Call It—“NEST”

The House of the Future Was Unveiled at the National Home—builders Show—and It Features Interchangeable Modules That Can Be Customized.

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It’s called “NEST” —for “New Expanding Shelter Technology . . . and it’s really something.

That’s why a NEST ’85 demonstration house was the centerpiece of attention at the recent convention of the National Association of Home Builders in Houston.

The prototype, featuring Dryvit Outsulation, was the talk of the show for a number of reasons.

According to its consortium of sponsors, the NEST system allows the production run of interchangeable
modules with the ‘potential to create more than 70 possible configurations and a variety of housing types. Modules may nest side by side, or side to end, and can be customized to blend with the site locale. This state-of-the-art system also allows builders to produce these homes in the cost-effective and controlled atmosphere of a manufactured housing facility because while the design concept was developed for specific application to the modular production line, it is easily adapted to panelized or stick-building operations.

The 1785-square-foot NEST House was fabricated in four modules at the manufactured housing facilities of Mill-Craft Building Systems, Inc., in Waupaca, Wisc. It was here, more than 100 miles northwest of Milwaukee, that Ed Bscherer and Dick Hill, of Exterior Systems, Inc., in Gillett, Wisc., faced the challenge of their careers. In addition to being members of Dryvit’s family of trained applicatorcontractors, Bscherer and Hill boast more than two decades of experience in the plastering industry.

“Meeting tight deadlines is nothing new to us,” notes Bscherer, “but this job was a real pressure cooker. Each NEST module had to move through almost 20 assembly stations in the factory in an extremely short period of time. Not only were the quarters tight, but our crew had to learn how to work within the strict time constraints imposed by a Mill-Craft assembly line that moved once or twice a day to a new station. Each station moved on wheels and an iron platform to support the module. Behind us on the tracks, were as many as ten modules.

“The NEST project was a tremendous learning experience for all of us,” adds Hill, “and now with that experience behind us, we can look forward to increasing our business with more projects in the manufactured housing market.”

Besides testing the suitability of exterior wall insulation and finish systems, to an entirely new type of construction—manufactured modular housing technology—the NEST project tested Exterior Systems’ mettle by adding a number of complicating factors unique to this project.

**The Design . . .**

To award-winning California architect Barry Berkus, AIA, of the Berkus Group Architects in Santa Barbara, the NEST House was more than just another design; it was a chance to demonstrate to more than 50,000 builders the versatility and flexibility of his design concept when applied to manufactured housing. For NEST’s sponsors, the project was an opportunity to show consumers and builders alike the high-quality housing that can be achieved with this type of technology.

The design, therefore, was anything but simple. The exterior walls alone feature two colors—“Pearl Ash” and a custom color specially blended to complement the building’s exterior—alternating in five horizontal bands punctuated by bronze accent strips and decorative copper elements.

“Dryvit Outsulation allowed us to create a structure that achieved coherent and dynamic surfaces expressing form, material and color,” notes Berkus. “The product gives architects more design flexibility in terms of forms and textures.”

Berkus’ “new-generation design” includes a combination living-dining area; kitchen; den; two master bedrooms with walk-in closets and adjoining baths; a guest bedroom with
separate entrance, walk-in closet, adjoining bath and private greenhouse; three decks—one with a California-style jacuzzi; a tropics room and a solarium entry.

“Horizontal and vertical expansiveness highlight the floor plan, thus eliminating a feeling of confinement experienced in most modular systems,” says Berkus.

**The Climate . . .**

In order to meet strict publication deadlines, the NEST House was completely assembled at a Waupaca golf course down the road from the Mill-Craft factory. Finishing touches were then applied to the NEST House on-site. Exterior Systems took advantage of any breaks in a stretch of bad weather by working all hours of the day and night. Their dedication and ingenuity in combating rain and severe cold helped bring the job in on schedule.

Using both panelized and field-applied techniques, they applied approximately 350 square feet of Outsulation in a Sandblast Finish.® One-inch Dryvit Insulation (EPS) Board and three-and-a-half inches of batt insulation were used to produce R-17 + walls.

**The Show . . .**

The NEST House was not only a showcase for The Berkus Group, its consortium of sponsors and Exterior Systems, it was also a chance for Dryvit System and more than 30 other manufacturers to display their products to homebuilders nationwide. To maximize this opportunity, the completed house was furnished and decorated to the very last detail, displayed, reviewed and photographed, then dis-assembled and trucked more than 1200 miles to Houston, where the modules were reassembled into a fully finished and landscaped home inside the Astrodome.

Reaction to the NEST House has been phenomenal and Dryvit System is now planning to take this unique design and manufacturing concept to other housing manufacturers around the country. To this end, Dryvit has produced a videotape that chronicles the history of NEST ‘85 from concept and manufacturing to its unveiling at the Houston Astrodome this winter.

The West Warwick Company is confident that a new market has developed for exterior wall insulation and finish systems that will create excellent business opportunities for those applicator-contractors willing to make the most of this new technology.