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BPA INTERNATIONAL

JLC's

Letters

Installing Stucco Weep Screeds

To the Editor:

The 1997 *UBC* requires a weep screed with a minimum vertical attachment flange of 3 1/2 inches to be provided at or below the foundation plate line on all exterior stud walls, but it doesn't tell you exactly how to attach it. The article "Stucco Flashing Details" (10/98) shows a drawing of a foundation weep screed where the vertical attachment flange does not extend below the sill plate. In construction defect cases, we have found deteriorated shear paneling and corroded fasteners when weep screeds were installed in that manner.

If there is unevenness in the wall plane where the concrete foundation meets the sole plate and plywood sheathing, this should be addressed first. If the concrete juts out beyond the framed wall plane, then it may be necessary to chip away the concrete. If the wall overhangs the concrete, then you should add concrete parging to get an even plane.

You should then install the weep screed so that 1 1/2 inches covers the plate and 2 inches overlaps the concrete (see illustration below). Otherwise, the splashback soaks up into the end grain of the sheathing, leading to decay and corrosion of fasteners, and compromising the shear wall.

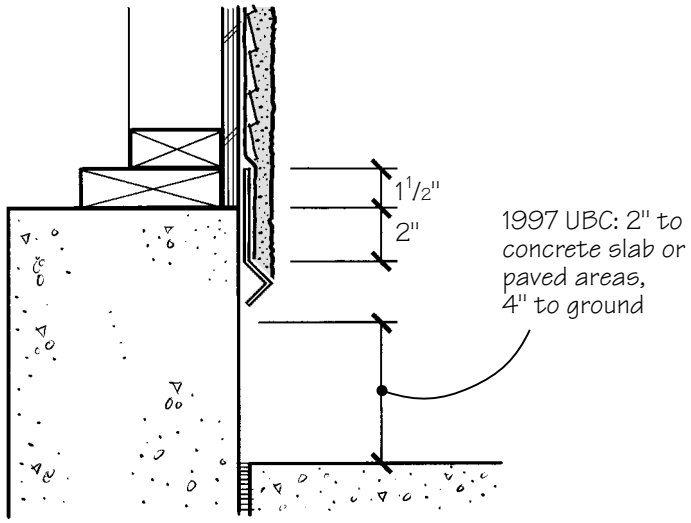
Doug Matthews
Doug Matthews Consulting
Newport Beach, Calif.

Permanent Bracing of Trusses

To the Editor:

Prior to and since the placement of the article in the March 98 issue of *JLC* on the bracing of piggyback trusses, our industry has been working diligently on a variety of bracing related issues. WTCA (Wood Truss Council of America) asked TPI (Truss Plate Institute), as the primary technical organization within our industry, to review this matter ....With WTCA's input, TPI's Technical Advisory Committee unanimously approved the following key position that was subsequently approved by TPI's board of directors:

"Since no substantive data has been provided to TPI, TPI TAC does not concur with all the assumptions, conclusions, and recommendations set forth in the article titled 'Permanent Bracing for Piggyback Trusses,' authored by Frank Woeste, P.E., and published in the March 1998 issue of



the *Journal of Light Construction.*"

WTCA has in place a Truss Safety Committee…composed of representatives having a broad exposure to the wood truss industry….We would appreciate it if *JLC* or any of its readers would bring any concerns over the performance of metal-plate-connected wood trusses to the attention of this group….The WTCA contact for these issues is Scott Arquilla of Best Homes, Inc., at sarquilla@woodtruss.com or 608/274-3329 (fax). Thanks for working with us on resolving these very important issues.

Richard W. Brown, President
Kirk Grundahl, P.E., Executive Director
Wood Truss Council of America
Madison, Wis.

No substantive data has been submitted to JLC *that would contradict the conclusions of the article mentioned. Also, our research has convinced us that proper permanent bracing of piggyback trusses is not understood by many residential builders, and that builders may not be aware that they are in many cases legally liable for having that bracing engineered and installed. We applaud Dr. Woeste for bringing this matter to our readers' attention, and we plan to cover the issue in greater detail in the future.*

—The Editors

Calibrating Stud Sensors

To the Editor:

We read the article "Stud Sensors Come of Age" (*Toolbox*, 10/98) with great interest. The article compared various features of the Stanley stud sensors to those of the Zircon products. We felt that there were several discrepancies, in particular the stated lack of an "error detection feature" in the Stanley stud sensors. Stanley IntelliSensor and IntelliSensor Pro have error detection features built in to prevent the user from erroneous readings due to calibration directly over a wood or metal stud.

