

Architect responds after Floridians call Caribbean houses 'cardboard'

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Steel

foundations of a building which was destroyed by Hurricane Irma last week. Share to FacebookShare to TwitterShare to LinkedInShare to WhatsAppShare to Facebook MessengerShare to EmailShare to TelegramShare to More Comments made online by two Florida residents calling Caribbean homes 'cardboard' and implying that the buildings were destroyed because they were of shoddy construction sparked a response from a Caribbean architect.

Marc Simmans, who has since hidden his Facebook account from the public, made a post slamming Caribbean houses.

"Dear Weather Channel, please stop showing flattened bungalows in 3rd world countries, that are built to the same specs as 2 of the 3 little pigs houses, and portraying that Florida will look the same. You are making my family worry more than is necessary.

Sincerely, a South Florida resident in a well-constructed building."

Michel Canaday added: *"This is so true I was telling DK this morning that they keep showing islands where they basically use cardboard for their homes."*



However on Thursday, Linda Dias, who is the Chief Architect for the Government of Montserrat, refuted these presumptions.

She outlined that houses in the Eastern Caribbean, once built according to OECS requirements, should withstand winds of up to 180 miles per hour.

"To be clear, the destruction left in the wake of Hurricane Irma is NOT an indictment on the construction techniques within the Eastern Caribbean. The building codes in the Eastern Caribbean dictate that buildings should be designed to take wind speeds of between 154mph – 180mph, depending on the location and category of building."

"Each island that the OECS Building Code accounts for that was affected by Hurricane Irma, has buildings that can withstand storms up to the following wind speeds:

- Antigua & Barbuda – 168 mph
- Anguilla – 176 mph
- British Virgin Islands – 180 mph
- St. Kitts & Nevis – 170 mph
- Montserrat – 172 mph

"Irma is an anomaly of a superstorm that hit the islands at 185 mph," she said.

"To put this into perspective: the frequency of Category 5 hurricanes that make a direct hit on each of the Caribbean islands isn't on an annual basis. Cat 5's start at wind speeds of 157 mph. A hurricane that reaches land at even 160 mph tends to go down in the record books."

"Our construction techniques in the Caribbean region have improved considerably after 1989, when Hurricane Hugo hit the Eastern Caribbean and caused a considerable amount of damage. Hurricane straps, ties, the distance between rafters, etc. were all rethought and strengthened. Although we always welcome new and improved construction technologies, our Building Code is sound, and many of our construction techniques are superior to those in many international countries."

"Hurricane Irma was a fluke of nature," Dias added.

The Times Caribbean also posted a photoshowing the solid steel foundation of another building (pictured above) which had been damaged by Hurricane Irma.

"For those who think Caribbean homes are built of cardboard...this is steel...that used to be upright...let me see you bend it back into place, then let's talk about cardboard!!" – read the caption.

Simmans has since hidden his social media profile after Caribbean people angrily responded to his comments.

Leon Adams:

"It is hard to believe that people are this ignorant and down right dumb to this degree in 2017 at this height of the Information Age...smmfh."

Keisha Chapman:

"Little do they know, we third world countries been building houses to withstand hurricanes for centuries. If Irma destroyed them, that's testament to power of the storm, not to our construction."

Derwyn Bernard:

"Let's not have this ignorant imbecile cause us pain. I am from the Caribbean living in Florida and I am scared living in these stucco, drywall, ply board wire constructed wall. My family has all right to be scared. I am accustomed to concrete walls."

Juanita Breezy Capron McCartney:

"I'm sorry, who is this a**hole? Apparently he has never been to the islands. Being from the Bahamas we have the most structurally sound buildings. The buildings in the islands are built to withstand a Cat-4 so go sit your ignorant ass down somewhere. In the words of my niece-Sit Small!"