



AIA Peconic

A Chapter of The American Institute of Architects

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 1, 2009

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AIA PECONIC ASKS STATE TO IMPROVE BUILDING CODE'S WOOD FRAMING SECTION

AIA Peconic, the East End Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, has asked New York State to include specific prescriptive standards for Wood-Framed residences in the Building Code. The current Code is devoid of explicit wood framing standards.

The Chapter's architects point out that, because the Code presently relies entirely on references to external documents, most commonly those provided by specifications written by building component manufacturers, for the assembly of certain crucial framing elements important to a building's ability to resist destructive hurricane wind forces, the result has too often been home construction that fails to satisfy the intent of the Code, protection of the building's occupants.

Wood Frames are commonly built, for instance, with too much steel strapping, strapping incorrectly located or nailed, or strapping used to secure exterior walls when proper placing and nailing of plywood sheathing would be stronger. Even the normal sequence of construction, in which siding is installed over sheathing, damages the metal connectors sufficiently to void the manufacturers' warranties. Due to the absence of specific wood framing standards, in some jurisdictions, wood shingle roofs have been permitted to be built with lath and without the plywood deck that is essential to meeting current wind resistance requirements, the architects say.

AIA Peconic argues that the continuing confusion and misinterpretation in the field is a consequence of the omission from the Code of a Section on *prescriptive* Wood Framing standards, which they recommend would include elements of Wood Framing design that are critical to hurricane wind resistance.

The Chapter implores the State to take the lead, as it regularly does in making exceptions to the model International Building Code, in reaffirming not only the central role of Partially Enclosed Design in safe wind engineering, but also the importance of critical Wood Framing standards written directly in the Code.

A copy of the Chapter's recent letter on Wood Framing, as well as their July 2008 letter to the State - which addresses other building practices important to the East End hurricane region - can be found on the Chapter's website, <http://www.iaipeconic.org>

For further information, contact:

Stephen A. Lesser AIA

AIA-Peconic Chapter Codes Committee Chairman

Tel: (631)329-5867

Email: salarchitect@aol.com