

PROCESS
AND
CONTROL



Mark Ledkins, vice president, operations, Southern Division, GATE Precast, reviews mock-ups with visitors. The result was the beautiful St. George Catholic Church in Baton Rouge, La. Photos: GATE Precast and toddlandryphotography.com.

FOLLOW THE SAMPLE PROCESS AND CONTROL YOUR OWN DESTINY

PCI HAS MANY RESOURCES FOR ARCHITECTS AND PRECAST CONCRETE PRODUCERS

As with many aspects of work, processes deteriorate over time as various individuals execute the same functions on a repetitive basis. What may be adequate for one particular job may not satisfy the requirements for a similar project. Also, successful processes are lost when they are not reinforced and documented. When precast concrete producers and architects don't follow PCI's recommended sample process, they can find themselves with differing opinions. This can cause unnecessary delays, increased costs, frustration, and an adverse relationship.

Don't be a victim of short cuts, brain drain, or opinions, especially when it comes to a project's final aesthetic appearance. "Finish uniformity is the topic I address more than anything else," says Randy Wilson, PCI's director

of architectural precast systems. "Most architectural precast concrete appearance concerns can be avoided by following the written sample process in our documents."

"The sample process should be clearly defined in the project specifications and followed," says Wilson. "The process is established to set realistic aesthetic expectations with the design and construction team by having honest continual conversations at each step of the sample process."



The sample process is a two-way street. The design and construction team should commit to meeting with the precast producer regularly throughout the sampling process to prevent any surprises when the panels arrive at the jobsite.

While it might seem that the sample process creates more upfront work, project participants will see the advantages when panels are being installed and they are within the acceptable color and finish range. "Architects often include the PCI recommended sample process in their specification, but many do not follow it," Wilson says. "It is the precast producer's responsibility to ensure the individual project team realizes the importance of, and insists on, following PCI's recommended sampling process."

"Control your own destiny. Don't be a victim; be a victor."



Range samples such as these at International Concrete Products are an important part of the sample process. Photo: International Concrete Products.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Explore PCI's Architectural Resources at pci.org/architectural-resources for a wealth of tools and guides, including: *Architectural Precast Concrete*, third edition (MNL 122).
- Refer to the Architectural Precast Guide Specifications for PCI Architectural Certification Categories AA, AB, AC, and AD.
- Use the PCI Color and Texture Selection Guide.
- Consult PCI's 37 Designer's Notebooks covering project planning with architectural samples, specification guidance, acceptability of appearance, textures, and more.
- Access more than 1000 project profiles on PCI's website, searchable by project name, location, project team, market segment, and architectural precast concrete finish.

THE PRECAST CONCRETE SAMPLE PROCESS

Proper selection of precast concrete's color, form, and texture is critical to creating a successful project. The selection and approval process should be clearly defined in the construction documents and should begin with prebid samples that establish general color and texture for the project.

Pre-bid Samples: Typically, 12 × 12 × 2-in. samples that demonstrate general color and texture and is listed in the specification as "architect's control sample" for bidding purposes only.

Initial Samples: Typically, 12 × 12 × 2-in. samples produced by the successful precast bidder and is used to produce larger approval samples.

Production Sample: Typically, 4 ft × 4 ft × 6-in. (or similar) sample panel and can incorporate project-specific details. Once approved, this sample panel can be considered to be the production control sample.

Range Samples: A set of 4 ft × 4 ft × 6-in. (or similar) sample panels that are expressly produced to show the potential color range of the actual project components after erection on the structure. The approving entities shall collaborate with the successful precast producer to define the acceptable color range for the project.

Mock-up Panel(s): When desired by the owner and included in the contract, a full scale mock-up as defined in the contract documents should be produced and installed for final approval.

Samples should be observed under climatic conditions to which the precast concrete components will be exposed, such as direct sun, overcast, shadows, etc., and from a distance relative to the product's final location on the structure but not less than 20 ft (6 m) as defined in MNL 117. The samples should also be judged in relationship to adjacent materials and structures. ●