Precision and Perfection

Were the Watchwords on Panelized EIFS Project for High-Tech Manufacturer

Building #20 in Santa Clara, Calif., features panelized EIFS for a dramatic design.
Perfection is a standard that’s difficult to reach in the construction business. But when high-tech manufacturer Applied Materials was searching for an extremely precise and flawless look for the exterior of its new office building in Santa Clara, Calif., contractor Rollie R. French, Inc. was up to the challenge.

Rollie R French, Inc., based in San Jose, Calif., fabricated and installed a Dryvit Outsulation® panelized exterior insulation and finish system on the 100,000-square-foot building, which satisfied the owner’s desire for an exceptionally high-quality, consistent appearance.

“We went with the panelized approach rather than a field-applied system because of aesthetics,” explained David Vaughn, facilities engineer for Applied Materials. “We felt that by fabricating the panels off-site we could get better uniformity to create the look we wanted.”

The new three-story building provides administrative office space for Applied Materials, which is a supplier to the semiconductor manufacturing industry. The new facility, officially called “Building #20” on the company’s roster of facilities across the country, is one of five buildings on Applied Materials’ Santa Clara campus.

According to Steve Spangenberg, project manager for Rollie French, the degree of precision and quality demanded by Applied Materials on this project was just the sort of challenge his company likes to take on.

“We’ve been working with Dryvit doing panelized projects for 15 to 20 years now,” he said. “Over the years, we’ve developed a reputation for our panelization capability.” The company has fabricated and installed panelized systems for the San Francisco International Airport, Kaiser Hospitals and Advanced Cardiovascular Systems, among other clients.

For the Applied Materials job, Rollie French worked from the beginning with the project architect, Erlich Rominger of Los Altos, Calif, to determine exactly how the panels would be fabricated to achieve the architect’s vision. The dramatic design of the building features a variety of intricate architectural details, including a zigzag, stepped-back pattern, a barrel-shape radius soffit on the ground floor and false reveals at every column line.

The fabricated panels were then trucked to the site and installed by Rollie French crews over 21,000 square feet of wall area. An additional 4,000 square feet of field-applied Dryvit Outsulation was used around balconies and other detail areas.

Spangenberg noted that the panelized cladding approach, in addition to allowing for strict quality control, was also a time-saver. From groundbreaking to occupancy, the project took about nine months.

Vaughn expressed satisfaction with the way Building #20 turned out, “It looks great,” he said. “We were able to achieve the kind of uniform, quality appearance for the building that we were looking for.”

For Rollie French, founded in 1966, the project represents another addition to a long list of successful projects for clients such as Stones Town Mall, Hewlett Packard, the Louise Salter Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford University, Veterans Hospital in Menlo Park and many others. The company is a 10-year member of The Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industries—International. It employs 150 to 250 people and has an annual sales volume of $19 million. Its services include metal stud framing, drywall, lath and plaster and EIFS. Rollie French has never had a warranty claim filed against it.

“I am quite proud of our ability to produce a quality product,” commented company president Keith Walker.

According to Brent Fisher, Dryvit’s national accounts manager for the western United States, Applied Materials’ Building #20 “is easily the best panelized EIFS project I have ever seen, anywhere.”

Fisher noted that he had heard of Rollie French’s reputation for “building a Swiss watch” when it comes to panels. “But if a Swiss watch is Rollie French’s typical panel job, this new facility for Applied Materials is an atomic clock!”