

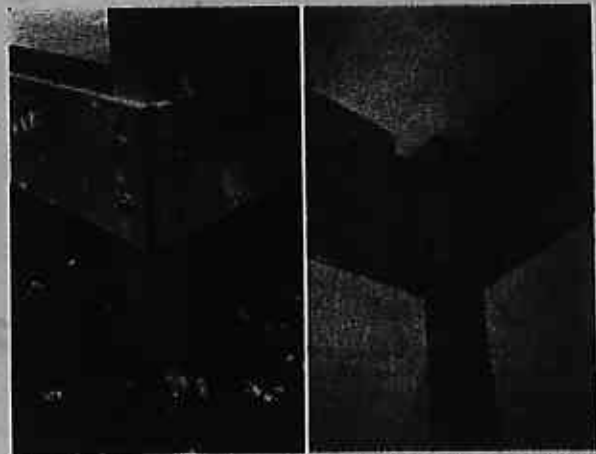


Interchangeable wall panels let the living cube change to suit the season. In fall, Walker removes screen panel (above) for replacement with a window panel. Screen stores on sling under cube (left).

Make a LIVING CUBE

Modular wall panels let it change with the seasons for year-round multiple use on a compact scale

Design by LESTER WALKER / Architect



Plywood beams for floor and roof support bolt to 4-by-4 corner posts. Note that holes are staggered so bolts will clear each other. Feet for the cube are cut from 2-by-10, treated with preservative, and bolted to columns.

Most homes are static structures. Once they're built there's little you can do to suit them to the seasons. You can take down the storm windows and put up the screens for summer, then reverse the procedure for the winter season, but that's about it.

Les Walker designed his country-living cube for much greater flexibility. Modular panels let you change whole walls to suit the seasons. Panels run the gamut from solid, pre-insulated type, to a floor-to-ceiling screened frame. In between are door panels, and two types of window panels. All are completely interchangeable.

This kind of flexibility adapts the living cube to a wide variety of uses. Build it as a backyard screened gazebo, or playhouse for the kids. Put it up on your country site where it can serve as your headquarters while you build a vacation home large enough for the whole family. Afterwards it can serve as a guest house or storage building.

You prefab all the parts—wall, roof, and floor panels, columns and feet—at home in your spare time. This lets you work at a comfortable pace in a comfortable place, where you'll have access to the power tools and electricity that may not be available at a remote country site. When you're ready, load everything on a small rented trailer and drive it to the site. You and a helper can erect the entire building in a single day.

As shown in the parts list included with the plans, next page, the living cube costs about \$600 to build. This includes a small pot-bellied stove for heat. Options such as a Port-A-Sink, Coleman ice box, and a small Colton chemical toilet raise the costs to around \$700.

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Completely insulated walls, ceiling, and floor make the living cube easy to heat in winter with a small wood stove. This cube becomes good home base for snowmobiling or cross-country skiing.

for all seasons

Start by picking the modular panels you'll want for your needs. You'll need a door panel, plus seven others. (How many of each type is up to you. The numbers specified on the plans are one suggestion, but you may prefer to make seven screen panels for a gazebo.) Construction of all panel types is pretty much the same. First, cut all frame members to length, then rip rabbets in the perimeter pieces. Fasten the framing to interior cladding with adhesive and galvanized finishing nails. Place the insulation—foil face down—on the assembly, nail and glue on the exterior cladding. Use a prehung door for the door panel, 1/4-inch glass for the fixed-glass panel, or an Anderson #X303 window for the window panel. The screen panel is the basic perimeter framing with screening secured under nailed-and-glued wood strips.

Floor and roof panels are simple plywood and 2-by-4 sandwiches with insulation filling. Be sure to make the floor panels as a pair—one right-handed, the other left-handed. Roof panels are identical except for the placement of the corrugated iron roofing, which is staggered to produce a rain-tight overlap at the center seam.

Building the beams for floor and roof

These are cut from plywood according to the layouts printed with the plans. Ledger strips and drip caps go on with the 3M glue and nails. Take care to stagger the bolt holes in the ends of the beams, so bolts will clear each other.

Once the beams are made, use them as templates to

Continued



1 Wall panels are glued sandwich of plywood and fir framing with a filler of foil-faced fiberglass insulation.

2 Nails and 3M adhesive #5280 are used to assemble all panels. Outer framing members are rabbeted for seal.



3 Framework is bolted together on building site. Floor beams attach to columns first, then come the four roof beams.

4 Floor panels just drop into place; center seam is caulked with silicone. Then the roof panels drop in, above.



5 Wall panels are raised up and into the grooves in the roof beams, then lag-screwed to columns. No caulking needed.



