



El Escorial Owners' Association

To Whom It May Concern:

After years of leaking buildings, termites and mold problems El Escorial can finally relax and enjoy the beautiful buildings and location that we have here in Santa Barbara. Since 1998 we have been struggling with these construction defect issues, and have endured major litigation while living with the problems associated with leaky buildings.

With some fear and apprehension we embarked on this reconstruction project. We hired an architect and a contractor and very quickly realized that we also needed a construction manager. We reviewed proposals from several construction managers and unanimously chose Design Build Associates. Their experience, reputation and qualifications far exceeded others in the industry. The Board entered into a contract with Design Build Associates and almost immediately we began to see the fruits of our decision. We soon realized that the path we had started down with the architect and contractor were not sufficient to resolve our problems and we would be wasting time and money to continue. Design Build brought valuable experience to the process that we were about to undertake, and offered remarkable insight and wise counsel on how we should proceed. With Design Build's guidance, we revamped the project to include all of the critical components necessary to truly resolve our water intrusion problems once and for all. This meant that we also needed to pass an assessment since our funds were insufficient to complete the entire scope of work. Design Build Associates put together a comprehensive report for our homeowners which they presented several times. Additionally, they assisted us in the necessary communications with the homeowners so that the owners would understand the need for the funds, and the process that we needed to go through to accomplish the goal of leak-free buildings. Design Build helped us with resources such as financial institutions that would loan to associations' needing funding for projects like ours, and most importantly, they gave us confidence that if we consented to their advice we would achieve that which we really wanted at the end of the project.

Throughout the project, we relied on Design Build to advise us on what we should do concerning material selections, scheduling, how we should handle issues with the contractor, how we should deal with issues with certain homeowners, as well as how to track the expenses so we knew where we were financially and what was remaining. This was not an easy process and on many occasions we relied on Design Build to help us deal with frustrated and/or angry homeowners. Design Build met weekly with the contractor during the entire process and we were invited to attend those meetings whenever we felt the need to do so, and we did for the majority of the time. We are confident that our \$11 million dollar project was money well spent.

Design Build was able to demonstrate to us areas where major savings occurred. Design Build's poise and confidence during the whole process was very reassuring to the Board and the rest of the membership and we quickly came to understand that if we trusted their advice we would emerge from this project with the desired result. Design Build's counsel proved to be invaluable to us in all of these areas and **we can confidently state that the recommendations and savings proposed by Design Build Associates, more than paid for their services to our Association.**

Today as we near the end of this project we have beautiful, water tight buildings and new landscaping. Our homeowners are thrilled with the results, excited about the transformation, and we no longer will be dreading the wet winter days.

It is without any reservation that I can highly recommend the experts at Design Build Associates to anyone who is considering a reconstruction project. I would be more than happy to speak with anyone about our tremendously positive experience with Design Build Associates.

Sincerely,

Barbara Caudry
President
Board of Directors
El Escorial Homeowners Association