

TechTalk



VOL 1- FEBRUARY 2023

NAHB IBS SHOW – Las Vegas

The SMA booth at the recent NAHB show in Las Vegas was a success. The attendance was off the charts with a steady stream of designers, builders and developers coming to the booth to learn about stucco, the SMA and the SMA training program. We thought we brought enough Tech Times handouts, but we were wrong. Thank goodness for cell phones as visitors took pictures of SMA displays to capture our website information. The display board of members also got a lot of attention from your customers. As an SMA member, your name was displayed. If you are a contractor, the state you are located in was also noted. The SMA is grateful to our sponsors for making this not only financially possible, but a huge success as they worked at the booth to help promote stucco.

The IBS show sponsors:



STUCCO QUIZ: DO YOU KNOW PLASTER?

1. The term used for a lath fastener that has missed a framing member
 - a. Shiner
 - b. Catface
 - c. Slicker
 - d. Blow out
2. High-gloss surfaces or masonry with low absorption can be made more receptive to plaster the application with
 - a. use of fibers
 - b. dash-bond coat
 - c. bituminous coating
 - d. marblecrete
3. The term "hardwall" means
 - a. Includes mesh
 - b. cement based finish
 - c. gypsum plaster basecoat
 - d. a dolomitic lime
4. "Green" plaster means it is
 - a. turning odd color
 - b. not fully set/dry
 - c. ready for the finish
 - d. from outside the USA

Answers are on the last page

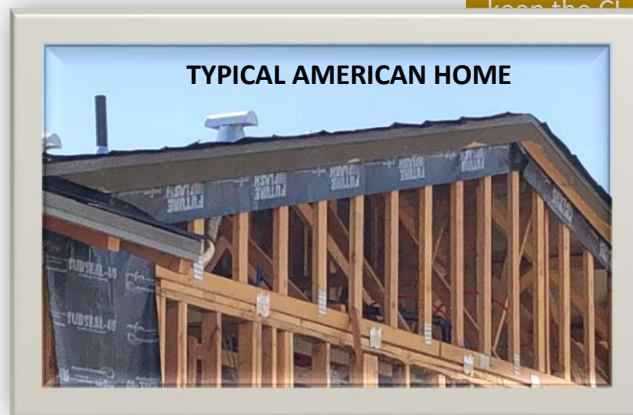
WHY IS CONCRETE MASONRY UNIT (CMU) CONSTRUCTION NOT MORE COMMON IN AMERICA?

In much of the world, masonry walls are the most common substrate for stucco. ASTM refers to this as “Solid Base”. Europe uses red clay units (see picture). Similar to our CMU, it is a great substrate for cement plaster. They both are absorptive and ideal substrates. Why does the US not build like the rest of the world? The reason masonry walls are not as common in America is basically a two-fold answer.

1. In the early days of America, we had a severe shortage of skilled masons, but plenty of wood and carpenters that built furniture. Stick framing took off and we never looked back. Even after 250 years, it can be challenging to find masons in the US. Kind of like plasterers in the south compared to finding them in the north. Light wood-framed construction is an American invention filling the need for productivity with economics. The unitized and standard measure of studs, posts, beams, joists and rafters made construction faster and less expensive. We even have a term for these type of carpenters as they are called “Framers”. They can put up the structural part of a home in record time using wood studs. Cement plaster (stucco) required a few modifications for wood framing, and this too proved to be American ingenuity.
2. Another subtle reason is earthquakes: the US has many earthquake zones, stick framing tends to fair better than masonry, particularly when clad in cement stucco. While masonry can be made more earthquake resistant with steel re-enforcing, it can be cost prohibitive. For residential homes, wood framing and stucco are not only economical but more resilient in the event of an earthquake. CUREE seismic studies and other reports verify this statement.



The popularity of Continuous Insulation is now impacting CMU walls. Adding a layer of rigid foam over masonry and the cement plaster is NOT recommended. There is perfect system designed for this and it is called Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS). Ironically, in Europe they are putting mineral wool into the cavity of red clay blocks so they can use adhered masonry veneer and keep the Cl



MORE ON CMU

WATER PENETRATION

CMU walls are decent at keeping water out adding a parge (skim) coat of cement plaster not only adds aesthetics but significant water-resistance as well. Europe has known this for centuries and this is where the term parge comes from. In 1864 Portland cement was invented making cement plaster highly water-resistant with less maintenance during its life. Several studies verify the benefits of Portland cement plaster. Most studies are from Florida where stucco is commonly applied directly to CMU. CMU walls coated in plaster are still popular in south Florida due to excellent resistance to hurricanes. Tile flooring makes this type of construction logical for Florida and the Caribbean markets. Walls get wet, dry out, and after some clean-up, they are put back in service. On the other hand if wood framing gets wet, walls typically have to be opened up to dry out or simply replaced. Thus we have regional preferences.

