

A Pattern of Performance

Case Study in Brick: St. Vincent, Austin



Acme Brick
Marble Gray (PEP166)
Velour; Slate Gray
(PEP167) Smooth;
Special Mingle of
PEP166 Velour, PEP166
Smooth, PEP167
Smooth—All Modular

Best in Class Commercial
Brick Industry Association
Brick In Architecture Awards

**ACME
BRICK**
brick.com

Corner Personality

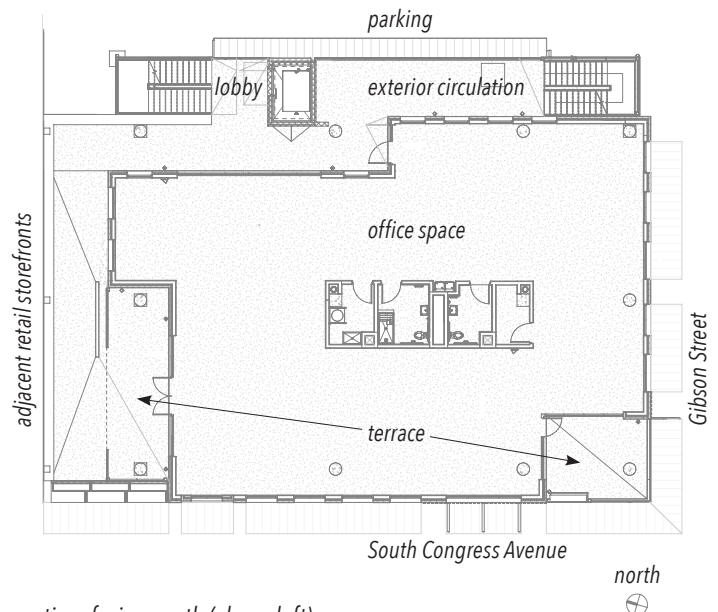
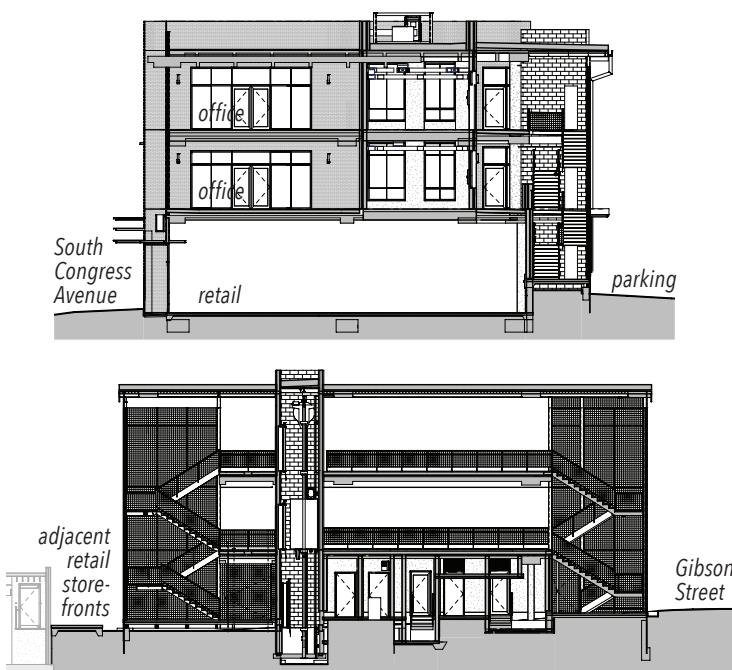
cover image: south elevation



southwest view

This mixed-use project stands on a prominent corner of Austin's storied South Congress Avenue, turning what had been a parking lot into a bustling retail and creative office space. Interaction with nature was central to the design. The two floors of office space feature operable windows positioned to provide effective natural cross ventilation. Stairs and circulation occur outdoors for regular fresh air. Meeting spaces are provided both indoors and outdoors, and all office areas are daylight.

A blend of brick shades and textures provided the right animated surface for this vibrant pedestrian district. A diagonal grid of shadow play on the most prominent corner of the building was achieved by turning brick on end to extend them from the finish wall. The knobby visual feeling created by the pattern changes through the day as the sun crosses the sky. Brick defines the project as both its predominant surface material and its readily visible image from street or sidewalk.



section, facing north (above left)
section, facing east (left) at circulation
plan, 2nd floor, office level (above)

"The St. Vincent project allowed us to transform what had been a barren thrift store parking lot on South Congress into a thriving and durable building. The new mixed-use retail and office building sits among eclectic shops and architecture, including Austin icons like the Continental Club and the Hotel San José. We designed the building to have the tenants be front and center; the building is meant to be a handsome backdrop to make each unique small business it houses 'pop.'"

"Early on, the team chose brick, as we wanted to fit in with the neighboring masonry buildings from the early 20th century. Throughout the design phase the team spent a lot of time testing different brick blends and combinations of colors and textures. We made countless dry-stacked mockups with sample piles of brick. It was a group effort, too, as the brick color was driven by conversations with our amazing client. We drew a 500-mile radius from the jobsite and looked for brick plants. We worked through several blend options and ultimately chose a gray blend color combination, which complements the natural wood and painted steel finishes on the job."

"In addition to the blends, we wanted the building to have great brick details. We designed a window inset detail to create larger punches and deeper, more distinct shadow lines. We were pleased that Acme Brick was able to produce solid bricks for the overhanging brick studs on the facade. The overhanging pattern gave us something special for the corner. Now that it's built, we have been fascinated by the very different personalities the building displays during different times of the year, as the changing sun angles cast different shadows via the overhanging bricks across the facades."

"We would not have the building we have today without mockups. Mockups collaboratively with our talented masons, contractors, and



southeast view

owners were key to the design. This is especially true when working with gray bricks, which are like chameleons, and look very different in different light and orientations. The team really enjoyed working with brick, as there are endless permutations possible within a very rigid system."

*— Jonathan Smith, AIA, LEED AP BD+C,
Associate Partner, Lake | Flato Architects*

west elevation detail, featuring turned brick, smooth and velour faces

St. Vincent Mixed Use Building Austin
architect
Lake|Flato Architects, San Antonio / Austin
general contractor
Sabre Commercial, Austin
masonry contractor
Parker Stone, Austin





west elevation; below: street view from northeast



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