“Concrete masonry really is the focus and highlight of the design... this is a simple building but it works! The bold and appropriate use of color in the glazed block functions perfectly for kenneling animals and concrete masonry eliminates damage from scratching.”

—Design Awards Jury

**San Jacinto Animal Shelter**
San Jacinto, California

**Agrarian Roots for a Masonry Building**
Set in a community rapidly transitioning from farming to residential, San Jacinto Animal Shelter was built to provide shelter, pet adoption services and education, as well as veterinary medical aid in Riverside County, CA. So, in a bow to the local design aesthetic, architects at Harley Ellis Devereaux created a complex reminiscent of the area’s agrarian roots.

“Despite its humble architectural expression, the planning was actually extremely complex and required

**ARCHITECT:** Harley Ellis Devereaux, San Diego, CA

**BLOCK PRODUCER:** Trenwyth, Emigsville, PA

**MASONRY CONTRACTOR:** Ron Shoffeitt Masonry, Winchester, CA

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Studio Maha
extensive interface with the users,” said Harley Ellis Devereaux Senior Project Designer Gary Leivers, AIA, RIBA, LEED AP. “The requirement for a single level and a footprint of 37,000 ft² (3437.5 m²) suggested several independent buildings clustered around a series of outdoor spaces.” The extensive program for the San Jacinto Animal Shelter included large spaces for animal housing and holding areas, and also administration offices, along with a full veterinary surgical suite. One important criterion was to create a welcoming area and a relaxing environment that encourages visitor interaction with the animals awaiting adoption and to provide space for animal owners reuniting with their lost pets.

Multiple buildings are closely clustered on a 10-acre (4.05-hectare) site. The 14,000-ft² (1300.6-m²) main administrative building houses several key customer and animal service departments, including adoption services, administrative services, community outreach and education, field services, and animal medical services. In addition to the main structure, the receiving, kennel and maintenance/warehousing structures are integrated around a central outdoor courtyard that is nicely landscaped. The result is a campus-like complex inviting to both animals and people.

Although the buildings accommodate a wide range of functions, they share a common design theme that references the local vernacular of simple forms and economic building systems, says Leivers. The main building is constructed with concrete masonry units with a honed surface in a neutral color that matches the ground material. The loadbearing capabilities of the architectural block provide the primary structural system, and help reduce the load on the mechanical systems through the block’s inherent mass, saving energy. Low slung metal roofs, ample overhangs and covered outdoor walkways offer shaded areas to all of the campus facilities and create a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor environments.

The animal holding areas must stand up to intensive maintenance and also maintain an attractive backdrop for pet adoptions. In response, a glazed masonry unit was selected for its self-finished characteristics, available in a wide range of colors, which the designers used to create a “pixilated interpretation of the surrounding rural landscape.” Concrete masonry is the key to the campus character, said Leivers. And that character helps bring the need for better treatment of animals in a rural setting to the forefront.