

Design-Build Firm Creates Eco-Townhouses with ArchiCAD Start Edition



Architects Jeff and Tracey Prose of Building Arts Workshop LLC took the unconventional route of becoming their own clients in the design and construction of an eco-friendly re-development project in Portland, Oregon.



Homes are linked by a common courtyard

The Portland-based design-build firm, which offers complementary practices as architect and general contractor, developed two LEED Platinum rated townhouses using ArchiCAD to help launch the couple's new business.

The project enabled them to create a unique property that both showcased their talent and provided a home. The townhouse approach let them create two adjacent homes linked by a common courtyard and garage, with one house providing the couple's residence. The

husband-wife firm served as both architects and general contractors on the project.

The project was uniquely designed to take advantage of the sloping site, with a dramatic two-story central space that pulls in the vast Oregon sky and landscape through multi-story glazing and skylights. Both 2,000 square foot homes incorporate advanced sustainable features and technologies including radiant heat floors, solar hot water, rain water harvesting, heat recovery ventilator, high efficiency insulation, native Douglas fir cabinets and woodwork and other locally sourced and reclaimed materials.

Jeff Prose, a 14-year veteran ArchiCAD user, utilized ArchiCAD Start Edition software for the townhouse project. ArchiCAD Start Edition is an affordable, entry-level version of ArchiCAD designed for architects seeking to expand their business with building information modeling (BIM). It has all the core design, 3D modeling and documentation capabilities of ArchiCAD, but with a feature set and price tailored to the needs of small architectural practices. It enabled a small firm like Building Arts Workshop to design two LEED Platinum buildings with software costing under \$2,000.

Prose said the use of affordable BIM technology was essential to the project's

success due to its ability to accelerate the design process and to enable him and the subcontractors foresee challenges they might otherwise have missed with conventional construction documents.

"ArchiCAD Start Edition lets us easily switch between a 3D BIM model and 2D plans using a single environment with a single file," he said. "It's a huge productivity gain. We can quickly pull the building apart in a 3D environment, drilling down deep into the elevation views and tiniest of details to identify potential work-stopping problems ahead of time. Using BIM in the design-build process fuses the tangible aspects of building construction while allowing the actions of invention and discovery to thrive."



Townhouse project in Portland, Oregon

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