

LETTERS

Reader Looking for Help

Does anyone know when the first backyard deck was built? We are working with a customer who lives in a historic district, and the historical commission doesn't want to allow a deck on the house. They say that decks are not a historical feature of homes from this era. Front porches are, but decks are not.

I started researching, but can't find when the first deck on the rear of a home was built. I did find an article that said decks started booming when DIYers in the 1970s began customizing their homes. However, I am running into a wall finding the very first deck. Is anyone aware of such information?

Christina Speiden
Highland, Md.

Editor's note: If you have information on deck history, please e-mail it to Professional Deck Builder at prodeck@hanleywood.com. We'll forward it onward.

Look Out for Engineered Building Components

Mark Clement covered a lot of ground in his article on framing new door openings and hit all the high points of a conventional install. I run into a lot of houses framed with engineered components that don't fit standard practices.

Floors framed with I-joists may not have rim-joist material capable of supporting the crushing loads of the jack studs on a wide door opening. Just as you would when

planning deck-ledger attachment to an I-joist system, you should reinforce the I-joists and rim joist when installing a door.

Install squash blocks made from solid 2-by material with the grain oriented vertically between the underside of the floor sheathing and the mud sill (or wall plate). The squash blocks transfer the header load through the I-joist system and down to something solid. I drive a screw or nail through the floor deck before positioning the new jacks to pinpoint the squash blocks, then glue and screw them in place.

Clement also noted that the loads on hip-roof systems transfer to the building corners. This is partially true for stick-framed roofs. However, hip roofs framed with trusses have concentrated loads beneath girder trusses that may require headers larger than what's listed in prescriptive code tables. They may even have to be engineered.

You can pinpoint girder-truss location by looking in the attic. Girder trusses are usually flat-top trusses that are doubled or tripled and have a series of face-jack and hip-jack trusses emanating from the down-slope side.

Mike Guertin
East Greenwich, R.I.

Non-metallic Preservative Not Approved for Ground Contact

Editor's note: In "The New Preservatives" (September/October 2008), we mistakenly reported that Viance's Ecolife, a non-metallic preservative for aboveground applications, was approved for ground contact. Here is Viance's clarification:

Ecolife GC is in fact approved for ground contact under the ICC approval document ESR-2711. Ecolife GC has soluble copper in the product in order to assure its performance in ground contact; however, we market it under the overall Ecolife brand.

We have not found any completely non-metallic preservative that will perform in ground-contact applications. Ecolife GC contains the same preservative as Ecolife for aboveground, but has copper added for performance.

Chris Shadday
Commercial Vice President
Viance



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E-mail us at prodeck@hanleywood.com or mail letters to: Professional Deck Builder, 186 Allen Brook Lane, Williston, VT 05495.