The exterior of the building that houses The Original Ron Jon Surf Shop on Long Beach Island, N.J., is as distinctive as the products sold from inside.

Fueled by his love for surfing, founder Ron DiMenna opened his first shop on the Jersey Shore in 1961 in the town of Ship Bottom, located on Long Beach Island in an inlet just north of Atlantic City. Even from a one-room, 1,000-square-foot building, it wasn’t long before DiMenna managed to sell more surfboards than every East Coast retailer combined.

The success of his business prompted him to head south to Cocoa Beach, Fla., in 1963 to open a second shop. Ron Jon’s quickly grew to become a world-famous retailer of surfing gear, equipment, clothing and accessories and today is headquartered in Cocoa Beach in a flashy, art-deco style, 52,000-square-foot building. The company slogan, “One of a Kind,” was incorporated into the trademark Florida logo, while the logo for the New Jersey store appropriately reads “The Original.”

Meanwhile, the New Jersey Ron Jon’s outgrew its original location and in 1989 DiMenna decided to move his main operations from the little cinder block building to a larger, 5,000-square-foot building across the street, keeping the original building for use as a beach rental store and longboard specialty shop during the peak summer season. By 1996, the store again was due for a major expansion, and the decision was made to tear down the smaller original building and construct a new, larger one on the same spot.

The owners also wanted something that would attract attention to the building, which is located off Route 72, the only access road to Long Beach Island.

“It’s a very visible location,” said store manager Andy Messier. “You can see us whether you’re coming onto the island, leaving the island, going north-to-south or south-to-north.”

“What we tried to do is create a Floridian-type atmosphere that you typically don’t see in New Jersey,” said Brian Clayton, project manager with Rob Roth Architects, the Brant Beach, N.J.-based
firm that designed the new building. “The whole point was to create a building that is easily identified as a Ron Jon.”

The architectural style for the new building was adapted from the Cocoa Beach structure, and exterior insulation and finish systems manufactured by Sensergy were selected for the cladding. The versatility of EIFS made it the ideal material to duplicate the lavish style of the Cocoa Beach store.

“By using EIFS, we got the textures and colors that were right for us, whereas with other types of siding, we would have been really limited,” Clayton said. “We wouldn’t have been able to capture the tropical image with a cedar shingle, block or brick exterior.”

**EIFS Adds Color**

The region’s windy, rainy climate also was taken into consideration when selecting an outside building material. Sensergy’s Senerflex Class PB EIFS, which consist of an expanded polystyrene insulation board that literally wraps around the building’s exterior, fit the bill.

“We needed something durable that would withstand the fluctuating temperatures common to the East Coast,” Clayton said.

The architecture firm reviewed completed projects submitted by several EIFS applicators before choosing Baruffi Brothers, a 50-year-old Vineland, N.J.-based company, because of its quality work and reputation, Clayton said.

The EIFS application took about three months to complete. The 16,000-square-feet of exterior wall space incorporates shades of blue, green, yellow, coral and purple finishes to give it a more tropical appearance. Expanded polystyrene foam shapes were pre-formed into palm trees with branches sprouting from the top of the building and an intricate carved band of seashells.

“The applicator’s job is to duplicate what the architect has drawn,” said Lawrence D. Baruffi, the firm’s president. “And that takes quite a bit of skill.

“The building is breathtaking,” Baruffi said. “There is tremendous detail in the scalloped shells and palm trees that would have been impossible to create using any other product.”

The vast array of colors were easily achievable with EIFS. For example, the architect wanted to use particular shades of certain colors in the project, all of which were easily incorporated into the acrylic-based finish used with EIFS. Achieving some of those exact shades also would have been impossible using a cementitious product like stucco, Baruffi said.

A 2-inch layer of the standard, one-pound density EPS insulation board was used, which delivered an R-value of more than eight. The EIFS also are flexible and expand if there is any movement to the building, Baruffi said.

**Artistic Qualities**

“EIFS give the architect the ability to be an artist. They give an engineer a product that functions. And they have a lot of the qualities an owner loves, because the end result is a spectacular building like this,” he said.

It’s a building that the public also has come to enjoy. At first, the reception from some was wary, considering the building was sort of an anomaly for the area where more demure colors are the norm.

“In the beginning, some people would come in and say, ‘I can’t believe you put those flashy colors on there. Where do you think we are, Florida?’” said Messler, the store manager.

“Now, most people say they love the way it looks,” he said. “It is a bright, fun-looking building that’s unique in this area, so it really stands out.”