



Achieving a Contemporary Aesthetic with Masonry

**Brick and
manufactured stone
solutions for modern
commercial designs**

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You never get a second chance to make a first impression. This is particularly true with commercial design. A well-designed façade goes a long way toward projecting a particular image that reflects a building's purpose. At the same time, a building's materials must also function well in its surrounding environment, be durable and contribute to the structure's energy efficiency.



shopping centers, health care and educational facilities, and many other commercial buildings. While red brick remains a popular choice among our customers for numerous commercial applications, we have seen a shift over the past few years toward non-traditional brick colors that continues to rapidly grow.

These colors include clean, crisp white bricks – with white mortar for a monochromatic design or dark gray mortar for a high-definition look. Additional popular brick tones include ivory, cream, pink, light taupe and sand – either for a full project or in conjunction with a darker brick or stone. Subtle, elegant light and silver grays, along with sleek pewter and steel grays, are also in high demand for modern designs. Architects are also incorporating deep, rich chestnut browns, raw, earthy charcoal grays and muted blacks into commercial projects for an impressive visual statement. Combining brick and stone in the same neutral color palette achieves an even more contemporary design.

Some of General Shale's most popular brick colors utilized by commercial designers and specifiers are our Smoke Gray Velour and Graystone Velour – both for main field brick and accent brick. Highly requested light colors include Oatmeal Velour, Diamond White and Cascade White, and we're seeing strong interest in dark colors, such as Java, Shadow Canyon and Dutch Chocolate.

Color, however, is not the only element impacting today's masonry trends. Elongated brick and stone shapes are changing the face of today's commercial projects as architects continue to seek cleaner lines and sophisticated profiles for their designs. Longer masonry sizes enable architects to bring a fresh dimension to their projects by emphasizing the linearity of a building's façade, resulting in a dramatic presentation.

We have a number of products that assist architects in achieving such an aesthetic. General Shale's line of commercial brick selections includes Norman (11 5/8"L) and Monarch (15 5/8"L) sizes. Arriscraft's commercial stone products offer a comprehensive range of building stone selections that not only replicate the aesthetics of natural stone, but also deliver modern style and long, sleek lengths (up to 31 3/8"L).

Arriscraft's elongated Contemporary Brick is popular for current building designs

Today's building professionals are faced with an overwhelming array of design choices for commercial façades, but only a few meet all of these important requirements. Masonry is one of them.

Brick and manufactured stone are two of the most robust, resilient and sustainable building resources available to architects and designers, offering unparalleled protection from the elements, long-lasting value, greater energy efficiency and less maintenance than other materials. They also afford superior design choices, exquisite natural beauty, and a stunning selection of colors and styles that provide unique aesthetic advantages.

Brick colors are no longer relegated to the red hues so commonly seen on banks,

Commercial designers are requesting highly textured materials for their projects, and the brick and manufactured stone industries continue to add more texture to product lines to meet increased demand.



and comes in random lengths. Our new Architectural Linear Series from Arriscraft introduces an elegant, extra-long (23 5/8" L) brick for the North American architectural community that rivals the popular premium products offered by European companies. This brick series features a distressed finish ideal for modern designs with rustic appeal. Both of these Arriscraft products are composed of calcium silicate, just like natural stone.

Longer, thinner masonry units are striking elements for contemporary designs. They can be laid in a singular bond pattern across the entire façade or by combining varying patterns for a stunning effect. Whether incorporating the brick with matching mortar for a monolithic effect, using contrasting mortar for visual interest, or mixing brick sizes to achieve a multi-layered pattern, wider masonry profiles offer more opportunities for architectural designers who seek to establish a distinctively modern look.

Part of what makes masonry a compelling building product is the character it provides, not only via color and shape, but through texture. Commercial designers are requesting highly textured materials for their projects, and the brick and manufactured stone industries continue to add more texture to product lines to meet increased demand.

General Shale's commercial brick has a unique rock face texture that allows architects to change from a traditional brick texture to a chiseled stone texture without changing body color. It also has the same fired-clay body, so any movement from expansion and contraction will be the same in the brick courses, despite the texture. This unique texture is less absorptive than concrete products and will



last the life of a building, with no sealing needed. Popular with customers, this stone look affords varying depths and dimensions. Combining a rock-faced brick with a smooth, velour brick on the same project provides the look of stone accents using all-clay brick.

Another popular product is distressed or tumbled brick for a weathered effect, lending a rustic, old-world appearance that is extremely effective for architects seeking to replicate a historic look or create an industrial feel for their projects. This highly sought-after characteristic is also available in our thin brick products, providing a realistic, hand-laid look that allows for the incorporation of additional architectural design elements.

One of our newer thin building stone products, Arriscraft's Coastal Series, provides a split face texture in a distinct linear style that is ideal for designers who prefer a sleek, "ashlar" look with a mortar joint. Midtown Thin

Building Stone, another newer Arriscraft thin product, also provides a split face texture in a thin stone that is reminiscent of a linear brick, available in lengths up to 23 5/8".

Today's brick and manufactured stone products afford architects an extensive and diverse selection of contemporary options for achieving stunning and distinctive commercial projects. The versatility of masonry colors, textures, profiles and sizes – combined with custom shape capabilities for bullnoses, water tables, arches, sills, corners, lintels, soffits and more – offers unlimited design possibilities, enabling architects to dress up a façade well beyond what is typically available with other building materials – and not only make a great first impression, but a lasting one. **CCR**

Industry expert Luke Guinn is General Shale's Marketing Manager. Headquartered in Johnson City, Tennessee, General Shale is the North American subsidiary of Wienerberger AG and a leading manufacturer of brick. Arriscraft is the stone products group of General Shale. For more information, visit www.generalshale.com or www.arriscraft.com.