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AIA-PECONIC SAYS FIXED SITE-BUILT WINDOWS BELONG IN THE CODE

AIA Peconic, the East End chapter of the American Institute of Architects, has petitioned New York State to revise the Building Code to once again allow architects and builders the option of using fixed (non-operable) site-built windows in lieu of more costly factory-manufactured units.

The option to use fixed site-built windows was removed from the state Building Code in 2003. Since then, AIA Peconic argues, sufficient data has been accumulated about the use of fixed-glazed windows in hurricane wind zones to restore permission for site-built units.

In a Position Paper sent to the state Codes Division, AIA Peconic asserts that fixed site-built windows can and should be prescriptively defined in the Code because practical and mathematical evidence now exists from the development of tested manufactured windows over the last five years, for prescriptive standards and generic details for site-built fixed windows to be incorporated in the Code's design pressure requirements. AIA Peconic has asked NYS to write these prescriptive standards into the Code.

AIA Peconic adds that when an owner and designer elect to construct a building using the alternative Partially Enclosed Design Method – where a building's structure is strengthened to resist hurricane wind loads without calculating the resistance of windows – both fixed manufactured and site-built windows should be exempt from complying with design pressure standards. The Chapter has asked NYS to clarify this in the Code.

AIA Peconic's architects argue that manufactured fixed units are no more of a guarantee of satisfactory construction than any carefully site-built fixed window unit with field glazing because the effectiveness of tested, manufactured windows not only relies upon units furnished to the construction site replicating the assemblies tested in the factory but upon the accuracy with which both their installation and associated construction is made in the field.

A copy of the Chapter's recent letter, as well as their letter to the State which addresses other issues in the Code, can be found on the Chapter's website, <http://www.aiapeconic.org>.

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