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Stucco siding: a timeless and beautiful finish

Many people think home exterior finishes are restricted to vinyl siding or brick. However, there are many other masonry finishes which are durable and attractive. One such finish is stucco.

Stucco is essentially a cement-based or plaster material that may have other elements mixed in, such as sand or pebbles to achieve texture. Depending upon the climate where the home is located, the type of cement mixture used will vary to hold up to the elements. There's also a composite material that can be used called Exterior Insulation Finishing System (EIFS). EIFS is a lightweight synthetic wall cladding that includes foam plastic insulation and thin synthetic coatings. It is a sort of synthetic stucco and some homeowners prefer it to traditional stucco due to the additional insulating properties it provides.

While stucco may be applied over some pre-existing surfaces, or reapplied over older stucco, generally there is a tried-and-true method of installation. This involves applying the stucco over a base of wire mesh, wooden slats, building paper and plywood sheathing. The final layer of stucco will need to be kept moist for a few days so that it dries slowly, thus increasing its strength.

Advantages to Stucco

Homeowners considering stucco for their home should consider the many ad-

vantages of this material.

1. Durability: Stucco is very durable and will often outlast other exterior siding materials, like wood or vinyl.

2. Low-maintenance: Once applied, it really doesn't require any maintenance, and will not need to be repainted unless you choose to do so.

3. Increases R-value: Stucco can be a good insulator, and thus increases the R-value (insulation efficiency) of the home. It may keep a home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

4. Fire-resistant: Stucco is less flammable than other materials, which can make it a safer choice. Because of this factor, homeowners may be eligible for a reduction in their homeowner's insurance.

5. Modern advancements: While stucco is not a new building material, the changes made to finishes can make it seem like something a homeowner has never seen before. A wide array of styles and colours to choose from as well as different application techniques by plasterers make stucco modern, yet timeless.

One disadvantage to stucco could be that application is seldom a do-it-yourself project. It takes a skilled plasterer to know the right consistency of plaster to use as well as the correct amount of dye to achieve a consistent look. Otherwise one could be left with a finish that is neither attractive nor long-lasting.



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