



A Masterclass in Mixed Material DESIGN

Cladding Case Study:
Veterinary Regional
Orthopedic Center
Austin, Texas



*Featuring: Summit Brick, Alaskan Smooth Modular
MAC Metal Architectural, Harrywood Plus in Black Walnut
CUPACLAD® Natural Slate, 101 Random*

Street-facing north and west façades



Designed by Studio Indigo—formerly Blue Fin Design—for well-known local veterinarian Dr. David Allman, the Veterinary Regional Orthopedic Center (VROC) in North Austin is Texas' most advanced veterinary hospital dedicated exclusively to orthopedic and spinal care. The cutting-edge facility is overseen by highly-qualified, board-certified surgeons and features state-of-the-art operating rooms as well as a rehabilitation and pain management center.

The VROC's second story is also home to a 6,400 square foot educational suite that includes overnight accommodations for visiting doctors and a fully-equipped conference hall/training center for hosting advanced continuing education courses and lab workshops for veterinary professionals.

This space allows the VROC to pioneer advancements in both technical education and ongoing veterinary research, furthering the clinic's commitment to raising the standard for pet-centered orthopedic and spine care in the Central Texas area and beyond.

Modular Brickwork, With a Twist

The VROC's exterior is clad in a captivating blend of materials, with white Alaskan Smooth modular brick from Summit Brick Company—paired with locally-sourced white limestone—dominating the achromatic product palette. Staggered courses of decorative, evenly-spaced corbels cut diagonally across the building in several places, wrapping around corners and breaking up the flat façade in a subtle yet expressive manner.



Corbelling detail



"It [the corbelling] isn't anything that hasn't been done before, it's just a different way of doing it—we took common masonry elements and tried to use them in a more modern, unique way. We challenged the team to come up with a different, more modern brick design rather than leaning back into classical brick construction; we picked a cadence on an angle and pulled those bricks out $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch to give it a nice textured pattern.

During the early design stages that angle originally came from the 'V' in their logo, but in working with the masonry and the degree it just didn't work out perfectly, so some of that kind of got lost in our original language, but we still liked the idea of what we had going, and we stuck with that and came up with a different angle that flowed better."

*— Warren Ince, RA, LEED AP,
Principal Architect, Studio Indigo Design*



Corbelling detail (above left);
A simple corbel pattern helps
VROC stand out from traditional
brick construction.

Slate, Made Simple

This light-colored brick is contrasted against black CUPACLAD® 101 Random, a natural slate ventilated rainscreen cladding system from Cupa Pizarras. Fashioned from extremely durable tectonic slate, CUPACLAD® 101 Random incorporates slate of varying sizes to deliver a more dynamic, creative look that allows the stone itself to remain the main focus of the building's main entryway portal.

CUPACLAD® 101 Random
detail shot



*"Slate was very important to the owner, as they really liked the idea of leaning into the 'rock' side of 'VROC,' and CUPACLAD® fit the bill of what we were looking for. This product was actually recommended by our local Acme representative, and that input was something we valued, because, **if Acme has got a product and is representing it, it's been tested and run through the gauntlet**—they're not putting their name on or supporting anything that's not going to stand the test of time.*

As for the pattern, we took the options that were available and what was recommended by our sales representative, put the technical team on it, and ran renderings of each option. What you see at the entryway is the one that we liked the most, and it makes for a really cool signature piece as you drive up on the building."

— Warren Ince



The clinic's main entrance is clad in CUPACLAD® 101 Random black slate, providing contrast to the light-colored brick.

The CUPACLAD® 101 series features an innovative invisible fixing system specially engineered to streamline installation and reduce on-site construction times. Austin-based roofer and general contractor LOA Construction oversaw the installation of the slate and additional non-masonry claddings.

“This was our first natural slate cladding project, though we had installed composite slate materials and worked on slate roofing projects before. Our representative Liza Cruz-Iliff with Acme was very helpful in providing all the information we needed to properly estimate and teach our guys how to install this project, and the installation itself was straightforward and user-friendly.”

— Steven Sartory, Commercial Construction Director, LOA Construction



CUPACLAD® 101 Random detail shot

The Look of Wood, The Strength of Steel

MAC Metal Architectural's Harrywood Plus steel siding in Black Walnut likewise helps provide contrast to the white brick and limestone. These high-performance steel siding panels use the company's proprietary TEXTURAL paint technology to expertly replicate the look of real woodgrain without any of the material drawbacks—a key consideration for a project subject to Texas' extreme climate.

"The problem with wood in the heat of Austin or in Texas in general, is that the surface gets baked with UVs as well as the heat, so the wood wants to dry out, become brittle, or starts to cup depending on how it's installed, and then it needs maintenance, which can become costly over time.

A product like MAC Metal Harrywood Plus, on the other hand, is going to give you that timeless look forever—there's no caulking, there's no sealing of the seams, the paint is on there and comes with a 40-year warranty."

— Tony Papa, Cladding & Precast Product Specialist, Acme Brick Tile & Stone



MAC Metal Harrywood Plus
in Black Walnut detail shot





MAC Metal's Harrywood Plus in Black Walnut clads VROC's west- and south-facing façades

Studio Indigo arranged the panels vertically along the west- and south-facing walls as a way to help break up the façade and draw the eye up the building.

"We tried it in multiple orientations and we just preferred breaking up that horizontal look, as you already have a very strong horizontal with the masonry itself, and we liked the introduction of the vertical element. It also supported the tall curtain wall glazing that we had and the tall windows, which is kind of what drove us towards the vertical orientation over a horizontal orientation in the first place."

— Warren Ince

Harrywood Plus can also be found at all exterior soffit locations—most notably the attached carport—as well as the walls and soffit of the building's second story outdoor patio.

