



CMU Profiles in Architecture

WINTER 2026 ISSUE

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Announcing the

2026 CMACN/AIACA Design Awards Competition

“Call for Entries”

Eligibility and
requests for entry
materials available at:
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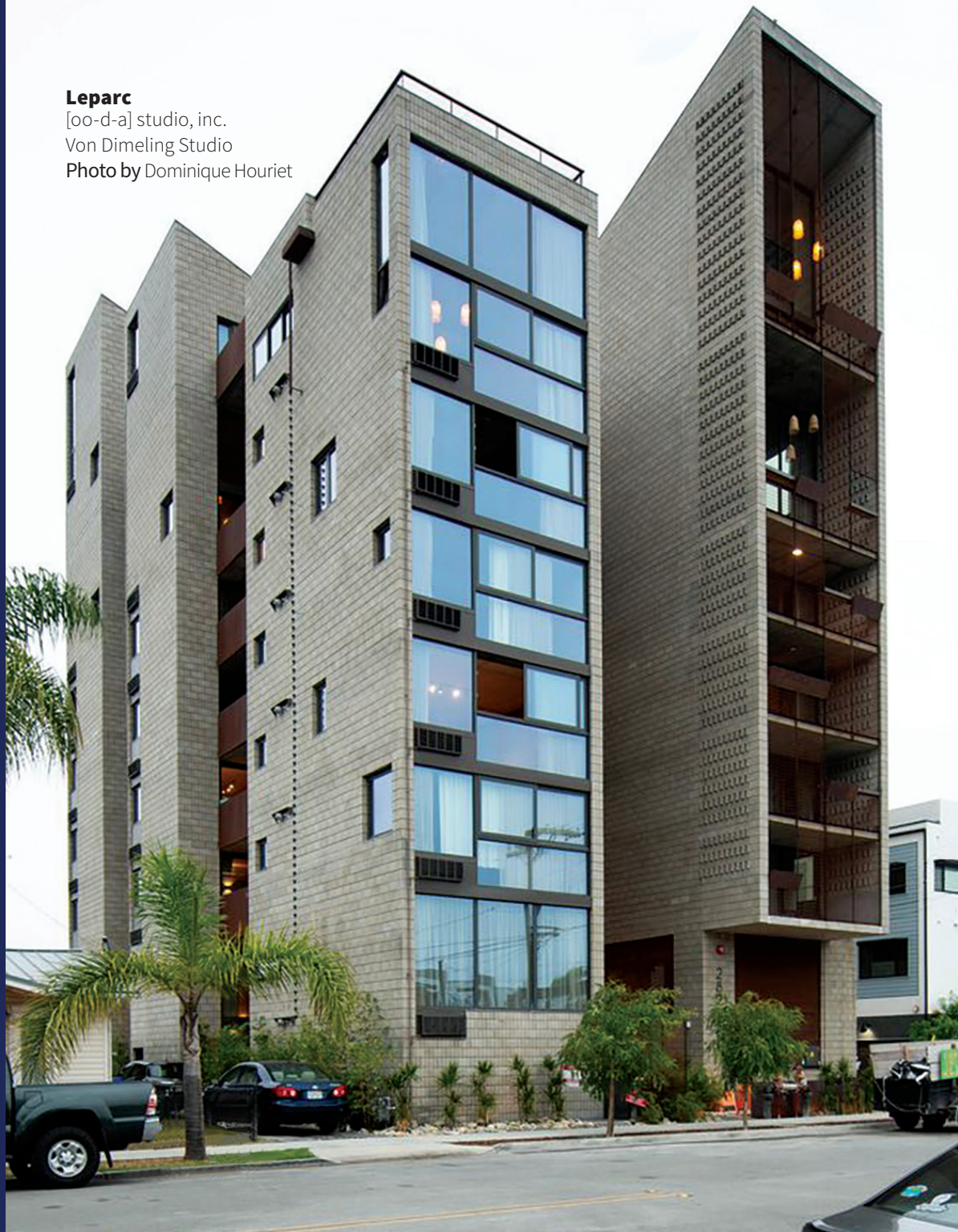


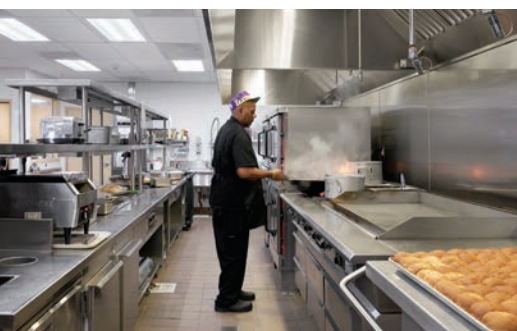
Leparc

[oo-d-a] studio, inc.

