

A BUYER'S GUIDE TO

Stone Veneers



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Emerson, the owner of Old Station Outdoor & Landscape Supply has been in the hardscape business for over 15 years.

After owning his own hardscape company, he decided he would try something new and opened Old Station in 2013. His main reason was he wanted a place where both homeowners and contractors could get supreme customer service.

One of his core values is treating all his customers with the same type of service he himself likes to receive.

He loves to sit down with the homeowners and go over step-by-step on how to complete their project, helping them choose the best options, materials and techniques to make their home improvement project a success.

For more information please visit us at:

<http://oldstationsupply.com>



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What Are Stone Veneers	2
Why Stone Veneers are a Great Choice for Your Next Project	3
Real Stone vs Engineered	4
Backyard Transformations Using Stone Veneer	5
Indoor Uses	6
How to Choose Colors, Patterns and Materials	7
CONCLUSION	8

1. Introduction



Your home is your castle. We've all heard it said so many times, but the fact is, your home is where you relax after a long day, raise your children, entertain family and friends and increasingly where we take stay-cations to recharge our batteries.

Creating your ideal environment takes time, and effort. For many of us, as we live in our homes, over time we transform them inside and out into our vision of the perfect space. Today, there's a growing trend toward adding functional living space outside of our homes. The transition from interior to exterior space is often accomplished by introducing natural materials to the inside of our homes that allow a flow from interior to exterior living space. For example, introducing materials like natural stone flooring that flows seamlessly from the great room to your outdoor kitchen. Or building an outdoor fire feature that mimics your beautiful stone fireplace in the living room.

One natural material that is at home both inside and outside your house is natural stone. Improvements in manufacturing technology have given us a wide variety of natural stone products to choose from. Stone veneer is available in a wide variety of species, sizes, styles, and textures to meet any homeowner's style or aesthetic needs.

Stone veneers offer several attractive features. From the availability and affordability of exotic species and less physical weight than full stone making them easy to work with, to the wide selection of sizes, colors, patterns and textures available, stone veneer is the perfect way to add beauty, functionality, and focus to your interior and exterior designs and spaces.

This guide will explore some of the advantages of working with stone veneer, compare natural and man-made engineered stone veneers, help you to choose the perfect material to meet your stylistic and functional needs, and some popular indoor and outdoor uses. But first, let's start with the basics!



2. *What Are Stone Veneers*



Stone veneer is used in a number of areas inside and outside the home as a decorative and protective material for exterior or interior walls and surfaces. From fireplace surrounds, to bathrooms, as a kitchen backsplash, a feature wall, and as a finishing material for exterior siding, stone veneers can transform your space.

Typical stone veneers are about 0.75 to 1.5-inch-thick and must weigh less than 15 pounds per square foot so that no additional structural support is necessary when used. It can be made from natural materials like travertine, slate, marble or granite, or manufactured stone such as formed concrete, cultured marble, or quartz.

Natural stone veneers are made from real stone that is either collected, such as fieldstone, or quarried and cut like granite or travertine. The stone is milled to a consistent thickness and weight when used as veneer. The cut stone can offer a more finished look, or retain the natural look of the stone such as stacked stone veneers. These types of veneers are often referred to as “thin stone” veneers.



Manufactured stone veneer is a decorative material made to replicate the look of natural stone. It is also sometimes referred to as artificial stone, faux stone, and stacked stone veneer depending upon the manufacturer. Manufactured veneer is fabricated by pouring a lightweight concrete mix into a rubber form of different styles then painted, or colored to resemble real stone.

3. Why Stone Veneers are a Great Choice for Your Next Project



Whether natural or manufactured stone, there are many benefits to using stone veneers during both new construction, and in your home improvement projects throughout your home. Natural stone veneer is versatile and you'll love how it captures the color and texture of real stone masonry, at a fraction of the cost! Whether you choose to use it as inlaying in your landscaping, as a decorative cover for concrete retaining walls, to add elegance to your outdoor kitchen, or along the exterior facing of your home.

Here are 10 reasons why stone veneers are a great choice for your home improvement project.

