

Prior to Hurricane Kirk, the City of New York predicts an imminent disaster relatively far in advance. The community of Prospect Shore is singled out as a Danger Zone and Task Force Committees are formed in each neighborhood to facilitate the necessary guidance to ensure a confident response to the Act of God.

As Prospect Shore is struck by the storm, warehouses outside the predicted storm surge area are already filled with most of the necessary materials for provisional dwellings. These materials consist of Panels that snap into the interior of a standard shipping container via a simple method such as z-clips. The Panels are 2'-0"X2'-0" and are constructed like a Structural Insulated Panel – an insulated sandwich with a finished interior. Another type of Panel is also created: the inside face is finished identically to the others, but necessary items such as kitchen utensils, furniture and sleeping accessories are folded into the space between the insulation and the interior face. This creates a variegated checkerboard texture inside each unit while answering the needs of each displaced individual and family. Other panels drop down to become shelving.

The other component is the Partition. There are two different types of Partition. One is opaque. It creates a definite separation between spaces. The other is translucent. This affords the possibility of the transference of light from an exterior area to the interior of a housing unit. Partitions can be locked into place or retract for passage. At viable sites, a 2'-0" strip along the top of the shipping container is cut and fitted with a sliding hinge mechanism that allows it to drop down to a perpendicular position outside the unit, creating a light-shelf. The shelf is then covered with a smooth, white panel to maximize the reflection of sunlight into the interior. The translucent Partitions help carry this light further into the dwelling.

Each dwelling is treated as a kit-of-parts, the basis being the Studio Unit. The Studio is a simple plan for one standard 40'-0" long shipping container; it has sleeping, bath, kitchen and living space, as well as a small storage area. This basic unit can then be expanded upon by adding the other type of module: the Flex Unit. The door openings along the length of all units are situated to coincide and the Flex Unit has tracks placed on the ceiling, allowing a combination of Partition usage that can divide the space by thirds, one third to two thirds, or not at all. This creates the possibility for added bedrooms, storage, work space, or a completely open space. A combination of one Studio and one or two Flex Units creates a flexible template for a single person to a family of eight or more. Units may be stacked seven to eight high. The necessary modifications are simple, commonplace and can be done in the field. Manuals outlining the changes will be transported to each site along with the components.

During the initial clean-up efforts, the main structure of the units is being gathered from local docks and freight yards, as well as transported from everywhere on the Eastern Seaboard. Soon, they begin pouring in via rail and trucks from all over the country. These gathered units are standard shipping containers that are an average size of 8'-6"hX8'-0"Wx40'-0"l. Production begins on new Panels and Partitions while the warehoused pieces are transported to the disaster area.

Sites are first prepped for the assembly of units on pre-determined vacant lots just outside the storm surge area. Site prep consists of clearing, leveling and the digging and pouring of elevator pits for circulation cores that highlight accessibility. Skilled labor in the shipping field is readily available and volunteers come forth in waves. Openings for doors and windows are perforated and knocked out of the steel units and the removed pieces are stored on each site for future use.

Dwellings are completed for all available vacant lots. As debris continues to be cleared, sites are prepared for the next wave of units. The above process of clearing and assembly continues until approximately Day 100, when all public land is finally cleared and readied for utilization and the number of displaced persons burgeons.

Finally, as salvageable housing is repaired and some return to their homes, vacated dwellings are re-adapted for the use of the community. These newly opened units become common spaces such as daycare facilities, yoga studios, playgrounds, work and study areas, cafes, urban gardens, etc. Each provisional community is enabled to develop and grow according to its own needs.

As the majority of units become vacant, dismantling begins. Units can be shipped intact to other areas that need relief. However, most will return to their original function; sections previously removed to create door and window openings and other modifications, conserved on-site, will be welded back into place. Panels and Partitions are removed, cleaned and repaired, then sent to other disaster areas.