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Winter 2018

# ASCENT<sup>®</sup>

DESIGNING WITH PRECAST



**Parking.**  
OUT OF THE BOX.





#### GO TRANSIT

Precast concrete was used throughout the West Harbour GO Transit station's elevated parking deck, and in areas subject to high pedestrian traffic, to minimize risk of damage to the building. By using varying pigments, finishes, and reveal patterns in the precast concrete, the desired architectural language was achieved. The station serves as a landmark for the community, while fitting contextually within the neighborhood. Photos: Studio Shai Gil.

#### TRANSIT BEAUTY: WEST HARBOUR GO TRANSIT STATION

To kick off the 2015 Pan Am Games and create a gateway to the City of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, the West Harbour GO Transit station showcases style and substance. The transit project incorporates an urban plaza embellished with landscaped gardens as well as a parking structure. The site is designed as a series of sloped roads, stairways, and gardens punctuated by two tower and bridge structures that connect the streets directly to the platforms. A two-story parking deck clad in precast concrete links the towers, with 140 parking spaces and a "Kiss & Ride" passenger drop-off area.

"Rail stations are founded on passenger flow, so the facility is all about movement," explains Arthur Briggs, manager of architecture with the IBI Group. "We didn't want anything flat or static, and to celebrate movement we used different textures of precast to create animation and poetic repetition in the cladding."

There were concerns about the noise that would be created by buses using the plaza bus lane. To alleviate these concerns, a 7-ft-high precast concrete sound barrier was installed along the south perimeter of the plaza. Rather than using the simple

#### WEST HARBOUR GO TRANSIT STATION

##### LOCATION

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

##### OWNER

Metrolinx, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

##### ARCHITECT

IBI Group, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

##### ENGINEER

IBI Group, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

##### CONTRACTOR

Kenaidan, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

##### PCI-CERTIFIED PRECASTER

Armtec, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada  
(sound walls at plaza)

Advanced Precast Inc., Ontario, Canada  
(parking deck panels)

Castle Precast, Ontario, Canada  
(precast planter boxes)

##### PRECAST COMPONENTS

Architectural precast panels and sound walls







precast concrete sound barrier panels typically seen on highways, a custom articulated panel face was used, with overlapping rectilinear forms at various face depths. Staggered linear LED strip lights were recessed within these panels, animating the wall and providing a sense of movement to what could have been a static and utilitarian element of the project.

“We used precast sound walls to line the edge of the project and to delineate the residential portion of the plaza,” explains Briggs. “The LED lights embedded in that wall provide animation to that area and soften the impact to the area residents.”

“Given the grade difference, several retaining walls were integrated into the station design. They serve as multifunctional structures cohesive with the project design, rather than solely utilitarian. Retaining walls from plaza level to platform level were terraced, and serve as planters. A retaining wall between nearby streets provided the opportunity for a stacked parking solution, with the structure serving as the south wall of a two-level parking deck. This concrete retaining wall was clad in charcoal precast panels, alternating between a smooth, sandblast finish and a ribbed panel with 3-in.-deep reveals, mimicking the waterfalls that the city is known for. Precast planter boxes were provided at the

top of this concrete retaining wall, creating an extension of the landscaped boulevard along the street to the south of the project site.”

“Precast concrete was used on the station’s parking deck and in areas subject to high pedestrian traffic to minimize risk of damage to the building. By using varying concrete pigments, finishes and reveal patterns, the desired architectural language was achieved by using this cost-effective and resilient material. The station serves as a landmark for the community, while still fitting contextually within the surrounding neighborhood,” recalls Briggs.

Precast concrete is synonymous with parking structures. Parking structure aesthetics are essential to the sense of architectural continuity critical to the success of a project. Just as architectural panels can benefit an office or residential building, so too can they create a positive identity for a parking structure. These examples illustrate how architectural precast concrete can provide the “wow” factor to complement high-end retail or mixed-use projects, introducing color and texture that transform parking into an architectural statement.

**GO TRANSIT**  
Photo: Studio Shai Gil.

