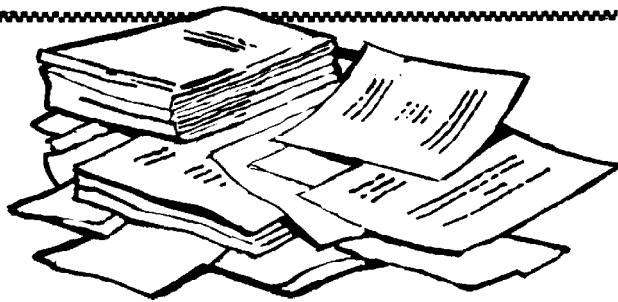


# Letters



## Not All Gypsum Sheathing Alike

To the Editor:

As always, I enjoyed the latest edition [6/88] of *New England Builder*. However, I was startled when I read the piece on EIFS systems and found a glaring omission.

Nowhere in the article does your writer, Richard Piper, mention that not all gypsum sheathing is paper-faced. Georgia-Pacific has developed Dens-Glass, a fiberglass-faced gypsum sheathing to address the same problems of paper-faced sheathing that Mr. Piper stressed.

Mr. Piper concludes that a way to prevent soft-coat EIFS failures is to use a cement-based sheathing. However, in tests comparing Dens-Glass with cement-based board products, Dens-Glass compared favorably with those products. And Dens-Glass has an added benefit for the builder and the applicator—it weighs one-third less than cement-based boards and costs about one-third of what they do, too.

The statement, "(all) gypsum sheathing is not an acceptable substrate for synthetic stucco in Europe, where EIFS originated," is incorrect. In fact, when Georgia-Pacific first began testing Dens-Glass, STO Industries, Inc. (a German firm) volunteered to field test the product in Europe. They must have been pleased with the performance since they chose to use Dens-Glass as an EIFS substrate on their new Atlanta headquarters building last year. And STO is not the only European coatings manufacturer that has enjoyed success with the product. We have had a number of inquiries from European manufacturers who have asked us about the possibilities of licensing the manufacture and/or distribution of Dens-Glass in Europe.

Because Dens-Glass has a fiberglass face and back, it is highly moisture resistant. In an EIFS system, as Mr. Piper pointed out, moisture can collect between the insulation and the sheathing. Dens-Glass is virtually unaffected by that moisture accumulation.

Therefore, finish systems can be adhesively applied to Dens-Glass without fear of delamination.

We heartily agree with Mr. Piper that the best way to prevent EIFS failures is to educate applicators on why certain methods are imperative and what can happen with an improper application. That is why we are offering a free booklet about Dens-Glass to systems manufacturers and to interested applicators. For a copy, your readers may write to: Dens-Glass, Dept. NEB-ED, P.O. Box 2808, Norcross, GA 30071. Or call our toll-free number: 1-800/252-6119.

Barbara Squires Smith  
Georgia-Pacific Corp.  
Atlanta, Ga.

## Siding Researchers Heeded Guidelines

To the Editor:

I would like to briefly respond to a couple of comments you made to a letter entitled "Cupping Clapboards Not Foam's Fault" in the June 1988 edition of *NEB*.

The Joint Industry Committee (on Wood Siding and Foam Sheathing of the National Forest Products Association and the Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc.) collectively agreed on how wood/hardboard sidings would be installed over foam/fiberboard sheathings in the jointly monitored research. Your comment that "the study did not represent typical installation and finishing in the real world" is not true. The installation followed the Committee's "Guidelines" which focused on obtaining the best performance for the materials involved. A few key points of the guidelines included: choosing quality material, conditioning of the siding prior to installation, priming of the siding on all sides, proper nail length in order to obtain the required penetration into the wood framing (type of shank influences the required penetration), and the proper nail location for the siding being used. It is interesting to note these same basic points are also outlined in two articles in your June 1988 edition ("Problem Clinic: Wood, Vinyl, and Aluminum Siding," by Paul Cove and "Selecting and Installing Red Cedar Siding," by Don Wallace and Gunnar Brinck) for siding used over any sheathing material. So the research concentrated on monitoring the performance of a proper installation, as it should, not on the monitoring of an improper installation.

You also commented that "in general, the wood industry...would like to have seen the study run longer." All the researchers involved would have liked to continue with the monitoring in order to obtain additional data (typical of most researchers). But, in examining the data in hand, there were no major differences in the sidings' performance over the foam or the fiberboard sheathings. Also, there was nothing to indicate that any changes would take place. And again there was a consensus by the committee to discontinue further monitoring.

