



KEY LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

BRICK WALLS AND WALKS:

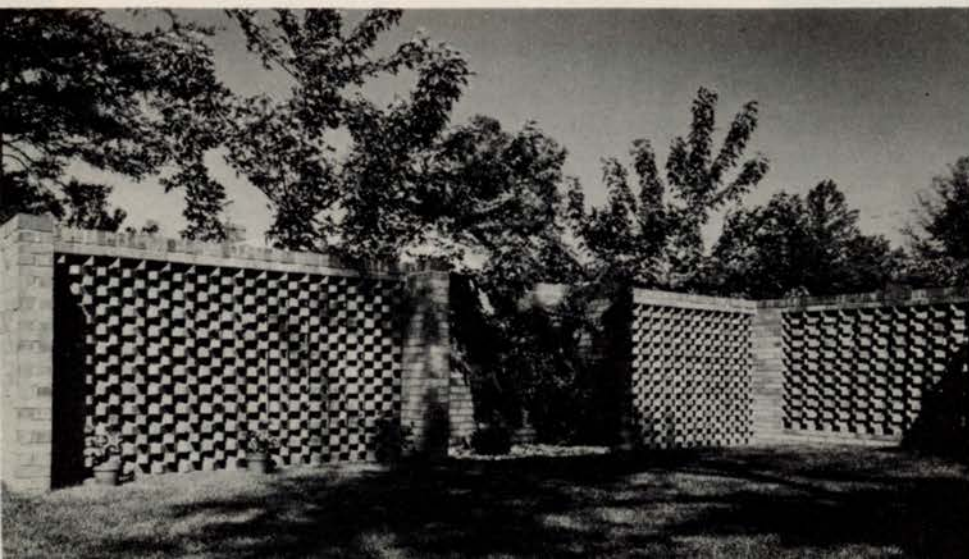
BY BRUCE F. SHANK, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The ability of one landscape contractor to perform non-plant segments of landscape installation can be a definite edge over others in competing for business. Brick masonry of walks, walls, and other landscape elements is a practical, additional service for landscape contractors. Carpentry is another service to gain a service and profit edge. Carpentry will be discussed in June *Weeds Trees & Turf*.

The obvious limitations are the scale of brickwork and union requirements on union job sites. This article is designed to show types of brickwork practical to a landscape contractor. More complicated projects would require masonry subcontracts.

The Brick Institute of America (BIA) and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) assisted us in the development of this article. BIA has a vast

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number of helpful brochures on brick masonry and works with ALCA on occasion to meet the specific informational needs of the landscape industry.

