

## CENTRAL MARKET

During the past six years Central Market has been one of the most widely publicized retail projects in the world. Its success has been demonstrated by the fact that it has become a prime Austin meeting place due to highly functional gathering spaces for eating and entertainment. The sense of place created by this design is evident to all who visit Central Market.

After a detailed set of architectural and urban design guidelines were developed, Black + Vernooy was then selected by the developer to be the design architects for the first project on the ground as the design architects for the 120,000 sq. ft. shopping center.

This project presented a tough challenge: to give interest and texture to a simple building type—the strip shopping center—on an extremely limited budget, using only durable, low-maintenance materials.

The limited budget for the shopping center determined the creative use of inexpensive, maintenance-free industrial materials: concrete block, clay sewer pipe, galvanized metal with brick as an accent material. The concrete block mortar joints are “smeared” in reference to a traditional limestone building technique common to central Texas. The design relies on the contrast of textures of the different building materials to create a strong sense of materiality, as well as on the patterns of light and shadow that are provided by the strong Texas sun.

In 1996, Central Market received a Merit Award from the Austin chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