- 1. It's Lightweight** – As an alternative to traditional masonry, stone veneer is lightweight and much easier to work with. Especially for projects where you have limited space or weight requirements. Because it is kept to a maximum of 15 pounds per square foot, (less for manufactured veneers) you will not need to add additional structural support when facing with stone veneers.
- 2. It's Durable** – Natural stone veneers are thin layers cut from real stone. As a result, they resist weather and ultraviolet damage when used in exterior projects. Depending on the species used, durability may vary.
- 3. It's Hard** – Like durability again hardness may vary with the species of stone used. Granite is the hardest and is not easily chipped or cracked.
- 4. Maintains Its Color** – It will never fade or discolor. Because it is a natural material if it cracks or chips, it will reveal the same stone consistency, so scratches and chips are not noticeable, and are even natural looking!
- 5. Huge Variety of Choices!** - When using natural stone, each piece is unique. There is an abundance of species, colors, textures, sizes and styles available so decorators love working with stone!

6. **It's Extremely Versatile** – Stone veneers work equally well inside or outside your home. It doesn't need footing or a support ledge. Simply adhere it to any surface. This makes it easy to add to your next remodeling project.
7. **It's Customizable** – Stone veneer can be custom cut to whatever thickness and face size that you need. And today, consistency in the manufacturing process means no sacrifice in quality.
8. **Timeless Appeal** – The cut maintains the beauty of timeless natural stone.
9. **It's Inexpensive** – It's an economical choice. Because it's thin cut it weighs less, costs less and is less bulky. Because there is less production, shipping and installation costs involved your overall costs are significantly lower.
10. **Low or No Maintenance** – Exterior stone surfaces can be cleaned by power washing. And if you use a sealer product, periodic resealing is all that's necessary to main its luxurious look!

As you can see, thin stone veneer has many benefits for your home improvement projects. It's the perfect material for commercial or residential projects.

4. Real Stone vs Engineered

When choosing between real stone versus an engineered product, your final choice comes down to budget and aesthetics. While natural thin stone veneer is a fabulous product with many benefits, manufactured stone does have a few advantages over natural stone, including:

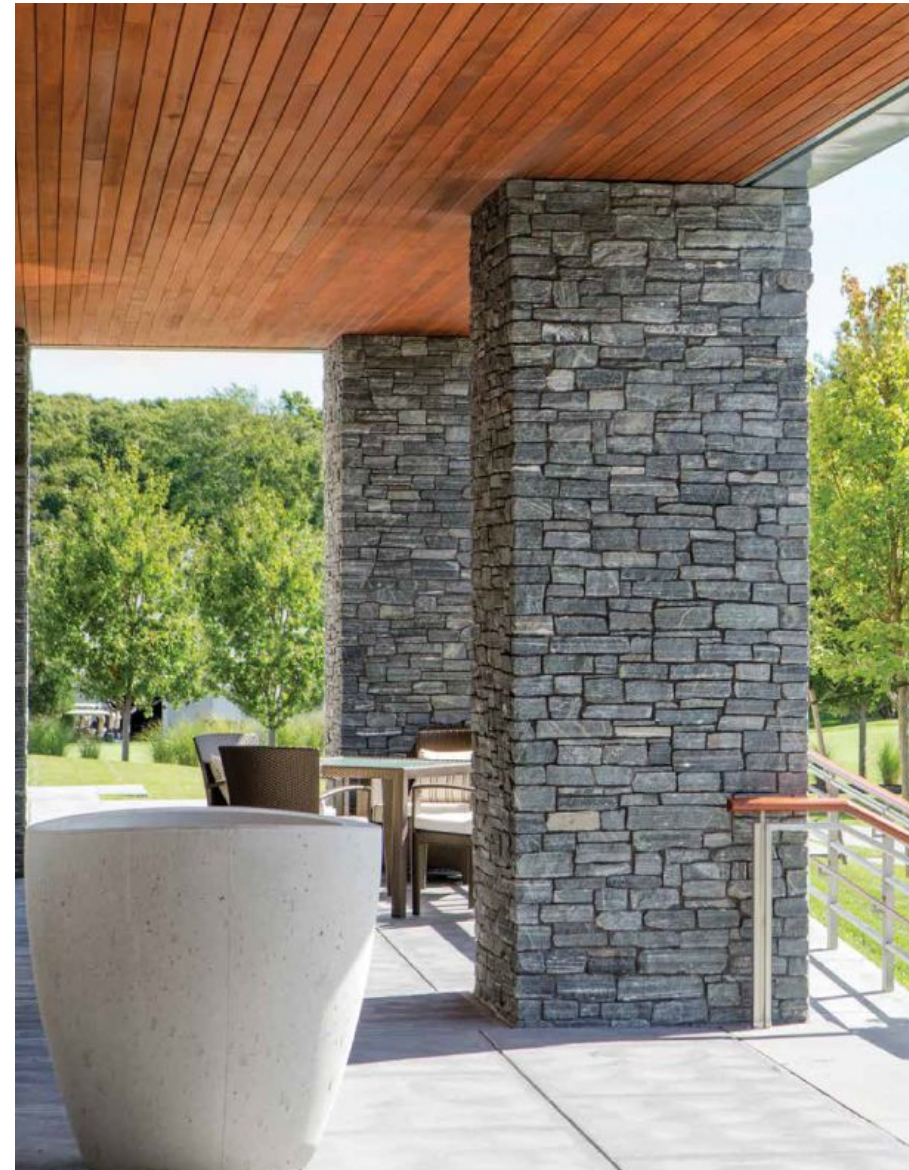
- **Cost** – Both the cost of the material and the cost of installation is significantly cheaper with manufactured stone. In fact, manufactured veneer can cost 1/3 to 1/2 the price of natural stone.
- **Lower weight means easier installation** – Manufactured stone veneer can weigh much less than natural stone as well. While thin stone veneer generally does not need additional structural support, there are instances where it may be necessary. This can increase the price of installation. Manufactured stone veneer eliminates the need for any wall ties or footings making it easier to build with and cheaper to install.
- **Wide range of styles and colors** – Because manufactured stone is custom made it comes in a wide variety of colors textures and styles that may not be available in a natural stone.
- **It looks good in the home as well as in commercial properties like offices and hotels** - Because it is a cheaper choice, manufactured stone can be a good choice for larger scale projects, like as an exterior wall covering when creating a "stone house" look, or for larger areas like commercial office buildings or hotels.

