

# Metamorphokit

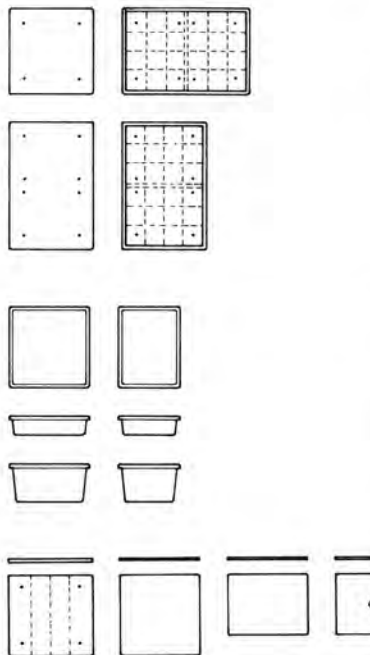
Toby Cowan  
Peter deBretteville

The project of providing furniture for 360 college students, housed primarily in double rooms, began by considering a number of possibilities. The first was to provide more or less conventional dorm furniture. This was rejected because of the almost total inflexibility of these so-called systems which, being designed to satisfy purchasing agents and maintenance men, are unrelated to the needs of the real client, the student. The second possibility was to stock a random selection of used furniture from which the student could furnish his/her room. The advantage here seemed to be great variety. This scheme was rejected, however, because the variety, it seemed, would probably have been primarily in terms of style rather than also in terms of performance. The third possibility was to allot a certain amount of money to each student to buy the necessary furniture, which would later become a part of the inventory for the next year. Great variety and close fit to each student was outweighed by the apparent unreliability of the process; it seemed unlikely that the students would be able to deal with all of the problems of getting the necessary furniture, not the least of which would have been transportation. The decision was then made to design a furniture system to be easily assembled by the user with a maximum number of different configurations, which would give the maximum range of performance and formal possibilities. That goal had then to be related to specific identifiable furniture types such as desks, tables, clothing and materials storage, and beds.

The appropriate modules of the system would have to be

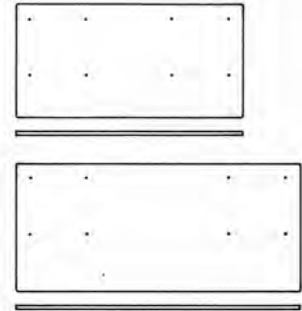
combinable in a variety of ways to provide all significant types of the above and more. In addition, the module would also have to be large enough and simple enough—both itself and in terms of its connection—to allow easy assembly and knock-down. (Easy knock-down being especially important so as not to harness a forthcoming student with another's use pattern).

The main physical module which evolved was a *volume*, the wooden box measuring 18 inches by 18 inches by 27 inches and open on one long side.

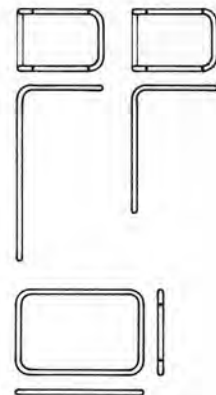


These dimensions function as follows: one box horizontally or 18 inches high is at seat height; one box vertically or 27 inches high is at table height; two boxes horizontally or 36 inches high are at standing or counter height. This module also has a series of internal slots to accommodate vertical or horizontal panels which function as dividers, shelves or supports for a variety of different sized plastic bins or drawers. This *volume*, a wooden box, is

supplemented by *planes*, which provide table tops and enclosure for the wardrobes



and by *frames* which provide the bed, table legs and separator/hanging rods for the wardrobe.



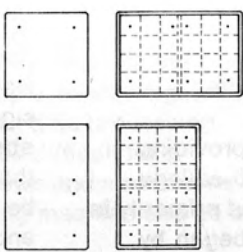
The entire set of physical modules—*volumes*, *planes*, and *frames*—is provided with a corresponding dimensional module—a grid of holes which, with the use of a limited number of nuts, bolts, and connectors, provide attachment points throughout the system. The box is made of Finnish plywood either natural, stained orange, yellow or blue and lacquered semigloss. The plastic bins are white, yellow, orange or blue ABS. The metal frames are chromed. The resulting range of colors, from natural birch or white through yellow and orange to dark blue or any combination of these, provides a variety of choice for performance and form.

