Northwest Concrete Masonry Association, helping put concrete masonry to work for you.

FEATURED PROJECTS

LA Fitness
Mill Creek, WA

19th Ave Place
Everett, WA

Ridgeview Elementary
Spokane, WA

Tulalip Casino
Tulalip, WA
For their first LA Fitness club in the Seattle area the 22-year-old Irvine, California, company chose to build prominently in Mill Creek, a planned “bedroom community” of the same age, located north of Seattle. The 2005 $4.4 million building, adjacent to the new Town Center on Main Street, is the anchor structure for an intended mixed-use plaza. City planners in the thriving and affluent city of around 17,000 are focused on creating the kind of central downtown core that many such suburban cities lack. A pedestrian-friendly gathering place where urban parks, retail, and residential buildings look like they belong together – these are all elements necessary to summon a sense of community in a town center.

The City of Mill Creek had specific design criteria for the LA Fitness building to meet before they were approved as the anchor to this important development. As a substantial component of the Mill Creek Town Center, the LA Fitness facility needed to “convey a sense of permanence” according to Steve Sears, AIA, principal of Fuller Sears Architects. Sears and the design team, which included Steve Johnson, AIA, as project design principal, felt that utilizing concrete block as the primary structural material was the “appropriate response” to this need. City design review comments stipulated that “monotonous facades be avoided” in the construction of the facility. Designers responded to this requirement with variation in the colors and textures of CMU block creating visual diversity. To “break up” the large 45,000 square foot club into smaller sections aesthetically, accent block and integral color split-face CMU were used. “We sandblasted the integral color block to get the effect of a honed, surface-ground finish but at a significant cost savings,” said Sears.

Greg Gill, Director of Development at LA Fitness, said, “This was a very atypical project for LA Fitness as the building fronted Main Street in an urban setting… special attention had to be given to its design and massing to avoid the appearance of a large, monolithic building.” “We are quite pleased with the rich and varied design created by Fuller Sears,” added Gill. “Larger areas are treated as canvases with very active masonry patterns to avoid monotony and add complexity.” “We consider our Mill Creek facility to be one of our best looking clubs nationwide,” stated Gill. “For my money, it makes the most sense to build with CMU for the variety of color and creative solutions it provides.”

CREDITS
OWNER LA Fitness, Irvine, CA
ARCHITECT Fuller Sears Architects, Seattle, WA
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER VLMK Consulting Engineers, Portland, OR
GENERAL CONTRACTOR Robinson Construction Company, Hillsboro, OR
19th Avenue Place in busy south Everett is home to businesses that, to survive and thrive, need to project an image of stability, safety, and trustworthiness – an image that long-lasting, fireproof, and durable concrete masonry conveys. The core tenant, Washington Mutual Bank, shares the first floor with an ophthalmologist while a dentist and orthodontist take up the second floor.

Everett dentist Dr. Shuichi Yamaguchi had grown frustrated with the lack of easily accessible parking available to his patients – his downtown practice had outgrown its urban core location. In early 2004, Yamaguchi partnered with two other doctors, found the “perfect” lot south of the downtown core, and planning for 19th Avenue Place began. Yamaguchi chose architects Botesch, Nash & Hall, P.S. to design the two-story building and wanted concrete masonry as the main construction material.

“Concrete masonry was primarily used because the owners liked the look of a previous concrete masonry building that we designed,” said project architect Chris Thome, AIA, an associate with Botesch, Nash & Hall. “The cost and durability of concrete masonry were added benefits that were appreciated.”

The relatively short construction schedule was also a factor in choosing to build with CMU. “The design process took about two months, and once construction began in July of 2004 Gaffney was able to complete the job by December,” said Yamaguchi.

The total square footage of 19th Avenue Place is 13,640. According to Joe Gaffney, Project Manager for Gaffney Construction, general contractors for the project, “with buildings of this style and size – larger than 10,000 square feet – it is more cost effective to use CMU and steel than wood.” Not including tenant improvements to individual spaces, the project budget was $3.5 million.

The architecturally interesting details of 19th Avenue Place are highlighted with steel canopies over the many windows and a dramatic recessed entrance, as well as the various shades and types of CMU utilized in the design that was implemented by mason contractor Sterling Construction. Bearing walls of seven-score and split-face block are accented with smooth- and ground-face block in natural and khaki. Simulated, graduated columns in single-score, split-face charcoal block appear to “pop out” of the building at the corners and entryways. Each unit is accessed by attractive aggregate concrete walkways.

“The combination of different concrete masonry colors, textures, and styles gives the owners a distinctive building to market themselves to their clients,” said Thome.

**CREDITS**

**OWNER** (Primary) Dr. Shuichi Yamaguchi, Everett, WA
**ADDITIONAL OWNERS** Dr. Daryl Boekenoojen, and Dr. Roger Hall, Everett, WA
**ARCHITECT** Botesch, Nash & Hall Architects, P.S., Everett, WA
**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** Kosnik Engineering, PC, Mill Creek, WA
**GENERAL CONTRACTOR** Gaffney Construction, Inc., Everett, WA
Ridgeview Elementary Principal, Kathy Williams, must be very happy to have a desk again. Throughout the 2005-2006 school year, during construction of a new building to replace the demolished 1953 Ridgeview Elementary in north Spokane, Williams’ office was in her car as she constantly traveled between the six area schools in which Ridgeview kids were temporarily placed. For a total of three years, together with staff and community members, she had been involved with creating the plans for a new building to replace a cramped, aging school. She is thrilled with the end product.

