

New Home Diagnostics Guide

by Dan Friedman

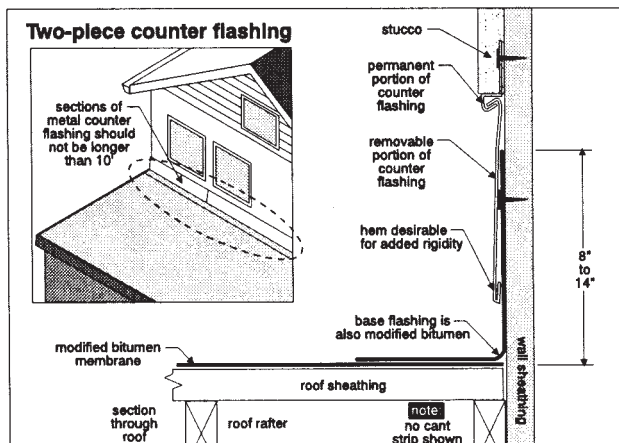
I'm a home inspector, and I have a client whose new low-slope roof leaks. The contractor used modified bitumen, which I like, but the roof-wall flashing is only about 3 inches high and is peeling from the siding. The contractor has proposed a questionable repair: caulking along the top of the existing material. In the past, I might

have looked for a detail in the National Roofing Contractors Association's *Roofing and Waterproofing Manual*. Instead, I turn to a new resource that provides authoritative detail drawings across a broad spectrum of residential construction topics.

Carson Dunlop's *The Illustrated Home* book and CD-ROM contain more than 1,500 drawings of construction details organized in nine chapters: Roofing, Structure, Electrical, Heating, Air Conditioning & Heat Pumps, Insulation & Ventilation, Plumbing, Exterior, and Interior. The JPEG format of the CD drawings is PC- and MAC-compatible.



One of more than 1,500 details from *The Illustrated Home*.



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complete enough that contractors can use them in the field. Some of the illustrations show entire systems within the home, while others focus narrowly on individual components and their problems. All are clearly labeled to show how things should be done.

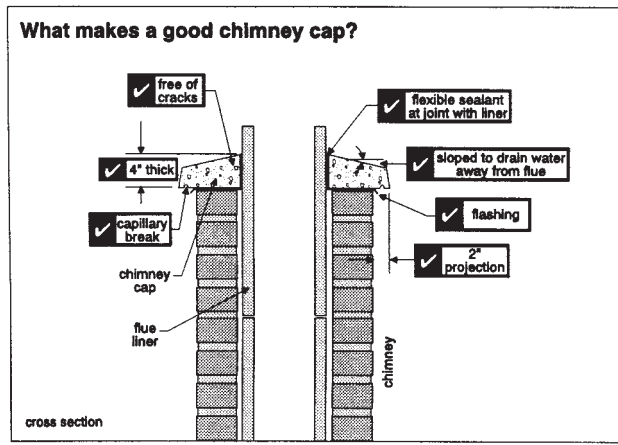
In the case at hand, I used the table of contents to find the flat roof flashing section, where I spotted the correct detail (see illustration).

I can copy the drawing from the CD directly into a letter (the CD includes a licensing agreement that allows you to use the illustrations), or simply print the drawing and give it to my client and the contractor.


Index Less Than Perfect

It's the index that makes a reference book frustrating or useful. The 3,500-item index (the same in both the book and the CD) uses key words and phrases. As a test, I searched the CD index for Chimney Cap and found Drip Edge on Chimney Cap, Improper Slope on Chimney Cap, Missing Chimney Cap - Metal, and Slope on Chimney Cap. Two of these were helpful, but the search also reveals that the index is incomplete, because it missed another drawing entitled "What makes a good chimney cap?" (illustration, at left). In the book, it was easy to find this drawing because it's on the same page as two of the other drawings. But using the CD alone, I would have missed it. My conclusion: To use the CD, you need to use the book.

Simple drawings with clear annotations can be copied or printed directly from the CD-ROM.



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The book version of *The Illustrated Home* costs \$79; the book together with the CD costs \$295 (plus \$10 shipping and handling in either case). You can order from Carson Dunlop at 800/268-7070 or download an order form from www.carsondunlop.com. Both the book and the CD are well done and easy to use. If you don't agree, there is a 45-day money back guarantee. 

Dan Friedman is a home inspector in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and serves on the American Society of Home Inspectors' Standards of Practice committee.