

# Is The Stack the Solution to NYC's Housing Problem?

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Crain's New York Business recently reported on the initial completion of The Stack, a 28-unit six story Manhattan apartment building that rose from the ground in the city's Inwood section in just 19 days. Through the use of modular construction, in which each individual unit was assembled remotely in a factory and then installed together at the property site, the process was more efficient than traditional construction in terms of time and money. After assembling the pieces, all that remains is to tie the building together by connecting interwoven components like air ducts, the elevator, and pipes. Jeffrey Brown, CEO of the development company, estimated the project cost 15% less than it would have with the use of traditional construction methods. This makes it much more likely that modular construction, which has seen pockets of early success in certain US areas such as Los Angeles and Philadelphia, will latch on and grow as an alternative way of building.



Modular construction currently faces some limitations, but is viable in many applications, especially in Manhattan, which continues to face a severe and very real [shortage of housing supply](#) and has very high construction costs. Seasonally adjusted apartment vacancies in Manhattan are just 2% as of the first quarter of 2013, a low that is driving effective rents up to unsustainable levels for the middle and working-class. A quick way to add more units to the city's housing supply, like modular construction, could help alleviate this problem by expanding supply quickly and efficiently, thereby boosting availability or at least holding it stable. Increased availability would at least slow the rapid ascent New York City apartment rents have been undergoing.