



NOT JUST SUPERFICIAL

MORE THAN A PROTECTIVE LAYER FOR BUILT STRUCTURES, CLADDING MATERIALS ENABLE THE CREATION OF TRENDY DESIGNS IN KEEPING WITH CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

BY ARUNA RATHOD

Cladding creates an aesthetic exterior for a structure but also acts as a protective barrier around the external face of a building to help regulate the interior atmosphere, preventing external elements from affecting the main structure. "Beautification, thermal/heat insulation which helps in reducing loads on the HVAC system and thus energy consumption and sound insulation," says Rakesh Verma, vice president - Marketing & Business Development, Stylam Industries (Head: GRANEX Acrylic Solid Surfaces, High Gloss Pre-lam Boards, Fascia & Cuboid Business), "are the tangible benefits of an effective cladding system."

The installation of cladding can be completed quickly by professional fitters, depending on the complexity and size of the structure of the job at hand. Modern cladding has many options, and what gets selected finally depends on the user, the application and architect.

Stone cladding adds a classic, old-style feel to the architecture, while wood cladding can be used inside and outside the building for a warm look. Wood also lends a beautiful texture to the structure. Fibre cement cladding helps provide protection from natural elements. Brick cladding is popular and time-tested. The porous nature of the material allows it to absorb rainwater, thus protecting the underlying structure. Newer materials that are popular now are uPVC cladding, high pressure laminate (HPL) cladding and metal cladding.

1. Honey and caramel hues of Granlam's exterior cladding products create a warm, welcoming picture.

2. White and red shades always exude boldness and modernity, as seen in this elevation showcasing Granlam's exterior products.





Used largely in commercial buildings, glass cladding can be moulded into a variety of different shapes – enabling unique designs, similar to the Gherkin in London. It's a modern style that never goes out of shape.

Ashwani Khanna, AVP-Marketing, FunderMax, states, "High pressure laminate cladding offers a lot of functional benefits. If installed using the rear-ventilated principle as recommended, it improves the thermal energy efficiency of the building by removing the hot air from behind the façade and replacing the same with cold ambient air. It is lighter in weight and thus leads to lesser dead-load of the building which, in turn, results in a lower carbon footprint." The Original Max Exterior range from FunderMax has a host of decors – 121 in number comprising 30,000 SKUs – which offer creative freedom to architects and designers.

Given the extent of research into materials and innovation in this field, new materials are fast replacing traditional ones. Elements such as metal, stone and wood now add aesthetic appeal and texture to a building, which age-old paint cannot. Shankho Chowdhury, president, Decoratives Division, CenturyPly, explains that cladding usually serves as a control feature, primarily protecting the building from weather elements. "Cladding comes with a superficial protective layer, for which the maintenance part lessens and it makes the building more durable than a traditional building, which is just finished with wall paint."

Cladding also makes the building weather-proof as it has strong resistance to external weather conditions like winds, sunlight and rain. It also acts as a protective layer and prevents seepage of water into the interiors. Insulating proper-

3. Greenlam's exterior cladding products highlight and protect the building as well as its interiors.

NEW ON THE BLOCK

CenturyPly's CenturyExterior is a premium quality exterior grade decorative high pressure compact laminate used for claddings and other creative building exterior applications. Available in thicknesses up to 18mm and as large format panels, this product complies with EN-438 - Part#6 and ASTM E84 fire safety standards. The product shows no distortion in extreme climatic changes – such as temperatures ranging from -20° C to +80° C and humidity levels of a dry climate to an excess of 85%, and even protects the interiors from effects of extreme climate. It is resistant to extreme weather conditions, that is heavy rains, acid rain, hail and heat. The laminate is highly UV-resistant and colour-fast, with almost no shade fading even after years of installation. Suitable for installation as a ventilated facade system, this low-maintenance product uses double-hardwood resins that are resistant to erosion from natural elements. The panels can be easily and rapidly installed, and are available in a wide range of wood grain décor species and solid colours.

FunderMax's Max Lato series is a system that enhances visual and thermal comfort of occupants. This new-age shading system has slats made of Max Exterior panels from FunderMax and can be fixed at any position according to the location of the building. Being a passive architectural solution, it comes with a multitude of installation possibilities that help make a building more in-tune with the weather and climatic conditions of the location.

The cladding material should provide functional benefits to the users by having an installation system that complements it and allows it to perform to its optimum level. FunderMax India understands this need and provides a complete installation system along with the panels. These systems are standardized but they have provisions to be customised according to site conditions as well.

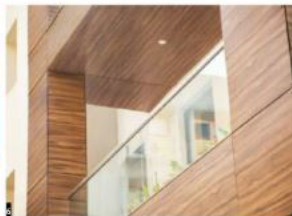
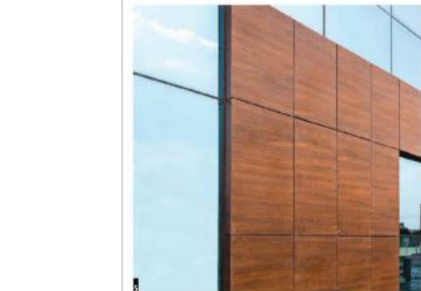
The newly developed F501 soffit system is making news for its revolutionary design of not needing rivets for cladding soffit areas. This seamless soffit cladding system is sure to give a building undeniable character while enhancing its aesthetics.

Greenlam Clads are a new-age facade cladding system for exteriors which is gaining popularity these days. Greenlam Clads come in various categories and aesthetic options such as abstract designs, stone, wood and solid colours. One can mix and match these designs to create almost limitless aesthetic possibilities.

