



**Volume 7, 2023**  
October 19th, 2023  
Publication Committee  
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This Newsletter Published by the Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee highlights activities and information of interest to Practicing Architects.

**NEWSLETTER**

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I Current Activities



October 19, 2023

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The meeting began at 6:03pm.

Attendees:

Boris Baranovich  
Sara Djazayeri  
Ofe Clark  
Robert Esnard  
Antonio Freda  
Nicholas Friedmann  
Linda Infante  
Ken A. Koons, Jr.  
Ken H. Koons, Sr.  
Julian Misiurski  
Alyssa Manfredonia  
Robert Markisz  
Richard Montana  
Matthew Rezkallo  
Bryan Zelnik

Guest

Gary Solomon  
Architectural Consultant  
Won-Door & Horton Access Solutions  
Email: [gsolomon@wondoor.com](mailto:gsolomon@wondoor.com)  
Tel: 516-287-6377

Agenda / Discussion

1. Seminar:

Gary Solomon, the One Door Corporation architectural representative for the New York region, presented a seminar titled; "Horizontal Sliding Fire Doors in a Means of Egress". The seminar described the design considerations, code requirements and various Means of egress in alternate building types and uses. The company was started as Won – Door Corporation, developing the accordion type, horizontal sliding fire and security door has had a profound influence on the model code requirements that regulate their use. They can replace traditional solutions in virtually any means of egress or access control application. When security matters, Won-Door Fireguard Fire Guard accordion doors can restrict access to line of sight to corridors and building spaces in seconds.

At the start of the presentation, Gary introduced the company and periodically supplemented the seminar with descriptions, slides, videos, and illustrations of Horizontal Sliding Fire Doors (HSFD) characteristics and uses. The seminar highlighted: the design solutions using HSFD in egress applications. He reviewed the code provisions that allow the HSFD's to be used in egress situations, and to compare/contrast HSFD to other opening protectives as it relates to maintenance and aesthetics.

He described the flexibility these individually made floors that can be up to 28 ft tall and almost unlimited width. The doors are rated by all municipalities, publicly own facilities and can accommodate curved locations as well straight or staggered situations. They are mechanically controlled and always require electronic connections and are installed with battery backup. The opening can be simple from side to side opening or a central opening. The doors are operable with a force not to exceed 15 pounds and easily operable by handicap or impaired people. They operate no faster than 18 inches per second. HSFD's can be operated both remotely as well as physically by occupants. In terms of fire and codes regulations, they are code compliant and universally accepted as they meet all egress requirements found in the IDC and NFPA with all occupant load limitations in all occupancy types, except Group H. The design flexibility of the doors allows for them to be used as fire doors and egress doors in many unique situations.

At the end of the seminar Gary Solomon answered members' questions and specifically discussed why HSFD's Won Door products are always specifically designed and built. He referred architects interested in developing sliding fire doors in their projects, to contact him early in the process as he and his staff will assist in developing details and the specifics of the project.

The manufacture and installation of Won Door products are always performed by their employees. The manufacturing facility is located in Utah and distributed throughout the United States. After a Won Door product is specified it will require approximately eight to fifteen weeks fabricating the product, depending on the site location several days to deliver and one week to generally install. These products are all guaranteed for two years and this guarantee can be extended. The guarantees are basic to having the doors perform reliably and why only Won Door employees manufacture and install their products all over the country.

Gary Solomon urges any architect who would like assistance to directly contact him to review; designs, specifications, as well as specific and egress characteristics, to insure guaranteed performance of their products. He recommends that Chapter members contact him at:

Gary Solomon  
Architectural Consultant  
Won Door and Horton Pedestrian Access Solutions  
Email: [GSolomon@wondoors.com](mailto:GSolomon@wondoors.com)  
Tel: 516-287-6377

2. Adoption of June minutes:

The Sept 21, 2023, minutes were summarized by Bob Esnard the Chapter Secretary, highlighting two significant issues;

- The first was the Chapter’s Accreditation by National AIA, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, which will be good for four years. The letter was sent to the Chapter with a special accreditation logo presented to the Chapter indicating a successful review which is important and significant as not all Chapters were accredited.
- The second issue was the completion of the Chapter’s first CEU tour for 2023. The tour was mentioned as a reminder, as the Chapter is to have its second tour this Saturday October 21, 2023, at Orchard Beach and Hunter Island in the East Bronx.

