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Knowing When to Demo

A common question that comes up in the restoration industry is to demolish or not to demolish. The decision to demolish, either completely or selectively, versus repair/renovate is a vital part in most restoration projects. Whether the loss was caused by water damage, fire damage, or storm damage, the single most important thing to remember is safety. It does not matter if it is a residential or commercial property, it is imperative that a structural engineer assess the property to determine if it has been compromised and if it can be repaired. The stamped report from the engineer will more than likely need to be presented to the city or local building authority.

A house or building found to be in poor structural condition might be better off demolished, as it could be the safest and cheapest option. If the building can be repaired, the question becomes should the building be repaired. Factors such as cost, condition of the building, building code upgrades, and historical significance should be considered. Insurance carriers will more than likely have a say in the decision depending upon the language in the policy. Below are some considerations to take into account when it comes to choosing demolition or repairing.

Demolition Considerations:

- Is the property architecturally significant? Is the property a historic property or in a historic district? There might be a historic preservation ordinance and laws in place to protect historic resources and character. Many communities, towns and cities establish historic preservation commissions and process for considering alterations and demolition.
- Teardown restrictions can require structures to strictly adhere to the predominant architectural size and standards for the neighborhood.
- Demolition permits may require site specific testing for lead and asbestos prior to demolition. If these materials are present, the cost to dispose of them may be significantly higher.
- Environmentally critical areas, such as wetlands, have different restrictions.
- The cost to demolish and rebuild a home or business is highly variable.
- Utilities must be disconnected, including water, sewer, gas, electricity, and cable. Some cities may require that utilities be disconnected all the way to the right of way or property curb line.
- If there is a mortgage on the property, the owner will have to involve the bank in the process.

Repair/Renovation Considerations:

- Repair/renovation is an alternative to demolition. Cost can accumulate further into the project as unforeseen problems may arise such as opening up walls and discovering pest/termite infestations, leaking pipes, mold, cracked foundation, damaged wiring, etc.
- Many homes and commercial buildings were built prior to the strict building codes that are present today. Rebuilding or restoring the structure may require the property be brought up to the current building code.
- Living expenses can add indirect costs to the repair/renovation budget. Sometime projects can be completed in stages, allowing the owner to live in/work from the property as it is being repaired.
- Depending on the extent of the damage, planning and zoning review may also apply.
- Substantial rehabilitation of historic structures or in a historic district may qualify for tax credits.

In the event that you suffer property damage due to water damage, fire damage, or storm damage, it is important to choose an experienced and trusted restoration contractor. An experienced contractor will be able to rely on the knowledge they have gained from years in the field and be able to walk you through the process in order to make the best decision for your project. Until next time my friends, be prepared and stay safe.

September 2016

Events

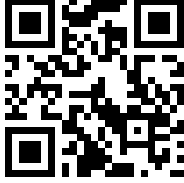
September 1: SAMA Luncheon
 September 1: ACA Luncheon
 September 5: Labor Day
 September 13: CAI Luncheon
 September 13: SACA Luncheon
 September 15: Austin BOMA Luncheon
 September 15: SAHLA Showcase
 September 15: SAABE Luncheon
 September 21: AASMOCA
 September 21: SA BOMA Luncheon
 September 21: AAFAME Expo
 September 22: IWSA Luncheon
 September 23-25: TASA-TASB Convention
 September 30: IREM Fish Bowl

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 SAMA Luncheon ACA Luncheon	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 CAI Luncheon SACA Luncheon	14	15 Austin BOMA SAHLA SAABE Luncheon	16	17
18	19	20	21 AAFAME Expo AASOMCA Social SABOMA Luncheon	22 IWSA Luncheon	23 -----TASA-----	24 -----TASB-----
25 ----Convention-----	26	27	28	29	30 IREM Bowling	

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