Von Dimeling Studio

Photo by Dominique Houriet





Sunny Village Care Center

ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA

Architect's Commentary:

The Sunny Village Care Center added a single-story commercial kitchen and emergency generator which sits on an interior portion of a skilled nursing facility site originally developed in the 1960s. The original kitchen and generator were part of a larger site that was sold for a housing development, thus necessitating this new building. The Sunny Village Care Center houses 99 beds, therefore requiring a kitchen and emergency generator building with ample space to provide service for all residents.

Why Masonry?

Being a purely utilitarian building that required an extremely durable design solution, it was decided to use concrete masonry unit (CMU) for the exterior walls. The existing Skilled Nursing Facility also used concrete masonry unit, so the selection was also contextual. Due to its commercial kitchen use, the building is a simple rectangle.

In order to create a building that not only served a purpose, but also enhanced its environment, it was decided to use a two-color CMU scheme and create a variegated texture in the façade by randomly stacking the units in an eccentric fashion. The resulting wall pattern provides a rich texture for the exterior space between the new kitchen and the existing Skilled Nursing Facility. The emergency electrical generator is also pleasantly concealed in a yard at the North side of the building by CMU walls matching and integrated with the kitchen building. This use of CMU for the generator yard helps with noise attenuation when the generator is operational. The building was designed and constructed to be in compliance with the requirements of the California Energy Code, including high efficiency HVAC equipment and low wattage LED lighting.

Architect:

HED
550 South Hope Street, Suite 2500
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Bruce Macpherson
Principal-in-Charge

Structural Engineer:

IMEG Corp

General Contractor:

PNG Builders

Masonry Contractor:

Majestic Masonry, Inc.

Block Producer:

Angelus Block Company, Inc.

Owner:

Network Medical Management/Apollo
Medical Holdings, Inc.

©Photography:

Eric Staudenmaier Photography



La Cañada High School Aquatics Center

LA CAÑADA FLINTRIDGE, CALIFORNIA

Architect's Commentary:

The La Cañada High School Aquatics Center serves as the centerpiece of a multisport athletic complex supporting both the District's junior and senior high schools as well as the broader La Cañada Flintridge community. As a year-round public facility funded through public funds, the project required a design approach grounded in efficiency, value, low maintenance, and long-term resiliency for the 5,000-square-foot facility.

The Practice design team collaborated with the District, program management, the City, and community members to shape a design vision for the new aquatics complex. This partnership guided the master planning and design of the 40-meter competition pool, support building, and spectator seating. The resulting facility incorporates an entry and check-in zone, locker rooms, coaches' offices, storage, equipment and chemical rooms, and an outdoor shower area. The project's location within active playfields required careful planning to maintain the functionality of surrounding joint-use facilities and campus operations.

Why Masonry?

As used elsewhere on campus and in adjacent facilities, concrete masonry unit (CMU) was selected for both the building's structural wall system and exposed finish, providing a high-quality, dual-purpose material. Valued for its exceptional durability and strong thermal performance—critical in this valley climate—the team was confident CMU would endure repeated exposure to water, weather, and daily physical use. Its inherent finished quality also supported rapid erection within a tight construction schedule.

Aesthetically, the manufacturer's standard white burnished block offered a smooth, non-abrasive surface with exposed aggregate, creating a natural, earth-toned appearance. With a low-sheen anti-graffiti coating, the burnished finish delivers long-term durability with minimal maintenance. Exceeding the District's performance goals, the material's insulative properties also allowed the team to eliminate most mechanical cooling, instead relying on operable doors and a clerestory ribbon of windows to naturally ventilate the interior spaces.

Architect:

Practice
135 West Green Street, Suite 200
Pasadena, CA 91105

Dennis Smith
Associate Principal

Structural Engineer:

KPFF

General Contractor:

Hamel Contracting, Inc.

Masonry Contractor:

Patterson Co Inc.

Block Producer:

ORCO Block & Hardscape

Owner:

La Cañada Unified School District

©Photography:

Ric Berrymany, Practice
Jason Sylvia, ORCO Block & Hardscape



Eastern Madera County SPCA Animal Care & Adoption Center

AHWAHNEE, CALIFORNIA

Architect's Commentary:

Established in 1990, the Eastern Madera County (EMC) SPCA Animal Care & Adoption Center is the culmination of a vision and a passion to provide care and services to local dogs and cats by offering the necessary services, love, and environment for adoption to their forever homes. In 2002, the EMC SPCA set a goal of building an Animal Care and Adoption Center in Ahwahnee for the local mountain community that strongly supported their vision and passion.