WEEPSCREED: cement plaster on CMU substrates is classified as a barrier moisture system, there is no need for a weep screed as water is not intended to weep down the backside of the plaster as it does with a rainscreen. Terminating the stucco above the earth is optional and not required for masonry walls.



LET'S ADD A GRADE D PAPER !!

While it is possible to add paper, felt or house wrap over the CMU before plastering, it is generally not advised. A sheet good becomes a bond breaker. Losing the intimate contact between the CMU and cement plaster is not a good thing. The belief you are adding water resistance is a fallacy. Attaching the paper or felt to a masonry substrate cannot be done practically with nails, screws, or staples. Using a power actuated fastener is no better. This application will force fasteners into the masonry with high pressure. This will likely spall the masonry and tear the paper/felt. How can this be more water resistant? In addition, fasteners are recommended to be placed into the grout joints. How can you see the masonry joints through a black felt? If a designer really wants extra water protection, there are fluid applied WRBs that can be used. Make sure they are meant to have cement plaster bond to them. Do not use bituminous type compounds.

SMA OFFERS: TIPS & CAVEATS

CEMENT PLASTER ON CONCRETE MASONRY UNITS (CMU)

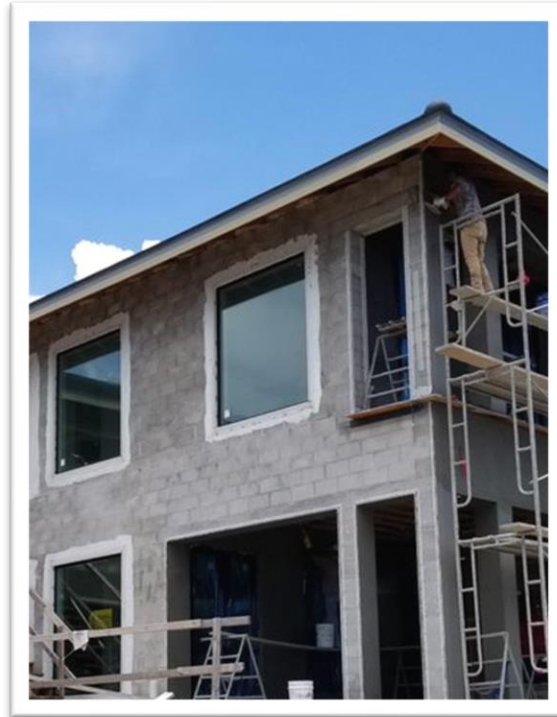
Plastering over masonry is the oldest and simplest form of plastering. It is also proven as it has been done for centuries in hot cold and wet climates. Stucco is the most popular cladding around the world by a wide margin. Stucco over masonry is the most common method of application and can be up to two inches thick in other parts of the world. The US has more stringent code requirements regarding thickness of cement plaster.

THICKNESS ISSUES

Cement plaster can be skim coated or put on up to 1 ½ inches over CMU substrates. The code states if the plaster is over 5/8 inch thick, a lath is required. The SMA recommends not adding a sheet good WRB.

Attach the to the grout joints and get a minimum ¼ inch penetration into the grout. Spacing should not exceed one fastener per square foot.

Skim coating CMU with cement plaster is good for landscape walls. **CAVEAT:** The joints will likely show when the wall is wet. Adding a ¼ to 3/8 inch cement skim coat before applying the finish coat will hide the joints. The joints can show through if the walls become soaked. However, that is the beauty of cement plaster and CMU, this water does little to harm the wall and it dries out when the sun hits the wall. It can be a kind of “reservoir” cladding. While Americans denote reservoir as a bad thing, Europeans continue to build this way in a wide range of environments.



SOUTH FLORIDA STUCCO ON CMU



WARNING: THE SMA SHIELD IS FOR SMA CONTRACTORS WHO HAVE PASSED THE COURSE, HAVE A QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR AND REFERENCES CLEARED BY THE SMA. USING THIS SHIELD WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THIS PROCESS CAN PUT YOUR FIRM AT RISK IF A CUSTOMER DESIDES TO ASK THE SMA “ARE THEY SMA CERTIFIED?”



WINDOWS

Unlike framed walls that frequently use nail-flange style windows integrating the paper/felt or housewrap: CMU and stucco are best done with a sealant joint around the window. Head flashings are a good idea for exposure to heavy rain areas. Sill pans under the window is also advised. These are NOT the plasterer’s responsibility to design or install. Both head flashing and sill pans should have the termination point beyond the outer surface of the plaster.

