

On the Job

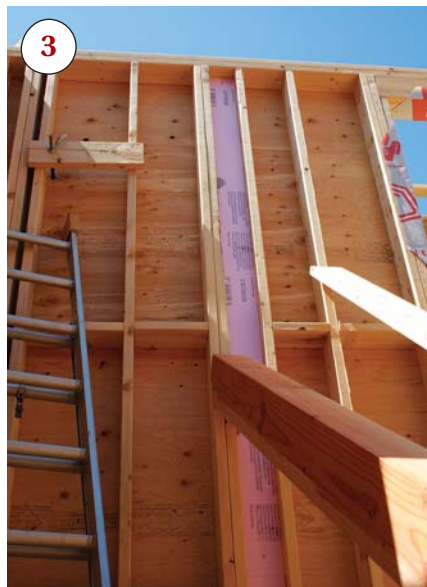
Timber-Frame Look for a Stick-Frame Addition

by John Hemming

My crew and I just finished building a Cape-style addition to a faithfully restored 1776 house. The antique home couldn't be properly heated, so the addition will serve as wintertime living space. Since the owners wanted the new stick-built structure to reflect the old building's post-and-beam construction, the architect

added exposed 6x10 posts and collar ties to the plans for the great room. I ordered #1 Douglas fir beams from the local lumberyard, then cleaned up the planer marks with a hand planer and belt sander (1). We applied Watco Danish oil and let it soak in; the oil penetrates and hardens in the wood, rather than on the surface, and provides a good sealer.

We balloon-framed the two-story walls with 18-foot-long 2x6s on 16-inch centers. Every 4 feet, we created snug-fitting post pockets (2), which we lined with 2-inch-thick EPS foam board to reduce thermal conductivity (3). We notched the posts top and bottom to fit around the plates, then stood them in the pockets (4). Pressed against the foam, the posts projected 5³/₄ inches proud of the studs — 5 inches after the 5⁸/₈-inch drywall and skim-coat plaster were installed. To pull the posts snugly against the foam, we first screwed them from outside, through the sheathing, with 4¹/₂-inch TimberLok (800/518-3569,



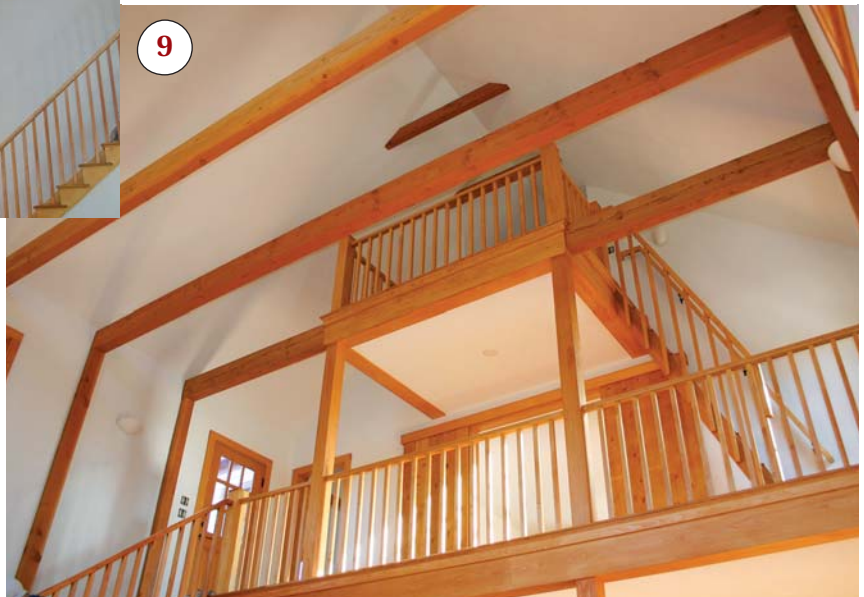
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fastenmaster.com) screws, then nailed them through the studs on either side.

We brought in a boom truck from the lumberyard to hoist the collar ties onto the plates (5,6). We fastened the ties to the plates with three 8-inch TimberLok screws, one angled in from each side and one angled through the end. I had made sure that the posts were a scant $\frac{1}{16}$ inch taller than the plates so that the 24-foot collar ties would sit seamlessly on their tops.

I cut the ties 3 inches shorter than the 24-foot span to allow for a 2x10 rim board across their ends. We filled in between the ties with 2-inch foam board, $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch plywood, and solid 2x10 blocking, then ran a double top plate across the top, ready for rafters (7).

After framing the roof we added 3x8 Doug-fir collar ties on 4-foot centers, about 3 feet down from the ridge. We



screwed them through the rafters with 4-inch TimberLoks. The plaster crew wrapped the posts and beams with protective paper as part of their work. The posts stand out strikingly against the rough-coat plaster and effectively evoke the look of the old house (8,9).

John Hemming is a contractor in Orleans, Mass.

Adding a Border to a Hardwood Floor

by Trevor Kurz



Our design-build company is always looking for ways to make average jobs more interesting. For the project shown here, a new client called us in to update kitchen cabinets. One idea led to another and we found ourselves gutting the kitchen and laying cherry floors in it and three adjacent areas. To help define each space within the open floor plan, I proposed installing opposing diagonal layouts and framing each area with contrasting borders.

The border design (1) consists of three courses of 3 1/2-inch cherry, followed by a contrasting strip in bird's-eye maple that's either 1 1/2 or 3 inches wide. In the past when I worked with borders, I'd install the border first, then the field. Although that method got the job done, it was time-consuming — and it would have been a nightmare with this complicated layout.

Our lead carpenter came up with a better approach. We installed the field flooring first, running the ends rough to within a few inches of the walls and taking care not to nail within the border zone. Once all four fields were completed, we snapped reference lines for the borders. Then we simply laid our newly acquired Festool plunge-cut saw and guide rail (888/337-8600, festoolusa.com) on the lines and cut the edges clean (2).

Integral nonslip strips on the bottom of the guide rail saved us the hassle of fastening it to the floor. At adjoining angles, we completed the cuts with a flush-cut saw (3).



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Next, we ran a router equipped with a stacked pair of wing cutters (4) along the sawn edges, creating a groove for the tongued maple inlay strip. We had to replace the locking nut on the router with a thinner version — and even then we cleared the subfloor by only about 1/16 inch (5).

We prepared the maple strips back at the shop, using a table saw with a stacked and spaced dado blade to create tongues on both edges (6). The two-way tongues allowed us to orient the cherry strips tongue-to-the-wall for easiest installation. Rather than mitering the borders at corner junctions, we stepped the pieces, to add visual interest (7).

In the entry hall, an inlaid compass-rose medallion prefabricated by Oshkosh Designs (877/582-9977, oshkoshdesigns.com) put the icing on the cake. The inlay came with a prepared routing template and router bit, simplifying its installation (8). As with the borders, we were careful to keep nails out of the 4-foot-diameter inlay area.

The border process added about a day and a half to the field installation but went without a hitch. And the finished floor looks fantastic (9).

Trevor Kurz is president of Kurzhaus Designs in Dennis, Mass.

