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News Release:

New Roofing over the Puerto Rico Supreme Court

By: Eduardo Garcia (Roofing Specialist)

The Puerto Rico Supreme Court Building is a Modernistic Tropical Movement Architectural landmark by Osvaldo Toro & Miguel Ferrer Architects dating back to 1956. Cutting Edge concepts in efficiency design, like natural illumination, cross ventilation, the use of a reflecting pond as A/C cooling tower, Brise-Soleil (Shading Device) façade, and a vapor permeable mica sand insulated roof deck with a Johns Manville Felt-Asphalt & Gravel Roofing made this building “Green” well before being green became fashionable. With the coincidental retirement of some Judges, the understaffed Court was under such a severe workload that no open days were available for a disruptive Roof & Deck reconstruction intervention. Add to this an unpredictable sub-tropical weather and you have a recipe ready for disaster.

Architect Luis Yordan from the Sierra, Cardona, Ferrer Architects firm worked with the roofing contractor Josean Rivera from Surfaces Contractors Inc. and Newcon Caribbean as the Johns Manville local presence in Puerto Rico in the design, selection and execution of a reliable, sub-tropical extreme weather proven, hurricane resistant, non disruptive installation roofing system. The half a century old original roofing system had been re-covered over a decade ago but the sprayed in place urethane cover used, soon deteriorated under the severe sub-tropical sun exposure.

The removal of all existing roofing down to exposing the original insulating dry mix mica sand over the perforated deck, was followed by a cast-in-place, pitched-to-drains, latex enhanced Mearlcrete® Cellular Concrete hard shell cover. Gardner's foundation coating and ModGrip® adhesive were used as primer and overnight sealant for the curing Cellular Concrete. The roofing membrane chosen was an SBS fully self adhering DynaGrip® Cap & Base system by Johns Manville. The polyester reinforced Cap provides the puncture resistance necessary for the roof mounted A/C equipment servicing. The Johns Manville exclusive pure Asphalt-to-Asphalt bond on the self adhering DynaGrip® system ensures the extraordinary deck and inter-component bond that a tropical hurricane wind up-pull will require.

A couple of afternoon scares came when a morning removed open roof was exposed to menacing tropical rainstorm clouds that shadowed and even drizzled over the still fresh Cellular Concrete shell pour. Fortunately the job was done without major incidents and the Tribunal Supremo de Puerto Rico now has a reliable roof for many decades to come.