The Architect was selected by the EMC SPCA to design a state-of-the-art animal care facility that would create a warm, bright, durable, and efficient environment for the future staff and animals of the surrounding foothill communities. Madera County generously provided a 7-acre parcel in Ahwahnee for the construction of the shelter, located on an east facing slope of a mountain with expansive views of the Sierras. It was decided that this facility and site would also function as a meeting and drop-off point for larger animals in the event of an evacuation.

Why Masonry?

The exterior design was driven by the local vernacular – stone foundations, single-story buildings, and barns. The natural choice of concrete masonry unit (CMU) for the shelter provides the durability required for a facility that is cleaned daily for the health of the animals, fire resistance, and thermal mass to

moderate the hot summers and cold winters of the Sierras. Split face CMU was utilized on the exterior as a wainscot and as lintel headers, and polished CMU was used for the main exterior wall surfaces. The precision face of the CMU allowed the application of epoxy wall coatings on the interior wall for a finished, bright, and durable space.

Architect:

Alan T. Hendry, Architect
219 Copperleaf Lane
San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

Alan T. Hendry, RA
Principal-in-Charge

Structural Engineer:

Brad Young & Associates, Inc.

General Contractor:

R. Papike Construction, Inc.

Masonry Contractor:

Bricked Inc.

Block Producer:

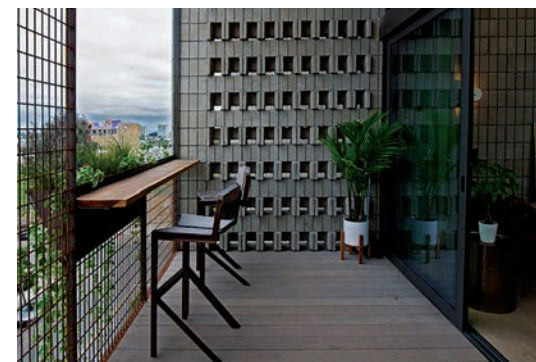
Basalite Concrete Products, LLC

Owner:

Eastern Madera County SPCA

©Photography:

Alan T. Hendry, Architect



Leparc

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Architect's Commentary:

In 2021 the City of San Diego ushered in a program called Complete Communities, offering a real opportunity for infill developers to make a meaningful contribution to the region's housing supply. Leparc was created to help with the housing crises while offering an eclectic and classy lifestyle. With Von Dimeling Studio leading the development and [oo-d-a] studio, inc. leading the design, Leparc is something truly different.

Why Masonry?

The zoning of Leparc allows for taller, more dense buildings, up to 95 feet in height ministerially, surpassing the allowable Type 3 wood framing system capped at 85 feet. Building out of concrete masonry unit (CMU) is simple compared to the sandwicheing / fireproofing required for wood framed wall assemblies. It is also easy to draw and detail, and requires less trades to build the project walls. With the natural fire hazards and insurance costs in Southern California, using CMU as a non-combustible building system was ideal and aided in reexamining how our homes and communities should be built. Developers, architects, and builders have a responsibility to recognize and address these shifts and reevaluate the approach to meet the demands of today. Through the analysis and careful selection of building materials, assemblies, and environmental systems, CMU allowed the development of Leparc to have longevity,

reduced trade costs for a type 1 building, and deliver more units, all while improving the quality of living.

Architect:

[oo-d-a] studio, inc.
2820 Polk Avenue, Unit 1
San Diego, CA 92104

Dominique Houriet
Principal-in-Charge

Associate Designer:

Von Dimeling Studio
2820 Polk Avenue, Unit 1
San Diego, CA 92104

Christian Dimeling
Principal-in-Charge

Structural Engineer:

Envision Engineering

General Contractor:

Build Solid

Masonry Contractor:

Tier 1 Masonry, Inc.

Block Producer:

RCP Block & Brick, Inc.

Owner:

Commune Parc, LLC

©Photography:

Dominique Houriet, [oo-d-a] studio, inc.



Lakewood Aquatic Center

LAKEWOOD, CALIFORNIA

Architect's Commentary:

The Lakewood High School Aquatic Center redefines athletics and campus identity through thoughtful integration of program, site, and history. On a constrained site requiring reconfiguration of softball fields, athletic courts, and portable classrooms, the project delivers a 50-meter competition pool meeting elite standards for training and competition, along with shaded bleachers, a spacious pool deck, and a welcoming public plaza. Support facilities include inclusive locker rooms, a multipurpose classroom, offices, a ticket booth, and a snack bar. Inspired by the campus' modernist heritage, the design blends contemporary yet durable materials with cohesive scale, ensuring the new buildings feel both current and contextual. The result is a vibrant, inclusive, high-performance facility for students and community alike.

