



# MANCHESTER CREATIVE COLLECTIVE

## – City Containment - ‘Thinking inside the box’ –

### INTRODUCTION

Shipping or cargo containers are probably the most widely used and almost completely ignored structures in the world. The majority of the imports countries consume arrive via shipping containers. Subsequently, there are literally millions of these containers in every city and port. Containers are an extremely flexible method of construction, being both modular in shape, extremely strong structurally and readily available. Container Cities offer an alternative solution to traditional space provision. They are ideal for office and workspace, live-work and key-worker housing.

Though it's becoming an ever increasing trend to repurpose these containers for use as modular building materials, very rarely do you see it being done in a way that is either aesthetically pleasing and/or, in simple terms, 'makes sense' for the project itself, i.e. using containers as building elements then applying convoluted and expensive materials and techniques to hide the fact that containers are being used as the structural elements.

MCC want to design modular container designs that are true to the original design specification mostly for usability but also so they can be connected or stacked and create modular spaces that are easily replicated. Recycled Shipping containers bring efficiency, flexibility and affordability and most importantly innovative urban design to Manchester Green Space. Designed using reclaimed materials and with green technology in mind they are practical spaces for a fraction of the cost, labour and resources of more conventional materials.

Container Cities can truly be seen in short and medium term land use projects. Short-life sites can have Container Cities that simply unbolt and can be relocated or stored when land is required for alternative uses. To date this alternative method of construction has successfully created youth centres, classrooms, office space, artists studios, live / work space, a nursery and retail space.

### DESIGN SPEC

Whilst stacking containers offers more exciting possibilities it is generally only appropriate in medium/large scale use due to increased logistics of servicing, installation and build, loss of space for vertical circulation and provision of inclusive access.

However, there are still several configurations open to us sitting them at ground. The units can be joined together or staggered, placed as linear, row or radial.

Functioning as an exhibition space the relationship between the containers and the external space will be important. The extension of the units into the wider space may be achieved through:

- pivoted canopies cut from the shell
- swiss army knife concept of elements pulled out/ swung/ rotated from containers
- end wall of unit to fold out as decking
- second layer/wrapper over box that may be pulled out to provide intermediate space and may

provide additional functionality eg. Night time lighting

- transparent pneumatic pods carried off container – surreal prosthetic limb
- flexible walkway link and overhead cover between units
- awnings attached alongside/between units – could be independent of units – and innovative materials possible eg. Woven thin film solar panels, knitted recycled plastic bags

20ft x 8ft x 8ft 5in UNITS 6.1m x 2.4m x 2.6m

Average Interior Dimensions			Door Dimensions		Cubic Capacity
LI	BI	HI	B2	H2	
5890mm	2345mm	2300mm	2335mm	2290mm	33.3m <sup>3</sup>

Tare weights vary between 1800kg and 2500kg.

There are also inherent advantages to using shipping containers over traditional building materials. The units are stronger than conventional house framing because of their resistance to lateral loads. The roof is strong enough to support the extra weight of a green roof. The building envelope of a container structure reflects about 95 percent of outside radiation, resists the loss of interior heat, provides an excellent air infiltration barrier and prevents water migration.

MCC has designed a structure that is both a creative reuse of materials and a signature aesthetic that fits perfectly with our organization. Though not every aspect of the structure is focused on sustainability, it's a suitable solution to the lack of creative space in Manchester and opens the possibilities of design and new eco technologies being developed.

Effectiveness however as a functional and green building material largely lies in proper modification, application of necessary products, and installation which is the process that MCC are undertaking in the prototype design funded by MOSI Museum of Science and Industry and Beacon.

## THE PILOT - VOICE BOX

We have theories, specialisms, regulations, exhortations, demonstration projects. We have planners. We have highway engineers. We have mixed use, mixed tenure, architecture, community architecture, urban design, neighbourhood strategy. But what seems to have happened is that we have simply lost the art of placemaking; or, put another way, we have lost the simple art of placemaking. We are good at putting up buildings but we are bad at making places.

This pilot consultation, aims to look at place making in the city, collating people's thoughts about the use of space and sense of place across the city. MCC have been commissioned to undertake this consultation and have designed the shipping container into a practical acoustic treated live room & studio that will be used to conduct the speakeasy consultations, with various stakeholders in the city. This will be located initially on Birley Fields, Hulme, but, due to its mobile nature, will be able to be transported around the city, to garner the opinions of communities and stakeholders right across the city.

## SUSTAINABILITY - THE SHIPYARD

Eventually a number of shipping containers will be brought together to create a multifunctional space for

artists designers and planners of all disciplines, which can be rebuilt anywhere. The containers will house artists, performers, workshops, events, and a multitude of other art-related endeavours. By the end of 2010 we are planning to have 10 completed containers designed as music and art studios, workshops and a cafe build.

We will begin on the basis of three containers and try to maximise the space through innovative planning. The studio containers will be able to be presented in different formats like exhibitions, movie nights, concerts and multimedia performances, workshops, discussion panels and special events. The first three studios will initially hold residencies in the containers as a way to mass appeal and build awareness of the project, giving upcoming artists from Manchester and abroad the opportunity to develop creative projects in the space. This also gives business's and organisations not only the chance to sponsor a design build but also the residency of the artist inside and the final exhibition of the work. Other designs utilising additional units may be looked at in the initial design phase but a view needs to be taken on the realism of acquiring more units and available funds and labour to fit out a bigger scheme.

## **SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Working in partnership with the City Council and Hug a Hovel, MCC are investigating the impact of vacant space on the city and seeking to find new ways to bring empty buildings back into the community. Placing the containers in front of empty or under-used buildings in the city, they can highlight the issue and potential uses, by providing a consultation and learning environment directly adjacent to the building in question.

As with the Shipyard project the shipping containers allow for multiple artist residences to be held at strategic locations across the City. Depending on the particular interest or motivations of the sponsoring organisation, specific residencies can be developed and locations selected to suit the organisation. Working with MCC, the sponsor can choose location; length of residency; artist brief; and the nature of the final exhibition.

Other uses of the shipping containers across the city include:

Recording Studio

Artist Studio

Workshops

Consultation Pods

Offices

Learning Environments

Activity Centres for local schools or parks

Venue/Staging for leisure activities and events

Community Cafe