

# BUILDER'S MATE

ISSUE 35 | April 2009



**Once the floor is poured and the tiles laid, how do you know exactly where the underfloor heating cables or pipes run in a house? After the linings are fixed, how can you prove that a bracing panel has been bolted down to the floor with the correct anchors (other than the fact that it was inspected by the BCA before the lining was fixed)? The answer comes from keeping a good record of a construction, right from the start.**

Two key parts of a good site record are photographs and a site diary.

Digital cameras can record where things like wiring, pipes and framing are while they are still visible. They can also show how a process was carried out, and with what materials. A camera which records the date when a particular photograph was

taken can be very useful. Try to incorporate something that identifies where the photo was taken.

You can use a camera to record:

- reinforcing layouts
- in-slab pipework
- bracing fixing
- the position of in-wall services

>

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Fines for illegal building work

Courts are handing out some hefty fines to people who've done major building work without a consent. A North Shore builder was fined \$29,000 plus costs of \$4,746 for adding an extra floor to some industrial units without getting a consent. That's not the only bill he faces: he must also remove the work, or do whatever is required to make it legal.

### Starter homes competition success

The Starter Home Design Competition, launched last year by the Department of Building and Housing, received 140 entries. The competition aimed to encourage plans for homes which are affordable but also well designed. The winning home will be built by Housing New Zealand Corporation.

The winner will be announced at an awards function to be held in Parliament.

## HAMMER 'N' NAILS



**Win!**

**A Bosch 10.8v Scorpion drill/driver kit**

**Worth \$399!**



> Continued from previous page

- the location of service trenches before they are filled in
- drains installed behind retaining walls
- any materials delivered in a damaged condition
- weather and site conditions
- vandalism
- site milestones.

A site diary should be used to record:

- important telephone calls and verbal instructions from the designer, building owner, building inspector, engineer, etc. Record the date and time and briefly what was said
- when requested additional drawings were delivered to the site (these now become part of the contract documents)
- important verbal instructions given to staff or subtrades
- calls to BCA, designer
- variations to the contract by the project manager, designer or client
- material deliveries, including their condition. Keep delivery dockets.
- if incorrect or substandard materials are delivered, keep a note of when the supplier was notified, and when the

materials are replaced

- work progress
- quality checks
- site safety issues
- moisture content readings of timber or concrete
- problems encountered – incomplete drawings, a storm
- site visitors
- inspections – who was there, what was inspected, and the outcome.

At the BRANZ helpline, we get calls from people who could have avoided a problem if they'd kept good records, such as an up-to-date site diary and some photographs.

Good records can also help keep you out of hot water, by showing that processes were completed properly and the right materials were used.

At the end of the day you'll have a good record of the project, and information which could be very useful to the building owner and any future builders doing alterations.

## Dribblings from the Old Geezer

I have the good fortune to live in sunny Golden Bay. This wonderful backwater still has all the desirable behaviour and values of heartland New Zealand. Community events still involve families, 'number eight' wire attitudes prevail, and a healthy scepticism of bureaucracy is often evident. We celebrate the fact that Ed Hillary shoved it to the poms by driving his Fergie tractors to the South Pole despite being only supposed to lay supply drops for the proper team led by Sir Vivian Fuchs.

Why the reflective musings? At one of these cool inter-generational Golden Bay social gatherings - still called a 'bash' - I pondered the fate of the 'Licensing of Building Practitioners' scheme with a local builder, and wondered if it would continue now that we have a different government. I was surprised that my companion, who fitted all the criteria for being a gently alternative local, being a basket maker as well as a builder, wants to become an LBP. While many of his local peers plan to go under the radar, he felt that with the possibility of a real economic decline, he wants to be chosen by the good mainstream clients who still have money and want the best job done, done by the best, i.e. licensed. Good eh!

