STUCCO FUTURES

Drainage, Sequencing, and Constructability in Stucco Systems

December 19, 2025

The December 19, 2025 Stucco Futures session was a virtual meeting of contractors, building-envelope consultants, manufacturers, and association representatives. A technical director from the Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry (AWCI) gave a presentation that opened a wide-ranging, candid discussion of how stucco systems are being designed, detailed, and built.

Why This Group Exists

Stucco is a proven, time-honored cladding, but it is under pressure. Systems are becoming more complex while schedules, budgets, and field expertise tighten. Regional practices diverge, codes evolve unevenly, and details multiply faster than they are tested. Too often, designers, manufacturers, inspectors, and installers are solving the same problems in isolation. Stucco Futures is a practitioner-driven forum for straight talk and shared learning, focused on what works in the field across climates and regions. It is not meant to force a single national prescription, but to test assumptions against data and constructability, and to make stucco clearer, more buildable, and more trusted.

The Question

As stucco assemblies grow more complex, how can the industry keep them buildable, defensible, and competitive?

What the Discussion Revealed

- Drainage mats and accessories are out of sync, and drainage paths are frequently crushed or bottlenecked.
- Water entry is inevitable, so performance depends on fast, reliable exit.
- Sequencing at windows, flashing, and accessories remains a primary failure point.
- ASTM standards and field best practice are not always aligned, and engagement with the standards process is needed.
- Control joint testing, including bureau and Texas studies, shows cracking occurs regardless of whether lath is cut or continuous.
- CI stucco systems are advancing faster than constructability guidance.
- Architects and installers need stronger feedback loops around constructability.

Positives

- Open, candid exchange across roles
- Strong appetite for shared research and documentation
- Respect for field experience and data
- Clear momentum toward collaboration

Concerns

- Over-complexity threatens stucco's competitiveness.
- There is a lack of standardized, defensible details.

- Fragmented guidance creates confusion.

What It Means in Practice

If stucco is to remain on the wall, it must perform. If it is to be specified, it must be understandable. If it is to grow, the industry must reduce contradiction and increase shared evidence. That means details that are tested, explained, and consistent from one source to the next.

Next Steps

- The January session will feature a presentation on CI fastening and detailing.
- Members will share control joint testing data.
- Stucco and wall and ceiling industry associations will explore co-authored white papers and a shared resource library.
- All participants are invited to propose future topics.

What do you think?

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