

# Construction Glossary of Building Terms

## **ABUTMENT**

That part of a pier or wall either end of an arch, beam, or bridge which resists the pressure of a load.

## **ACCESS**

Approach or way in.

## **ACCESS DOOR**

Door which allows access to concealed space or equipment.

## **ADMIXTURES**

Materials added to mortar or concrete to achieve particular modifications to the normal properties of the basic material.

## **AGGREGATE**

The crushed stone or alternative substance contained in concrete.

## **AGREEMENT**

A contract between two or more parties, either written or verbal.

## **AIR BRICK**

Ventilation built into brickwork to provide ventilation through the wall.

## **ALLOTMENT**

A building site

## **ALUMINIUM OXIDE**

Synthetic abrasive made into stones, wheels or abrasive paper for sharpening tools.

## **ANT CAPPING**

Termite barrier (shield), usually of galvanised iron, placed over piers and dwarf walls to control the entry of termites.

## **APEX**

The highest point of a gable.

## **ARCH**

A structure of wedged shaped blocks, or square blocks with wedge shaped joints, over an opening so disposed as to hold together when supported from the sides, and capable of carrying a load over the opening.

## **ARCH BAR**

A structural member or beam carrying loads over an opening.

## **ARCHITECT**

A person who is qualified to design buildings and supervise their construction.

## **ARCHITECTURE**

Art and science of building.

## **ARCHITRAVE**

A moulded section covering the joint between window and door frames and the wall lining.

**AREA**

The measure of a plane surface within defined boundaries, eg land, buildings.

**ARRIS**

A sharp corner formed by the join of two surfaces along a length of timber or brick.

**AUSTRALIAN STANDARD**

Approved standard for material, equipment, technique or procedure as set down by the Standards Association of Australia (SAA).

**BACKFILL**

To fill the earth, any remaining space after placing concrete, brickwork, timber, pipes etc in an excavation.

**BACK-PUTTYING**

The application of glazier's putty under glass on which it is bedded.

**BAGGING**

A masonry process in which thin mortar is applied to the face of the work with some coarse material.

**BALCONY**

A platform, enclosed by a railing or balustrade, projecting from the face of either an inside or outside wall of a building (eg a gallery in a theatre).

**BALUSTER**

A small post used to support a hand-rail.

**BALUSTRADE**

A series of balusters supporting a hand-rail.

**BARGE BOARD**

The board covering the roof timbers on the gable or skillion end of a roof, fixed parallel to the roof slope.

**BASEMENT**

A room or rooms of a building, in part or wholly below ground level.

**BATT**

Any portion of a full brick.

**BATTER**

The slope of a wall of buttress built at an inclination to the vertical plane.

**BAY WINDOW**

A window of varying shapes, projecting outward from the wall of a building, forming a recess in a room.

**BEAD**

A moulding, generally of small size in cross section.

**BEAM**

A horizontal load-bearing structural member.

**BEARER**

A member of floor framing, spanning piers and supporting joists.

**BED JOINT**

Horizontal joint in brickwork.

**BENCHMARK (BM)**

A fixed point of reference, the elevation of which is known and referred to during levelling operations.

**BEVEL**

An angle formed between two straight lines meeting at an angle other than 90°.

**BIRDSMOUTH**

A notch cut out of roof rafters to secure a firm bearing on top plates.

**BIT**

An interchangeable cutting tool inserted into chuck of drilling machine.

**BOND**

Pattern for laying bricks so that none of the perpends are in line in adjacent courses.

**BONING RODS**

Three rods with tee heads used to sight a straight line between two given points.

**BORE**

Diameter of centre hole in circular saw blade.

**BORERS**

Several species of insects and larvae that tunnel into timber.

**BOWING**

Deformation of timber at right angles to its face.

**BRACE**

A member, usually a diagonal, which resists lateral loads and/or movements of a structure.

**BRICK(s)****Common**

Blocks of material moulded from clay or cement used for building or paving purposes. Usually bricks burnt in continuous kilns; used in general work.

**Face**

Best quality bricks used for face or external work, or for other special work.

