

SOUND HOME INSPECTIONS

I N C O R P O R A T E D

3801 N.E. 98th St., Seattle, WA 98115 (206) 522-0282

April 3, 2009

Mr. Lee McDonald
PO Box 4311,
Bellingham, WA 98227.

Re: 1101 McKenzie Ave. Bellingham. Washington

Dear Mr. McDonald,

The following is my report about the site visit to the property sited above, commonly known as the Young Building. This report is also based upon the photos taken during my visit and some documents that you provided subsequent to that date.

During my visit I was able to see the exterior of the buildings, the roof of the Young building, some of the parking and garage areas, most of the common areas in the Young building and portions of your units. I also took a look at portions of the Waldron building's exterior and parking areas. My inspection work was visual and didn't include any type of testing, any destructive work or use of specialized instruments or sampling. I spent about 3 hours at the site. As such, this is a report of a preliminary inspection of the building.

My preliminary findings are:

The Young – Waldron Complex

This complex of mixed-use condominiums consists of two building and an underground garage. Portions of the underground garage are located under McKenzie Avenue. The Waldron building includes some pre-remodeled elements. The Young building appears to be a new structure with some historic design elements. The construction at this site appears to be about 2 years old. There are some areas with more recent modifications and some incomplete repairs, "punch-list" items and active leaks.

Underground Garages and Related Areas¹

Portions of the underground garages are located under the buildings and other portions are under walkways, patios, sidewalks and under McKenzie Avenue. There are many areas of water intrusion (leaks) at all of these areas. There are also signs of modifications and repairs that appear to be related to these leaks.

Some of the leaks are at perimeter walls, the garage slab and other areas with relatively minor apparent² consequences. Such leaks tend to increase maintenance requirements, may limit the use of some areas and can result in slippery surfaces. Other leaks can result

¹ These findings are listed in the chronological order of my visit.

² Based upon the limits of this preliminary inspection work.

in damage to vehicles, building elements (walls and ceilings) and maybe related to plumbing and drainage system issues.

Some water intrusion into basements and other underground areas, like these garages, are common. The leaks noted here are unusually severe and appear to be the result of several types of problems:

Street Tree Locations

The original design and your report show some street tree areas. There are also some signs of water stains and current water intrusions. The planned-for tree areas have now been eliminated but this doesn't appear to have solved the leak problems.



Sidewalk and Related Modifications

There are a number of areas with caulking and other modifications at the sidewalks, the intersection between the building structure, the entrances and walkways. Planters and/or brick siding details have been eliminated. Some of the brickwork repairs have been started and some mortar and caulking modifications are apparent. Most of this work appears to be incomplete and some of the work is sub-standard.

For example the brick and mortar modifications are messy and uneven.
Active leaks are evident in the garage ceilings under the areas with sub-standard work.



The photo (immediately above) shows an area at the east side of the Young building. The leaks here appear to be related to moisture entry at the patio between the two buildings. These leaks appear to be active and are likely to damage the doors and frame and the electrical lines and fixtures.

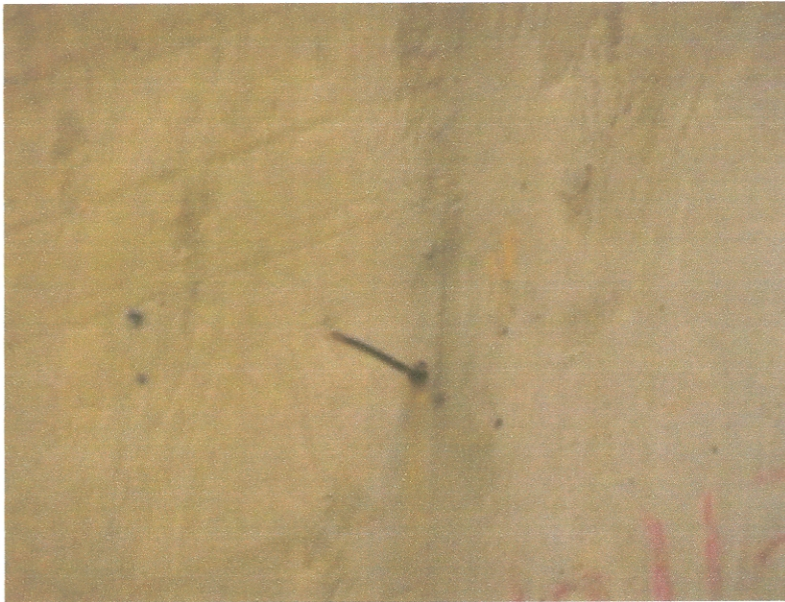
Leaks at Storm or Waste Line Drains

I noted some leaks at drain lines in the garage areas. Some of these pipes appear to be storm water drains from the interior courtyard area and others maybe waste lines. Some

attempted repairs are evident in these locations but some of these leaks appear to be active.

Concrete-Work “Details”

There are a number of areas with unfinished or sub-standard concrete work “details”. Some of this work is normally part of the “punch-list” items that are completed at the end of any construction project. Such “details” may also be an indication of defective work that is no longer visible or could not be inspected during this preliminary inspection.



The photo above shows one of numerous form ties similar items that should have been trimmed during the finishing portions of the construction. There are also some areas with pieces of wood concrete-form material that have not been removed and areas of uneven concrete surfaces that should have been corrected.

Roof and Related Items

The current roof hatches are located above stair areas and away from stair landings. This makes roof access difficult and potentially dangerous. The use of a portable ladder to reach these hatches is difficult and potentially in conflict with safety codes. Heather Killebrew, you and I accessed the roof by means of a damaged portable light-duty ladder at one of the roof hatches.

