



THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION

A Builderburg Group Publication

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The Journal of Light Construction (ISSN-1050-828X; USPS-001-659) is published monthly by Builderburg Partners, Ltd., 1025 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005. Periodicals-Class Postage paid at Richmond, VT., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Journal of Light Construction*, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477. Copyright 1997 by Builderburg Partners, Ltd. All rights reserved.



JLC's

Letters

Cedar Roof Questions

To the Editor:

I enjoyed reading Patricia Hamilton's article "Long-Lasting Wood Roofs" (5/97). What pleased me most was her description of the way they fabricate and install their valley flashing. If all builders and roofers were to treat them in the same way, homeowners would be spared much anguish.

Patricia's article raises a question: If I understand correctly, she covers the edges of the Cedar Breather with a 1x2 applied over the fascia. The photo shows a rake shot; is the 1x2 also applied at the eaves? If so, doesn't this interfere with the ventilation of the underside of the shingles? Wouldn't it be preferable to leave the Cedar Breather exposed at the eaves or concealed by putting the 1x2 on blocks?

Henri de Marne
Waitfield, Vt.

To the Editor:

Patricia Hamilton writes that she holds the plywood sheathing back 1 inch at the ridge, then installs Roll Vent for ventilation. I have used Roll Vent many times; the manufacturer's installation instructions specifically state that a 35/8-inch-wide slot is required, or 1^{13/16} inch on each side of the ridge beam. The manufacturer will not warrant the Roll Vent if their installation instructions are not followed.

Robert Heine, Project Manager
Norman L. Graham, Inc.
Lancaster, Pa.

Patricia Hamilton responds:

Henri is right: Benjamin Obdyke, the manufacturer of Cedar Breather, does recommend leaving a 1/2-inch air gap at the rake and eaves. I use Cedar Breather primarily because it provides an air space between the roof deck and the shingles,

which allows the shingles to dry on the back, instead of trapping moisture. This helps prevent cupping and prolongs the life of the shingle.

As for the ridge ventilation comment, the manufacturer's literature for Roll Vent for Cedar Roofs specifies a 2-inch-wide gap in the sheathing at the ridge. The 35/8-inch gap applies to the Roll-Vent product made for asphalt shingles.

On Nailing Cedar Roofs

To the Editor:

I was surprised that Patricia Hamilton's crew uses hot-dipped galvanized nails to fasten cedar roof shingles. We've had problems even with the best galvanized nails losing the coating on their heads after a few whacks with a hammer (not all the nails, mind you, but some in every box). Plus, the black streaks that develop over time are an eyesore. Our cedar roofs are primarily of the hand-split variety, which may account for some of the performance problems: It's possible that the nail heads are exposed to more water than would be the case with No. 1 Blues.

In any event, we've found a solution to our staining problem. First, we no longer fasten anything with galvanized nails. We primarily use Duofast pneumatically driven 6d or 8d aluminum box nails. Sure, they're more expensive than hand nails — but what a labor-

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saver! We use a pressure regulator at the tool's air inlet to prevent overdriving. We'd rather have them stand proud and give the last tap flush with a hammer than overdrive them and split the wood. A two-person crew with one nailer can lay down wood roof shingles faster than sidewall shingles, but don't tell our clients. When we encounter a purist client who wants everything "hand nailed," we use stainless steel siding nails. They're fantastic and expensive, but worth every penny. And when you consider the cost-per-square difference, as Patricia did when justifying No. 1 vs. No. 2 shingles, it's insignificant.

Mike Guertin
East Greenwich, R.I.

Don't Paint It Black

To the Editor:

I want to comment on your article about steel doors ("Insulated Steel Door Burns Toddler," Notebook, 5/97). Many years ago when steel doors were just coming onto the market, I started buying them from Harvey Industries in Waltham, Mass. At the time, many customers wanted storm doors as well. Harvey stated the hazard: The heat buildup behind the glass storm door panel would cause the door's plastic moldings to crack and the insulation to melt if the door was painted a dark color. I had a stupid customer who proceeded to paint his steel door black after installation, even though he was told not to. When the moldings broke free from the door, the customer expected replacement, and Harvey actually gave me new moldings. After installing them, I warned the customer to paint the door white, but he refused (he expected Harvey and me to keep replacing the moldings). You can guess what verbiage he received from me. Fortunately no one was burned in this incident.

Harvey is a great company. They have supplied me with building materials since 1963 and always stand behind their products.

R.M. Edman
Newton Highlands, Mass.

First Corner Window

To the Editor:

I read your recent article on framing for corner windows with great interest. Thank you for your thorough and detailed treatment of the subject. I have long wondered about some of the finer points the author raised, such as using a flexible strap to fasten the window at the header.

I'm sure you're not aware of this, but although we were not listed in your index of suppliers, we were the first North American residential window manufacturer to supply bent glass corner windows. We preceded Marvin by a couple of years, Pella by many years, and Weathershield by a decade! Thank you for your consideration; and again for your article, which we will refer to for framing specification ideas.

Cary Richman
President, New Morning Windows
Lakeville, Minn.

Stair Angles Work

To the Editor:

Regarding the article "Using Metal Connectors" (Practical Engineering, 5/97), I disagree with the author's opinion regarding stair angles. This connector works better than any other method for exterior stairs. Proper assembly is for the angle to be lagged into the stringer and through-bolted from the tread. Leave a 1/4-inch gap between the tread and the stringer for air circulation. This gives a strong, rot-resistant stair. I have replaced many stairs built like the author recommends; they had failed due to rot.

Conrad vonBlankenburg, G.C.
San Francisco, Calif.

KEEP 'EM COMING! Letters 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, RR 2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477; or e-mail to 76176.2053@compuserve.com.

