Brookridge

Common defects & managing your expectations

Timber cladding is a beautiful, sustainable, and timeless choice for exterior finishes, but it's also a natural material, and with that comes a unique set of characteristics that can sometimes be misunderstood as defects. At Brookridge, we believe in the importance of transparency and helping our customers make informed choices. This guide is designed to help you understand what is typical and acceptable in timber cladding and what may occur over time and how to differentiate between natural variations and genuine concerns.

It's important to recognise that timber, by its very nature, responds to its environment. Exposure to sunlight, moisture, and temperature fluctuations will gradually change its appearance and performance - this is not only normal, but expected. By being aware of the common traits and different limitations of different timber species, you can better anticipate how your cladding will age and perform, allowing for a more satisfying and lasting result.

Common timber cladding traits & species-specific notes

Different species of timber have their own strengths and quirks. Below are some of the most commonly encountered issues that can arise, especially with popular species like Red Grandis and Canadian Western Red Cedar.

Red Grandis
Red Grandis is a durable plantation-grown hardwood with fine grain and an even appearance, making it a popular and cost-effective alternative to more expensive hardwoods. However, it does have a natural characteristic worth noting.

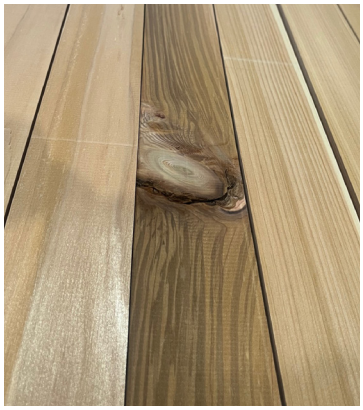
Split ends
End splitting is a common occurrence in Red Grandis. This is not considered a structural issue but rather a natural response to the drying process or change in humidity. It can usually be trimmed during installation or left as-is when minor.

If you are ordering set lengths for your project, it's important to note that minor trimming may be required to remove split ends. For this reason, we strongly recommend allowing a buffer stock in your order. This ensures that you have enough material to trim boards, as needed, without falling short during installation.

UK Timber Cladding
Bristol Rd, Dunball, Somerset, TA6 4TE
Telephone: 01823 680546

Canadian Western Red Cedar
Canadian Western Red Cedar is prized for its lightweight, rich colour and natural resistance to decay. However, being a softwood, it also presents certain typical traits.

At Brookridge, we supply 85% (No2 Clear & Better Grade) of your Canadian Western Red Cedar cladding in your specified lengths, with the remaining 15% (No4 Grade) provided as running lengths (always 1.8m in length or more). It's the perfect balance of beauty, efficiency and affordability.



No2 Grade is a high-grade Cedar
- Mostly clear of knots, possible tight knots or minor blemishes
- Excellent for visible applications
- You can expect long usable lengths with minimal trimming

No4 is a lower-grade Cedar
- Expect frequent knots, checks or blemishes
- Typically used where aesthetics are less critical
- Structurally sound
- Usually shorter lengths - expect trimming and/or selection

The combined supply of No2 and No4 grades typically reflects the standard grading and sorting practices of cladding suppliers and is done for a few key reasons:

This approach ensures that you receive top-quality timber with minimal waste, as it allows us to make the most of each board and the overall yield. This way, the shorter lengths aren't discarded and in, many cladding projects, shorter boards are useful for less visible sections, e.g. cutting around windows, doors and other openings.

Canadian Western Red Cedar is a natural product and often has knots, sap streaks, mineral staining, colour variation and checks or splits. Even with our No2 Clear & Better Grade a small proportion of boards will have blemishes that don't meet the full visual spec. Part of the 15% allowance that we mention above includes boards that are structurally sound but may present some visual defects, like knots, splits or discoloration - these boards are intended to be trimmed or used in less visible areas.

So, to clarify, the 85/15 rule isn't only about some shorter boards, it's also about boards with blemishes that you may need to cut around and managed effectively through smart installation.

UK Timber Cladding
Bristol Rd, Dunball, Somerset, TA6 4TE
Telephone: 01823 680546

How the above issues may affect installation

It is important to:
- Inspect your boards during layout
- Use the clean sections in high-visibility areas
- Use blemished sections for cuts, for behind downpipes or under windows etc

It is common practice to order 10-15% extra cedar to allow for waste, cutting and selection. If your project is extremely visually sensitive, we would advise that you seek clear one-face, 100% defect free, usable length, but this comes at a premium and isn't always readily available.

UK Timber Cladding
Bristol Rd, Dunball, Somerset, TA6 4TE
Telephone: 01823 680546