

case study: a closer look at the Children's Hospital of Michigan



Seven Glazed Products in three sizes

key players:

Architect • Harley Ellis Devereaux (HED)
Mason Contractor • Schiffer Masonry
Builder • The Christman Company
Distributor • Brick Tech Architectural

Children's Hospital of Michigan • Troy, MI

Resembling a giant toy within an existing drab commercial suburban context, the Children's Hospital of Michigan provides a welcoming environment for both children and their families while serving as a visual icon in the surrounding community. As a result, the building has become a positive influence on the planning of future projects as well as a recognizable symbol of healthcare excellence in the region.

The playful composition identifies the primary service functions and support spaces within the main three-story blue block, the two-story yellow block denotes the main entrance lobby and the single-story red block identifies the emergency entrance and associated functions. These simple moves of color, geometry and scale create a welcoming memorable image while providing a necessary visual way-finding tool for the anxious parent as they arrive with their ill child.

"We wanted a number of bright colors and textures to capture the imagination of children and Glen-Gery had the products to turn our design vision into reality. We started with the colored pencils used in the original design sketches and Glen-Gery matched the design intent perfectly. Furthermore, they were able to deliver their material to the site to meet the demanding fast track schedule and within the allocated budget." – Arthur Smith, FAIA, LEED AP BD + C, Harley Ellis Devereaux Architects (HED)

The masonry was a perfect material choice due to the variety of color, texture and scale. The blue box is comprised of only utility brick to provide color variations within a uniform texture. Conversely, the yellow entrance and red emergency boxes employ one solid color each that are comprised of norman size units with bands of custom utility units to create a variation of texture. This small scale

the brick breakdown:

86,156 brick in three sizes

Dark Blue (G14-1432A) • Blue Bonnet (G14-1433) • Forest Green (G14-1434A) • Mustard (G06-4057)
Nikki Red (G14-1339) • Orange (G14-1359) • Lime (G14-1375)



detail was intentionally incorporated to provide surprise and delight to the children patients of this facility.

From the prominent playful exterior design through the friendly and welcoming interior planning and design, a child-focused environment is created just for kids and their unique needs. Color, materiality, detailing, spacial organization and lighting reinforce the concept of creating a transformational experience for children with special medical needs that appears more suited as a big toy than a medical facility.

The use of simple color for these basic functions creates a fun memorable image not found in healthcare design while establishing a powerful branded image. Seen as an animated visual beacon at night along a mostly dark stretch of road, during the day, the glass throughout the building is a colorful composition that not only coordinates with the brick masonry but brings the interior environment to life with a kaleidoscope of color, lighting and pattern creating a vibrant healing environment that nourishes the human spirit.