CAVEATS:

1. This is not a drainage assembly. The wall cladding is meant to keep all the water out.
2. While it is not the plastering contractors responsibility to install head flashing or sill pans, you can document that you asked about them and keep that documentation to protect yourself.

CORNERS

The use of trim accessories for corners on framed walls is common. For CMU walls it is kind of a hit and miss. The SMA is often asked if corner trim accessories are required for CMU walls. The short answer is no. However, they have a benefit, and the thickness of the cement plaster is typically the guiding key to follow. Less than a ½ inch of cement plaster makes the corner trim hard to align and most forego using them. Thicker plaster (not required) can really benefit from installing these trims. Some plasterers prefer to make their own corners using a straight edge. See *TRADE TIP* and *graphics*.

In Florida it is common to use PVC corner bead and they often apply the corner with an adhesive to the masonry wall. The adhesive must be waterproof and set prior to plastering. The key for all trim accessory attachments is that they do not move during the application of the plaster.

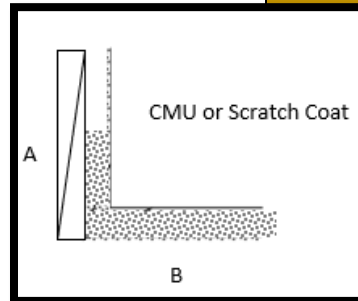


MEMBERSHIP

It is that time of year. Membership dues are sent out. The SMA is grateful to membership support and thrilled that many firms call the SMA as soon as they get an invoice to make sure they are paid. This is usually followed by a comment about the value they see in being with the SMA. Many members use SMA services, some do not. While we appreciate the financial support, you should use the SMA to your benefit. We help manufacturers with code issues, regional practices and even disgruntled end purchasers. We help contractors with conflicting directives and known practices that will likely result in a call back. We can help solve the situation or memorialize your concern for the record. Get the most out of your SMA membership.

TRADE TIP: -Making a cement corner without trim in 5 steps: This is best done over a substrate that absorbs moisture, such as CMU or a cured scratch coat of cement.

1. Apply daubs of mortar to Side A of the corner.
2. Adhere a dampened straight edge.
3. Align straight edge to be plumb and to extend out to the desired plaster thickness for side B.
4. Fill side B with mortar using the adhered straight edge as a guide (skillful touch required).
5. Slide the straight edge off the corner so as not to disturb the fresh corner.



CORNER BY NAME

In the east coast they use the term corner "Bead" regularly. In the west coast they use the term corner "Aid".

However, there is a technical difference between the two. The welded wire corner is an aid.

SMA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The SMA is ready to start meeting in person again. Our next meeting is set for March 28, 2023 and will be at the Yorba Linda Country Club. This is a lunch meeting and reservations must be made in advance. The cost will increase due to venue and food price increase. \$ 75.00 per person is for lunch and the presentation. Our Speaker is **Jacob Belk**. Jacob is the Vice President for John Burns Consulting and has spoken to the SMA before. He provided insight into the economy that proved to be spot on and it was done in an entertaining fashion. SMA asked Mr. Belk to return because there was a lot of requests to have him back. He specializes in residential construction forecasting with real life data his firm gathers from various parties. If you want to predict the next twelve months for your business, no one can do it better for you than Jacob Belk. Seating will be limited, so book early!!!

MARCH 28 , 2023 12:00

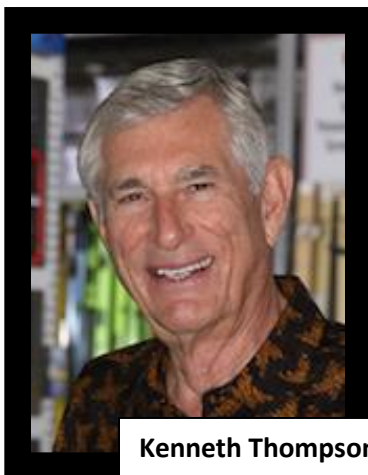
**YORBA LINDA COUNTRY CLUB
19400 Mountain View Ave,
Yorba Linda CA**



- ANSWERS:
- 1 . A- *this is a southwest term for fasteners missing a stud*
 2. B- a dash bond coat is a cement rich slurry used to increase the bond
 3. C- an old term used to describe the interior gypsum plaster basecoat
 4. B- green means newly applied plaster not fully dried



YOUR SMA BOOTH AT THE NAHB IBS TRADE SHOW PROMOTING PLASTER TO BUILDERS AND DESIGNERS



Kenneth Thompson

The Passing of an Industry Icon: Kenneth Thompson has passed away at the age of 85. He was a legend in the lath and plaster industry. “Kenny” put over 60 years in the industry, he built an empire. He was a great supporter to the SMA and the industry in general. His presence will be missed by the industry. We express condolences to his friends and family.

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