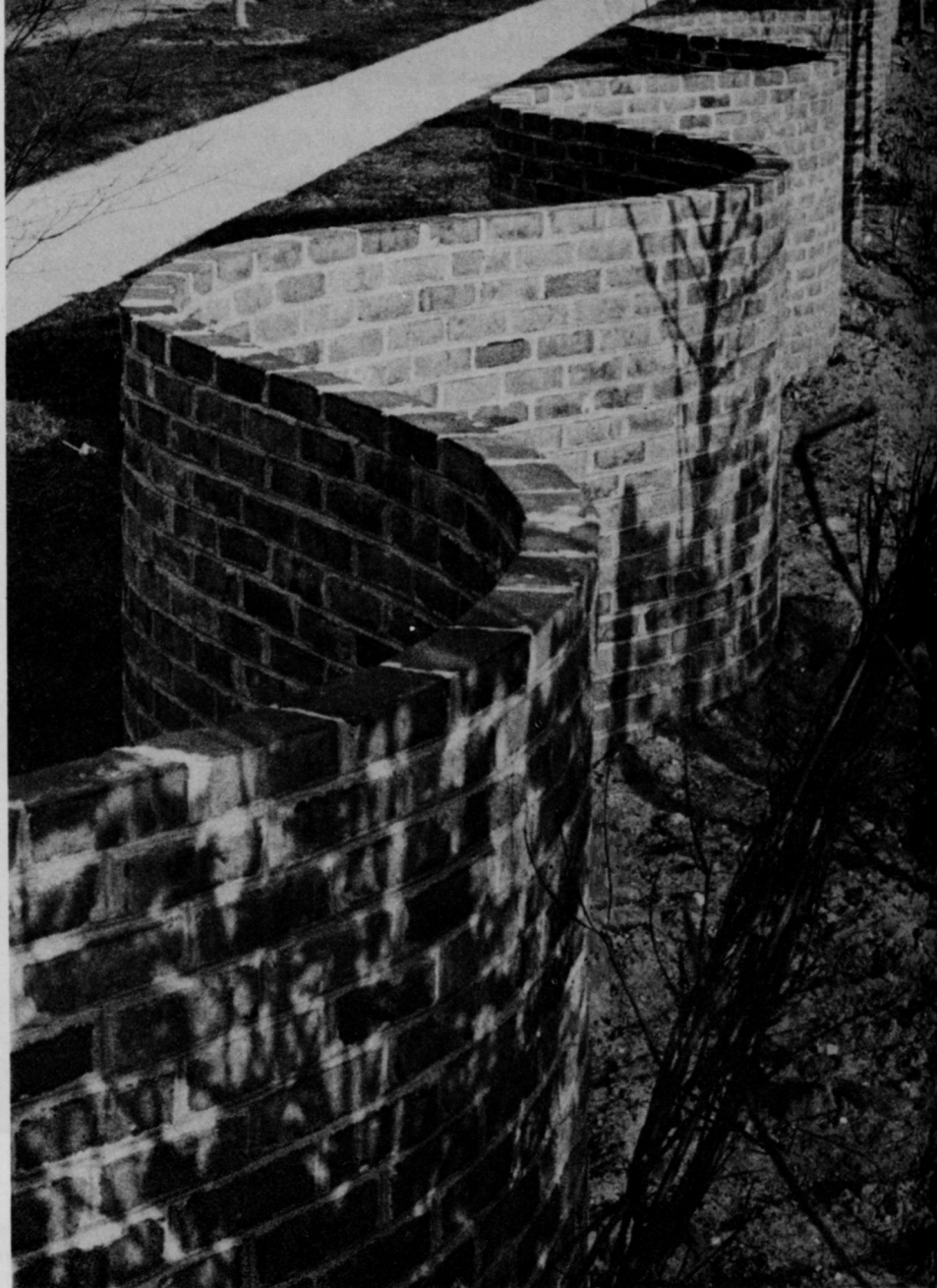
Design

Brick features must be designed for durability as well as appearance. There are a variety of patterns and types of brick providing a wide selection for landscape design. The landscape contractor should focus on simpler, classical designs and leave complicated ones for the mason. A landscape feature should not stand out in the plan, but rather blend with the plant material as one landscape. Resist the temptation of the customer to create a functionless monument and instead concentrate on the overall appearance and use of the area.

Both walks and walls are intended to guide traffic through a landscape. A creative plan will avoid straight lines and edges in favor of more natural curves, as in the bends of a brook. This immediately complicates matters due to the shape of most brick and is one reason for the popularity of molded concrete brick with landscape architects. Nevertheless, a few tricks provide the skill to use bricks for curves, ledges, and corners.

Recognize the difference between commercial and residential design. Commercial is very functional, efficient (low maintenance), and uses a smaller variety of plant material. Residential is more recreational, colorful, higher maintenance, and uses fewer numbers of elements with more variety. Residential design is more reflective of the owner than commercial.

In commercial design, the planter may have three or four plant elements. Whereas, a residential plant bed may contain ten or more types of plants. In commercial landscaping, the primary design element is the planter, whereas in residential the emphasis is on the plants. Landscape architects must lobby with the general contractor for plant considerations over structural ones. By the time the job gets to installation, the compromises (freedom to make changes) has been greatly reduced. In residential work, the selection



may be left entirely to the landscape contractor, who knows variety and color are expected.

You are not working for a masterpiece brick structure, you are working for a complete landscape, plant and structures working together to achieve a naturally striking impact.

