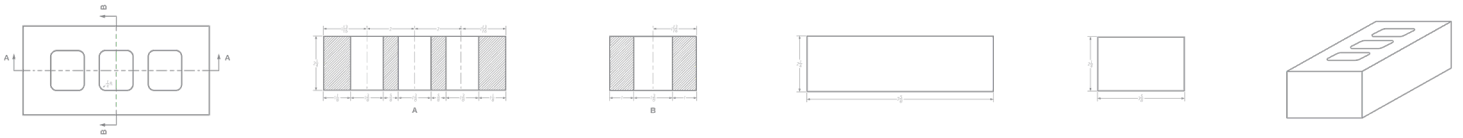


BRICK BLUEPRINT+



Lakewood's Fire Station Number 2

Eric F. Pros

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Distributor

DS Architecture maximizes client involvement, from design conception to the final stages of construction. DS Architecture encourages clients to join the design team by reviewing and approving every major milestone of the architectural process.

When we asked Eric F. Pros, Director of Design at DS Architecture, about his recent project, Lakewood's Fire Station Number 2, this is what he had to say:

Q: What was your inspiration for this project?

A: We were inspired by the history of the Lakewood Fire Department and the surrounding neighborhood. This project was a renovation and addition to an existing historic fire station in Lakewood, Ohio which is the most densely packed city in Ohio. The existing building's character was recognized and celebrated while we improvised on its character and introduced innovative new ideas to not only honor the history of the building, but also elevate its identity with some contemporary style.

The urban context of this site was an inspiration. Because land is in high demand in this city, we had to make the most of every bit of the property, while still being a good neighbor. These conditions which initially seemed like restraints were used as helpful parameters for the project and helped us make informed decisions about the building's placement, scale, massing, and rooflines.

The people that would be the end users of this facility were an inspiration. The first responders have a great deal of pride in their community and are recognized by the neighborhood as a symbol of civic pride. The long, tall façade of the apparatus bay that could have felt imposing or out of scale with the rest of the neighborhood was instead leveraged as an opportunity for public art and innovative wayfinding signage. The Flemish bond brick pattern was articulated in a way that gave the field of brick depth through a textured backdrop for a metal sculpture. The corner of the building that faces the roadway received some special brick detailing attention by rotating the stretcher units 30 degrees in a way that formed a block number 2 that is reminiscent of the fire department's insignia on their vehicles. In this way, a standard off-the-shelf masonry unit was used to create unique dramatic effects.



Q: What was the overall goal, or desired outcome, for this project?

A: The first goal of the project was to upgrade an existing fire station to suit the needs of modern firefighting and emergency medical services. The pre-existing facility did not offer appropriate space for the new fire trucks and did not have adequate bunk space for first responders. As public safety continues to evolve, the way that fire fighters performed their duties 100 years ago is very different from today. The vertical growth of the city has made it necessary to have longer ladder trucks to respond to emergencies that may occur in high rises.

A secondary goal was to give the first responders a facility that they can be proud of. In a similar way, the residents of the City of Lakewood should be proud of the buildings that represent their rich community and the diverse history of their neighborhood.

Q: Why did you choose brick for this project? How important is material to your approach?

A: There are many reasons why brick made sense for this project. There is a sense of symbology for the fire stations to be constructed of brick. Red brick is somewhat synonymous with fire stations and contributes to their iconic presence in communities. “Fireproof” buildings constructed predominantly with masonry became popular and embraced by fire departments.

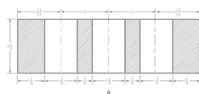
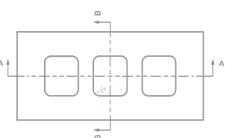
Because fire stations are public buildings that are occupied 24 hours a day and often maintained by the crew, low maintenance materials, like brick, are preferable. The long-term durability of fired clay masonry products makes them a good investment for such buildings. The longevity of this material ensures that the building will be a building that the City of Lakewood can be proud of for many years to come.