**BRICK CONSTRUCTION**

A construction where the external and internal walls are built of brick.

**BRICK VENEER**

Framed construction with an outside skin of brickwork tied to the frame.

**BUILDING BY-LAWS**

Regulations by which local authorities control building construction. No new building work or alteration of existing structures may be carried out unless these regulations are observed.

**BUILDING LINE**

A line established by the local council which is the minimum distance that must be maintained from the building to the street boundary.

## **BUILDING TRADES**

All trades which have a part in the construction of a building (eg carpentry, masonry, painting, plumbing, electricity, heating).

## **CAMBER**

A convexity upon an upper surface (eg beam, bridge, lintel).

## **CANTILEVER**

A projecting beam supported at one end, or a large bracket for supporting a balcony or cornice. Two bracket like arms projecting toward each other from opposite piers or banks to form the span of a bridge making what is known as a cantilever bridge.

## **CAPPING**

The uppermost part on top of a piece of work.

## **CAPPING BRICK**

Bricks which are specially shaped for capping the exposed top of a wall.

## **CARPENTRY**

Trade of preparing, cutting and fixing timber in building construction.

## **CAST**

To place some plastic material in a previously constructed form.

## **CAST IN-SITU**

Concrete cast or poured in its permanent position in prepared forms (eg concrete steps, hearth slabs, floors, beams, lintels).

## **CAVITY WALL**

A hollow wall, usually consisting of two brick walls erected 40 to 50mm apart and joined together with ties of metal.

## **CCA**

Copper chrome arsenic salts used in preservation of timber.

## **CEILING**

### **Height**

The overhead internal lining of a room. The height of a room measured from floor surface to ceiling, or, where there is no ceiling, to the underside of the rafters.

### **Joist**

A structural member which binds the wall and roof framing together and carries the mass of the ceiling sheeting.

## **CEMENT (Portland)**

Obtained by crushing and burning limestone in kilns, the resulting clinker being finely ground with gypsum and with the addition of various aggregates is used for many purposes (eg concrete, mortar)

## **CENTRING**

A temporary framework support under an arch during its construction

## **CHALK LINE**

Length of string thoroughly coated with chalk dust, used to strike a straight guide line on a material. Line which is made with a chalking line.

**CHAMFER**

To take off the edge or arris of any material to a small depth at an angle of about 45°.

**CHASE**

A rough groove or recess cut into a masonry wall for water pipes, conduit etc.

**CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS**

Works comprising a structure other than a building and its associated site works such as a dam, bridge, road etc or an operation such as dredging, dewatering, soil stabilisation.

**CLADDING**

Any material used to face a building or structure.

**CLERK OF WORKS**

Supervisor of a building project, employed by the architect or the building owner, to ensure that the architect's plans are followed accurately and that workmanship is of an appropriate quality.

**COARSE AGGREGATE**

Hard stone, basalt, dolerite, cracked river gravel greater than 4.75mm in diameter - a component of concrete.

**COLUMN**

Free standing vertical load bearing member. See *engaged column*

**COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH**

Resistance of a material to a crushing force.

**CONCRETE**

Artificial rock of cement, sand and aggregate.

**CONCRETE BLOCK**

A concrete building block.

**CONSTRUCTION**

The process of assembling materials and erecting a structure. The medium in which a building is built (eg wood, steel or masonry).

**CONSTRUCTION JOINT**

Joint which occurs because of the sequence of construction, unlike an expansion joint.

**CONTOUR LINE**

A line drawn on a site plan joining points of the same elevation.

**CONTRACT DOCUMENTS**

Working drawings, specification and details which form part of the formal contract between the Client and the Contractor.

**CONTRACTOR**

One who agrees by written agreement or contract to supply materials and perform certain types of work for a specified sum of money.

**CORDLESS DRILL**

A portable drilling machine powered by rechargeable batteries.

**COUNTERSINK**

A tapered recess, cut around a pilot hole for a screw, to receive the head of the screw.

**COURSE**

A single row or layer of bricks.

**COVER**

The actual distance a board will cover in width after milling; notably in flooring, weatherboards and lining boards.

