

Student Focus

Design Build Syracuse: Westside Workshop

Syracuse's economically challenged Near Westside neighborhood continues its resurgence, thanks to the hands-on efforts of twelve Syracuse Architecture students involved in the first design-build project at the School of Architecture. "Link House," a modular 1500 square-foot home on Tully Street, is the result of a year-long collaboration which began in fall 2008 with a visiting critic studio taught by **Lea Ciavarra G'95** and **Anne Marie Lubrano** of *lubrano ciavarra design, llc* of Brooklyn, NY. Course objectives called for students to design an innovative, cost-effective, prefabricated, sustainable, energy-efficient, single-family home on a pre-determined site. The client, local not-for-profit housing agency **Home HeadQuarters, Inc.**, owned the site that was previously occupied by a neglected, vacant building, and, subsequently, has found a buyer for the new home.

The **Westside Workshop Studio** worked collaboratively to develop a single, final schematic design that evolved and regenerated through analysis, conceptualization, and critique. During the design development and construction documents phases, students further defined their projects following tight (and feasible) construction details, including all material specifications. They worked

closely with the instructors' firm, participated in meetings with local code enforcement officials for building code compliance, helped to negotiate final pricing with the client's in-house construction management staff, and coordinated with Haven Homes, the modular homebuilder selected to prefabricate 80% of the house off-site.

By July, all pre-construction coordination was completed, including construction of the foundation. Seven of the students returned for skills and safety training as well as on-site arrival and setting of the six modules by **Haven Homes**. Led by **Jim Herr**, president of **V.I.P. Structures**, together with staff from Home HeadQuarters, Inc. and Haven Homes, and Lea Ciavarra, the students then spent five weeks helping with remaining construction and finish work that included hanging sheetrock and installing exterior SmartSide siding. They continued to "design and build" many of the home's more custom features: sliding slatted cedar wood window shingles in recessed pockets at the exterior; custom stainless steel rod stair railings with wood posts and top rail at the interior and exterior; and a new side-yard deck with built-in planters. Students met with landscape designers to install a small green roof at the house's entry porch and creating a landscape plan or strategy for the new homeowner's future implementation. The house has successfully met **Energy Star** standards.

