



## AIA BRONX CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Published by

Bronx Chapter AIA Publications Committee [Info@studio360's.com](mailto:Info@studio360's.com)  
Highlighting activities and information of interest to the Practicing Architect

### Events and Education Opportunities

- **AIA Conference on Architecture & Design**  
June 4-7, Boston  
Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, Exhibit Hall A-B  
[AIA Conference on Architecture & Design 2025](#)
- **AIA Hotel to Housing – Virtual Seminar 1CEU**  
A Sustainable Urban Transformational Story  
Tuesday , April 8, 2025  
2:00PM – 3:00PM  
[Register](#)
- **2024 AIA- Bronx Scholarship Awards Event**  
May 1, 2025 6:00PM-8:00PM  
Manhattan Location To Be Finalized
- **AIA Bronx 2025 Spring Tour - Norwood/Urban Planning (2 CEU)**  
June 28, 2025 10:00AM-12:00PM  
Valentine-Varian House  
3266 Bainbridge Avenue,  
The Bronx, NY 1067  
[besnard@dzco.com](mailto:besnard@dzco.com)

### Table of Contents

I	<b>Current Activities:</b> Chapter Virtual Meeting Minutes of January 16, 2024,	Page 2
II	<b>Next Chapter meeting April 17, 2025,</b> <a href="https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766">https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766</a>	Page 7
III	<b>Appendix</b>	Page 8

I Current Activities



March 20, 2025

## AIA BRONX CHAPTER MEETING MINUTES

The virtual meeting started at 6:03PM.

Attendees:

Antonio Freda  
Bryan Zelnik  
Eric Schneider  
Hirinha Pena  
Jerin Lisha  
Julian Misiurski  
Ken A. Koons, Jr.  
Ken H. Koons, Sr.  
Leila Pena  
Matthew Rezkallo  
Nicholas Friedman  
Nico Zapata  
Robert Esnard  
Sara Djazayeri

Guest:

Shannon Noto  
Area Sales Representative  
**AL13 Architectural Systems**  
[shannon.noto@al13.com](mailto:shannon.noto@al13.com)  
**(631) 6150293**

### Agenda

**1. Seminar Presentation**

Shannon Noto, Area Sales Associate, and Afsaneh Dhalla, Territory Representative, from Al 13 Architectural Systems Company presented utilized slides and illustrations of physical examples how the panel systems can be used safely and economically. Shannon, who is based in New York, began the presentation, Afsaneh, the manager for Eastern Canada and Eastern United States, joined from Ontario. They discussed their products, pricing, delivery, and support services specific to the New York area.

ACM Panel Manufacturing and Installation Shannon discussed the manufacturing process of Aluminum Cladding Material (ACM) panels, their design elements, and the methods for safely installing them. She also reviewed the requirements for panels to meet specific fire, wind load, and rain screen certifications. Shannon highlighted the importance of selecting the right panel thickness, core type, and surface material for different projects. She also emphasized the durability, low maintenance, and sustainability of ACM panels. The team discussed the different types of coatings available for ACM panels, with the PVDF coating being the best option due to its excellent weathering benefits and gloss range.

ACM Installation and Testing Standards

Shannon reviewed two methods for installing ACM: the traditional route and return method, and the extrusion-based method. The route and return method involves removing material from the backside of the panel and bending or folding it after routing. However, this method requires specialized equipment and technicians, and can be costly and time-consuming. In contrast, the extrusion-based method involves cutting and assembling panels on-site, which is more cost-effective and requires less specialized equipment.

### Panel and Plank Systems

She discussed the company's patented aluminum panel and plank systems, which are compatible and offer system compatibility. The panel system is a certified rain screen system, available in three types of finishes, and can be installed in any weather condition. The plank system is ideal for horizontal applications and is available in six-inch and four-inch widths. Both systems are non-combustible and offer simplified installation without the need for adhesives.

### Baton System Installation and Resources

The company's extrusion components, system compatibility, and testing certifications for their panel and plank systems were reviewed. The baton system, highlights its architectural flexibility and various applications. Shannon explained the installation process for the baton system, including the use of preset spacing brackets and single mount brackets.

