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Straight Talk

FROM THE VIRGINIA MASONRY ASSOCIATION

If Money Was No Object

Sometimes you have to take a very close look at the building materials available today to realize what is right in front of you.

If money was no object, what building material would we rush to spec as often as possible? To help decide, let's establish 10 difficult hurdles for the ideal building material to clear.

1. **Color**—It has to be available in essentially *any color*. We must have the entire palette before us.
2. **Shape**—In a word, the shape should be *infinite*. The manufacturers and installers should be able to make what we see in our mind's eye a reality!
3. **Texture**—It has to be *whatever we want*. Smooth as glass. Rough as sandpaper. And everything in between!
4. **Fireproof**—This hurdle will probably separate the men from the boys. Many building materials stretch the standards by being labeled as being fire-resistant. That's not good enough. We're talking *fire-proof*!
5. **Structural**—It has to go far beyond veneer. It must be *loadbearing*...as well as fire-proof, multi-textured, multi-shaped and multi-colored.
6. **Durable**—Wouldn't it be something if our "money was no object" building material lasted one hundred years? Or better yet, lasted one *thousand* years?
7. **Insulation**—We want a *perfect insulator*. Interior spaces would be cool in summer and warm in winter. That's a tough hurdle to clear but this is just a hypothetical exercise...right?
8. **Availability**—When we need it...it has to be there. We know what it's like to have to wait six months for something to be manufactured and delivered from Europe. We want it locally-made and locally-installed.
9. **Popularity**—Once we find the perfect material, we don't want to do a song-and-dance to persuade the owners and their customers. They have to like it and be happy that we selected it.
10. **Family resemblance**—Will this material *fit into the community*? Will it be harmonious with commercial and residential? Will it blend in?

Sometimes the answers you seek are right in front of you!



Masonry is the finest building material in the world.

Yet, knowing who you are working with is important. Why not work with a company who has made a significant commitment to improve industry practices and education? Thanks to our quality membership, VMA has become the largest all-masonry association in the state.

If the name of a particular contractor, distributor, manufacturer or supplier does not appear here, please contact the VMA headquarters at (804) 377-2080. It may be that they have been qualified for VMA membership since this letter was published. Thank you very much.

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