The Stanley IntelliSensor, when calibrated over a stud, provides no reading at all when moved, forcing the user to recalibrate the unit. We feel it is more intuitive for users to realize that they need to recalibrate the unit at a different location versus having to interpret blinking lights. The Stanley IntelliSensor Pro, when calibrated using the proper procedure, cannot be calibrated directly over a stud and give an erroneous reading. This is because the unit is swept across the surface to be scanned during calibration versus being held in one position when calibrating.

Viresh Bijawat
The Stanley Works
New Britain, Conn.

Wrapping the House

To the Editor:

Regarding the article "Housewrap vs. Felt" (11/98), Paul Fisette puts the issue to bed for me (even if he doesn't tuck it in). I look forward to the results of his future research.

For years I used 15-lb. felt. Then, when Tyvek hit the market, I was swayed by their claims and client expectations. When gray, green, pink and the rest of the spectrum brought their wraps to market, I looked for a bargain, not really understanding the difference between non-woven and micro-perforated products.

Along the way, I lost sight of the dual function of housewraps and saw them as only air infiltration retarders. Then, questioning the actual value of an air-infiltration retarder on the fully sheathed homes I build, I began just taping the joints between panels. About

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two years ago, I read about Paul's water repellancy tests (*Notebook*, 6/97) and it dawned on me: "That's what we used to put tar paper on the walls for." Thankfully, that was just before the siding stage during the construction of my own home.

I chose Tyvek for my own home rather than tar paper. It was January and cold. The Tyvek was supple and the tar paper was stiff and cracked easily. Even though they cost tons more, I'll continue to use Tyvek or R-Wrap. They perform well and are easier to install than 15-lb. felt.

Mike Guertin
East Greenwich, R.I.

Termite Prevention Not Hopeless

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the article "Insect Infestations in Buried Foam" (10/98). First of all, the tone and conclusion of your article has a hopelessness about it that I think is unwarranted. There are number of insect management approaches that builders and homeowners can use.... Companies like AFM, Termi-mesh, Osmose, and Dow-Alanco (to mention a few), have products and systems that can help solve the problems discussed in your article.

Perform Guard EPS, as a foam insulation product, deters termites from continuously moving through it and/or prolonged infestation in it. We have very real world field exposure research which substantiates this statement. But having said that, we also disclose in our literature that Perform Guard EPS is not a barrier, in that termites can access a building in other ways than traveling through foam insulation. If you have termites, look elsewhere, because they are not long in the Perform Guard EPS foam.

Our research has shown that Perform Guard EPS will slowly kill those termites that encounter it over time, because it works much like all safe borate-treated products.... AFM's borate treatment is a preservative to the foam, which effectively keeps the termites out of the foam long term, so it can serve in its intended use as insulation for energy savings.

I mentioned companies who have developed products and systems that can solve the challenges of protecting buildings from termites. Osmose Wood Preserving has committed to making available a complete commercial line of borate-treated studs, plywood, joists and rafters. A woven stainless steel mesh, which has been used successfully to block termite entry into buildings, is available from Termi-mesh. Dow-Alanco and other companies have been marketing "baiting" termite management systems that can be used along with traditional treatment systems by pest control operators and have shown them to be quite effective.

AFM Corporation feels that its Perform Guard EPS will contribute greatly to the management of termite infestation, when used as an important component of a holistic approach to termite-safe building. This is the basis by which we market our Perform Guard EPS.

Mike Tobin, President
AFM Corporation
Shorewood, Minn.

Safety Pays

To the Editor:

Joe Guerra's letter (8/98) struck a nerve, but when I received your September issue, I was provoked to send my own comments. My first tirade is directed at Mr. Guerra. After 30 years in specialty contracting, I understand just how brutally expensive accidents and injuries are. I helped set up safety programs in three companies, the latest of which I am part-owner. In every case, the costs of a full-time safety director, safety equipment, training, and enforcement were only a fraction of even one lost-time accident. Ironically, the best-supervised, on-time, under-budget projects also had the best safety records, regulatory compliance, and satisfied customers. Accidents and safety incidents are far more likely to happen with over-budget, behind-schedule jobs. Joe would not have been so lucky just to lose a day's pay with our firm. After two safety warnings, he would be invited to leave. Good luck to the competitor who hires his high-risk behavior. We can't afford it.

My second tirade is directed at *JLC* itself. In nearly 50 "head photos," including the cover shot, only three are wearing hardhats (Owens Corning, Bobcat, and Allstate ads). No article photos showed hardhats, and not even a single picture showed safety glasses or fall protection. Get with it, guys.

Safety does pay, both in accident cost savings and in better productivity. Your articles purport to represent cost-effectiveness and good technology. Sadly, they are woefully incomplete when they fail to illustrate even basic safety needs, which represent a major cost item for those contractors who don't bother to investigate this biggest single cause of cost "leakage" in their businesses.

James L. Werner
Werner Associates
Barrington, Ill.

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