**CRAMP**

To compress edgewise the boards of a floor.

**CRANES**

Mechanically operated devices which are located on or around a building site for the purpose of lifting building components or equipment into position.

**CRAZING**

Fine cracks that may occur on plastered or rendered surface.

**CROSS BRACE**

Any crosspiece which diverts, transmits, or resists the pressure of a load.

**CROSS CUTTING**

Cutting timber across the grain.

**CUL DE SAC**

An access street with a blind end usually in the form of a turning space for vehicles.

**CUPPING**

Distorting of wide boards showing curvature across the grain causing the broad surface to be concave.

**CURING**

Treatment of concrete or cement rendering to facilitate hardening.

**DAMP PROOF COURSE (DPC)**

A barrier, usually physical, built into masonry to prevent moisture migrating up from the ground or down from above, eg chimneys, parapets.

**DATUM**

A predetermined level on a site from which all other levels are established.

**DEAD LOAD**

A permanent, inert load on a building or other structure due to the weight of its structural members and the fixed loads they carry, which impose definite stresses and strains upon the structure.

**DIAGONAL BRACE**

An oblique framing member securing wall framing lateral in vertical position.

**DIMENSION**

A measure of distance.

**DISTRIBUTED LOAD**

A load spread over a surface expressed in kilograms per square metre, or along a length of member expressed in kilograms per metre.

**DOOR(s)**

**Flush**

A smooth-faced door.

**Hollow core**

A door with infill of expanded cardboard.

**Solid core**

A door with blockboard fill

**DOOR FRAME**

A frame into which a door is fitted.

**DOOR HEAD**

The upper part of the frame of a door.

**DOOR JAMBS**

The two vertical members of a door frame.

**DOOR LEAVES**

In wide openings, a door may be made up into two or more individual sections or “leaves”, which are hinged together.

**DOWEL**

A wood or metal pin used to strengthen a joint by its insertion partly into each of the joined pieces.

**DRESSED**

Timber that has passed through a planing machine to produce smooth surfaces.

**DUMPY LEVEL**

An optical levelling instrument.

**DUST MASK**

A device fitted over the nose and mouth to prevent inhalation of toxic dust or fumes.

**DWARF WALL**

A brick wall from footing level or underside of floor framing.

**EAR MUFF**

A shield worn over ears to protect against excessive noise.

**EAR PLUG**

A device fitted over the nose and mouth to prevent inhalation of toxic dust or fumes.

**EAVE**

The lower part of a roof that overhangs the walls.

**EFFLORESCENCE**

A white or coloured powder sometimes formed on the surface of masonry by deposit of soluble salts.

**ELEVATION**

A geometrical drawing of a facade of a building.

**END MATCHING**

Milled tongue and groove on the ends of flooring boards.

**ENGAGED COLUMNS (PIERS)**

Columns or pilasters attached to a wall.

**ENGINEER**

A professionally qualified person, who when associated with building and planning, designs, supervises and manages Civil, Structural and Services components of projects.

**EXCAVATION**

A hole made by removing earth.

**EXPANSION JOINT**

A joint in a building to permit thermal movement or creep.

**EXPANSION STRIP**

A soft, resilient material used to fill the void provided for the expansion and contraction of any two adjacent substances.

**FACE PUTTYING**

The process of applying putty to the edge faces of a window sash after inserting the glass in a rebate.

**FASCIA**

A board fixed horizontally to the lower ends of the rafters, to which guttering may be fixed. Also forms the outside board of a boxed eave.

**FIBRE CEMENT**

A product made of cellulose fibre, fillers, Portland cement and water.

**FILLET**

A small strip of wood or a flat moulding of small section.

**FINISHES**

The final applied coat or natural surface of a material used in walls, ceilings or floors of a building.

**FIRST FLOOR**

The floor which is next above the floor at ground level

**FLASHING**

A strip of impervious material used to prevent the ingress of water between two surfaces.

**FLUSH JOINT**

To place two adjacent surfaces together in the same plane. To form an invisible joint between two such surfaces, eg sheets of plaster-board.

