

Resort Trades

MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

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To the Rescue!

Employing design professionals and the Request for Proposal (RFP) Process to save time and money on maintenance and capital improvement projects...

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We recently received a call from a long-time client. They had taken over management of a very high-end project. The HOA had contracted with a construction company to replace several water- and termite-damaged wood windows in the large, twenty-plus year old complex. The contractor had already installed many of the replacement windows. The manager called and asked us to come take a look at the installation because he felt "something just didn't seem right". That's because it wasn't.

In today's busy construction and real estate environment, it can sometimes be difficult to find the right contractor to perform the smaller, but still necessary and occasionally critical modifications required to maintain your property in tip top shape. Many of the past articles in this series have discussed the advantages of putting together a top-notch design team, including the right contractor, for the design and construction of a new project. These people are your resource for all aspects of the project, from initial concept through the placement of the last accessory and the arrival of the first, soon-to-be-satisfied guest. You

turn to them when you need to do an end-of life-cycle upgrade on your FFE. But what happens down the line, five, ten or even twenty years into a project's life when the critical systems and structural portions of your project begin to need attention? How should you approach getting these quite important but less grandiose projects done in a professional, timely and cost effective manner?

Involving appropriate design professionals in every aspect of modifying the infrastructure of your property is a critical step in assuring a quality result. It could be your architect, structural, mechanical or electrical engineer, or all of them, depending on the scope of the project. Clear, precise and complete documentation of the problem and well designed solutions from your design professionals are the best road to take for quality, cost effective results.

We arrived at the job site to find a disaster waiting to happen, and soon learned the entire history of what had taken place. A previous management company had allowed the HOA to contract for the window replacement without the aid of a single design professional. The HOA had simply contracted with a company that "somebody knew did that kind of work...". The contract that the HOA signed was the one submitted to them by the contractor rather than a standard AIA Contract. Even though the HOA felt the intent was clear, this contract had no language requiring the contractor to match the new windows to the existing windows size, color, style and detail. There was no language requiring

that the windows be installed per the manufacturer's requirements, including all flashing, drip pans, anchors, shims, etc. There was no language requiring the work to be done within a specific time period. There was no language requiring a final acceptance of the work before payment. You can probably imagine the outcome of this scenario....

Where the old windows had been removed and new windows installed, the new windows had absolutely no flashings or drip pans. Light was visible around the perimeter of the window and air infiltration was obvious. Not only had the windows been improperly installed, but they did not even remotely match the overall size, sill height and detailing of the adjacent remaining windows on the same wall. No permit for the window replacement had been obtained by the contractor and there had been no design professional oversight of the contractor's work during construction. The previous management company felt that this should be the responsibility of the completely overwhelmed property manager. Complaints to management were mounting, and action was necessary.

This entire problem could have been avoided, and much money, time and effort saved, had a design professional been retained at the time the decision was made to replace the windows, as we subsequently were. Our scope of work began with Due Diligence. This included examination of the existing windows and existing installation to determine which windows actually did need to be replaced and for which reasons. Next



was a review of existing as-built documents (which the HOA actually did have – a definite plus) that had a wealth of information. We then called the original window manufacturer to determine availability of the same or similar windows, or the ability to manufacture them as a custom product (remember that the windows were over twenty year old!) Luckily, a quality product had been initially installed, and the manufacturer confirmed they could match the existing windows exactly. Construction Documents were produced that the windows in each of the units within the complex that our Due Diligence determined needed to be replaced, along with the size and configuration of each existing window. The Documents also included proper detailing for removal of the old windows, the temporary measures required, interior and exterior finish repairs, and installation of the new windows according to the manufacturer's

requirements. Specifications for exterior color, material, interior finish, detailing, glazing and accessories such as screens, operators and locking devices were also part of the documentation.

This package of information became the basis for a Request for Proposal (RFP) that was sent out to qualified, licensed contractors with a documented history of successfully completing similar projects. The documents were also submitted to the governing authorities to obtain a building permit, a necessary step when modifying structural or permanent building elements.

The HOA has already spent several tens of thousands of dollars and now will likely need to pursue court action against the original contractor. Significantly more money has been wasted than would have been spent hiring the design professional in the first place. Involving your design professional in any and all capital or large scale maintenance projects can be an effective way of assuring



quality results, saving significant amounts of time and money, keeping your operations running smoothly, and maintaining happy, satisfied guests and owners.

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