LEAKY ROOFS
LEAD TO TIDY WALL
BUSINESS

When a California roofing contractor checked homeowner complaints, he found water leaks coming from the walls instead. His unique solution has led to a growing wallcoating business.

Contractor Dick Newton, a roofing contractor who discovered the potential in walls and ceilings, talks about the number of townhouses he’s done in this California capital city, and right away you know that this is different.

Newton is president of Western Foam, Inc., which specializes in spray-applied PUF roofing covered by an elastomeric coating based on RHOPLEX® EC acrylic technology from Rohm and Haas Company of Philadelphia. Over the last seven years, his company has applied the system on three sprawling townhouse developments here: The Casitas Arden, Casitas Manzanita and Casitas El Camino townhouse complexes.

But Newton’s idea of “doing the buildings” didn’t stop with re-roofing: he’d discovered walls. At each of the three developments, which together total over 700 townhouses, Western Foam is also coating the exterior walls with an elastomeric acrylic wall coating specially designed for such applications.

“When I say we’re doing the buildings, I mean we’re doing the whole building—roofs and walls,” said New-

Rollers were used to apply the Acryshield A-300 elastomeric wall coating to the scrolled stucco walls at the Casitas developments. The rollers permitted applicators to apply more coating to the walls.
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In addition to the 600,000 square feet of roofing involved, the job totals almost 700,000 square feet of walls that have been or will be coated with the elastomeric acrylic wall coatings.

And it all started with a rather startling proposition made by Newton and his son, Randy, Western Foam’s vice president.

“We did the Casitas Arden project first,” said Dick Newton. “That’s 150,000 square feet of roofing, plus about 160,000 square feet of walls.

“We had finished the roofing, and the Casitas Arden Townhouse Association came to us and told us they were getting leaks,” Newton said. “They thought it was the roofing, but when we checked, the problem was actually caused by cracks in the stucco walls.

“That’s when we decided to use the elastomeric wall coating—Acryshield A-300—on the walls,” Newton said. “They didn’t think it would work, so we made them a proposition: We’d apply it to a few walls as a test, and if it didn’t work, they didn’t have to pay us. They only paid if it worked.

“Well, we applied it and eventually we got a heavy rainfall,” Newton said. “No problems. The coating worked, but they weren’t convinced. The same thing happened with the second rainstorm, and they still weren’t convinced.”

But the third time was the charm. “The third time we got a heavy rain, that clinched it,” Newton said. “They were convinced.”

Five years later, the gamble has paid great dividends for the residents as well as Western Foam. “They hired us to do all the walls, carports, garages and metal trim at Casitas Arden,” Newton said. “In other words, the complete buildings, including the clubhouse and 2,000 sq. ft. of stucco wall around the complex. And we’re starting at Casitas
El Camino, which is the same size as Casitas Arden.”

But it was the first application, at Casitas Arden, that remains the most important. “We became the prototype,” said Vera Brown, president of the Casitas Arden Townhouse Association, which manages the complex and hired the Newtons to apply the elastomeric wall coating in 1982. “The same developer built two other complexes with the same basic construction problems. Now they’re also waterproofing the walls and foaming and coating the roofs.”

Brown, who says the Association is “very pleased” with the job done by Western Foam, confirms that the performance of the foam/acrylic roofs and the elastomeric wall coating has been “outstanding.”

Newton is proud of that performance record. “We’ve never had to go back because of a performance failure at Arden or Casitas El Camino,” he said.

On the walls, the reason for this performance can be found in the coating itself, said Brian Sexauer, Vice President for Sales at National Coatings Corp. of Culver City, Calif., which formulates Acryshield® A-500 (roofs) and A-300 (walls), the elastomeric acrylic coatings used in the Casitas applications.

Sexauer said that because the wall coating is an elastomeric, it provides great flexibility for the coating, allowing it to bridge cracks in concrete surfaces such as the scrolled stucco walls at Arden and El Camino. In addition, said Sexauer, its durability “allows it to remain flexible over the years.” Moreover, the coating’s superior dirt pickup resistance keeps it “looking like new for years,” said Sexauer.

“The walls had a scrolled stucco finish,” he said. “And with a roller, the very top of the (stucco) surface gets thorough cleaning of the existing stucco surface, said Newton. Western’s crews then applied a cementitious patching mortar to the larger cracks.

The next step, said Newton, is the application of the elastomeric coating to the walls. Although the coating can be applied by spray, roller or brush, Newton said that the stucco walls at the developments dictated that the elastomeric be applied by roller. The color chosen for the walls was beige, Newton said, and in addition to using it on the stucco, the crews also applied the wall coating to portions of the exterior walls which were covered with T-111 wood siding material.

“The application really moves quickly,” said Newton. “The application of the elastomeric coating to the walls. Although the coating can be applied by spray, roller or brush, Newton said that the stucco walls at the developments dictated that the elastomeric be applied by roller. The color chosen for the walls was beige, Newton said, and in addition to using it on the stucco, the crews also applied the wall coating to portions of the exterior walls which were covered with T-111 wood siding material.

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