While manufactured stone offers an affordable alternative to natural stone veneers, it does not share the same durability. If a piece breaks, or is removed, it will show significantly unless it's replaced, unlike natural stone which can chip with no loss of functionality or beauty. Natural stone is also a much greener product producing less waste. When natural stone pieces are shaped, the resulting chips can be recycled into other products like construction aggregates.

Manufactured stone veneer also contains lime nuggets as part of its composition. These can leach out and stain over time and when exposed to water, when used in exterior applications. It can change color over time when exposed to UV light as well. Higher quality manufactured stone veneers contain color throughout the material which can lessen the effects of UV exposure, but not eliminate it.

Because natural stone is a dense product, it does not react to UV rays or water. Manufactured stone is porous and will absorb more water than any natural stone. If improperly prepared for exterior use, through repeated exposure to water, it can cause many of the same issues as improperly installed stucco. In colder climates, manufactured stone may be subject to ice wedging and freeze/thaw issues as well.

Natural stone veneer offers durability (it can last for centuries!) aesthetic advantages (nothing is as luxurious!) and is also lightweight and easy to install. The main drawback to natural stone veneers is their cost when compared to manufactured stone, however their timeless look and durability is more than worth the additional cost.



5. Backyard Transformations Using Stone Veneer

Natural stone veneer has a role in creating a backyard transformation for your home. Right now, the trend is leading back towards natural materials in your landscape and that means that not only can you beautify your space with natural stone products, you can add to your homes curb appeal and value. When planning your projects, create an overall game plan.

Outdoor hardscaping can be rolled out over several seasons to reduce costs and better fit into your home improvement budget. By planning ahead, and because of the natural beauty and consistency of thin stone veneers you can choose a species, or several complementary species for your projects.



Here are four current popular trends to consider for your next outdoor hardscaping project.

- **Modern Linear Designs** – Homeowners are moving away from convoluted designs and creating more professional looking backyard designs for their homes. The big trend is towards interior/exterior flow. Using natural stone veneers to create the transition from the interior of your home to your backyard entertaining space is a great way to establish design continuity.
- **Outdoor “Features” like Kitchens, Fire Pits, Pizza Ovens...** - Creating fully-functioning outdoor kitchen areas and features like fireplaces or pizza ovens is a huge trend as more people are opting for staycations. Stone veneer lends itself to these projects well, whether it's a prefabricated element, or a custom design. Thin stone veneers can be used in any application from beautifying and adding interest a boring concrete retaining wall to create focus, to sheathing an outdoor kitchen island, fire pit or water feature.
- **Matching Interior and Exterior Designs** – We mentioned this briefly, but more consumers and designers are opting to create interior and exterior designs that mimic and complement each other. Natural stone veneers can create a consistency that can help to connect your interior and exterior living spaces.
- **The Shift Towards “Greener” Materials** – As we all become more aware of environmental issues, the use of natural products like real stone veneer is rising. Consumers are seeking materials that offer natural beauty, are affordable and will last. Thin stone veneer is perfect because it produces little waste, it's easy to install, it's affordable and it looks amazing for years and years!

