



2017 TFG
Conference

Teaching Architecture Through Timber Framing

Sam Marts, Robert Foulkes, & Robin Johnson

Sam Marts Architects & Planners / Robin Johnson Architects

Chicago, IL / Empire, MI

Architecture students need to develop a broad range of skills, from understanding material properties to building codes to urban planning to loads and stresses, and more. The panelists are using timber frame buildings as a first step in understanding materials, allowing all issues to be evident and exposed. Concrete and steel have replaced wood as the assumed medium that students will encounter in their careers. However, heavy wood construction is a simple way to examine core structural issues: dead loads, live loads, snow loads, wind loads, and much more. The panel members have years of experience using designs as the basis for educating new architecture students, and will discuss why and how they do this.

About the Speakers

Sam Marts

Sam Marts is the founder of Sam Marts Architects & Planners, Ltd. (previously Sam Marts Architects), which has been operating since 1987. Prior to that, he worked for various architecture firms following his graduation from Miami University in 1972. Mr. Marts is a registered architect in Michigan and Illinois, and has been involved in numerous community organizations, including the Chicago Architecture Foundation, where he served as a member of the Advisory Committee for The Architecture Handbook. He is a visiting critic/teacher at the Rural Studio in Alabama, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Andrews University, University of Notre Dame, and the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Robert Foulkes

Robert Foulkes owns White Oak Timber Frame in Suttons Bay, Michigan, and has been working in construction since 1975. He established a working relationship with Sam Marts Architects in the 1980s, and returned to school, receiving a Masters in Urban Planning & Policy from the University of Illinois. In the past decade, he has had opportunities to recycle buildings working with the National Park Service, work on private projects to extend the walkable urban patterns in small towns, and teach some of what he has learned to architecture students at Andrews University and others at hands-on “work camps” from northern New Hampshire to southern Alabama.

Robin Johnson

Robin Johnson holds an undergraduate degree in architecture and a Master of Architecture degree from the University of Michigan. Professor Johnson participates in reviews of student architectural work at the university level in a number of states, in addition to presenting at conferences and workshops that further sustainable forestry practices, timber frame construction, and promotion of sustainable land use in residential development in Ireland.

She has worked for 28 years as a licensed professional architect in Illinois and Michigan, working on a wide range of award-winning projects for a handful of small firms, each focusing on finely-crafted, well-resolved design solutions. Her solo practice has focused on locally-harvested timber frame construction, recycled components, passive solar, and highly efficient envelopes, as well as now-simple tech busting systems like cob construction.