

THE FACTS: BRICK VS. CONCRETE MASONRY VENEER



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THE ARTIFICIAL “BRICK”: CONCRETE MASONRY VENEER

Concrete brick comes in a variety of sizes similar to those of clay brick. Like clay brick, the units may be cored, solid or have frogs and weigh from 3 to 15 pounds each. What’s the big difference between architectural concrete block or concrete brick and clay brick? Quite simply, it’s the materials and methods of manufacture. Concrete units are cured at high humidity and temperatures to facilitate bond between the portland cement and aggregate. Clay brick is fired with natural gas or coal at approximately 2000 °F to fuse the shale or clay into a durable unit. These different materials and manufacturing processes affect the behavior of the units when placed in a wall. Concrete masonry walls shrink, whereas clay brick walls expand. Both materials change size when subjected to temperature and moisture changes; however, the rate of change is different for each material.

DEBUNKING POPULAR MYTHS

Concrete masonry's colors lack vibrancy compared to clay brick. Early versions faded badly, and while newer dark shades claim to be fade-proof, time will tell. Clay brick, with its rich, through-body colors, never fades. Plus, those unsightly control joints in concrete? Brick has none. Additionally, clay brick's vitrification process creates a fused, durable material. Concrete masonry relies on cement paste, which can degrade over time, leading to deterioration.



“Concrete masonry costs less than clay brick.”

“Concrete brick looks just like clay brick.”

“Concrete masonry will last as long as clay brick.”



CONCRETE MASONRY VENEER WEAKNESSES

Appearance:

- Inconsistent Color: Varies between batches, requiring special techniques to match.
- Fading: Color pigments fade over time, requiring periodic touch-ups.
- Limited Character: Precise and machine-like, lacking the handcrafted look of brick.

Maintenance:

- Difficult to Clean: Susceptible to damage from acidic cleaners.
- Prone to Staining: Requires specific cleaning methods to avoid surface erosion.

Construction:

- Control Joints & Reinforcement: Necessary to prevent cracking, adding cost.
- Precise Installation: Requires more attention and time compared to brick.
- Corner Treatment: Special techniques needed for aesthetically pleasing corners.

Overall:

- Potential for Cracking: Requires proper installation and maintenance to avoid.
- Higher Maintenance Costs: Compared to brick, necessitates specific cleaning and potential touch-ups.



**Build Smarter,
Build Stronger,
Build with Brick**



Brick: Trust the Legacy, Not the Experiment.

Can concrete truly stand the test of time like brick? Centuries-old structures stand as a testament to brick's enduring beauty and strength. Concrete masonry, a newcomer, can't boast the same legacy. Do questionable cost savings outweigh the timeless elegance and guaranteed longevity of genuine clay brick? Choose wisely, build to last

