

A

ALCOVE: A recess opening off a wall of a larger room. Often used as a sitting area, coat room, or storage area.

ANCHOR BOLT: A threaded rod inserted in masonry construction to anchor the sill plate to the foundation.

APRON: Trim used under the stool on interior windows.

ATTIC: The space between the roof and the ceiling.

AWNING WINDOW: An outswinging window hinged at the top.

B

BALCONY: A deck projecting from the wall of a building above ground level.

BALUSTERS: Usually small vertical members in a railing used between a top rail and the stair treads or a bottom rail.

BANISTER: A handrail with supporting posts used alongside a stairway.

BASEBOARD: The finish board covering the interior wall where the wall and floor meet.

BASE SHOE: A molding used next to the floor in interior baseboards.

BATT: A roll or sheet of insulation designed to be installed between members of frame construction.

BATTEN: Narrow strips of wood used to cover joints or as decorative vertical members over plywood or wide boards.

BAY WINDOW: Any window space projecting outward from the walls of a building, either square or polygonal in plan.

BEAM: A structural member transversely supporting a load.

BEAM CEILING: A ceiling in which the ceiling beams are exposed to view.

BEARING PARTITION: A partition that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.

BEARING WALL: A wall that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.

BOARD FOOT: A method of lumber measurement using nominal dimensions of 1 in. thick, 12 in. wide, and 12 in. long, or the equivalent.

BRICK: A solid masonry unit composed of clay or shale. Formed into a rectangular prism while soft and burned or fired in a kiln.

BRICK VENEER: A facing of brick laid against and fastened to sheathing of a frame wall or tile wall construction.

BRIDGING: Small wood or metal members that are inserted in a diagonal position between the floor joists at midspan to act both as tension and compression members for the purpose of bracing the joists and spreading the action of loads.

C

CARPORT: A garage not fully enclosed.

CASEMENT WINDOW: A hinged window, usually metal, that opens out.

CASING: Molding of various widths and thicknesses used to trim door and window openings at the jambs.

CENTRAL HEATING: A system by which the heat from a single source is distributed with ducts.

CHAMFER: A beveled edge on a board formed by removing the sharp corner. Generally used on moldings, edges of drawer fronts, and cabinet doors.

CHASE: A slot or continuous groove built in a masonry wall to accommodate ducts, pipes, or conduits.

CHIMNEY: A vertical flue for passing smoke from a heating unit, fireplace, or incinerator.

CLEAT: A piece of wood, normally used in frame construction, fastened to another member to serve as a brace or support.

COLLAR BEAM: Nominal 1 or 2 in. thick members connecting opposite roof rafters. They serve to stiffen the roof structure.

CONCRETE: A mixture of cement, sand, and gravel with water.

CONDUIT, ELECTRICAL: A pipe, usually metal or plastic, in which wire is installed.

CORBEL: A ledge or shelf constructed by laying successive courses of masonry out from the face of the wall.

CORNER BRACES: Diagonal braces at the corners of frame structure to stiffen and strengthen the wall.

CORNICE: The part of a roof that projects out from the wall.

CORNICE RETURN: That portion of the cornice that returns on the gable end of a house.

COUNTERFLASHING: A flashing used under the regular flashing.

COVE: Molded trim of a concave shape used around cabinet construction and other built-ins.

CRAWL SPACE: The shallow space below the floor of a house built above the ground. Generally it is surrounded with the foundation wall.

CRICKET: A device used at roof intersections to divert water.

CRIPPLE: A structural member that is cut less than full length, such as a studding piece above a window or door.

CROSS BRACING: Boards nailed diagonally across studs or other boards to make framework rigid.

CROWN MOLDING: A decorative molding used at the top of cabinets, at ceiling corners, and under a roof overhang.

CUPOLA: A small, decorative structure built on the roof of a house. It is often placed over an attached garage and may also be used for ventilating purposes.

CURTAIN WALL: An exterior wall which provides no structural support.

D

DADO JOINT: A groove cut across the face of a board to receive the end of another board. Often used in quality shelf and cabinet construction.

DAMPER: A movable plate which regulates the draft of a stove, fireplace, or furnace.

DEAD LOAD: All the unmovable weight in a structure and the weight of the structure itself.