At the end of the discussion, Ken Koon Sr. made a motion to approve the September minutes with Julian Misurski seconding it. The Chapter then unanimously approved the September 2023 minutes as presented.

3. Next meeting dates:

As previously discussed at the September meeting after the summer break, the Chapter is scheduled to continue with normal **Virtual** meetings which are scheduled as follows;

November 16, 2023	at 6:00PM
December 14, 2023,	at 6:00PM,
January 18, 2024,	at 6:00PM,
February 21, 2024	at 6:00PM,

4. Nomination Committee – Proposed Officers and Directors for 2024.

The Chapter Nominating Committee Chairman, Ken Koons Sr., as required by the Bronx Chapter By Laws, developed the proposed slate for the 2024 officers and directors to be presented at the October meeting. The proposed slate will be included in this meeting’s minutes for all members to review. Ken Koon Sr. highlighted a By Law requirement, that the slate of officers can only be modified in writing, with a supporting letter to the Board Secretary containing five Chapter member’s signatures, in support with any changes or additional candidates. The slate is to be then reviewed and hopefully approved at November’s meeting, for next year’s officers and directors.

Ken announced the proposed slate of officers to be,

**Officers -**

President -	Sara Djazayeri
Vice President -	Julian Misiurski
Treasurer -	Kenneth Koons Jr.
Secretary -	Robert Esnard

**Directors –**

1. Ofé’ Clarke
2. Kenneth Koons Sr.
3. Julian Misiurski
4. Bryan Zelnik
5. Nicholas Friedmann

Ofe' Clark indicated that she has completed her time as NY State Director and now Julian Misurski has replaced her. In turn, Nicolas Friedmann is proposed to take Julian's spot as the Bronx's representative to the State Association.

## 5. Chapter Fall Tour

### Orchard Beach and Hunter Island

As the Chapter previously discussed one of the AIA National's accreditation requirements is for each Chapter to provide 4 CEU Credits annually. We each year, comply with this requirement by scheduling and organizing two tours, each for 2 CEU's. The Bronx Chapter partners with the Bronx County Historic Society to produce them. This year's first tour was in the summer in the South Bronx featuring the designated NYC Landmark (Art Deco) lower Grand Concourse District.

The Second Tour this year is scheduled to be in three days, on Saturday **October 21st, 2023, from 10:00AM to 12:00PM**. The tour will take place in the East Bronx and will explore the Orchard Beach complex, and the development of the Bronx Park system. This facility is another example of the City of New York responding to a Nation Wide "City Beautiful Movement" of the late 19th and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The beach portion of Pelham Bay Park and the Hunter Island natural area will be explored. This tour is located and will all take place in Pelham Bar Park, the city's largest park.

The tour will start and end, at Orchard Beach which Julian Misiurski the Chapter's leader for the tour, described how to enter the parking lot through the Exit gate, as the main entrance is closed for the winter season.

## 6. The Chapter Committees

### Student CCNY Studio Competition

Last year Michael Goldblum proposed and coordinated the successful Chapter CCNY architectural student competition effort. At the September meeting, Michael volunteered to continue his efforts this year; to lobby, as well as, assist a needed Bronx Public Project to hopefully a construction stage. Michael could not attend the meeting, Sarah Djazayeri reported on their efforts over the last month. Michael met with the architectural school representative and will discuss alternative public NYC construction projects with the Borough President's Office for the competition. In the next months, a project is scheduled to be chosen. As was done last year, the students will be from a 3<sup>rd</sup> year architectural studio class at CCNY, . The goal is to utilize the 2024 spring semester school term and have an award event in May 2024, at the Bendheim Manhattan Design studio, as we have done in the last two years.

### Student Awards - Empowerment Program

The Empowerment Program started with the Chapter's commitment three years ago, to "make a difference" in our borough. The basic concept is to assist young architectural students. At that time Ofe Clark and Marty Zelnik suggested that Chapter award grants to be

made to two upper class Bronx resident architectural CCNY students. Last year the Chapter expanded the program by adding two Bronx students from Pratt institute to be included in the program.