**Des Molloy**



## AT A GLANCE

# Soffit linings constructed using BRANZ Weathertight Solutions details

Where BRANZ Weathertight Solutions soffit details are being used (see example at right, taken from the Weathertight Solutions Volume 1, *Horizontal Weatherboards* Third edition), the sequence of completing the top of a wall intersecting with a soffit is as follows:

1. The wall underlay is continued up to and turned out under the soffit framing
2. The cavity battens are fixed over the wall underlay and the wall cladding is fixed
3. The cavity is closed at the top by continuous blocking or a horizontal batten to close it off from roof cavities
4. The wall cladding is installed up to the soffit bearer (the first key difference from traditional practice). This ensures that any water on the soffit is below the top of the wall cladding
5. Where a back-flashing is specified, it is installed. Installing a back flashing is recommended so that water cannot get into the cavity
6. The soffit lining is fixed in place after the wall cladding (the second key difference from traditional practice)
7. Trim timbers are fixed.

Constructing the detail this way means that any water being held on the soffit by surface tension is below the top edge of the cladding. It is therefore less likely to get behind the cladding than the traditional way of constructing this detail where the cladding finishes to the underside of the soffit, especially on a raked soffit.

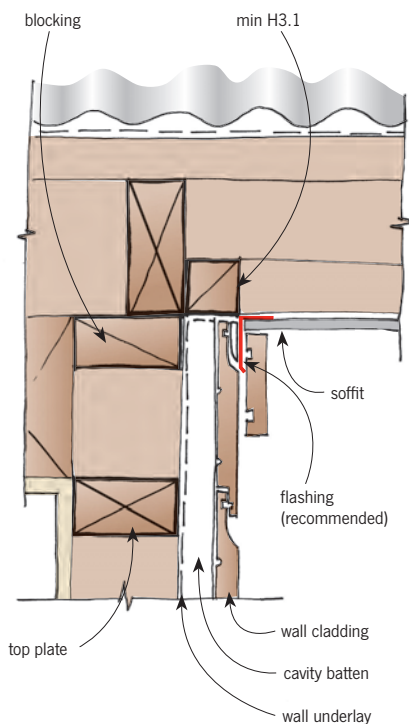
# Floor levels

Getting the floor level wrong can lead to ongoing moisture problems in a house. It can also bring serious Building Code compliance problems, and potential drainage problems due to an insufficient height of the floor above ground and lack of fall to the drains.

Building Code requirements for floor levels are the absolute minimum.

Clause E1.3.2 says that houses must be built so that a 50-year flood will not enter the building. To achieve this, Acceptable Solution E1/AS1 says that the floor level must be no less than 150 mm above the crown of the road or the lowest point of the boundary (Figures 1 and 2). These figures apply to near-level sites. For steep sites, specific design and consent as an Alternative Solution is required.

It is important to prevent water from splashing, or being conducted by capillary action, under or behind the cladding. E2/AS1 4.2.5 gives minimum heights of finished floor levels above ground for concrete slab on ground and suspended timber floors, the measurements depending on whether there is grass or paving outside. NZS 3604 sets a minimum height above ground for wood based products used for flooring. E2/AS1 also gives a minimum stepdown of 100 mm between a floor and waterproof deck.



Install the soffit so the bottom surface is below the top of the cladding.

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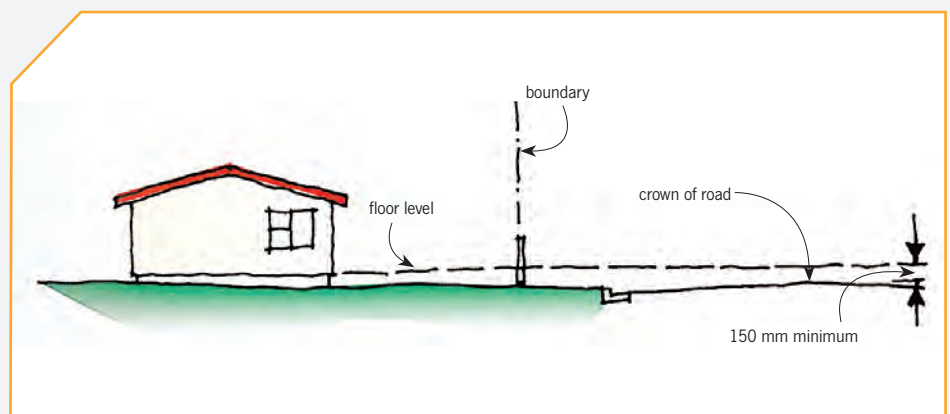


Figure 1. Minimum floor level for a site above the road level.