As with any home improvement project, do your due diligence! There are many different choices available when it comes to choosing a stone veneer. If you are working with a landscape architect or designer, speak with them. They can offer the expertise to help you make the right choice. It's important to consider all of your options before you choose. Natural stone veneers are extremely durable and can last for decades when properly installed. Make sure you will be happy with your choice for many years to come!

6. Indoor Uses



Both natural and manufactured stone veneer has many uses inside the home as well as in your outdoor space. One major design trend we spoke of earlier, is the continuity between indoor and outdoor living space. Natural stone veneer (or manufactured stone veneers if budget is an issue) is an excellent choice for creating this continuity. Meshing various materials for example stone and wood is a growing design trend. It allows you to bring the outdoors inside and can add a rustic look taking a room from interesting to memorable!

Here are some ideas and interior uses for stone veneer:

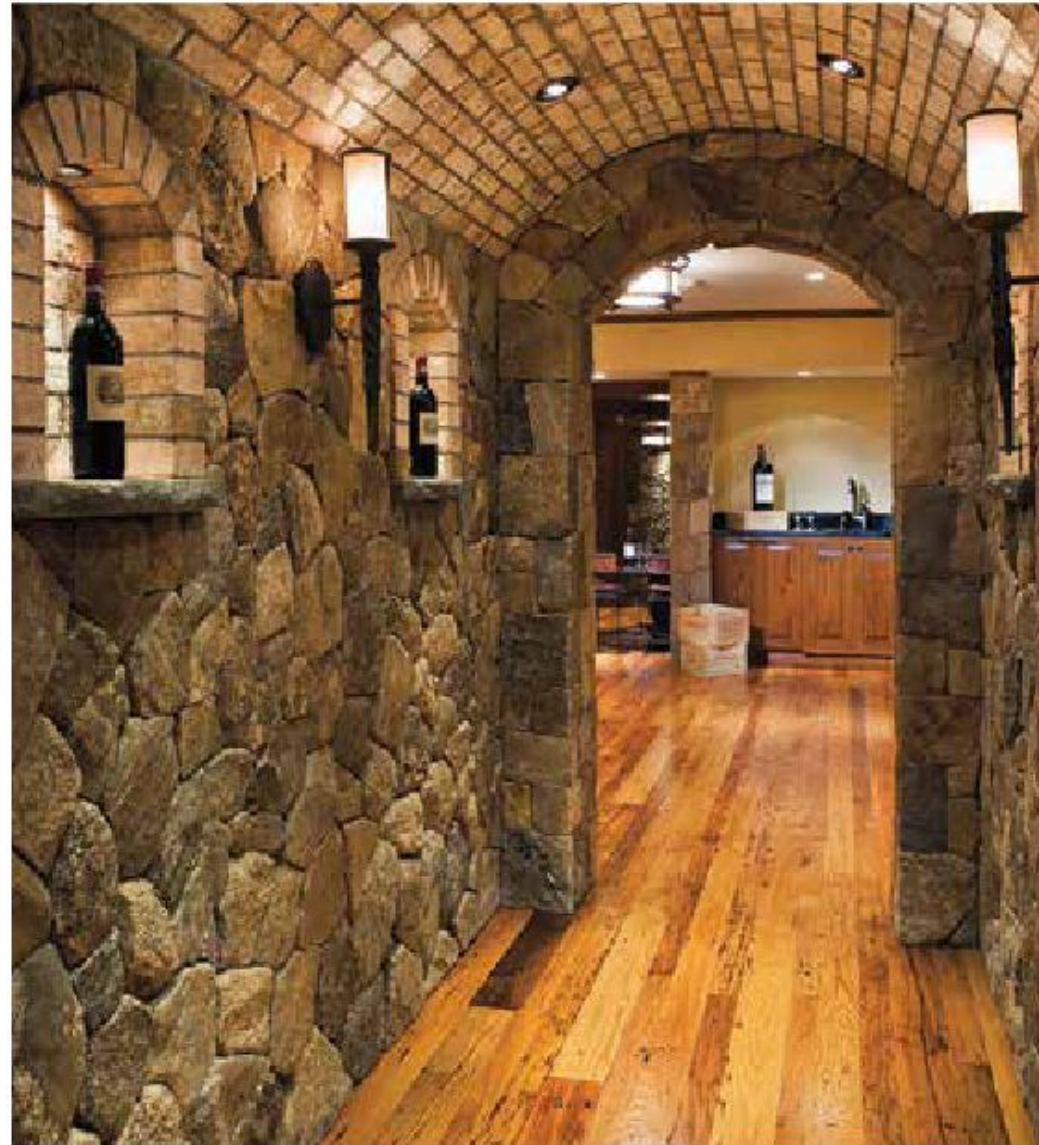
- If you have a **fireplace** in need of updating, stone veneer is a perfect choice. You can create any look from modern or contemporary to rustic with stone. With a quality stone, you can give your chimney breast a classic look, as if it has been there for over 100 years!
- Create a **feature wall** in your home with stone veneer. It's light enough to apply so you will not need to add any structural support, and in fact, can actually strengthen the integrity of an interior wall, while creating a fabulous focal point that can help define your interior décor as well as create a natural transition from your interior space to your outdoor living area.