Peter deBretteville

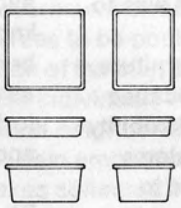
element uses materials size top and side views

volumes

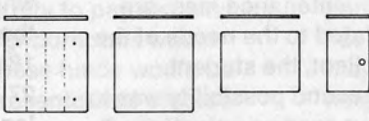
structure shelving  
drawer stor.  
seat  
Finnish ply  
lacquered  
natural or  
stained  
yellow  
orange or  
blue  
18·18·27



drawers  
ABS  
vacuum  
formed  
white  
yellow  
orange or  
blue  
4,8·16·16  
4,8·13·16

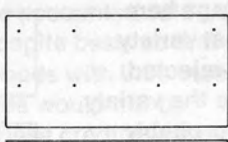


shelf, divider  
shelf, divider  
doors  
Finnish ply  
tempered  
masonite  
same  
3/4·17·17  
1/4·17·17  
1/4·13·17  
1/4·9·13



planes

table  
wardrobe side  
Finnish ply  
white  
laminated  
plastic  
3/4·24·48  
(3/4·27·54)



3/4·27·60

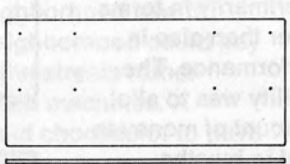
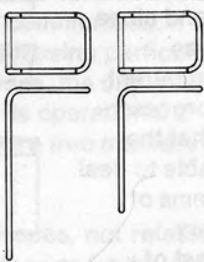
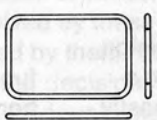


table legs  
chromed steel  
13·18·36, 1  
13·18·27, 1

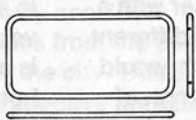


frames

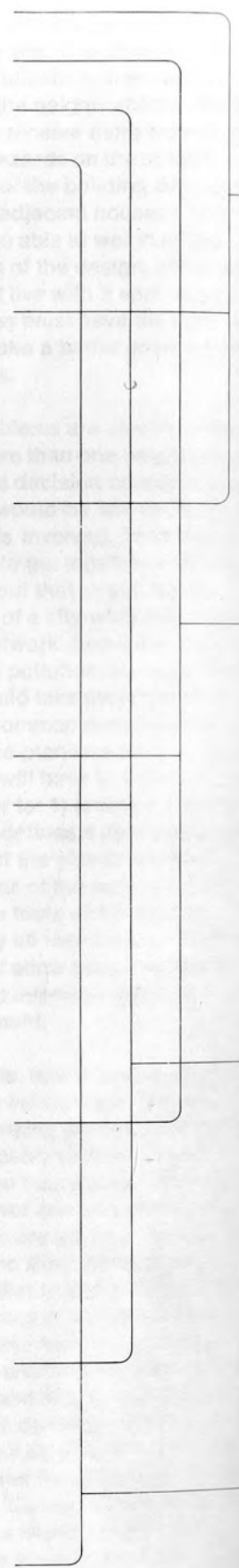
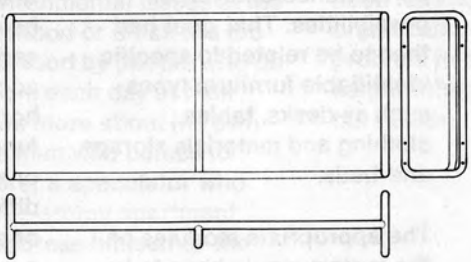
spacer, hanger  
chromed steel  
13·18·27, 1



