

# 10 | ADVOCACY

GETTING THE WORD OUT



## National Architecture Week April 2007

### Cities of Milwaukee and Racine

In celebration of the 150th anniversary of The American Institute of Architects, the cities of Milwaukee and Racine declared the week of April 9th-14th to be National Architecture Week. These proclamations were a recognition of contributions of the architectural profession to the improvement of the built environment. Furthermore, the proclamations call attention to the efforts of the joint University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee - AIA initiative to bring affordable housing to the area.

As part of this declaration, special banners were created for display in the neighborhoods where the student-designed homes are to be built.



Much of the success of this initiative could not have been possible without the constant efforts of AIA 150 team leaders to promote the work both inside and outside the studio. Persistence and elbow grease kept this project fresh in the minds of community leaders and neighbors. These are just a few of the headlines featuring the *Reweaving the Neighborhood Fabric* initiative.

## The Daily Reporter July 7, 2006

### AIA to provide affordable housing

*A grant to Southeast Wisconsin chapter is being used to build three modular houses.*

Joe Grundle

*[excerpt from original article]*

Next year is the 150th anniversary of the American Institute of Architects, and AIA Southeast Wisconsin is getting in on the party.

AIA - which is celebrating the event by providing \$2 million to fund up to 200 grants to its regional components for specific community programs called Blueprint for America - awarded its first 60 grants on May 19.

AIA Southeast Wisconsin received \$7,500 for its initiative that strives to knit together inner-city neighborhoods by infusing creatively designed affordable housing in the blighted gaps between existing housing.

“Rather than make a big cake and eat it, we wanted to do something for our community and show people that not just lawyers and developers get involved in helping neighborhood, but architects as well,” said John Holz, vice president of AIA Southeast Wisconsin and senior project designer for Plunkett-Raysich Architects, Milwaukee.

## WUWM Milwaukee Public Radio March 14, 2007

### Affordable Good Design

Jane Hampden, *Lake Effect*



“John Holz is an Associate with Plunkett Raysich Architects and President of the Milwaukee chapter of The American Institute of Architects. Erik Hancock is a grad student at UW-Milwaukee’s School of Architecture and Urban Planning and an intern at Plunkett-Raysich Architects. Sara Rogers is also a graduate student at UWM’s School of Architecture and a project assistant at Eppstein Uhen Architects. The American Institute of Architects is celebrating its 150th anniversary with the Blueprint for America design initiative, which addresses many design and community issues.”

*[listen to the full interview at:*

*http://wuwm.com/programs/lake\_effect/view\_le.php?articleid=148]*

## Northshore Magazine April 2007

### Good Neighbor

*My Cause: John Holz*

Judith Steininger

*[excerpt from original article]*

During the late '90s, young John Holz thought sitting in Brett Favre's locker at Lambeau Field was a big deal. As an architect working for the national firm Ellerbe Beckett in Kansas City, he had designed the facade for Lambeau Field, hence his access to the locker room. In 2000, he was working on another cathedral, a real one, St. Mary's Catholic Church in Hales Corners, and he had an epiphany talking with parish volunteers. "I thought, 'Here I am, a well-paid architect listening to volunteers dedicated to their church. What am I doing?'" That introspection has led him to an ongoing project in Milwaukee, the end result of which will be architecturally designed houses in blighted central city neighborhoods.

The project title is "Reweaving the Neighborhood Fabric: How Modular Housing can Build Affordable and Dignified Communities." Holz's day job is as a senior project designer at Plunkett Raysich Architects in Milwaukee, but this effort is an all-volunteer one, with Holz in the lead. He's working with a committee of 40 volunteers, including city planners, developers, students and contractors. Plunking down houses into a neighborhood has many ramifications, hence the breadth of the effort.

"As architects, we should not do 'to' a neighborhood, but 'for' or 'with' it," Holz says. The architects in this case are UW-Milwaukee seniors and graduate students. UWM is Holz's alma mater, both in graduate and undergraduate degrees. He says this volunteer work will be beneficial to students because their project is not an abstraction. "My thesis project was a design for a new terminal at Milwaukee's Mitchell Airport. It is beautiful, but it will never be built. These houses will be. Our long-range goal is to have four or five designs to choose from."

