



CITY OF ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

Planning Department
Building Division

May 20, 2003

Mr. Frederick P. Horn
Presiding Judge of Superior Court
700 Civic Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Re: Orange County Grand Jury report regarding wood roofs.

Dear Mr. Horn:

We are in receipt of the Grand Jury report that addresses issues related to wood roofs in Orange County. The recommendations based on the findings propose that all Orange County cities require roofs having a minimum Class A rating. The report also addresses the lack of uniformity in requirements for wood roofing throughout Orange County.

After reviewing the report, the following comments have been prepared by staff.

In the 1997 code adoption process, the City of Anaheim adopted a Class B roofing standard for our City based on climatic, geological and topographical conditions. As a result, Anaheim already has a more stringent standard than some of our Orange County neighbors. In addition, Anaheim has adopted standards for areas that have been designated as very high fire hazard severity zones. The State of California standards only allow the use of Class A designated roofs in this area. These requirements apply to the areas east and south of the 91 and 55 freeways. Not all cities in Orange County have these designated zones. Adopting the standards recommended in the report would only affect new roofs. In Anaheim, the largest vacant area for future residential development is already in the designated very high fire hazard severity zone, which already requires Class A roofs.

It is our experience that many wood roofs are being replaced with asphalt shingles, tile or composite tile materials. Very few roofs are being replaced with wood. Older non-rated roofs are diminishing in number due to age, market, insurance companies and style.

Listed below are responses, as required, to the findings and recommendations.

Findings

1. There is lack of uniformity in local building codes involving roofs for identical environmental conditions within Orange County.

Response: It is acknowledged that there are different standards enforced in Orange County. One standard does not seem appropriate based upon differing climatic, geological and topographical conditions that may exist from city to city (i.e. costal, hillside, flatland, etc.).

2. The testing and qualification standards of wood shakes and shingles are below the environmental conditions of Orange County.

Response: This issue does not seem relevant for Anaheim due to our Class B minimum requirement.

3. The cities' and counties' roofing codes do not adequately take into account the climate, particularly the Santa Ana winds and topographical conditions unique to Orange County.

Response: Anaheim has taken this into account in its very high fire hazard severity zone (Class A standard) and throughout the balance of the City, which has a minimum Class B standard, which exceeds that of the 2001 California Building Standards Code.

4. Fire conflagrations stress finite fire fighting resources especially during the period of Santa Ana winds.

Response: The City of Anaheim has its own Class I rated municipal Fire Department that is prepared to respond as needed to any incident. In addition, Anaheim has mutual aid agreements in place with surrounding jurisdictions. As previously noted, the occurrence of wood roofing in Anaheim is less than it might otherwise have been due to more stringent standards that have been in effect for a number of years.

Recommendations

1. Each responding jurisdictional agency should consider amending the building code to require the most fire retardant class of roofing covering (Class A) for new construction of all residential structures (Group R) in all fire zones. (Findings 1 through 4)

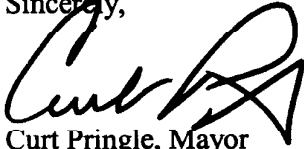
Response: We have considered the recommendation and given the issues addressed, do not feel that there is a compelling argument to adopt this standard. As noted, the City of Anaheim already has adopted this standard in our very high fire hazard severity zone (hill and canyon area).

2. Each responding jurisdictional agency should consider amending the building code to require the most fire retardant class of roof covering (Class A) for re-roofing of all residential structures (Group R) in all fire zones, when more than 50 percent of the roof is replaced within one year.

Response: We have considered the recommendation and, given the issues addressed, do not feel that there is a compelling argument to adopt this standard. Again, this standard already exists in our very high fire hazard severity zone (hill and canyon area).

In conclusion, our analysis indicates that more stringent requirements for roofs are not needed in our community at this time. However, the City of Anaheim intends to continue to support and participate in the Orange County Uniform Code Program in the code adoption process. In doing so, we will work in conjunction with other Orange County jurisdictions to review the State of California Building Code Standards, as appropriate. If you have any questions, please contact our Building Official, Julie Seay, at (714) 765-5153 extension 5764.

Sincerely,



Curt Pringle, Mayor
City of Anaheim

- C: Council Members
Carlos N. Olivera, Foreman, Orange County Grand Jury
David Morgan, City Manager
Tom Wood, Assistant City Manager
Joel Fick, Deputy City Manager
Julie Seay, Building Official