Bryan Zelnik indicated that he will reach out to CCNY and begin this year's program, as the Chapter had done last year. Sara Djazayeri who is teaching at Pratt Institute, will again coordinate the selection of two Bronx Pratt architecture students.

#### Associate License Exam

At September's meeting, Sara Djazayeri reported on NY AIA Chapter's offer to assist the other NYC smaller Chapters. She requested thoughts from members to respond with what assistance issues our Chapter should request. As part of a brief discussion it was suggested, one of the important things to request is to support Chapter member Linda Infante's efforts, to coordinate our Associates in developing a chapter study program for taking the Architectural Record Exam (ARE). Over the summer, she worked on a series of virtual study sessions to be led by two-chapter members William Davis, who teaches Architectural Practice at City Tech, and Richard Montana a former DOB employee, to talk about building code issues. Unfortunately, Linda could not coordinate the volunteers or associates over the last months to commit to a specific day for the sessions. It was suggested that one of the Chapter officers reach out to both the AIA member lecturers and the associates to finalize the dates for two ARE sessions. One in January and another in February or March. If there are associates or other members interested in participating on these ARE sessions, they should contact Linda directly at;  
Email: [linda@build-tech.org](mailto:linda@build-tech.org)

#### 7. DOB – Update

Tony Freda, who represents the Chapter at the Architects Counsel of NYC, indicated that the City New York under the direction of Mayor Adams, is proposing a series of new regulations and changes to increase the production of housing across the city of New York. Some of the proposed changes will have an impact on less parking required for residential buildings near mass transit as well as, the attempt to make housing available in commercial zones and buildings. The code issues that will come up and have not been solved are; will the parking requirement create serious neighborhood congestion and as large office/commercial buildings are converted to residential use, how light in the air is "legally" provided in living spaces when they are over 30 feet from a window.

Tony Freda also indicated that although, no dramatic things occurred at DOB in the last two months, several DOB NOW filings have been modified. They added more required information for the simplest filings. He reviewed the fact that DOB when it operated with all paper filing there were required a series of background questions to be answered for all applications that included; FAR calculations, Lot characteristics and Zoning details. However, when computerization was implemented for applications, many of these items were eliminated except for the large projects. Tony pointed out that we and DOB have come full circle, and all the paperwork requirements are now digitally required. It indirectly madidates the filling architect to do more and may cost clients some time and money in the sense that

some of this information may require consultants or other professionals even though their input may not have any bearing on the work been reviewed for a permit.

In addition, Tony described another new DOB regulation that requires each application individual Tenant Protection Plans (TPP) be hired by the contractor not the owner. The filling of a TPP seems to be “a bit” wasteful, as most projects now require; Plumbing, HVAC and/or GC work separately filed for a project. Each one of these filings needs the same TPP individually filed. Again, this may not be good for a client, however it does allow for more professional architectural services.

Tony additionally, pointed out that in the last month based on a CNBC article he described that architects work has decreased as market conditions, such as the increase in mortgage rates, and new construction regulations have slowed down the construction industry. Some of the members agreed that the work has not been as “robust”, as it was in the last few months.

#### **Appendix I – CNBC Architects Report Business Drop**

Finally, he reminded the chapter that City of New York, beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, every building must have their Parapets Inspected, in accordance with Section 28-301.1.1 of the New York Administrative Code. This requirement will apply to all building with Parapets that front the public right of way regardless of height. There is only one exception and that is detached one- or two-family structures or buildings with a fence or other barriers preventing access to the exterior wall. Tony pointed out that this is another chance for architects to provide services to clients.

#### **Appendix II – Parapet Inspection 1 RCNY §103-15**

#### **8. New Business**

Sara Djazayeri the chapter President had two items to review with the members.

One was the offer that New York Chapter volunteered to assist the other NYC Chapters to be more efficient, successful, and coordinated with each other. Sara at the last meeting had requested thoughts from the members and with this input she then wrote a lengthy letter itemizing the ideas that members suggested. One of the most significant requests, was to assist our associates in their studying for the ARE. She was hopeful that in the next month or two, we will get some positive feedback to allow us to our support associates’ studies and chapter efforts.