**FOOTING**

The construction whereby the weight of the structure is transferred from the base structure to the foundation.

**FORMS**

Prepared forms of timber or other material for the casting of concrete.

**FOUNDATION**

The ground upon which the footings of a building are constructed.

**FRONT AGE**

The line or lines marking the division between a building site and a street.



**GABLE**

The triangular end of a house formed at the end of a pitched roof, from eaves level to apex.

**GABLE ROOF**

A roof shape consisting of two sloping surfaces.

**GOVERNMENT ACTS**

Legislation passed by the relevant State or Federal Parliament to control a specific activity, eg Construction Safety Act.

**GRADING**

A classification of timber by strength requirement to perform a specific tasks.

**GRAIN**

Description of direction of growth of wood.

**GROUND LINE**

The ground level or natural grade line.

**GROUND PLAN (FLOOR)**

Plan view of a horizontal section of a building showing the layout of rooms on the ground floor.

**GROWTH RINGS**

Reflection of seasonal growth pattern in timber.

**HALF-LAPPED JOINT**

A joint in woodwork where two members are halved in thickness and joined by lapping.

**HALVING**

*see half-lapped joint*

**HAMMER DRILL**

A portable drilling machine which exerts hammer blows to the head of the drill as it rotates for drilling masonry materials.

**HANDRAIL**

Railing which serves as a guard and which is intended to be grasped by the hand to serve as a support.

**HARDBOARD**

A timber sheet product manufactured of compressed wood fibre.

**HARDWOOD**

A pored timber.

**HEADER**

A brick laid with its short end to the face of the wall.

**HEARTWOOD**

The more durable inner part of tree trunk where cells seem only to provide support to the tree.

**HIGH GLOSS**

A lustrous, enamel like finish.

**HIP**

A slanting ridge formed by the intersection of two sloping roof surfaces at an external corner.

**HIPPED ROOF**

A roof with an end roughly pyramidal in shape, with surfaces sloping upwards from all three eaves.

**HOIST**

Any device or machine used in building for lifting materials.

**HORIZONTAL LINE**

Line that is a tangent to the curvature of the earth's surface. eg at any given point it is parallel with the surface of still water.

**HOT DIP GALVANISED**

Process by which iron or steel is immersed in molten zinc to provide protection against corrosion while in service.

**HOUSING**

Recess cut across the face of a piece of timber to receive the end of another piece.

**HURDLE**

see *profile*

**IDENTIFICATION SURVEY**

A survey which indicates whether a building is erected on the correct allotment and does not encroach on any of the side boundaries.

**ISOLATED PIER**

A pier supporting floor framing at points not attached to dwarf walls.

**JOINERY**

Doors, windows, cupboards, manufactured in a joiner's shop.

**JOISTS****Ceiling**

Timber members spanning between walls or other supports, to which the ceiling battens or ceiling is attached.

**Floor**

Timber members to which the flooring is fixed.

**KERB**

An upstand. A raised edging to a pavement or path.

**KERFING**

The process of cutting grooves of kerfs across a board so as to make it flexible for bending

**KEY**

- a. Carpentry: timber or metal wedges used across or between two or more members to act as a tightening agent.
- b. Plastering: the roughening of a surface to form a bond for subsequent work.

**KICK BACK**

Tendency for a circular saw blade to move back sharply when becoming jammed in the cut.

**KILN DRYING**

Controlled seasoning of timber by use of kilns.

**KNOT**

Timber: Cross section of branch in sawn timber where it intersects with the main trunk. To paint, cover the knots in timber with a knotting preparation generally composed of shellac and methylated spirits.

**LADDER**

Climbing equipment consisting of side rails and rungs to enable workers to change heights.

**LEVELLING INSTRUMENT**

Device consisting of a spirit level attached to a sighting tube and the whole mounted on a tripod and used for levelling a surface to a horizontal plane (eg dumpy level).

**LINE OF SIGHT**

The straight line projected from the telescope of a dumpy level.

**LINING**

Internal covering to walls of framed construction.

**LINTEL**

Structural member or beam carrying loads over an opening.