### Summary

Shannon and Afsaneh concluded the presentation reviewing the unique features and benefits of using ACM products. She indicated that AL13 Architectural Systems is a leading provider of cladding and façade solutions for high-rise, midrise, residential, multifamily institutional, and commercial projects. They have 3 different systems to enhance both the aesthetics and performance of buildings:

- [AL13 Panel System](#): CM Panels, ideal for exterior rain screen cladding, cut to fit on-site with a wide range of colors including solid, metallic, and woodgrains.
- [AL13 Plank System](#): Extruded aluminum that gives the look of plank siding.
- [AL13 Batten System](#): Whether for interior, or exterior ceilings/walls, the batten system works.

Finally, Shannon indicated that she and the employees of AL13 Architectural Systems are willing to assist in the design development stages of any member's projects. She shared some quick links for reference as you are working through any current or future projects where AL13 may be a good fit. Please feel free to reach out to her.

Her email is;

[shannon.noto@al13.com](mailto:shannon.noto@al13.com), and phone number is 631-615-0293 should you require any additional information they look forward to the opportunity!

### General Information:

Learn more about AL13 [here](#).

AL13 System Catalog & Brochure: View our [digital brochure](#).

Gallery for Inspiration: Explore ideas [here](#).

Technical Information: Access our [resources](#).

Sample Request: Request samples [here](#).

Estimates: upload your project [here](#).

For even more details, explore our website at [www.al13.com](http://www.al13.com)."

**2. Adoption of Minutes**

Bob Esnard began the meeting by sharing the minutes of the last meeting on the screen. He briefly reviewed the minutes and pointed to the first page under **Events and Education Opportunities** six new members of the chapter were welcomed. Also, he noted attending the meeting were two new members Eric Schneider and Leila Pena. Leila came on camera to introduce herself indicating that she was born and raised in the Bronx, has a bachelor's degree of Architecture from New York Institute of Technology (NYIT), graduated in 2016 and has been working in as an architectural designer / job captain. She concluded saying that she is “excited to join and see where she can plug in to chapter activities”. Leila was asked if she was related to Bronx chapter member Hirinha Pena, who was also attending the meeting. Both Leila and Hirinha indicated that were not . It is obviously an **unusual** accidental circumstance.

Bob opened the floor for any objections to approve the February meeting minutes, which were sent to everyone via email. As no objections were raised, Julian Misiurski initiated a motion to adopt the meeting as presented and Nico Zapata seconded the motion. The February 2025 AIA Bronx Chapter meeting minutes were then unanimously approved.

**3. Schedule for Next Meetings**

The schedule of the next meetings was discussed, and reviewed. Sara Djazayeri, President indicated that she is negotiating with sponsors of the May in-person public Awards Event, like prior years celebrating the Chapter’s Empowerment Student Grant and a CCNY Student Competition of a Public Project was also discussed with the location to be determined. Therefore, the proposed meeting dates which are;

April 17, 2025	6:00PM– (Virtual)
May 1, 2025(Tentative)	Location to be determined-(In person)
June 19, 2025	6:00PM– (Virtual)
September 18, 2025	6:00PM– (Virtual)

**4. Chapter Committees**

Sara Djazayeri and Bryan Zelnik updated us on the Student Competition and the Empowerment grants.

**Student Competition**

The Student Competition project of the redevelopment of the vacant Old Bronx Borough Courthouse in the Melrose neighborhood is proceeding on schedule. This “gorgeous” Beaux-Arts style building will be repurposed for public use and the student have various concepts to have this building become an asset to the neighborhood and the people of the Bronx. Sara expects the selection process and scheduled public event to be on time for the tentative date in the early evening of Thursday May 1.

