

With so many siding materials out there, how do we know what is right for our association? To understand what type of siding is best for us, we created a guide highlighting the pros and cons of popular siding materials and outline some of the best manufacturers we considered as we weighed the options.

We believe that the best siding materials are durable, reliable and can withstand the extreme weather conditions that we have living on Lake Erie. Not only does choosing durable siding material increase condo value, this one decision can cut costs of repair, maintenance, and reduce chances for siding replacement all together for years to come.

Here's what you need to know:

Fiber Cement Siding (Manufacturer James Hardie)

This was the material of choice for many years but recent technology improvements have change the landscape of siding. Fiber cement is a man-made material - a mixture of wood fibers, cement and sand. It is made to mimic other materials especially wood/cedar. The expected lifespan is 30 years and it carries a 30 year limited warranty. It comes in the Shake look. It is a heavy material, that has a good reputation for insect control. It carries a Class (A) fire rating.

The siding has no seams that overlap, which prevents mold or mildew from growing between the outside and interior walls. This feature lessens allergens within the condo, further protecting a homeowner's family.

Installation of fiber cement board siding is costly. Labor costs are higher because fiber cement is heavy and requires more manpower to deliver and install.

Unlike aluminum or vinyl siding, fiber cement siding has to be re-painted every 10-15 years to keeps its luster. Initially, the siding can be installed painted. We did not see a color that matched our current look so we would have had to paint it. Fiber cement has had the problem of swelling and falling apart in high moisture areas. We believe it was a very popular product for many years but recent updates in siding technology and a long history of warranty issues and contractor frustration is causing homeowners to go in different directions namely to wood and vinyl siding.

Wood Composite Siding (Manufacturer LP Smartside)

Also known as engineered wood siding it is a good alternative to natural wood siding. It comes with a 50 year warranty. **Paint applied has been problematic for matching between packets ordered.** Paint correctly applied with the desired color match has a 25 year warranty. Wood composite siding is very affordable. It is resistant to insects, moisture, and fire.

The first step in the engineered wood process involves placing raw lumber through a wood chipper to create wood strands/chips that are somewhat uniform in shape & size. The wood strands are then fed through a mixing mechanism whereby all surfaces of the wood chips are coated with a mixture of waxes, resins, and zinc borate. The zinc borate acts as a preservative that wards off wood-rot & termites. After mixing/coating, the wood strands are laid down in interwoven orientations which results in dimensional stability in

the finished product. The now loosely-interwoven mat of wood-strands is then fed into a press which does a few things simultaneously: it embosses a wood-like finish into the surface of the boards, it compresses the interwoven-mat into the final thickness of the desired siding product, and it uses heat to activate the binding agent of the material. **The same process is used on Diamond Kote plus the paint technology.**

Wood Composite Siding Diamond Kote (Manufacturer LP Diamond Kote)

The DK is a finisher product made by LP - elastomeric coatings with resistance to fading, moisture, cracking and peeling. The final product is a combination of the superior wood composite siding from LP Smartside and the innovative paint technology of DK. Very similar to LP Smartside except paint is factory applied with a 30 year no fade warranty and it is scratch resistant. The finish uses pure metal oxide colorants extracted from rocks. These natural pigments don't fade overtime, keeping siding vibrant and protected against harmful ultraviolet rays which cause synthetic tints to fade quickly. **The cut open edge will require the contractor to paint before installation.** It can withstand everything from freezing conditions to heavy humidity due to superior finish and non porous surface. The product resists impact from airborne debris and the warranty covers damage from hail up to 1.75" in diameter. Comes with a 5/50 limited warranty that provides a 5-year, 100% labor and replacement feature, and a 50-year prorated Limited warranty on the product.

The interlocking system and seamless look make it enticing. Multiple color options that carry a warranty are appealing. **We have been able to color match our existing look.** It has a good R-value, which is how well the material insulates. There is a home visualizer tool on the website diamondkotesiding.com.

Vinyl Composite Siding - We have investigated many brands and have samples and brochures of each. We called Carter Lumber in Port Clinton, Norwalk, and visited Carter Lumber in Elyria. Visited ABC Building Supply and Willoughby Supply (CertainTeed) located along same Griswold Road in Elyria.

