

### The Skyscraper's New Look

A less costly, faster and greener way of building is getting increased attention from developers and investors in these economic times. According to the Modular Building Institute (MBI), the five billion dollar industry is poised to grow as economic pressures spur developers to trim costs. MBI asserts that:

- Quality modular buildings have expected life spans of 20 to 50 years.
- They must meet the same rigorous local building codes as traditionally-built structures.
- Single and multi-story buildings can be configured to include independent offices, conference rooms, lobbies, kitchens, restrooms and large open areas for cubicles or other partition systems.
- Standard floor plans are available for immediate delivery while custom buildings are built to customer specifications in weeks, not months.
- Site work occurs at the same time as the buildings are being built in a quality-controlled factory.
- The five most prevalent uses are for educational facilities, general and medical office, retail and hospitality.
- Walls, floors, ceilings and rafters are all built simultaneously, then brought together in the same factory to form a building.
- Module lengths are up to 70 feet, usually in two-foot increments.



Located in Wolverhampton, UK, this modular student housing project, built in 27 weeks, would have taken 24 months using traditional site-built methods.

- Module heights vary from approximately 11 feet to 13 feet, not including the height of the unit's transport trailer or frame.
- Type-V wood-frame construction is the most common and economical type of construction – some manufacturers also build with steel and concrete and can meet the requirements for Type-I, II and III construction.
- Multi-story modular buildings can be built up to the maximum stories allowed by code.
- Lease-to-purchase options are available.
- Typical foundation systems used in conjunction with modular units allow for ready return to pre-installation status with little or minor site reconstruction costs. Foundation selection factors include wind, seismic, support, use and access requirements in determination of appropriate systems.

Student housing developer, Victoria Hall Ltd., used modular construction to solve overcrowding and urban site constraints at the University of Wolverhampton, England. The ground floor of the mixed-use building is site built, but the other 25 stories are assembled from 383 individual modules