Kalzip press release

Curved screen enhances the view

The artistic shade screen on the new Science and Humanities Building at the Sierra Canyon School in Chatsworth, CA, offers a pleasing break from the ordinary for students looking through it and for passers-by looking at it.

The curved screen, made of perforated Kalzip aluminum panels, is a key design component of the 54,000-square-foot building that includes classrooms, a library, science and laboratory facilities, and a student center. The screen encloses one side of a 350-foot outdoor passageway connecting these new facilities and providing an exciting social space for students as they move between classes. Completed in April 2008, the new three-story structure sits over a 41,000 square foot, on-grade parking garage.

Sierra Canyon is an independent coeducational school serving more than 900 students on two campuses overlooking the San Fernando Valley. The lower campus is for kindergarten through 6th grade students; the upper campus serves grades 7 through 12.

Parallax Associates, Inc., Culver City, CA, created the new master plan for the upper campus and is the architect of record for the project. Principal Craig Jameson, AIA, was the project principal and co-designer with John Masotta, the firm's other principal who served as project architect.

This state-of-the-art building was the first project on which Jameson and Masotta used Kalzip. "We were looking for a product that would make this a very contemporary elevation and discovered Kalzip at an AIA convention. We were attracted to the curved and perforated products, so we investigated further to determine if the Kalzip product would fit our expansion and contraction criteria and still be solid enough to offer protection," Jameson said.

After careful evaluation, the team chose the perforated Kalzip for several reasons. "This one product delivers several important advantages. It reflects the heat from the mostly southern exposure, it buffers the wind and provides security. It's also flexible so it could be precisely arrayed on the curve. Our only challenge was selecting the correct gauge of material," noted Jameson.

The screen is formed from Kalzip 65/400 perforated .040 aluminum material with a 6-8 pattern. Kalzip 65/305 solid .040 aluminum was used for the parapet at the top of the screen. Both materials have a metallic silver coating.

"The code requires a specific density of fabric or material to be approved for use as a guardrail. The perforated Kalzip was a good candidate because it's a consistent fabric yet you can still see through it. It met code and eliminated the need for a separate guard rail element," Jameson added. The referenced code is 2007 California Building Code, Section 1013, Guards.

Del Amo Construction Inc, Torrance, CA, was general contractor for the project. "This was the first time our company worked with Kalzip. The perforated panels were installed horizontally to create the screen," added Curt Jennings, project manager for Del Amo. Progressive Roofing, Oxnard, CA installed the panels.

According to Jameson and Jennings the patterned openings in the screen frame the fantastic views of the San Fernando Valley. For students and others using the corridor, the setting is one that encourages them to take time out to enjoy the scenery.

Functionally, the screen protects the corridor, which is on the exterior of the building that faces southeast with a stronger orientation to the south. The architects' decision to place the corridor on the exterior and shade it was based on their sustainable design approach.

"Many schools would have put the corridor inside the building and air conditioned it, which would increase energy costs. Keeping it on the exterior and shading it will provide substantial energy savings over the life of the building because the aluminum screen will reduce heat gain, " Jameson said.

The building has several sustainable features, such as onsite water filtration, operable sash windows, natural lighting, the use of renewable and recyclable materials, and decentralized air conditioning. Each room has its own air conditioning so occupants can turn the system on or off as needed, and energy won't be wasted on unoccupied rooms.

"The goal for this campus was to be a 21st century educational flagship. We're about the future and this was a good place to show it because the site is fairly open and on a hillside. A four-lane highway curves in front of it, so this dynamic element on the building has a lot of visibility. As we work on the other buildings on this campus we'll use Kalzip wherever we can to keep the design consistent," Jameson noted.

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Sierra Canyon School, Chatsworth, CA,