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## Modular Marvels

INNOVATION | Anthony Ho's Craftsman-style dwellings are pre-built but blend in beautifully with their neighbours

**Brian Morton**  
Vancouver Sun

*February 21, 2004*

At first glance, the five single-family Craftsman-style houses in the 4400-block of Quebec Street look no different from other new heritage-type houses going up in Vancouver.

The houses, built by Grand Pacific Construction Ltd. on

smaller lots, all have front porches, wood or wood-accented siding, peaked roofs and other details that make them an "instant fit" in the east Vancouver neighbourhood.

Separate garages are accessed from a rear lane.

But the houses, which sell for about \$645,000 (four have been sold), are anything but typical. Instead of being constructed on site, they were all built in a factory by Britco Structures and then shipped to Quebec Street, where they were erected to lock up stage in about a week.

Each house in the development, called the Residences at Riley Park, actually consists of four individual pre-built modules. Two of them were placed side by side and two more placed on top of the bottom two. The modules were then fitted together over a foundation with basement and the house completed on site.

Grand Pacific president Anthony Ho says the houses, which are each just over 2,000 square feet in size, actually cost a little more to build than a standard site-built house, citing what he calls superior finishing and precision engineering.

As well, he says, the houses are more solid than standard homes because of their structural reinforcements needed for shipping and separate floors and walls in each module.

"They very sound-proofed," says Ho. "If someone's jumping up and down upstairs, you can hear them, but there's no vibration [through the house]. They have a double wall system and double floors, because the modules come separate. And they have to be very rigid [for shipment], so they're very reinforced. I believe that in the future, manufactured homes will be very popular."

Ho says his homes are a little different than typical manufactured homes. Usually, he says, about 85 per cent of the house is finished in the factory. With the Quebec street homes, it was about 50 per cent. "For example, we did all the floors, porches and landscaping on site. And the roof was built on site."

Ho says he plans to market manufactured homes in Asia and will use the Quebec street houses as a showcase of Canadian pre-fabricated housing. "We're developing this technology with Britco."



Anthony Ho's heritage-style manufactured homes are an instant fit on East Vancouver's Quebec Street.

CREDIT: Ian Lindsay, Vancouver Sun  
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Ho says the project has its pros and cons.

"On the positive side, we can gain speed and build much faster if done properly. And seismic-wise, they're very sturdy. This house is very rigid.

"But on the negative side, it's hard to find a good team of people to finish the job. They may not be used to this type of construction, so cost can be a problem. And when you're doing 50 per cent of the job on site, you're doing a lot, so you need a good team."

Ho also says its also a challenge fitting manufactured homes to basement foundations. "You need a separate electrical panel for the basement."

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