

## Where Eaves Meet Rake

by Katie Hutchison

The roof can be one of the most defining elements of a house: Look at any child's drawing, where a strong triangle atop a box is likely to say "home."

The way the roof terminates at the eaves and rake contributes greatly to both the practical function and aesthetic effect of the roof.

There are two basic types of eaves and rakes: clipped and extended. Clipped eaves and rakes project no farther beyond the exterior wall than necessary to cover the frieze trim. Extended eaves and rakes project 6 to 8 inches for a short overhang, one foot for a moderate extension, and 18 inches to as much as 3 feet for a more dramatic effect.

Extended eaves and rakes can be either closed or open — depending on whether the rafter tails or lookouts are enclosed with a soffit. If open, the rafter tails can be shaped and trimmed with a shadow board, or the shadow board can be omitted.

Often the design of the eaves drives the rake design. There are some useful rules of thumb to guide eaves-rake pairings (but, as always, there will be exceptions). To start, consider a rake that is similar to the eaves you've selected. If the eaves are extended and open, an extended, open rake may be a good choice. The rake needn't extend as far as the eaves; that could prove excessive in many cases. There's nothing wrong with an 18-inch eaves overhang coupled with an 8-inch rake overhang, for example. Rarely, though, is it desirable for the rake extension to exceed that of the eaves.

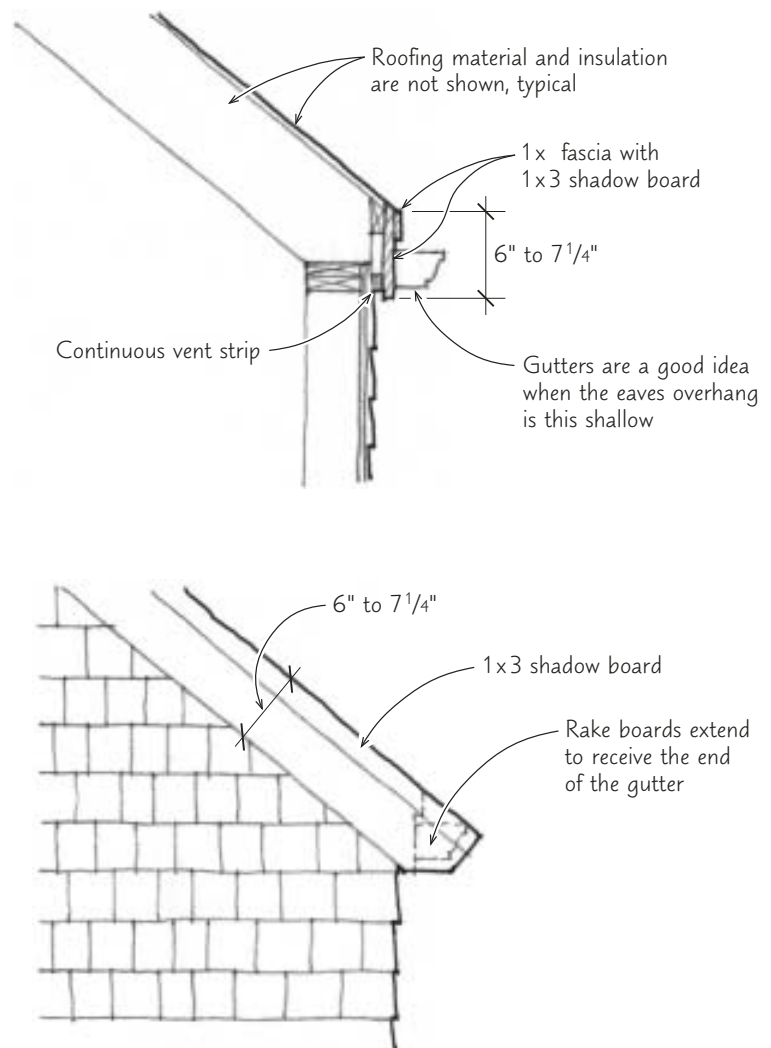
Likewise, clipped eaves generally work well with a clipped rake — an overhanging rake with clipped eaves might appear somewhat awkward. On the other hand (here's an exception), a clipped rake can work with extended eaves.