(ALSC did a great job of making our vision a reality,” said Williams referring to ALSC Architects, project architects for the school. “We wanted a traditional, timeless design in brick with lots of fun, geometric shapes.” By using several varieties of concrete block in many different natural colors, the ALSC Architects team came up with a fanciful, multi-textured design that replicates brick.

“The community really liked the look of brick – it has the feel of permanence and is very durable,” said Dave Huotari, Principal-in-Charge of the project at ALSC. “It has been a long time since the school district has built schools using a classic burgundy brick. CMU was an economical choice for this project from a labor and material standpoint providing the color and texture of brick and the economic advantages of concrete block.” Smooth-face, ground-face, and split-face block were utilized in shades of burgundy, charcoal, khaki, and gray to create playful and multi-textured walls.

The gym and multi-purpose room were constructed with structural CMU walls. “Load-bearing masonry was used in these spaces because the more people you have in a room together at one time, the more concerned you are with surface durability, structural stability, and life safety,” said Huotari.

With 48,500 square feet of usable space on 3.68 acres, Ridgeview Elementary can accommodate 443 children in 19 classrooms. The school meets the goals of the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol by using natural light, local materials, and low and no VOC materials.

An interesting feature of the new school is the custom-cast bell from the Netherlands that, thanks to $10,000 raised by the Ridgeview community, graces a tower at the main entrance. The working bell is embossed with a new school crest that was designed by students and includes the image of an old stone castle representing a sense of stability in home and school. Ridgeview Elementary is indeed a whimsical “stone castle” of a building that generations of children will be happy to call their “home away from home.”
When contractor Mortenson-Gobin suggested designers switch mid-stream from tilt-up construction to structural concrete masonry for the $72 million Tulalip Casino, the project was under construction and the foundations had been built. The project was done as fast track and 60% of the drawings for the project were already complete according to John Moran, AIA, of Ruhl, Parr & Associates. The successful completion of the 240,000 square foot casino near Marysville was the result of a unique partnership between national general contractor Mortenson and the Tulalip Tribes tribal firm of Gobin Hauling and Excavating.

"Plans changed to concrete block because Mortenson-Gobin thought they could save a lot of time and meet the construction schedule with CMU," said Moran. “They can put it up in any kind of weather.” Not a slight factor to consider in an area with steady rainfall throughout much of the year. Mortenson-Gobin made good time and brought the project in under budget after 15 months of construction. “We needed to get the shell up quickly – using CMU gave us more flexibility on the schedule,” added Bill Kent, Project Executive with Mortenson.

The team at Ruhl, Parr & Associates made the most of the change in plans. Their design in CMU led to an architectural award from the Masonry Institute of Washington. Moving to concrete block allowed for creativity and fine aesthetic details that would not have been possible with tilt-up construction. Moran and Jerry Ruhl, AIA, another project architect, were able to incorporate a band of a traditional Tulalip basket weave pattern into the upper portion of the building’s exterior with split-face and ground-face CMU in shades of gray. “I like to work with CMU better than tilt-up – it makes visual relief more versatile,” said Moran.

The solid-grouted reinforced CMU walls were designed using the tall-slim wall strength design method according to project engineer John Headland of Shutler Consulting Engineers. High-strength, eight-inch wide block were produced for the project, which used a masonry wall design strength of 2,500 psi.

The entrance to the casino features a fountain and pond with an Orca whale and spear fishermen. A basket-weave pattern similar to the one in the walls of the building was repeated throughout pathways between the casino and the neighboring outlet malls, as well as in a large circular area surrounding the nearby 2,300 seat Tulalip Tribes Amphitheater. According to Bill Kent, “The Native American participation in the entire project was great… and the finished product is an excellent example of what can be done with masonry.”

**Tulalip Casino**

**TULALIP, WA**

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**CREDITS**

**OWNER** Tulalip Tribes, Tulalip, WA  
**ARCHITECT** Ruhl, Parr & Associates Architects, Bellevue, WA  
**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER** Shutler Consulting Engineers, Bellevue, WA  
**GENERAL CONTRACTOR** Mortenson-Gobin, Bellevue/Tulalip, WA
Lynnwood Theatre, Lynnwood, WA
Still looking good after 20 years, a Lynnwood, WA, theatre was one of the first northwest concrete masonry projects to use an integral water repellent in the CMU.

Concrete Pavers, Tulalip Amphitheater, Tulalip, WA

Submit a Concrete Masonry Project
If you know of a successful northwest project utilizing concrete masonry construction, please submit it to NWCMA for possible inclusion in future issues of this publication. To make a submission, go to www.nwcma.org and click on submit a project near the top of the right column. Please e-mail a photo of the project to info@nwcma.org.

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Northwest Concrete Masonry Association
19109 36th Avenue West, Suite 211, Lynnwood, WA 98036
425.697.5298 • www.nwcma.org

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