



FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENTS (FCA)

AROUND ONE MORE CORNER, BEHIND ONE MORE DOOR

AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR THOROUGH EVALUATION OF BUILDING CONDITIONS

GLHN Architects & Engineers, Inc. has developed a comprehensive system for surveying and recording existing building conditions and utility distribution systems, having performed Facility Condition Assessments (FCA) at over 120 Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers, covering 9,000 acres and totaling over 2,400 buildings at 78,000,000 GSF. Our FCA work for the VA also includes coordination and Quality Control of the VA's national database, holding over 150,000 records on approximately 3,800 buildings in the VA system. We are proud of this work because our assessment data and prioritization of recommended corrective actions assist the Medical Centers in obtaining the necessary funding for capital improvement projects. Applying its thorough and detailed assessment methodology of *"around one more corner...behind one more door"*, GLHN examines all architectural and engineering building components. The team rates the existing condition of the facilities, records detailed information relating to deficient systems, and calculates the cost of corrective actions, employing an extensive database of local material and labor costs. GLHN has also applied its methodology to university facilities, including assessment services for an Energy Conservation Study at Arizona State University and Facility Condition Assessment of Biosphere 2 for the University of Arizona.



The GLHN FCA team is experienced in assessing the condition of buildings that house varied functions and unique environmental conditions. In 2006, GLHN was contracted by the University of Arizona to complete an extensive Facility Condition Assessment and Operation and Maintenance Cost Plan for Biosphere 2 near Tucson, Arizona (left). The project involved a thorough investigation of the current capacity, code compliance, and condition of the air handling, automatic control, sewer, water, electric power, and architectural systems. In 2011, GLHN updated the assessment to provide a summary of the needs as they relate to the operation of the public outreach function and scientific research program over the next decade. The revised study was instrumental in securing funding for capital improvement projects that will have the capacity to attract top research groups from around the nation.

UNDERSTANDING THE FCA INDUSTRY

ASSESSMENT APPROACH RESPONDS TO THE NEED FOR USER FRIENDLY INFORMATION

Since the 1980's, an entire facility assessment industry has been created and developed to provide owners accurate surveys of their buildings and related systems. In many cases, particularly with institutional and governmental entities, assessment data (and identification of deficiencies) is used to justify project approval and is tied directly to capital expenditure. In the industry's continuing desire to provide clients with more comprehensive products and results, GLHN has observed a progressive trend toward more complicated assessment methods and software solutions, resulting in increasingly higher costs to clients in terms of the services performed and the resources required to learn and maintain the related software.

APPLYING A USER-FRIENDLY APPROACH

A FLEXIBLE METHODOLOGY AND EASY-TO-USE RESULTS

GLHN's formula for success has been to keep its FCA approach simple, while comprehensive, and to provide results in a user-friendly form that clients need no additional training to use or understand. Our user-friendly approach is based on the following principals:

- an FCA team of senior staff members with years of experience in their respective disciplines and dozens of collaborative assessment projects,
- all key disciplines are in-house assuring optimal inter-disciplinary communication and quality control,
- a flexible methodology enabling us to perform an assessment at various levels, or depths of involvement, ranging from a simple visual inspection to detailed samples testing, depending on the client's needs, and
- a common Microsoft database system. Access or Excel are common programs already utilized in most offices. The client is not required to purchase, learn, and maintain any special assessment software. The database we create is customized and not bogged down with superfluous information; it contains only the data needed to obtain the client's desired goals.

THE BASIC METHODOLOGY

PERFORMING THE FCA

GLHN has developed a methodology that utilizes a multi-disciplinary team of architects, engineers, and cost estimators who collaborate closely with the owner, the facility's users, and building maintenance groups to assess a building's structure, spaces, systems, and equipment. A facility assessment meets three basic objectives:

- it identifies the condition of the facilities surveyed,
- it prioritizes the deficiencies, highlighting those that are most critical, and
- it associates a cost to correcting the deficiencies.

1 On Site Investigation

An initial meeting with facilities personnel to discuss the building's known deficiencies.

2 Site Survey

Examination of as-built drawings and assessment of building systems for age and condition, compliance with applicable codes, conformance with current industry practices, deficiencies between as-built and as-used conditions, capacity for future expansion, and obsolescence and significant maintenance issues.

3 Going Beyond the Visual

GLHN carries out a hands-on inspection to include checking crawl spaces and lifting ceiling tiles. Through experience we have developed a philosophy of always checking "around one more corner... behind one more door".

4 Post Site Investigation and Analysis

GLHN inputs the data collected on site and develops cost estimates for each of the corrective actions identified during the field survey.

5 Report Production

For each building the report includes a summary page and a system-by-system description of current conditions, recommended actions, remaining useful life, and estimated costs to correct deficiencies.

6 Review Meeting

Once the client has had time to evaluate the report, GLHN will organize an interactive meeting to discuss the results.