Concrete Masonry Association of California and Nevada

July 2011 Awards Edition

# CMU Profiles in Architecture

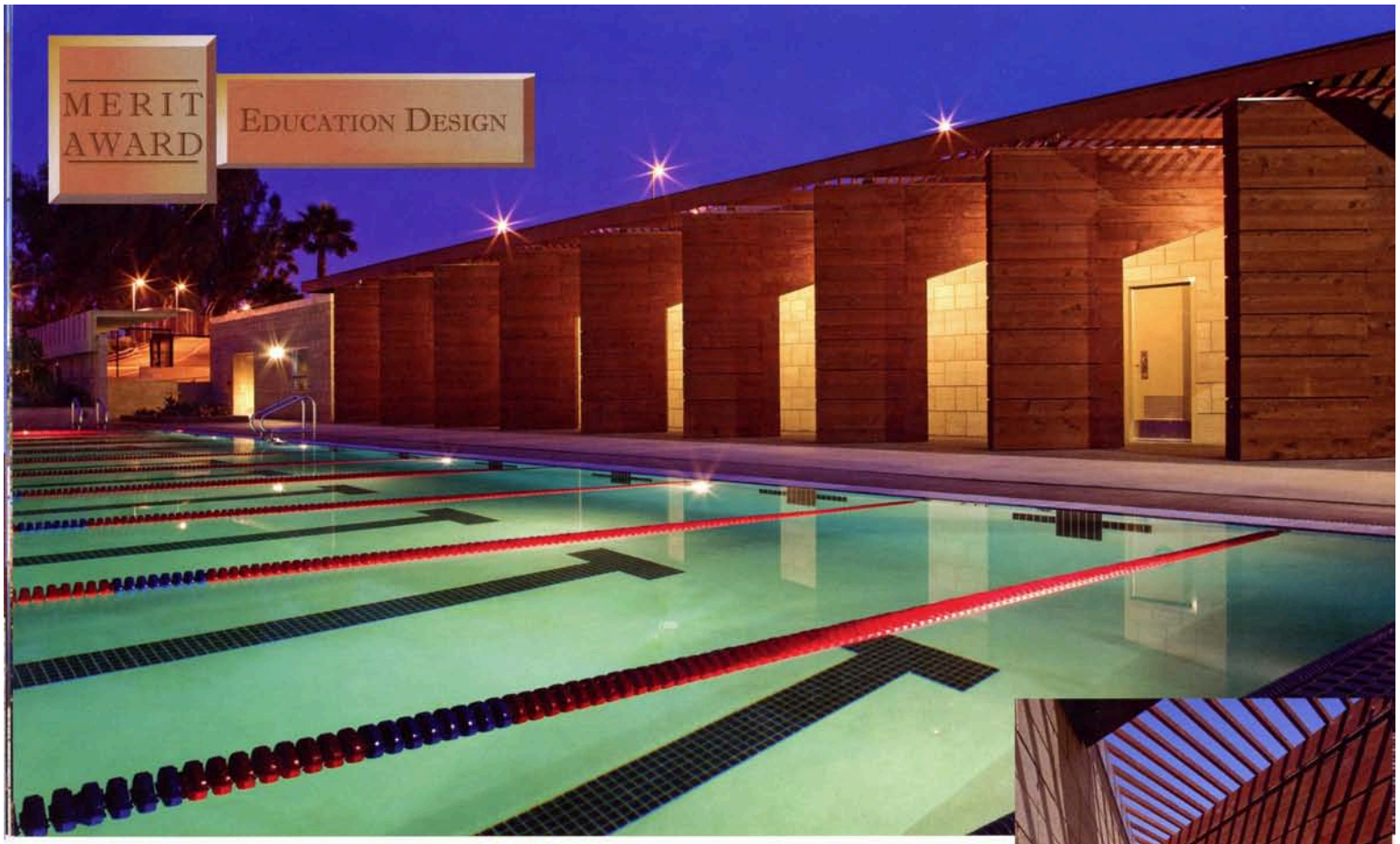

## 2011 Concrete Masonry Design Awards

Text Includes Excerpts From Each Architectural Firm's Description of the Project, and Jury Comments Delivered by Jury Chairperson, Trula H. Remson, A. I. A., LEED® AP.

The Concrete Masonry Design Awards Are Co-Sponsored by A.I.A. California Council

MERIT AWARD

EDUCATION DESIGN



# CARUSO WATT AQUATICS CENTER

**LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**

**ARCHITECT:**
**Parallax Associates**
5763 Uplander Way
Culver City, CA 90230

Craig Allen Jameson, AIA
*Principal*

John Masotta, AIA
*Principal*

**STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:**
Cefali & Associates, Inc.
**AQUATICS CONSULTANT:**
Jones & Madhavan
**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:**
Del Amo Construction
**MASONRY CONTRACTOR:**
Masonry Masters, Inc.
**BLOCK PRODUCER:**
Angelus Block Company, Inc.
**OWNER:**
Brentwood School

***Jury Comments:*** *This building was described as a "theatre for swimming," and this jury found it to be quite dramatic, indeed. The juxtaposition of the jumbo running bond block and the wood arbor-type structure above the entry colonnade must make the experience of entering this facility a truly special experience. We also found the shower structure to be particularly elegant and well-detailed. Much attention was given to the material selections, orientation and shading to reduce glare and to provide respites of shade to enhance the experience of using this aquatic center.*

***Architect's Commentary:*** Situated on Brentwood School's 27-acre campus, the Caruso Watt Aquatics Center is designed to be a "theatre for swimming." The project requirements called for a 25m x 25m swimming pool to host swim meets and water polo events served by a 5,100 square-foot facilities building that provides locker rooms, training and equipment rooms, offices for coaching staff, and mechanical rooms for pool machinery.

Careful attention was given to the selection, use, and detailing of concrete masonry units (CMUs) that would come to define the character of the aquatics center. CMU walls were selected to be used as interior and exterior walls for the need to withstand abuse from sun, water, and student athletes, while conveying high architectural quality and drama. At the exterior, the masonry units were coursed in "jumbo running bond" to form 16″x16″ modules to mimic larger stone elements and elevate the appearance of the wall.

Complementing the use of concrete masonry units is a colonnade and lattice "proscenium" through which swimmers enter and exit the pool. Clad in Alaska Yellow Cedar, the broad columns modulate between the expansive scale of the pool and starkness of the concrete masonry units, reduce glare in the pool area, and provide shade for the building entries. Throughout the day, light passes through the delicate trellis above and activates the CMU wall beyond with a performance of shadows in constant motion.

The aquatics center is located on a site with a steep hillside that had to be carved back to create the area necessary for the required program. Two parallel retaining walls with a landscaped terrace between them were introduced to accomplish this. Then, the facilities building was sited parallel to these walls in a manner designed to promote passive heating and cooling. Together, the 12-foot high retaining wall at the rear of the building, and the colonnade and trellis along the front keep over 80% of the building's surface area fully shaded. This, along with the fully grouted 8-inch thick perimeter masonry eliminates the need for air conditioning.

Further protecting the interior from heat gain is the 135-foot long array of solar panels that shade the roof system and utilize solar energy to supply a substantial portion of the pool's heating requirements. To provide proper shading for spectators and student athletes, solar orientation was carefully studied to provide effective shade canopies over the bleachers and outdoor showers.



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