



Winter 2025



Profiles in Architecture

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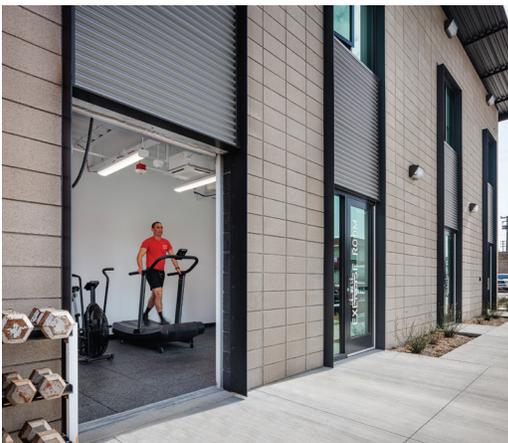
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BLOCK PRODUCER:
Angelus Block Company, Inc.
OWNER:
City of Santa Monica
PHOTOGRAPHY:
Chipper Hatter

Santa Monica City Yards Fire Training Facility

Santa Monica, California

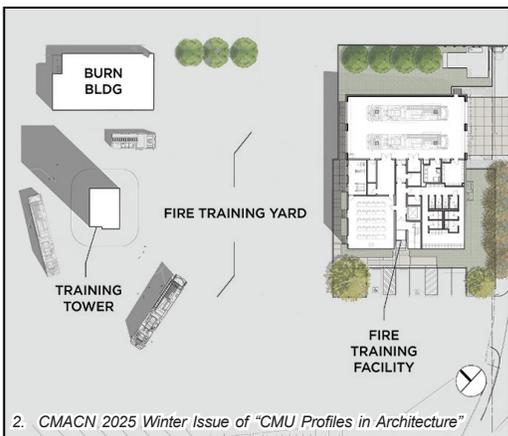


ARCHITECT'S COMMENTARY: Nestled amidst Santa Monica's urban fabric, the Santa Monica Fire Training Facility (FIRE) stands as a vital addition to the city's infrastructure, echoing the transformative spirit of the Santa Monica City Yards. This two-story structure boasts a double-height apparatus bay supporting the daily endeavors of four dedicated staff members and the cycles of fire trainees. The facility features realistic simulation environments, including a burn tower and burn building, enabling firefighters to practice and hone their skills in a controlled and safe setting.

Within its walls, the facility houses essential amenities, including a training room, exercise area, locker rooms, and storage on the ground floor, with administrative offices above, ensuring seamless operations and coordination. This state-of-the-art facility not only provides comprehensive education and hands-on experience for the firefighters but also integrates seamlessly into the community, supporting both the public and the city's first responders.

WHY MASONRY? The FIRE building shares a similar form and material palette with the FLEET and ADMIN buildings, featuring concrete masonry units (CMUs), exposed steel structure, shed roofs, extensive glazing, insulated side panels, and coiling doors. Large openings under generous roof overhangs are framed by CMU columns in stack bond, elevating the utilitarian design. White burnished block is contrasted by precision block which is either unpainted or painted black on feature exterior walls and white on the interiors.

Reflecting on the City Yards' evolution from a clay mine to a hub of critical services, the FIRE building rises as a symbol of progress and safety. The design-build team navigated a modest budget and an expedited schedule, ensuring construction began concurrently with Phase 2 of the City Yards Modernization Project. The careful positioning and architectural language create a harmonious relationship between the City Yards, the FIRE building, and the FLEET building north elevations.



Longfellow K-8 Modernization & New Construction

San Diego, California



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MASONRY CONTRACTOR:
Haxton Masonry, Inc.

BLOCK PRODUCER:
ORCO Block & Hardscape

OWNER:
San Diego Unified
School District

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RMA Architectural Photographers



ARCHITECT'S COMMENTARY: The vision of Longfellow K8 Spanish Immersion Magnet School is to improve student achievement in Spanish and in English by improving teaching in a powerful community of learners. Initiated in 1977, the continued success of this program required the need to densify the Longfellow campus from an elementary school to a K-8. The two-story classroom and surroundings serve this program with general and science classrooms, physical education support spaces, and various outdoor small group learning areas.

The campus is perched atop the diverse Bay Park neighborhood of San Diego, a mixed density low-rise urban community overlooking Mission Bay. The neighborhood scale is one and two stories, with clusters of taller structures dotting the hillside. This language influenced the scale and prominence reflected in the new two-story classroom building. New decorative fencing and gates ensure full security and single point of entry for the campus and inherits a style reminiscent of the heritage of the school and history of the neighborhood.

WHY MASONRY? Longfellow K-8 was inspired by cultures, communities, textures, colors, and patterns of language. Intense research was conducted to select a color palette and patterning that distinguishes the rich regional contribution of Spanish-speaking cultures to San Diego. Although seen throughout the campus, this is most apparent in the two-story classroom building, with its strong, bold presence and delicate detailing. Inside and out, the building features stack bond factory shotblast concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls bracketing the classroom wings, with additional textured block striations.

