



SCHAEFER NEWS

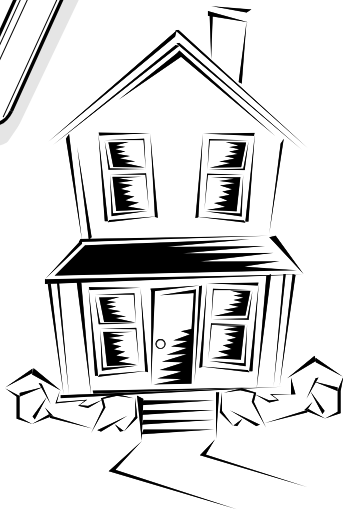
Vol. 1 Issue 1

1-800-345-2776

Spring / Summer 1998

YOUR OLD HOUSE

OLD HOME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE



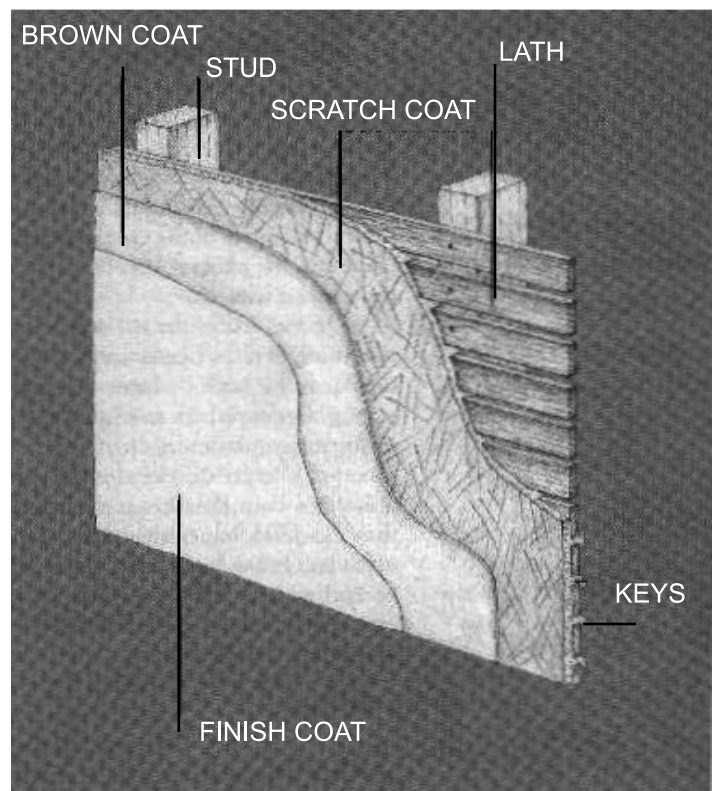
There is nothing like the character of an older home. They give you the feel of better, simpler days. However, they require a little more loving care than a more contemporary home. With some patience and effort, many small repairs and normal upkeep can often be accomplished by an average home owner.

Plaster damage and cracks are common in most older homes. Repair may not be as difficult as some might imagine. If you are selling an older home and want to prepare it for the market, or if you are purchasing an older home and want to be a hands on type of home owner, then we hope this issue will be helpful to you.

The diagram to the right is typical of a three coat plaster surface. In some cases you may find metal mesh instead of the wood lath. Please refer to this diagram as you read through the instructions.

Remember, never take on a job you do not feel comfortable doing. While many may feel competent to complete the types of repairs mentioned in this issue, some may not. There is no harm in calling in a professional and having it done right the first time.

There are three typical types of plaster failure: cracks, delamination, and key failure. Crack size can vary from hairline to very wide. Delamination is the separation between one or more of the three coats, normally the finish and brown coat. Keys are the part of the plaster which locks into place between the lath. When the keys fail, large bulges appear on the wall or ceiling surface.