When extended eaves have a level soffit, extra care should be taken to resolve the intersection with a clipped rake. On the flip side, when extended eaves with a level soffit are paired with a similarly extended closed rake, the result can have a heavy, boxy look.

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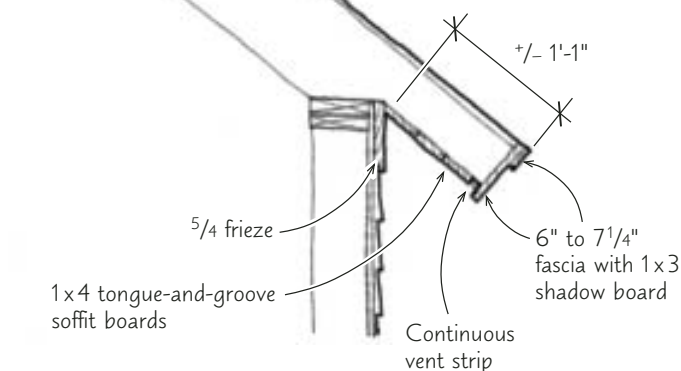
### Clipped Eaves and Rake

Clipped eaves are common on both 18th century New England cottages and contemporary homes. Paired with a tight rake, clipped eaves de-emphasize the roof as a sheltering plane and instead allow the entire building to be understood as a simple form — much like a Monopoly house. This taut simplicity often appeals to contemporary minimalists.

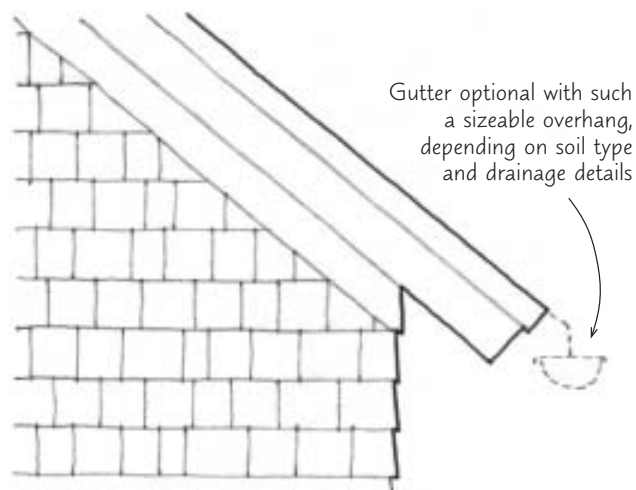
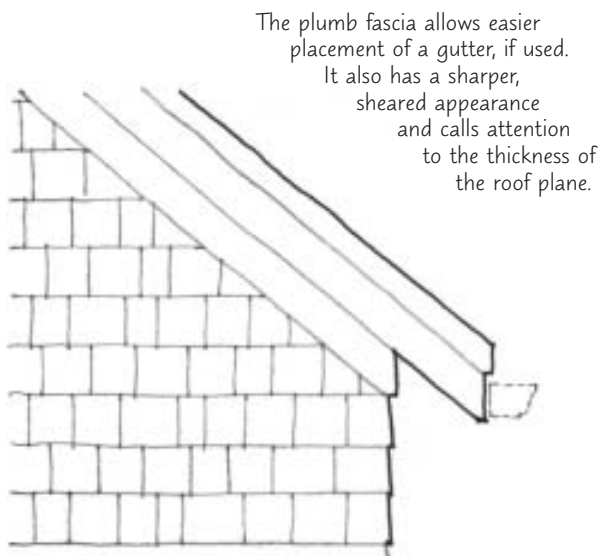


## Extended Eaves With Closed Sloped Soffit

These overhanging eaves with a sloped soffit create a sheltering, clean-lined roof plane that wraps neatly onto the rake elevation. They carry rain water well beyond the wall plane and produce a pronounced shadow line at the roof-wall intersection. The greater the eaves extension, the greater the potential shading and cooling effect. The length of the rake overhang may vary from the eaves overhang dimension.

