

We're all becoming more familiar with what you require to get your repair scopes accurately assessed, but don't rest on your laurels once that is done.

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THE PROCESS IS NOWHERE NEAR FINISHED ONCE YOU'VE SIGNED OFF WITH YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY / PMO.

The first thing that you need to insist upon, is that the architectural designer that is doing your document is licensed with the Department of Building and Housing with at least a Design 2 license - this ensures that they are experienced in detailing technically difficult buildings. Insist on nothing less than this license category. If the insurance company says that a license level of 2 is not necessary due to the house being a complete rebuild, then this isn't enough in my opinion. The designer needs to understand how buildings perform in earthquakes and how they are affected by the ground conditions, designing accordingly (eg. Symmetry and balanced structure distribution are critical in TC3 areas).

Also, make sure that your consultants and builders are locals. This is for a few reasons:

1. They've experience the earthquakes, and understand how they affect buildings (and what possible damage there may be even if it's not immediately visible).
2. They're able to check on things immediately when the need arises.
3. Social conscience - the design and building industry was put on hold for close to a year (and is still on hold for a lot that aren't at the forefront of the rebuild) - businesses and families have suffered great hardship because of the earthquakes, and they deserve the first break - not 'out of towners' that have come down to make a buck, they can help once all of the locals are busy.
4. Once the dust has settled, and the rebuild / repairs are all complete – you need to be able to get in contact with the builder if you have any issues – they're liable for their work for a number of years.

With the work that my company is undertaking, what we're doing with the earthquake repairs is first meeting the assigned builder, plus structural engineer on site, and reviewing the damage and repair strategy with the project manager and owner present. If we come up with completely different repair solutions than what are listed, the project managers may need to adjust their figures with the QS accordingly.

The design process is all about practicality and liability. We're being asked to sign off on liability with our repairs, so we're going to make sure it's done properly. Make sure that all consultants and builders involved have been in business for at least 5 years – that way you know they've been able to trade through the recession and know how to run a successful business - this will ensure that they will be around in the future if anything goes wrong – be careful with anyone that has recently formed a new company, as they may not be around for long enough to offer any security in their design/workmanship.

Once the building work is complete - make sure that you get a copy of the builders construction producer statement, the structural engineers producer statement, and the architectural designers practical completion certificate. This is your final quality assurance checkpoint - if these items aren't willingly supplied, then you need to know why...

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