DIMENSION LUMBER: Framing lumber which is 2 in. thick and from 4 to 12 in. wide.

DOORJAMB: Two vertical pieces held together by a head jamb forming the inside lining of a door opening.

DOORSTOP: The strips on the doorjamb against which the door closes.

DORMER: An opening in a sloping roof, the framing of which projects out to form a vertical wall suitable for windows or other openings.

DOUBLE GLAZING: Making a pane of two pieces of glass with air space between and sealed to provide insulation.

DOUBLE HEADER: Two or more timbers joined for strength.

DOUBLE HUNG: Refers to a window having top and bottom sashes, each capable of movement up and down.

DOWNSPOUT: A pipe, usually of metal, for carrying rainwater from roof gutters.

DRIP CAP: A molding placed on the exterior top side of a door or window frame to cause water to drip beyond the outside of the frame.

DRY WALL: Interior covering material, such as gypsum board or plywood, which is applied in large sheets or panels.

DUCTS: In a house, usually round or rectangular metal pipes for distributing warm air from the heating plant to rooms, or air from a conditioning device or as cold air returns. Ducts are also made of composition materials.

DUPLEX OUTLET: Electrical wall outlet having two plug receptacles.

DWARF WALL: A low wall built to retain an excavation or embankment.

E

EAVES: The lower portion of the roof that overhangs the wall.

ELL: An extension or wing of a building at right angles to the main section.

EXCAVATION: A cavity or pit produced by digging the earth in preparation for construction.

EXPANSION JOINT: A bituminous fiber strip used to separate blocks or units of concrete to prevent cracking due to expansion as a result of temperature changes.

EXPANSIVE CLAY: A type of soil which swells when wet and produces very high pressure against underground walls.

F

FACADE: The front elevation or face of a structure.

FACE BRICK: Brick of better quality used on the face of a wall.

FACE SIZE: The exposed width of a molded piece of lumber after installation.

FACE VENEER: Veneer selected for exposed surfaces in plywood. Especially selected for fancy paneling.

FACING: Any material attached to the outer portion of a wall used as a finished surface.

FASCIA: A vertical board nailed onto the ends of the rafters.

FIBERBOARD: A building board made with fibrous material and used as an insulating board.

FILL: Sand, gravel, or loose earth used to bring a subgrade up to a desired level around a house.

FILLED INSULATION: A loose insulating material poured from bags or blown by machine into walls.

FIREBRICK: A brick that is especially hard and heat-resistant; used in fireplaces.

FIRECLAY: A refractory mortar used to lay firebrick in the bed and walls of a fireplace.

FIRE STOP: A solid, tight closure of a concealed space, placed to prevent the spread of fire and smoke through such a space. In a frame wall, this will usually consist of 2 by 4 cross blocking between studs.

FIRE WALL: Any wall designed to resist the spread of fire between sections of a house. Fire walls are commonly used between the main structure and an attached garage. Fire resistant materials are designed specifically for this purpose.

FLAGSTONE: Flat stone used for floors, steps, walks, or walls. **FLASHING:** Sheet metal or other material used in roof and wall construction to protect a building from water seepage.

FLUE: The space or passage in a chimney through which smoke, gas, or fumes ascend. Each passage is called a flue, which together with any others and the surrounding masonry make up the chimney.

FLUE LINING: Fireclay or terra-cotta pipe, round or square, usually made in all ordinary flue sizes and in 2 ft. lengths. Used for the inner lining of chimneys with the brick or masonry work around the outside. Flue lining in chimneys runs from about a foot below the flue connection to the top of the chimney.

FLY RAFTERS: End rafters of the gable overhang supported by roof sheathing and lookouts.

FOOTING: A masonry section, usually concrete, in a rectangular form wider than the bottom of the foundation wall or pier it supports.

FORM, CONCRETE: A temporary structure built to contain concrete during pouring and initial hardening.

FOUNDATION: The supporting portion of a structure below the first-floor construction, or below grade, including the footings.

FRAMING, BALLOON: A system of framing a building in which all vertical structural elements of the bearing walls and partitions consist of single pieces extending from the top of the foundation sill plate to the roof plate and to which all floor joists are fastened.

