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University of North
Carolina Hospitals
Wellness Center
at Meadowmont
Chapel Hill, NC

Architect:
Corley Redfoot Zack Inc.
Chapel Hill, NC

General Contractor:
Resolute Building
Company
Chapel Hill, NC

Masonry Contractor:
Brodie Contractors, Inc.
Raleigh, NC

BRICK

works

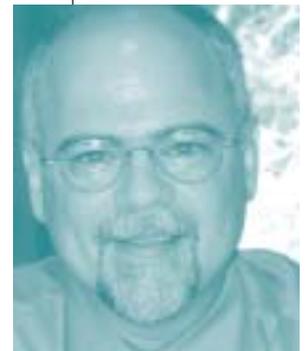


New Wellness Center In Chapel Hill Gives New Meaning To “Human Scale”

Most people envision a village as an intimate, pedestrian-friendly community composed of quaint, small shops and cottages surrounding a sprawling green. So when the architectural firm of Corley Redfoot Zack Inc. was asked to design a 52,000-square-foot Wellness Center in the middle of Meadowmont – a new, planned “village-like” community in Chapel Hill – the firm faced a significant design challenge. “We had to somehow make this massive structure more digestible to the eye,” says Mark Zack, lead designer for the project.

“Since brick allows you to play with scale, proportion, color, texture, and pattern – all in a single material – it was the ideal choice for imparting a separate character to each building element.”

Mark Zack, AIA, Corley Redfoot Zack Inc.





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“The answer was to design it to appear more like an assemblage of smaller masses rather than one large building.”

The UNC Hospitals Wellness Center at Meadowmont succeeds in creating a fun, inviting atmosphere dedicated to visitors’ overall wellness. The architectural inspiration came from an unlikely source, however. “We devised the skin of the building as a series of layers, much the way muscle and skin are layered over the skeleton of the human body,” Zack says.

The building is a playful mixture of materials, colors, and patterns – all designed to give the massive structure a human scale. The interplay of solid brick and transparent forms serves to divide the building into appropriately smaller visual masses. The glass curtainwall with aluminum mullions, along with contrasting hues of brick, allowed the design team to freely carry out the “human anatomy” metaphor.

The design team paid considerable attention to the brickwork in order to unify it with the surrounding buildings, which use red brick liberally. “The surrounding structures are of a much more vernacular style of architecture than the Wellness Center,” Zack says. “We sought to demonstrate that scale and texture are sufficient to fit a piece of architecture to its context without being tied to the same style or specific detailing. Brick provided that textural tie-in.”

Red wirecut modular brick is the predominant material, with layers of buff closure-size brick that add varying dimensions of color and texture. A full spectrum of bonding patterns were employed to lend a unique character to each brick element. For instance, the arched stairs utilize a vertical stack bond of buff soldier coursing, topped by two red sailor courses, that emphasize the stair’s role in vertical movement. Setting off the clean, modern look of the arched stairway is an ornate

panel of buff brick in a running bond, broken every sixth course with a flemish bond course using red header brick. The motif is reversed on other large panels of the building’s exterior, with red brick in running bond accented with a flemish bond featuring buff header brick.

“We found no need to use special shapes for this project,” Zack says. “Brick gave us an exponential number of sizes, patterns, colors, and orientations to play with, so we could exploit the versatility of brick at a reasonable cost. In this respect, brick is the most easily manipulated product we could have chosen.”

Opened in November 2002, the UNC Hospitals Wellness Center at Meadowmont has become an overwhelming hit with the community. Its playful design lends character, personality, and intimate scale to a facility custom-made to promote strength, health, and longevity.

THE DETAIL FILE

Take a closer look at how the Architect detailed this section.

Of course, this depiction is not to be construed as an exact detailing recommendation by the Brick Association of the Carolinas.

