

Pebblecrete

Panels faced by smooth pebbles have largely gone out of fashion, but if and when they come back into favour, ***Repel 54*** is the ideal product for their manufacture.

In the 1990s a large number of interlocking pebble-faced concrete panels were supplied to the Roads and Traffic Authority of New South Wales for facing bridges and embankments along the Great Western Highway. The manufacturer tried to minimize the amount of mortar on the facing side of the panels by using a variety of oils and waxes, but there was always a lot of mortar stuck tenaciously to the pebbles which had to be ground off. At the end of the contract the manufacturer was kicked out of town by the local council for creating an unacceptable dust by grinding its panels.

Repel came about a few months too late for this application, but it would have solved this problem easily. One of the properties of ***Repel 54*** is that when applied too thickly it prevents the surface of fresh concrete from setting. Learning how to use ***Repel*** has always meant cutting back on its thickness – except for making pebblecrete. A heavy application of ***Repel 54*** over a mould, then a layer of pebbles followed by fine sand to fill the voids, then pouring of structural concrete would produce a cast panel where the whole underside would be permanently undercured – dark, friable, and easily removed, preferably by water at moderate pressure.

Any textured concrete panel where the texture is created by some non-absorbent additives bonded from behind but exposed to the front could be made by this technique.

© Richard Maerschel 2008