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Affordable housing innovations

Thursday 29 Jan 2009

No money? No problem...



Exterior: Bright Build home



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EDITORIAL

Two innovative projects propose solutions to housing crises

In 2005 the UN Commission on Human Rights was told by Special Rapporteur and qualified architect Miloon Kothari that 1 billion people around the world 'lack adequate housing' and approximately 100 million are classified homeless. Four years later, with natural disasters and a Credit Crunch to boot the statistics are bound to take a further battering. But you can always rely on the ingenuity and creativity of the architecture community to bash out a solution - two innovations have been announced that may provide a tangible difference at opposite ends of the poverty scale.

Working to revolutionise world slums is the Universal World House, a durable structure made entirely from resin-soaked paper. Developed by a team from the Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany in collaboration with outdoor advertising specialists The Wall AG, who patented the material, the structures are sturdy, lightweight and importantly cheap. Costing no more than \$5000 each of the 390 sq ft structures provide safe, dry indoor space and outdoor social space in the form of a patio fitted with benches and a table. Thin honeycomb structure panels ensure the walls are light and strong. The design could revolutionize slums and shanty towns worldwide.

On the other end of the scale, the financial crisis among other factors has made it a difficult time for first-time buyers posing a further threat of homelessness. Bright Build, a new and dedicated company, have developed a prefabricated mortgageable house which can be constructed in just two days. Aimed at first time, and last time buyers and the holiday home market, this low-impact modern prefab would cost just £60,000. Complete with mirrored bedroom wardrobes, sliding pocket doors to bedroom, bathroom and livingroom, and a lacquer and stainless steel kitchen, residents would feel no different once inside than in any other new-build home.

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