The second item she mentioned at the last month’s meeting was that Patricia Semmler, an associate from the Brooklyn Chapter volunteered to assist in our Chapter’s marketing efforts. She has devised a questionnaire for Chapter members to respond to the idea of setting up a Chapter public index of Bronx Architects similar to Brooklyn’s “Find and Architect”. Members in the next week or two will receive an email questionnaire from Patricia that will request business and information on each member, to provide background information including a short paragraph describing services they provide or are interested in working on with clients.

The goal is to put on our websites a place where clients can locate our members, “Find an Architect” and hopefully link up with our members for future projects.

**Appendix III – AIA Bronx Marketing Email**

For further details or information on the previously mentioned members can contact Sara directly at; Email: [Info@studio360's.com](mailto:Info@studio360's.com)

As there were no other new business items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned with the meeting ending at 7:47pm.

- III. Next Meeting:  
The next meeting will be virtual on:  
**Thursday, November 16, at 6:00pm**



IV.

## **Appendix**

### **Appendix I**



**CNBC Architects Report Business Drop**

### **Appendix II**

**Parapet Inspection    1 RCNY §103-15**

### **Appendix III**

**AIA Bronx Marketing Email**

## Appendix I Architects Report Business Drop



CNBC

### Bad news for commercial real estate: Architects report a big drop in business

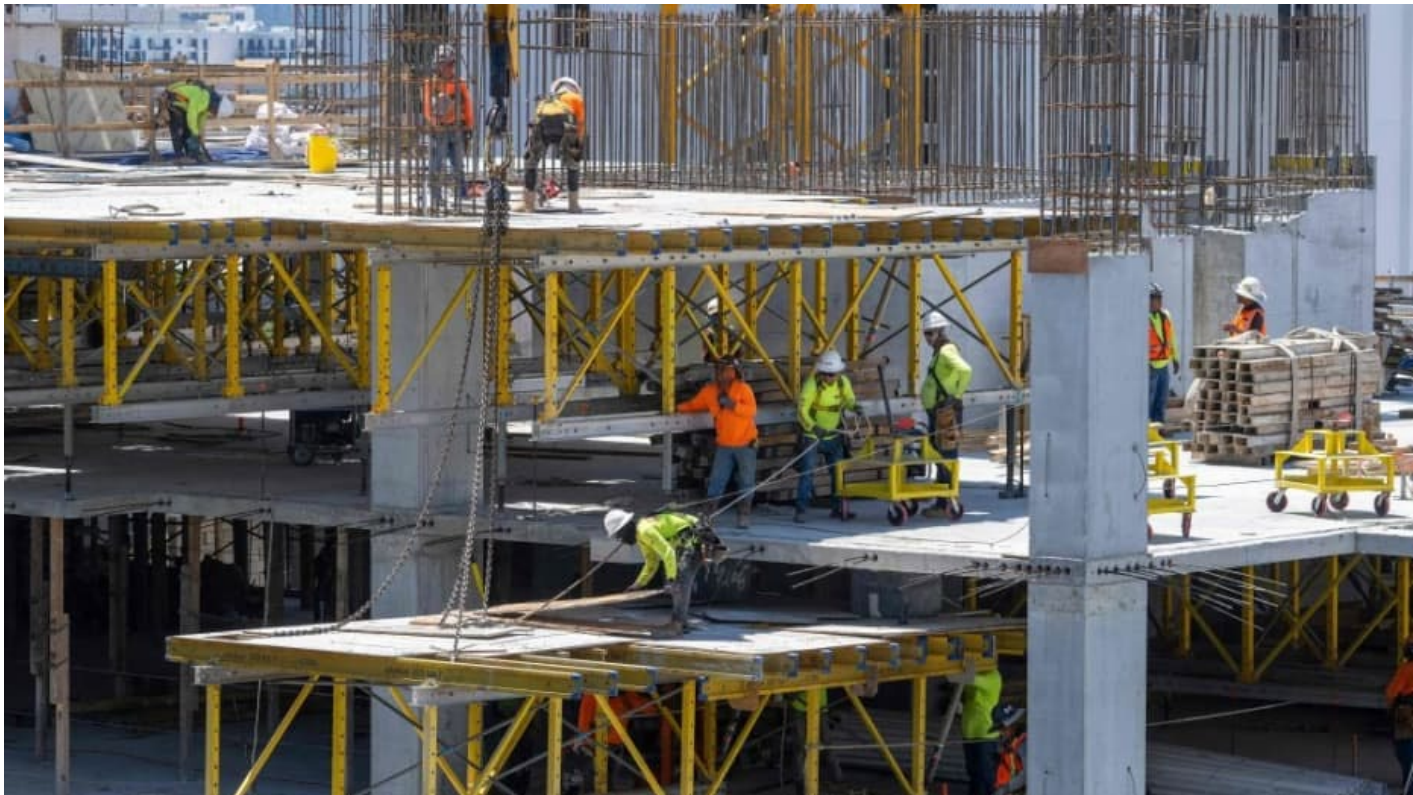
PUBLISHED WED, OCT 18 2023 12:09 PM EDT UPDATED WED, OCT 18 2023 3:11 PM EDT

