

Letters

More Mold Headaches

I read with great interest “Can Mold Give You Headaches?” by Mac Pearce (2/10). I have a similar headache to fix on a 13-year-old house, all because the vinyl siding installer didn’t seal one of the J-channel openings between the pair of windows, nor did he install the diverter flashing behind the siding at the window corners. (I still have a *JLC* article from June 1997 that shows how to do it correctly.)

I’ve included some pictures (below) and would appreciate Mac’s comments. I plan to remove the siding, replace the rotted OSB sheathing, and simply spray the framing members with bleach, since there’s hardly any damage to them. I will then replace the OSB with plywood sheathing; install new insulation, siding, and the

diverter flashings; and caulk. Will spraying with bleach be enough to kill any remaining mold?

Gary Lozowski
Easley, S.C.

Mac Pearce responds: Once the moldy, water-damaged material has been removed, the problem is usually 90 percent solved. When everything is opened up and demolition is complete, I recommend scrubbing with soap and water, then treating the surfaces with bleach, allowing at least 15 minutes of wet contact time. The treated surfaces should then be rinsed and allowed to dry.

Some claim that bleach doesn’t kill all the mold spores, but it has been my experience that it is actually very good at removing mold, dead or alive. However, it’s critical that all surfaces be thoroughly rinsed off. I also recommend that soaps and detergents used with bleach be free of ammonia. Most dish soaps have ammonia in them, because it helps clean glass. But when ammonia meets bleach, free chlorine gas can be released, and that stuff is poisonous.



Ice Dam Insurance

Given the existing roof assembly in Jeffrey Hoffman’s article “An Ice Dam Analyzed” (3/10), the proposed solution — retrofitting a built-up vented assembly — is appropriate. It will not only help prevent ice dams, but also eliminate thermal bridging and add much-needed R-value. The original installed R-30 and the minimum Michigan code requirement of R-38, as stated by the author, are both much too low for a house located in Zone 7. However, the cross-section drawing in the article shows no peel-and-stick membrane along the bottom of the roof. Certainly, at least one course should be used as a precaution, as there may be situations when venting will not be adequate or when worst-case weather scenarios develop.

In new construction, scissors trusses are a good option for sloped ceilings. They allow you to use traditional attic

venting between the insulation and the roof deck, and provide room for high R-values of blown-in cellulose.

Allen Zimmerman
Ohio State University, Wooster

Template Available

I’m writing in response to the letter written by Joe Nash (2/10) regarding the possibility that some company might wish to reproduce the Rockwell stair template. Cordes Machine makes almost the exact same template as the original, except it’s made of aluminum instead of cast iron. I’ve been using the Rockwell UST-1 template for 30 years and have been able to purchase the necessary router bits from Amana. With this tool, I can build squeak-free, prefinished straight run stairs in my shop,

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then install them just before drywall. As long as the stairs are properly protected, this method saves a lot of time during the finish phase of a new home.

Jim Williams Jr.
Building Contractor
Sunderland, Mass.

From the Horse's Mouth

We were recently notified by one of your readers about a letter suggesting that someone should reproduce a vintage stair template from aluminum. Our company in fact manufactures a current-day version of this tool and we sell it directly to users. The Stair-Template Model 7 sells for \$595 plus shipping, and includes the template, three cam followers, and three nosing plates. Your readers can view our product line at stairequipment.com.

Doug West
Cordes Machine Division
Mountainside, N.J.

The Right Word

I loved the article "Drying a Stone Cellar" (9/09) and think both letter-writer David Logan and author Robert Lauten make great points in their follow-up (*Letters*, 1/10). I agree that calling this project a restoration is inaccurate and could get a contractor in serious trouble if a client finds it misleading. Restoration means to bring back to a previous condition. This often takes lots of money, labor, and research — clearly not the case in this project. Defining this job as a remodel might be more accurate but lacks pizzazz. Renovation is the happy medium: It implies restoration but allows for upgrades to modern building standards.

Damon Starnes
NW Renovations
Sherwood, Ore.

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