



## Perfect choice for architects

Mike Brown, Design Manager from Lend Lease, shares his thoughts on the recently constructed Top Ryde Shopping Centre in NSW.

"Upon arrival at Top Ryde City, the two most distinguishing features greeting the visitor are the immediate proximity of the network of arterial roadways, and the amazing 25m site cross fall. By working with this radical topography, an enviable opportunity arose whereby an impressive façade palette was made available to the design team, for project theming.

Granny Smith has long been respected as a local legend, and coincidentally across the lower Tucker Street is a playground full of Top Ryde school children facing this facade. What better way to celebrate and promote this local heritage celebrity, than to create a full façade graphic, depicting an apple orchard sitting over a patchwork quilt of earthen colours?

These beautiful, rich colours were the colours of Nawkaw, and the patchwork quilt was the amazing array of Hanson precast panels, stacked randomly in as many shapes as there were colours in the palette. It was fun, it was eye catching and it was unique to this local community.

### Precast Manufacturer

Hanson Precast

### Architect

Lend Lease Design

### Builders

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Beyond and bordering on one of the busiest highways in the state, was the primary address façade of Top Ryde City. In this location, a soft honed precast panel was employed both to combat this aggressive environment, but at the same time to present a sense of quality and reliability – echoing the retail experience that was on offer behind the ramparts of this imposing development.

Finally, the open air, internal pedestrian Strada is lined with high-end retail fashion, cutting edge merchandising and coffee bars. Semi-polished creamy precast panels fill the parapets of this alfresco arcade, bringing a tone and mood of elegance and sophistication, to an otherwise intimate retail retreat.

Precast concrete panelling was the perfect choice of façade lining in this particular project. It offered expediency in construction, an unlimited choice of shapes and finishes, and helped create an opportunity to have some fun for all to share.”

The sheer scale of Top Ryde City is impressive. Occupying a 3.5 hectare site with 80,000 square metres of retail space, it boasts around 300 retailers and over 3000 undercover car spaces, including an outdoor fashion promenade, an entertainment and dining precinct, water features and public artworks. 546 precast wall panels were supplied with the original project design noting that the precast walling has 3 different finishes – polished, honed and a class 2 off-form finish with a high dosage of integral oxides in a range of colours.

According to Chris Parsons, Manager of Hanson Precast “the challenge to produce a precast panel with four different coloured concrete mixes would have been difficult and time consuming, with any bleeding of any concrete mix into the adjoining portion of a panel being a potential reason for rejection. Also, the architect didn’t want to see any tonal variations in any of the concrete colours.”

The Nawkaw colouring process that penetrates into the pores of the concrete surface substrate to produce a consistent and long lasting finish, was therefore selected and applied to the surface of the off-form precast panels. The process is guaranteed for a minimum of 25 years and was carried out in the precaster’s factories, after the panels had been cured for 7 days.

Erection of the precast wall panels needed to take place at night to minimise disruptions. The panels were erected using 50 and 130 tonne mobile cranes with all traffic management, task lighting, surveying, welding, grouting and caulking to the panels included in the precast contract. The shopping centre was opened in three stages with the centre completed in late 2010.