



Volume 8, 2023
November 16th, 2023
Publication Committee
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Published by the Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee to highlight activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect.

NEWSLETTER

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I Current Activities



November 16th, 2023

AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The meeting began at 6:03pm.

Attendees:

Boris Abramovich
Sara Djazayeri
Robert Esnard
Antonio Freda
Linda Infante
Alvi Rahman Khan
Ken A. Koons, Jr.
Ken H. Koons, Sr.
Jerin Lisha
Julian Misiurski
Robert Markisz
Matthew Rezkallo
Bryan Zelnik

Guest

Mike Keller
Regional Sales Manager
Mark Lipman
NYC Metro Sales Representative

Kalwall Corporation
www.kalwall.com
Tel: 1-800-258-9727

Agenda / Discussion

1. Seminar:

Mike Kelle of Kalwall presented a seminar titled "Daylighting and LEED Credits", he was assisted by Mark Lipman who is the NYC Metro Sales Representative. The presentation outlined the advantages of utilizing translucent composite sandwich panel technology. These panels are constructed differently than normal skylights or windows. They are structurally stronger and modify as well as improve the lighting within buildings. Mike described the Kalwall Corporation operations and the company he works for, based in New Hampshire and

producing panels all manufactured at their factory. The company's products have the advantages of creating both superior interior daylighting and sustainability.

Their translucent composite panels are a unique way of creating walls, roofs and enclosed spaces which allow for light transmission in an efficient and architecturally significant way. The panels are made of four components.

- Interior Lens – High Impact Resistant
- Translucent Insulation – Good "U" & "R" values
- Grid Core – Interior Structural Support
- Exterior Lens – Durable & Color Tinted
-

The construction of these panels is in two thickness, 2 ¾" or 4" and they are made 5' wide by 20' long. The panel is structural with significant strength to weight ratios, that reduce their weight while having a and with high level of structural strength. The panel strength is such that a single 5' x 20' panel weighs less than two pounds per square foot, and can support approximately 12 people or 3,000 Lbs., with no deflection or structural fatigue. They can easily be lifted and handled with one or two workers. The panels can be constructed, flat, curved, or irregularly shaped to accommodate design/site conditions.

The panels are individually made to suit specific architectural and building designs. They allow defused light (natural light) to pass through the panels which are made from chopped fibers and resins, re-distributing the light to illuminate interior spaces evenly and efficiently.

Technically the translucent panels have high insulating characteristics with U factors from 0.53 to 0.05 with R values from R-2 to R-20. In addition, they have a low solar heat gain co-efficient (SHGC) from 0.65 to 0.06. The thermal characteristics of one of the panels are significant such that, with an exterior temperature of Zero-degree Fahrenheit, the interior temperature can be at a comfortable 70-degree Fahrenheit.

Mike described the benefits of using translucent sandwich panels for roofing. The panels are OSHA compliant, and roofs are walkable. This eliminates the need for protection of roof fences or cages. He emphasized the high level of energy protection which is especially good for schools and prevent maintenance people or student accidents on roof tops. He also mentioned how the panels will reduce light pollution, glare, and contribute to earning LEED credits in many categories, such as heat island reduction, energy efficiency, as well as sustainability. Mike outlined the ASHRAE standards for improving energy efficiency in new construction, he discussed how credits are accumulated based on improving the benefits of using the translucent panels to maximize thermal performance and light transmission.

At the conclusion of the seminar, Mike Keller and Mark Lipman reviewed Kalwall Corporation's history and manufacturing activities. The company is family owned and was created in 1955 by Mike's grandfather Robert Keller, who invented the first of the company's translucent panels. Mike illustrated various finishes and the choice of Grid patterns, face sheet colors, and various examples of panel installations. As the panels are low maintenance, strong, easy to manipulate, and install. These characteristics result ultimately in lower insurance, as well as costs for building owners.

In conclusion, Mike and Mark emphasized the advantages of talking to Kalwall staff early in project development. Their expertise will help in reviewing specifications, drawings as well as modeling to evaluate and maximize LEED credits. They also have experience in most kinds of building types, can assist architects in many ways and all at no cost.

Mike recommends that Chapter members and contact the company local representatives;
Mark Lipman
NYC Metro Sales Representative
Kalwall Corporation
www.kalwall.com
Tel: 1-800-258-9727

Finally, members who would like to get LEED Credits should self-report the course through their credential page indicating the presentation is by and listed as follows:

Kalwall/Structural Unlimited

GBCI - 1CEHOUR

Course # 0920001814

- Instructor: Mike Keller
- In person Workshop
- Refining the Understanding of daylighting principles.

