

REPORT OF TRANSITION STUDY

EXAMPLE CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION

BA Burns and Associates – Engineers

Executive Summary

Those portions of the building construction that are declared to be the common elements of the *Example* Condominium Association have been found, in general, to be of high quality both in material selection and the level of workmanship.

Commentary on exceptions to the construction is provided to assist the client in negotiations with the developer as part of the process that transfers governance of the Association to its Board of Directors. Conditions found during the roof evaluations represent the most significant exceptions to the construction.

A. Intent and Scope of the Study

A transition study documents the physical condition of the common and limited common elements of a community interest development that is in the process of being transferred from developer / declarant to the “Unit Owners’ Association”, typically its board of directors. Its purpose is to make certain that the common elements meet the intent of the available design documents (commonly drawings and specifications) and to document any exceptions to those documents. These exceptions may then become items for negotiation between the developer and the board of directors and may potentially form conditions upon which the board accepts transfer of the property held in common.

In conducting the transition study for *Example* Condominium, we reviewed design drawings for construction of the buildings prepared by ----- Associates – Architects, Inc. We inspected the site conditions including drainage and the major structural components of the buildings that were open and available for viewing. The Declaration and By-Laws were reviewed principally to discern those components that are part of the common holdings as opposed to those within the unit boundaries and the responsibility of individual homeowners. We consulted with the representatives of the client and the developer as necessary to obtain specific items of information.

A transition study is commonly done in parallel with a capital reserve study. The latter provides guidance to the board for future management of the capital reserve fund. Since the physical condition of the common elements and the fund to replace them are clearly linked, it is vital that both be viewed in tandem at the time of transition. If there are conditions present before turnover that will impact on the future upkeep of the common elements, those conditions need to be planned for during transition.

The primary focus of this transition study was on the major components of *Example* Condominium. The following is offered in the hope that it will be of some help in addressing the results of this study:

Regarding expectations during the transition process, “... the expectation (is sometimes) created among owners that there should be monetary compensation or that the construction should be brought into conformance with the approved documents or applicable codes regardless of the nature of the discrepancy. This reaction is understandable, but it fails to take into consideration factors such as field changes necessitated by unexpected conditions during construction, any approvals by governmental inspectors and agencies of such changes, alternative methods of compliance with codes, if any, and, finally, the impact of such variations on the durability and usefulness of the project improvements at issue. Clearly, where there is a serious health or safety problem, or a substantial economic issue such as significantly higher maintenance costs, the association should seek to hold the developer accountable. However, far too frequently owner-controlled associations assert that they are entitled to redress for every such

discrepancy and run the risk of impeding an effective dialogue with the developer regarding the major problems. For instance, does it really matter if the landscaping is in a different location or if the species vary from the approved plan if the maintenance costs and aesthetics are generally comparable? The focus should be on items that count, such as fire-safety measures, structural soundness, and so forth.”⁽¹⁾

The helpful assistance of the following in preparing this study is acknowledged:

(1) *Report #1 Reserve Studies / Management*. Community Associations Institute Research Foundation.

B. Property Description

The *Example* Condominium Association consists of ----- units in ---- buildings. Each building has four levels, with a parking garage beneath. There is a detached clubhouse providing two levels of community spaces. Roadways are the common property of the Association. The development is served by municipal water supply and sanitary sewer systems.

The topography of the site is moderately sloped with a generally southwest drainage pattern toward retention ponds.

C. Observations and Recommendations.

We present here what are considered exceptions to either the design documents or commonly accepted standards of construction. These items should be matter for discussion with the developer during the transition process. Where appropriate, a cost estimate is provided to cure the exception.

There are invariably exceptions to be found as part of the report of any transition study. Some of these may be incomplete work items.

The common elements of *Example* Condominium are considered to be of a high quality both in material selection and in the level of workmanship that put them in place. Commentary that describes the condition of all these common elements can be found in the capital reserve fund study for the Association.

D. Exceptions – Recommendations - Costs

Site

1. The edges of the bituminous pavement for the access road from ----- Road have raveled and need to be repaired. This roadway is 14' wide, which leaves little room when even two passenger vehicles are passing. Winter conditions could compound the safety issue. If this road is to remain in use as an access road and part of the common ownership then the client should consider eventual widening it. *Cost: \$12,300.*
2. Curbing at the northwest end of Building One should extend around in a radius to protect the shoulder of the approach road from ----- Road. At present traffic appears to ride over the corner creating a rut in the shoulder. *Cost: \$1,600*
3. The sidewalk running from the clubhouse to Building Three is a bituminous concrete textured pavement product embossed to replicate a brick pattern. Edges of the sidewalk are damaged and transverse cracks were seen at random locations. The sidewalks need to be repaired and a solution devised to prevent future damage. *Cost: \$2,500*
4. The catch basins between Buildings Three and Four leading into the parking garages are silted up and require cleaning out. The inlet and outlet piping for these catch basins should be rodded out to make sure they are free of silt. *Cost: \$800*
5. The lawn for the embankment adjacent to the entrances to the parking garages for Buildings Three and Four is damaged and needs to be re-seeded. *Cost: \$400*
6. The pavement leading into the garages for Buildings Three and Four is only a base course. A finish wearing course needs to be placed and catch basin rims lifted to the new grade. The same is true for the roadway and parking area in front of Building Four. *Cost: None. This is an incomplete work item.*
7. The textured sidewalk in front of building four has not been installed. Only the base course is in place. *Cost: None. Incomplete work.*
8. Debris needs to be removed from wells for garage air intake / exhaust openings. Some of the gratings for the tops of these wells are loose and need to be fastened in place. *Cost: \$1200*