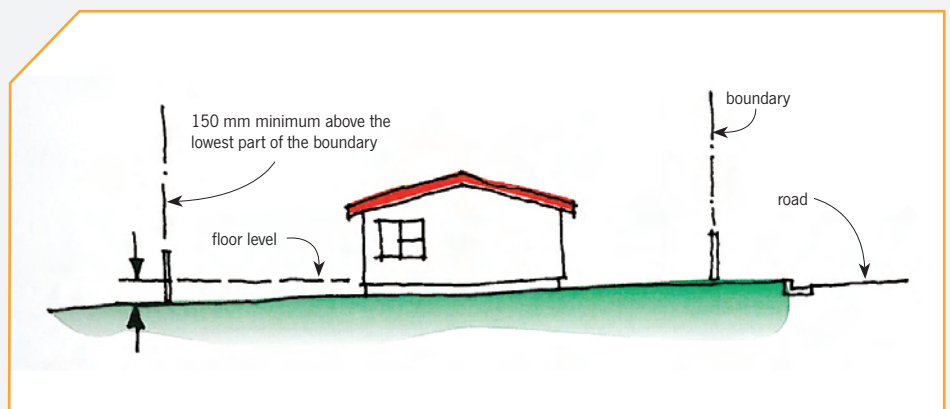


Figure 1. Minimum floor level for a site below the road level.



# COMPETITION Win!



## A Bosch 10.8v Scorpion drill/ driver kit **Worth \$399!**

This amazing new drill/driver is just half the size of a standard 12-volt tool, so is incredibly light at just 1.1kg including battery. Its 2-speed gearbox allows great power transfer drilling (up to 19 mm) or driving screws (up to 7 mm).

The prize is provided courtesy of The Tool Shed.

All you need to win is tell us the name of the mystery tool (above, right) and what it's used for. Send us your answer plus your name, address and telephone number on the back of an envelope. Post it (you don't need a stamp) to: Builder's Mate 35, Mystery Tool Competition, FREEPOST BRANZ, Private Bag 50 908, Porirua City 5240. One entry per entrant please.

Don't forget to tell us where you picked up your copy of Builder's Mate! The winner will be the first correct entry drawn at 9 am on Friday 1 May 2009. Details will be posted on the BRANZ Ltd website ([www.branz.co.nz](http://www.branz.co.nz)) and in the next edition of Builder's Mate due out on 2 June 2009.

### Terms and conditions:

Entry is open to all New Zealand residents except employees and immediate families of BRANZ Ltd, BRANZ Pty, Building Research and The Tool Shed shops. The competition will close on Friday 1 May 2009. The prize is not transferable for cash. The judge's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

# ?

What is the name of this tool  
pictured below and what is it used for?



## BUILDER'S MATE WINNERS

Photo: Dave Read, the winner of the BM 33 competition, receives his prize from Warren Rehu, manager at The Rotorua Toolshed.

The winner of the BM 34 competition was Regan Stallard of Naenae, Lower Hutt. The mystery tool was a dry wall sander and vacuum, used for sanding plasterboard. The prize was a Stanley FatMax mobile tool kit.

# BLOKES on the job

## MICHAEL DRUM

building in the Hokianga area but holidaying in Golden Bay.



### Favourite tool

Chisel and hand saw.

### Favourite tip

Get it right from the start.

## DALE WELTY

working at the 'Old Geezer's' place.



### Favourite tool

'Airline' ultra-light string line for long spans.

### Favourite tip

Trust your string lines.

## NEIL GARD

On a site above Taylor's Mistake, Christchurch



### Favourite tool

Irwin chisel.

### Favourite tip

Do not leave your hammer on the top of the ladder.

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Standards referred to can be purchased from Standards New Zealand.  
Tel: 04 498 5991 or [www.standards.co.nz](http://www.standards.co.nz).

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Know someone on the job? Send us details of his or her favourite tip and tool and you could win \$50-worth of BRANZ books.