## Urban Land Magazine July 2007

### Building Blocks of Housing Affordability

Patricia L. Kirk



*[excerpt from original article]*

The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee School of Architecture agreed to design home prototypes, and a \$7,500 grant from AIA150 and \$21,500 in donations launched the effort. The initiative will provide each community one dwelling intended to serve as a catalyst for building a neighborhood of secure and sustainable housing in existing communities suffering from financial disinvestment. Homes are designed to fit on 30- to 35-foot- (9.1- to 11-m-) wide, odd-shaped lots, says Holz, noting that the two-story structures are about 22 feet (6.7 m) wide and are thoughtfully designed to “live bigger” than their actual size of 1,500 square feet (139 sq m) and encourage social interaction and revival of community, with large front porches and welcoming facades.

Meanwhile, the Southeast Wisconsin AIA is underway on a community service program aimed at demonstrating how modular housing can be used to reweave the fabric of deteriorating neighborhoods and create dignified inner-city housing, explains Milwaukee-based architect John Holz, AIA Southeast Wisconsin vice president, who heads the program. Part of the national AIA Blueprint for America 150th anniversary observance, the regional program encompasses three projects—in Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha, Wisconsin—which are south and west of Milwaukee respectively.

## Architects show modest budgets don't require modest design

Whitney Gould

*[excerpt from original article]*

When a weed-choked vacant lot in one of the city's poorer neighborhoods finally sprouts a house, it seems frivolous to quibble about the design. Who cares if the roof pitch isn't quite right, or if the windows are too small and the detailing is clumsy, so long as a deserving family finally has a decent home?

OK. Now let me put it a different way: Why do people of modest means have to settle for second- or third-rate design?

The short answer is that it is cheaper to build the same old-same old over and over again than something distinctive.

Now, however, the design community is finally beginning to push for innovation in infill housing (dwellings on vacant urban lots). Progress is in tiny increments. But if this mini-movement spreads, it could add value to tattered neighborhoods and raise the bar for housing design elsewhere.

One hopeful sign is a partnership between the southeast chapter of AIA Wisconsin (a Society of The American Institute of Architects) and architecture students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The students will design three affordable modernist homes for empty lots in central city neighborhoods: one in Milwaukee's Merrill Park, to be built next spring, the others later that year, in Racine and Waukesha. Each will be around 1,400 square feet and sell for about \$150,000.



**Above**

Award-winning infill housing by Johnsen Schmalig Architects.

*Photograph by Gary Porter*

# AIA National Convention May 3, 2007

## AIA150 In Wisconsin

*A Blueprint for Urban Revitalization*

John Holz, Kelly Thompson-Frater, Marty Sell  
San Antonio, TX



In May of 2007, *Reweaving the Neighborhood Fabric* took the national stage during a presentation to the annual AIA Convention in San Antonio, Texas. In their presentation to the assembled architects, students, educators, and industry professionals, AIA Milwaukee President John Holz and his colleagues described the initiatives and how they could become models for urban revitalization across the country.



### **From Left to Right**

George Miller, FAIA; Anthony Costello, FAIA; Kelly Thompson-Frater, AIA - President, AIA Southwest Wisconsin; Marty Sell, AIA - President, AIA Wisconsin (2007); John Holz, AIA - President, AIA Milwaukee (2007).

# AIAS FORUM December 29, 2007

## AIA150 Studio

*A Collaboration of Practice and Education*

John Holz and Ryan O'Connor

Milwaukee, WI

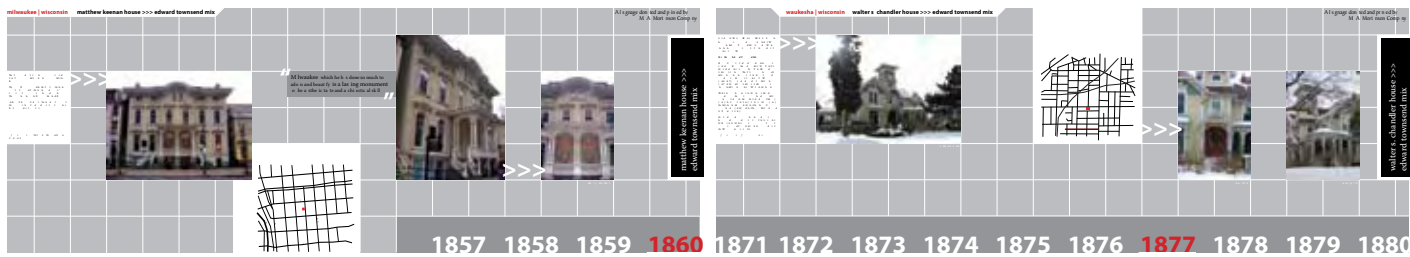


**Above**

AIA Milwaukee President, John Holz, AIA.

