

Katrina Cottages

Chalmette, LA and Ocean Springs, MS

D U A N Y P L A T E R - Z Y B E R K & C O M P A N Y



Location: Ocean Springs, Mississippi and Chalmette, Louisiana
Type: Affordable Housing Prototype
Year Design: 2006
Status: Built (Prototypes 1 & 2)
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As part of the Mississippi Renewal Forum, DPZ Principal Andres Duany charged the forum's architecture team with developing a more viable and humane alternative to the FEMA trailer. The Katrina Cottages resulted, which were conceived to be small, yet permanent, houses that could be built and installed on-site at costs comparable to that of trailers. These houses would be safe, durable dwellings that could later be expanded into larger houses.



The U.S. government spends between \$70,000 and \$140,000 per FEMA trailer, yet the structures are only intended as temporary dwellings. While helpful on a short-term basis, the magnitude of Katrina and Rita so upset the housing balance that the trailers may be needed for much longer than anticipated. In this light, the Katrina Cottages could be a realistic first step towards solving the post-hurricane housing crisis.

The first Katrina Cottage, designed by Marianne Cusato, was built on-site in Jackson, Mississippi. It was first displayed at the National Homebuilders' Show, where it gained coverage by periodicals including *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. The model is currently on display in Ocean Springs, Mississippi.



The DPZ Louisiana Speaks charrettes furthered the development of the Katrina Cottages. Throughout the charrettes, designers and consultants developed plans for cottages of different styles, sizes and prices, including several modernist prototypes. A second model was built on-site during the St. Bernard parish charrette, and remains on display in Chalmette, Louisiana.

Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour has testified before Congress and encouraged FEMA to accept Katrina Cottages as a substitute housing standard and provide funding for them just as for FEMA trailers. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco also supports such cottages as a permanent alternative to the temporary FEMA trailers. The Katrina Cottages can be built by any contractor, from any suitable material, "stick built" on-site or constructed from panels manufactured elsewhere. They must meet the tough standards of Louisiana's new International Building Code, as well as the FEMA base flood elevations.