2. Adoption of November Minutes

The November 16th, minutes was unanimously accepted with Ken Koons, Jr., making a motion for approval with Julian Misurski seconding the motion.

3. Next meeting dates:

As reviewed at the October meeting the Bronx Chapter will have a scheduled virtual meeting. as well as an informal luncheon in December. The Chapter President will send individual members, invitations to the Botanical Gardens Luncheon on December 21, 2023, as she did last year.

Otherwise, the virtual meetings schedule will be as follows:

December 14, 2023,	at 6:00PM,
January 18, 2024,	at 6:00PM,
February 21, 2024,	at 6:00PM,
March 21, 2024,	at 6:00PM.

4. Voting for 2024 Officers & Directors

As the Nominating Committee and the Chapter Secretary did not receive any changes to the Committee's proposed slate of officers discussed in the October meeting, the proposed slate officers are the same and are;

Officers -

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

Directors –

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

After a short discussion, Julian Misurski proposed acceptance of the slate of officers with Bryan Zelnik seconding the motion that was then unanimously accepted. The officers and directors as proposed and listed above were approved for 2024.

5. Simon Zelnik AIA - Scarsdale Landmark

Bryan Zelnik reviewed the successful efforts he led to preserve his grandfather, Simon Zelnik's residential building design, from demolition, and restoring Simon's significance as an architect and designer.

Bryan had started his efforts about two years ago, when some Scarsdale homeowners reached out to him to assist the community in saving his grandfather's building. Bryans produced a series of public statements and attended meetings at the Scarsdale Committee for Historic Presentation (CHP), and the Scarsdale Board of Trustees, the governing body of Scarsdale. After much discussion both governmental bodies accepted Bryan's argument that his grandfather's building was worthy of preservation and should not be demolished. The current owner of the property, a major real estate company, the Milstein Holding Company, used several consultants and lawyers to argue their case for demolition.

The Milstein group then appealed and sued in NY State Supreme in court, to overturn the preservation judgment to save the building. A few weeks ago, the appeal to reverse decision was defeated, and the judge's decision cited Bryan's testimony and arguments, as well as the Bronx Chapter's letter of support as the fundamental reasons for supporting preservation.

What is apparent is the Bryan has become as significant "hero" to the citizens of Scarsdale who are now proposing, and it appears to be something Trustees and the local government will support, a moratorium of six months. The idea is for Scarsdale to study the impact of demolishing significant buildings for economic gain and possibly destroying the architectural heritage of Scarsdale residential communities.

The chapter members unanimously congratulated Bryan on his victory in saving the building, and the restoration of Simon Zelnik's architectural credentials, his reputation, place in history, as well as being a founding member of our chapter.

Appendix I – Scarsdale Newsletter

6. Marketing- “Find a Bronx Architect”

Sara Djazayeri outlined our efforts to create a Bronx AIA website link for the public to find a Bronx architect. Historically, individuals from the public have called the Chapter president and or secretary to find an architect, as they discover the legal need for one. This happens when a person starts a construction project, or when they need to file with the government and specifically at DOB to do building improvements. The chapter is asked for a recommendation; however, the Chapter does not specifically recommend architects, we only provide a list of members. As this process is not a good marketing tool, Sara discussed this problem with Patricia Semmler, a Brooklyn Chapter associate who volunteered to assist us in a marketing effort to develop a “Find an Architect” link, for the Bronx Chapter website. Patricia sent a letter to all our members requesting members to provide their background and contact information. Some have responded, however Sara is requesting everyone should respond, to give themselves exposure. In addition, they should be able to explain their expertise in consulting, designing, DOB filling and lobbying. This will allow a prospective client to scroll down a list on the web and see the services each Architect can provide. Sara is asking those who have not to please fill out the form so that in the next month or so we can get the website marketing effort up and running.

Appendix II - AIA Bronx Marketing Email

7. Chapter Committees

CCNY Student Competition

Sara Djazayeri reported that this year's CCNY Architectural competition is moving forward. Teachers, the Bronx Borough president, and we are discussing three potential public projects. It is expected that they will shortly agree on a project in the next week and that the Studio Design class will work on the competition during the spring term.

Student Awards/Empowerment Programs

The decision of the board at the last meeting was to continue the empowerment program like last year, Sara Djazayeri will coordinate Pratt Institute's selection. Bryan Zelnik will continue his father's efforts started two years ago, following up with the CCNY students' selection. There be will two Bronx student awards per school presented in an award ceremony at the end of the spring term in May 2024.

