

Hewitt-Trussville High School

Photography: Rion Rizzo



Hewitt-Trussville High School wraps around a new civic space punctuated by a clock tower. Ground-face masonry clads lower walls of the main wing with native sandstone above and red brick to distinguish the auditorium.

By Philip Morris



When DesignAlabama published Davis Architect's renderings and plans for the new Hewitt-Trussville High School (Spring/Summer 2007), it was all in black and white. Opened last October, the school has sprung to life rich in texture and color. It has a formal, civic front and a more relaxed side fronting the headwaters of the Cahaba River in northeast metropolitan Birmingham.

Trussville City Schools got the traditional character they wanted. The primary masonry cladding is a ground-face concrete block that delivers the classical formality, but the architects introduced native sandstone and metal roofs similar to those used nearby in the WPA-era Cahaba Village project to relax it a bit and tie it to its setting.

A surprise comes in the red brick used to clad the auditorium block and rear classroom wings. "We wanted a strong red brick without much range to make a crisp contrast with the other masonry," says Neil Davis. "On the classroom wings it works well with the greens and browns of the natural setting."

Using a new school to protect the river fits in with Trussville's other moves to protect its natural environment.



"I've always wanted to make a Doric portico of the most basic elements," says Neil Davis. The non-tapering poured concrete columns carry a Roman cross-patterned steel entablature.



Red brick-clad classroom wings, like this one seen from the atrium of the main building, extend through the woods toward the Cahaba River.



The bulk of the athletics wing that wraps one side of the front court is tamed by the classical colonnade pattern executed in two shades of ground-face blocks and a darker jumbo brick.