

# Myth Busters: Excellence in Universal Design Case Studies

Questions and Answers from the June 13, 2012 webinar

Q: Do you like small projects like this and do you pursue more of them now that you successfully completed this one? [Eric Faulkner]

We love small projects and the idea to create something different than what is typically done. We have done some small pedestrian bridges and continue to accept small projects as they are interesting and challenging. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: What are Cor-Ten panels? [Lanny Lerner] Are the panels core-10 steel panels? If not, what material are the panels? [Eric Faulkner] Q: Does water run-off on core-ten steel cause staining of the surrounding landscaping? [Angie Winston]

The steel was  $\frac{3}{4}$ "th ASTM 606 Type 4 weathering steel. The landscaping is more of a natural grass, nothing new planted. The crush granite path has not been stained by the panels as it is a slow process. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: What hinges did you use for the rest rooms in Austin park? [Prabhansu Ghoshal]  
The hinges were from Innovative Hinge Products, Inc. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: Does the steel get hot to the touch? [Michael Heffron]  
Yes, everything in Texas gets hot in the summer even wood. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: What metal bracing was used as further support in the footing? [Amy Hummerstone]  
Steel angles connected with bolts to the concrete footing and welded to the panels. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: A great project in Austin! The architect though, talks about ADA and CAS requirements and Codes but Universal Design is more than that! Can you enlighten us as to your thoughts on UD? [Jane Cee]  
I was talking about TAS, Texas Accessibility Standards. I wanted people to know there is the regulation we need to follow in Texas, paper work to be filed before construction starts, and there is an inspection at the end. Our hope is eventually all elements of universal design are integrated into the design solution in such a way that we no longer see them oriented to a particular group of persons with a disability. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: I was wondering if the needs of people with visual disabilities were addressed in the Austin project. [Clifford Hymowitz]  
Besides Braille, we did not. We should have tried to do something about it, specially, some floor marking or something by the trail. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: Could you talk more about privacy? with open panels did anyone have issue with the openness? PS. I love the project. [Roger Keller]  
Thank you, we were concerned about the privacy too, and were not 100% sure it was going to work, but it did. It was the balance of creating privacy and full ventilation we wanted. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: How does rain water run through the roof? [Christopher Vlcek] Q: How do you keep rain out? [Jorma Loci]  
We were not that worried about the rain. If you are in the park in the rain, we thought it was not an issue. In any case, we have a roof with a rain chain into a drain. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: What is the per unit cost of each location? [Alan Hewitt]  
We only did one of these. The cost was comparable to those restrooms that you buy pre-made. We worked closely with the foundation and subcontractors to keep the budget. [Miguel Rivera, AIA]

Q: What was the most challenging component of this project and how did you resolve it? [Eric Faulkner]

Q: Which way is north? [John Ahern]

A: Up is north. [Reggie Stump]



Q: What was the construction cost for the residence? [Daniel Berkhoudt] Q: Project cost? Estimate Premium effect of Universal Design on cost? [James W. Barton]

A: \$550k. The premium costs for UD were minimal, but my estimate would be 5% of construction cost. Most of the UD features were just about designing something that already exists in a house and making it UD. For example, the kitchen was not any more expensive than a typical kitchen, however, I had to spend more time designing the layout and researching specific appliances, fixtures, etc. that the client could use with ease. [Reggie Stump]

Q: Since the building is all glass how can privacy be accommodated or choice of the amount of light be accommodated in the home? [Clifford Hymowitz] Are there any privacy shades in the master bedroom? [Nidy Hendrickson]

A: The design strategy for the shades and privacy was to not install shades until they moved in, so that they could determine which windows needed shades based on how they use the house. After living in the house for 1-2 years, they installed shades on specific windows based on privacy and sun control. There are shades on about 40% of the windows. [Reggie Stump]

Q: Any special design considerations for lighting and shade controls? [Allegra Kochman]

A: In the kitchen, lighting was designed so every countertop had direct light. The floor up-lights were designed to give direction of travel at night and to provide even light that doesn't create deep shadows and contrast. [Reggie Stump]

Q: What established the depth of the roof overhangs? [Lanny Lerner]

A: I calculated the sun angles for summer and winter so that during the summer the house does not get direct sun in the house but during the winter the house is heated with direct sun. [Reggie Stump]

Q: Where did you find the left-hand hinge oven? Who is the manufacturer? [Eric Faulkner]

A: Gaggenau is the manufacturer but I believe Bosch and other manufacturers make side opening wall ovens. [Reggie Stump]

Q: Is the cork floor in the Luminous Bodies home finished (waxed, for example) or unfinished? [Betsy Jones]

A: The cork floor does have a prefinished wax, but the client was able to walk on the cork floor in a showroom to test the surface. [Reggie Stump]

Q: The inside corner of the living room (slide 69) looks like a threshold strip raised above the flush floor? [Christopher Vlcek]

A: There is a 1/4" floor transition strip. This was necessary for the transition between the two directions the wood floor was laid. This is the only 1/4" threshold in the house beside the entry doors. [Reggie Stump]



Q: What are the exterior panels made of? [John Ahern] 2'-0" X 5'-0" weathering steel shingles that interlock so no fasteners are exposed. [Reggie Stump]

### **E.B. Min, AIA**

Q: Did you employ home automation to assist your client with light, audio, operation and security controls? [Eric Faulkner]

Q: How does your client operate the cooktop vent hood? Is there a switch on the cabinet face? [Eric Faulkner] How can she cook at the height of the stove? [Robert Tobin]

Q: How do you address privacy in the bedroom without doors but with several children? [Amy Hummerstone]

Q: Is a handrail not needed on the ramp? [Louise LeCompte]

Q: How does your client transfer from her chair to/from the pool? [Eric Faulkner]

Q: What are the requirements for the Pool in the Saratoga house to satisfy Universal Design? To my knowledge ADA does not address pools. [Prabhansu Ghoshal]

### **General**

Q: I wonder if anybody ever came up with a universal design way of accessing the case of a personal computer with the requirements to be able to access in all different points. [Clifford Hymowitz]

Q: These projects are awesome! Here in the Philadelphia suburbs we are faced with a much more challenging design problem; creating universally usable homes in a historic town setting. I would love to see creative examples of universal renovations. I applaud the incredibly beautiful projects by your presenters. Thanks for the seminar. [Jay Reinert]

Q: So, I guess that "Universal" only applies to those projects that have extraordinary budgets. Any project could be made accessible when you have a huge budget. What about truly universal design that is accessible to everyone? On a realistic budget. [James Plagmann]