

SINGLE WYTHE MASONRY CONSTRUCTION:

Partnered with Architectural Masonry, This Method of Construction Saves Both Time and Money for Developers

Simply stated, single wythe construction utilizing architectural masonry provides a finished exterior and interior surface. From a major shopping complex to a house of worship, these two very different projects earn high marks from both developers.

Looking to save time and money on your construction project while creating a distinctive look at the same time? Single wythe construction using architectural masonry is the answer.

According to the National Concrete Masonry Association, this building method has many advantages. One is the opportunity to create a distinctive architectural facade. This is accomplished with the use of integrally colored architectural concrete masonry.

Coupled with concrete masonry's superior structural integrity, thermal efficiency, fire resistance and sound transmission qualities, it's easy to see why the builders of Lakeview Pelham's First United Methodist Church chose this type of construction.

"We chose single wythe construction for budgeting, so this church turned out to be a very economical structure," says Gary Wyatt of Wyatt Construction in Birmingham.

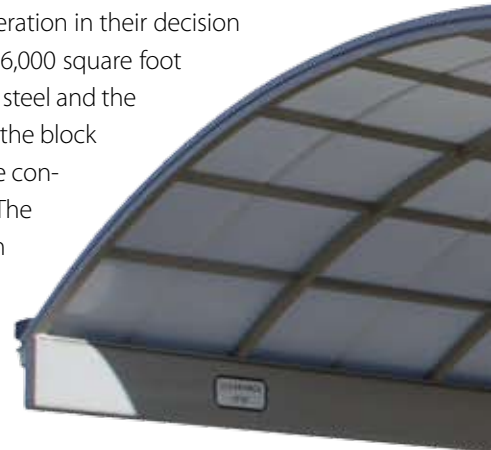
The block selected for this project is a split face unit with integral color. That eliminates the need for painting and dramatically reduces exterior maintenance costs. Two colors were used, a white and tan shade. "We did a mock up sample to show our clients exactly what it would look like and they loved it," explains Wyatt.

The integral color and the textured surface of the unit eliminate the need for a veneer, painting, or finish.

Terry Beving with Lakeview's building leadership team says cost was a big consideration in their decision on how to construct the 16,000 square foot structure. "The high cost of steel and the low maintenance factor of the block sold us on the single wythe construction," says Beving. "The block is load bearing with no steel required to hold up the roof," according to Wyatt.

In another cost saving move, the church chose a concrete floor for the sanctuary and foyer. "Everybody loves it. All we need is a buffer to keep it clean," according to Beving. "It is stained a brownish, swirl color. Expansion joints were put in and filled with grout to prevent cracking and it has held up very well. No one complains about it being cold in the winter," says Beving.

The church, located on Highway 11 in Shelby County, was completed a little over a year ago.



In East Birmingham, single wythe using architectural masonry was a major part of the construction of the new Eastwood Village Shopping Center, which replaced the old Eastwood Mall. The project, considered a major economic development for Birmingham's eastern area, includes a Wal-Mart Supercenter along with a number of additional retailers.

The 45-million dollar project was completed in late 2007 with the businesses opening in October. Project designers chose a deep red and grey color half-high architectural block which gave the facility a quality appearance. "Everyone involved in the project was very happy with the final outcome," says Mike Hopper of MAP Development, LLC.



“The City of Birmingham wanted the project to have the feel of an old warehouse district, so we chose the color half-highs primarily for their old brick look.”

Building the development as a single wythe project also provided another major advantage: speedy construction. The block was not load bearing as designed so contractors put steel up and began work on the roof while the block work was being done.

“It was a huge upgrade for the area,” says Gene Townley of Professional Masonry Incorporated. Townley says the project called for roughly 130,000 blocks and the work took about ten weeks.

“The time and ease of construction are another huge plus when it comes to single wythe architectural masonry construc-

tion. There is virtually no finishing work to do once it is up,” says Townley.

Several out parcels at Eastwood Village are also being built as single wythe projects. A new Starbuck’s coffee location at the entrance to the development features a similar design consisting of the same style of half-highs as other structures surrounding the property.

When you add up all the advantages of single wythe architectural masonry construction, it is easy to understand why it is so popular. And with masonry construction’s proven track record, it will no doubt continue to have a strong future.



The new Eastwood Village, anchored by a Super Wal-Mart, features a single wythe of architectural half-high units. Some out parcels (right) feature a similar design.