With designs that go beyond the usual options, the beauty and endurance of Greenlam Clads lasts for a lifetime. They come with the revolutionary GL Technology and its three layers of protection that make the systems resistant to UV light, microbial threats, weather and fire – hence apt for exteriors. Claddings from Greenlam come with special fasteners which are made using non-corrosive materials that offer better colour fastening properties. These façades are anti-graffiti, chemical-resistant and can withstand extreme temperatures.

Stylam Industries' Fascio exterior panels are extremely durable high-pressure laminates (HPL) that are produced in lamination presses under great pressure and high temperature. Excellent weather protection is achieved with protective coating. The panels demonstrate optimal light fastness, and resistance to scratches, heat, fire, solvents and impacts. The easy-to-maintain and easy-to-install product decreases air-conditioning costs because of its insulating properties.

ties of good cladding materials can help keep the interiors cool. Cladding can also act as a sound insulating layer which prevents external noise from coming inside. Aesthetically, since good cladding materials protect the building from pol-



lution, they can improve appearance of a structure. A painted building, for instance, soon starts looking shabby owing to the atmospheric pollution and particulate matter.

Parul Mittal, director, Greenlam says, "Greenlam's exterior grade compact laminates, are specially designed to beautify exteriors. The exterior clads come with an unmatched GLE Technology that makes them resistant to fading, microbial threats and fire, besides being weather-proof – and hence they are apt for exteriors." Claddings from Greenlam come with special fasteners which are made using non-corrosive materials that offer better colour fastening properties. The exterior clads allow you to decorate your home, office or entire building structures. Ease of maintenance and longevity are other attractive advantages.

POPULAR CHOICES

Cladding has witnessed a revolution in variety. Demands of quick project execution and global designs have made a huge

difference in the cladding market.

Khanna explains, "Rear ventilated façades are gaining popularity in India due to the benefits they offer given the tropical nature of our climate. In addition to thermal benefits, these façades, also known as rain screen façades, ensure rain water doesn't linger on the wall surface. This prevents leakage issues in the building as well. It enables the façade to act as a breathing system rather than a hot box."

Over the last few years, certain events around the world such as Grenfell Tower, London, and the Torch Tower and Address Hotel (both in Dubai) have caused the construction industry to review its fire safety regulations, especially when it comes to external cladding. Certain types of cladding materials, such as stone, have a very low combustibility rating whereas other materials like aluminium composite panels could have a very high rating.

Chowdhury says, "There are two types of cladding. In dry cladding, the application of the cladding material is on another substrate which is fixed on the wall. For example, HPL panels, ACP, etc. In wet cladding, the application of the cladding material is directly made on the wall. For instance, stone, ceramic tiles, etc. Nowadays, dry cladding, especially HPL is gaining its popularity rapidly because of various



technical advantages and aesthetics."

Talking about aesthetics, the market is flooded with a variety of options – abstract designs, stone, wood and solid colours. "Popularity depends on usage. For instance, wood or stone finishes matched with solid colours like red dynasty, chocolate, and electric blue can be applied to schools, airports, hotels and hospitals," explains Mittal. "Regarding exteriors, Lava Stone and Vermillion Red are a perfect example of a classy combination of stone finish and solid colours. Added colours to outside spaces, durability and resilience make the exterior clads withstand years or use without any wear and tear of the product."

TRENDS IN CLADDING

At the global level, the building façade industry is undergoing several changes and developments in terms of performance deliverables. Being a developing country, India is experiencing its ripple effect, in a positive way.

Chowdhury says, "When it comes to the façade of a structure, builders as well as end-users mostly agree that it is no more about just aesthetics. Although the traditional wet façade elements such as bricks, stones, and wood are still widely used and have a ready market, new-age elements and composites around ceramic, vinyl, fibre cements are also rapidly gaining grounds. Technological advancements and novelties in the industry are aiding in evolving consumer preference." He observes that there is a tilt towards HPL cladding amongst façade consultants. This is primarily, he explains, because these products allow architects to design façades that move beyond traditional possibilities, both technically and aesthetically.

Other than this, metal claddings are also proving to be a popular choice when it comes to commercial buildings and factories. Fibre cement as a cladding element may be a new concept for India, but it definitely has a huge scope.

Exterior cladding is a blend of aesthetic and functional



attributes, Khanna observes, "For more than a decade, glass, stone, wood, metal and ACP have always been the traditional choice of material for exterior cladding. Nowadays, new and innovative materials such as exterior grade laminates (as per EN438-6), glass fibre-reinforced concrete, metal claddings (zinc, copper and steel) are creating a healthy disruption in the market. The differentiating factor of the Max Exterior series of high pressure laminates from FunderMax are eco-friendliness, thermal efficiency, energy renewability and sustainability."

Exterior cladding options also come with a beautiful ingrained texture that infuses elegance to spaces. This property is being increasingly appreciated by design practitioners. Mittal says, "Additionally, shades like light blue or peachy white are also suitable for every season. For commercial spaces or the hospitality industry, a mix of wooden and abstract cladding option will infuse elegance and finesse into your space. In wall cladding space, wood finishes and neutral solid colours are the go-to trends. We believe that abstract patterns and wood finishes stand the test of time and will be very popular in the coming years as well."

First impressions are important – but when they go beyond the superficial, the experience becomes more meaningful. This statement pretty much encapsulates cladding materials of today, which lie at the intersection of form and function. ■

F&B FunderMax products have been used to great aesthetic effect in Aragonia, Cavarrina Centre, Hyderabad, and MITE Hitech Park School of Architecture, Bangalore.

S/Sylam Industries' exterior panels demonstrate optimal light fitness, and resistance to scratches, heat, fire and impacts. A protective coat gives them excellent weather protection properties.