**LIVE LOAD**

The load arising from the intended use or purpose of the building or structure, but excluding wind, snow and earthquake loads.

**LYCTUS BORER**

A borer that attacks sapwood or hardwoods; thus, the term *Lyctus susceptibility*.

**MASONRY**

Brick, concrete, stone, artificial stone or terra cotta laid in mortar.

**MASTER KEYING**

A system by which all locks within a building are capable of being operated by one key. Often there are a series of sub-masters.

**MASTIC**

A waterproof adhesive plastic compound.

**MATRIX**

The mixture of sand and cement that binds together the aggregate of concrete.

**MILLED**

Timber that has passed through a moulding machine and is of a specific profile.

**MITRE**

Half the angle of a joint.

**MITRE SAW**

A circular saw which can rotate on a swivel base for cutting timber at angles up to 45°.

**MODULE**

A unit of length used as a basis for dimensional coordination and by which the planning of buildings can be

to some extent standardised eg - a dimension of 100mm used as the fundamental increment in Modular Co-ordination.

### **MOISTURE BARRIER**

Material which is used to retard the flow of vapour or moisture into floor or walls.

### **MOISTURE CONTENT**

Mass of water contained in timber expressed as a percentage of dry wood fibre.

### **MONOLITHIC**

Any structure made of a continuous mass of material or cast as a single piece.

### **MORTAR**

A composition of lime and/or cement and sand mixed with water in various proportions.

### **MORTAR JOINTS**

Types of joints in finishing the mortar in stone or brick work.

### **MORTISE**

A recess in a piece of wood to receive a tenon or lock.

### **NEWELS**

Posts placed at top and bottom of flights of stairs to secure handrails, strings.

### **NOGGING**

A horizontal piece of timber fixed between studs in a framed wall.

### **NOMINAL SIZE**

Sawn sectional size of timber.

### **NON-LOAD-BEARING PARTITION OR NON-LOAD-BEARING WALL**

One which supports no vertical load except that of its own weight and merely defines spaces.

### **NOSING**

A projecting edge of any flat surface (generally rounded in section), eg the projecting edge of a stair tread.

### **NOTICES AND FEES**

A notice is advice of intention to build or alter any buildings or service usually required by the local authority. Fees are charges made by local authorities in connection with notices given.

### **OFF FORM CONCRETE**

Concrete which is formed by placing and stripping from formwork and has no other applied finish.

### **OFF-SITE**

In another place of building.

### **ORDINANCE**

See *Regulations*.

### **ORTHOGONAL PROJECTION**

A drawing of the various views or sections of a building, so the projecting lines are perpendicular to the plane of projection.

### **OUTSIDE FOUNDATION LINE**

A line which indicates the location of the outside of the foundation wall for a new building.

**OVERFLASHING**

The flashing which is built into the wall surface and sits over the upturned apron flashing.

**OVERHANG (ROOF)**

The section of a roof extending over the external wall (see *Eaves*).

**OVERLOADING**

Placing too heavy a load on a beam, column or floor.

**PAINT**

Paint is usually a coloured liquid laid on the surface of building materials by a brush, roller or spray gun, drying as an impervious coat to protect the material covered from the effects of the atmosphere and also for decorative purposes.

**PAINTER'S PUTTY**

A plastic substance composed of a mixture of whiting and linseed oil and sometimes including white lead, used for fixing panes of glass in window frames and to fill nail holes and defects in wood before applying paint or enamel.

**PANE**

Single piece of glass in a window or door.

**PANEL**

An area on a wall, ceiling, raised above or sunk below the general surface; a piece of wood framed within four other pieces of wood, as in the styles and rails of a door, but often applied to the whole square frame and the sinking itself; in fencing, a section or infilling between two posts.

**PARAPET**

Low wall at the edge of a roof, balcony, bridge or terrace.

**PARTICLEBOARD**

A manufactured material formed by bonding together flakes of wood and pressing them into a dense sheet.

**PARTY WALL**

The wall between two adjoining buildings but common to and used to advantage of both buildings.

