

Letters

Architects Not Adversaries

To the Editor:

I take exception to the letter of Mitchell Miller (*Letters*, 3/01) in which he criticizes the AIA contract. I am guessing that he is referring to the AIA Abbreviated Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Contractor for Construction Projects of a Limited Scope. I am a member, and I use this contract often. Clients like the protection of the third party to administer the contract.

Mr. Miller states his company policy to "not enter into a contract with anyone other than the owners of the property." The AIA contract does not violate that policy. The architect is named as the contract administrator with specified responsibilities but is not a signatory. His principal duty is to provide administration of the contract and to be the owner's representative during construction to correlate the progress of the work with the contractor's request for payments and to guard the owner from defects and deficiencies in the work. The architect's interpretations and decisions must always have a basis in the contract documents. The contractor has the right to issue change orders to any decisions affecting the work that cause him extra cost in materials, labor, or time.

Everyone is bound by the "reasonable man" rule that is the basis of all contracts. In disputes, I suggest that the three parties work for what is in the building's best interest. If we do that, then everyone's interests are served.

Contractors should adopt a team approach and not see architects as adversaries. There will always be those contractors who want total control, as if others involved are perceived as "out of control."

Theodore P. Streibert, AIA
Owner, Streibert Associates, Architects
Newton, Mass.

Hungry Bugs

To the Editor:

Thought you might find this interesting (see photo). The uninitiated have a hard time imagining the damage Formosan termites can inflict. This is a section of door jamb (rough and finish



laminated together) taken from a third-floor interior location in a masonry building. The termites had worked their way up from the cellar through the wooden lathing behind the plaster walls, wreaking havoc all the way. Their moisture source was an undetected leak around an in-wall plumbing stack. All told, damages will exceed \$50,000. Can you spell "routine inspection" now, Mr. and Mrs. Homeowner?

Mike Shannahan
La Porte, Tex.

About Those Pig Tails

To the Editor:

The item "To Pig Tail or Not to Pig Tail" (*On the House*, 7/01) may be misleading depending on specific conditions. The article does not make it clear that the feed-through method is not acceptable on multi-wire branch-circuit grounded conductors. *NEC* 300-13(b) clearly states this. Although the article states that wiring needs to be "in compliance with all provisions of the *NEC*," on the surface the article appears to give a thumbs-up to this method without distinction. In areas where conduit is used, multi-wire branch circuits are extremely common and the feed-

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through wiring method is dangerous.

Although the device may be able to handle the load with the feed-through method, the potential for unbalancing and back-feed is present should the grounded conductor (neutral) become open. It is critically important not to use the feed-through method on multi-wire branch-circuit neutrals.

Corey Friedman
Licensed Electrician
via e-mail

Steve Campolo of Leviton responds: The original question was whether feed-through current might overheat the receptacle. The two terminal screw pairs (line and neutral) are indeed listed to serve as a junction for supplying a downstream device. The illustration makes it clear that we are talking about a typical two-wire branch circuit, not a multi-wire circuit. However, Mr. Friedman is correct that the NEC disallows the feed-through method in the case of a multi-wire circuit.

The issue of imbalancing loads must be considered when wiring by either method. Loads may be imbalanced by either the wire nut or pig tail method; pig tailing does not automatically eliminate imbalanced loads.

Flexible Flashings on the Roof

To the Editor:

The article "Choosing Flexible Flashings" (6/01) was informative. The insurance industry is advocating the use of this material as a secondary moisture barrier. Adding the rubberized asphalt tape to the seams between the sheathing on a roof before the felt and roofing material are installed drastically improves protection against water intrusion in case the roofing material is lost during a major windstorm. By using this product on sheathing as described above, one may receive insurance discounts.... For more information, visit our Web site at www.ibhs.org.

Alfred H. Hartley Jr.
Project Engineer
Institute for Business and Home Safety
Tampa, Fla.

Window Flashing Advice

To the Editor:

The article "Choosing Flexible Flashings" discusses the ongoing debate about whether peel-and-stick should be applied directly to the sheathing or to the housewrap or felt. The correct answer is both. To properly flash a window, apply the housewrap or felt, cut out the opening, then cut a flap above the opening and fold it up out of the way. Apply the peel-and-stick to the sill, install the unit, and apply peel-and-stick to the window jamb flanges. Finally, apply peel-and-stick to the window head flange and the sheathing, then fold the flap cut in the housewrap or felt back over the peel-and-stick. This creates a positive drainage system that starts at the sheathing plane and directs moisture to the exterior side of the housewrap or felt.

Carl Hagstrom
Montrose, Pa.

Solar-Minded Overhangs

To the Editor:

Thank you for the article "Designing Overhangs with the Sun in Mind" (By Design, 5/01). I am a residential designer in west and central Maryland and have been concerned for years with the apparent lack of interest most builders and designers have in roof overhangs and their function in passive solar design. Here in Maryland, the standard overhang is either 8 or 12 inches, depending on the pitch of the roof and whether the builder is concerned about the truss heel height for adequate insulation value at the eaves. Roof trusses with a standard heel condition are less expensive, so you can guess which option is usually chosen.

One thing missing from the drawings in the article is the effect rain gutters have in extending overhangs. If you factor in the gutters with the overhang calculation, you'll have a more accurate assessment of the overhang's total shading effect. The design of the gutter itself (half round vs. standard ogee, for example) even

has a minor effect on the result.

Also, the article addressed only windows on the eaves walls. With the various window elements that are commonly incorporated into the gable walls, it might be good to look at the need to extend the overhangs there. Angling the overhang as it approaches the ridge can provide summertime shade for typical window walls in the bumped-out sun rooms found in many of today's designs. This may give the south-facing gable a more contemporary styling on an otherwise traditional home, but the benefits of the shade may offset the variation in design.

Doug Parker
Frederick, Md.

To the Editor:

I am puzzled by the chart showing overhang factors in the article "Designing Overhangs with the Sun in Mind." Here in San Antonio, we

need a longer overhang due to the great amount of sunshine we receive (300 days a year). According to your chart, we should have some of the shortest in the country. Is this chart backwards?

Richard Markee
Sitterle Custom Homes
San Antonio, Tex.

Author Jerry Germer responds: The chart is correct, but we should have pointed out that it's based on the assumption that solar heat gain is desirable only in certain times of the year. The longest day, June 21, is used as the day on which all direct gain is to be avoided, since the sun is at its maximum altitude at noon on that day. Admittedly, this is seldom the hottest day of the year — that usually occurs a month or so later, due to the time it takes for the earth to warm up after winter — but it's a reasonable compromise.

As the altitude of the noontime sun

decreases through the summer and fall, progressively more light will strike the windows until December 21, when the windows will be fully exposed to the sun for maximum solar gain.

This is an effective formula for temperate climates, where winter solar gain is desirable. In a very hot, sunny area, however, such as your part of Texas, a wide overhang that shades the windows from direct sun throughout the year is a better choice, as you already know.

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, 186 Allen Brook Ln., Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to jlc@bginet.com.

