

Big design, small package: AIA Chicago names 2014 Small Project Awards winners

Winning projects include an events center for Mies van der Rohe's landmark Farnsworth House and a new boathouse along the Chicago river.

AIA Chicago

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Harbert Cottage



Location / Harbert, Mich.

Architect of Record / Searl Lamaster Howe Architects

Client / Withheld

Contractor / Estkowski Construction

Photos by Tony Soluri

This project was an opportunity to reengineer and reinvigorate a classic American ranch house. The 1974 home was showing signs of its age with the roof caving in and a slowly-sinking slab. Its renovation was shaped by principles of simplicity, ease, durability and environmental responsiveness to the site. The architects designed a rehabilitation that revealed the building's construction, crafting a new roof formed using basic mass-produced trusses, and adding clerestories to flood the interior with light.

"This is just an excellent use of prefab materials," a juror said. "The place explodes with light," added another. Coupled with generous overhangs, the detailing of the roof minimizes the need for air conditioning and a new geothermal system further minimizes energy consumption.

