

Cris Quinn Fine Arts Building, Monsignor Kelly Catholic High School

Beaumont, Texas

Architect: The LaBiche Architectural Group, Inc.

In these days of tougher college entry requirements, it becomes more important that college preparatory schools like Monsignor Kelly Catholic High School to provide their students with the opportunity to participate in a fine arts curriculum that is inclusive of art, dance and music. In the case of this high school, those courses were available but were taught in temporary buildings or cramped classrooms, which were not conducive to the enhancement of the arts. The new Cris Quinn Fine Arts Building bridges that gap and provides spaces whose volumes enhance the arts taught and practiced in the spaces. The facility was designed from the inside out. The building houses an art classroom, an outdoor pottery classroom with a kiln, choral hall, dance hall, band hall, faculty offices, and restrooms.

The interiors of the building are a mosaic of colors not selected as school colors but selected to stimulate the student's creative aspirations. The architect worked with the arts instructor to design floor patterns in VCT tile that were both fun and artistic. Red, black, yellow, pistachio, and blue were woven together to create giant art canvases on the floors.

The exterior of the building is clad in metal panels, which match the schools existing metal panel building. The building is anchored at either end by planes of brick veneer that match the older sections of the adjacent school building and give a strong backdrop for the building signage. The structure of the building is three pre-engineered metal buildings with one-way slopping roofs. The envelope formed by the roofs and exterior walls conform to the required volumes of space needed for the music halls. The art classroom is



Photos Courtesy of The LaBiche Architectural Group, Inc.

housed in a smaller volume turned on a bent access, which relates to the students direction of travel from the existing school. The existing covered walkway and new building connectors encircle a courtyard at the building's entrance, which is conducive to outdoor student activities as they relate to the arts.

The art classroom houses both an interior studio and a covered exterior pottery/sculpture area enclosed by galvanized fencing to secure the pottery kiln and equipment. A lockable gate allows big pieces of art and equipment entrance to the area. The interior studio houses millwork in varying colors and textures which act as usable sculpture.

Adjacent to the art classroom is the choral hall placed so that the music generated can inspire the art created next door, a subtle connection, which seems to inspire the students. The choral hall has an eighteen-foot ceiling with both barrel vault deflectors and absorptive ceiling panels

designed to create an ideal space for music.

The dance hall sits adjacent to the choral hall and also has eighteen-foot ceilings. The rectangular room has large window openings to the north to allow natural light to filter into the room at the ceiling. The back wall of the space is mirrored to assist the dance team and cheerleaders with honing their dancing skills.

The band hall is the final component to the building. It was designed to house a 100-piece band and contains pre-manufactured instrument storage cabinets to house the band's instruments. The ceilings have diffusers similar to the choral hall, and the rear wall of the band hall is angled to support the room's acoustics. This room also contains north-facing windows illuminating the hall with a soft even natural light. The band can exit the hall onto the practice field through a rear exit.

MANUFACTURERS/SUPPLIERS

DIV 07: *Insulation:* Owens Corning; *Sealants:* Degussa Building Products; *Manufactured Roofing & Siding:* VICWEST; *Walkway Cover:* Avadek.

DIV 08: *Entrances & Storefronts:* Kawneer; *Wood & Plastic Doors:* Alinson Door.

DIV 09: *Gypsum:* American Gypsum; *Suspended Ceiling Grid:* Donn®; *Ceiling Tile:* United States Gypsum; *Paint:* Sherwin Williams; *Metal Studs:* Clark Steel Framing; *Acoustical Diffusers:* Conwed; *VCT:* Armstrong, AZROCK, Mannington; *Linoleum:* Forbo; *Base:* Roppe; *Carpet:* Pacificrest.