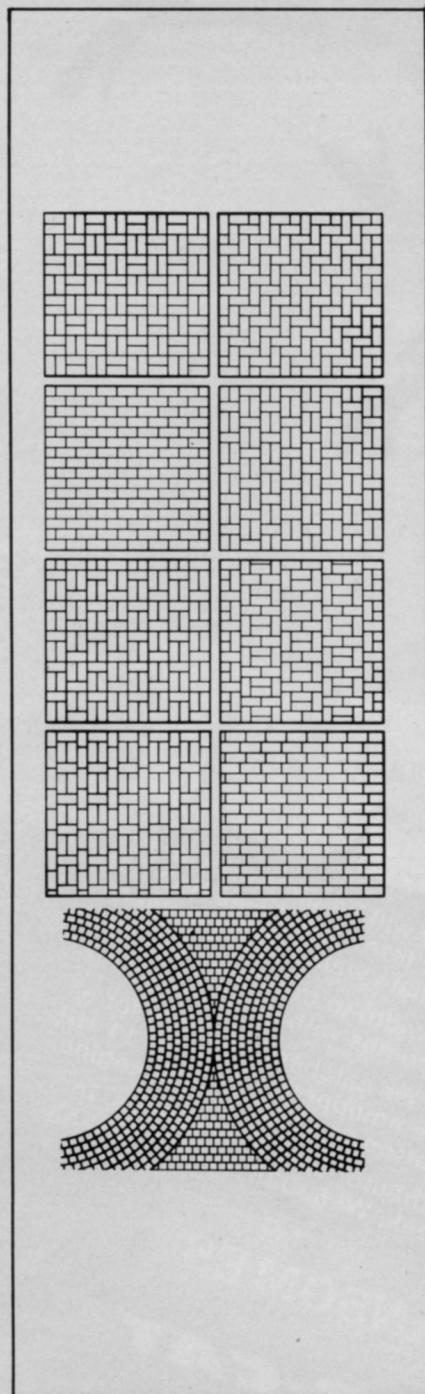
Construction

One major advantage of brick over paving, according to BIA's Charles Farley, is its ability to let water permeate the surface and drain downward. The sheer volume of runoff caused by paving becomes a problem. Letting rainfall percolate in the area it falls is preferred to collecting large volumes of water and then adding structures to handle it.

Large bricked patios should not be mortared, if possible. Sand filler allows rainfall to drain where it falls. Large expanses of brick should be broken up with tree wells, planters, or steps. These elements, along with the perimeter, hold the brick in place. Metal and wood borders are common. These are simpler than using soldier course of brick set in concrete footers and pouring curbs to contain the brick.

Large bricked areas should have provisions for drainage, at the perimeter or underneath, or both. Dig trenches in the subsoil, lay tile, and cover with gravel. Place one or two inches of sand or screenings on top of the gravel as the base for the brick. Be careful of grades to avoid

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low points which will gather water. Crown the surface or slope it away from adjacent structures.

Heaving is a common problem for mortarless brick areas. Good drainage is the best prevention for heaving by subfreezing temperatures. A slope of $\frac{1}{4}$ in. per foot is recommended. Masons will roll or tamp the base before laying brick to reduce settling.

Walls must have a solid footing, especially retaining walls. Large retaining walls and brick planters should include weep holes to pre-

vent a buildup of water behind the wall. To dramatize a wall try designs which create a textured look or curve serpent-like. Perforated walls permit air flow through the wall while still providing privacy and direction.