- Natural stone veneer is an attractive and durable material for a **kitchen or bathroom backsplash**. It can add texture and color to your kitchen or bath while creating a beautiful and flowing aesthetic.

- If you have structural supports like **pillars or columns** in your home, you can add a rustic look by applying stone veneers. Just because an architectural element is functional, doesn't mean it can be beautiful as well.

- **Shower surrounds and standalone tub surrounds** can be made more beautiful with the addition of stone veneers. It's functional and water resistant when properly sealed. Bring the outdoors into your master suite to create a relaxing oasis with natural stone veneers.

Interior designers love the flexibility and natural look of thin stone veneer. If you're working with an interior designer on your project, speak with them about the feasibility of adding natural stone accents to your interior space!



7. How to Choose Colors, Patterns and Materials



Choosing the perfect stone veneer for your project comes down to its use, aesthetics and your budget. Stone veneers are available in a wide variety of colors, textures, sizes, facings and materials. Whether you choose a natural stone product or a man-made engineered veneer, make sure you choose the highest-quality materials you can afford.

Both natural stone veneers and manufactured veneers apply easily, and are much more cost effective than using traditional full size stone materials around fireplaces, pillars, backsplashes, outdoor kitchens and dozens of other home improvement projects.

When choosing colors, patterns and materials consider your homes existing style and décor.