[Diana Olick@IN/DIANAOLICK@DIANAOLICKCNBC@DIANAOLICK](#)

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#### KEY POINTS

- Architecture firms reported a sharp drop in business in September, indicating that the commercial real estate market could experience more pain soon.
- Commercial real estate has been hit with a double whammy: Return to office is slow and interest rates are high.



**Construction workers erect a building in downtown Miami, Florida, on June 14, 2023.**

*Jim Watson | AFP | Getty Images*

Architecture firms reported a sharp drop in business in September, indicating that the commercial real estate market could experience even more pain in the next year.

The [AIA/Deltek Architecture Billings Index](#) dropped to 44.8 in September, the lowest score since December 2020, during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Any score below 50 indicates worsening business conditions. The score shows a growing number of architecture firms are reporting a drop in billings.

The index is a forward-looking indicator of demand for nonresidential construction activity — both commercial and industrial buildings. It aims to predict construction activity nine to 12 months out.

“While more firms are reporting a decrease in billings, the report also shows the hesitance among clients to commit to new projects with a slump in newly signed design contracts,” said Kermit Baker, AIA’s chief economist. “As a result, backlogs at architecture firms fell to 6.5 months on average in the third quarter, their lowest level since the fourth quarter of 2021.”

Commercial real estate has been hit with a double whammy. [Return to office](#) is slow, hitting both office buildings as well as the retail stores and restaurants that support them. Downtowns are suffering. But a [sharp rise in interest rates](#) has exacerbated the problem, causing investments and deal-making in most sectors to grind to a halt.

While all regions of the country are experiencing a decline, the West is deepest, as the return to office there has been slower than in other areas. Among [real estate](#) sectors, firms with a multifamily residential focus saw more of a decline. Multifamily construction boomed over the past few years, with a record number of units now flooding the market and putting pressure on rents.

Analysts, however, warn that the drop in apartment activity does not bode well for the future.

“I’ll say again, we do need to absorb a lot of multifamily construction currently in place but after that, there won’t be much for a few years after,” said Peter Boockvar, chief investment officer at Bleakley Financial Group

# Appendix II

## Parapet Inspection 1 RCNY §103-15

### 1RCNY§103-15

#### CHAPTER 100 R 100 Subchapter C Maintenance of Buildings

##### §103-15 Periodic observation of building parapets.

(a) **Definitions.** For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings.

Appurtenance. Any structure attached to or supported by a parapet.

Cornice. A projecting horizontal member or assembly that crowns a wall.

Fronting. Running parallel or near parallel to a public right of way.

Gooseneck. A curved section of a handrail which terminates at the top of a roof or parapet.

Observation. A visual examination of a parapet, cornice and other parapet appurtenances conducted to determine their stability and identify any potentially hazardous conditions.

Parapet. The part of any wall entirely above the roof line.

Public right-of-way. A public street, avenue, sidewalk, roadway or any other public place or public way.