Floating joint compound over pre-taped cracks, feathered out about six inches on each side of the crack

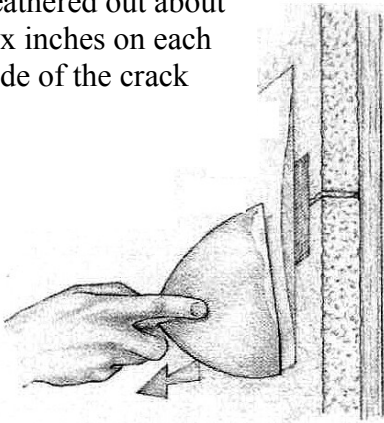


Diagram 1

Plaster washers can be used to secure the loose or high side of cracks to the lath in areas where keys have failed

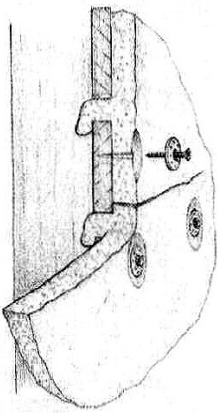


Diagram 2

It is sometimes necessary to open a bulge with a wire and vacuum any debris from behind the plaster in order for it to set flush against the framing again.

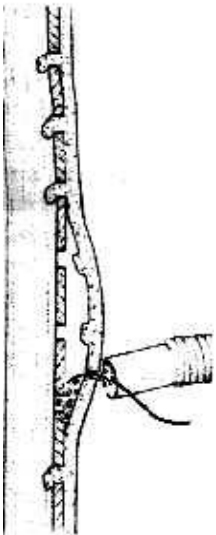


Diagram 3

CRACK REPAIR: Hair-line cracks that have been around for years are easiest to repair. Remove any loose particles from the crack, apply a coat or two of joint compound or spackle, allow to dry, and sand the area smooth with sandpaper and a sanding block.

If this fails or the cracks are larger, taping and floating the crack with a thin layer of plaster is required. Before you perform this operation, certain things should be checked first. Check to see if one side of the crack is higher than the other or if the plaster is also loose. If the edges are even and there is no loose plaster simply tape the crack with self-sticking fiberglass tape following the crack where it leads. Do not worry about overlapping tape ends. Once the tape is in place float two or three layers of thin joint compound or Durabond, allowing it to dry between each application. The joint compound should be feathered out about six inches to each side of the crack. After the last coat has dried, sand smooth.

If the edges are not even or there is loose plaster, dig out the crack down to sound plaster. Plaster washers may be needed to secure the plaster to the lath or studs if loose plaster extends too far beyond the crack. (see diagram 1) After loose material is removed, apply a plaster bonding agent around the edges. Fill in the excavated crack with Durabond, allow to dry and then follow the above directions for taping and floating.

For extensive cracks or map cracking, calling a professional may be the best option for most homeowners. However, if you feel you would like to do the work yourself, cover a large area with sheets of adhesive-backed fiberglass mesh or embedded sheets of fiberglass window screening in Durabond. When this is dry apply another coat and finish with bucket mud or Easy Sand.

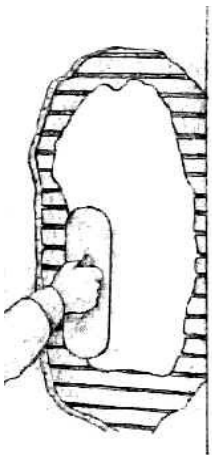
DELAMINATION: If the finish coat has delaminated, remove all loose debris down to the brown or scratch coat if necessary. Following manufacturing directions, apply a plaster bonding agent to the damaged surface. Trowel on the finish coat with veneer plaster or multiple coats of Durabond. As the plaster begins to dry, brush it with water and quickly smooth it out. After it dries, apply a final coat of drywall mud over the plaster and sand smooth when dry.

KEY FAILURE: When key failure has occurred, all loose plaster must be removed down to the lath. It is usually easy to find a stopping point where the plaster is in sound condition. Sometimes, however, you must take care not to use too much force and damage sound plaster. Screw in plaster washers around the damaged area about two inches from the edge and four inches apart. If there is damaged lath it must be repaired by bridging over it with metal lath mesh secured to the wall framing.

Once the area is clean apply a plaster bonding agent to the edges and lath. After the bonding agent is dry, apply a scratch coat of Structo-lite plaster with a trowel, pressing it into the lath to create new keys (See diagram 4). Scratch the surface with a nail, as this will help the brown coat bond properly to the scratch coat. The next day, the brown coat can be applied, also using the Structo-lite. You can use veneer plaster or Durabond for the finish. If you use veneer plaster leave the brown coat about 1/8 inch from the surface. If you use Durabond, bring the brown coat almost flush with the surface. Prepare the surface by dampening with water before applying the finish coat. When the finish coat has been trowled on and dried, any small imperfections can be patched over with drywall mud. Remember to make sure that all surfaces are cleaned of dust and debris before each application of any of the three coats or touch ups.