In summary, investigations of properly installed wood/hardboard sidings over foam sheathings have shown that the materials can perform satisfactorily together. The relatively small number of past problems have mainly been related to misapplication.

It should be the responsibility of manufacturers and distributors of information to help inform the building public on how to properly install materials in order to gain the desired performance. I am pleased to see that *NEB* is helping to do this by

publishing informative articles (such as the two previously noted) on this subject.

Phil Hendrickson  
Styrofoam Brand Products  
Granville, Ohio

## Barrier-Free Remodeling

To the Editor:

In researching various trade magazines, we've noticed that almost without exception, there is very little information offered regarding plans or products for the differently-abled, the hearing or visually impaired, or the elderly. In light of the fact that the elderly themselves are becoming a larger portion of the population every day, it would only seem logical that we should be paying more attention to any special needs they and the handicapped require.

We are interested in compiling any information you may have regarding designs, products, ideas, etc., in this special area that would help us in our remodeling business.

Les Deal  
Les Deal, Inc.  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Author Al Wasco responds:

*At the Housing Resource Center we've gotten dozens of letters asking about remodeling for people who are elderly and/or disabled. These come from contractors in nearly every state in the Union, especially from small towns where they presumably don't have access to other resources.*

*As Rae Lyle and I tried to make clear in our article for New England Builder ["Barrier-Free Design," 11/87], people have very different needs, abilities, and disabilities. Good design and successful remodeling must consider the individual first. It's very important to talk with clients and potential clients about what they want in a house. A contractor might even contact a senior citizens group or social-service agency and ask to meet with a group of people for just this purpose.*

*We also urge contractors to adapt ordinary fixtures and materials whenever possible, rather than looking for "handicapped" items. They'll usually cost less, work just fine, and avoid the institutional look. People want to live in homes, not hospitals.*

*OK, now where to look for ideas? There are many books and magazine articles available. For builders I'd suggest starting with the magazine articles "A Home for Life" (Rodale's Practical Homeowner, July/Aug '87) and "Market Niche: Homes Without Barriers" (Habitat 2000, Aug/Sept '87).*

*For remodeling ideas, a good quick introduction is "House Retrofits That Make it Easier for the Handicapped" (Home Mechanix, March '85) or The Do-Able Renewable Home (AARP Consumer Affairs Section, 1909 K St., N.W. Washington, DC 20049). Each of these includes a list of information resources; some technical, some not. HUD (the government agency) has a number of useful publications, including Housing Special Popula-*

tions, A Resource Guide (*HUD USER*, P.O. Box 280, Germantown, MD 20874, \$3).

*To help sort through this material, the Housing Resource Center is compiling an annotated list of books and articles. For a copy, send \$2 to Barrier-Free, c/o HRC, 1820 W. 48th St., Cleveland, OH 44102.*

## Air-Driven Galvanized Nails

To the Editor:

I have been using with great success a Duofast CN 350 Framing gun that shoots a round-headed nail that can be purchased with a very high quality, cement coated, hot dipped, galvanized coating. No one else to my knowledge has this set-up, which gives a very good appearance and provides the corrosion resistance of a real hot-dipped nail. Most everyone yawns when I make this point, but judging by the April column of "On the House" at least one other person must be interested.

Chris Cartwright  
Chris Cartwright Co.  
Middlebury, Vt.

## For Mac Fans

To the Editor:

Regarding CAD for the Macintosh, two inexpensive—in the \$600 range—and easy-to-learn programs are "Powerdraw" (Computer Shoppe, Greensboro, NC 27419), and "Mincad" (Diehl Graphsoft, Elicott City, MD 21043). Both are fast, powerful tools, suitable, I suspect, for the design professional, fully meeting the needs of the residential/light commercial builder.

Timothy D. Chase  
Grove City, Pa.

## More on Confusing Wrap Data

To the Editor:

As a sales rep. for the distributor of Tyvek since its introduction eight years ago, I have always strived for accuracy of my technical information. Alex Wilson's article last August on housewraps was very fair and informative. However I was disturbed by the errors in his most recent update on housewraps (June 1988). Perhaps the technical information given him was incorrect. The manufacturer of Tyvar is stressing tear strength and U.V. resistance over the primary reasons to use a housewrap—stopping air leakage while allowing moisture passage. Contrary to what was stated in the article, Tyvek has a much higher perm rating than Tyvar, much lower air porosity and higher resistance to water leakage. Also I feel you should point out that Tyvar as all the others is a perforated film as opposed to Tyvek which is not.

