

French Quarter Facelift: *The Full Service Approach*

Everyone knows that Mother Nature, pollution, airborne corrosives and time all take their toll on a building. The resulting wear and deterioration of a building is, unfortunately, inevitable. With proper care, however, the life of a building's exterior skin can be extended. One of our most current exterior restoration projects took us to a hotel in the heart of New Orleans where, once again, Chamberlin's full service approach to cleaning, restoring and sealing the entire building envelope added another successful restoration project to our list of jobs well done.

The J.W. Marriott Hotel, formerly known as The Meridian, was built over 25 years ago on Canal Street, just two blocks from Bourbon Street and The French Quarter in downtown New Orleans. During the last 25 years the building has had very little maintenance and renovation. When The Meridian was purchased several years ago by CNL Hotel Development Company (CNL), major upgrades and changes were on the horizon. And with the new J.W. Marriott emblem on the side of the building, the hotel had to visually live up to the standards of the many beautiful hotels in the J.W. Marriott family.

Over the years, the exterior stucco walls had deteriorated in several areas and the eighth-floor pool terrace had begun to leak. To evaluate the condition

of the building, CNL enlisted the help of Vince Smith of Williamson and Associates, Inc. Architects. Smith designed the repair approach and produced architectural drawings giving locations and repair methods. He also provided a list of acceptable contractors that could perform individual parts of the restoration, including Chamberlin, to CNL.

Having already worked for CNL Hotel Development on similar projects in Washington, D.C. and Dallas, Chamberlin competitively bid to perform the entire scope of work from demolition to patching, re-waterproofing and sealing.

"Since we are a one-source contractor for restoring and waterproofing an entire building envelope," said Project Estimator Terry Maitland, "we were able to offer the owner a turnkey solution for the whole restoration project. Plus, we have the manpower to tackle large projects in multiple states and still remain price competitive."

Chamberlin began working on the hotel just before Christmas 2004. The exterior renovation required demolishing the stone tile around the pool deck, re-waterproofing the pool terrace and planters, installing new tile and repairing stucco on the first eight floors. Perhaps the most logistically challenging aspect of the project was the fact that the work was to be completed while the hotel remained open and fully

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Paul Beavers, President Systems Building Envelope Consultants, Ltd.

Patios, Plaza Decks & Balconies . . . a Case of Mistaken Identity?

Today, more and more commercial properties such as apartments, hotels, condominiums and office buildings are being designed with custom features such as balconies, plaza decks and patios. Often, these features are constructed over useable space and thus must also be considered rooftops. Frequently, the construction details and installation of balconies, plaza decks and patios are not scrutinized as closely as those in a roofing assembly, yet they still

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Chamberlin Named Master Contractor

Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing was recently awarded the 2005 Master Contractor Award from Firestone Building Products Company. This award is given in recognition of Chamberlin's dedication to quality roofing installations. "Firestone Master Contractors represent the finest professionals in the commercial roofing industry," said Michael Gorey, president of Firestone Building Products and CEO of BFS Diversified Products, LLC. "The exceptional inspection ratings achieved by Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing over the last year have earned them the Master Contractor Award, and Firestone proudly congratulates them on their outstanding work."

2005 marks the 11th time for Chamberlin to attain Master Contractor status. This year, only 250 commercial roofing contractors throughout the U.S. and Canada were named Firestone Master Contractors. Firestone-licensed contractors earn the Master Contractor Award each year based on total square footage and quality points accumulated for achieving exceptional inspection ratings on Firestone Red Shield warranted Rubbergard™ EPDM, UltraPly™ TPO and asphalt-based roofing system installations.



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require properly designed waterproofing/roofing systems to prevent the infiltration of water into the building.

Because we don't remember to treat patios and the like as the rooftops they are, we often misuse and abuse them. On rooftops, maintenance personnel are encouraged to restrict access to reduce unnecessary foot traffic and potential damage to the roof system. Roofing assemblies are also designed to shed water and thus eliminate ponding. Yet with balconies, plaza decks and patios there is a great deal of pedestrian traffic because tenants and guests entertain on them. Elaborate decorative planters and the like are also often placed on these areas, complete with sprinkler systems. These things seem harmless, but in actuality, planters, sprinkler systems and even foot traffic are the kinds of things we avoid putting on a roof system since there is occupied space below.

Plaza areas, patios, balconies and the like often have waterproofing material submerged below the walking surface. The walking surface generally consists of tile, concrete topping, concrete pavers or some other barrier over the waterproofing membrane itself. Sometimes these designs have some form of drainage such as internal drains and/or through-wall scuppers. Other times the design simply allows the water to flow off the edge of the balcony. It seems that designers often fail to remember that these areas are essentially rooftops and thus forget the fundamental elements of roofing such as drainage and long-term waterproofing. Aesthetics often overrule functionality and typically the critical function, long-term waterproofing, is overlooked. In many cases drainage is completely neglected, which leads to premature deck or balcony failure.

Another serious challenge related to pedestrian plaza decks is that they are most often accessed by way of doors with thresholds and will typically have wall systems directly above them. The transition between the vertical wall systems and the horizontal waterproofing system must be designed in a manner so as to prevent the entrance of water into the structure. Thus, every construction detail above the roofline (horizontal plane which is waterproofed below the wall) must be designed to be watertight. Control joints, window/door mullions, thresholds and so forth all must be integrated into the waterproofing assembly to provide flow away from this transition.

One of the most disregarded details is the door and/or window pan, which is typically custom fabricated to fit beneath the door and/or window system. Water damage that results from the lack of these critical details can be unbelievably costly. In the absence of a pan, water accumulates within the deck and begins to damage the substrate below until complete structural failure occurs.

***About the author:** Paul Beavers is the president and manager of Systems Building Envelope Consultants, Ltd., which provides roof and wall evaluations, draft and issue specifications and installation monitoring on a nationwide basis. His knowledge is frequently called upon as an expert witness in litigation as well as for destructive testing and evaluating failed roof and wall assemblies.*



The pan resists the backflow and blown-in rain while also providing a catch for any water accumulated above this detail, which gravity forces toward the vertical to horizontal transition.

Even when the door pans have been properly provided they are sometimes mechanically anchored to the base of the door and/or window system, thus setting up this well thought out detail for failure. This is rather common. Though a property manager or building engineer should not consider this type of detail to be complicated, it is very often overlooked and not addressed properly during the new construction phase. These and similar waterproofing details are usually only discovered once a failure has occurred, thus requiring a leak investigation of the plaza deck.

When having to properly detail and waterproof failed plaza deck assemblies, it makes sense to replace the existing walking surface since it has to be demolished to access the waterproofing system and make necessary repairs. Decorative, removable concrete pavers are recommended replacements. These surfaces protect the waterproofing from the elements while, at the same time, making the waterproofing accessible by the ability to remove the pavers without destroying them. This type of a design likewise allows the water to channel beneath the pavers thus eliminating any slippage issues related to standing water. Not only does the removable paver system address the functionality, but it also provides a more appealing and upgraded rooftop appearance.

More specific detailing and coordination of work would go a long way toward preventing these types of water infiltration problems. Property managers clearly bear the burden of maintaining these types of plaza decks and balconies in a watertight condition. When problems arise it is critical to get to the source of water entry in order to design a long-term, yet cost effective, repair. Trapped water or moisture will cause extensive damage to areas that are not normally considered a roof. These areas should be considered what they actually are: rooftops. Truth is, they're quite challenging rooftops.

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