13·18·36, 1

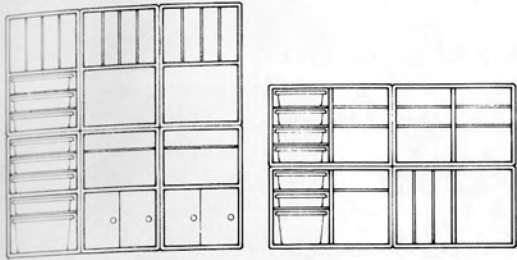


bed  
chromed steel  
14·36·82, 1 1/2

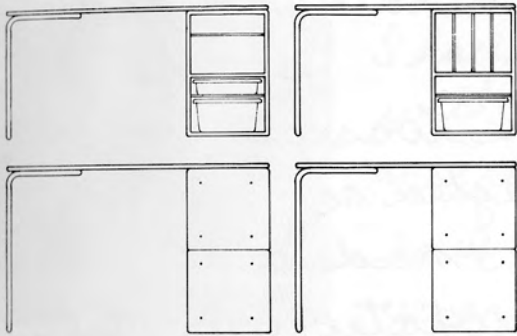


element combinations

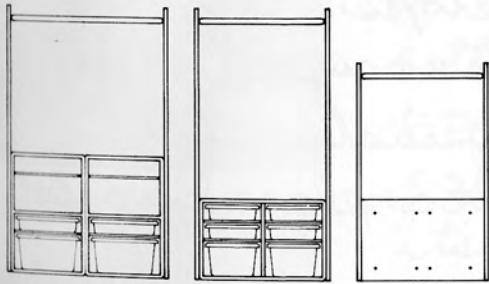
add combinations



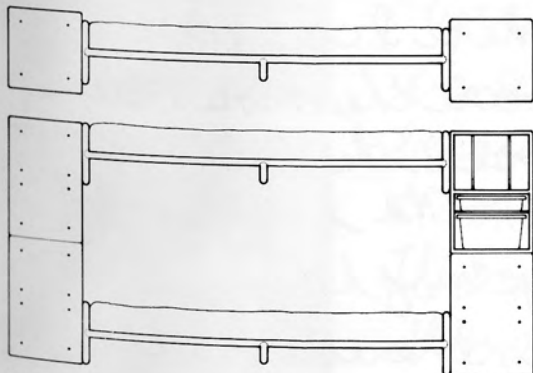
storage



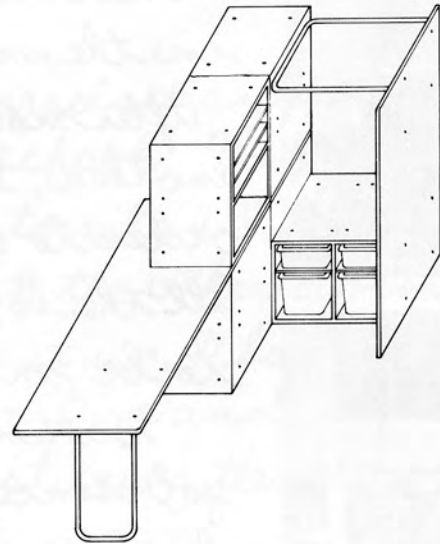
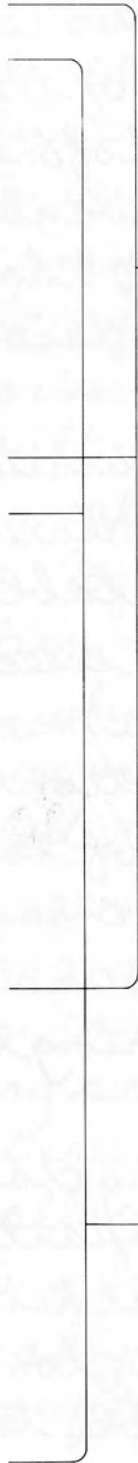
desks



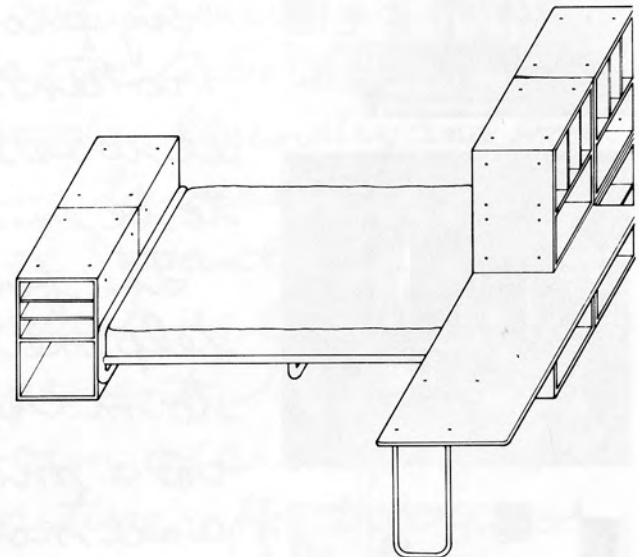
wardrobes



beds



desk, wardrobe and storage



bed, desk and storage





photos: Tom Ingalls, Laurie Raskin

I was assigned to a white, concrete block room with a walk-in closet, large sliding glass windows, and a stack of yellow and vermillion wooden boxes, bent metal tubing, wood panels, a bag of nuts and bolts, and two copies of *Dorm Book I* in the middle of the floor.

After moving out of one building and into another, I just wanted to sleep, but in order to do that I had to put my bed together. All the boxes and assorted hardware had to be moved.

Making the furniture was a two person job since the boxes weighed so much. Sue built a small table. I made a kitchen area, and we used whatever was left over to build a monumental bookcase - desk combination. It required 8 boxes and two levels of tabletops. We were very proud of ourselves and of our broken nails and squashed fingers. It was beginning to be a place I wanted to be in.

The following day I got a friend to help me take apart the desk in order to make a perch where I could lie on a mattress, look at the mountains, and not be able to see the Denny's sign on the freeway. We had it together in a couple of hours. After a hot shower, I read for the rest of the afternoon and felt content.

A quick tour of the dorm revealed a variety of closets, room dividers, storage areas, elevated beds and all types of tables and desks. Most people were excited even though some were frustrated about clashing colors and too few parts.

At first I preferred playing with my room to being at school. Now I simply enjoy coming home to relax. I hated going back to my room at the other dorm, but I had no desire to fix it up. What can be done with built-in furniture and unpaintable concrete walls? Just being there drained my energy. My room is now in its fourth generation - very low table tops supported by boxes which form an L shaped area for sitting on or junk collecting, and a double panelled table for making food, eating sitting, spreading out papers and for working. The plastic tubs hold clothes, papers, canned goods, laundry and food. It's very satisfying to make the furniture do what I want. By contrast, the walls resist masking tape, hanging objects, rearrangement, bending and basically any form of change, yet because of the furniture's flexibility no two rooms are set up in the same way. This makes living in a dormitory bearable.

Sharon Lovett