**Empowerment Grant**

The progress of the scholarship program is also moving ahead and hoped to have all of the grantees identified in early April. Sara indicted that Brian Zelnik has been heading this effort and very effectively. They confirmed the schools who are participating which are CCNY, Cooper Union, Pratt, Parsons, NYIT. We have received nominations from all the schools and highlighted Cooper Union's participation, as each student is to receive a grant of \$1,000. Brian had donated a thousand dollars for their students in honor of his father Martin and Grandfather Simon. Ken Koons Sr. asked about Cooper Union's current status as an approved architectural school do they offer an architectural degree? Bryan confirmed that since 1975 they have been offering a Bachelor of Architecture Degree. Brian was thanked again for his generosity and helping to expand the chapters Empowerment program.

## 5. Potential Chapter Initiative

Sara proposed organizing official mentorship sessions for AIA Bronx members. Her thought was to develop a quarterly series possibly with guest speakers to discussions on job-related issues. She participated in a meeting at NYIT representing our chapter which was organized by AIAS (American Institute of Architecture Students) organized by AIA National, to foster/support collaboration between practicing architects and architectural students throughout the country. Sara sent two flyers which were shared on the screen illustrating the website of AIAS and a potential Mentorship program that she drafted for discussion. One specific take away from the meeting was a request for the chapter to host a tour of architectural highlights in the borough during their upcoming AIAS convention in New York City.

### **Appendix I – AIAS Website**

### **Appendix II – AIA Bronx Proposed Mentorship Series**

Members at the meeting generally agreed with, as well as support these initiatives. They spent some time reviewing the importance and relevance the issues discussed to many of our younger architect members.

However, it was clear that to implement them requires a commitment of specific members to lead the initiatives. It was requested that if anyone would like to work some or all of these ideas that they contact Sara Djazayeri [info@studio360s.com](mailto:info@studio360s.com) or Bob Esnard [besnard@dzco.com](mailto:besnard@dzco.com) to get involved.

Julian indicated that the easiest of the initiatives would be a tour as he and our chapter hosts two CEU tours a year. The issue would be when AIAS's convention was to take place, if we have a month or so we should be able to arrange something with our partner the Bronx County Historical Society. Julian also noted the difficulty of showcasing major buildings in a compact walking tour as in the Bronx they are not conveniently clustered in a single neighborhood to make a 1 or 2 hour walking tour. Sara indicated that she will investigate who the appropriate person at AIAS to see if we can participate with them and their tour.

## 6. Chapter Nomination for Fellowship

After last month's meeting we discussed having a Bronx chapter member elevated to AIA Fellowship status, Sara Djazayeri the chapter president indicated she would like to apply and the board officers decided that it would be very positive for our chapter for to be her elected to fellowship status. They directed the Chapter Secretary to send the recommendation meeting the deadline on time and in anticipation of the full board ratifying the nomination at this meeting. Therefore, the Chapter secretary called for a motion to approve Nomination of Sara Djazayeri's nomination for AIA Fellowship status. Nico Zapata made a motion to support the Nomination and Bryan Zelnik seconded the motion. It was then enthusiastically and unanimously affirmed.

After the vote members warned her of the complicated and usually long process for approval and wished success, as she is a wonderful candidate.

## 7. DOB – Up Date

Tony Freda the Chapter's representative to the "Architects' Council of New York", ACNY, indicated that there were two issues that related to Bronx architects. The first is the ACNY's dues which we are behind and second the **most** important was the mayor initiative to produce more affordable housing titled **The City of Yes for Housing Opportunity**.

### ACNY Dues

The council indicated to Tony Freda that the Bronx Chapter is behind in dues payment and they urged us to please make a payment. Bob indicated that the chapter has received the annual bill from the council and although we are late, we have always paid their invoices. In the discussion about our arrears, a question

was raised by a member, why does the chapter need to belong to ACNY at all? Sara asked for clarification on the benefits of membership. Tony pointed out that The Council is one of the **few** organizations that represent architects and small firms who are not Manhattan or large project oriented. Bob indicated that ACNY provides valuable support for small architectural practices, particularly in dealing with building department issues and regulations. There is no one who monitors the City Council, and local elected officials, as well as, the DOB and other governmental regulators of the construction industry, the way ACNY does. They are very thorough and consistent in keeping up with legislation and government activities that affect the construction industry. They are very important to the small practitioner and applicants who are involved with the day by day DOB New York city governmental approval processes. Keeping the ACNY operational and lobbying for us is very important to the small practitioner and applicants who are involved with the day by day DOB New York city governmental process. After this discussion, the members agree that ACNY is a useful resource for members who encounter issues with the Department of Buildings. The secretary was directed to forward the bill to our treasurer for payment.

