



FEMA

Wet Floodproofing Reduces Damage To Popular Beach Restaurant

Key West, FL - The Duval Beach Club sits on the only natural stretch of beach in Key West. In 2005, it was hit by Hurricanes Rita and Wilma. Thanks to the mitigation efforts initiated by the restaurant's owner, Fred Tillman, worries about flood damage have been reduced.

The building that houses the popular restaurant, as well as the land it occupies, is owned by the City of Key West. When Hurricane Georges made landfall in September 1998, the building sustained so much damage that the previous leaseholders were forced to abandon it. The City of Key West then leased the property to Mr. Tillman and his partners. Mr. Tillman proposed the idea of wet floodproofing the restaurant and completed the retrofit. So far, his efforts have protected the property from hurricane damage.

The concept of wet floodproofing is simple: provide means to allow floodwaters to enter, flow through, and exit a building, thereby preventing more severe damage to the building as a whole. Non-absorbent materials and/or coatings are used to allow easier cleaning and sanitizing of interior surfaces after a flood event.

When designing the Duval Beach Club, Mr. Tillman utilized his experience as a marine surveyor who once inspected damaged buildings in the Caribbean. He recalled, "most of the time, tiki huts, with their basic pole construction, were still standing when everything else around them was gone."

"When hurricanes come, [restaurant personnel] evacuate," said Mr. Jones. "They remove barstools, stoves, and other equipment that would be damaged by flooding. They open the place up, and let it flood. When the storm has passed, they shovel the sand out and put it back into shape."

According to Mr. Tillman, cleanup after a storm does not take long. The Duval Beach Club is usually open for business within 10 to 20 days. The cleanup involves shoveling sand back out onto the beach, cleaning and sanitizing surfaces and fixtures, repainting, and simple repairs. Mr. Tillman keeps his staff on the payroll to assist with the cleanup. Although other businesses in the area are sometimes closed for months, the Duval Beach Club is operational within days, providing a much-needed service to the community and ensuring that the restaurant's staff has continued employment following a storm.

Mr. Tillman asserts that the mitigation efforts were worth it. "The money that we originally invested in the mitigation has been recouped many times over. When storms approach, we no longer have to worry about repairing the building, replacing the equipment, or losing revenue due to being closed."



Monroe County, Florida



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

\$140,000.00 (Estimated)

Primary Activity/Project:

Flood-proofing

Primary Funding:

Property Owner, Commercial