



MFC NEWS

“Building Understanding”

MFC will find out the truth about buildings and answer the hard questions.

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What's New at MFC...

Myles's daughter Julia passed her boards recently. Congratulations Dr. Corcoran!

April 1st marked MFC's 26th year of construction consulting. A very warm thank you to the clients and friends we've made along the way who have helped make 26 years possible.

On April 28th, Senior Inspector/Consultant Micah Rodler celebrated 8 years with MFC and Administrative Assistant Clif Wooten celebrated 2 years. Congratulations, guys, and many more to come!

MFC Tip of the Day

When it comes to construction defect lawsuits, often a Plaintiff, whether a homeowner or a contractor, must weigh principle against what is pragmatic. Construction defect cases are rarely as clear cut as either side sees them. Most cases take years to reach settlement. Once a case is settled there is no guarantee that any party will be made whole or feel victorious. Even if the Plaintiff is completely in the right, it may be less expensive, less stressful and less time consuming to simply fix it out of pocket.

What is clear is that when defects are found, repairs must be made. What is a bit murkier is when to repair and file a suit and when to repair without.

MFC recommends consulting an attorney specializing in construction defect cases and an impartial construction expert. Put emotions aside, look objectively at the facts and try to approach your situation with resolution, not retribution, in mind. Most of the time, both sides want the same end result: a fixed building and no dispute.



Quote of the Day

“Architecture should speak of its time and place, but yearn for timelessness.”

~Frank Gehry, Architect

Wisdom Corner

By Myles F. Corcoran

When we are not helping folks figure out what went wrong with their building and how it can possibly be fixed, we are helping design buildings that will, we hope, never need anyone to come behind and answer those same questions. For your next project, consider asking a specialist such as MFC to do the waterproofing design.

If we count projects as one each, our design side has more jobs logged than our investigative / construction defect side. If, however, we looked at these

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same categories in terms of hours logged, the scale shifts drastically to the investigative side. This highlights the point that it's better to spend a little more money up front to get the waterproofing right the first time rather than investigate later to figure out what went wrong.

It is so much easier to correct mistakes on paper than in buildings. What has gone wrong with a building is often under the finishes where you cannot easily see the problem. This fact means it will take time to uncover the problem and, once an issue is positively identified, it often requires removal and replacement of expensive finishes to repair. We have seen this scenario on hundreds of failed buildings. Here are two examples:

1. A Contractor approached MFC as waterproofing designers on a set of eight high-end condominiums by the beach. The developer however balked at our rough estimate of \$10,000 to not only draw up the design, but do on site, first instance training where we show the team how to do the fenestration install per our design. In the first winter after the construction was completed, we were called to help the developer and builder answer the complaints of leaks. Before we closed the book on that project (years later), we had invoiced just under \$75,000.
2. A developer approached MFC to discuss our waterproofing design services on a 55 unit townhome project. Our proposal came in around \$15,000, which the developer declined. Again, the first winter after project completion, leaks began to show up. We were called in to pinpoint the problem and help fix it. We invoiced just under \$100,000 for that project.

In both cases, the repairs ran over \$1,000,000 and the projects went on years longer than they should have, costing the builder, developer, their insurance companies and owners time and money - all unnecessarily.

This does not have to be how things go, but the value of professional waterproofing design is often not understood. Design professionals usually know that they need to bring in specialists. There are nearly always civil and structural engineers. Following those trades, there are often HVAC, electrical, landscaping, lighting and other specialists brought in, but much less often waterproofing designers.

In residential and smaller commercial/public works projects, it is often the case that there is no "real" waterproofing design. Designers and owners leave those details to the builders. Builders do what they think will work and, when things do not work, builders get asked to fix things at their own cost or they get sued. Designers usually do not get sued. They did not provide details so it is not their fault if it was built wrong - right?

We recently looked at the plans for a beautiful \$4.5 million home that has endemic rot under the finishes. The exterior waterproofing detailing is barely outlined, however the design for the shoe shelves in the master closet is highly detailed.

Architects are artists. They design the finished usability and form of the buildings, which is necessary and good. Structural, civil and often other elements are designed by specialists the principle designer enlists. It is rare for a specialist in waterproofing design to be engaged. There remains a lingering myth that any average contractor will

simply “know” how to build the waterproofing aspects.

For your next project, consider asking a specialist such as MFC to do the waterproofing design and first instance training. In our particular case we have long and wide experience in looking at

building failure. We know how wrong things can go and we can help you avoid many of the common pitfalls we’ve seen over the years. You may never know for sure, but it could save you a lot of time and money in the long run. A stitch in time saves nine.



About MFC News

MFC News is the e-Newsletter published quarterly by the Editorial team at Myles F. Corcoran Construction Consulting, Inc. (MFC) located in Santa Cruz, California. It is circulated to our colleagues in the construction and construction-related fields. Visit our website www.mfcbuild.com for more information and testimonials.

Please help us make this a “Construction Community” endeavor by sending us your feedback, comments, wisdom, and ideas for future issues. Call (831) 476-4502 or contact us at: <http://www.mfcbuild.com/contact/>

