



FIRST FEDERAL BANK

Metal-clad bank helps planned development build community

Building a new community from the ground up is no easy feat. Having a vision of the overall aesthetics from the beginning is an important element in assuring that community will hold together over the decades. Developers of the new 2,900-acre community of Wildlight in northeast Florida, about 20 miles north of Jacksonville, are emphasizing historic styles for buyers' homes and townhomes, but commercial establishments are getting a bit more leeway. A new Wildlight branch for First Federal Bank of Florida puts an industrial twist on basic gabled designs to create a quirky, inviting building that's highlighted with standing-seam metal panels used for both roofs and walls.

The new bank branch is sited within the community's burgeoning village center, which also includes a supermarket along with a number of restaurants and other retailers. The larger development is now in its first building phase, which is planned to include approximately 1,000 homes built on 261 acres, with an additional 350 acres of permanently preserved open space. Eventually, Wildlight is expected to incorporate up to 24,000 homes.

Designers with the Jacksonville office of Dasher Hurst Architects were given a few guidelines from the community, which included emphasizing walkability and bike-friendliness in the commercial area, according to firm principal Tom Hurst, AIA. These included siting the building close to the front property line. Elements like front porches that spur personal interactions and provide some relief from the Florida sun also are encouraged.

However, Hurst says First Federal gave his team a pretty open hand when it came to their own corporate requirements, since they didn't have their own prototype style for local branches, and were hoping for something a bit more modern than previous facilities.

“It was important to them that the architecture fit into the new neighborhood, which included other commercial buildings with a decidedly ‘industrial’ aesthetic,” he says, adding that there was a bit of tension to also ensure ‘industrial’ didn’t equate to unwelcoming. “They wanted to make sure the building felt inviting and encouraged the use of woods and other warm materials. The simple gabled form of the building fits in well with the scale of the neighborhood, while the material palette references the surrounding buildings within the commercial district.”

The most dramatic element in that palette are the standing-seam panels, which run vertically up the top half of the walls and gable ends and continue up the roof in an effort to accentuate the gabled volume, Hurst says. “We wanted the building to feel like a solid, extruded object, rather than separate walls and roof – to achieve this, we needed a material that would work equally well for both,” he says. “Standing-seam metal is one of the few materials that fit this situation. The dark color was selected to create a strong visual anchor to the building and to complement the other lighter and warmer materials.”

The architects turned to Petersen and its Snap-Clad panels in their specifications, with a total of 5,000 sq. ft. of 24-gauge panels in the company’s Graphite finish used in the project. This wasn’t a new choice for Hurst, who says he has long counted on both the durability of the company’s PAC-CLAD products and its employees’ expertise.

“We have used Petersen roofing products for years because they perform well and have all the necessary testing in place for installations in Florida, which is a very challenging environment,” he says. “We have excellent sales representation in Jacksonville. Petersen has always been very helpful when reviewing projects with us and ensuring that we have the proper products and specifications.”

With the bank now open, Hurst says it has become right at home in a community being developed on the principles of friendliness and neighborliness. “The building has been well received by both the general public and our client,” he says. “It is located at one of the main entrances to Wildlight, and we’ve been told that it helps to create an interesting and welcoming gateway to the neighborhood.”

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Petersen, a Carlisle company, manufactures PAC-CLAD architectural metal cladding systems in multiple gauges of steel and aluminum. PAC-CLAD products include hidden- and exposed-fastener wall panels, standing seam roof panels, flush- and reveal-joint wall panels, vented or solid soffit panels, perforated metal, coil and flat sheet, composite panels, column covers, plus fascia and coping. All are available in a Kynar-based 70% PVDF Fluoropon coating in 46 standard colors and 16 wood grain finishes that include a

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