I appreciate the difficulty of wading through the marketing blitz and

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# Letters

various sales pitches to find solid facts to report on. Perhaps what is needed is a *Consumer Reports* for building products.

Steve Cary  
Plunkett-Webster  
South Windsor, Conn.

Author Alex Wilson responds:

*Mr. Cary is correct about the relative permeability of Tyvek and Typar—my apologies. The problem is that in defining the perm rating of air barriers, some manufacturers use American “perms” (grams of water per square foot per hour given a pressure differential of one-inch mercury), while others use the metric perm (grams of water per square meter per 24 hours given a pressure differential of one-millimeter mercury). The published Tyvek perm rating (85-95) is in American perms, though it is not so identified in their literature, while the published Typar perm rating (125) is in metric perms and properly identified. Clearly a confusing situation! The metric perm rating of Tyvek is actually 795—much higher than that of Typar.*

*In terms of air leakage, Tyvek lists its air porosity at 17.6 seconds (Gurly-hill porosity, with the higher number being better) while Typar lists its at 10 to 20 seconds. Dupont has apparently measured Typar’s air porosity at 9.0 seconds. I’m not sure who to believe.*

*With water resistance, as I stated in my update, figures weren’t given for Typar. DuPont lists Typar’s water resistance at 19.0 cm, which is indeed quite a bit lower than Tyvek’s (99.3 cm). I had tried hard to dig up Typar’s own water resistance data, but without success.*

*As for Mr. Cary’s claim that Typar is a perforated film, like “all the others,” I suggest he pick up a sample. Typar is a “spun-bonded” polypropylene—very different from the perforated polyethylene films. Simplex’s Barricade product is also spun-bonded.*

## Corporate Complexities

To the Editor:

Andrea Morgante is correct that subchapter S can offer welcome relief to the more general scheme of double taxation under the federal income tax laws, but your readers should be aware of at least three problems with her “In Business” column (*NEB* June 1988). First, S corporations are allowed to have up to 35 shareholders, rather than ten. Second, although it is understandable that builders would choose a taxable year ending during their slow season, in February, the law now limits the choice of taxable years for newly-electing S corporations to September, October, November or December, and even for older corporations requires additional estimated tax payments making non-calendar tax years much less attractive. Finally, fringe benefits like health and life insurance that would be deductible if paid on behalf of employees of a regular corporation are non-deductible to an S corporation if the employees own more than two percent of the corporation’s stock.

Other points raised by Ms. Morgante could be misleading. For example, any of your readers operating through the corporate form to limit their personal liability should recognize that the operating procedure

outlined by Ms. Morgante (meeting once a year and filing a form with the Secretary of State) is unnecessarily risky—the protection of the corporation is much more likely to be respected if the directors meet more frequently to approve important corporate decisions like the execution of contracts with customers. Similarly, issuing stock to key employees is a tricky issue for any closely-held corporation but perhaps especially so for S corporations, where issuing the wrong kind of security or restricting the economic rights of the recipient can inadvertently terminate the subchapter S election with disastrous tax consequences. Ms. Morgante also fails to mention that some states do not have legislation mirroring the federal subchapter S rules. In my state of New Jersey, for example, closely-held companies that have valid subchapter S elections in effect for federal purposes must nevertheless be careful to minimize their corporate taxable income in light of the state corporate income tax.

One last point if I might. Owing to changes put into effect by the Tax Reform Act of 1986 and the Revenue Act of 1987, deciding whether to make a subchapter S election has become one of the most important and difficult decisions facing small businesses, with intricacies that are often not appreciated even by those traditionally relied on by clients for guidance on tax issues. My advice applies equally well to builders and tax lawyers: When in doubt, ask someone who knows.

Markley S. Roderick, Esq.  
Pennsauken, N. J.



**Keep 'em coming...**We welcome letters, but they must be signed and include the writer’s address. *New England Builder* reserves the right to edit for grammar, length, and clarity. Mail letters to *NEB*, P.O. Box 5059, Burlington, VT 05402.