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5 January 2010

Housing experts build the case for manufactured homes in cities

Manufactured housing could solve the affordable homes crisis in urban areas, but only if planners help local people to overcome their prejudices.

Writing in the Winter issue of the ***Journal of the American Planning Association (JAPA)***, two leading urban affairs and planning experts – Professor Casey Dawkins and Professor Theodore Koebel from the Center of Housing Research at Virginia Tech in the US – urge urban planning officers to support proposals for prefabricated homes.

They argue that the planning process discriminates against people on low incomes unless planners speak up for the design improvements, longevity and value for money that make manufactured housing a feasible and affordable alternative to traditionally built homes.

Their new research shows that planners see high land prices and citizen opposition as the biggest barriers to manufactured housing developments in urban areas. Dawkins and Koebel want planners to educate their local communities away from thinking that manufactured housing means ‘mobile’ homes, ‘trailer parks’ and anti-social behaviour. They say planners should be counteracting these ‘not in my back yard’ prejudices by highlighting how modern designs can blend in with existing neighbourhoods and provide permanent dwellings for teachers, firemen and other essential workers.

“Modern prefabricated homes don’t have to be the ugly boxes we associate with out-of-town trailer parks,” said Professor Dawkins. “Modern designs are built to last, and can include pitched roofs, cladding and other attractive features. They offer the same quality as many site-built homes, but are much more affordable because they cost less to make.”

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Information on **JAPA** is available from www.tandf.co.uk/journals/rjpa.

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