Associates License Exam

Linda Infante reported that she has contacted member Bill Davis, who agreed to present the first ARE study section in mid-January 2024. She hoped to finalize the date by the next meeting, and that she would reach out to Richard Montana who also indicated he would participate. Linda will see if he will attend the second seminar study session in February 2024. She again urged other licensed members to volunteer, as well as remind associates to participate with her

and attend the sessions that are planned. Then, Bob Esnard volunteered to do a session, discussing a structural issue at an existing 12-story building his company built, where the building façade stability had been compromised. 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

8. DOB – Update

Our Chapter representative at the Architects Counsel of NYC, Tony Freda reported that he attended the November meeting of the counsel where several issues were discussed mostly related to DOB’s processing of applications and the problems around getting them approved.

He reported that the NY State legislature is drafting a bill to assure that builders and architects looking to file exterior construction work, adjacent to an existing building under separate ownership, be allowed to legally protect that adjacent building and start their work in a reasonable time. Unfortunately, adjacent owners have stopped or delayed projects because they would like the project not to go forward or to force concessions from a builder for permission to protect their adjacent buildings.

Another subject Tony discussed was related to in the CO process, that require new address building numbers that the Borough President must grant. This approval requirement is outside of DOB’s control and can take a minimum of 6 to 9 weeks to get a number from the Borough President’s office. In Brooklyn, an expedited process has been utilized, where if the new entrance door is not moved, in an alteration construction, the Borough President need not provide a new number and the existing number is used. This Brooklyn office change, after Tony suggested it, will now be extended to the Bronx office of DOB to adopt the same policy. It was reported that the DOB Bronx Commissioner agreed to implement this policy and it is hoped this will be a city-wide policy change.

Ken Koons, Jr. joined the discussion to point out that the Mayor, due to the new immigration pressure the city is under, will make major cuts to all the city agencies’ budgets, to house so many new homeless people. All agencies, including DOB, will lose staff and Ken suggests that project approvals at DOB will adversely be affected or slowed down. Ken mentioned that there are many other instances, like the address numbers change, that are bureaucratic steps that can be eliminated, and efficiencies made. Ken’s hope is that creative thinking would/should be helpful to hopefully minimize the impact of the budget cuts on the city construction industry.

Finally, Tony outlined that DOB Commission Otto, is reported to have indicated that he would be willing to look at other steps in the process, that do not affect the substance of reviewing and approving projects, should be implemented especially if they do not add costs and save time.

9. New Business

Sara Djazayeri reported on last months offer by NY Chapter, to help the other NYC Chapters and our Bronx request. The AIA Chapter Presidents met again and discussed the Bronx Chapter’s specific request letter, about how the NY Chapter could assist the Bronx to be, more efficient,

successful, and coordinated with the other Chapters. She indicated that no other Chapter wrote a detailed letter. Then as part of the meeting's discussion, Brooklyn and Queens asked to sign our letter requesting similar NY Chapter Assistance. She said it might be interesting to see what comes out of this and if cooperation is possible and what the NY Chapter can implement or agree to do with the recommendations.

A second item Sara brought up was the fact that the Bronx Chapter does not have an active AIA Fellow. She was hopeful that some of the senior members of the Bronx Chapter would volunteer to go through the process with National AIA so that there could be an acknowledgement of the members hard work that has resulted in Bronx Chapter successful activities. Her wish is that some or at least one of our members be awarded a fellowship. She indicated that NY Chapter is also willing to help members with the "fellowship" process, which is very involved and requires a good deal of research, and documentation for a to be member elevated to fellowship status. She urged members to volunteer.

- III. The meeting ended at 7:42PM as there was no further discussion.
The next virtual meeting be:
Thursday December 14, 2023, at 6:00PM.

IV.

Appendix

Appendix I

Scarsdale Newsletter

Appendix II

AIA Bronx Marketing Email

Appendix I Scarsdale Newsletter

State Supreme Court Denies Milstein's Appeal to Tear Down Historic Midcentury Modern Home

TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023 15:52
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JOANNE WALLENSTEIN



Here's some more interesting news for those advocating for preservation in Scarsdale. Last week, the Committee for Historic Preservation denied an application to demolish a treasured home in "The Woods" section of Scarsdale, following an organized campaign from neighbors.

This week we learned that another home will be spared. In a ruling from the Westchester County Supreme Court, **Judge Robert A. Neary** upheld a decision by the Scarsdale Board of Trustees to deny an application to take down a mid-century modern home at 76 Birchall Drive. The

homeowner, Howard Milstein planned to demolish the home, subdivide the property and build two new homes on the site.