ROCKING A PATCH: An alternative to a three coat patch is "rocking a patch". If the thought of going through the three layers of patching seems a little too difficult, use rock lath or drywall (see diagram 5). Rock lath is similar to drywall, however it is chemically treated to bond to veneer plaster. Cut a piece of rock lath to fit the hole as snugly as possible and secure it to the lath with screws. Apply a plaster bonding agent to the edges of the old plaster and the rock lath. Fill in the open gaps with Durabond or Structo-lite. Tape the seams with mesh tape overlapping the gap between the old plaster and the rock lath. Then you are ready to float out the area with veneer plaster until it is even with the surrounding surfaces. Make final patches as need and sand smooth.

With drywall, finish with multiple coats of Durabond and a final coat of bucket mud or Easy Sand.



← **Three coat repair** Scratch coat, brown coat, and finish coat (see front page)

Make sure that all voids are properly filled in along edges of the brown coat by using a small pointing trowel as shown below

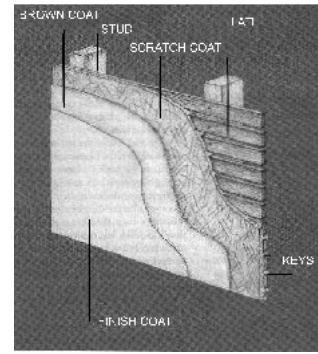


Diagram 5

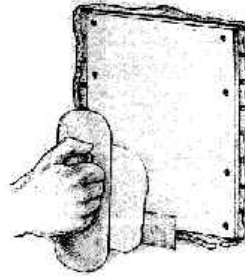
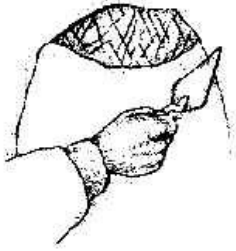


Diagram 4

Rocking a patch For larger patches it may be easier to use rock lath or dry wall to fill in the larger portion of the void and then applying a finish coat.

Dry wall comes in 1/4, 3/8, 1/2, and 5/8 inch thicknesses. If one of these sizes is not appropriate you can use a combination of more than one layer to fill in the patch.

QUICK TIP - FLOOR STAIN REMOVAL

In an old home stains are not uncommon. Beautiful old hardwood, stone, and marble floors with unsightly stains can often be restored to a better look, if you know how to go about it.

If you have bluish blotches or stains on your hardwood, or other woodwork, it is usually the result of standing water. Oxalic acid, which can be found at most better hardware stores is the product you need. Oxalic acid is a poison so wearing gloves, eye protection, and avoiding inhalation of crystal dust is necessary. Fill a glass container with hot water and slowly dissolve the Oxalic acid until the crystals no longer dissolve in the solution. Apply the solution with a rag or brush, let it sit for about ten minutes, and rinse thoroughly. To avoid lightening in just the stained area it is recommended to apply the solution to a wide area around the stain. More than one application may be needed to correct the problem.

Stone and marble floors (as well as counter tops, mantels etc.) are very conducive to staining due to their porous nature. Many of these stains,

however, can be removed by applying a poultice of certain cleaners or solvents. Typically these poultices are composed of whiting, which is a powdered limestone available at better hardware stores or marble care suppliers.

Preparing the poultice is as easy as combining a solvent or proprietary marble cleaner and whiting into a "potato pancake." Press the poultice over the stain and cover with plastic. The stain will slowly be drawn into the poultice as the solvent evaporates. For food stains like coffee, tea, or berries use a poultice of hydrogen peroxide (hair bleach strength) mixed with a few drops of ammonia. Many oil stains can be removed by using solvents in the poultice with acetone (nail polish remover) or cleaning fluids such as carpet cleaners.

We hope these tips will be helpful. Remember, if you have difficulty or do not feel comfortable trying these methods yourself, calling a professional may be your best option.