



Waterproofing Solutions

Protecting Your Most Critical Assets

by Peter Innes

One of the most critical decisions in the life of a community association is the choice of a roofing and waterproofing system that provides a long-term solution. The wrong decision on this issue can result in significant community problems and costs. In fact, construction statistics show that the majority of all building litigation results from roofing and waterproofing issues.

While traditional roofing and waterproofing products may conform to economy at the time of installation, new advances in reinforced liquid applied resin membranes now offer savvy building owners and managers a long-term built-to-last solution.

These membranes are comprised of cold fluid applied resins, which, when combined with a reinforcing fleece, cure to form a fully reinforced monolithic membrane that protects practically any architectural element. These membranes are designed to provide full adhesion to the substrate, display uniform bond strength, and encapsulate the entire structure from edge to edge. In contrast, traditional roofing and waterproofing systems are made up of layers with glued and welded seams that display uneven bond strength. It's here in the seams and flashings where the point of failure typically occurs. In fact, most failures in waterproofing systems result from the flashings, seams, and transitions. Because reinforced liquid applied resin membranes virtually bond to the sub-structure, they are a superior solution for any architectural structure.

Reinforced liquid applied resin membranes form their own flashing system, creating a fully adhered, seamless watertight system that prevents water migration. This ability to adhere to the entire substrate is what gives these systems their superior performance. Conventional products require additional components in a non-integrated system, creating inferior seams and flashings which can allow moisture to migrate from an entry point.

For added flexibility, reinforced liquid applied membrane systems can easily accommodate future renovations, repairs, and maintenance. For roofs with HVAC systems and other mechanical equipment, reinforced liquid applied membranes are fully adaptable to transitions, handle multiple penetrations, and are suitable for vertical, horizontal, and overhead applications without interruption.

In addition to roofing systems, reinforced liquid applied membranes are ideal solutions for almost any type of project including plazas, landscape roofs, planters, underground applications, fountains, gutterways, balconies, terraces and interior applications including mechanical rooms and below grade facilities.

An example of how these reinforced liquid applied membranes systems can be used by community associations can be found at Harbours Edge, an assisted living community in Delray Beach, Florida where residents faced a real challenge with their plaza deck. Until recently, their 40,000 square foot deck was unusable. The original paver network had become a maintenance nightmare. Its non-reinforced waterproofing system had caused the pavers to be removed so many times for repair that many of the pavers and their supports became damaged. So many pavers had been damaged that eventually, the deck became unsafe.

The owners of Harbours Edge knew it was critical that the waterproofing below deck be failure-proof. They needed a long-term solution and began an exhaustive search to find the solution that would best avoid any future failure. After researching the different options available, they decided to use reinforced liquid applied resin membranes.

The contractor first removed the existing pavers and waterproofing system, and installed a reinforced, cold fluid applied membrane. Since the application cured in the shape of the substrate that it was applied to, it provided the advantage of superior protection, especially at critical areas such as penetrations, vertical transitions, and drains.

The contractor installed a plaza deck assembly consisting of high quality insulation and sand-set interlocking pavers. In addition, a shuffleboard court was converted to a PGA tour-quality synthetic putting green covering a large part of the plaza deck area. The new waterproofing assures the owners of Harbours Edge that their plaza deck is safe from disturbance of constant repairs.

Steven Cortazzo, President of Kemper System states

“Community associations are presented with a number of difficult decisions, and too often, the association members do not have enough information to make critical decisions that involve waterproofing. If you only look at competitive bids for the same type of waterproofing solution, then you’re really not looking at every available solution. You’re only looking at cost when you should be looking at cost and performance.”

When community associations approach a roofing or waterproofing project, often the only distinguishing factors between bids are price and/or warranty. Choosing a system solely on these criteria too often leads to a system that does not live up to the associations expectations. Adaptability for unique construction, removal of overburden in case of a failure, maintenance requirements, exclusions from the warranty, and involvement of the manufacturer in the design and installation are factors that will have much more to do with the success of the system than price and warranty. It is usually advisable to employ a roof consultant or engineer for these projects to assist with the product selection and design.

Bernie Abrami, who manages the Florida market for Kemper, lists a number of unique challenges in the Florida market. “In addition to the need for superior adhesion because of the high wind zone, Florida had some additional unique issues such as thermal shock resulting from extreme variances in temperature from sun to rain, as well as exposure to UV and salt.” He points to projects such as the Don CeSar Resort in St. Petersburg Beach, Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, and the Hilton Hotel in Lake Buena Vista as examples of projects where liquid applied membranes provided solutions for roofing systems, planters, plazas, pool decks, and terraces.

Peter Innes is owner of Innes Communication in Saddle Brook, NJ. Information for this article was submitted by Kemper Systems of Boca Raton, FL. ■

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