After both the Committee for Historic Preservation and the Scarsdale Board of Trustees found that the home met the criteria for preservation, the owner, Howard Milstein of PIM Holding Company filed an Article 78 in State Supreme Court to appeal the ruling “on the grounds that the administrative decision was made in violation of lawful procedure; affected by an error of law; or arbitrary and capricious or an abuse of discretion.”

Milstein’s attorney, **Troy D. Lipp of Cuddy and Feder** contended that the Village's Historic Preservation Law “is unconstitutionally vague and overboard under the federal and state constitutions.” The Village of Scarsdale was represented by **Nicholas M. Ward-Willis and Carina P. Zupa** of Kean & Beane.

The decision says, “The Scarsdale Board of Trustees determined that the Petitioner- Plaintiff’s residence is “uniquely” historically significant in that it is a classic example of the mid-century modern movement and has retained its integrity despite the substantial record evidence confirming the significant changes and alterations to the residence and conclusions of the Village's own expert that the residence no longer possess integrity of its original design and, therefore, does not satisfy the Village's criteria for historic preservation.”

“The Board of Trustees additionally found that the residence is worthy of preservation because (architect) Zelnik was a master, and the residence is the work of a master, citing Zelnik’s achievements and the letter in support of preservation from the President of the Bronx Chapter of AIA.”

Furthermore “The Board of Trustees engaged in the required balancing test and considered the relevant statutory factors, and their determination is supported by evidence in the record.”

The court said, “In the instant case, the Court finds that the BOT's determination to deny the appeal of the CHP's decision to deny a COA had a rational basis and was not illegal, arbitrary, and capricious or an abuse of discretion.”

“The Court finds that in the present case contrary to the Petitioner-Plaintiff s contention, the HPL (historic preservation law) is not unconstitutionally vague. The fact that different parties may disagree on the significance of certain statutory language does not indicate that the statute is unconstitutionally vague.”

“Therefore, based on the foregoing, the Petition is denied, and the matter is dismissed.”

The application was the subject of many meetings and neighbors amassed significant evidence to support a denial of the application. The architect's grandson, Bryan Zelnik played a role in defending his grandfather's legacy

Bryan Zelnik, who is also an architect said, "I was happy to hear the news that the Supreme Court Judge decided to agree with the Trustees and the judge denied the petition and dismissed the case. This decision allows 76 Birchall Drive by Simon B. Zelnik FAIA to remain in Scarsdale's architectural history. The Dolkart report should be amended to include **Simon B. Zelnik** FAIA and his 76 Birchall Drive house as the first modern architect and the second Midcentury house in Scarsdale's modern history. The modern first house in Scarsdale was the 1948 Barricini House that Zelnik also designed and placed on the national stage where it belonged in the 1948 Architectural Forum article i uncovered in my research online."

He continued, "I had several thoughts about the Supreme Court case decided by Justice Robert A. Avery. The judge acknowledged and cited my grandfather's achievements including his earned fellowships from the AIA in Design and Education along with importance of the 1948 Arch Forum Article I presented as documentary evidence to the CHP. The 1948 article the Judge highlights as one of Zelnik's achievements is "the feature of Simon Zelnik in the 1948 Architectural Forum issue that highlighted his forward thinking "modern luxury" architectural designs." It can be argued that Zelnik's Barricini house led to the future of modern residential luxury architecture and one of the first in the country."

"I also wanted to note the recent article "Residents to Present Petition Calling for a Moratorium on Tear Downs and Subdivisions to Village Trustees" as a positive direction for the village. I hope that the preservation of 76 Birchall inspired this group to create a "mandate for change" and wish them luck in achieving their resolution. As an architect, I am a strong advocate for preserving the past if it satisfies the village code's criteria and documentary evidence is provided and not just consulting opinions against it."

The issue was even covered in the [Wall Street Journal](#) in an article that sought to cast doubt on the status of Zelnik in the world of architecture. The piece, said, "You'd be forgiven for not knowing the name of Simon B. Zelnik, a respected-but-not-celebrity New York architect who died in 1980." However, the article did not sway Judge Neary.

The ruling comes at a pivotal time for Scarsdale. After many homes have been torn down, properties subdivided and two oversized homes replacing one, some neighbors have had enough. A group has amassed over 300 signatures on a petition calling for a six-month moratorium on tear downs and subdivisions.

However, aggressive developers and homeowners continue to tear apart neighborhoods.

Appendix II

AIA Bronx Marketing Email

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

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