

Making Modular Work: Lessons from the Field

There's been a lot of conversation around modular construction in recent years – and for good reason. We're in a market that's short on housing and long on complexity. Delays, labor constraints, and rising costs are making it harder to deliver the housing we need, especially at prices people can afford.

At Adam Berger Development, we've spent the past decade putting modular to the test – not in theory, but in the field. We wanted to know: Can modular help us build faster, reduce risk, and deliver high-quality housing in a more predictable way?

The short answer: yes. But only if the entire process – from design through delivery – is set up for modular from the start.

What Modular Really Offers

Modular construction isn't a cure-all. Maybe it can make a broken deal pencil, but only if



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it's incorporated into every aspect of a project's development life cycle. When used strategically, it allows teams to shift much of the building process off-site and into a controlled factory environment. That change, when done well, opens up some key advantages: It shortens the schedule, improves cost control, and reduces exposure to on-site variables like weather delays or subcontractor availability.

We saw this play out at West Holden Place, our modular, all-electric, mixed-income project in Denver. While the factory completed 50 volumetric units over

a two-month period, we were finishing foundations and infrastructure on-site. Once the modules arrived, we set the full building in just seven days. That kind of efficiency is hard to match in traditional construction.

But it didn't happen by accident. Every detail – from unit design and entitlement strategy to trade partner selection – was planned with modular in mind from Day One.

Things that Make or Break Modular

From our experience, there are critical areas that determine whether modular delivers on its promise: Design, factory completion, and field logistics are three.

1. Design with the Constraint in Mind

Highway transport limits modular units to about 15 feet in width. That may sound like a small detail, but it impacts everything – layout, window placement, storage, and most importantly, how rooms feel to the resident. We spent four years refining our modular unit designs for West Holden Place to work within those constraints to create units that feel open, functional, and comfortable. If the units aren't well-designed, the rest of the process won't matter.

2. Build Nearly Everything in the Factory

To get the time savings, you need to build everything you can off-site. We aim for 99.9% comple-



tion in the factory – including finishes, fixtures, appliances, and all the MEP systems. And just as important: the modules need to stitch together smoothly in the field. If they don't, you lose time and money trying to make up for it during install.

3. Plan for the Set Like It's Opening Day

The modular set is a big moment. It has to go well. At West Holden Place, we set 50 boxes in seven days – something only possible with advance planning around street closures, staging, crane access, and a team that knew exactly what to do. That kind of coordination turns a potential bottleneck into a schedule advantage.

Proof in the Field

Before we built West Holden

Place, we delivered dozens of modular duplex and townhome projects across metro Denver. These smaller-scale efforts gave us a chance to test whether modular could consistently produce high-quality housing at a price point that made sense.

We learned a lot – and we've been able to replicate the model successfully. One key reason: We work with the same core trades on every project. Our plumber, electrician, and drywaller know the product, know the sequencing, and price their scopes consistently. That reduces risk, improves quality, and brings stability to a process that's often unpredictable.

We've also worked with municipalities and nonprofits to deliv-

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