Vinyl composite siding is a synthetic material popular because of its low cost and low maintenance. We tended to only look at vinyl composite if it came in shake. Usually lasts between 20-40 years. These numbers depend on manufacturing, weather, sun exposure and maintenance. Vinyl is known for being durable and resistant. When compared to engineered wood it is not as resistant to weather especially hail and wind.

Everlast

As we stated in previous articles we were drawn to this siding for a number of reasons. Our neighbor, Mr. Riat had installed and his opinion of it carried a lot of weight with us. Everlast Composite Siding makes a product reportedly 500 percent thicker than vinyl, reduces noise pollution, and offers impressive durability. [Everlast](#) is a cellular PVC siding, but it's made from a triple-composite material that incorporates granular stone and

polymeric resin to produce a siding with impressive durability. The third component is a fade-resistant and UV-stable acrylic layer that is chemically bonded to the substrate for superior resistance to color fading. This blend is how it resists moisture. But the lack of any wood particles negates sustainability benefits of building with wood.

Everlast can provide an extremely authentic wood-like appearance, dubbed “CedarTouch,” by embossing the product with a texture from roughly sawn planks of real top-grade cedar. This process is available in a couple of horizontal clapboard reveal widths (the reveal is how much of the siding plank is visible): offering a standard 6-7/8” and a narrower 4-1/2”. It is also available in a vertical board & batten-style with an 11-inch reveal on a 12-inch plank.

Everlast siding comes in a wide range of colors with trims to match. It performs strongly against the elements and the manufacturer proudly states that there’s no need for painting, caulking and scraping, and they promise that cracking and chipping won’t be issues.

The product comes with [a competitive warranty](#) that can be passed onto the next homeowner should the current residents move on. It’s an extremely low-maintenance material that requires only the very occasional light wash, meaning it won’t become a headache for the next tenants to keep Everlast siding looking its best. Everlast can be installed quickly and easily and is only half as heavy as fiber cement siding.

It does not come in the Shake look we believe the owners desire. If we as a Board believe that is not the case we can pursue this siding. Color would also be similar to what is on the Riat house. It will also be a costly material similar to other top brands of siding.

Celect Cellular 7” Composite (by Royal Builders)

Celect is a form of cellular composite PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) siding made by Royal Building Products that’s available in many different colors and styles. Cellular composite PVC is known for its ability to handle and look much like real wood, including being 100% recyclable. Celect provides all the functional performance a homeowner could want while making aesthetics a priority.

There are 15 base color options, and [Celect’s handy online design tool](#) allows homeowners to find the perfect color complement and even apply a virtual preview of it to a picture of their home.

Royal Building Products offers a limited 25 year lifetime and 25-year color protection warranty. Celect also boasts “superstar UV protection,” which will make sure the siding keeps its color very effectively over time, while the exterior beauty is further enhanced by extremely low visibility seaming and a high resistance to the worst extremes of the elements except for hail.

The interlocking joints connect to form a firm barrier against the elements, particularly exterior water. This means moisture won’t get trapped inside the siding layer to cause cosmetic, structural or health-threatening problems.

The newness of Celect Cellular means that, for the time being at least, there are no long-term testimonials as to the quality of its performance. This fact plus when

talking with area contractors and lumber specialists we did not get as high a rating as articles suggested. Finally, we would prefer to pursue a material that has a more proven track record.

Cedar Impressions Single or Double 7” Perfection Straight Edge (made by CertainTeed)

Cedar Impressions high performance siding has features such as reinforced nail slots, Molded Perimeter Lock™ and HammerTapper™ to ensure you enjoy the beauty and performance for many years. CertainTeed, an industry leader for over 100 years, offers a lifetime limited warranty. There is a warehouse factory in Milan but they will only give 3% discount to local contractors. When you look at the sample texture it does not compare with the other brands we have. Although it is put on in a few homes in the area it seems to be combined with other types of siding. This is the same material that was put on our present roof. Product usually lasts between 20-30 years.

AZEK Siding

AZEK Siding is virtually identical to wood. It is earning good reviews as a best new product. AZEK is light and strong in comparison to other types of siding. It consists of a reinforced polymer composite for unparalleled aesthetics and durability. It also [weighs up to 40% less](#) than most fiber cement siding. A protective film boosts its longevity and enables the siding's trim to maintain a stunning matte white finish.