**PERGOLA**

An open framework over a path, terrace or patio.

**PERPENDS**

The vertical joints in a masonry wall.

**PIER**

A vertical member of base structure.

**PILOT HOLE**

A hole drilled to receive a nail or screw.

**PITCH**

The angle of inclination to the horizontal of a roof or stair.

**PLANK**

A timber member between 50mm and 100mm thick and over 150mm wide.

**PLANT**

Tools and equipment used in building operations. To attach or fix by nailing or otherwise, eg planted door stop.

**PLASTER**

Material of a mortar like consistency used for covering walls and ceilings of buildings usually made of Portland cement mixed with sand and water.

**PLASTERBOARD**

A rigid insulating board made of plastering material covered on both sides with heavy paper.

**PLASTERING**

Any calcareous compound, usually of gypsum plaster, Portland Cement or lime putty and sand, that has been applied to a surface in a plaster state and sets hard.

**PLASTIC PAINTS**

Synthesised paints using a form of liquid plastic as vehicle.

**PLUMB**

Vertical or perpendicular.

**PLUMBER**

A qualified tradesperson who fixes metal roofing, installs waste pipes, water systems and gas piping.

**PLY OR PLYWOOD**

Two or more thin sheets of wood glued together, with the grain of adjacent layers usually at right angles to each other to form a sheet.

**PORTAL FRAME**

Joining the rafters of a roof and wall frame together by a rigid joint such as that provided by welding.

**PORTABLE POWER SAW**

A circular saw powered by an electric current. Can be carried and operated when held by hand.

**PORTLAND CEMENT**

A component of concrete and mortars which combines with water to provide the cement agent. Named for its resemblance to Portland stone.

**POSIDRIVE**

Type of slot formed in the head of screws providing a very positive grip for the screwdriver.

**PRE-CAST**

Poured or cast in any place other than its ultimate position (eg pre-cast units of concrete houses).

**PRE-CAST CONCRETE**

Concrete manufactured away from its ultimate location.

**PREFABRICATED CONSTRUCTION, PREFABRICATION**

The manufacture in a factory of whole or parts of buildings such as individual rooms, walls and roofs, in contrast with the conventional construction of a building piece by piece on the site.

**PRIME OR PRIMING COAT**

In painting, to apply the first or priming coat.

**PRIME COST SUM**

A sum allowed for and included in the contract specifications and/or Bill of Quantities by the architect to cover certain items which are subject to a later selection by the architect. The allowance made is to cover the supply and/or labour of the item selected; and charges by the contractor are based on net purchase prices and are accounted for and adjusted in the final statement of accounts.

**PROFILE**

A frame set up on a building site on which is indicated the position of the building. (*Sometimes called hurdle*).

**PVC (POLYVINYL CHLORIDE)**

A widely used plastic - the main uses include water pipes, waste pipes and floor covering.

**PROVISIONAL SUM**

A sum set aside in the Bill of Quantities or Contract to provide for work whose scope is not clearly foreseen.

**PUTTY**

A 'mastic' formed by binding whiting with linseed oil.

**PUTTY****Back**

A layer of putty placed in the rebate of an opening to be glazed, against which the glass is pressed.

**Face**

The putty placed in position after an opening has been glazed.

**QUAD**

Moulding having a profile of a quarter of a circle.

**QUARTER ROUND**

See *Quad*.

**RAFTER (COMMON)**

In roof construction, a timber framing member providing the principal support for the roofing material.

**REBATE**

A step-shaped reduction cut along an edge or face or projecting angle of wood.

**REDUCED LEVEL**

Elevation of a point relative to a given datum.

**REGULATIONS**

Rules made to implement an Act of Parliament (ordinances).

**REINFORCED**

To strengthen by the addition of new or extra material (eg reinforced concrete, steel rods are embedded to give additional strength).

**REINFORCED CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION**

Building construction in which the principal structural members are made of concrete which is poured around isolated steel bars, or steel meshwork, in such a way that the two materials act together.

**REINFORCING FABRIC**

Prefabricated steel reinforcement for concrete, consisting of an oblong or square mesh of parallel steel wires welded at points of contact and manufactured in flat sheets or rolls.