Why Masonry?

Concrete masonry unit (CMU) forms the structural backbone of the aquatic center, selected for their durability, moisture resistance, and ability to withstand the demands of a pool-adjacent environment. High-impact program areas, such as locker rooms, restrooms, concessions, and equipment storage benefit from CMU long-term performance, resilience, and low maintenance requirements.

While CMU provides the primary structure, the design incorporates a complementary palette of plaster, brick veneer, precision block, exposed aggregate block, and strategically placed aluminum cladding. This approach maintains architectural continuity with the mid-century campus while enabling contemporary expression and nuanced texture across the exterior.

CMU structural capacity allowed walls to

serve as both bearing and shear elements, simplifying construction and enhancing seismic performance, an essential consideration for Southern California schools. Its thermal mass contributes to moderating indoor temperatures, supporting energy efficiency across regularly occupied spaces.

By anchoring the project in masonry, the aquatic center achieves durability, fiscal responsibility, and architectural cohesion—strengthening the campus's long-established character while meeting the modern performance demands of a high-use athletic facility.

Architect:

StudioWC
515 Encinitas Boulevard, Suite 201
Encinitas, CA 92024

Robert Webb
Executive Vice President, Principal Architect

Debra Vaughan-Cleff
President, Principal Engineer

Rebecca Peterson Ibarra
Senior Vice President, Principal Architect

Structural Engineer:

Welsh Structures, Inc.

General Contractor:

Balfour Beatty Construction

Masonry Contractor:

Cornerstone Masonry, Inc.

Block Producer:

Angelus Block Company, Inc.

Owner:

Long Beach Unified School District

©Photography:

Brett Moore, RMA Architectural Photography



Aspire Richmond Technology Academy

RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

Architect's Commentary:

The new Multipurpose Building at Richmond Technology Academy is a single-story, 18,000-square-foot addition to an existing TK-5 elementary campus serving up to 640 students. Beyond standard classrooms and administrative spaces, the facility centers on a generous, high-volume Multipurpose Room that serves as the heart of student gatherings and performances. The building employs load-bearing, fully grouted reinforced concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls paired with a two-tier clay tile roof system. The lower tier features a mansard-style roof carried by glued-laminated wood joists and steel beams across most of the plan, while the taller Multipurpose Room is crowned by a prominent hipped roof supported on open-web wood trusses. This deliberate shift in roof heights adds visual richness and clearly announces the building's primary communal space from both the campus and the street.

Why Masonry?

Reinforced CMU was chosen for its exceptional durability in a high-traffic school environment, its proven longevity, and its minimal long-term maintenance demands. The inherent strength of the masonry system freed up wall area for expansive windows and clerestory glazing—especially around the Multipurpose Room—flooding classrooms and circulation spaces with natural daylight and creating an open, welcoming atmosphere for learning. The high thermal mass of concrete masonry naturally moderates indoor temperatures, reducing peak heating and cooling loads and contributing to lower energy costs throughout the building's life cycle.

Aesthetically, the honest expression of the CMU, combined with thoughtful detailing and the rhythmic play of roof forms and windows, delivers a contemporary yet timeless presence on campus.

Ultimately, CMU construction delivers a resilient, light-filled, energy-efficient facility that will serve the students with elegance and reliability for generations to come.

Architect:

Studio Bondy Architecture
110 Linden Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Thomas Lumikko, AIA, LEED® AP
Principal-in-Charge

Structural Engineer:

Fratessa Forbes Wong Consulting Structural Engineers

General Contractor:

Kaufman Construction Inc

Masonry Contractor:

PT Masonry

Block Producer:

Calstone, an Oldcastle Company

Developer:

Campus LLC

©Photography:

Ken Gutmaker Architectural Photography



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California and Nevada**

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“Call for Entries” 2026 CMACN/AIACA Design Awards

The 2026 CMACN/AIACA Design Awards Competition “Call for Entries/Request for Entry Materials” is now available at www.cmacn.org.

2026 Design Awards Calendar of Events:

Last Day to submit entry materials
Monday, April 20, 2026

Winners Announcement
Monday, June 8, 2026

Banquet and Ceremony
Friday, September 25, 2026, Pasadena, California

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Award winning projects for the 2024 CMACN/AIACA Concrete Masonry Design Awards competition may be viewed at www.cmacn.org



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CMACN is nonprofit professional trade association established in 1977, is committed to strengthening the masonry industry in California and Nevada by:

- Providing technical information on concrete masonry for design professionals.
- Protecting and advancing the interests of the concrete masonry industry.
- Developing new and existing markets for concrete masonry products.
- Coordinating Members' efforts in solving common challenges within the masonry industry.



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