AZEK can generally be installed quickly and does not require the use of additional clips, special tools or blades. It leverages Gravity Lock Technology that helps accelerate the installation process and ensures each piece of siding is safely and securely locked in place.

Multiple AZEK pre-finished colors are available, but not in the color look we would be interested in. **Using ProPaint Technology we would have to paint the color on following company guidelines.**

AZEK Siding delivers exceptional moisture-, weather- and UV-resistance. AZEK Siding is simple to maintain, and it has a long lifecycle in contrast to other options. AZEK is sold in various board widths, and it is backed by an extensive fade and stain warranty.

With AZEK, thermal expansion can occur if the siding is exposed to extreme heat for long periods of time. In hot temperatures, the siding will expand and grow. Then, when the temperature declines, the siding will shrink, which can cause it to crack and peel and effect its ability to bond to other surfaces.

The AZEK return on investment value for siding is suspect. In reading the material it implies that the shake has to be painted by the contractor prior to installation. I called a sales agent and he confirmed that this material must be painted by the contractor. If you go on the website they offer a paint guide chart to help ensure you choose the right paint to provide the best long-term paint performance.

Portsmouth Shake and Shingles (manufacturer Royal Builders)

Strong aesthetics designed to match any regional look or preference. Ease of installation designed to install faster and easier, particularly when transitioning with other sidings.

We have been told that people use this product in conjunction with stone.

Contractors and sales vendors seemed skeptical. Low maintenance never requires repainting or re-staining. Lower installed cost compared to alternative polypro and fiber cement. Smart Design built into V-Pro Cedar Shingle virtually impossible to install incorrectly. Class A fire rating.

Weathered Vinyl Perfection 7" Cedar Split Shake Siding (Manufactured by Foundry)

Within the last year this Foundry brand has been purchased by Westlake Royal Building Products. We have been in consultation with members of Catawba Shores South in a variety of areas from material products, to general finances, to loans and contractors. This is the type of siding they chose. The Foundry 7" Vinyl Perfection Shingles are siding panels that have a traditional rustic edge. They achieve the perfect balance of the deep texture of shakes and the clean lines of shingles. Perfection shingles hold a rich color due to its durable ASA caps that protect against weathered elements and UV rays. This product is comparable to the CertainTeed Cedar Impression. We have looked at this siding at South. **In talking with area building vendors representatives, their experiences suggest a history of fading colors and we do not believe it is the right fit for our association.**

DaVinci Hand Shake Split Siding (Manufactured by Royal Builders)

This brand has also become part of the Westlake Royal Builders group. Primarily a roofing company, it entered the siding competition in 2019. Two colors immediately drew our interest (Aged Cedar and Mossy Cedar) and it does have 5/8" thickness. **Upon careful checking of the warranty we were disappointed to see that the no fade policy only covered 10 years and the winds could not exceed 90mph unless you received a special certification to 110mph. We also struggle with the fact that this siding does not carry with it any history. Area vendors suggested this was a very costly product.**

So what is our criteria when examining these products:

We like the idea of no painting, fade resistant materials for up to 30 years, moisture and UV resistant material, easily installed, a strong warranty history backed by the company, a color choice that is the closest to what we presently have, that the product will have local availability with a manager that is local in case of problems and the possibility of product financing when dealing with package pricing.

Vapor Barriers

Ottawa County building codes require us to upgrade our interior vapor wrap system. In the 1980's when these condos were built contractors used rosin paper treated with tar to increase indoor comfort and reduce air transfer. The Reserve Study suggested that forty

year old methods of flashing on our doors, windows and decks have resulted in numerous leakage issues over the last couple of years. We have found answers to most of the leaks but we will need a new wrap for water resistance and proper drainage. Today a superior house wrap is air- and moisture-resistant, permeable, and has a high UV-resistance and tear strength. It should also be simple and quick to install, to limit damage during application. Two of the most popular Tyvek and Zip System do not carry with them a warranty if the material is used in a remodel of an existing condo only when it is on the original. Many of the siding companies carry their own version of a vapor barrier. For example, Diamond Kote moisture management system has the same warranty available that we could not get with the Tyvek or Zip system. The vapor barriers answer an important owner question. My condo has no leaks why should I pay for this repair? We do not know how much water is aurally trapped behind these forty year old siding exteriors and a vapor barrier made up of paper and tar that is also 40 years old. This is the reason a couple of contractors are for not wanting to get involved in this job.