FRAMING, PLATFORM: A system of framing a building in which floor joists of each story rest on the top plates of the story below or on the foundation sill for the first story, and the bearing walls and partitions rest on the subfloor of each story.

FRIEZE: In house construction, a horizontal member connecting the top of the siding with the soffit of the cornice.

FROSTLINE: The depth of frost penetration in soil. This depth varies in different parts of the country. Footings should be placed below this depth to prevent movement.

FURRING: The use of wood strips (or other materials) as a method of finishing the interior face of a masonry wall. Furring provides a space for insulation, helps prevent moisture transmission, and provides a level surface for paneling or other surface finishing treatment.

G

GABLE: The portion of the roof above the eave line of a double-sloped roof.

GIRDER: A large or principal beam of wood or steel used to support concentrated loads at isolated points along its length.

GLAZING: Placing of glass in windows or doors.

GRADE: The surface of the ground around a building.

GRADE, WOOD: A designation given to the quality of manufactured lumber.

GRAVEL STOP: A strip of metal with a vertical lip used to retain the gravel around the edge of a built-up roof.

GROUT: A plaster-like material used to seal between ceramic and other tile in kitchens, showers, and baths.

GUSSET: A plywood or metal plate used to strengthen the joints of a truss.

GUTTER: A trough for carrying off water.

H

HANGER: A metal strap used to support piping or the ends of joists.

HARDWOOD: Wood produced from broad-leaved trees or trees that lose their leaves. Examples include alder, ash, hickory, oak, maple, walnut, and birch.

HEADER: (a) A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for chimney, stairway, or other opening. (b) A wood lintel.

HEARTH: The inner or outer floor of a fireplace, usually made of brick, tile, or stone.

HEAT EXCHANGER: A device for removing heat from water or air and transferring the heat to another medium. Baseboard convectors are water to air heat exchangers.

HIP RAFTER: The diagonal rafter that extends from the plate to the ridge to form the hip.

HIP ROOF: A roof that rises by inclined planes from all four sides of a building.

HOSE BIB: A water faucet made for the threaded attachment of a hose.

HOUSE DRAIN: A horizontal sewer piping within a building, which receives waste from the soil stacks.

HOUSE SEWER: The watertight soil pipe extending from the exterior of the foundation wall to the public sewer.

HUMIDIFIER: A device, generally attached to a furnace, to supply or maintain humidity in a home.

HUMIDSTAT: A controlling device to regulate or maintain the desired degree of humidity in a house.

I

I-BEAM: A steel beam with a cross section resembling the letter I. It is used for long spans as basement beams or over wide wall openings, such as a double garage door, when wall and roof loads are imposed on the opening.

IMPROVEMENTS: Any additions to property which tends to increase its value, such as buildings, streets, sewers, etc.

INCANDESCENT LAMP: A lamp in which a filament gives off light when sufficiently heated by an electric current.

INSULATING BOARD: Any board suitable for insulating purposes: usually manufactured board made from vegetable fibers, such as fiberboard.

INSULATION: Materials for obstructing the passage of sound, heat, or cold from one surface to another.

INTERIOR TRIM: General term for all the finish molding, casing, baseboard, and cornice applied within the building by finish carpenters.

J

JACK RAFTER: A rafter that spans the distance from the wall plate to a hip, or from a valley to a ridge.

JAMB: The side and head lining of a doorway, window, or other opening.

JOIST: A horizontal structural member which supports the floor or ceiling system.

K

KILN-DRIED LUMBER: Lumber that has been kiln-dried, generally to a moisture content of 6 to 12 percent.

KING POST: The central upright piece in a roof truss.

KNEE WALL: A low wall resulting from one-and-one-half-story construction.

L

LAMINATED BEAM: A beam made of superimposed layers of similar materials by uniting them with glue and pressure.

LANDING: A platform between flights of stairs or at the termination of a flight of stairs.

LATH: A building material of wood, metal, gypsum, or insulating board that is fastened to the frame of a building to act as a plaster base.

LATTICE: A framework of crossed wood or metal strips.

LEADER: A vertical pipe or downspout that carries rainwater from the gutter to the ground or storm sewer.

LEDGER STRIP: A strip of lumber nailed along the bottom of the side of a girder on which joists rest.

LINTEL: A horizontal structural member that supports the load over an opening such as a door or window.

