

# A New Beginning

SPS30 building envelope project heralds bright future for Sunset Place



When it comes to dealing with building envelope problems, taking a wait and see approach is not a viable option. Even if, as J. Cawley will tell you, your property is relatively new.

“We did maintenance on a piecemeal basis,” says Cawley, a long-time board member at Sunset Place, a 44-home condominium community on Nantasket Beach in Massachusetts. “There was no comprehensive plan.”

The property, which was built in 2003, is particularly vulnerable to the elements. Years of deferred maintenance was also a problem. “We were playing ‘whack-a-mole’ with peeling paint and rotting trim,” says Cawley. “The place looked terrible, and it was affecting the market value of our homes.”

## Sunset Place Nantasket Beach, Mass. 2018

- ☐ SPS Savings BluePrint
- ☐ SPS30® Building Envelope Replacement
- ☐ SPS30 Enhanced Manufacturer Warranties
- ☐ SPS30 Assurance 30-Year Workmanship Warranty

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**Still, the board was considering yet another round of painting. “We were in denial until our property manager intervened,” says Cawley.**

“He said painting was a superficial, short-term fix and we needed to figure out what was wrong and what to do about it. That’s when he recommended we speak with Scherneck Property Services (SPS).”

## **“Worse Than We Expected”**

SPS offers a complete suite of building envelope solutions for condominium communities — from project planning and production to an exclusive 30-year inspection, maintenance and warranty program.

“We take a collaborative approach to working with clients,” says SPS Vice President Thomas Daniel. SPS starts with the Savings BluePrint, a process that helps homeowners choose the highest-value long-term solution.

“Building envelope problems can feel overwhelming,” says Daniel. “That’s why we begin with invasive inspections. We need to evaluate the facts to understand the underlying cause of the problem.”

Cawley, a financial advisor, appreciated SPS’s practical, fact-based approach. But he admits to being rattled when SPS shared its findings with board members. “It was worse than we expected,” he says, “like going to the doctor with a cold and finding out you should be in a hospital.”

SPS’s findings detailed a widespread failure of the building envelope — the interconnected system of exterior building components that keeps a property weathertight. Water penetration had degraded the pine trim to the point where it would not hold paint and started to rot, especially around the bay windows. The fiber-cement siding was also failing due to water penetration. On the flat rubber roof, the prized wooden deck had degraded beyond safe use.

SPS’s inspections also revealed that a non-breathable membrane was used as an underlayment on every exterior wall. “That was a surprise,” says Daniel. “This material is waterproof, so it’s typically used as flashing for roofing and transition seams. But it also prevents interior moisture from escaping. And there was evidence in the walls that trapped moisture was causing rot.”

During the Savings BluePrint process, board members work with SPS to understand and evaluate their options. “It’s a rigorous process,” says Daniel, “so board members can be confident they are making the correct decisions. The Savings BluePrint is complete when board members agree on a fully-formed actionable plan.”

Board members have complete autonomy about what happens next. “You can take your plan and put your project out to bid. You can hire SPS and an independent expert to verify pricing,” says Daniel. “Or you can do nothing.”

## **A Clear Path Forward**

For Sunset Place, the path forward was clear. “Given the facts and our fiduciary responsibility, the best most cost-effective solution was a complete building envelope replacement,” says Cawley. “And we wanted SPS to perform the work.”

Sunset Place’s board members and property manager worked closely with SPS to customize their new SPS30 building envelope. Building materials were selected for their longevity, low maintenance and ability to withstand harsh coastal weather conditions: The original fiber-cement siding was replaced with vinyl siding; the pine trim was replaced with PVC trim; and the existing underlayment was stripped from all plywood sheathing and replaced with Tyvek house wrap.

In addition, SPS replaced all exterior doors; rear decks were upgraded with PVC-wrapped post columns and a new PVC railing system; and stucco was replaced with a weatherproof stone facade on

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first-floor walls. The scope of work also called for SPS to replace the roof deck and the portion of the flat rubber roof under the deck.

Homeowners were given an option to upgrade original windows with more energy-efficient new construction vinyl windows at cost.

## Transparent Pricing

We knew we found the right contractor, says Cawley. “As we worked with SPS during the Savings BluePrint process, their experience and expertise was evident. They were always direct and transparent. We trusted them. But this was a multi-million dollar project. We needed to be sure their numbers were also transparent.”