Milwaukee was the 2007 host for The American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) FORUM, a global gathering of architecture students. Despite a massive snowstorm, the city was flooded with future architects from all over the world. On the first day of the conference, John Holz and UW-Milwaukee student Ryan O'Connor presented the NCARB-prize winning AIA150 Studio project.





# Celebrating the Past, Designing the Future April 2007

AIA150 Exhibition

Gallery of Architecture and Urbanism

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



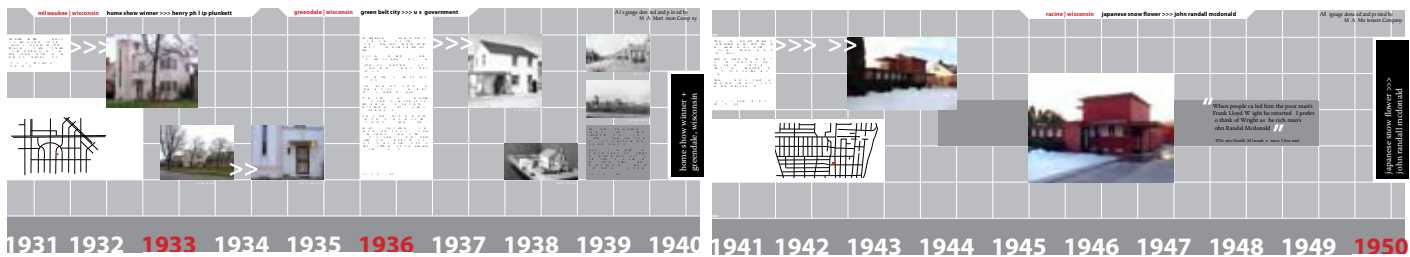
1933 Home Show Winner  
*Henry William Plunkett*

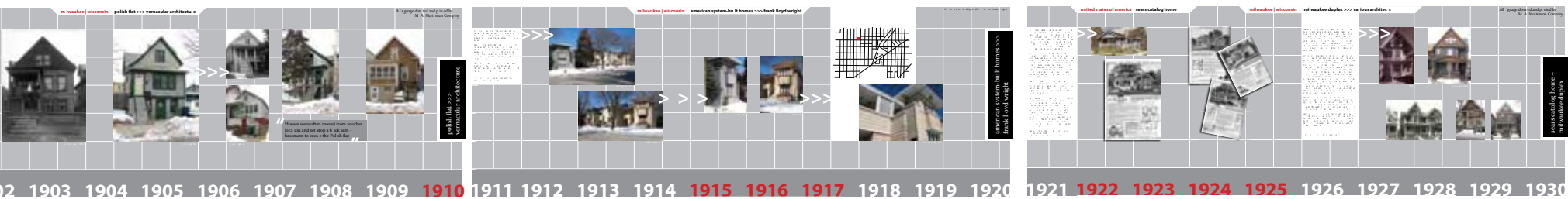


American System Built Homes (1915-17)  
*Frank Lloyd Wright*



Urban Infill 01 (2005)  
*Johnsen Schmalig Architects*





To offer a thoughtful view of what we can design together, AIA Milwaukee presented this gallery of the three affordable modular housing prototypes, within the context of the past 150 years of residential architecture in Milwaukee and Southeast Wisconsin. Attendees enjoyed a glimpse of fifteen other contributions to our residential fabric. One to two different homes or housing types were chosen to represent each decade since the beginning of the AIA in 1857 - no small task. Some decades were better blessed than others, and many miles were logged searching for inspired architecture to fit those decades.

The projects presented did not begin to cover the extensive amount of residential architecture in Milwaukee and Southeast Wisconsin. Instead, the homes presented were offered as an exemplary representation of what was being designed in each decade. We chose examples from all seven counties in the AIA Milwaukee region, including Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha Counties. Worthy of a firsthand view, most have maps and addresses. While a sampling of them exhibits historically significant work by the area's notable architects, equal attention was placed on affordable, urban and innovative housing. These smaller but dignified dwellings were attainable by folks of modest means. In celebrating these past contributions, we must renew our commitment to designing a future where affordable and dignified housing is attainable by all.