**REINFORCING STEEL**

Steel bars of various sizes and shapes used in concrete construction for giving added strength.

**RENDERING CEMENT**

The covering of a wall surface with one or more coats of cement mortar.

**RETAINING WALL**

Any wall subjected to lateral pressure other than wind pressure and built to retain material.

**RETURN**

A term denoting that a feature has been continued at another angle.

**REVEAL**

The thickness of wall from the wall face to the door or window frame. The remainder of the thickness of wall is known as the 'jamb'.

**RIDGE**

The horizontal member at the highest point of a roof where the common rafters meet.

**RIPPING**

Sawing timber in the direction of the grain.

**ROOF PITCH**

The angle formed between a sloping roof surface and a horizontal line.

**ROOF TRUSS**

A frame designed to carry the loads of a roof and its covering over the full span without intermediate support.

**ROUGH SAWN**

Timber direct from the saw.

**SAA**

See (*Australian Standard*).

**SANDING**

The smoothing down of visible timber or other surfaces with sandpaper.

**SAPWOOD**

Wood from outside of trunk, usually high in starch.

**SARKING**

A covering of water-proof building paper beneath the external roof covering.

**SASH**

The framework in a window, into which the glass is fitted.

**SCABBLE**

The dressing down of the roughest irregularities and projections of stonework or the roughening of a smooth finish (eg concrete).



**SCAFFOLDING**

A temporary structure specifically erected to support access platforms or working platforms.

**SCANTLINGS**

Sawn framing timbers of comparatively small dimensions (eg 100 x 50) in a building.

**SCARFING**

The joining of two pieces of timber together in length by which the two ends are cut to lap over and fit each other.

**SCREED**

Boards or battens set up to establish the height at which concrete is to be levelled off.

**SCREED BOARD**

A board used to level off concrete between screeds.

**SCRIBING**

Cutting a piece of timber (eg a moulding), to fit the profile of another to which it is to be fitted.

**SEASONED**

Dried timber by air or kiln.

**SEASONING**

Eliminating excess moisture from timber by air or kiln drying.

**SEGREGATION**

The tendency for coarse aggregate in concrete to become separated from the cement paste.

**SERVICES**

Supply or distribution pipes for cold or hot water, steam or gas; also power cables, telephone cables, lift machinery, transformers, drains, ventilation ducts, and so on.

**SHEETING**

Flat sheets of material to protect or cover a building framework.

**SHEET FLOORING**

Flooring made up and laid in large sheets.

**SILL**

The horizontal member at the bottom of a window frame.

**SKEW NAIL**

Nail driven at an oblique angle through a piece of timber and into receiving piece. Usually in opposite pairs.

**SKILLION**

A roof shape consisting of a single sloping surface.

**SKIRTING**

Moulding to cover the joint between floor and wall flooring.

**SLIP JOINT**

A joint so designed that movement of the units joined, by expansion or contraction, is possible without affecting structural soundness or stability.

**SLUMP CONE**

A mould into which concrete to be tested by the 'Slump Test' is placed, which is of standard construction in the form of a cone.

**SOFFIT**

The lower face or under-surface of anything (eg the underface of an arch, the underside of the eaves of a roof).

**SOFTWOOD**

A non-pored timber.

**SOLID PLASTER**

Solid plasterers apply material of a mortar like consistency (usually made of cement mixed with sand and water) covering rough walls of a building to produce a smooth finish.

**SOIL TEST**

A core of earth taken from specific positions on a building site to test and select the type of footing needed.

**SPAN**

Face to face distance between points of support for loadbearing structural members.

**SPANDREL**

That part of a wall that is roughly triangular in area, enclosed by the curve of an arch on one side, a horizontal line through the crown of the arch on the top side and a vertical line from its springing on the third side. The triangular space under the outer string of stairs. Infill panel between window sill and floor.

**SPLICE JOINT**

Joint used to extend timber in length.

**STEEL FRAME CONSTRUCTION**

Building in which the structural members are of steel or dependent on a steel frame for support.