Price verification was conducted by Building Enclosure Science (BES), an independent engineering firm hired by Sunset Place to oversee project scope, specifications and quality.

“Price verification allows a board to fulfill its fiduciary responsibility to assure that pricing is fair and reasonable,” says BES engineer Mike Aires. “We start with a thorough audit of project scope, specifications, materials, quantities and labor hours,” he says.

BES then compares pricing against market sources. Any discrepancies are discussed directly with the contractor on behalf of the owners. That conversation is cordial, but it’s not comfortable, says Aires. “Price verification is about accuracy and integrity. And that’s not a problem for a good contractor who believes in both.”

## A Productive Partnership

SPS began work at Sunset Place in July. “The transition from planning to production was seamless,” says Cawley, who credits SPS Project Manager Shane Crowley for keeping the project on track.

“Shane and his team were great,” says Cawley. “He was always onsite and fully informed. The crews started and stopped work on time. And they kept the site clean. It was a well-run machine.”

Cawley noted the value of weekly production meetings for the entire project team, a hallmark of SPS project management. “We always knew what was going

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on,” he says. “Shane gave us progress updates and schedules for upcoming work. We reviewed minutes from the previous week’s meeting to track expenses and action items. And we made decisions that required approval. It was an extremely productive partnership.”

One of the decisions board members made during production concerned the flat roof. The original scope of work called for SPS to replace the failed roof deck and the section of rubber roof under the deck structure.

“The specification called for us to reintegrate the new roof section back into the existing roof,” says Shane Crowley. “And that can be done. But when it’s time to replace the rest of the roof, the owners would be spending more money to do the same work twice.”

Shane’s concerns prompted the board to hire a roofing specialist from BES to determine remaining roof life. The report estimated between 3 and 10 years.

“That was a good catch,” says Cawley. “We weren’t planning to replace the entire roof, but compared to the cost of having to do it all again, and likely sooner than later, it was the right decision.”

## “We Wanted Peace of Mind”

SPS30 building envelope replacement projects are built to last for at least 30 years. “We knew the job was done right,” says Cawley, “but after seeing our original building envelope fail before its time, we weren’t taking any chances. We wanted peace of mind. So SPS30 Assurance made a lot of sense for our situation.”

SPS30 Assurance is a 30-year annual inspection, maintenance and umbrella warranty plan only available from SPS. Communities can choose the coverage that makes the most sense for them. Key benefits include 100% coverage for workmanship and materials, annual homeowner surveys, and annual inspections. If there are any issues, SPS addresses them before they become bigger problems.

SPS30 Assurance provides continuity of care, says Cawley. “It’s like having a personal trainer for your property. You have an accountability partner who is going to monitor your building envelope’s physical state, keep it in shape, and looking good for the next 30 years.”

SPS30 Assurance proved to be invaluable for another reason. “Most lenders max out at 20 years for condominium project financing. One reason is there is no way to know if their investment will last or be maintained,” says Cawley. “But SPS30 Assurance made it possible for our lender to give us a 30-year term. That was a game changer for us.”

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The combination of the longer term and lower monthly repayment amount was the best solution for the majority of homeowners, says Cawley. “The 30-year term made financing as reasonable as possible. Otherwise, we would have likely had to pay for our project with a significant assessment.”

## Choose the Right Team

SPS finished work at Sunset Place in March. “The transformation was stunning,” says Cawley. “The place looks great and the market noticed. There have been quite a few sales since the project — and those homes sold quickly.”

The difference is more than instant curb appeal, says Cawley. “Current owners and prospective buyers want predictability. They want certainty. And Sunset Place has a new building envelope that is guaranteed to perform and look good for the next 30 years.”

Cawley’s advice for other communities? “If you have a building envelope problem, do not wait to get professional help,” he says. “These projects have a lot of moving parts. There are a lot of decisions to be made and your board members are responsible for those decisions. But the most important decision,” says Cawley, “is the team you choose to see your community through your project. So choose carefully.”

## SPS30® Enhanced Manufacturer Warranties

SPS30 building envelope projects deliver enduring value, longevity, and peace of mind. SPS30 projects use only the highest quality materials, backed by manufacturer warranties only available to SPS30 clients.

## SPS is proud to collaborate with



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