



## Saieh Hall for Economics

University of Chicago  
Chicago, IL

By Sue Klawans | Based on an interview with Larry Blouin

### PHASE 1 OUTCOMES

Budget reliability on an  
extensive renovation

No schedule delays

End user satisfaction

#### INSIDE:

■ project information

■ successes

■ lessons learned

■ insights into:

procurement  
strategy

overcoming  
unknowns

building the team



## PROJECT INFORMATION

### PROGRAM

- Adaptive reuse of Chicago Theological Seminary to become modern study areas, conference rooms, lecture halls and offices
- Phase 1: 100,00 sq ft of reuse
- Phase 2: 50,000 sq ft of new construction

### TEAM / BUDGET / SCHEDULE

- Owner: Larry Blouin, University of Chicago
- Designer: Ann Beha Architects
- Architect of Record: Gensler
- Construction Manager: Turner Construction Company
- Budget: \$105M total project (Phases 1 and 2)
- Schedule: 25 months (two overlapping 17 month phases)

### CHALLENGES

- Risks of unknown in 80+ year old building
- Coordination of structural and MEP within an existing building
- Needed to preserve as much of the character of the building as possible
- Integration of project team that had not previously worked together
- Logistical challenges of working in a residential area

## SUCCESSES

- ✓ Gained budget and schedule reliability and mitigated risk through the utilization of Construction Management at Risk rather than design/bid/build.
- ✓ Added value to the design, budgeting and scheduling process through early engagement of major trade contractors in design-assist roles
- ✓ Prevented change orders and delays by planning for early access to the building to investigate hazards, unknowns and existing conditions
- ✓ Use of Lean planning techniques (pull planning, just in time delivery) to overcome logistical challenges and maintain schedule
- ✓ Successful collaboration: roll up sleeves to achieve a first-class project

## LESSONS LEARNED

### DOs

- ✓ Make the effort to utilize the right contracting methodology for the project's conditions
- ✓ Get contractors engaged early
- ✓ Focus on team building
- ✓ Promote collaboration and a shared drive for results from day one and every day
- ✓ Utilize BIM for planning and coordination

### DON'Ts

- ✗ Don't settle for lowest price
- ✗ Don't underestimate the complexity of an adaptive reuse project



## INSIGHTS INTO:

### PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

- University's typical delivery method had been design/bid/build
- Project leadership identified many variables and risks for this project and recommended a delivery strategy of construction management at risk and design-assist to mitigate risk of unknown
- University procurement and project leadership collaborated with construction manager on design-assist procurement of major trade contractors to ensure best value selection (target budget, BIM capability, past experience)

### OVERCOMING UNKNOWNNS

- Built nearly a century ago as a seminary, there were many unknowns about existing conditions, thus high risk potential for budget, schedule and quality
- Further, there was an addition of new underground space adjacent to the existing building, requiring work more than 25 ft below existing foundations
- Project leadership understood the importance of providing the designers and contractors access to the building three months early to open up slabs look at substructure, develop pile designs, understand the extent of demo and renovation
- This enabled design to be more thorough and construction budgets and schedules to be reliable

### BUILDING THE TEAM

- The university's project's leader understood the importance of instilling the culture of collaboration, trust, and drive to a clear goal. He began the development of chemistry from day one by setting expectations with his own team and by bringing all the players to the table to communicate openly and transparently
- The entire project team visited other similar adaptive reuse projects to understand comparable work and establish the common understanding of quality
- End users, including Nobel laureates, met with the project team, including construction foremen
- Used a third party facilitator for team building
- The team agreed upon specific metrics to track
- Celebrated successes as a regular occurrence. For example, recognized important milestones such as building enclosure with a ceremony including project team, trade contractors and researchers.

**Mission: Through a positive and collaborative environment, aspiring to stewardship and excellence, this team will partner to revitalize a historic building and create a world class research and learning facility for the University of Chicago.**

We commit to accomplishing our mission by achieving the following objectives:

**Leadership Excellence  
Collaborative Culture  
Continuous Improvement  
Schedule Performance  
Cost Awareness  
Project Quality  
Satisfaction**