

Wood Trim

FOR Vinyl Siding

We install vinyl siding on many of the custom homes we build. It provides the traditional

by John Connor

look of clapboards while satisfying our customers' desires for a low-maintenance cladding. As an alternative to the standard J-mold trim at doors and windows, we've created a detail using 5/4 pine with a $\frac{5}{8} \times \frac{5}{8}$ -inch rabbet that conceals the ends of the siding while maintaining the appearance of traditional wood trim.

The rabbet begins at the ends of the head trim, travels down the outside of the casing, then turns and runs along the bottom side of the sill trim (see Figure 1). All of the edge milling is done ahead of time using a table saw on full-length 5/4 pine; the trim is also back-beveled so it sits flat over window and door flanges. After the trim is cut to finish length, we rout the ends of window and door casings as necessary to match the edge rabbets, then prime all sides and edges. Before we hang the trim, we also wrap the perimeter of the opening with a bituminous membrane or an extra layer of felt paper. For added protection against water, we set window flanges in a bead of silicone caulk.

The only place we use J-mold is at the head trim, because it serves to divert water away from the window (Figure 2). We run the J-mold long, then turn the edges down so that water draining off the siding above is directed toward the rabbeted casing. We also use finish molding under the sill casing to hold the top of the vinyl siding in place.

We use a similar rabbet detail at cornerboards to conceal the siding. Since we also like to run cornerboards through the skirt board, the rabbet prevents moisture from building up in the vertical joint (Figure 3). Occasionally, we'll use built-up trim at cornerboards. Instead of rabbeting heavier stock, we'll lay $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pine boards against the sheathing, then overlay another piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pine, creating an overhang at the edges to conceal the vinyl.

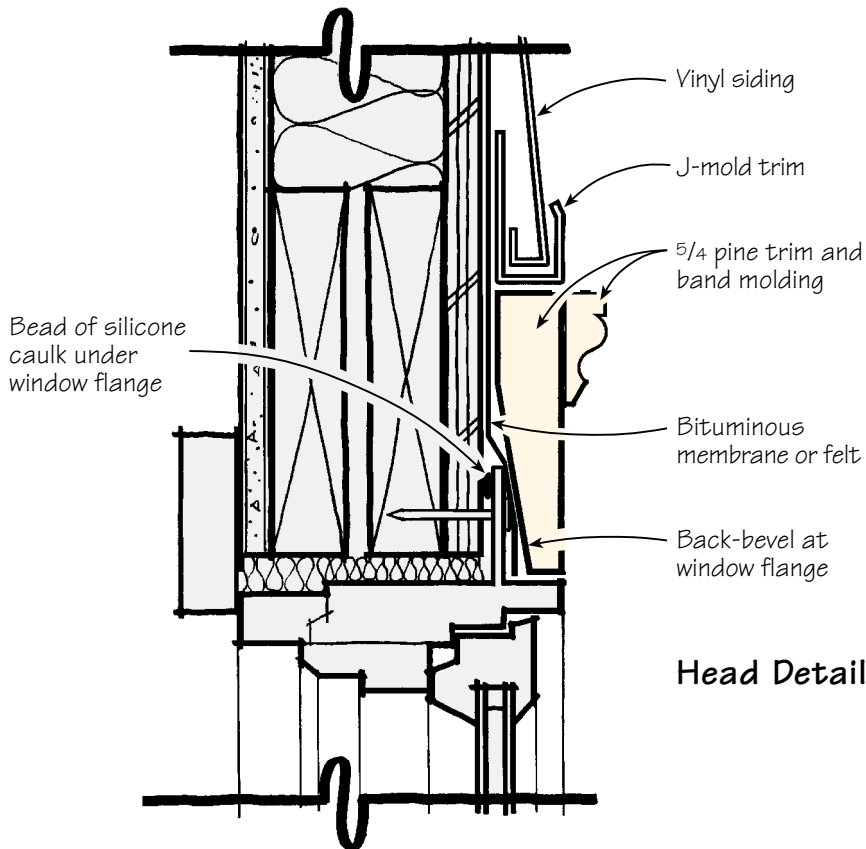


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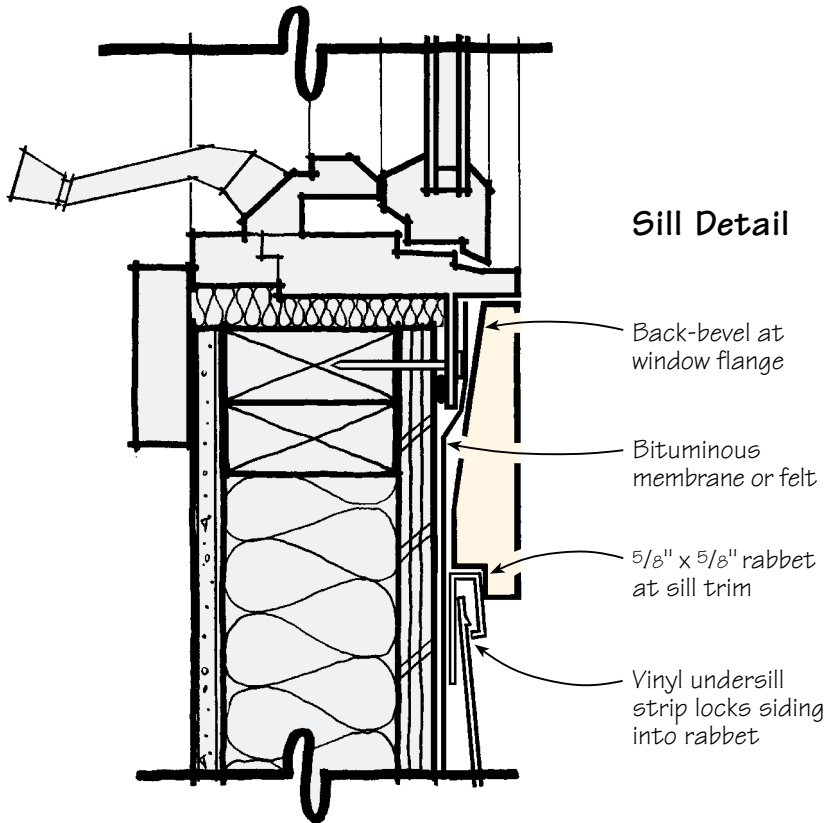


Figure 1. To avoid exposed J-mold, the author conceals the ends of vinyl siding behind a rabbet cut into the outside edges of 5/4 pine trim. To protect against moisture, the window flanges are set in silicone caulk over a layer of bituminous membrane or felt that rims the opening.

Head Casing & Sill



Head Detail



Sill Detail



Figure 2. J-mold is exposed only above the head trim (photo). The molding is cut long and the ends are turned down to direct runoff into the rabbet. At the sill trim, a piece of vinyl undersill trim holds the vinyl siding in place (illustration, left).



Figure 3. At corners, the rabbet conceals the ends of the vinyl siding and provides good drainage at the vertical joint where the corner trim passes by the skirt board (top). At built-up cornerboards, 1-by stock applied over spacers achieves the same clean look (above).