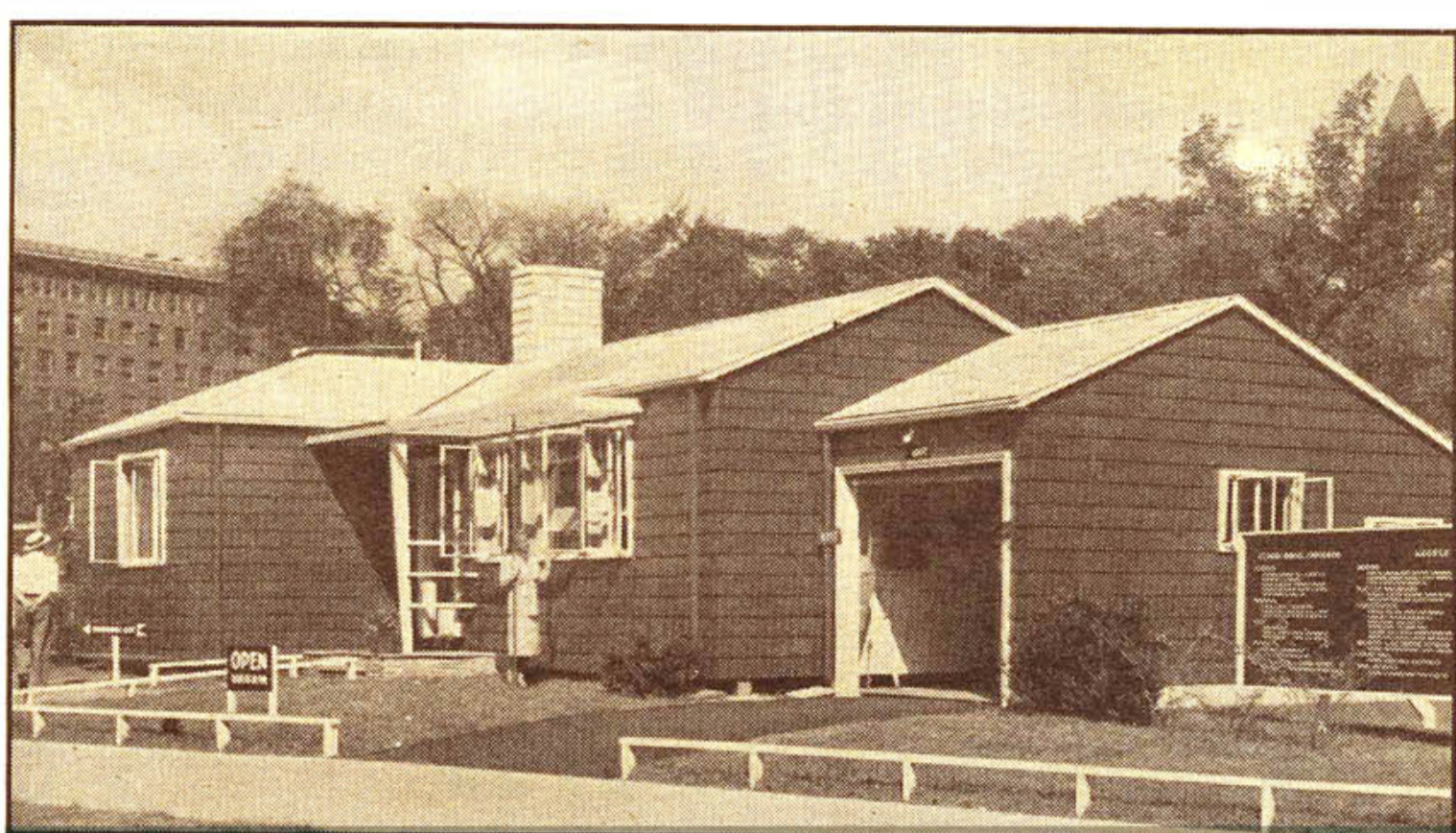


Pathfinder

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Modular is the Word



MODEL MODULAR HOUSE. Built from materials of 4-inch multiples, it saves dollars and . . .



. . . offers gracious living space such as this dining-entry area.

For the past month, a snug little California ranch-type house has parked in downtown Washington, just north of Labor and east of Commerce. Against these staid Government buildings and the cold gravel lot, its green-stained cypress siding and sun-bright yellow trim have beamed a warm welcome to thousands of visitors.

This is no ordinary dwelling. It is the first publicly-shown Industry-Engineered house, lumbermen's answer to the nation's housing shortage, or at least to rising costs.

After eight years of research, the National Retail Lumber Dealers Association and the Producers' Council, an organization of building materials manufacturers, have polished up all the known short-cut, dollar-saving methods in building, packaged them into an industry-wide program, and labeled them the "four-inch module plan."

Four-Inch Units. Modular houses are designed on four-inch multiples so that lumber, brick, tile, window sashes, doors—almost every manufactured or pre-assembled part that goes into a house—can be made in standard sizes and at mass-production costs. Because it takes less time to assemble such materials, labor costs are lower. Waste is negligible because all parts fit or need little trimming.

"There should never be a bonfire when a house is finished," says Paul H. Bolton, editor of *Small Homes Guide*, speaking for 25,000 dealer promoters.

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Adaptable. Emphasis in modular designs has been on small houses, now most in demand. But the principles work on any size and almost any type of house. By late fall, dealers and builders hope to have plans ready for 118 different styles, one- and two-storied, with or without basements, in stone, stucco, and so on.

How many dollars and cents customers will save can be more precisely predicted after several experimental small homes are built by the University of Illinois and the Department of Commerce.

But customers can expect beauty and efficiency in a modular house.

Storage. The \$9,000 model, built by the Washington Home Builders Association, has only four rooms but ample space for living and storing. The two bedrooms, featuring built-in, sliding-door cabinets and closets, are also divided by a cabinet wall providing still more storage space. Kitchen and bathroom are placed back to back so that one wall takes care of plumbing and heating units.

The house is built of three sections, each 16 x 24 feet, and bolted at floor, walls and roof. Wall joints are hidden by cabinets; by simply removing top and side cabinets, bolts can be loosened and the house readied for moving on trailers.

Some of the more impulsive visitors rushed straight from the house to the nearest-lumber yard. There they found only a limited stock of lumber, window sashes, glass brick in modular sizes. But they got a cheery word from the dealer: More modular is coming.