LOOKOUT: A short wooden framing member used to support an overhanging portion of a roof. It extends from the wall to the underside surfacing of the overhang.

LOT LINE: The line forming the legal boundary of a piece of property.

LOUVER: An opening with a series of horizontal slats so arranged as to permit ventilation but to exclude rain, sunlight, or vision. See ATTIC VENTILATORS.

M

MANTEL: The shelf above a fireplace. Also used in referring to the decorative trim around a fireplace opening.

MASONRY: Stone, brick, concrete, hollow-tile, concrete-block, gypsum-block, or other similar building units or materials or a combination of the same, bonded together with mortar to form a wall, pier, buttress or similar mass.

MASTIC: A flexible adhesive for adhering building materials.

METAL WALL TIES: Strips of corrugated metal used to tie a brick veneer wall to a framework.

MILLWORK: Lumber that is shaped to a given pattern or molded form. It includes dressing, matching, and machining. Examples include casing, base, panel door parts, and stair rails.

MITER JOINT: A joint made with the ends or edges of two pieces of lumber cut at a 45 deg. angle and fitted together.

MODULAR CONSTRUCTION: Construction in which the size of all the building materials is based on a common unit of measure.

MOISTURE BARRIER: A material such as specially treated paper that retards the passage of vapor or moisture into walls, and prevents condensation within the walls.

MORTAR: A mixture of cement, sand and water, used by the mason as a bonding agent for bricks and stone.

MORTGAGE: A document used to hold property as security for a debt.

MORTISE: A slot cut into a board, plank or timber, usually edgewise, to receive the tenon of another board, plank or timber to form a joint.

MULLION: A vertical bar or divider in the frame between windows, doors, or other openings.

MUNTIN: A small member which divides the glass or openings of sash or doors.

N

NEWEL: A post supporting the handrail at the top or bottom of a stairway.

NOMINAL SIZE: The size of lumber before dressing, rather than its actual size.

NONBEARING WALL: A wall supporting no load other than its own weight.

NOSING: The rounded edge of a stair tread.

O

OC., ON CENTER: The measurement of spacing for studs, rafters, joists, and other framing members from the center of one member to the center of the next.

OUTLET: Any type of electrical box allowing current to be drawn from the electrical system for lighting or appliances.

OVERHANG: The projecting area of a roof or upper story beyond the wall of the lower part.

P

PALLET: An inexpensive wood skid used to stack and ship construction materials such as brick or concrete block.

PANEL: In house construction, a thin flat piece of wood, plywood, or similar material, framed by stiles and rails as in a door or fitted into grooves of thicker material with molded edges for decorative wall treatment.

PARAPET: A low wall or railing around the edge of a roof.

PARTICLE BOARD: A composition board made of wood chips or particles bonded together with an adhesive under high pressure.

PARTITION: A wall that subdivides spaces within any story of a building.

PASSIVE SOLAR HEATING: Involves capturing, storing, and using solar radiation (the sun's energy) to heat a dwelling without the use of fans or pumps to circulate the heat.

PERIPHERY: A boundary or complete outside edge of a parcel of land or an object on a drawing.

PHASE CHANGE MATERIAL: A material capable of storing large amounts of heat as they change from solid to liquid. They are slow to release the stored heat and are, therefore, interesting as possible thermal mass materials.

PIER: A concrete pillar usually below a building to support the floor framing.

PILASTER: A portion of a square column, usually set within or against a wall for the purpose of strengthening the wall; also, a decorative column attached to a wall.

PINE, YELLOW: Softwood of medium texture, moderately hard, and a yellow to reddish brown color. Used for joists, rafters, studding, and general construction where extra strength and stiffness are required.

PITCH: The slope of a roof usually expressed as a ratio. Minimum of 4/12 pitch to be used with composition shingles. Metal roofing can go as shallow as 1/12.

PLASTER: A mortar-like composition used for covering walls and ceilings, usually made of portland cement mixed with sand and water.

PLAT: A drawing of surveyed land indicating the location, boundaries, and dimensions of the parcel. The recorded plat, usually sent to an appropriate governmental office or the county recorder's office, also contains information as to easements, restrictions, and lot number.

