

August 22, 2007

On behalf of Rivertown Windows  
Caledonia, Michigan

To whom it may concern:

The purpose of this letter is to commend Rivertown Windows for their assistance in the Green House on Watson project – a joint project by Westtown Jubilee Housing (a non-profit low-income housing ministry) and the School of Engineering at Grand Valley State University. The Green House on Watson was designed for a large low-income family and high energy efficiency was a top priority so that long-term energy costs would be held to a minimum for this family. The thermal envelope – walls, windows, and roof - was critical. We chose insulated concrete form walls (R-32) all the way to the attic, cellulose insulation (R-50) in the attic, and single-hung, low-e glass, argon-filled windows ( $U=0.21$ ) by Rivertown Windows.

A heat loss analysis shows that energy losses through windows can be significant yet we wanted to include many windows for this home to maximize natural lighting. The Rivertown windows with a U-factor of 0.21 are 1/3 better than the Energy Star requirement of  $U=0.35$ , they are beautiful and they are easy to maintain. The proof of this design is in the performance. The family has lived in the house for 11 months. The house is heated with a natural gas forced hot air furnace. Natural gas is also used for the stove and the clothes dryer (with 8 people living in the house this is used a lot). In 11 months the family has used 540 CCF of gas; the monthly gas bill has not been over \$72 and is often lower. This is because the thermal envelope for this house is outstanding - and the excellent windows are a significant part of the outstanding performance that we have seen.

This particular project was the largest community service project undertaken by the GVSU School of Engineering. More than 70 students participated in various aspects of this project and students continue to be involved as we continue to study the performance of this house in engineering classes. Rivertown Windows worked closely with us to choose the windows and also to install them using engineering student help. By involving students and by providing technical information about the windows they also contributed to the educational aspect of this project. The windows were installed without one incident of mis-sizing and they were done in the allotted timeframe. In fact, during the installation of the driveway, we were pleasantly surprised to discover an additional feature of the windows. A redi-mix truck was dumping gravel within 3 feet of the house and next to 2 of the largest windows. The noise outside was deafening, yet inside the house – with the windows closed – we could barely hear the noise.

The Green House on Watson received a LEED-Silver rating from the US Green Building Council under the pilot LEED for Homes program. It also received a 5-Star Plus rating (the best possible) under the Energy-Star Program. The windows are a critical part of the performance of this home.

Both personally and professionally I am very impressed with the company – Rivertown Windows – and their exceptional windows. Their commitment to the long-term relationship with the client is second to none. For that reason, I am giving them my whole-hearted endorsement for having an outstanding product and service ethic. Without reservation I recommend them to anyone looking for a superior performing window.

Very sincerely yours,



Shirley Fleischmann, PhD  
Professor of Engineering  
Grand Valley State University