

Stylish Stacking: Container Housing Project by Group 41

Salt Lake City, Utah: Shipping containers will jump off the rails to form an innovative multifamily apartment complex near a commuter rail station.

By **ArchNewsNow**
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San Francisco-based architecture firm Group 41 is designing an innovative multifamily project in Salt Lake City made entirely out of shipping containers. Founder and principal Joel Karr has been involved in shipping container architecture for more than 10 years, but this is his first commission for a shipping container project. The design proposes using nearly 1,000 containers to create up to 200 studio to three-bedroom units, and would sit on a concrete commercial "base" that also includes parking.

The development is slated for a transit-oriented district near a commuter rail station. Currently in the preliminary conceptual phase, Group 41's [Container Nation](#) has created two different proposed schemes that take different approaches to the stacking and build-out of the containers.

"CURVE SCHEME"

This scheme uses a complex stacking arrangement that would be a bit costly because individual stacks of containers are staggered "within" the stack, so additional structural support steel would have to be fabricated. However, it results in a much more exciting architectural form. It also allows a much more flexible arrangement of the containers, even in the form of a "curve," where an open balcony corridor and outdoor spaces create curved expressions on the exterior. The entire building also curves away from the neighboring parcel, opening up a large garden terrace on the west side of the building.

"RED CONTAINER SCHEME"

This scheme employs a stacking strategy for the containers that is simple and less costly, because the containers are stacked as they are designed to be on board a ship. The design interest comes from the stacks being staggered at different locations to create a rhythm of open and closed spaces with "flying bridges" that provide light and air into the interior of the corridors. The basic arrangement is around an open, raised "court" sitting on top of the commercial space and parking deck.

Preliminary local planning approvals are expected by the summer of 2009. If approved, Karr expects that the project could be in the ground by early 2010, with an 18-month construction schedule planned.

[Group 41 Inc.](#) is a San Francisco-based architecture, planning, and development firm specializing in modern residential and commercial design with a portfolio of large- and small-scale projects in California, New York, London, and Japan. A longstanding practitioner of sustainable design, Group 41 has built a reputation on thoughtful design that harmonizes the built and natural world.

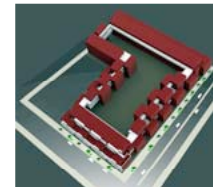
(click on pictures to enlarge)



Group 41
Red Container scheme



Group 41
Red Container perspective



Group 41
Red Container aerial



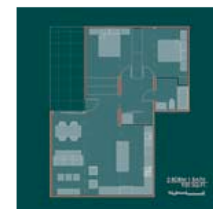
Group 41
Curve scheme



Group 41
Curve main entrance



Group 41
Curve public plaza



Group 41
Typical 960-square-foot,
two-bedroom apartment