(b) **Observations.** Starting on January 1, 2024, in accordance with the requirements of section 28-301.1.1 of the Administrative Code, every building owner must have an observation performed in accordance with this subdivision. This requirement applies to all buildings with parapets fronting the public right-of-way, regardless of height, except for detached 1- or 2-family homes or buildings with a fence or other barrier preventing access to the exterior wall.

- (1) The observation must be performed annually by a person competent to inspect parapets. For the purposes of this subdivision, this includes, but is not limited to, a bricklayer, building superintendent, handyman, mason or a person in a similar construction-related trade, architect, engineer, an inspector working for a New York State-authorized insurance company, a New York State-authorized building inspector or any other individual capable of identifying hazards on the parapet.
- (2) The observation must include close-up inspections of the entire parapet. The close-up inspection may be conducted from a fire escape or roof.
- (3) The observation must include, but not be limited to:
  - (i) A determination that the parapet is plumb by a horizontal distance within one-eighth of its cross-sectional thickness in any location.
  - (ii) A determination of whether there is excessive deterioration, including, but not limited to, displacement, horizontal or diagonal cracks, missing or loose bricks or coping stones, deteriorated mortar joints, spalling, or rot.
  - (iii) A determination that appurtenances such as tele as telecommunications equipment, railings, roof access rails, gooseneck ladders and handrail rail attachments for fire escapes, and signs, have been installed and maintained in a stable condition.
- (4) If the parapet exhibits a hazardous or unsafe condition:
  - (i) The person performing the observation must immediately notify the Department of Buildings; and
  - (ii) The owner must immediately install public protection, such as erecting sidewalk sheds, fences, and safety netting, as may be required to secure the safety of the public, and have the unsafe condition remedied. All unsafe conditions must be corrected within ninety (90) days from the notification to the Department. The public protection must remain in place until the unsafe condition is remedied.

(c) *Report Requirement.* A report must be prepared by the person performing the observation or by the owner in consultation with the person performing the observation.

(1) The report must include, but not be limited to:

- (i) The address and any other associated addresses for the building;
- (ii) The name, mailing address and telephone number of the owner of the building, or, if the owner is not an individual, the name, mailing address, telephone number, and position/title of a principal of the owner;
- (iii) The name of the person performing the observation. If other than the owner, their mailing address, telephone number, affiliation with the building or owner, and business name, if applicable;
- (iv) The date(s) of the observation;
- (v) The location plan of the parapet(s) observed;
- (vi) The construction of the parapet, including but not limited to material, height, and thickness;
- (vii) General conditions noted, whether any unsafe conditions were found, and actions taken to remedy the unsafe conditions;
- (viii) Any repairs made to the parapet since the previous report, a t, and
- (ix) Dated photos documenting the conditions at the time of observation.

(2) Owners must maintain the observation reports for at least six (6) years and must make such reports available to the Department upon request.

## Appendix III

### AIA Bronx Marketing Email

Bronx Chapter members business exposure opportunity

Dear AIA Bronx Member,

The Communication Committee team is excited to reach out to our esteemed AIA Bronx members with a great opportunity to enhance your business's visibility at no cost to you. AIA Bronx is committed to creating a platform that connects our members and facilitates easy access for individuals or organizations in search of architects, interns, job opportunities, and more.

We are thrilled to extend this opportunity to all AIA Bronx members, irrespective of your professional status. Whether you are self-employed, work for a company, a government agency, a student, retired, or even a stay-at-home parent or caregiver, we want to help you make your mark in the architectural community.

The AIA Bronx website will be patterned after the AIA Brooklyn website, showcasing your business's contact information for all to see. You can preview the AIA Brooklyn page here:

<https://aiabrooklyn.org/find-an-architect/>

If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity and have your business featured, kindly respond to this email with the following information:

- Business Name
- Business Website
- Business Address
- Business Email
- Business Phone Number
- A Brief Description of the Services Offered

For any additional inquiries or clarifications, please feel free to contact Patricia Semmler at [patricia.semmler@gmail.com](mailto:patricia.semmler@gmail.com)

Thank you for your continued support, and we wish you a great week.

Warm regards,

Patricia Semmler  
Associate AIA  
AIA Bronx Communication Committee

**The End**