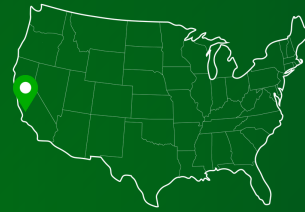


# PROJECT PROFILE

## Earthwood Lane Industrial San Luis Obispo, California



THE  
**BEAUTY  
OF  
BLOCK**

 CONCRETE MASONRY  
CHECKOFF



Photo Credit: ©RRM Design Group

## PROJECT CHALLENGES

A tight site required building directly to the property line while meeting fire separation requirements, while also accommodating heavy industrial use below and livable residential space above.

## CMU'S CONTRIBUTION TO PERFORMANCE & DESIGN

- CMU forms the load-bearing ground-floor walls, supporting the residential units above while serving as the finished surface for industrial spaces. Its durability makes it well suited for brewery and production environments, where surfaces must be washable and able to withstand heavy machinery and daily use, while also meeting fire separation requirements at the property line.

A three-color CMU palette, laid in a random pattern developed with the mason, establishes a defining architectural base for the building.

## ADVICE FOR OTHERS

*"For constrained sites, masonry brings together fire code compliance, industrial durability and architectural expression within a single system. As Scott Martin of RRM Design Group notes, "Our team would highly recommend utilizing block again."*

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This mixed-use development in San Luis Obispo, California, pairs industrial production with residential caretaker units on a constrained site. Designed by RRM Design Group, the project includes a 5,500-square-foot microbrewery, 4,500 square feet of additional industrial space, and two 1,000-square-foot residential units, organized through a modern industrial design approach and integrated site strategies.

## WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT UNIQUE?

Rather than separating industrial and residential uses, the project uses masonry to anchor the building in its working context. The CMU base establishes a clear architectural hierarchy, grounding the structure while allowing lighter materials above to contrast and respond.

## PROJECT INFO

- **Location** - San Luis Obispo, California
- **Completion Date** - 2017
- **Project Type** - Mixed Use (Industrial + Residential)
- **CMU Scope** - Structural & Architectural

## TEAM INFO

- **CMU Manufacturer** - Air Vol Block, Inc.
- **Architect** - RRM Design Group: Scott Martin (Project Architect), Pat Blote (Architect-of-Record)
- **General Contractor** - Sansone Company, Inc.



Photo Credit: ©RRM Design Group

# Earthwood Lane Industrial

# San Luis Obispo, California

At Earthwood Lane Industrial, the challenge wasn't simply fitting a mixed-use program onto a constrained site. It was reconciling two fundamentally different conditions within a single building. On the ground floor, a microbrewery and beverage production space demand rugged, high-performing environments. Above, residential caretaker units introduce a more controlled and livable condition. The project needed a clear relationship between the two without becoming fragmented.

Concrete masonry became both the dividing line and the point of connection.

At the base, CMU does the heavy lifting, both structurally and operationally. The load-bearing walls support the residential units above while forming the finished surface of the industrial spaces. In a brewery environment, where equipment, moisture and daily use are constant, surfaces must be durable, washable and capable of withstanding ongoing wear. CMU meets these demands directly, eliminating the need for additional applied finishes while maintaining long-term resilience.

The constraints of the site reinforced this approach. With limited space and the need to build to the property line, the design required a system that could satisfy fire separation and code requirements without adding unnecessary complexity. CMU enabled this condition, allowing the building to meet performance criteria cleanly within a tight footprint.

At the same time, the project avoids treating masonry as purely utilitarian. Working closely with the mason, the design team developed a three-color CMU palette laid in a random pattern, transforming a standard material into a defining architectural feature. The result is a grounded, textured base that contrasts with the lighter upper-level construction and Corten steel elements, creating a clear material hierarchy across the building.

Earthwood Lane demonstrates how masonry can operate simultaneously as structure, finish and design driver. In conditions where durability, fire performance and site limitations often constrain design, CMU provides a direct and efficient solution while still supporting thoughtful architectural expression.

