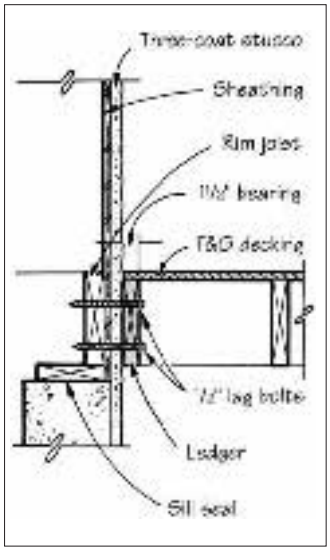
LETTERS

Alternative Ledger Detail

To the Editor:

Regarding the ledger board flashing detail depicted in "Designing a Porch That Fits" (6/92): Mounting ledgers in this fashion *will* provide proper moisture protection; however, as a proper stucco application will add 3/4 to 7/8 inches to the sheathing face, its depth will leave you approximately 1/2 inch of load-bearing surface for your T&G flooring (which I view as inadequate). Your diagram graphically indicates how thin a "lip" is left atop the 2x ledger.

As an alternative, consider the following: Stucco the wall, predrill



the ledger with an appropriate number of holes, mark the hole locations using the actual ledger as a pattern, and (switching to a 1/2-inch masonry bit) drill *through* the 1/2-inch stucco. Then use lags to mount the ledger. Yes, you have "violated" the water integrity of the stucco system by drilling through the stucco and paper beneath but:

1. You now have a full 1 1/2-inch bearing surface for your decking.

2. If the pressure-treated ledger decides to "take off" and warp, cup, bend, split, etc. (as it's prone to do), replacement of that piece will not involve messing around with rebending the flashing.

3. You don't have to buy or install a cap flashing.

Remember, the "violations" of the stucco system are limited to the 1/2-inch holes you drilled, and those holes are occupied by lags, which *fill* the holes — scant exposure in my mind. For those still concerned about water intrusion, caulking could be slathered over the lag heads, which would completely reseal the system.

Steve Thomas
Reitter Stucco Inc.
Columbus, Ohio

Proper Installation Key To Success with EIFS

To the Editor:

The article "EIFS Performance Review" (6/92) has resulted in numerous telephone calls to this Association. The Exterior Insulation Manufacturers Association (EIMA) represents manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, contractors and other building professionals involved in the exterior insulation and finish systems industry.

With well over one billion square feet of EIFS cladding installed on existing buildings, the occasional occurrence of problem installations is not surprising. Since man's earliest constructions, the performance of all building materials has been subject to proper system design and quality workmanship during installation. Exterior insulation and finish systems are susceptible to these same requirements and, as the article points out, "...the most common deficiencies found were caused by poor workmanship."

What is surprising about the article is the admonition to avoid gypsum sheathing substrates when many of the existing, trouble-free structures clad with millions of square feet of EIFS over the past decades were designed and constructed in this manner. Properly installed, EIFS is an effective weather barrier and, with proper flashings and sealants to complete the exterior wall assembly, water will not penetrate.

The HUD experience reported by the authors is disappointing. It is doubtful however that HUD only has problems with exterior insulation and finish systems and not with other exterior wall systems and components. Proper system design, quality products, and good workmanship are still the keys to successful building construction — though they may not always be available from the lowest bidder.

Many of the author's recommendations for "A Better EIFS" iterate the EIFS manufacturers' installation criteria. An exception is the author's recommendations on cement content and base coat application. While base coat and finish coat formulations are proprietary in nature, EIMA manufacturer members' products are tested and meet industry standards and building code requirements. Recognizing the evolution of new technology, these standards are performance-based and not prescriptive. The manufacturer's application instructions for base coats may vary by product and should be followed to assure years of maintenance-free performance and maintain manufacturer warranties.

Our association encourages designers and builders to require manufacturers and installers to meet industry standards published by EIMA. A copy of these standards is available upon request.

Eugene Z. Fisher
EIMA
Clearwater, Fla.

Upside Down

To the Editor:

Let me congratulate you on the excellent article about low profile ridge vents in your May edition.

Please note, however, that your photograph of Roll Vent depicts the product installed upside down. Roll Vent should be installed as it would normally want to roll out along the ridge.

A simple rule to remember when installing Roll Vent is, "Fabric to the Attic." This installation assures optimum performance as engineered.

Geoffrey N. Ehrman
Benjamin Obdyke Inc.
Warminster, Pa.

In Praise of Cost-Plus

To the Editor:

As a small contractor specializing in residential remodeling, I consider *The Journal of Light Construction* a must read. My comments concern the article "Keeping Track of Overhead" (6/92) by Robert Criner.

The author's definitions and categories parallel my own with one minor exception — I treat trash removal as a direct cost. I could not agree with him more on the importance of knowing costs and their relationships. This is knowledge necessary to operating a successful business.

However, I disagree with his choice of fixed-priced bidding. During the NAHB convention in Las Vegas (1/92) a seminar on cost-plus vs. fixed price began with standing room only and ran well past its allotted time. I was privileged to be one of the speakers and the only full-time cost-plus contractor on the panel. Those in attendance were hungry for information.

Cost-plus does require a little more selling and an explanation of overhead is oftentimes necessary. Contrary to the author's statements, my experience shows most clients will believe you and will fathom it. To those who wish to know more about cost-plus and its pros and cons, I suggest you write your favorite publications, trade associations, and sponsors of trade shows and seminars. Only then will you know how much interest there really is!

Daniel R. Jenkins, CGR
Jenkins and Jenkins Construction
Simi Valley, Calif.

Corrections

The correct address for the NAHB Research Center, publishers of the *Directory of Accessible Building Products* listed in "Remodeling for Accessibility" (5/92), is 400 Prince George's Blvd., Upper Marlboro, MD 20772. There is a $2 shipping and handling charge for the publication.

Also in the same list, the book *Accessible Bathrooms*, by the Design Coalition (2088 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI 53704), costs $14, which includes shipping and handling.

Non Errata

We've gotten several responses to the April '92 cover telling us the fascia, identified as a 2x8, looks like a 1x8. Well folks, it is a 2x8. The fascia end nearest the camera is beveled to accept the rake, so it looks smaller than it is. Look again at the bottom edge and compare it to some of the other framing members.

— The Editors

Keep 'em coming.... We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer's address. *The Journal of Light Construction* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to *JLC*, RR2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.