

Tru-Brix System: The Perfect Solution for Rooftop Installation with Special Shapes

Business Challenge:

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute had recently built a one-story addition to an early 1900s campus building; the addition used Redland full-sized brick to match the structure's original brick. The addition was required to have two rooftop mechanical structures, which were initially encased in an exterior insulation system. Since the addition's rooftop was visible and accessible from the main dining hall, it was designated to be used as a cocktail reception area. From the rooftop there was a high-profile view of the campus. A paving system was installed on the rooftop, and the client requested the two mechanical structures be more aesthetically pleasing, including decorative lights and fixtures.

Using full size brick for the rooftop structures was not possible due to roof framing and structural capacity. The situation also involved varying design conditions that called for special shapes, and an alternative to thin set mortars and adhesives.

The Solution:

"We had seen standard thin brick systems on other projects that had problems with the brick popping off afterward. We were concerned that an adhered-type solution with glue or adhesives may create the same problem here," said Matt Ryan, Project Manager for Dembling + Dembling Architects. "When we discovered the Tru-Brix System and its mechanical bond, we felt comfortable in selecting it, and didn't even look at other systems. The rail system eliminates failure due to moisture behind the brick, which was the main reason for our choice. Also, the Redland Tru-Brix System assured brick color and texture compatibility with the existing masonry."

The main structure and more recent addition had used a Flemish Bond pattern which was easily reproduced with Tru-Brix for a close match. Special shapes were made for projected corner quoins.



Before



Installing the steel rails



Installing the Tru-Brix tiles



The finished project

According to Lou De Ridder of De Ridder Masonry, the project's masonry contractor, "Tru-Brix is a good product for retrofits and renovations, especially when the existing structure can't carry the load of standard brick masonry. We were pleased with how fast the thin bricks snapped into the tracks."

"We were under severe time constraints to complete the installation," said Matt Ryan, "and the entire team at Redland Brick did an outstanding job getting the material to the job site and working with the project masonry contractor on installation methods and details."