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The Conduite Sauf Report

Special Interest Articles:

- Building Permits
- Selecting a Designer
- Materials
- When Things Go Wrong

Welcome to Spring 2012 and
the second edition of the Conduite Sauf Report

Building Permits

Welcome to the spring construction season. I hope everyone had a great winter and designs were flooding the local building departments. From what I have heard, Permit applications are about the same as last year. If you are just getting starting and not sure if you need a permit, contact your municipal office for specific project requirements for any particular project. Here are some Q&A's to keep in mind.

When Do I Need A Building Permit?

Permits are normally required for:

• building any detached structure more than 10 m^2 (107 ft^2)

• building an addition to your home or building

• raised porches and decks

• carports and garages

• structural alterations

• moving and lifting your house, installing a fireplace or wood burning stove,

• partitioning a basement or adding a basement walkout,

• demolishing a house

• waterproofing repairs

• attached and raised decks

This list may not be complete so, check first with your municipality or call us to discuss your plans.

Selecting a Designer

Your roof is one of the most important components affecting short and long term performance of your building whether it be your home, cottage or office.

A great deal of time and effort went into its design. Below the outer protective layer of shingles or gravel and asphalt lies a complex support system custom designed and built to your building's needs. Roof framing is designed to meet local snow loads and other factors unique to this part of the country.

Trusses or Rafters

Roof structures are commonly 'stick framed' or 'trussed' or a combination of both using either wood or steel. Between the rafters and joists or trusses lie a system of bracing and blocking creating a complete rigid frame overlying the walls or beams. Roof framing or alterations to roof framing is best left to the experts because it was designed and constructed as a complete system. While it may be tempting to want to use some of that empty space above the ceiling for storage or even create an additional room, it's unlikely that the existing framing was designed for such use. And, there may be conflicting local code or by-laws or sections of your lease agreement which if ignored, could have serious consequences. It's best to talk to the experts first. Start with your local building department or feel free to contact me if you are not sure at (705) 331-7711.

Materials

"our engineer guided us through the whole process and made sure our project met the requirements of the Building Code "

Solar panels have gained increased attention in the past couple of years as Owners seek new ways of decreasing their utility costs or as a source of revenue by selling to the grid. Also, what a great way to decrease our carbon footprint!

From our experience, solar panel applications tend to be either building mounted or free standing. Residential building applications tend to be on the south side of sloped roofs. Commercial solar panel applications tend to be on flat roofs or on free standing structures.

Whether a commercial or residential application, the building's structure should be assessed to make sure the solar panels can indeed be installed as desired. Free standing applications require pre-engineering assessment for foundations. Prior to doing any work, the local municipality should be consulted.

If you are considering a solar panel installation please note that each site is unique. Costs and benefits should be carefully assessed first for this long term investment. I can help you make the right choices for your location.

When Things Go Wrong

Every building rests on some kind of foundation whether it be footings and frost walls, piles, caissons or floating slab. Older houses were commonly built on rubble and mortar foundations. Considerable thought goes into the selection of a foundation design which depends upon soil conditions, local design factors and building use and should be done by an Engineer.

Problems can occur with foundations. Before repair, the cause and extent of the problem should be carefully reviewed prior to initiating any repair work.

Engineered Fill

Soil fill placed to the Engineer's requirements and specifications is known as engineered or structural fill. Foundations and roads can be built on engineered fill but only if placement was supervised and tested.

Underpinning

Under pining and engineered fill often go together. Underpinning is a method of stabilizing or deepening existing foundations. I work closely with specialty contractors before, during and after this kind of work to make sure everything goes as planned.

Engineered fill ready for placement of footings.

We are looking forward to the 2012 construction season and urge you to plan ahead. Call or drop by anytime or make an appointment. We are here for You!

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