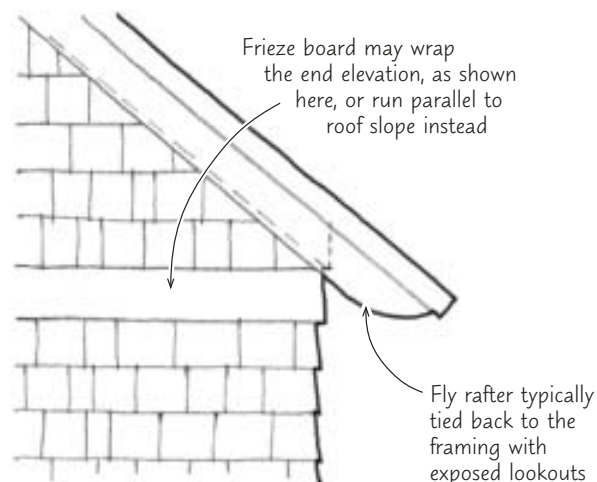
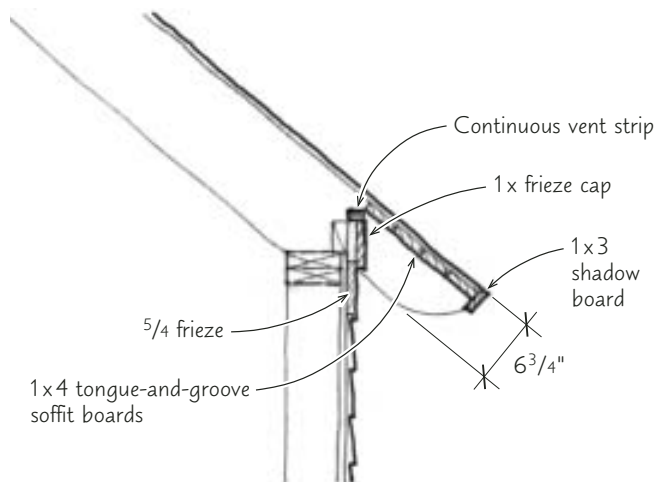


Cutting the rafter extension perpendicular to the roof slope helps reduce the apparent thickness of the roof plane



## Extended Eaves With Exposed Rafter Tails

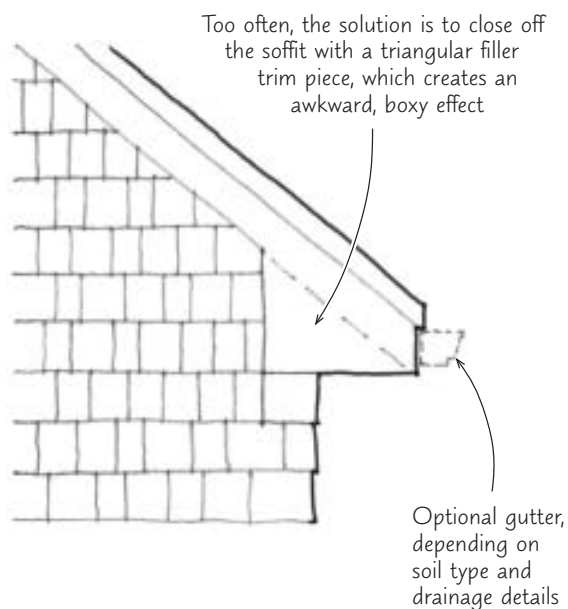
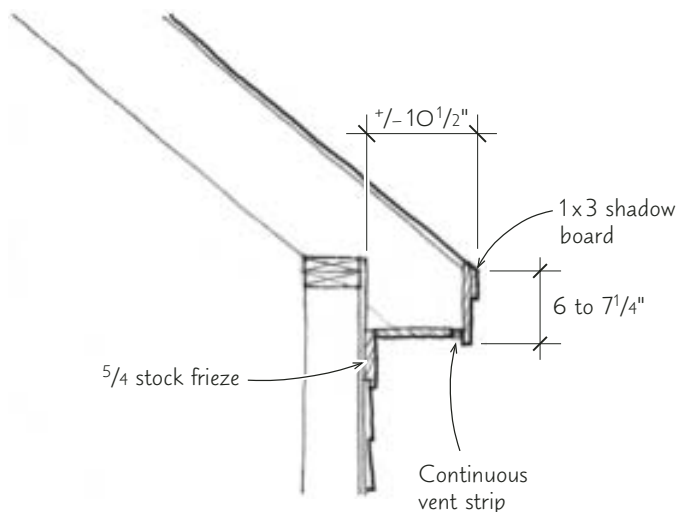
Open eaves recall the vernacular details of cabins and cottages in which the rafter tails are extensions of the exposed rafters inside. In modern construction, open eaves play up the expression of the structure itself as ornament, even when the rafters are not displayed on the interior. Exposed rafter tails are often found on Craftsman, Stick, and Shingle Style homes. An open rake typically works well with open eaves.



