

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR BUILDING GOES BAD

By: David L. May, Jr., AIA

50% of the buildings in the United States were built in the last quarter century. Many new construction techniques and methods of assembling building materials were developed as a response to the energy crisis of the 70's and the persistent inflation it caused. The inflation forced an all out effort to develop new and cheaper building materials and that's where many of today's problems come from. Many buildings have incorporated new materials and methods that were developed during this time. Some of these have not withstood the test of time. Products such as: ureaformaldehyde foam insulation, fire retardant plywood, polybutylene piping, EIFS and hypalon roof membranes were some of the better known building product failures that were part of the response to the 70's crises. Even buildings with tried and true materials have been experiencing problems as those old materials are put together with new methods.

Buildings with persistent problems have been around as long as man has been creating shelter. That's not new. What is new is the extent of the problems. As buildings have gotten larger, taller and more complicated the magnitude of the defects has greatly increased. As architects have pushed the envelope of technology and form, the ability of the workman has not kept pace and defects have been the unwelcome consequence. Famous failures such as the John Hancock Building in Boston and the Kansas City Hyatt Skywalk collapse have captured much attention, but small insidious defects have actually caused more damage. Leaks are more damaging because they often go undetected, or they don't get the needed attention until the damage is done. That's where Architectural Building Forensics comes in. It is the study, evaluation and testing buildings with persistent defects to determine their cause and solution.

The DLM Architects Forensics Department consists of registered architects and engineers who are experienced in the evaluation of defects and damage to existing buildings and buildings under construction. We have various investigative techniques and instruments which assist our architects in determining the cause of the building's problems.

The services we provide to building owners are as follows:

- Hail damage assessment
- Structural settlement
- Subsidence
- Wind damage
- Wall leak investigations
- Window leak investigations
- Roof leak investigations
- Storm damage assessment



- Structural damage
- Water damage assessment
- Mold & mildew
- Building material failure
- Specifications and drawings for repair or replacement
- Bidding
- Construction inspection

DAVID L. MAY, JR., A.I.A.:

25 years experience practicing architecture

Registered Architect, Virginia, North Carolina and Maryland

For the execution of these studies, Mr. May combines his architectural background with an understanding of the mechanics of good design and years of experience with design and construction procedures. In addition to his expertise, he has overseen the firm's most challenging renovation and repair assignments. His expertise includes forensic architecture, as well as serving as partner-in-charge for the roof repair or replacement for more than 3,500,000 SF of roofing systems. His professional affiliations and achievements include:

- President, 1996 Community Associations Institute, Southeastern Virginia Chapter
- President-Elect, 1995 CAI, Southeastern Virginia Chapter
- Board Member, 1994 CAI, Southeastern Virginia Chapter
- Speaker of the Year, 1993, 1997 & 2000 CAI, Southeastern Virginia Chapter
- Member of the State Board for Architects, Professional Engineers, Land Surveyors, and Certified Interior Designers and Landscape Architects, 1996-2000
- Committee Member, The Study of Wind Resistive Design, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Housing and Community Development - 1993
- Panelist, Hurricane Aftermath Conference, Ocean City, MD, 1994
- Board Member, American Institute of Architects, Hampton Roads, (1984-1999)
- Guest Lecturer at Regent University Law School for 2nd year Real Estate Law Curriculum in 1992 and 1993;
- Educational seminars to the Southeastern CAI, When to Call in the Professional, Hurricane Preparedness and Construction Defects: Negotiate, Litigate or Bite the Bullet

- Society of American Military Engineers, Disaster Readiness Committee, 1995-1996
- Member, Governor's Blue Ribbon Strike Force on the Capital Outlay Process, 1994

