

WARD'S RIDGE OFFICE BUILDING

Ward's Ridge serves as a landmark development for Wish Development, representing their inaugural venture into ICF construction. This project is a rare "living laboratory" for building performance, featuring two ICF structures and one traditional stick-framed building on the same site. The results have not only earned regional accolades but have fundamentally shifted the developer's approach to future construction.

About

Location: New Castle, PA
Project Type: Office Building
Project Finish Date: 2018
ICF Installation Duration: 42 Days
Total Construction Time: 72 Weeks

Owner: Tony B, Wish Development
Architect: Tony B, Wish Development
Engineering: Ricky, RThre3 Design
CG: Shiderly Construction
ICF Installer: Bill Hauck, Hauck ICF Construction
Time Saved with ICFs: 3 Weeks

Size: 28,000 sqft
Cost: \$5,550,000 (\$5.8 adjusted 2026 inflation)
ICF Wall Square Footage: 22,000 (85% of exterior walls)
Floor Joist: Steel Joists
Exterior Finish: Brick, Split Face, EIFS
Bucking: 2x8 Wood

Highlights

- 28,000 sqft commercial office building completed with 22,000 sqft of ICF exterior walls, covering 85% of the building envelope and saving 3 weeks of construction time.
- Advanced structural execution included 14-foot single-day wall pours and complex 36-foot two-story intersecting T-walls, showcasing the versatility and strength of BuildBlock ICF construction.
- **Major long-term energy savings:** Ownership reported the ICF buildings operate at approximately 25% of the heating and cooling cost of the smaller traditional stick-frame building on the same site.



Design Complexity & Structural Innovation

While the project required a functional and practical aesthetic, the structural execution demanded high-level technical expertise. The primary challenge involved the sheer scale of the vertical assemblies:

- **Massive Vertical Pours:** The team successfully executed 14-foot wall pours in a single day, maintaining perfect structural integrity throughout the process.
- **The 36-Foot T-Wall Challenge:** The most complex architectural feature involved two sets of four-way intersecting T-walls that extended two full stories to a height of 36 feet.
- **Field Engineering:** Because these intersections required custom geometries, the crew field-cut and fabricated the BuildBlock forms on-site. By applying strategic bracing and specialized strapping, the team ensured these “tricky” areas were cast without voids, providing the robust lateral strength necessary to support the building’s heavy roof and parapet system.



Construction Excellence & Craftsmanship

Transitioning to a new building material often presents a steep learning curve, but the collaboration between the developer and the ICF installation crew mitigated these risks.

The project was defined by proactive problem-solving. By staying ahead of the schedule and identifying potential conflicts before the concrete was pumped, the team delivered exceptionally straight walls. The finished product stands as a testament to precision craftsmanship, with perfectly plumb corners and an absence of common ICF issues like bulges or honeycombing.



Architecture & Occupant Experience

The architectural philosophy focused on creating an adaptable, light-filled environment.

- **Natural Integration:** Large window expanses were integrated into the ICF envelope, flooding the open interior spaces with natural light.
- **Spaciousness:** The strength of the concrete core allowed for wide, spacious floor plans that can be easily reconfigured to meet the needs of various commercial tenants.



Sustainability: The “1/4 Cost” Efficiency Milestone

The most compelling aspect of the Ward’s Ridge case study is the direct energy comparison between the different construction methods on-site. As a developer responsible for utility costs on long-term leases, Wish Development prioritized thermal performance.

The Results:

According to ownership estimates, the utility costs to heat and cool the ICF buildings are roughly one-fourth (25%) of the costs associated with the smaller, traditionally built stick-frame building on the same property.

Even the largest ICF structure on the site operates at a fraction of the cost of its smaller, traditional counterpart, proving that the thermal mass and airtightness of the ICF system provide an unmatched Return on Investment (ROI).



Project Summary:

The success of Ward’s Ridge stands as a definitive proof of concept for the future of commercial development. By delivering a structure that is simultaneously more resilient, quieter, and four times more energy-efficient than its traditional counterparts, Wish Development has demonstrated that high-performance building materials are not just a sustainable choice, but a superior financial investment. This project doesn’t just provide a modern workspace for its tenants; it serves as a benchmark for the industry, proving that with the right partnership and precision craftsmanship, the challenges of complex construction can be transformed into lasting architectural excellence.