#### City of Yes for Housing Opportunity

This is a plan to tackle our housing shortage by making it possible to build a little more housing in every neighborhood. Together, our city can produce more affordable housing without dramatic changes in any one community. An important part of this plan is allowing homeowners to create small “accessory dwelling units” or ADUs. Tony indicated that it is a very complicated program that may/will be very important for architects to learn about as soon as possible. The city is about to significantly increase the housing budget allocation as well as change many DOB rules and regulations unrelated to Bronx issues to create housing throughout the city. The idea is to allow a little more housing in every neighborhood, to create a lot of housing overall, without overburdening any one area. Tony indicated that the City is sponsoring a day long zoning seminar on **April 8, 2025** in Brooklyn to go over the mechanics of filing. The goal is to explain the concepts to the architects, engineers and all the real estate professionals interested. He thought, that although there probably will be other sessions /public meetings about this program, if members could attend, it should be very valuable. The seminar specific are in the flyer copied in the appendix.

#### **Appendix III - “City of Yes” NYC Zoning Seminar**

#### **8. AIA Bronx 2025 Chapter Spring Tour - Norwood/Urban Planning**

It was reported that AIA National had approved the chapters’ Spring 2025 Norwood/Urban Planning Tour. Roger McCormick, The Director of Education for The Bronx County Historical Society, and Julian Misiurski will lead the walking tour of Norwood, Bronx, NY, chronicling its’ place in the Bronx and New York City Urban Planning. Included are how historical, architectural and infrastructure construction impacted residential areas, the regional railroad, roads, and reservoirs within and adjacent to Norwood. Urban planning, public and private investment within the context of the growth of Norwood will be reviewed. The tour will take place Saturday **June 28, 2025** at 10:00AM- 12:00PM and will be worth 2 CEU credits. The Tour will start and end at the Valentine-Varian House, 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, in the Bronx, NY 1067.

#### **Appendix IV - AIA Bronx 2025 Spring Tour - Norwood/Urban Planning**

#### **9. New Business**

Two items were raised;, the **AIA 2025 National Convention** and the Chapter participation in a the State 2025 **Built by New York State** competition.

#### **AIA 2025 National Convention – June 4-7, Boston**

Bob reminded the members that starting in the fall, on the first page of all of our chapter newsletters under **Events and Education Opportunities**, as well as, on our and AIA National’s website there are notices and

an invitation for all AIA members to attend the Annual AIA Convention in June. As the notices indicate, this year's Convention will take place in Boston on June 4<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup>. The location is very accessible for our members and it is hoped that as many members who can, will attend. It is important for those architects who have never attended a AIA Convention, to experience the "professional" comradery and interaction that takes place when architects from across the country get together to discuss/deal with the day to day, as well as, the development and construction issues that face us all. If those who will attend could let our chapter president or secretary know, we can coordinate attendance at the appropriate; caucuses, meetings and possibly have our unique Bronx voice be heard. It is a terrific event that is educational, challenging and at the same time, socially a good time. Members are urged to attend!

**Participating in this year's AIANY Built by New York Competition**

Bob Esnard reviewed at last month's 2024 "abbreviated", Chapter Design Competition as a way to have members be selected as Chapter "winners" to be involved in AIANY's – Built by New York state wide competition. At February's meeting members expressed some interest in holding a Design selection for this year. As the state has this design effort every year and offers each chapter in the state complimentary entry for two projects, if they are winners of the individual chapter's design award program for that year. After a short discussion, it was agreed that that we should work on it again. The issue was concluded with Bob again requesting; that if members are interested on working on the selection or to make a submission they should contact him at; 917 318 7097 or by email at; [bensard@dzco.com](mailto:bensard@dzco.com) .