The project has been designed to the CHPS Verified level. The new two-story classroom building incorporates strategic building orientation and a heavily insulated south facing envelope which includes CMUs. All classrooms are fitted with floor to ceiling north facing operable insulated glazing. The corridor was pulled apart to become a wide, open-air breezeway to house smaller, breakout learning areas with exposed CMU, and to provide natural light to all classrooms.



El Modena High School Aquatic Center Orange, California



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HED

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BLOCK PRODUCER:
Angelus Block Company, Inc.

OWNER:
Orange Unified High School District

PHOTOGRAPHY:
Grace Milenkov, HED
Eric Staudenmaier

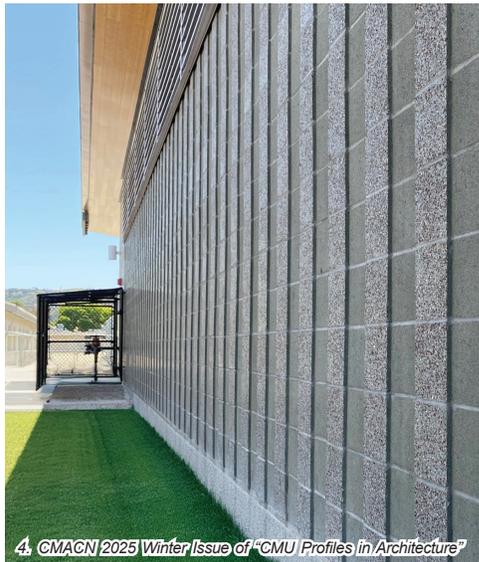


ARCHITECT'S COMMENTARY: At the new Aquatic Center, a 30-meter pool replaced the existing old pool facility on the El Modena High School campus. The building maintains connectivity to the campus with concrete masonry unit (CMU) block walls and steel-framed roof construction. During off hours, the community can utilize the pool, lockers, and restrooms, and host water sports such as swim meets and water polo tournaments. The over-the-bleacher shade canopies are placed on the perimeter of the facility's western edge at the pool deck to provide

much needed shading and comfort to event spectators.

WHY MASONRY? The decision to incorporate CMU into this project underscores the unwavering commitment to quality and longevity. These materials are engineered to withstand the test of time, resisting wear and tear caused by environmental factors such as weather fluctuations, moisture, and chemicals, which is critical for a pool project. Unlike buildings made of other materials, structures made of CMU are less prone to developing cracks and leaks, ensuring their integrity and functionality over an extended lifespan and reducing the need for frequent maintenance while providing long-term cost savings and peace of mind for project stakeholders.

Choosing CMU for pool construction aims to achieve sustainable design strategies by extending building life expectancy while increasing energy efficiency, as masonry acts as a high thermal mass that can store and slowly release heat to maintain a stable temperature in the pool house, reducing heating and cooling energy assumptions. It is also a natural resource conservation strategy that contributes locally to reducing transportation emissions and supporting local economies. CMU materials are recyclable and can be crushed and reused as aggregate for new projects. The versatility of CMU blocks allows for diverse construction methods, ensuring the creation of structures that meet unique requirements. This choice not only guarantees the safety of our facility but also instills confidence in its sustainable approach.



Solvang School District Culinary Arts Facility

Solvang, California



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MASONRY CONTRACTOR:

KMA Masonry Inc

BLOCK PRODUCER:

Air Vol Block, LLC (A Basalite
Concrete Products, LLC Company)

OWNER:

Solvang School District

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Matthew Carver

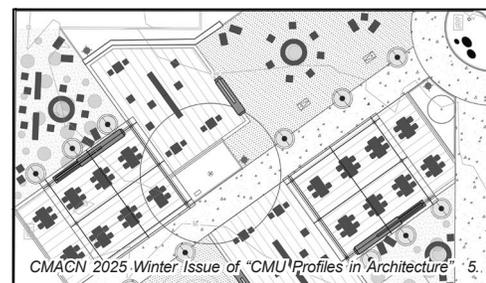


ARCHITECT'S COMMENTARY: The small coastal valley town of Solvang is known around the world for its historic Danish style architecture. The historic Solvang School campus contributes to this iconic feel. The Solvang School District wanted to play homage to this heritage and inspire students toward the future with a contextual modern design for a new campus entrance and culinary arts building. This was achieved by developing a Danish modern style building and campus entrance rooted in the existing school and community vernacular.



The design team reimagined the vernacular building forms and site configuration to create an entrance with a European plaza feel and to continue the Danish block form of the campus from the street. Internally from the campus the building completes the original campus courtyard and provides the starting point for the future master planned expansion. The design team was able to achieve a cohesive look for the campus by maintaining the high-pitched gabled roofs and dormers, unifying the roofline and overall form of the buildings. Additionally, they integrated crisp and modern details, along with site elements, resulting in a beautifully integrated and unified campus design.

