

With prefabricated panel system, house goes up in less than a day

December 8 2016, by Nancy Owano



Credit: People's Architecture Office

(Tech Xplore)—Rome was not built in a day, we are warned, but new housing conditions call for here-and-now creative thinking. In China, the

People's Architecture Office is doing just that.

What would you say to a [house](#) that can be built in under 24 hours? Not only that... a small team did it in just a few hours, said *New Atlas*. OK, they were skilled people. But *New Atlas* said "a couple of unskilled people" could do it in as little as 24 hours too.

How they did it: The group uses a prefabricated panel system.

The modules carry insulation, interior and exterior finish, wiring and plumbing— "all squeezed into one molded part," said *New Atlas*.

How do the modules attach? Through an integrated locking system, said Adam Williams.

The home is called Mrs. Fan's Plugin House and it indicates an option to high-priced housing that many cannot afford.

Williams wrote, "[Building](#) space is increasingly at a premium in central Beijing and even cramped apartments can fetch a small fortune, but China's People's Architecture Office (PAO) recently completed a new home for a first-time buyer for just US\$10,000."

The \$10,000 total cost makes the home around 30 times cheaper than a typical Beijing apartment, said the report. Details involve double-height lounge and kitchen, roof deck, and glazing for natural daylight. PAO also inserted a composting toilet and shower.



Credit: People's Architecture Office

Another PAO project meanwhile was highlighted in *ArchDaily*, and this one is described as The Plugin Tower. Forced to relocate? No problem. "The Plugin Tower curtails the investment necessary for building a home since it excludes the risk of losing one's property: residents can pack up their homes and bring it with them if they are ever forced to relocate."

No heavy machinery is required for this structure, and it does not need an underground foundation; it is a multi-story prefab system that is [expandable](#).

It has a steel space frame, and "a kit of parts that can be assembled in endless variations," said *ArchDaily*.

"Units are made with PAO's proprietary Plugin Panel system, modules that incorporate insulation, wiring, plumbing, interior and exterior finishes into one molded part."

They said the panels, attached with integrated locks, are "easily installed by a couple of unskilled people with just a hex wrench."

The two structures reflect the People's Architecture Office goal to respond to housing in China. According to *Architizer*, PAO was founded by He Zhe, James Shen and Zang Feng in 2010. Those who make up the team are described as "architects, engineers and urbanists."

Architizer added, "With the belief that design is for the masses, PAO aims to be conceptually accessible and culturally pragmatic. PAO approaches design from the framework of the realities of scale, global economics and flows, mass production, mass markets and social networks."

More information: www.peoples-architecture.com/pao/

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