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting concluded with a reminder that the next meeting will be virtual on April 17th. As no additional new business was presented, a motion to adjourn was agreed to.

The **March 2025** meeting ended at **7:32PM**.

**II Next meeting:**

**Thursday, April 17, 2025 @ 6:00PM**

**Virtual - ZOOM meeting link**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9948476766>**

## **IV Appendix**

### **Appendix I**

**AIAS Website**

Page 8

### **Appendix II**

**AIA Bronx Proposed Mentorship Series**

Page 10

### **Appendix III**

**“City of Yes” NYC Zoning Seminar**

Page 11

### **Appendix IV**

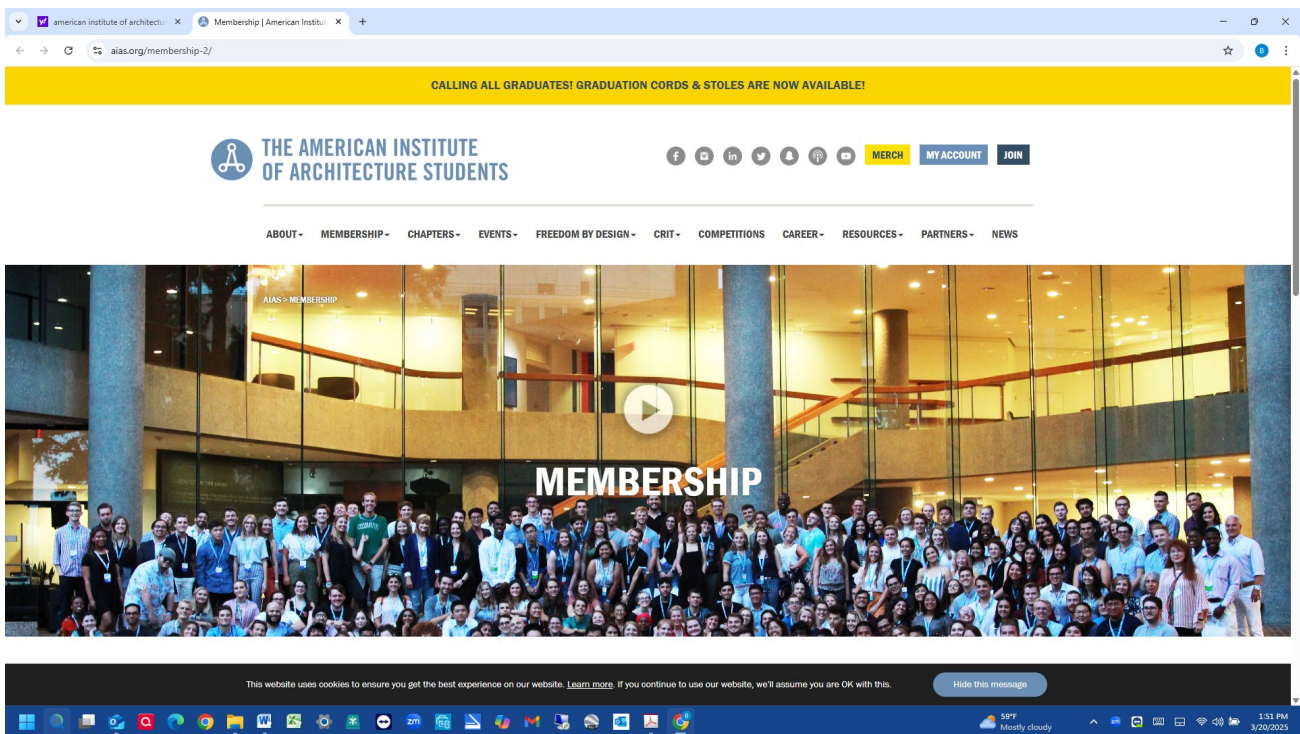
**AIA Bronx 2025 Spring Tour - Norwood/Urban Planning**

Page 12



**Appendix I**  
**AIAS Website**

**AIAS American Institute of Architecture Students**



## Appendix II

### AIA Bronx Proposed Mentorship Series





#### AIA-Bronx Mentorship Series

Empowering the Next Generation of AIA Architects



The **AIA-Bronx Mentorship Series** is an open and transparent conversation for all **architecture students and emerging professionals**. This program provides real-world insights into the profession through candid discussions led by experienced architects.