PLATE: Sill plate is a horizontal member anchored to a masonry wall. Sole plate is bottom horizontal member of a frame wall. Top plate is top horizontal member of a frame wall supporting ceiling joists, rafters or other members.

PLENUM SYSTEM: A system of heating or air conditioning in which the air is forced through a chamber connected to distributing ducts.

PLUMB: Exactly perpendicular; vertical.

PLYWOOD: A piece of wood made of three or more layers of veneer joined with glue, and usually laid with the grain of adjoining plies at right angles. Almost always an odd number of plies are used to provide balanced construction.

PORTICO: A covered entryway attached to house, usually open on three sides and supported by posts or columns.

POST AND BEAM CONSTRUCTION: Wall construction consisting of posts rather than studs.

PRECAST: Concrete shapes which are made before being placed into a structure.

PREFABRICATED HOUSES: Houses that are built in sections or component parts in a plant, and then assembled at the site.

PREFRAMED PANELS: Fabricated panels consisting of pre-cut lumber and plywood manufactured to standard dimensions ready for structural use.

PRESERVATIVE: Any substance that, for a reasonable length of time, will prevent the action of wood-destroying fungi, borers of various kinds, and similar destructive agents when the wood has been properly coated or impregnated with it.

PURLINS: Horizontal roof members laid over trusses to support rafters.

Q

QUARTER ROUND: A small molding that has the cross section of a quarter circle.

QUARTER-SAWED: Lumber which has been sawed so that the medullary rays showing on the end grain are nearly perpendicular to the face of the lumber.

QUOINS: Stone or other building materials set in the corners of masonry sections of a house for appearance.

R

RABBET: A groove cut along the edge of a board producing an L shaped strip. Used as trim and in joint work in cabinet construction.

RADIANT HEATING: A method of heating, usually consisting of a forced hot water system with pipes placed in the floor, wall, or ceiling; or with electrically heated panels.

RAFTER: One of a series of structural members of a roof designed to support roof loads. The rafters of a flat roof are sometimes called roof joists.

RANDOM RUBBLE: Stonework having irregular shaped units and no indication of systematic course work.

REGISTER: The open end of a duct for warm or cool air; usually covered with screening.

REINFORCED CONCRETE: Concrete with steel bars or webbing embedded for strength.

RETAINING WALL: A wall which holds back an earth embankment.

REVEAL: The side of an opening for a window or door, between the frame and the outer surface of the wall.

RIDGE: The top edge of the roof where two slopes meet.

RIDGE BOARD: The board placed on edge at the ridge of the roof into which the upper ends of the rafters are fastened.

RIPRAP: A sustaining wall or foundation of random stone to prevent erosion on an embankment.

RISE: In stairs, the vertical height of a step or flight of stairs.

RISER: Each of the vertical boards closing the spaces between the treads of stairways.

RISER WALL: A short wall.

ROOF SHEATHING: The boards or sheet material fastened to the roof rafters on which the shingles or other roof covering is laid.

ROUGH OPENING: A framed opening in a structure into which doors, windows, and other finished trim are set.

RUN: In stairs, the net width of a step or the horizontal distance covered by a flight of stairs.

S

SADDLE: Two sloping surfaces meeting in a horizontal ridge, used between the back side of a chimney or other vertical surface and a sloping roof. Also called a cricket.

SASH: A single light frame containing one or more lights of glass.

SCUTTLE: A small opening in a ceiling which provides access to an attic or roof.

SEPTIC TANK: A concrete or steel tank where sewage is partially reduced by bacterial action.

SETBACK: A zoning restriction which applies to the location of the home on a lot.

SETBACK LINES: Lines which indicate the required distances for the location of a structure in relation to the boundaries of the property.

SHEATHING: The structural covering, usually wood boards or plywood, used over studs or rafters of a structure. Structural building board is normally used only as wall sheathing.

SHED ROOF: A flat roof, slanting in one direction.

SHIPLAP: Wood sheathing which is rabbeted so that the edges of the boards make a flush joint.

SHOE MOLD: The small mold against the baseboard at the floor.

SIDING: The finish covering of the outside wall of a frame building, whether made of horizontal weatherboards, vertical boards with battens, shingles, or other material.

SILL: The lowest member of the frame of a structure, resting on the foundation and supporting the floor joists or the uprights of the wall. The member forming the lower side of an opening, as a door sill.

