STUCCO FUTURES

Improving Stucco Performance at Windows, Transitions, and Terminations

November 14, 2025

Stucco wall performance often depends on what happens at the edges of the assembly. Windows, parapets, changes in cladding, and wall terminations bring together multiple materials and trades. When those connections are poorly detailed or installed out of sequence, water can enter or become trapped behind the finish.

The Stucco Futures discussion explored these challenges through field observations and failure photographs shared by Nathan Taylor. Participants considered how better detailing, installation guidance, and communication could address recurring problems.

The Question

How can the industry make critical stucco interfaces more reliable as wall assemblies become thicker and more complex?

What the Discussion Revealed

Participants described water intrusion at parapets, copings, and top-of-wall transitions, along with weak connections between stucco and adjacent materials such as thin brick. These locations may lack the accessories, separation, or flashing needed to accommodate the transition.

The discussion also identified installation concerns within the assembly:

- Shallow lath embedment
- Accessory corrosion
- Inconsistent fastener placement
- Reverse-lapped weather-resistive barriers
- Poorly coordinated window details

Drainage mats introduced another set of questions. Their placement relative to accessories and window flashings was not always clear, and variations in stand-off complicated the assessment of lath embedment.

Some participants expressed a preference for liquid-applied weather-resistive barriers beneath continuous insulation, particularly around penetrations. That preference was part of the discussion rather than a determination that one WRB type is best for every assembly.

What It Means in Practice

The recurring need is for details that explain both the completed assembly and the installation sequence. A drawing should help installers understand how water moves through a transition, where it exits, and which components must be installed first.

Designers and installers also need a shared understanding of fastener placement and lath embedment when insulation and drainage materials separate the lath from its support.

What Remains Unresolved

The group identified several questions for further discussion:

- How much insulation thickness can be accommodated before fastener alignment becomes difficult?
- How should embedment be evaluated over compressible drainage materials?
- How can architects participate more directly in education informed by field experience?

Related Resources

SMA online training was highlighted during the meeting. Future Stucco Futures discussions will examine drainage accessories, continuous insulation, and attachment methods in greater detail.

What do you think?

Let us know at www.clarkdietrich.com/stuccofutures, or on LinkedIn, Instagram, or Facebook #stuccofutures