

4 | THE AIA150 STUDIO

A COLLABORATION OF PRACTICE AND EDUCATION

The AIA150 studio took place in the fall of 2006. Comprised of fifteen undergraduate and graduate architecture students, the studio was led by Professor Chris Cornelius. Students were divided into three teams representing the three home sites. Working with local politicians, suppliers, and manufacturers, the students developed design drawings for each neighborhood.

The studio timeline was split into three segments, an analysis project that culminated in a master planning proposal, an individual prototype proposal presented by each student, and a final group prototype representing a synthesis of the individual work. The end result of this studio was not only a buildable set of working drawings, but a model process for future affordable housing projects.

“Architecture has to be greater than just architecture. It has to address social values, as well as technical and aesthetic values. On top of that, the one true gift that an architect has is his or her imagination. We take something ordinary and elevate it to something extraordinary.”

Samuel Mockbee



Right
Examples of housing in
Milwaukee's Merrill Park
Neighborhood.



Right
University of Wisconsin-
Milwaukee
*School of Architecture and
Urban Planning.*



The students worked with clients and local politicians and neighborhood associations. They made several presentations during the semester to gather community input as well as to meet the design goals of the neighborhoods that these homes will be placed within. The community responded positively to the students' designs and were extremely pleased with the level of thought and considerations that was given to their individual neighborhoods.

The students were also exposed to the process of preparing construction documents for modular homes. They worked with a local modular manufacturer in order to meet the building standards and quality required for pre-fabricated housing.

Finally, students were required to prepare cost estimates for their projects. This involved developing detailed construction sections and constantly keeping track of square footage from foundation to walls and windows. Where possible, real numbers were obtained from the manufacturer. In other cases, cost estimating guides were used to generate numbers for on-site labor and materials. This attention to detail allowed students to even keep track of the cost impacts of changing roof pitches.

The hands-on experience of working with real clients, real projects, and real budgets prepared students for future practice in ways that few traditional architectural programs could. As a result, students gained a true appreciation for the creative problem solving skills required to construct a real building.



Above
Students present to community, faculty members and modular housing manufacturers, October 2006.



Above
Merrill Park master plan presentation boards.