Material choices greatly impact the perception of a building by the public. As a symbol of safety and civic pride, this fire station needs to evoke a sense of stability and permanence. Glen-Gery brick effectively communicates these ideas in a way that not only fits into its historic context but suggests a long-lasting presence.

Q: What interested you most while designing this project?

A: The people that would be using this building 24 hours a day, 7 days a week are really what this project kept coming back to. Providing a sense of dignity for the first responders that keep the City of Lakewood safe are what this project is all about.

The ability to collaborate with local artist Scott Goss on his metal sculpture installation was truly an honor. The building itself is focused on many of the practical considerations for a fire department, but Scott’s “Shielded Together” installation takes the building a step further and truly pays tribute to the men and women who have dedicated their lives to service. The metal sculpture is highly visible and is lit at night so that it can be appreciated around the clock.



Q: What features of brick are most important to you? What made you choose Glen-Gery?

A: Each project is unique, and every masonry application presents opportunities for innovation. In this project, finding a brick that matched the historic color and texture was our first challenge. Thankfully, Glen-Gery’s robust catalog of clay colors and textures allowed us to have several options to consider that were very close to the original brick from 1919, and the later addition. We were fortunate enough to test several sample panels in natural light next to the existing brick to see which option would give us the best match. Our final selection was Wavetex Red Bark. This brick perfectly complements the existing brick from a century ago. Additionally, because we were using brick in some unique ways with multiple faces exposed to the exterior, finding the right texture that would receive light correctly was critical to the success of the project.

The quality that Glen-Gery provides is an additional reason for our selection. The long-term endurance of the material gives the owners of the building a particular level of comfort because masonry is known for its resilience. On the design side of the equation, the brick’s quality is an added benefit.



Q: What made this design process different from others you have worked on?

A: This project presented several challenges, and seemingly limited opportunities for innovative solutions. A collaborative design process with the client and our team helped to streamline the design process and established goals. Where our innovation came into play was in how we treated the material and the installation that made this project truly unique.

Special care was given during the design phase to enable the project to be built while the facility can serve its primary purpose of serving the community. It's not uncommon for public buildings to remain operational while a capital improvement project is underway, but this project proved to be more challenging since there was minimal extra space on site. The builders worked diligently to keep the construction from interfering with the spaces needed for the firefighters to perform their duties.

Q: How did you utilize the International Masonry Institute (IMI) for this project, and what was your experience like?

A: The IMI is an incredible resource for designers and contractors. They provide technical expertise on proper masonry detailing and installation and advice on unique designs. The Ohio Regional Director is Tom Elliott, and I owe him a great deal of gratitude for his knowledge and dedication to masonry design over the years. The IMI partners with local BAC training centers to provide hands on training for masonry apprentices and continued educational opportunities for skilled craftworkers.

Once we had developed a design, I reached out to Tom to get his feedback on our concept. We reviewed the details together and decided this project could benefit from a full-scale mockup. I generated some drawings of the brick detail that we were working on that not only showed the detail in elevation and isometrics, but also a course-by-course series of plans that allowed the craftworkers the ability to easily understand the design intent at each course. The bricklayers knew exactly which units needed to be solid or cored, and which ones were to be rotated 30 degrees. Although we shrunk the overall scale of the detail down vertically for safety reasons in the training center, the intent of the design was appreciated.

Q: What is a typical timeline for a project of this scale?

A: The scope of this project was well defined from the beginning which allowed us to streamline the process into 2 distinct phases. This scope of work also allowed the contractors to construct the project while keeping the station fully operational during construction with limited interruptions to their service. The design timeline was approximately 8 months with the construction duration taking nearly 12 months due to the unique phasing of the project and sensitivity to keeping the facility operational.

Q: Has this project won any awards?

A: The Lakewood Fire Station Number 2 was recognized in the 2022 JBC Masonry Innovation Competition through the International Masonry Institute (IMI).