#### How It Works

-  **Quarterly Sessions (for now!)** – One session every 3 months, expanding to **weekly** next year.
-  **Guest Architect Speakers** – Each session features a different mentor sharing insights via Zoom.
-  **Diverse Career Paths** – Learn about traditional and non-traditional roles in architecture.
-  **Open Conversations** – No lectures—just honest discussions where **everyone participates!**

#### What Makes This Different?

- ◆ **Total Transparency** – Real talk about **salaries, career struggles, and industry secrets**.
- ◆ **Practical Advice** – Learn how to navigate challenges like firm culture, client relations, and salary negotiation.
- ◆ **Problem-Solving Focus** – Hear how seasoned architects tackle real-life issues in the field.
- ◆ **Community-Driven** – A safe space for students and early-career architects to ask anything.

#### Get Involved!

-  **Open to ALL** architecture students, emerging professionals, and architects.
-  **Join the conversation. Learn from real experiences. Build your future.**
-  **Stay updated—follow AIA-Bronx Instagram for session details!**

## Appendix III “City of Yes” NYC Zoning Seminar

---

NYC Zoning Seminar and  
Ancillary Dwelling Unit Forum  
“CITY OF YES” Zoning for Housing Opportunity

While AIANY is not a member of Architects Council of New York (ACNY), the following has professional practice value and thus is deserving of promotion.

April 8, 2025 2pm to 7:30pm

Location: Brooklyn Borough Hall  
209 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn  
(Adams Street Entrance)  
4.0 HSW CE units

This is a forum with the Department of City Planning and the Department of Buildings.

“City of Yes” NYC Zoning Regulation text amendments

[Click here to find out more and to register](#)

Do you have a question regarding the new Zoning Regulations?

Have you identified an apparent conflict between the new Housing Opportunity Zoning regulations and other applicable NYC or NYS regulations?

If so, please email [here](#) so it can be forwarded to the appropriate agency for their consideration for inclusion in the ACNY Zoning event.

Information being forwarded by the Building Codes Committee.  
Click [here](#) to get notices from the Building Codes Committee

Contact Steven Zirinsky [here](#) or at 718 706 0616 with questions

---

## Appendix IV

### AIA Bronx 2025 Spring Tour - Norwood/Urban Planning



## Norwood/Urban Planning

Course Number: AIA Bx19

This course is **2 LU|HSWs**.

### About this Course

The Director of Education for The Bronx County Historical Society, and a Bronx AIA Architect will lead a walking tour of Norwood, Bronx, NY, illustrating its' place in the Bronx, New York City, and Urban Planning. Included are how historical, architectural and infrastructure construction impacted residential areas, the public transportation, roads, and reservoirs within the Norwood neighborhood of urban America. Urban planning, public and private investment within the context of the growth of Norwood will be reviewed. The area grew from the bridges connecting Manhattan in the 18th century, as well as the construction of the railroad, Albany Post Road and Boston Post Road connecting New York City to Albany and Boston. The major roads and Parkways through the neighborhood such as; Gun Rill Road and the Mosholu Parkway, give easy access to the Bronx's regional parks; Pelham Bay Parkway, Mosholu Parkway, Crotona Parkway and Bronx River Parkway in or adjacent to Norwood.

### Tour Specifics

Date	Saturday - <b>June 28, 2025</b>
Time	10:00AM – 12:00PM
Start and End	Valentine-Varian House 3266 Bainbridge Avenue, The Bronx, NY 1067
Price	Architect Member <b>\$20</b> Associate Member <b>\$20</b> Non-Member <b>\$30</b>
Register	Bob Esnard <a href="mailto:besnard@dzco.com">besnard@dzco.com</a>

**The End**