

Greater Wilmington DMV Facility

Wilmington, Delaware

Architect: Anderson Brown Higley Associates



Photo Courtesy of Greg Benson

This three-building complex is for the inspection of motor vehicles and for issuing/processing of drivers licenses and vehicle titles. It was shaped by two major forces: a strong commitment to customer friendliness by Delaware's Division of Motor Vehicles; and complex, and constantly evolving, inspection and data-handling procedures. A welcoming, flexible, and easily understood environment was needed for the 10 million plus visitors expected over the next 30 years.

The Administration Building includes a customer service desk, a large, day-lighted lobby, and twenty-two workstations. The sawtooth design of the face of the customer service workstations provides a confidential setting. Raised access floor on the staff side allows eye-level contact between seated staff and standing customers, and provides a pathway for data and power cabling.

Customer and staff circulation and support areas in the Administration Building are separate. A state-of-the-art security and card access system meets the stringent security requirements for the building.

Two inspection lane buildings are provided for safety testing and for emissions testing of cars, RVs, large trucks and school buses. The emissions lanes are designed to accommodate future dynamometers to comply with Federal Clean-Air standards. Drive-through teller lanes at the rear of the Administration Building, utilizing vacuum tubes and closed circuit television, allow customers to renew registration from their vehicles after leaving the inspection lane buildings.

The site design responded to the challenge of stacking vehicles on a restricted site, while providing spaces for Driver

MANUFACTURERS/SUPPLIERS

DIV 04: *Masonry:* Glen-Gery; *Limestone:* Vickery Stone Co.

DIV 07: *EIFS:* Dryvit; *Metal Siding & Roofing:* Centria; *Modified Bituminous:* GAF; *Skylights:* Wasco.

DIV 08: *Storefront, Curtainwall:* Vistawall; *Glass:* Old Castle Glass Group; *Special Doors:* Overhead Doors.

DIV 09: *Metal Framing:* Unimast; *Carpet:* Mannington; *Tile:* Dal-Tile; *Gypsum Board:* Georgia-Pacific.

DIV 10: *Louvers:* Construction Specialties; *Access Flooring:* Tate Access Floors.

testing, Commercial Drivers License testing and motorcycle training. Berming and landscaped areas buffer the residential edge, and large trees along the entrance drive will provide shade to drivers waiting in line.

Consistent materials and colors between the inspection lane buildings and the Administration Building give the



campus a cohesive appearance. Metal siding is used at the gable ends of the Administration Building and for the upper walls of the inspection lanes. Brick was selected for all walls up to 9 feet above grade level for its durability and warmth. Concrete-encased steel columns define a rhythm for the Administration Building, and identify the entrances to the staff areas of the inspection lanes.

The Administration Building is given a human scale by sloped roof forms, generous canopies and overhangs, and extensive storefront and curtainwall glazing. In contrast, the large doors, exposed systems, and structural steel canopy supports of the inspection lanes express the utility and "car" scale of these buildings. The inspection lanes are further differentiated to the larger scale through the use of utility-sized brick and "Super-Rib" horizontal metal siding.

In the inspection lanes, gas detectors trigger raised levels of exhaust fans and alarms when fumes build up to unsafe levels. Because the 14-foot-high bay doors are open when the facility is operating, HVAC distribution is directed to specific work areas. Fiberoptic lights in the floor illuminate the undersides of vehicles, facilitating inspections.

Lighting and fenestration design respond to the fact that the buildings operate with both daytime and evening hours. Exterior lighting includes the illumination of the south facade of the Administration Building, which provides a landmark image for customers coming into the site.

The project has been recognized by the Delaware Chapter of the American Institute of Architects 2001 Design Awards program with an 'Excellence in Architecture' award.