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GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS

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One of the problems often faced in the rehabilitation and/or restoration of older buildings is the problem of the existing gutter/downspout system. Many have older boxed in systems, which while being more attractive than hung systems, create tremendous problems due to their deterioration. These built in systems occur both in frame cornices and in masonry cornices (where the masonry is corbelled to receive the gutter). Failure in either system delivers the moisture into the wall/cornice below.

Because failure often occurs at the joints of the liners, there may be potential for overcoming some of this problem through the use of today's modern single ply roofing membranes. However, until this is proven, the best technological solution remains to close the boxed system and either allow the moisture to fall directly to the ground or substitute a hung system. The hung system is an aesthetic compromise as well as an alteration to the original appearance, but certainly presents less potential for leaks.

There were early hunt systems throughout the state, generally consisting of half round gutters and round downspouts. These were hunt with metal or wooden supports.

Either the boxed in system or the hung system could be used in conjunction with ornamental leader heads. These usually occurred when the gutter was interrupted as it left the cornice and water was funneled into the leader head. These were often ornamental with various designs and created a nice effect. They should be maintained and re-emphasized as part of the design whenever they are found.

Another interesting aspect of the gutter/downspout system was its use in storage of water. Particularly along the Gulf coast where shallow wells often produce poor water, gutters and downspouts were used to deliver water to a cistern where it was stored for us.

The following articles from the *Old House Journal* give a good overview of the problems often encountered with gutters and their maintenance.

References:

- "Patching Metal Gutters" - *The Old House Journal*, Sept. 1979, pg. 101
- "Maintenance of Gutters" - *The Old House Journal*, Oct. 1979, pg. 109
- "Maintenance of Gutters Part II" - *The Old House Journal*, Nov. 1979
- "Special Roof Issue" - *The Old House Journal*, April, 1983.

Information and patterns of gutters and ornamental leader heads can be found:

Kenoth Lynch & Sons - 78
Danbury Rd.
Wilton, Conn. 06897
(Catalogue \$3.50)

The Copper Sales Co.
2220 Florida Ave. S.
Dept. O.H.J.
Minneapolis, MN 55426
(Catalogue/Flyer - Free)

Wood Gutters available through:

Mad River Woodworks
P.O. Box 163
Dept. O.H.J.
Arcata, CA 95521

Windham Millworks
P.O. Box 720
Dept. O.H.J.
N. Windham, ME 04062
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