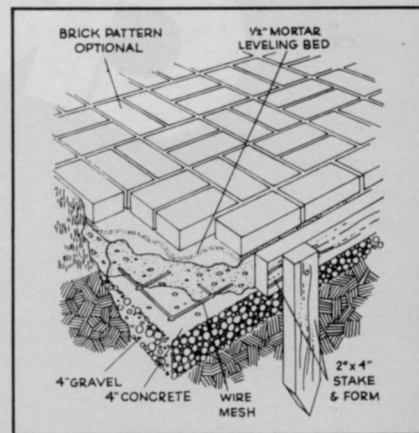
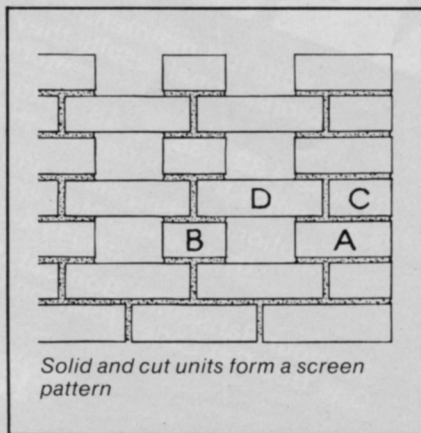
Footers should be poured a week before laying brick. They should be placed on undisturbed soil. Provision for electrical conduit should be made before pouring footers. Check with an electrician for local codes for conduit and placement of

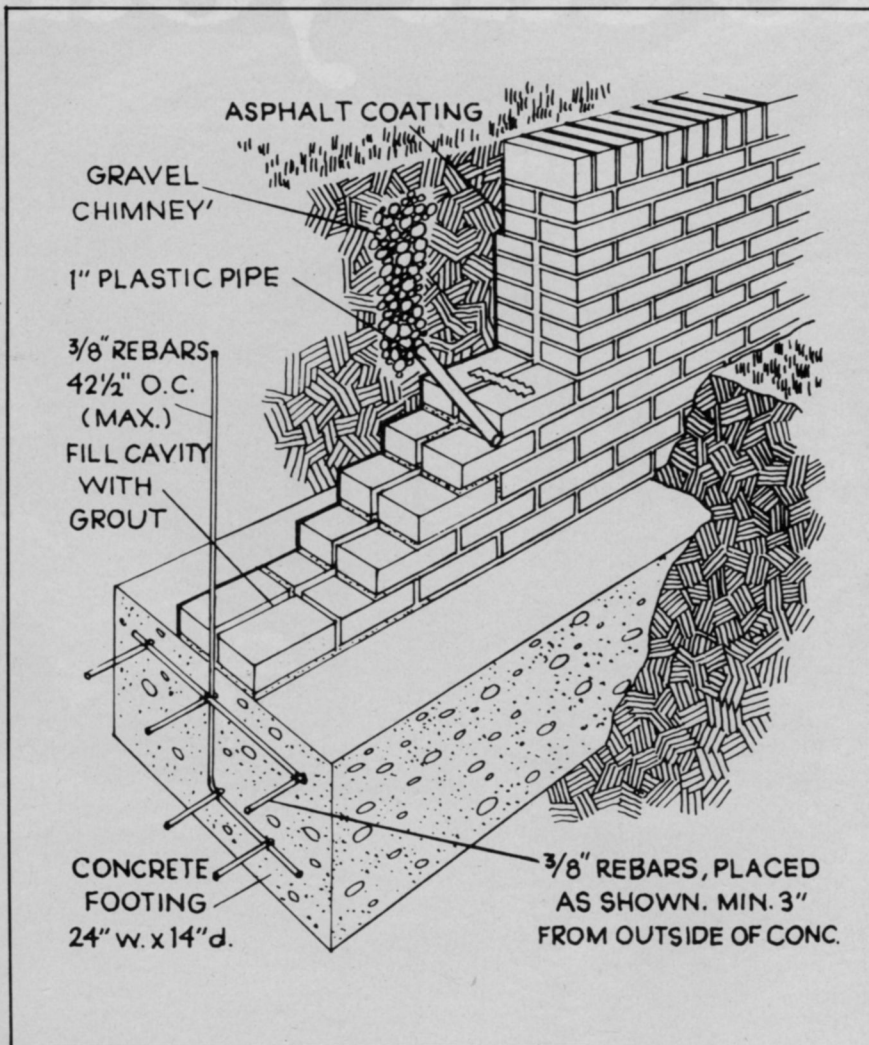
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Estimating Brick & Mortar