SKYLIGHT: An opening in a roof covered by glass or plastic material to admit natural light.

SLEEPER: Usually a wood member embedded in concrete, as in a floor, that serves to support and to fasten subfloor or flooring.

SMOKE CHAMBER: The portion of a chimney flue located directly over the fireplace.

SOFFIT: Usually the underside of an overhanging cornice.

SOIL STACK: The main vertical pipe which receives waste water from fixtures in a building.

SOLID BRIDGING: A solid member placed between adjacent floor joists near the center of the span to prevent joists from twisting.

SQUARE: A unit of measure – 100 sq. ft. – usually applied to roofing material. Sidewall coverings are sometimes packed to cover 100 sq. ft. and are sold on that basis.

STOOL: The horizontal ledge or strip as part of the frame below an interior window.

STRETCHER COURSE: A row of masonry in a wall with the long side of the units exposed to the exterior.

STUCCO: Most commonly refers to an outside plaster made with portland cement as its base.

STUDS: The vertical framing members of a wall.

SUBFLOORING: Any material, usually 3/4 or 1-1/8 in. plywood, nailed directly to floor joists. The finish floor is attached over the subflooring.

SUBGRADE: A fill or earth surface upon which concrete is placed.

SUMP: A pit in a basement floor which collects water and into which a sump pump is placed to remove the water.

SURVEY: A description of the measure and marking of land, including maps and field notes which describe the property.

SUSPENDED CEILING: A ceiling system supported by hanging from the overhead structural framing.

T

TAIL BEAM: A relatively short beam or joist supported in a wall on one end and by a header at the other.

TERMITE SHIELD: A shield, usually of noncorrodible metal, placed in or on a foundation wall or other mass of masonry or around pipes to prevent passage of termites.

THERMOSTAT: Automatic device for controlling temperature.

THRESHOLD: A strip of wood or metal with beveled edges used over the finish floor and the sill of exterior doors.

TOPOGRAPHY: Usually refers to site characteristics such as contour of the land, trees, or other natural features.

TRANSOM: A window placed above a door or permanent window which is hinged for ventilation.

TRAP: A U-shaped pipe below plumbing fixtures designed to create a water seal and prevent sewer odors and gases from being released into the habitable areas.

TREAD: The horizontal board in a stairway on which the foot is placed.

TRIM: The finish materials in a building, such as moldings, applied around openings (window trim, door trim) or at the floor and ceiling of rooms (baseboard, cornice).

TRIMMER: The longer floor framing member around a rectangular opening into which a header is joined.

TROWELING: The finishing operation which produces a smooth, hard surface on concrete slab.

TRUSS: Structural members arranged and fastened in triangular units to form a ridge framework for support of loads over a long span.

U

UNDERLAYMENT: A material placed under finish coverings, such as flooring or shingles, to provide a smooth, even surface for applying the finish.

V

VALLEY: The internal angle formed by the junction of two sloping sides of a roof.

VALLEY RAFTER: The diagonal rafter at the intersection of two intersecting sloping roofs.

VENEER: Extremely thin sheets of wood produced by slicing or rotary-cutting a log.

VENEERED CONSTRUCTION: Type of wall construction in which frame or masonry walls are faced with other exterior surfacing materials.

VENT STACK: A vertical soil pipe connected to the drainage system to allow ventilation and pressure equalization.

W

WAINSCOT: Surfacing on the lower part of an interior wall when finished differently from the remainder of the wall.

WALL TIE: A small metal strip or steel wire used to bind tiers of masonry in cavity-wall construction, or to bind brick veneer to the wood-frame wall in veneer construction.

WATER CONDITIONER: A device used to remove dissolved minerals from water to make it soft. Generally used in houses supplied by well water, which contains calcium, magnesium, and other minerals, to remove hardness that causes scale buildup in plumbing.

WEATHERSTRIP: Strip of metal or fabric fastened along the edges of windows and doors to reduce drafts and heat loss.

WEEP HOLE: An opening at the bottom of a wall which allows the drainage of water.

WYTHE: Pertaining to a single-width masonry wall.

X

No terms available.

Y

No terms available.

Z

ZONING: Building restrictions which regulate size, location, and type of structures to be built in specific areas.