

Questions + Answers from the Providing Your Point Webinar held April 2, 2012

Q: Do you have ideas for how vent chimneys could be used (in a code-compliant way) in buildings larger than single-family houses, specifically in multifamily buildings? I believe the system shown in Le Corbusier's Unite d Habitation would not meet code due to fire separation requirements.

A. There's the rub...it's hard to combine passive measures with fireproof dampers and fire suppression.

The commonwealth countries excel in larger scale examples like Norman Foster @ Masdar, Ken Yeung In Singapore, KPMB @ Manitoba Hydro, and Short Ford @ de Monfort University. So there must be some economy of scale to pay for the additional separation controls needed.

We've done a lot of rehabs of low-rise 1930's era multifamily apartments. Many of these units had light and ventilation wells that were retained under either continuing non-conforming use or because the building/units involved had acceptable fire separation. I look to the pre and post war precedents by Tecton Group (Lubetkin) who employed attractive open stairs that brought ample light and fresh air. Perhaps this approach could be employed today with a deluge curtain and judicious location of fire shutters and of course elevators.

Q: Which sustainability credit systems existing do you reference most when you refer to sustainability (or none at all)?

A. Another really good question. I imagine you are talking about financial credits here! As you probably know Federal programs and a few states provide incentives...these vary from state to state and none cover Vent Chimneys (or if they do...please let us know!!!) The Feds/DOE have something they call an "Innovative Design Request." "This is a process by which specific projects can receive credit in RESNET rating system for technologies or practices that are not currently recognized by the standard."

If you are talking about LEED, we use what we call "Practically Green" based upon over 30 years of architecture and landscape architecture "best practices" and common sense. (and lots of debate).

Q: How did you go about your research for your book, finding the buildings that you featured?

We could probably do a webinar just on the "process." Caren and I collected information on every Wisconsin Home listed in the Historic register. We sent out emails to a national network of architects, writers, landscape architects and lay people to compile a list of 2000+/- possibilities. We used evaluators of diversity, location, construction material, architect, style, period, owner, financial model and narrative appeal to further reduce the listings from 152 to 45. We presented the 45 to the members of the Wisconsin Historic Society and the Jeffris Foundation board to distill to the 20.

Q: What is the name of the book the presenters mention? Where can I purchase it?

[Wisconsin's Own: 20 Remarkable Homes](#) is available at Barnes & Noble, Amazon and at shop.wisconsinhistory.org.

Q: Octagon House: Plans show SQUARE stair well but photo was smooth, curved walls. Please explain. The stair to the basement was square but the stair to the upper levels was round; the first level plan showed both stairs, thus, the confusion, I believe.

A. Very perceptive. As an illustrating convention we typically show the first major floor and as a horizontal section we “cut” about 3’ above that floor and look down ...so we see about 3’ of the just starting to curve stair and also show the straight run stair to the lowest level. The Fantastic upshot was made from the second floor+/- fully into the curved upper stair enclosure. You can look at the HABS upper floors (free via Library of Congress) to see that curve.

Q: Please explain the function of the ""buttery"" room in the octagon house.

A; Buttery is a misnomer, colloquially applied. We thought it was a room where dairy products were stored, but it turned out to be a pantry and china storage room. The room did include a dumbwaiter, food from the ground level kitchen was delivered to the upper dining for the meal and dirty dishes were sent down after the meal.

Q: I believe the House of the Future now exists in Northern Indiana on the shore of Lake Michigan.

A. Right you are...the House of the Future along with several other Century of Progress architectural examples were moved from the Chicago Fair site to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

*If you have additional questions, you can [contact the author](#) through *AIA KnowledgeNet*.*