

EXTERNAL CLADDING

Create impact and protect your home with the latest external surface materials

Exterior cladding is the thin skin of material on the outer face of a building, providing visual detail and weather resistance. Common options include wood, brick and stone, with zinc, aluminium and wood-effect fibre cement becoming increasingly popular.

Cladding has many advantages: timber houses can look like brick, or vice versa; a long-lasting, low-maintenance finish is assured; properties can better blend in with their surroundings, and purposeful design statements can be created. 'The greatest characteristic of external cladding is its design freedom,' says architect Paul Archer (020 3668 2668; paularcherdesign.co.uk). 'You can create almost any kind of look – we've combined Corian panels with slate and used mirrored aluminium to great effect.'

DEFINING ARCHITECTURE

External materials are often combined to create a blend of colours, textures and profiles, with installations in horizontal, vertical or angled patterns. The right fusion can highlight architectural details

The benefits

Exterior cladding can provide weather protection in extreme environments

and define the shape and form of a house; it can also lessen the visual mass of a large property. 'Planners often like a building to be clad in various materials so that it breaks down the bulk of the forms,' says Archer.

On the other hand, sticking with just one cladding medium can make a bold statement. But careful detailing is needed, as architect Ian McChesney (020 8693 2738; mcchesney.co.uk) experienced with the design of the Tree House (pictured overleaf). 'We wanted the home to have a jewel-like quality so we chose black glass rather than white, which reflects the surrounding greenery and gives a crispness to the architecture.'

PLEASING THE PLANNERS

Local authorities may require a new extension to blend in with the original house – or it may be permitted to stand apart with contrasting materials. Such differentiation can show a clear architectural journey. In Alma-Nac's Landells Road project (020 7928 2092; →

It's a wrap Mirrored aluminium panels on this zero-carbon home reflect the surrounding landscape. The project cost around £500,000 (paularcherdesign.co.uk)

3 unusual cladding materials

1 Black glass offers longevity, but panels can delaminate if specified incorrectly. Materials cost about £250 per sqm. Sto (0141 892 8000; sto.co.uk)



2 Mirrored aluminium makes a home almost vanish. Expect to pay about £30 per sqm. Try Righton (0121 356 1141; righton.co.uk) for materials

3 Shou sugi ban is a method of charring wood to give a distinctive finish. From £90 per sqm. Shou Sugi Ban (01494 711 800; shousugiban.co.uk)



Steely edge Corten allows attractive perforations in this London house, which took two years to complete (piercyandco.com)