Contractors

Beginning last Fall we have contacted numerous contractors for advice on our siding and leak issues and to gauge their willingness to be involved on a project like this. We have been warned that many contractors do not want to take on the liability, insurance and staffing issues necessary for this type of project. We have met and communicated with at least a dozen area contractors or vendors, have visited area houses with particular brands of siding and just recently traveled to Oberlin College to observe the installation of Diamond Kote with LP Smartside.

We have kept searching yet at the same time meeting repeatedly with one local contractor who has impressed us from the beginning with his work ethic, integrity, ability to develop a work force capable of handling this project, products that will have the type of warranties and guarantees we are looking for, and a sincere desire to do whatever it takes to make us, the customer happy. We have talked with him over every product and all brands but he has never wavered in his support for Diamond Kote as being his first choice and Everlast his second. He used to install Hardie Board but has had too many issues (company warranty coverage and contractor maintenance). He has worked on our condos and already knows the interior structure. We feel very comfortable and confident in recommending him as our contractor for this important job and he has agreed that no matter what siding the Board decides to go with and when, he will do the work. His name is Ben Kluding from Norwalk..

Owners will ask us for square foot prices of these products. You can look online, some are priced by square foot others by the package or pallet which is usually 10' x 10'. In any of these cases the prices quoted are not accurate for us. The contractors we interviewed all have special relationships with their product companies and can therefore get project pricing based on a number of factors including total square foot needed and transportation costs, staffing and difficulty of installation.

To summarize our findings it seems to come down to comparing vinyl siding with wood engineered siding and for us specifically LP Smartside with the Diamond Kote paint. These two materials are known to have an aesthetic appeal and superb performance, and therefore are commanding a greater market share of the home-building community. However, due to polarizing opinions about the use of each, it can be quite difficult to choose siding material from the choices. It is really important to consider the choices in terms of what we feel is important to us at CSNCA. With every article written online or You Tube video we listened to, we tried to come away with how does that discussion effect our view on what would work for us to maintain and preserve our look, our appealing status and reputation as the best association on Catawba Island.

Vinyl siding typically cost less on first view. Each of these sidings will cost more because we believe the owners will want the shake look. Builder grades of 0.40-0.42 thickness is what you see. Many are now going to insulated siding to increase the durability and a thickness minimum of 0.46. This of course raises the price but still in most cases Diamond Kote may cost more because of factory installed paint, which we feel is a plus because of the uniformed look and no fade warranty. Both types of siding are very durable and pest-resistance. We understand that wood engineered siding needs to be inspected periodically for any evidence of rot, mold, or insect damage. We have discussed maintenance of LP/DK with Ben and have his word that we (as owners) will monitor the products wear and report to him any issues. The warranty specifically states that we must notify the company within 30 days. If there is an issue we will call him and he will call the company. That is a big plus, not sure how many if any contractors would agree to do that. LP/DK is more durable under harsh weather in particular hail and has a degree of protection coverage in the warranty. Vinyl does not respond well to hail. For us, the Diamond Kote look is much more appealing and fits almost perfectly with our present look in color, texture and thickness. From everything we have read and viewed, a condo or house using wood siding is likely to have more resale value than one sided with vinyl. Going a step further one contractor stated that he would never consider using vinyl on anything over \$300,000. Many of the newer homes back in the sub-division when you turn left at Rudders are using vinyl on the garage as an accent to stone. Wood siding is well known for its natural insulation properties which help to lower energy bills. Wood siding has a higher R-value rating than that of traditional vinyl siding. The higher the R-value, the better the insulation and the lower the energy bills. As I stated earlier, vinyl in many cases has went to foam panels on the backside of the traditional vinyl siding to make it a better insulator.

We wanted you to have this information before our Wednesday zoom meeting. Ben will be at the meeting to present specifically LP/Diamond Kote and answer any questions you may have on the product or any other siding product mentioned in this guide. We encourage you to do your own research with the mindset of what is best for our association. The owners deserve it.

We also are setting up an owners meet and greet where you can come have a cup of coffee and maybe donuts. Come look at our siding samples and talk with our contractor, Ben Kluding from 8-10am on July 23 at Primrose Hall. This should work well with the planned interior Open House later in the day. Always remember if you have any questions feel free to contact us.

Mike Colatruglio and Tim Keys