

November 2015 Newsletter

[Ted Has Found Something More Durable than Deckwood](#)

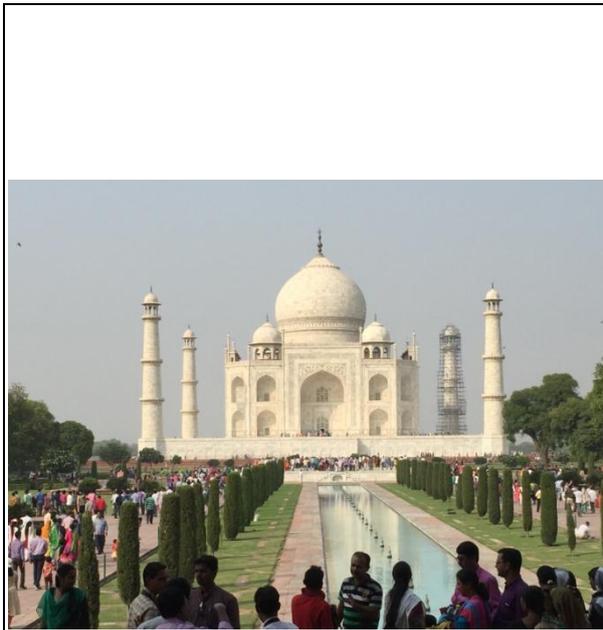
[Designing for the Local Climate](#)

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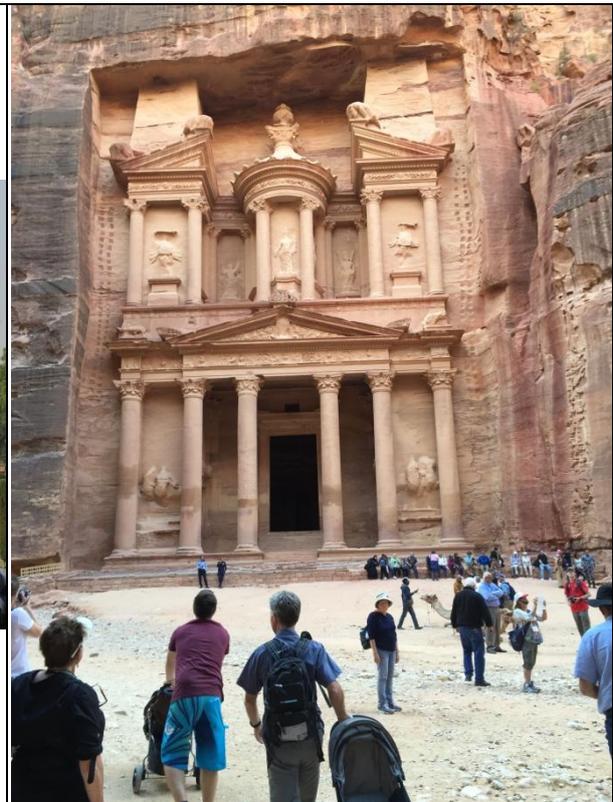
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Ted Has Finally Found Something More Durable Than Deckwood



The Taj Mahal, Agra, India Completed 1653



The "Treasury", Petra, Jordan commenced 1st century AD

I recently had the opportunity to travel to India and Jordan to see friends and family members. There was no Indiana Jones, no rolling heads and no holy grail at the "Treasury" in Jordan, a bit of a disappointment really (apologies to those who have not seen the movie). The Taj took our breath away and left us wondering how such incredible beauty can exist side by side with what at times is unspeakable squalor and poverty. I begrudgingly had to admit that, yes, there are more durable materials to use than Deckwood and Joistwood.

For those of you who do not have access to 20,000 skilled but poorly paid artisans (getting one skilled craftsman is hard enough now) we have to set our sights a little lower. Deckwood will give you the maximum durability of any timber product when used in accordance with

our design guides. You do not get this certainty when just cobbling together almost meaningless and often misunderstood terminology from various Australian Standards. Talk to me to find out more or better still, purchase the books.

Designing for the Local Climate



I have been criticised for having a Queensland focus in my books and newsletters. You can't accuse me of that this time. When in Jordan we went to see the alleged baptism site of Jesus on the Jordan River. While there, we parked under this shelter made of Oregon pine. It obviously has been there for some time yet the legs, which are set in concrete, are in good condition! It would be on the ground in a very short time in Queensland. What is the difference? It seldom rains but we did have a big dust storm.

Why the Queensland focus, for which I plead guilty? It is not just that we are the "Smart State" as our political masters tell us. Queensland's climate varies dramatically and includes hot wet tropics, interior deserts and a warm temperate to cold interior, all combined with high UV. You have to be smarter than a Jordanian Landscape

Architect (at least) to develop systems that work in Queensland but once you have them they will then work anywhere. The performance in Victoria will be even better. But If you have something that works in Victoria, quite possibly it cannot be exported to Queensland. In my semi retirement (or is that retirement? I am writing this on my 65th birthday) I have tried to put in writing what I have learnt over a lifetime so it does not have to be learnt again. Still we see people ignoring the help that is out there and trying to reinvent the wheel and making the same basic mistakes. It is awfully frustrating.

Expert Witness

I am dipping my toe in the very muddy field of expert witness work. If you think I can be of assistance please contact me on 0414 770 261. I can write a very reasonable report

Some Basics about Boardwalks/Decks



It is almost impossible to sell appropriate product now. Price is almost always chosen before fitness for purpose. Consider the top left hand image. The boardwalk joists are held down with lightly galvanised multi grips. The manufacturer of this brand requires stainless when used externally. On the practical side you do not get a good enough connection to easily straighten a 75 mm wide joist. The manufacturer also advised that they have not tested this product for this type of application so it is being used outside of its guidelines. The picture directly under shows a boardwalk held down with triple grips that was washed off the bearers. The failed boardwalk was replaced with one of ours. (Anybody got a better image of a failed triple grip?).

The image on the top right shows the post which is hardwood and set in concrete. This is something you should never do as it promotes decay at groundline - see the image directly below. If you are going to use hardwood posts, use it in conjunction with no fines concrete, fine crushed rock or natural earth. The treatments seem to work far better on pine than hardwood. Although pine is a four letter word to me, its use in boardwalk foundations is probably the best thing you can do.



I spoke about reinventing the wheel. When my son had an aptitude test for his grade 11 courses, he was shown a similar figure to the bike above. The student before him nailed it right away. It had no hand brake!! Got it in one. That what happens when you try to reinvent something that is already sorted. You run the risk of designing something with square wheels. The two problems I show above are addressed in my

Timber Preservation Guide - see treatment and corrosion and posts in concrete, and my deck and Boardwalk Design essentials guide where I discuss joist to bearer attachment. A grand outlay of \$66. The grips, the posts and not investing in some research lowered the cost to build so I suppose that is all that matters.

Writers Block - It is real



The next book will be on fences - eventually. I have to admit, I am having writers block. Not like me at all. But what do you think of this fence (image courtesy of Keighron Fencing in the UK). The rail is a split 75x75 which gives good water shedding and good thickness in the centre for fasteners. Does anyone know of this type of rail being used commercially in Australia. I expect my hardwood would not stay straight. Do you have any insights to share.

Particular images I need are:
Old pine fence in the south that is faring well

Old cypress pine fence in the south. Particularly seeking an image showing the sapwood decaying.