

Innovative Teaching Manual

PROJECT TITLE

Mock Trial - Codes Issues

AUTHOR

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PROJECT LEVEL

Third or Fourth Year

ABSTRACT

A mock trial was conducted as a method of introducing students to the importance of specifying appropriate materials and finishes and adhering to interior building codes. Students spent several weeks researching materials, codes and recommendations for contract interiors in order to participate in a juried trial concerning the specification of furniture and finishes in a dinner theater that was destroyed by fire. Students are first introduced to liability issues, interior fire hazards and current product testing methods and standards in classroom lecture and discussion. Guest speakers, including designers and codes' official, participated in group discussion. Students then worked outside of class conducting research on local and national codes for the type of structure and occupancy in question.

OBJECTIVES

This exercise will allow students to more fully understand the codes and regulations designers must use on a daily basis. It will also bring into focus the decision making process of aesthetics, client satisfaction, and recommendations and laws regarding handicapped accessibility and specification of materials.

PROCESS

Students participated in a mock trial involving an interior designer charged with strict liability in contributing to a fire through the specification of inappropriate materials. Research of specified products, local and national codes, and registration or certification requirements for interior designers in the state was required. Definitions of strict liability, implied warranty, breach of contract, product liability, professional liability and types of negligence were also researched.

Students were given a handout detailing the scenario, the case against the designer, the designer's background, the materials specified, a floor plan and the required research areas. Students were then divided into two teams: Defendants and Prosecutors. The instructor selected samples for floor covering, base, wallcovering, furniture and upholstery. The original binders or books were available for students to obtain any information provided by manufacturers. At least one "questionable" sample was purposefully included in the group.

Scenario: A fire occurred in a local downtown dinner theater killing two and injuring fifteen. Causes of death were smoke inhalation. Injuries ranged from serious burns and smoke inhalation to minor injuries incurred while trying to escape the building. The fire is thought to have started in a waste basket in the lounge area of the ladies' room. The 40-year-old building did not have sprinklers, but did have required fire

extinguishers and exits. An interior renovation was completed three years ago by the designer on trial.

Case: The designer is charged with strict liability in the specification of inappropriate materials that led to the deaths of two people and injury of fifteen.

Designer: The designer is a registered interior designer in the state, having completed a 4-year degree in interior design at a university and passed the NCIDQ. The designer had one year of experience when she specified the furniture, finishes, and accessories for the restrooms/lounge and dining area of the dinner theater.

PRESENTATION

The project culminated in a trial where each side chose attorneys (more than one per side was allowed) to represent their group and argue their case before an impartial jury. Each side chose one or more representatives to act as expert witnesses in various areas of concern. The jury was composed of faculty and practicing designers. One person was chosen from the Defendants' team to represent the designer on trial. Each team was encouraged to use visual aids to present their points.

EVALUATION

Each juror was given a form [fig.1] to evaluate the performance of the teams. Each student was given a form [fig.2] to confidentially evaluate the research, team contribution and performance of fellow team members. Individual grades were based on the average of the two evaluations.

PROJECT LENGTH

Three weeks. This was a project that students worked on mainly outside of class. Class periods were spent discussing codes, product testing, and related issues.

RESOURCES

Reznikoff, S.C. (1989). Specifications for Commercial Interiors. New York: Watson-Guptill.

Harmon, Sharon K. (1994). The Codes Guidebook for Interiors. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

