



OPEN PLAN, PREFAB UNITS CUT FLORIDA COSTS



OPEN PLAN, PREFAB UNITS CUT FLORIDA COSTS

CONTEMPORARY MATERIALS and techniques often go a long way to, wards helping produce the “most house for the least money.” This light and airy house on Siesta Key, Sarasota, Florida, is composed almost entirely of pre-fabricated parts. It is quite spacious—moderate cost.

Besides the wide variety of manufactured items commonly used in houses today, Architect Paul Rudolph has also employed ready-made girders and panels for walls and roof. The panels are of a “sandwich” construction, with a honeycomb core of phenolic-impregnated paper, and hardboard or plywood of various types glued to either side; they resist fire, decay and termites, and are lightweight enough to serve as sliding doors in several locations. The girders span 32 feet across the living room, and are of a “stressed-skin” type, formed of plywood glued to light wood members.

The roof is constructed in two levels, with the upper one supported atop the beams. The lower roof panels project 6 feet into the room and are suspended from the beams; to the outside, they project as a 4400t overhang, either cantilevered or attached by pins to sides of wooden posts. Spaces between beams form a clerestory for extra light, air.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD: Sarasota, on the west coast of Florida, is a quiet, sun-drenched land of palms and palmettos with a balmy climate.

THE SITE: ample in size and level, the lot adjoins a bayou and abounds in tropical trees and foliage. An artificial inlet has been made in the bayou to bring it to the perimeter of the house at the back.

Paul Rudolph, Architect. Harold Pickett, Monostructure, Inc., Contractor.

This very attractive and spacious house for Mr. and Mrs. David Cohen was built at moderate cost by using new structural techniques (“sandwich” panels, plywood girders) and a very open plan for living areas (preceding page, and photo below left)



THE FAMILY: Mr. and Mrs. David Cohen are an extremely musical couple. He is concert master for the Florida West Coast Symphony, and she is a pianist. They wanted a house that would accommodate large groups for rehearsals and recitals, and with good acoustics and sound system. From the design standpoint, they asked for a simple, straightforward, practical house that required a minimum of housekeeping.

THE HOUSE: the plan of the house works ideally for informal, servantless living, as well as the family's specific requirements. By eliminating all partitions except those of the bedrooms and baths, an enormous multi-purpose living area was created for entertaining or orchestra practice sessions. Even the kitchen is a part of the room; cabinets are arranged to shield the actual cooking processes from view. Sliding windows and doors join terraces at the front and back to the living area.

Large closets and a dressing room (well lighted by overhead skylights) minimize the need for excess furniture in the bedrooms, permit them to be used as sitting rooms on occasion.

THE ARCHITECT: Paul Rudolph remarks that, "Perhaps the most interesting feature of the house is the sunken area in the living room which is surrounded by cushions on the floor and additional cushions for back supports. We are much interested in the simplification and elimination of furniture and this seems to be a step. We feel strongly that too much modern furniture is so sculpturesque that it is difficult to make a truly quiet room."

OWNERS' REACTION: the Cohens muse that, "The house is right. Not fancy—very ample and straightforward—practical—not ornate—no lost space, NONE—no silly walls with curves or dead end rooms."

The entire periphery of the Cohen house is surrounded by brick paving which serves as walks and living terraces, reduces garden upkeep. Interior finishes of plywood, hard-board, terrazzo, make housekeeping simple. Meals can be served directly from the kitchen over the low cabinet behind sink (below)



