



# Roof/Top/Topics

In This Issue...Design Issues – More on Walls – Last Part, For Now.

This newsletter is the third in a series of newsletters dealing with waterproofing issues (roofing and otherwise) related to walls.

A client recently called because a “leaking roof” was causing mold growth at the rear of one of their tenant’s spaces. The photo below clearly shows mold growing and the arrow points to a stain on the ceiling tile that is also water damaged.



The wall is a mess. The client was horrified and wanted to know why we had projected a life expectancy for this roof of another 2-4 years, or more.

We referred the client to the following photo in the next column, which was part of the report they had received from us for this shopping center. The arrow in this photo shows a dark horizontal line running below the top of the coping. This is where the top course of block sits and the line is darker because there is actually a crack in the mortar joint. This is where the water has been entering. (There is no corresponding photo on the topside of the roof, because there wasn’t anything wrong on

top to report!) The roof is not leaking and these leaks are definitely not roof related.

The crack in the wall is located almost 24” above roof height. The ceiling shown in the first photo is located below the roofline and below the steel bar joists that support it. So the ceiling is perhaps as much as 48” or more below the crack on the outside wall. It takes a lot of water to soak a wall so completely that it starts dripping out the back side and staining a



ceiling tile!

You can also note that most of the mold and intense discoloration is on the mortar joints. Mortar is more porous than the actual masonry units so it will tend to hold more water.

The problems seen on the inside of this wall could be roof related and the typical building owner, like our client, assumed this was roofing related. Dispatching a roofer to fix this is a complete waste of time. The next time you have “leaks” at an outside wall, before you call the roofer, be sure to check the outside of the building to make sure your walls don’t have cracks like these! Note also in the last photo the rust on top of the wall. This will be explored in the next newsletter.