"It was a fairly simple install to learn and teach our crew how to do. It required a little more planning and attention to detail to ensure the wood grains appeared random, but the finished product was worth it."

The only location where the vertical orientation made the installation more difficult was on the west and south face of the building. The bottom of our install was 11' high and extended up to 31, but we noticed the exterior wall had some deflections that required some additional shimming in order to avoid oil canning of the panels."

— Steven Sartory

Creating Cohesion Through Mixed Materials

Balancing such a diverse collection of materials and textures—without creating a façade that clashed or appeared busy—wasn't a simple task, but Studio Indigo was up for the challenge.

"We're very happy with how the design turned out, but it wasn't something that was done overnight or thrown together in one shot. It was a lot of back and forth with analyzing materials, analyzing color palette, analyzing and working with the client and their vision...all of that through the trial and error of testing.

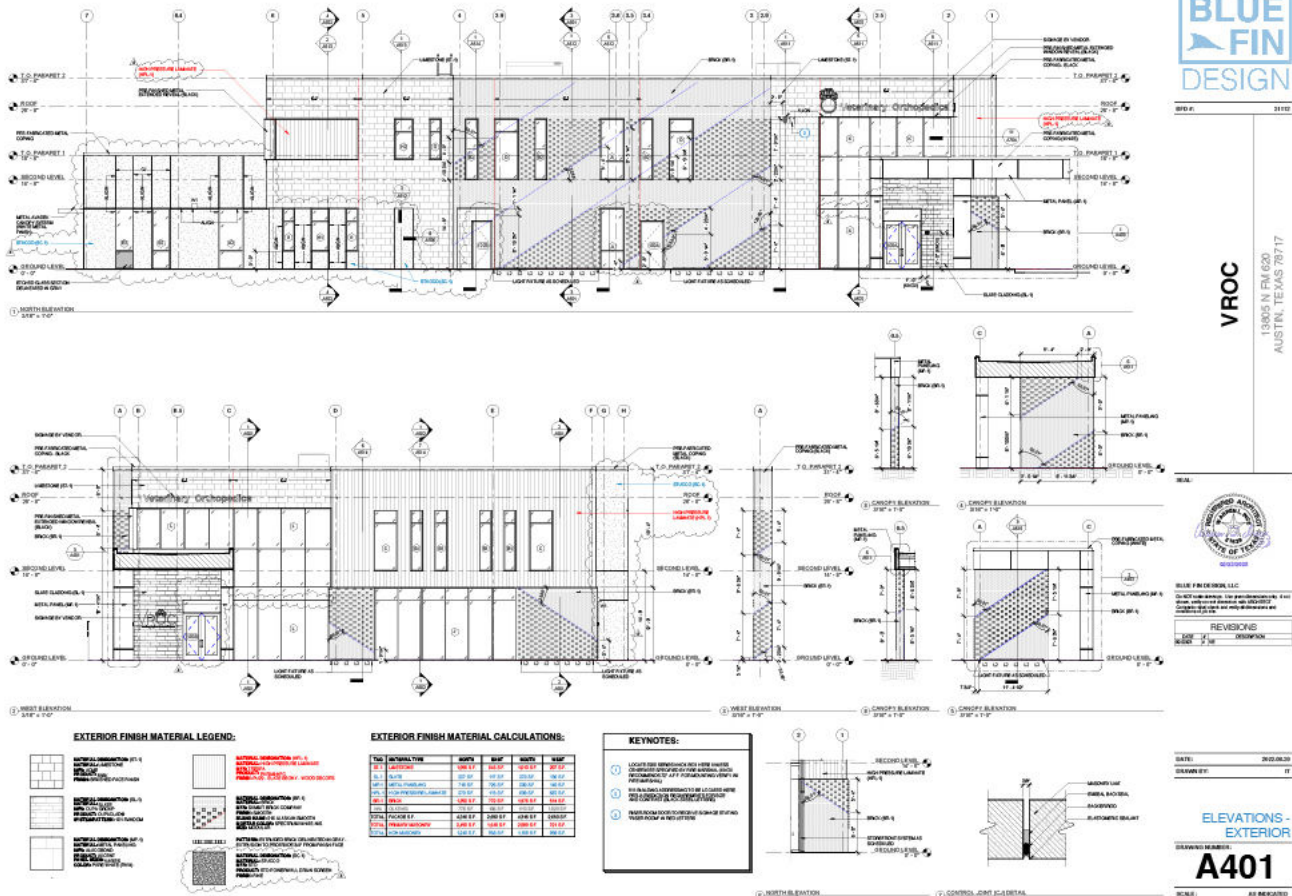
It's a process of looking at the options and then running versions until we get it to where we like it, but it was also just the thought process and the technical aspects, as we take technical documentation very seriously at Studio Indigo."

"We had to analyze how these products all tied together; things like terminations, the start and stopping of materials, is something that we really put a lot of thought into, and you'll see in a lot of areas where we added some heavy metal trims, which serve a dual purpose in that they aided us in some of the material transitions while also creating some heavier shade and shadow lines on the façade."

— Warren Ince

This fastidiousness and meticulous attention to detail paid off, culminating in a cohesive, modern exterior design that ultimately serves to reflect the kind of competence and care one can expect from inside the facility.

Architectural drawing showing cladding layout





Veterinary Regional Orthopedic Center

Architect: Studio Indigo, Austin, Texas

General Contractor: CADRE Construction, Austin, Texas

Masonry Contractor: ATX Masonry, Austin, Texas

Cladding Installer: LOA Construction, Austin, Texas

Photography: Spencer Martinez, Acme Brick; CBA Culture Marketing



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