

COVER-UP JOB

Paul Deffenbaugh, Construction Editor

Joseph Matta, of Matta Custom Contracting Company in Goshen, N.Y., was faced with two unsightly 4-inch steel columns on the exterior of the 1908 mercantile building he was converting to a kitchen and bath showroom. "The proportions were all out of whack," he says. "The columns were far too thin and tall; they weren't architecturally significant enough."

Beyond the aesthetic dissatisfaction was the fact that lowering the entranceway ceiling hid the decorative caps, and boxing around duct work had buried the bases. What architec-

tural grace had been there was lost by the remodel.

Matta was stumped. Then one day his plumber began replacing an old clay drain tile in the back of the building that had been broken during the remodel. Matta saw the cut-off end of a plastic sewer pipe sitting in the back of the plumber's truck and the light bulbs flashed.

The female end of the pipe provided the perfect detail for the base of the column, and fitting it was no problem. He just ran the pipe through his table saw, ripping one side, and pried it open. The whole assembly slipped easily around the existing column. He refastened the pipe with the manufacturer's recommended glue, toenailed it into place, and ran a bead of caulk top and bottom to keep the elements out. He faced the seam backwards, and it was further hidden by primer and paint.

For the top detail, Matta found plastic tubing at the hardware store and wrapped two different sizes around the pipe. Construction adhesive combined with a couple of screws held them in place. Again he turned the seams to the back.

As an added architectural touch, he placed a mate to each column, giving more significance to the entrance. In one of the hollow pipes, the crew created a kind of time capsule including such items as that day's *New York Times* and local paper, literature about the company, and the names of people who had worked on the building.

What brainstorm did you have that solved a tricky construction problem? Send your idea to "Trade Secrets," REMODELING Magazine, 655 15th St., N.W., Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20005. Or call Paul Deffenbaugh at (202)737-0717. Fax: (202)737-2439.

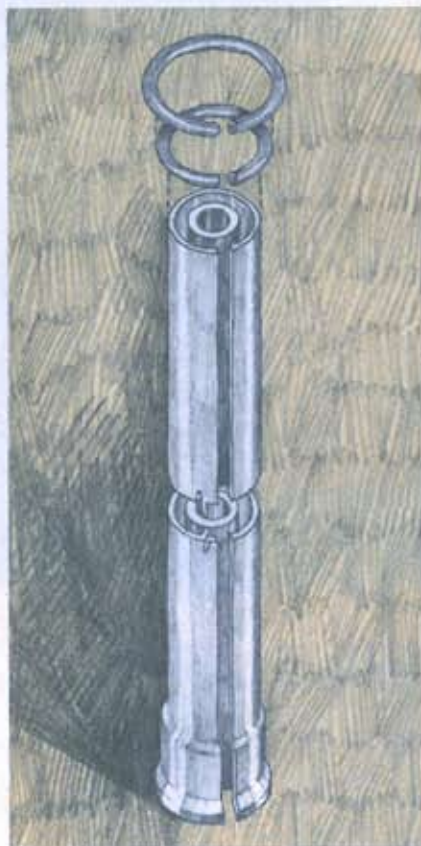


ILLUSTRATION BY RICK VITULLO, OAK LEAF STUDIO