**STIRRUPS**

In reinforced concrete beams, vertical or inclined rods to resist shear stress.

**STOOL**

In reinforced concrete, a support for the bottom reinforcement to ensure adequate cover.

**STOP (Stopping)**

To fill blemishes in work to be painted, eg nail holes, cracks, to bring them to an even surface after the application of the first or priming coat in timber work generally and prior to painting in plaster work.

**STOREY ROD**

A rod used to measure during construction the vertical heights of brick courses, and doors, windows and other openings. Prepared at the start of the job to ensure uniformity of heights throughout.

**STRAIGHT EDGE**

A length of timber with the sides and edges even and true, and the edges parallel; used for trueing and plumbing and levelling work.

**STRETCHER**

A brick laid with its largest side to the face of the wall.

**STRIP FLOORING**

Flooring laid as separate boards, fitting together with a tongue on one edge and a mating groove on the other.

**STUD**

Vertical member in wall framing.

**SUSPENDED CEILINGS**

A ceiling which is suspended from and is not in direct contact with the floor or roof construction above and generally used to conceal services.

**SUSPENDED CONCRETE SLAB**

A slab spanning between supporting walls or posts.

**TAMP**

To pound down or consolidate the material.

**TEMPLATE**

A guide for forming work to be done.

**TILER**

A qualified tradesperson who specialises in laying ceramic tiles on floors and walls.

**TIMBER**

Wood used for building applications.

**TOOLED JOINTS**

Mortar joints which are specially prepared by compressing and spreading the mortar after it has set slightly (eg weathered joint, V joint and concave joint).

**TRENCH**

In joinery, a groove. In drainage and plumbing, the excavation in which pipes are laid. In foundations, the excavation in which footings are placed.

**TRESTLE**

Steel or wood ladder structure used to support, planks to form a working platform.

**TRUEWOOD**

See *Heartwood*

**TRUSSED ROOF**

Roof composed of roof trusses.

**TUNGSTEN-TIPPED**

Inserts of tungsten carbide welded to the tips of circular saw teeth and drills to minimise the need for resharpening.

**U BOLT**

An iron bar bent into a U-shaped bolt, with screw threads and nuts on each end.

**UNDERCOAT**

A coat of paint between the priming and the finishing coats.

**UNDERPINNING**

The construction of new footings and walling under the footings of an existing structure which have failed or may fail.

**VALLEY**

The internal angle formed by two inclined slopes of a roof of an internal corner.

**VAPOUR BARRIER**

Impervious membrane providing a barrier against water vapour.

**VERMIN PROOFING**

Wire mesh fixed to bottom plate and set into mortar joint in brick veneer buildings to prevent entry of vermin into cavity.

**VERTICAL LINE**

Line at right angles to horizontal line.

**VOLUME BATCHING**

Proportioning the raw materials to a concrete mix by their volume.

**WALL SHEETING**

Materials used for external and internal linings, eg strawboard, fibre cement, fibrous plaster, plaster wall board, compressed wood fibre board.

**WALL TIE**

A steel wire tying brickwork to timber frame.

**WATER CEMENT RATIO**

The ratio between the amount of water and the amount of cement present in concrete.

**WATERPROOF**

Materials and construction which will prevent water from passing through walls and joints.

**WATERPROOF CEMENT**

A cement which, when set, is watertight.

**WATERPROOFING WALLS**

The making of walls impervious to water or dampness by mixing a compound with the concrete, or by applying a compound to the surface of the wall.

**WEDGES , Folding (Fox Wedges)**

Timber wedges used in pairs for lifting and tightening. In Australia commonly called 'fox-wedges'.

**WEEP HOLES**

Openings sometimes left in the perpendicular of a brickwork course over flashings, and at the bottom of wall cavities for drainage purposes.

**WIND BRACE**

A structural member, either a tie or a strut, used to resist lateral wind loads.

**WIND LOAD**

The estimated pressure or force exerted upon a structure by the wind, which must be provided for in the design of the structure.

**WROT (Wrought)**

Dressed or worked, either by hand or machine.