

CMU*Profiles in Architecture***COUNTRYWIDE HOME LOANS**

LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA

Countrywide Home Loans, a nationwide mortgage lender, was looking to construct a corporate facility in two phases to house over 2,000 employees. A trapezoidal shaped site in the Lancaster Industrial Park was selected for the new facility. Concrete Masonry Units (CMU's) were the main building material, because of its ease of construction, simplistic, but stylish form, texture, and colors. Allowing for multiple finishes and textures, the method of construction was uniform and consistent throughout with the use of CMU's.

Phase I was developed as a single-story 101,395 square-foot building. Structurally, the building was based on a grid pattern. At each grid line pilasters were placed at the exterior face of the building to break up the overall length and width of the building. The pilasters support a continuous wood framed, stucco finished canopy overhang, with a standing seam metal cap that blocks out direct solar radiation. At the main entry points, pilasters support a canopy, which shields the entry from the weather elements. Countrywide's logo and name are highlighted with a tiled background.

In addition to the canopy, Low-E glass was used at the storefronts, and furring with R-13 insulation was installed on the inside face of the CMU exterior walls to minimize heat loss and heat gain, since this area is a hot, arid desert climate.

The exterior walls in between the pilasters were constructed with split face CMU's. The coarse texture of these walls contrasts with the uniform textured pilasters constructed with scored face CMU's, and the smooth stucco finished canopy overhang.

Phase II was developed as a two-story 101,395 square-foot building. Again, the same grid pattern was used, as well as the pilaster layout, which supports the canopy overhang. In between the first and second floor windows, a smaller canopy with a standing seam metal roof was constructed, which tied the one-story building with the two-story building, to block out solar radiation at the first floor window areas.

BUILDING DESIGN:
Antelope Valley Engineering, Inc.
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John W. Svalbe
Project Manager

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:
 Antelope Valley Engineering, Inc.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
 Hanes & Associates

MASONRY CONTRACTOR:
 Nibbelink Masonry Construction Corporation

BLOCK PRODUCER:
 Desert Block Company, Inc.

OWNER:
 Countrywide Home Loans



Photography: Mitch Rubin, Desert Block Company, Inc.