9. Standing water was found behind Building Four along with saturated soils. Run-off from elevated land beyond the development appears to be finding its way to this location. Positive drainage of the location should be devised. The wet condition may have followed heavy lawn irrigation. *Cost: Developer provide solution.*
10. Random limbing up and selected cutting of trees behind Buildings Three and Four is required. Improvements to the landscaping required behind these buildings. The client may want to walk the site with the developer to agree on the scope of landscaping and tree work that will be done.
Cost: \$2,000
11. The embankment slopes for the retention pond across from Building Three are eroded in some locations. The field grass seed that was initially placed appears to have been washed out. These locations will need to be re-seeded. Some of the sod at the top of the slopes has died off and needs to be replaced. *Cost: \$6,700*
12. The fence that runs along the tops of the walls in front of all buildings can be moved in many locations with little force. A check on one post for this fence revealed a steel rod within the hollow vinyl post that is driven into the ground as the support for sections that run between posts. No concrete footing for the steel rod was seen. A concrete footing for these support posts would be the preferred practice. *Cost: \$4,800*
13. It appears that there is an understanding among some unit owners that a walking trail around the perimeter of the property was intended to be part of the landscaping. The client may wish pursue this issue.
Cost: To be determined.

Buildings

Foundations

All four buildings are of the same design. The foundations are of poured concrete. Inspection of the visible portions of the exterior faces of the concrete foundations revealed no structural exceptions. Inspections of the interior portions of the foundations that were visible in the garages revealed these conditions that warrant monitoring:

1. Building One:
Evidence of past water entry was seen in the room housing the electrical load centers for the building. Water appears to have entered at the floor to wall joint. Repair joint. Cost: \$500.
2. Building Two
Random cracks seen in the concrete floor slab of the garage throughout the field of the floor. There are construction / expansion joints in the floor which are intended to relieve stresses from thermal expansion during curing of the pours. A crack at the approximate center of the garage floor (1/16") runs from foundation wall to foundation wall. There is a crack in the foundation wall that has been repaired by pressure injection of epoxy compound to prevent water entry. There is a crack in the opposite foundation wall at the approximate terminal end of the floor crack. It appears that floor drain piping may run under the floor crack. A limited amount of concrete cover over the pipe chase may have allowed this cracking.
3. Building Three
A transverse crack (1/16" to 1/32") in the garage floor at the approximate center was seen similar to that in building two. Again, the location is over what appears to be a building floor drain. Random curing cracks seen in the field of the floor.
4. Building Four
Transverse crack in the floor slab at the approximate center of the floor similar in extent and location as that of buildings two and three.

All these floor and wall cracks should be monitored twice a year for any change in pattern. Any significant changes in the cracks that indicate a condition other than that caused by curing should be the subject to evaluation and individual repair solutions designed.

Roof Coverages

The roof coverage is of two types. The center portion is a continuous ethylene propylene diene terpolymer (EPDM), fully adhered, 0.60" thick membrane manufactured by Roofing Products International, Inc. The roof perimeter, gables and lower pent roofs are covered by a fiberglass core overlaid with asphalt shingle manufactured by IKO.

We conducted evaluations of the roof coverages for all four buildings. A report of their findings is included in the Addendum. The principal findings relate to a need for corrections to the flashings of roof penetrations, more secure terminations of the membrane, and of more significance, corrections to the patching of the EPDM membrane, primarily on Building Four.

The estimated costs to repair the exceptions found are:

Building One: \$2,500

Building Two: \$4,500

Building Three: \$5,300

Building Four \$11,000:

Structures

The principal support structure for the building floors is provided by steel I beams with wood bar trusses spanning across the steel beams to which are nailed and glued the plywood sub-floor. Gypcrete topping poured over the plywood sub-floors provides the floor surfacing. The roof support structure is a pre-fabricated truss system with 5/8" CDX plywood as the structural deck.

No exceptions to the building framing structure were seen.

Fire wall separations seen in the attics of all buildings. If not already done, the client should have the Exeter Fire Department review the operation of fire detection systems for all four buildings. Inspection tags for the building sprinkler systems are current as is the elevator inspection certificates.

The interior finish work of the completed buildings is of extremely high quality.

Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning Systems

Each homeowner unit has its own gas fired furnace and refrigerant coil for cooling. The compressors for the coils for the first, second and third floor units are ground mounted outdoors at the building ends. The compressors for the refrigerant coils for the fourth floor homeowner units are located on the building roofs. Wall mounted units on the fourth floors provide cooling only to that floor. Their compressors are mounted on the building roofs. There is no other heating or cooling equipment for the common areas.

Electrical Feed and Distribution

Each building is fed underground from the street with a main building disconnect within the electrical room in the basement. In this room are the 100 ampere disconnects for the units along with their power consumption meters. The house circuit disconnects and meters are located there. The elevator controls are located in their own mechanical room.

Some routine clean up should be expected within building four, the fitting out for which was incomplete at the time of the inspection.