WHY MASONRY? The modern details were amplified with refined materials of a silicone glazed curtain wall, bright red metal accents, stucco (to match the existing buildings), and subdued burnished concrete masonry units (CMUs), veneer, and site walls. Site flatwork integrated linear masonry pavers in a modern pattern with red accented site elements and furniture. This selection of materials was based on their versatility, ability to be customized to coordinate with existing block, subdued visual texture, and prolonged durability with low maintenance. The materials used in this project seamlessly combine the intrinsic vernacular language with the permanence of CMUs, resulting in an aesthetic appeal that is both visually striking and enduring. The project successfully blends modernity with the campus's rich history, creating a contemporary identity that pays homage to its past. It serves as a central anchor for the campus's future, and the addition is designed to be both resilient and durable. Overall, the project sets the stage for an inspiring future for the District and its student community.



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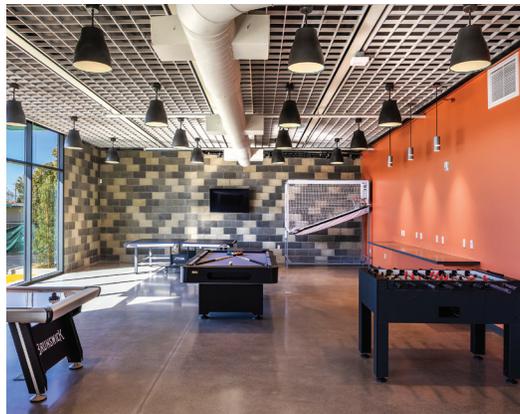
BLOCK PRODUCER:
RCP Block & Brick, Inc.

OWNER:
City of Chula Vista

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Loma Verde Community and Aquatic Center

Chula Vista, California



ARCHITECT'S COMMENTARY: This design-build project for a 25,800-square-foot Community and Aquatic Center, set in the 6.25-acre Loma Verde Park, replaced an existing, outdated facility. The Community and Aquatic Center features two pools, a sprayground, a multi-purpose gymnasium, dance rooms, crafts room, fitness room, game room, staff offices, lifeguard changing and break rooms, and changing rooms for swimmers.

WHY MASONRY? Concrete masonry units (CMUs) were the primary material used throughout the interior and exterior of both facilities. We utilized CMUs on the Loma Verde project for their many attributes, including durability, versatility, energy efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. They provide a highly durable finish, ensuring long-lasting structures that can withstand various environmental conditions and occupant uses. The variety of sizes, shapes, and colors that the blocks are produced in offer flexibility in design options. Not only do they contribute to energy efficiency and reduced heating and cooling costs, but they are also a cost-effective building material providing the ability to optimize project budgets without sacrificing design aesthetic or quality.

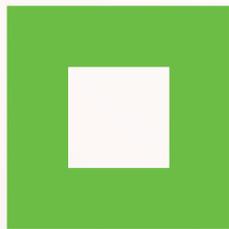
The recreation center lobby features an exposed CMU wall which serves as a structural element but were left predominantly exposed to showcase the natural beauty and durability of the material. The lobby floor includes a hand-seeded glass floor feature utilizing integral color with a sandblast finish. Concrete masonry units were also the primary exterior material throughout the balance of the building. A random running bond tri-color precision CMU was used along with precision natural colored stacked CMU walls to provide durability to the exterior. CMU block also allowed for an anti-graffiti coating to be applied to all exterior walls.



beauty and durability of the material. The lobby floor includes a hand-seeded glass floor feature utilizing integral color with a sandblast finish. Concrete masonry units were also the primary exterior material throughout the balance of the building. A random running bond tri-color precision CMU was used along with precision natural colored stacked CMU walls to provide durability to the exterior. CMU block also allowed for an anti-graffiti coating to be applied to all exterior walls.

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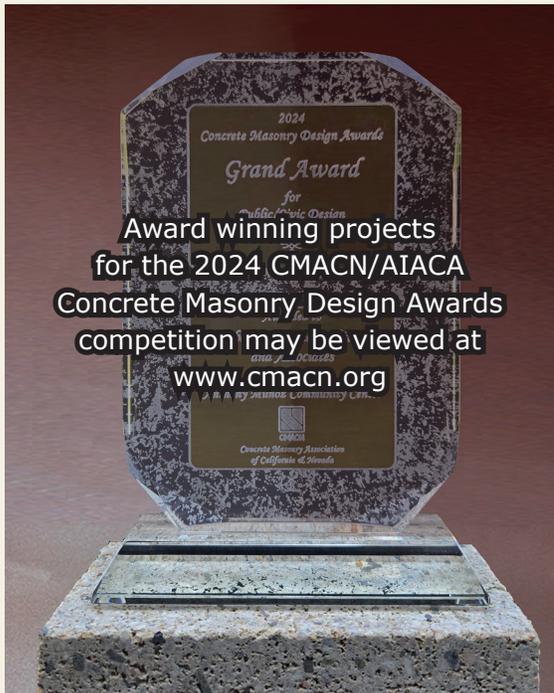
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