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CREEPER OVERHANGS WILL SHE BE RIGHT?

Following GN Guidelines No. 163 on gable overhangs, I write this article to address a similar concern for creeper overhangs in hip ends where a “She’ll be right” attitude also seems to prevail.

The corner jack/rafter is an imperative part of the roof structure but whenever I see the situation exemplified in Figure 1 and ask the carpenter, “What is supporting the corner rafter?” the most common reply I get is, “... the roof battens”.

My usual response is then, “Isn’t the roof batten meant to be supported by the rafters, not the other way around?”

This corner rafter clearly lacks structural support at the lower end and the only things keeping it in place are the eaves batten and flimsy fascia clip.



■ Figure 1

In quite a few other roofs, I have also seen the corner rafter missing altogether as in Figure 2.

When asked, they usually tell me that the roof installers ripped them out because they didn’t know what to do with them.

All of them seem totally oblivious of the fact that the eaves batten and metal fascia now have to span twice as far



■ Figure 2

for which neither is capable of doing under full load.

Some might be tempted to think that a way around this is to place the last creeper slightly in from the corner wall so there is some backspan support, as the builder in Figure 3 supposed.

While this is an improvement, the crowbar lever effect of this large overhang-to-backspan ratio exerts an elevated uplift at the hip fixing.

My calculations of a creeper connector, as AS4440 calls for in cyclonic regions, fail when a worker standing at the tail end exerts a point live load.

“What about nails or batten screws?” you say. Well, both nails and batten screws have even lower load capacities than a creeper connector; which is why AS4440 stipulates creeper connectors in cyclonic regions where nails suffice in lower wind classifications.



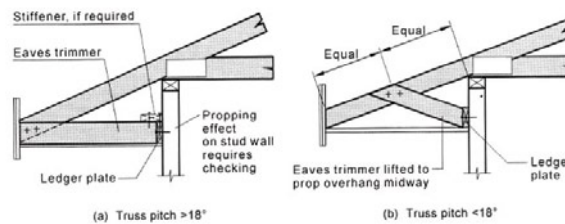
■ Figure 4

when the soffit is sheeted along the rake.

3. The best method with flat soffits is to prop or strut the overhang back



■ Figure 3



■ Figure 5

There are several ways of properly supporting creeper overhangs:

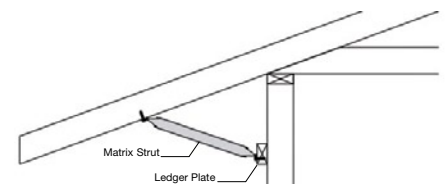
1. You can follow AS1684, which requires a structural fascia of 190x19mm softwood or equivalent to support the hip corner. Almost all metal fascias are non-structural.

2. If metal fascias are used, a short timber fascia beam could be inserted behind, as depicted in Figure 4. A good truss software package will size that for you. Fascia beams act in the same way as structural fascias.

These methods so far are preferred

to the wall. One example of achieving this is shown in Figure 5 (extracted from AS4440).

4. Alternatively, a pre-formed metal strut such as a Matrix strut in Figure 6 may be easier to install. The relevant information is available from your truss fabricator.



■ Figure 6

So let’s not say, “She’ll be right” and rely on proverbial sky hooks to support hip creepers. Simply using the right detail may save you the agony of seeing someone getting injured, or worse. **TTN**