A new acrylic matrix is “more appealing” than stucco while accentuating landscape.

In Bakersfield, Cal., where Kaiser Permanente recently opened its prototype medical clinic, project architects specified a polymer-based exterior insulating wall system finished with a new acrylic matrix to achieve two purposes at once—to create an outside wall surface more virtually appealing than conventional stucco, while accenting the lush landscape surrounding the new facility.

The new single-story, $4.7 million, 20,570-square-foot building is situated on five acres. Klassen Corp. of Bakersfield, provided the architectural design, which has been adopted for several other Kaiser clinics under construction in Southern California.

“We wanted something different in color and texture on the building’s outside surface” said architect Arthur Knight, whose firm is also construction manager for the other Kaiser projects.

Since both patients and staff are encouraged to use the large exercise course on the grounds, he said his firm wanted them to see something different than typical “plain” plaster walls when walking by the building.

After reviewing competitive bids, Knight and project manager Jerry Klassen, one of three brothers who own the company, selected a polymer-based exterior insulation finish system (EIFS) produced by Rhode Island-based Senergy, Inc. Its new “Aurora” matrix finish coat, with ceramic-coated stones, provided the four color variations and durability Kaiser was looking for, Knight said.

Plastering contractor Herb Shearer Plastering, Inc., which has completed other EIFS projects for Klassen in Bakersfield’s Kern County, was chosen to install the wall system. According to company vice president Herb Shearer, his six-member crew applied the standard base coat and woven fiberglass reinforcing mesh, and troweled on the integrally-colored matrix.

Then the crew used an air compressor and hopper gun to spray the colored aggregate onto the walls, soffits, and rain gutter. A protective acrylic sealer was then rolled over the aggregate.

Because Shearer’s applicators were inexperienced in applying an EIFS finish coat with a rock gun, “we were helped by Senergy’s technical staff, who climbed onto the scaffolding and showed them how to do it.” He adds that, “immediately behind the mechanic putting on the matrix was some-
one seeking the aggregate onto the wall. After we wet the wall, it went on easily. Before the matrix sets up, you’re going to have some loose aggregate. For this reason, we saturated the matrix with aggregate in order to ensure uniform coverage.” The entire 12,000-square-foot wall system was installed in only 22 days.

“...The fine beige-colored texture has a more refined look than other building materials containing aggregate,” said Knight. “And the off-white textured trim complements the glass entrance leading to the buildings interior, which is painted in solar tones.”

Bakersfield is hot and dry, and the new clinic was designed without many windows. The long, flat exterior walls are broken by two-inch wide horizontal bands spaced every two feet around the building’s perimeter.

“The combined standing-seam metal roof, bronze glazing and teal green window mullions, and salmon-colored Aurora matrix, harmonize well with the city’s commitment to lush landscaping and make the patients feel more at ease”” Knight adds.