

GRAY IS THE NEW GREEN



Precast concrete is more sustainable than you think.

EVEN FOR BUILDING PROFESSIONALS, precast concrete wall panels aren't at the center of dinner-table conversation. Trendier subjects tend to trump our humble building material; lofty ideas like conservation, sustainability, and aesthetics command all the attention. It's too bad, really; with a little information, precast wall panels should rightfully enjoy a place at the table.

At our house, it's a pretty regular discussion topic, and why wouldn't it be? For anyone who designs, builds, owns or manages buildings, precast concrete has a lot to offer. The problem is that most people haven't followed precast panel innovation. In the minds of many, precast concrete is a mature technology that has remained relatively unchanged for decades. Truth be known, you'd be hard pressed to find a more progressive building product.

In an age when sustainable practices are no longer simply admirable, but rather the status quo, structural precast wall panels are in lock step with heightened performance expectations. Precast concrete helps companies increase their physical footprint while shrinking their carbon footprint. Precast wall panels enable building professionals to customize R-values up to an amazing R-34. The right building envelope can greatly reduce heating and cooling costs and energy consumption. In addition to the obvious environmental benefits, think of the cost savings realized over a decade or two.

In an age when reuse, repurpose, recycle are words to live by, structural precast concrete wall panels are ahead of the curve. The steel strand, the aggregate and even the insulative foam billets used in a Fabcon VersaCore+Green™ panel are made of recycled materials. The concrete itself makes use of fly ash, a by-product of coal burning power stations. A precast panel can be comprised of more than 50% recycled content. Funny thing is, that's old news. We've been making panels that way for over a decade—we were early adopters of the green movement.

Of course, none of that means anything if you can't use the technology to build something you're proud of. And to be honest, that's up to you. Precast is available in a broad range of colors and finishes. By mixing pigments and natural aggregates there really is no limit to what you can accomplish. And if you like gray...well, that's pretty achievable, too.