The building plans are very clear regarding the roof access. For example, page A6.01 (3/7/07 revision) shows a fixed ladder with a handrail. This detail is also seen on several other pages and is a common detail for a roof access location of this type. Safe roof access is required for regular maintenance and repair work and for emergency access. In this case, roof access is required for additional roofing repairs, regular cleaning, HVAC³ service and inspections.

³ Heating, Venting and Air-Conditioning

Roofing

This roof system consists of membrane roofing (torch-down material) that appears to have been installed over a layer of rigid foam insulation. This type of a roof is sometimes referred to as a “hot roof” and is designed to be a structure without voids. Unlike roofs with attics and other spaces between the insulation, the sheathing and the roofing, this type of a roof doesn’t have a venting system. However, in this case there are some purposeful voids under the expansion joints and the pattern of work suggests that there maybe some voids above the rigid insulation. This suggests that moisture can get trapped inside the roof structure and thus cause fungal wood-rot damage.

The roofing material on this roof shows some sub-standard work and some areas of repairs. There are also some signs of leaks at the northwest staircase and these might be related to the roofing issues.



The photo (above) shows an example of several patches and short roofing caps that don’t extend over the edges of the “parapets.” It also shows one of the HVAC roof penetrations with messy use of foam sealant in place of a cap that would prevent water penetration.



This photo (above) shows one of several areas at the expansion joint caps with one or two generations of repair. These caps are designed to cover airspaces between structural elements in the building. Leaks at such locations could travel several floors down and into the building and garage structure. The absence of roof venting systems could aggravate this problem.

Roof Drainage

Workmanlike roof drainage provides for overflow drains. Such drains are designs to provide for roof drainage in cases when the primary drain system is clogged – a common problem with flat roofs. Overflow drains can prevent large water accumulations and leaks through various plumbing vents, ducts and other necessary roof penetrations. This roof lacks such overflow drains and contains some areas with single scuppers (drains) and no secondary drainage points.

Based upon these findings I have found this roofing system to be unreliable. The access to the roof is unsafe.

Siding, Trim and Related Flashing

Brick Siding

As noted above, some of the brickwork has been modified in a sub-standard manner. I also noted some incomplete and damaged brickwork. For example, the photo below shows one of the areas of exposed metal “lintels”, in this case with a sharp edge at the southwest corner of the Waldron building. This sharp corner is in a foot traffic area. This photo also shows some areas in need of mortar repair and cleaning.



Some other areas of brickwork show some small cracks, uneven work.

Fiber Cement Siding and Wood Trim

The photo (below) shows an example of trim material that was not capped with flashing. As seen in this photo, water accumulates at the top of the horizontal (white) trim material. Flashing is the workman-like manner to prevent water penetration and damage at such locations. The use of caulking to take the place of the flashing is a sub-standard practice.



The photo (below) show some inconsistent and other defective trim and flashing practices. The photo on the right shows continuous flashing at the top of the “belly”

board. In the photo the left flashing is interrupted (a short piece) on one side and is missing on the other.

Workman-like trim, siding and flashing details are very important and a part of the manufacturers' specifications and standard practices for this type of siding. Similar practices are required in most other types of siding. Defects of the type noted here are often associated with exterior envelope failure.



Summary of Findings and Recommendations

My partial inspection of this complex found a number of defects and some areas of sub-standard work. Some of the original construction work appears to be incomplete and/or defective. There are also some areas with past or current repair/modification work. Some of this work is also defective and/or incomplete. There are a number of areas with current water intrusion/leaks and areas with potential leaks.

The relatively early appearance, extent and distribution of these defects should be regarded as very serious. I based this conclusion upon my extensive experience with these types of buildings and with exterior envelope failures. The many defects found here must be corrected as soon as possible. This work must be done in a comprehensive and workman-like manner. As part of this work, attention must be given to the likelihood of other leaks and hidden defects.

It should be noted that small leaks can result in more serious problems than larger leaks. Large leaks tend to be easier to identify and their sources tend to be easier to locate. Small leaks may allow a limited amount of water to enter into building assemblies. Such moisture can be trapped for a long period of time and promote damage from wood destroying organisms.

I recommend the following course of action:

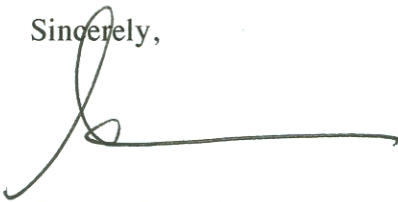
1. A complete inspection of the entire complex and all of the units. This inspection work may require some destructive testing.
2. Some re-design work and the development of architectural details and specifications for the repairs and modifications.

3. Careful selection of a qualified contractor⁴ for this repair and corrective work.
4. Professional supervision of the repair and corrective work.
5. Ongoing monitoring and maintenance work.

During my review of the various documents that you provided, I noted a section entitled "Exhibit VII – Report of Qualified Building Enclosure Inspector". This section appears to contain a 1 page letter by Arbour North dated 6/25/07 about the windows systems. This section appears to be incomplete. Such a section should include information about all of the elements in an enclosure report, e.g. siding, roofing etc.

Please let me know if you need any further assistance regarding this matter or have any questions.

Sincerely,



George Guttmann
President

Cc: Heather Killebrew
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Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

⁴ Workman-like repair and correction work for such a job is more exacting than original construction work.