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ALAN APARTMENTS

Modernist metal-clad apartments are bright standout in Stucco country

The 17-unit, townhome-style Alan Apartments project in Mesa, Ariz., quickly leased out, once construction was completed in late 2018 – but it took some doing to get its unique exterior past city planners. Building authorities initially took a dim view of the project’s proposed sharp angles and mixed materials, which stood in high contrast to the surrounding traditional beige Stucco.

“This project was made to stand out, and not look like all the boring beige houses around it – on purpose it doesn’t look like anything in the area,” says architect Tim Boyle, principal of Tim Boyle Design. “It was rejected by city staff five times because of how it looks, but we stuck to our guns until the Design Review Board gave it the highest praise.”

Metal plays a significant role in the streamlined profile of the project – known officially as The Alan. Specifically, 12,000 sq. ft. of Petersen’s 22-gauge Reveal 12-in. panels in a Weathered Zinc finish are installed as balcony canopies and unit dividers on both the front and back elevations of the development’s three buildings. The panels are angled in a way that creates a chalet-like sense of space and drama for what are actually flat-roof, box-style structures. This isn’t an uncommon approach for Boyle, who refers to his design style as “2020 Modern.” Metal has become an essential element in this updated edition of modernism.

“Sharp points are essential to the new, crisp look of 2020 Modern style, and metal is the only way to achieve this,” he says, as he explains the geometry of the panels’ slant. “The angle was determined by imagining a line from the top of the second floor to the outer edge of the roof’s overhang.”

While another metal-panel maker was initially chosen for the project, the developer, Porter Kyle Builders (also the development's installer and general contractor) eventually turned to Petersen's PAC-CLAD products, which opened its manufacturing facility in nearby Phoenix in 2017. While the ability to purchase directly from Petersen, rather than through a distributor, caught Porter Kyle's attention, the company soon recognized Petersen offered many advantages.

"When we started talking about pricing, we were actually more competitive than the other manufacturer," says Ben Wildasin, Petersen's Phoenix representative on the project. He adds that the region's designers and developers are turning increasingly to metal for their new construction and renovation efforts. "That was one of the reasons we opened the plant in Phoenix to serve the Western U.S., especially wall-panel metal. Metal is a more modern look."

In addition to providing the convenience of direct sales, Petersen also was able to keep up with the developer's aggressive construction schedule. "Lead time was a big thing," he says. "We were able to fill everything on a timely basis and keep them moving. They were extremely happy with us. They continued to get ahold of Petersen for projects."

Boyle also was pleased with the finished project – and Petersen's participation. "Price and quality of material were essential for an inexpensive project that looks phenomenal," he says, adding that he's not alone in his opinions. "Now the city uses The Alan in its promotional material. It had 10 percent higher rents than expected, was fully rented before it was even finished, and it sold at the highest price per square foot of any multifamily property in the city, ever."

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Petersen manufactures PAC-CLAD metal cladding products in multiple gauges of steel and aluminum. PAC-CLAD products include standing-seam roof panels, hidden- and exposed-fastener wall panels, flush panels, soffit panels, perforated metal, fascia and coping systems, composite panels, column covers, coil and flat sheet. All are available in full 70% PVDF finish (Kynar) in 45 standard colors that include a 30-year finish warranty. Most colors meet LEED, Energy Star and Cool Roof Rating Council certification requirements. Founded in 1965, Petersen's facilities are located in Illinois, Georgia, Texas, Maryland, Minnesota and Arizona.

For information on the complete line of Petersen metal products call 800-PAC-CLAD, visit pac-clad.com or write to info@pac-clad.com.

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