

The Lady Is Sawn in Half — and Survives



Katrina Cottage II is shown in its original location in St. Bernard Parish, La., prior to being moved to Ocean Springs, Miss.

The first home built in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina — a small panelized structure called Katrina Cottage II — has been moved to Ocean Springs, Miss., where it will join its sibling, Katrina Cottage I.

Florida builder Brian C. Bishop, whose panelized construction company donated labor and materials for Katrina Cottage II to St. Bernard Parish in the wake of the 2005 hurricane and oversaw its construction, was selected by architect Andrés Duany to move the cottage to its new home. Bishop and a crew from his company, New Panel Homes, Inc., made the move on May 18, 2009.

Katrina Cottage II contains 470 square feet of space on the ground floor with a 300-square foot sleeping loft. With its high peaked roof that contains the loft, the cottage was too tall to move in one piece on a flatbed truck. Bishop's solution was to cut the roof of the building off and move the structure as two large pieces. Since the building is constructed entirely of structural insulated panels (SIPs), the pieces could be rejoined relatively easily without sacrificing structural integrity.

A Katrina Cottage is a small permanent building that can be quickly built in the wake of a hurricane or other disaster for the same cost as a "FEMA Trailer." While not adhering to



Crew from New Panel Homes, Inc., begins lifting roof.

any specific design or construction method, the cottage must meet tough new building codes. A SIP system like the one developed by Bishop lends itself particularly well to the Katrina Cottage, since much of the work (fabricating and cutting the panels) can be done away from the storm zone, and the building can be erected in a matter of days by a crew of four people. The resulting structure is highly energy-efficient and can withstand hurricane-force winds.

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Series of photographs shows roof being lifted off Katrina Cottage with a crane and lowered to the ground; walls are readied for loading for transport. It took only four hours to cut the house apart and prepare it for shipping

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Unlike a FEMA Trailer, a Katrina Cottage offers reasonable comfort, traditional residential styling, and permanence — the cottage is designed to later be enlarged.

Two Katrina cottages were built as demonstration projects after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, one in St. Bernard Parish, La., and one in Ocean Springs, Miss. Katrina Cottage II was designed, engineered, prefabricated, built and furnished within three weeks under Bishop's direction. The panels were manufactured in Sarasota County, Fla., and trucked to Louisiana. Katrina Cottage II stood in a parking lot in St. Bernard Parish until it was decided to move the structure to Cottage Square in Ocean Springs, Miss.

Cottage Square is the result of ideas generated during the Mississippi Renewal Forum shortly after Hurricane Katrina. An group of architects, planners, and builders came together to develop a better method of providing quick, high-quality housing for Mississippi Gulf Coast residents and others living where disaster could strike.

Cottage Square was conceived as a real "Living Neighborhood." The group purchased two acres and began development in June 2006. One main goal was to permanently house the original Katrina Cottage. The construction of the first Lowe's Kit Cottage was completed and the original cottage was moved to the site for the one-year anniversary of Katrina.

Today, Cottage Square is the only built example of the recovery plans provided by planners of the Renewal

Forum. Cottage Square will eventually display more than 20 homes and live-work units. Property owners shopping for replacements for houses lost to Katrina can come by the Square and "kick the tires" of the models, check out the various building systems, and order their own cottage on the spot.

Cottage Square continues to evolve, with plans for commercial, worship and learning cottage prototypes to come. Building methods will include stick framing, panelized metal studs, structural insulated panels (SIPs), modular and other building systems.

Brian Bishop is a pioneer in the field of panelized construction. He founded Home Front, Inc. in Venice, Fla., in 1999 to develop panelized construction methods and to manufacture structural insulated panels (SIPs). In 2006, an investor group led by Arthur G. Nadel purchased a majority interest in Home Front and created a new corporation called Home Front Homes LLC. The Bishops are not affiliated with Home Front Homes LLC.

Bishop was the founder and first chairman of the Sarasota (Fla.) Green Building Council, a past president of the Sarasota Home Builders Association, and the founder and current chairman of the Charlotte-DeSoto Building Industry Association Green Building Council.

Bishop supervised the construction of Katrina Cottage III, designed by Andrés Duany as an example of a Florida Cracker cottage, circa 1910, for the second anniversary observance of Hurricane Charley.



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