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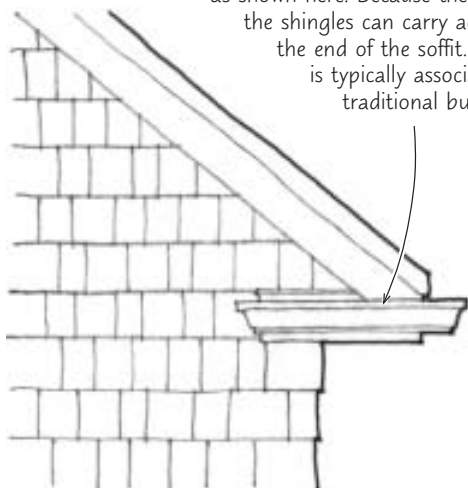
## Common Closed Eaves With Level Soffit and Clipped Rake

This eaves type sheds water beyond the wall plane, creates a modest shadow line, and is easy to build. However, its success depends largely on how the intersection with the rake is resolved.



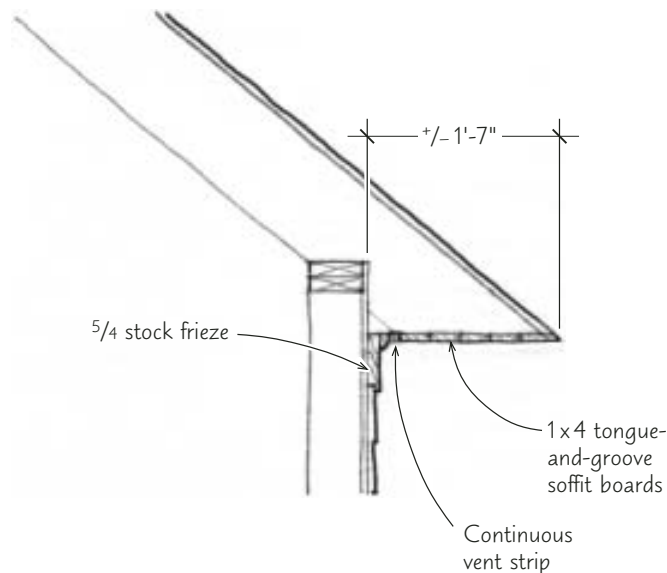
An eaves return can be a satisfactory way to resolve the intersection with a clipped rake.

The eaves return may include the gutter, as shown here. Because the rake is clipped, the shingles can carry across to close the end of the soffit. The eaves return is typically associated with traditional building styles.



## Knife-Point Eaves With Clipped Rake

Knife-point closed eaves are a contemporary detail. Their clean lines create a strong, formal composition of a sheltering roof sitting on top of a base enclosure. They're not generally suited to gutters.



This gable end elevation is composed of a distinct shingle base and a triangular cap, defined by the strong line of the eaves soffit. Here, board-and-batten siding and clipped-rake fascia boards close off the knife-point soffit.

