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Building Masonry Arches

Patent-pending product helps do the job quickly and easily.

The ArchClip System, developed by Estate Products Manufacturing Group, Louisville, Ky., is a fast, simple, and inexpensive means of building a masonry arch. This approach is an alternative to the time-consuming and often frustrating conventional methods available to masons, such as constructing a wooden template or stacking broken bricks to make a crude support system.

The ArchClip system is very easy to set up, with no measuring or special tools required. Simply fasten the clips around the perimeter of the arch window frame. Depending on the size of the job, 5 to 11 clips are needed per arch. A plastic insert in each clip serves as a foolproof guide, with the bottom of the insert resting on the upper surface of the window ledge.

Fasten the clips with a nail or screw. The backing acts as a sealant to the puncture, preventing moisture from penetrating the flashing. Remove the inserts after each clip is perfectly positioned.

Feed the flexible metal ArchStrip into the mouth of the clips. Notice that there are slots on the strip which allow it to be removed with the back of a hammer. These slots should be positioned facing outward. The strip is now perfectly arched and ready to support the brick.

Create the arch using the strip as a support form. Once the arch is complete, remove the strip with the back of a regular or mason's hammer, using the pre-cut slots. The strip can then be used again. Once the strip is removed, a perfect 3/32-in. gap for caulking has been created.

An extra large commercial arch can also be constructed with no problem. Simply use two ArchStrips end-to-end by positioning clips to receive both the end of the first strip and the beginning of the second. No welding is required.

The system increases productivity, quality of the finished product, and guarantees uniform arches, regardless of how many masons are involved throughout the building process. The contractor is assured that any future window problems that may arise are not the result of the mason's work because the weight of the brick does not rest on the window when using this system.

Perhaps the greatest benefit is the significant amount of time saved in setup, which ensures minimal interruption to the bricklaying process. One mason can do the set-up in less than 5 minutes. Once completed, the only materials used are a few small metal clips.

Tom Scanlan, inventor of the ArchClip System, is president of Estate Products Manufacturing Group Inc., a manufacturer and distributor of brick veneer-related chimney and foundation products for the masonry industry. He holds a B.S. degree in Business Administration from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