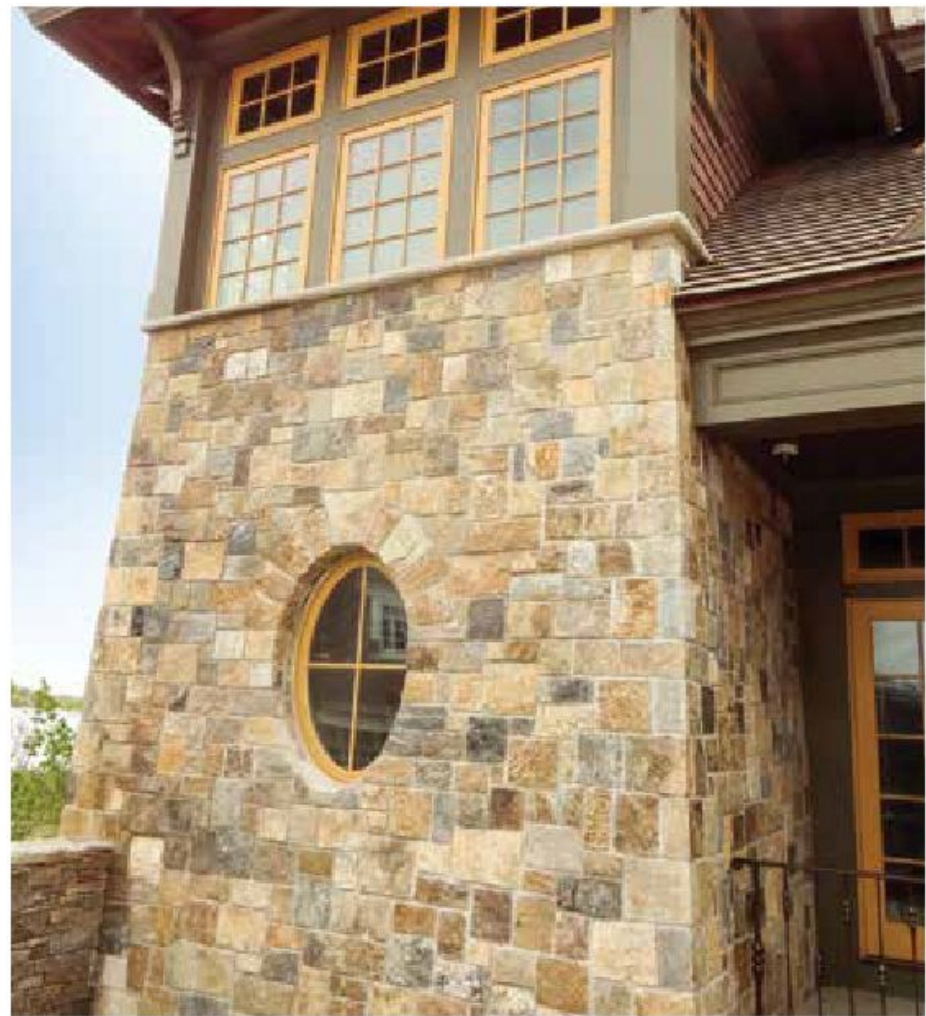
For exterior projects, natural thin stone veneer is a smart choice. It's available in several different species from travertine to granite, sandstone, slate and ledgerstone. Because it is a natural material, it offers a consistent look that will not fade in the sunlight and it is naturally dense and water resistant making it perfect for outdoor use.

Interior projects can benefit from the wide variety of manufactured products available. Cultured or engineered veneers are made using molds cast from natural materials. Cement is poured and cured using these molds then colored by a specialist to have a natural look. Because they are man-made, the color process gives you more choices and uniformity than natural stone.

Because it is also subject to less wear and tear, manufactured stone can be a great choice for interior projects. It is extremely budget friendly and today; manufacturing technology has allowed for high-quality materials that are almost indistinguishable from natural stone.

The best option is to visit several showrooms or if you are working with a designer, ask them to suggest options and provide samples. If you have existing hardscaping or interior stone work, look for complementary materials to match the color, texture and style of your existing décor. While manufactured stone veneers are not as durable as natural stone products, manufacturing techniques and processes have improved and made it less prone to chipping. In addition, newer color processes have created manufactured veneers that have color running deeper into the material, and it is more durable making chipping less of a noticeable problem.

Whichever you choose, whether natural thin stone veneer or manufactured, make sure you research the manufacturer and buy the highest-quality material you can afford.



8. Conclusion

Creating your dream space takes time and effort. Today, stone veneer is a growing trend that can enhance the timeless beauty of your home, as well as improve its curb appeal and even add value when it comes time to sell.

Whether to choose the timeless beauty, durability and look of natural stone veneers or the design flexibility that manufactured veneers offer, adding stone veneers to the interior or exterior of your home is an excellent choice for creating an interesting design element. Stone veneers allow you to create a flow between the interior and exterior living spaces of your home. They can bring the outdoors into your living space to create any look from warm and rustic, to modern or contemporary or any style in between.

If you are considering adding stone veneer to your home, plan ahead and do your research. Speak with your interior designer, visit home improvement stores and educate yourself on the myriad of choices and materials available. Whether your taste runs to the exotic, or the purely functional, there is a perfect stone veneer for every purpose, style, taste and budget. It's easy to install, weighs less than full-thickness stone, offers impressive durability, looks beautiful and if properly installed, will give you years of pleasure and enjoyment while enhancing the look, curb appeal and value of your home.

At Old Station Outdoor & Landscape Supply we offer a full range of beautiful natural and manufactured stone veneers for your next home improvement project. Stop by our store at 142 East Main Street in Norton, Mass, give us a call, or visit our website to see our selection. We love helping homeowners to create their dream outdoor or interior space. If you have any questions, or need some advice to help you make the best choice, we're always here and ready to help!



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