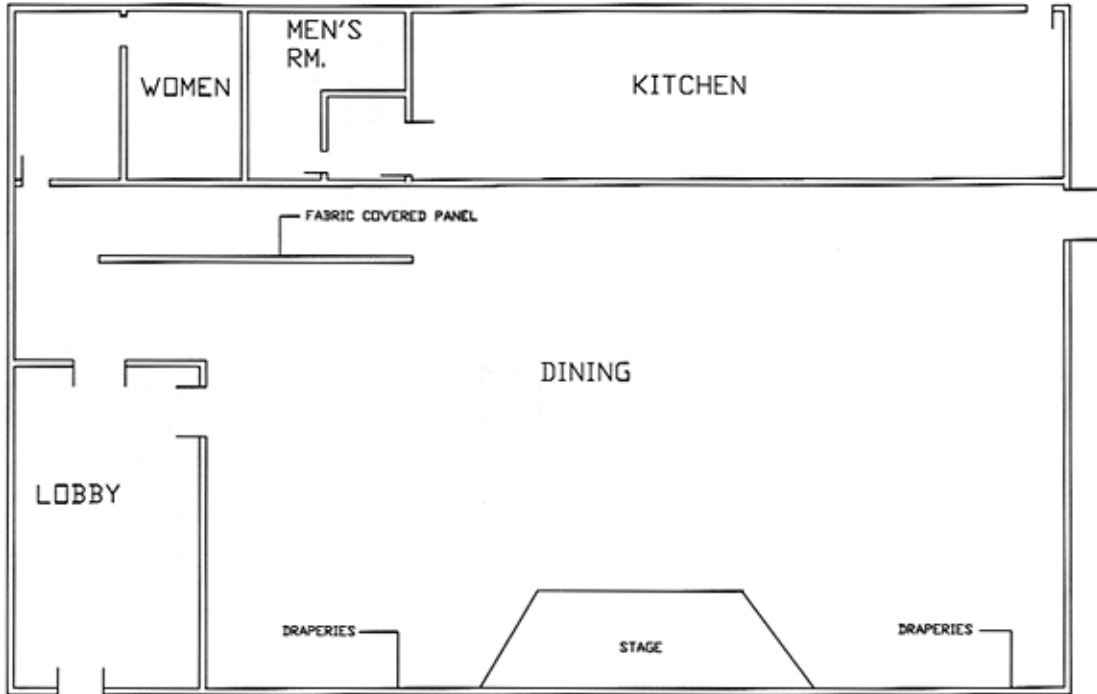
CREDITS

The Beverly Hills Supper Club Fire (1977) Southgate, KY
Dupont Plaza Hotel and Casino (1986) San Juan, PR

DOCUMENTATION

Floor Plan

CODES ISSUES FLOOR PLAN



Materials List

DESIGNER SPECIFIED PRODUCTS:

Women's Restroom and Lounge

WALLS: Ceramic walls to 4'-0'
Wallcovering by Eisenhard CL08033 and CL18033

FLOORS: Quarry tile in toilet area
Carpet by Collins and Aikman, style: contender #378, color CDR181
Tile base

FURNITURE: Shelby Williams SW472 rattan armchair

UPHOLSTERY: Stroheim and Romann, style: 21910 Bronze and Melon

DINING AREA

FLOORS: Carpet by Collins & Aikman, style: contender #378, color CDR183

WALLCOVERING: Blonder Wallcoverings, More Concepts with Faux, p. 17

FURNITURE: Shelby Williams: SW5600 rattan side chair
Howe: Howe Tempest 1600 series 36" round table
Top: Formica#346 (students should check material on which
laminates is mounted)
Edging: 2-1/4" oak banding
Base: 1-3/4" round, steel tubing
Custom-built banquettes with Howe rectangular tables
1600 series

UPHOLSTERY: Arc Com AC60531, style: trilinear; color: spice #LL
Econo-Fabrics, style: Holland; color: tawny

DRAPERIES &
PANEL FABRIC: Stroheim & Romann, style: 27554 Terra Cotta on Smoke

BASE: oak with urethane finish

[fig.1]

Team Name _____					
Verbal & physical presentation	A	B	C	D	F
Knowledge of codes	A	B	C	D	F
Knowledge of professional liabilities	A	B	C	D	F
Knowledge of materials	A	B	C	D	F
Reasoning abilities	A	B	C	D	F
Comments _____					

[fig.2]

Student Name _____					
Research of designated topic	A	B	C	D	F
Communication skills <small>(WAS THE STUDENT ABLE TO EXPRESS HIS OR HER IDEAS EFFECTIVELY TO THE GROUP?)</small>	A	B	C	D	F
Participation <small>(WAS THE STUDENT ACTIVELY INVOLVED THROUGHOUT THE TRIAL & RESEARCH PROCESS?)</small>	A	B	C	D	F
Group involvement <small>(DID THE STUDENT WORK WELL WITH THE GROUP? OR DID HE/SHE WORK MAINLY AS AN INDIVIDUAL?)</small>	A	B	C	D	F
Comments _____					