Walls				
Brick Size	Brick Per 100 sq. ft.		Cubic Feet of Mortar Per 1000 Brick	
	$\frac{3}{8}$ " joint	$\frac{1}{2}$ " joint	$\frac{3}{8}$ " joint	$\frac{1}{2}$ " joint
$3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$	675		8.1	
$3\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4} \times 8$	655	616	8.8	11.7

Pavements			
Brick Size	Brick Per 100 sq. ft.	Cubic Feet of Mortar Per 100 Brick (includes $\frac{1}{2}$ " bed)	
		$\frac{3}{8}$ " joint	$\frac{1}{2}$ " joint
$2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 8$	400		1.84
$2\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$	450	1.49	
$1\frac{1}{2} \times 4 \times 8$	450	No Mortar Required	





junction boxes. You may want to inset lighting fixtures in the wall, especially along walks.

Summary

Brick features need not be complicated to be attractive. A simple one-row border of brick for plant beds may be sufficient. Larger brick features may fall under local building codes. Have all the regulations down before taking on brick work.

All brick is graded for durability. Used brick may have a special look but may lack durability. If the site already has a brick feature, try to match the existing brick as closely as possible taking into consideration fading. Order extra brick to make up for mistakes and damage during construction.

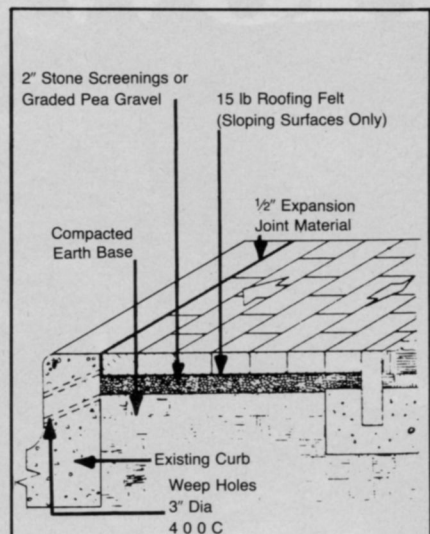
Don't practice at the customer's expense. Try out various tricks and designs before attempting to take

on a brick project. Warn customers of impractical requests, such as brick posts at the end of a driveway that may limit access if spaced too close to each other. Avoid separate projects. Try to limit brick work to fit an overall landscape plan. All brick work should be done at the same time to avoid later problems with matching brick or mortar. If the job is to be done in steps, buy and charge the customer for enough brick for the complete job.

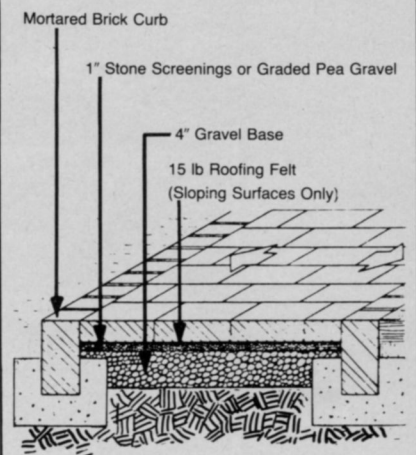
Brick landscape features, of course, may not work as well as wood features. Don't force the use of brick where wood will work as well. A split rail fence may fit the bill better than a brick wall.

Bricks are an important element of landscape planning. The landscape contractor should be familiar with all landscape elements. Masonry is one valuable tool in the contractor's kit.

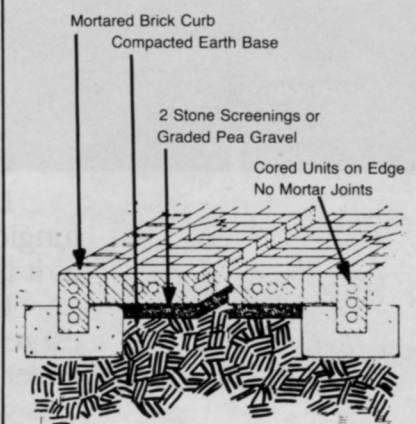
WTT



Walkway-Gravel Base



Driveway - 2 1/4" Pavers



Driveway - Cored Brick on Edge