

The 3D tools in AutoCAD have proved quite valuable for conceptual design. We can quickly develop multiple options to share with clients. Being able to review designs in 3D helps clients visualize the design, streamlining collaboration.

—Gedeon Trias
Associate Director of Design
Larson & Darby Group

Seeing the value of 3D.

The 3D features in AutoCAD software help Larson & Darby accelerate conceptual design and client reviews.



Image courtesy of Larson & Darby Group.

Project Summary

Based in Rockford, Illinois, the Larson & Darby Group provides architecture, engineering, and planning services to a wide range of clients. As one of the first architectural firms in Illinois to adopt CAD workflows, the firm has made AutoCAD® software the core tool in its design process since 1985. Today, Larson & Darby still uses AutoCAD software for every key design task on many projects, but it is also beginning the transition to building information modeling (BIM) with Autodesk® Revit® Architecture software, especially for larger projects. For more modestly sized projects and for preferred tasks, the firm plans to continue to leverage AutoCAD software.

The Midway Village Museum project demonstrates how Larson & Darby uses AutoCAD software to design and collaborate with clients. The 137-acre Midway Village Museum depicts life in northern Illinois from 1834 to the present day, and its 137-acre campus features 26 historical buildings and a 52,000-square-foot main exhibit hall. The popular museum has long wanted to expand the exhibit space available in its main building and to revitalize the building's exterior, and the museum engaged Larson & Darby to design the expansion. With museum stakeholders very excited about the project, Larson & Darby wanted to make the design process highly collaborative. In the conceptual design phase, the firm used the 3D tools in AutoCAD to quickly develop more than five very different options for the client reviewers to consider. The firm presented the options as 3D renderings and as presentation-quality

sketches prepared with Autodesk® Impression. Collaboratively, the firm and the client reviewers zeroed in on a striking stone and wood design. After the client agreed to a concept, the design team used AutoCAD software to complete the project. AutoCAD helped Larson & Darby to:

- Explore multiple design concepts with client stakeholders
- Use 3D to help clients visualize options, accelerating the approval process by several weeks
- Visualize and evaluate the impact of changes using 3D
- Prepare construction documentation quickly with custom routines

About Larson & Darby Group

Founded in 1963 and employing more than 90 design professionals, the Larson & Darby Group delivers architectural and engineering services to clients in northern Illinois. Each year the firm's designs represent more than \$250 million in construction value, and the firm has designed many of the schools, churches, and commercial buildings that contribute to the fabric of daily life in northern Illinois. The award-winning firm has been honored by the Northern Illinois Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) numerous times for excellence in architecture.

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