

What's Happening in Masonry

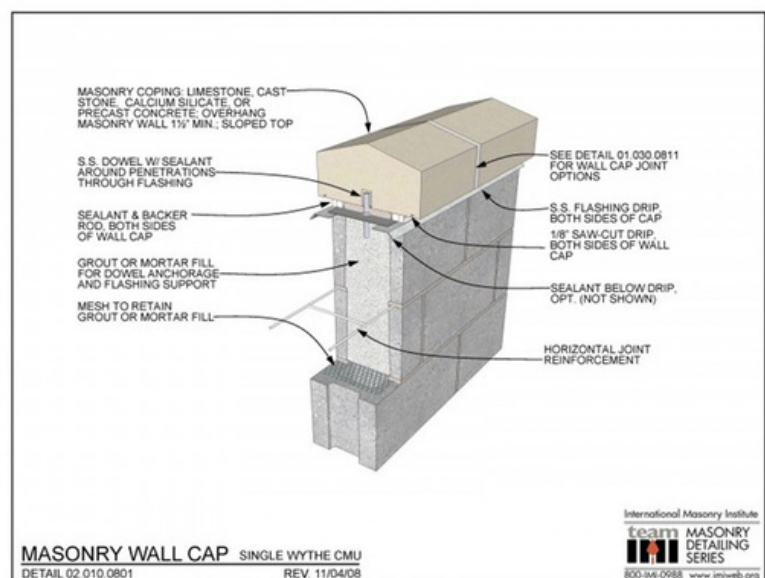
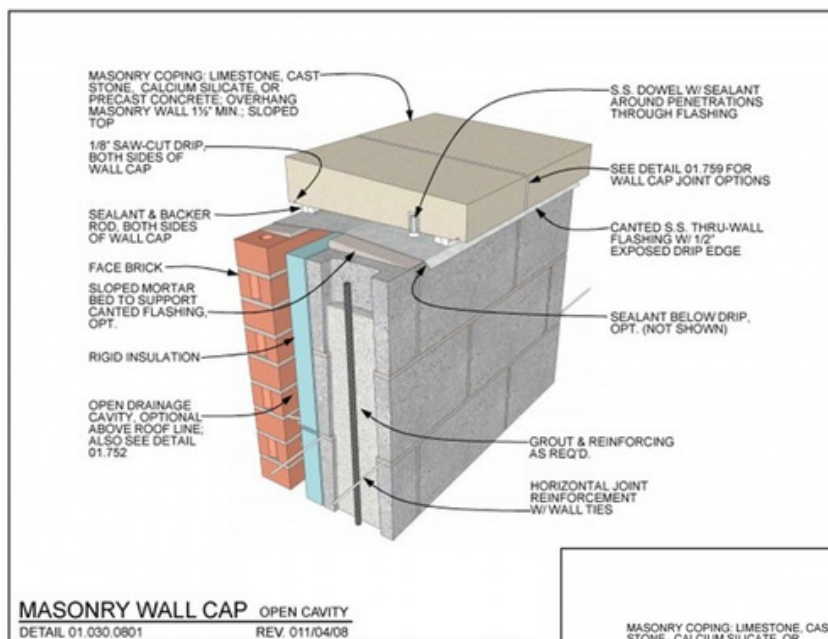
by: Gary Porter



Cap Flashing for a Stone Veneer Wall

The flashing details for flashing a stone veneer or stone faced masonry wall, with a face varying from the wall plane plus or minus 2" or more is not a well-documented subject. There is a lack of good flashing details depicting base, sill, head, or wall cap details for this type of wall. We know that moisture has numerous ways of entering masonry walls. The primary purpose of flashing is to allow that moisture a path to exit the wall via flashing and weep vents.

The typical detail for cap flashing shows either a stainless steel flashing spanning the entire width of the wall thickness with a drip edge on either face, inside & outside or a stainless steel drip edge with a rubber, copper, stainless steel (specified flashing "type") flashing. Plastic flashing is not advised here as it has been found to deteriorate in a masonry wall over time.



Cap Flashing for a Stone Veneer Wall (cont.)

The reason these details are the preferred detail for cap flashing is that the cap flashing is functioning as the backup as well as part of the flashing system for the first line of shedding water from the wall. The stone cap will shed the water and the flashing will shed any moisture that gets through the stone or its joints, preventing moisture from damaging the wall below this point.

The stainless steel drip for this cap should be caulked to the stone, brick, block or substrate below. If this stainless steel drip is missing, we don't know where the flashing is. Sometimes it could be installed back an inch or more from the face, allowing moisture an entry point. Most rubber flashing deteriorates in sunlight. Exposed rubber flashing is not good. Another function of the stainless steel drip is to protect the rubber flashing behind it. This might not look aesthetically pleasing from below to all parties in the design or owner community, but the stainless steel drip edge is playing an important part in the functionality of the cap flashing.

In summary, a stone veneer wall with irregular thickness in and out of the wall plane needs to be flashed just like a typical brick & block cavity wall. It is reassuring to see that the stainless steel with drip edge is below the coping stones. If it were missing, we would not know if any other flashing was installed below the coping stones and if there was a proven system in place to seal out the moisture.