

In the evolving landscape of workforce housing, the Berkeley plan's adoption of a 14 feet 6 inches by 47 feet footprint has emerged as a distinctive standard in modular construction. This dimension, roughly understood as a **47 foot footprint** paired with a **14 feet 6 inches module width**, is not arbitrary but a result of intricate design, manufacturing, and regulatory considerations that address today's housing scarcity, labor market constraints, and permitting challenges.

From manufacturers like *Irontown Modular* to visionary projects like *The Other Side Village* and creative off-grid solutions from *My Cozy Outdoors*, understanding the implications of module dimensional constraints is critical for developers, builders, and municipalities. This blog post dives into why the Berkeley plan uses this particular footprint and why it matters in workforce housing development.

Understanding the 47 Foot Footprint & 14 Feet 6 Inches Module Width

The Berkeley plan's dimensions stem largely from the interplay between transportation limits, manufacturing capabilities, and efficient site utilization.

Module Dimensional Constraints: Why 14 ft 6 in by 47 ft?

- **Transportation Limits:** In the U.S. West and many other states, the maximum width for oversize permitted loads traveling on highways without specialized escorts hovers around 14 feet 6 inches. This dimension allows modules to be transported on public roads relatively straightforwardly.
- **Factory Efficiency:** Manufacturing modules at 14'6" wide optimizes factory floor space while balancing structural integrity and yield of building materials. Longer footprints around 47 feet enable complete room modules or multi-room sections that reduce onsite assembly complexity.
- **Permitting & Zoning:** The narrow but long module dimensions align with multifamily and workforce housing site plans that require compact unit footprints but sufficient internal spaciousness.

Why Do These Dimensions Matter in Workforce Housing?

Workforce housing faces unique challenges: labor shortages, tight budgets, zoning regulations, and rapid delivery timelines. The Berkeley footprint addresses these by enabling modular construction to:

- **Accelerate Schedule Through Parallel Workflows**
- **Simplify Permitting & Inspection**
- **Fit Within Transport and Site Constraints**
- **Mitigate Workforce Recruiting Constraints**

Workforce Housing as a Recruiting Constraint

The West's workforce housing shortage is widely recognized as a constraint on recruiting and retaining skilled labor. Developers and builders rely on a steady supply of modular and manufactured housing units to alleviate pressure on local housing markets and offer affordable options for workers.

Using factory-built modules of 14 ft 6 in width simplifies production line setup and limits the amount of on-site labor, helping companies like *Irontown Modular* expedite their builds and keep up with demand. This efficiency

strengthens the workforce housing supply chain by reducing reliance on highly-skilled onsite labor, which is frequently scarce.

Manufactured vs. Modular: Definitions and Code Differences

Want to know something interesting? a clear understanding of manufactured versus modular construction is essential when discussing the Berkeley plan's footprint and its relevance.

Feature	Manufactured Housing	Modular Housing
Regulatory Code	HUD Code (Federal)	International Building Code (IBC) or Local Codes
Design Flexibility	Limited to HUD Standards	Wide design flexibility, permittable as traditional homes
Construction Site	Fully built in factory	Assembled onsite on permanent foundations
Modules	Built in factory	Assembled onsite with crane and connected
Transport Width Limits	Typically narrow to meet HUD transport limits	Can push wider limits (often up to 16 ft), but 14 ft 6 in is common to streamline permits
Permitting Workflow	HUD preemptive codes for factory build; less local permit involvement	Local plan review required; inspections both factory and site

The Berkeley plan's 14 ft 6 in by 47 ft modular footprint aligns with modular housing definitions, often subject to *IBC* and local jurisdiction codes. This distinction has permitting and inspection implications worth understanding.

Permitting Workflow and Inspections for Modular Projects

Unlike manufactured housing regulated federally, modular projects built to the Berkeley plan's footprint require coordination between multiple agencies conducting plan reviews and inspections both in the factory and onsite:

1. **Factory Quality Control:** Third-party inspections verify code compliance during factory construction with stringent controls on materials, engineering, and workmanship standards.
2. **Local Plan Review:** Municipalities review architectural, structural, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical plans to ensure compliance with local building codes.
3. **Site Inspections:** After modules are delivered and set on foundations, inspectors verify connections, utilities, fire safety systems, and integration with site elements.
4. **Final Occupancy Certification:** After complete installation and system verification, final permits allow occupancy.

This multi-step process demands careful timeline management but can be streamlined through standard footprints like 14 ft 6 in by 47 ft, which help municipalities gain familiarity and expedite reviews.



Schedule Compression Through Parallel Factory and Site Work

One of the biggest advantages of modular construction using the Berkeley footprint is the ability to compress overall project schedules by **parallelizing factory and site work**.

Because modules are dimensionally constrained to a standard 14 ft 6 in width and manageable length, factories like *Irontown Modular* can produce building sections indoors while site crews simultaneously prepare foundations, utilities, and site infrastructure. This overlap reduces total construction time by weeks or months compared to traditional stick-built methods.

For projects [re-thinkingthefuture](#) like *The Other Side Village*, which aim to quickly deliver scalable workforce housing with durable but affordable modules, this schedule compression is critical to meet urgent demand and funding deadlines.



Role of Companies like My Cozy Outdoors

My Cozy Outdoors specializes in compact, transportable living units designed off-grid or as accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Though smaller than typical Berkeley plan modules, their work highlights the importance of **modular dimensional constraints** in maximizing design efficiency and ease of transport—lessons that resonate with larger workforce housing modular strategies.

Summary: Why the 14 ft 6 in by 47 ft Berkeley Plan Footprint Matters

- **Transportation Compliance:** Fits within legal oversize load limits to avoid costly escorts and route restrictions.
- **Factory Optimization:** Enables efficient modular fabrication balanced against structural and architectural needs.
- **Permitting Streamline:** Standard footprint enables municipalities to develop predictable plan check and inspection regimes.
- **Speedy Delivery:** Facilitates schedule compression by allowing concurrent factory building and site preparation.
- **Workforce Housing Impact:** Addresses critical recruiting and housing constraints, bolstering project feasibility.

As workforce housing demand continues to grow in Western states, understanding and adopting optimal module dimension strategies, like the Berkeley plan's 14 feet 6 inches by 47 feet footprint, will be key to unlocking scalable, affordable, and timely developments.

Manufacturers like *Irontown Modular* and innovative projects such as *The Other Side Village* exemplify these benefits while smaller-scale innovators like *My Cozy Outdoors* reinforce how module dimensional constraints drive both design ingenuity and practical deployment.

Further Reading and Resources

- [Irontown Modular Official Site](#)
- [The Other Side Village Project Overview](#)
- [My Cozy Outdoors: Off-Grid Modular Units](#)
- [HUD Manufactured Housing Program](#)
- [International Building Code \(IBC\) Overview](#)