

THE RISE AND FALL OF CLADDINGS

Clay brick is currently most popular for new houses but the preference for a mix of cladding types on homes means more work when it comes to maintenance.

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Owners' preferences for low maintenance housing may be the reason for clay brick currently being by far the most common cladding for new housing (see Figure 1). Monolithic, which refers to a flat finish, usually painted, and which can be a texture-coated fibre-cement sheet, stucco, EIFS or 20 mm of plaster on block or brick, is the second most common.

However, for additions to existing houses weatherboard type claddings are the most common. These can be of a variety of materials, such as radiata pine, cedar, fibre-cement and PVC. A weatherboard profile is often chosen because the owner wishes the addition to meld in well with the existing structure, which for older style houses is likely to be timber weatherboard.

Steel popular for non-residential

In non-residential buildings the most common cladding is sheet steel, which is included in the 'Other' category in Figure 1. Steel is mainly used on industrial, retail and farm buildings, which together have approximately 54% of all non-residential wall claddings. Tilt slab and other pre-cast concrete panels are counted in 'monolithic finish' claddings and these are common in industrial and retail buildings.

Maintenance varies

Houses finished in brick are low maintenance, though the joints may require some repairs at 30-year intervals. Most of the other claddings will require regular painting.

In non-residential buildings much of the monolithic cladding will be unpainted concrete panels and tilt slab. These also have minimal maintenance. However, the 'Other'

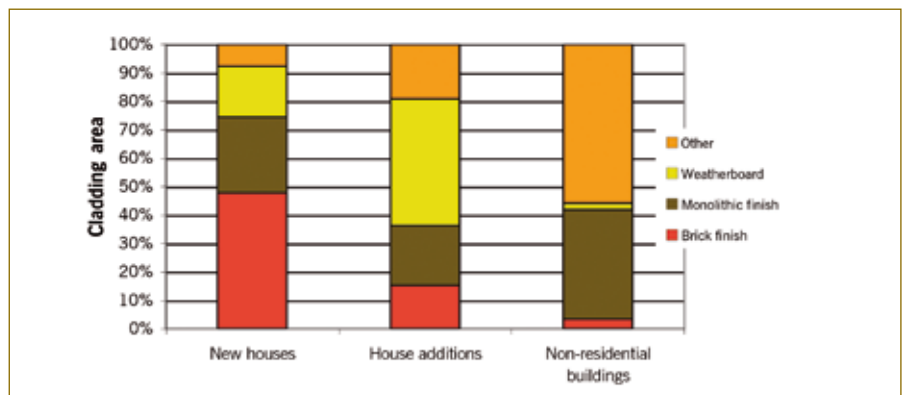


Figure 1: Wall claddings in new buildings in 2006. The percentages are based on wall areas covered by each type. (Source: BRANZ Materials Survey.)

category, mainly sheet steel, will require regular painting.

Mixed claddings common

In many countries, for example Australia, owners are quite happy with a single cladding type, usually all brick. However in New Zealand we still prefer our houses to look individual, which is facilitated by having a second cladding, even if only as a small percentage of the whole building.

Only approximately 73% of brick used in new houses is used in all-brick clad houses (see Figure 2). Other combinations are quite common, such as brick plus weatherboard houses which account for about 16% of total brick usage in new housing.

The downside of multiple cladding types on one building is that the owner needs to do more maintenance than would otherwise be necessary with an all-brick or an unpainted concrete panel/block house. So while Figure 1 suggests that approximately 48%

of new houses (the brick cladding share) will not require painting maintenance, the percentage is actually lower at about 35% (73% x 48%) of all new houses.

Trend away from monolithic

New house wall cladding trends are shown in Figure 3. Monolithic type claddings (stucco, fibre-cement, EIFS plastered block and brick) have declined in share in recent years whereas weatherboard profiles (timber, PVC and fibre-cement), and clay brick have gained in share. It is likely that the preference for low maintenance housing is one of the reasons for the brick share gain, but it is interesting that weatherboard profile has also increased quite significantly. ◀

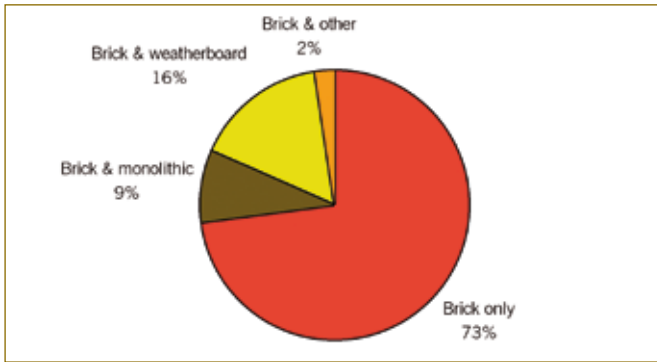


Figure 2: Cladding areas in new brick houses. (Source: BRANZ Materials Survey.)

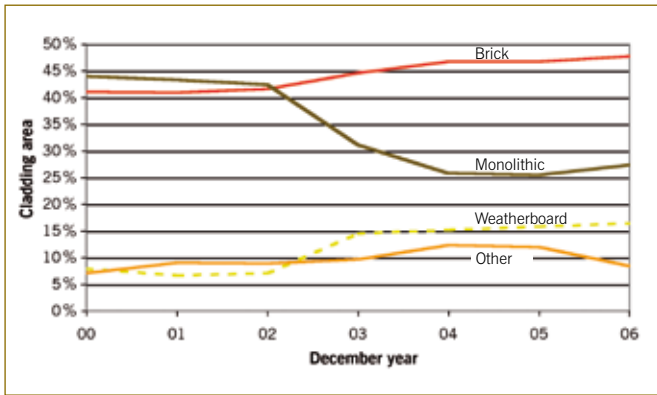


Figure 3: Cladding trends in new houses. (Source: BRANZ Materials Survey.)