

SONIC'S DINE-IN RESTAURANT CONCEPT

WEAVERVILLE, NC



ECHELON
MASONRY

PRODUCT:
Hillcrest™ Stone

ARCHITECT:
Jimmy Mann Architects

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
QED Solutions/Trace Hawke
Construction LLC

MASONRY CONTRACTOR:
Wright Stone Work Custom Masonry

MANUFACTURER:
Adams, an Oldcastle® APG Company



THE CHALLENGE

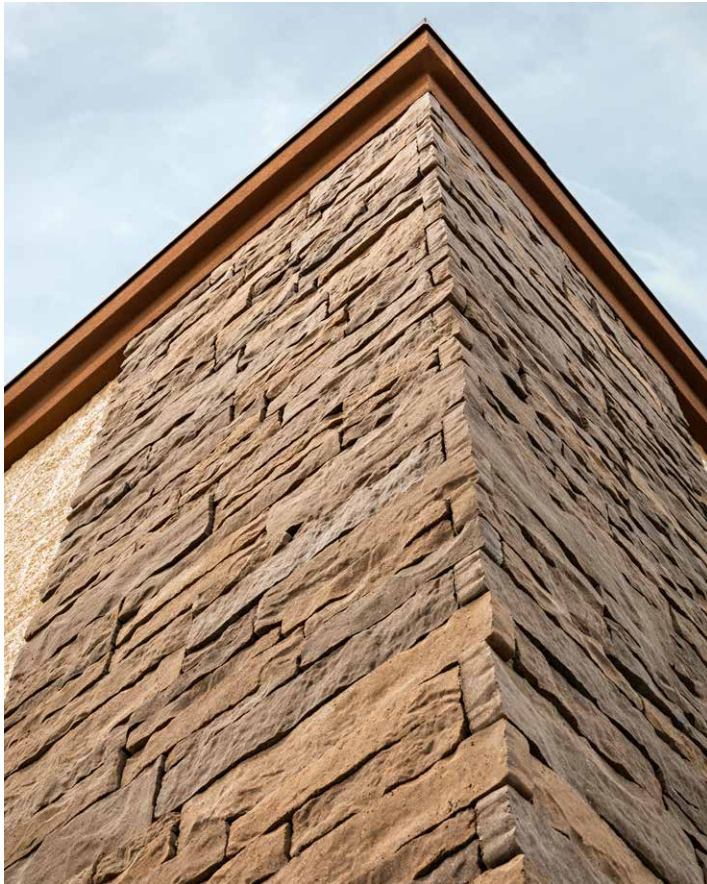
For more than 60 years, SONIC has worked to build a dominant position in the drive-in restaurant business and today operates the largest chain of its kind in America. While customers are quite familiar with the company's made-to-order signature menu items and speedy service from friendly carhops, they may not realize the behind-the-scenes technology and attention to detail the company employs bringing their product to market. This unique focus starts the moment they choose to build a new location, which is fast-tracked for completion in only five weeks. Echelon Masonry was chosen as a supplier for the construction of a new SONIC "dine-in" concept in Weaverville, North Carolina, and experienced the company's condensed timeline first-hand.

THE SOLUTION

"After taking notice of the big box companies building with masonry block, I wondered if that might be a solution for SONIC in order to meet their desire to build a stronger, yet economical building. I met with my architect and together we designed a block building that would work anywhere in the country and eliminate any structure issues." — Trace Hawke, Trace Hawke Construction

SONIC FINDS ECHELON MASONRY'S MADE-TO-ORDER CAPABILITIES PERFECT FOR NEW BUILD-OUTS

"When SONIC opens a new restaurant, they fast-track it to be completed and open for business five weeks from the time the shovel goes into the ground," stated Gary Hensley, vice president of sales, Adams Products. "It's built into their process and part of what is appealing to a franchisee—the fact that they are able to begin operating and making money in just over a month. However, it's a very tight deadline for the contractor, and they need every advantage to bring the project in on time while also meeting SONIC's stringent quality expectations."



For the Weaverville project, the co-contractors, QED Solutions / Trace Hawke Construction sought to build the restaurant out of masonry block. "Our company has partnered with SONIC to build a number of their restaurants in the past, and we traditionally used wood framing," said Trace Hawke Construction owner, Trace Hawke.

In addition to being a good structure solution, Hawke was pleasantly surprised at the additional efficiency that block brings to a fast-tracked program. With so many stub ups in various places in the floor—mechanical, cabling, conduit, plumbing, etc.—building with a steel or wood stud wall leaves little to no room for error in placement. With block's modular design, the contractor can place a footer, then lay the first course of block, then start pulling measurements. The floor doesn't

have to be poured like it does with a stud wall to start the building, so the mechanical contractor, plumber and electrician can all begin working at the same time, and allow installation of the underground conduit while the walls are going up on the building. Once completed, the floor can be poured.

"With the split face block, I can do my veneer and structure all in one step and also perform all of my subcontracting work," explained Hawke. "In addition to the speed at which we can build, the block building offers additional benefits to the restaurant such as fire resistance and moisture prevention. SONIC employees power-wash the floors each night and the seal on the block provides an excellent barrier against that water."

In addition to the block, Echelon supplied the Hillcrest™ Stone Thin Veneer as well as the mortar, wire and damp proofing. Rather than a smooth CMU, Echelon offered SONIC a block with a unique, course texture that gives the building additional aesthetic character. Ultimately, this SONIC franchise will operate out of a sustainable and very low-maintenance building that is also an extremely attractive showcase of the company's brand, which is very important in the competitive restaurant industry.

Hawke also noted that the service from Echelon Masonry was exemplary. "Our Adams reps were great to work with," he said. "We had no issues on the materials, it's a great product and we received good service from start to finish." Hawke plans on using this system on additional SONIC restaurants he is constructing throughout the country.

