



CASE STUDY

Specifying Fenestration Systems for Wildfire Risk: The Palisades' "Miracle House"

Conscientious Choices Contributed to Home's Resilience

In early January of 2025, Southern California's wildfire risk was exceptionally high. The region was in a moderate drought, lacking measurable rainfall for more than six months. A high-pressure system to the north and east was fueling powerful Santa Ana winds gusting up to 80 mph. The National Weather Service issued red flag warnings and residents were cautioned to be even more vigilant when it came to anything that could spark a wildfire.

Unfortunately, that catalyst was found in a holdover fire that was set deliberately on New Year's Day, the Lachman Fire. Though this fire was quickly suppressed by firefighters, it continued to smolder underground, burning unnoticed beneath dense vegetation.



Crafted in California since 1961.

Heavy winds brought the fire to the surface on January 7, where it rapidly spread in the Santa Monica Mountains. Within 14 hours, what was initially a 10-acre fire ballooned to nearly 3,000 acres. The area's steep terrain made fighting the fires difficult, igniting what would become a prolonged regional disaster. In more elevated areas, 20% of fire hydrants eventually ran dry. Whole neighborhoods burned.

All told, the Palisades Fire burned for 24 days before full containment. In total, it consumed more than 23,000 acres, devastating wide swaths of the Pacific Palisades, Malibu, Altadena, and Topanga. More than 6,800 structures were destroyed, and 12 lives were lost. It was the most destructive wildfire on record in the city of Los Angeles.

But among the charred landscape, some structures were spared. One of those homes, dubbed a "Miracle House," escaped intact, and it did so with Fleetwood.

Advanced Planning and a Little Luck

Designed by Shelter Homes and built by JJP Construction, the surviving wood-and-stucco clad home stood tall among the devastation of the surrounding neighborhood. Its fortitude is part good fortune, part smart planning.

From its inception, the home was designed thoughtfully as much as it was beautifully. The combination of tactful building material specification, clean landscape architecture, and the use of fire-resilient materials delivered a more resilient structure with fewer elements susceptible to fire. This included specifying Fleetwood's [3070 Multi-Slide & Pocket Door System](#), which features tempered glass and fire-resilient aluminum extrusions.



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The choice in Fleetwood Windows & Doors was one that supported the home's fire resilience. While selecting WUI-compliant products cannot guarantee a survival story, it is part of a conscientious building approach that can increase the likelihood of incurring little to no damage when natural disasters strike. With all surrounding homes falling victim to the wildfire, this Miracle House survived thanks in part to such careful planning—and a little luck.

"Fire has its own goal: finding fuel," said Jason Pietruszka, general contractor/developer for JJP Construction. "It finds its route and devours whatever it can. We're extending the ability for the house to survive and prevent fire damage."

Fleetwood products are fire resilient and can be specified with a variety of high-performance tempered glass. They are sustainable, eco-friendly, and meet building code requirements. This all culminates in windows and doors of superior quality and aesthetic, a reason Pietruszka turns to Fleetwood time and time again.

"It's all in the details," he added. "Product and service matter. Fleetwood meets all expectations on design aesthetic, meets all city codes and standards, and best of all, they service their products."

A Fire-Resilient Ingredient

Like everywhere, homebuilding in Southern California consists of a series of deliberate choices. Fleetwood products meet California Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) and Title-24 requirements, offering a level of fire resilience that surpasses typical vinyl or wood doors and windows. This is due in part to the composition of their products.

"Aluminum is a very strong alloy," said Mike Chavez, regional manager for Fleetwood. "We use T6063, which is good for strength, durability, and aesthetics. It can exceed 500°F worth of heat. Aluminum really stands a lot better than vinyl, which is plastic and has corrosive toxins that will disperse into the air. Wood obviously burns a lot quicker too."



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This competitive advantage allows Fleetwood to deliver a product that can be resilient in the face of fire while also providing jaw-dropping aesthetics and uncompromising performance. Fleetwood windows and doors feature extrusions with AAMA 2605 painted or Class I anodized finishes, meeting the most stringent standards for architectural coatings and offering superior corrosion and abrasion resistance. For additional durability, each product wears marine-grade stainless steel hardware with electropolished brushed stainless or painted surfaces.

Specifying Fleetwood is a decision for the long term, one backed not only by masterful craftsmanship, but also the industry's only true, transferable limited lifetime warranty regardless of location. Fleetwood's warranty applies even after change of ownership, protecting a home's value for generations as it is bought and sold.

In wildfire-prone locales like Southern California, Texas, Colorado, Oregon, Arizona, and others, Fleetwood offers ample protection from the elements, giving homeowners added assurance and greater peace of mind.

A Choice That Lasts

Though "Miracle House" survived the Palisades Fire, countless other structures were lost in the blaze. But in that loss arose unity and resilience. For Chavez and Fleetwood, the urge to assist in the rebuilding effort was more than a gesture of goodwill. It was a commitment to support their community.

"We manufacture in Southern California," added Chavez. "These are our neighborhoods, these are our friends, these are our neighbors. It's a community effort, and we want to make sure that we're doing good for our area."

That sense of responsibility continues today.

"We are proud to partner with local organizations to help our neighbors rebuild with confidence," said Rebecca Cottrell, general manager at Fleetwood Windows & Doors. "Non-profits like Case Study 2.0, Team Palisades, and Build Back Pali are making a real difference in the recovery efforts in Southern California. By working alongside these groups, as well as generous builders and architects, Fleetwood is committed to supporting the community and helping restore homes and hope across the region."

While no window or door alone can prevent loss, Fleetwood's fire-resilient systems remain part of a broader strategy for building stronger, safer homes across Southern California and other fire-prone locations.

To learn more about Fleetwood's fire rebuild program following the Palisades Wildfire, visit www.fleetwoodusa.com/en-us/palisades. **F**