

CAMPUS CAPITAL PROJECTS & PLANNING  
FACILITIES BUILDING, ROOM 205  
3791 CAMPUS ROAD, STOP 7107  
GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA 58202-7107

(701) 777-2591  
FAX (701) 777-4458

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Mr. Sam Nesius  
Sales and Marketing  
Wells Concrete  
1 N 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Ste 118  
Fargo, ND 58102

To Whom it May Concern:

The University of North Dakota recently constructed a parking structure as means to concentrate vehicular parking within the center of our campus. The new facility has the capacity to park up to 770 vehicles on five levels with an enclosed walkway and below grade tunnel that links it to adjacent university buildings. The ramp is experiencing capacity use on a daily basis, and also serves as a primary source of parking for sports events and other extramural functions.

During the design phase of this project, we considered a number of construction methods that included cast in place with concrete structural components, cast in place with steel structural components, and pre-cast concrete construction. We carefully evaluated the benefits for each system, specifically with concern for future maintenance costs, quality control, and speed of assembly. From that evaluation we elected to construct with a pre-cast concrete system.

Although the pre-cast system has joints within the structure, state-of-the-art sealants currently available for closing the joints have an extraordinary service life and to date have provided excellent wear. Cast in place concrete requires a number of expansion joints within the structure that would be sealed in a similar manner, but it also allows for other stress fractures to form which may not be detected and would subsequently create a source of water infiltration. Our greatest concern was the introduction of water into critical joints where freeze thaw cycles would damage the concrete and require expensive repairs.

In addition to the superior maintenance performance, we found that the quality control afforded by building the panels within a manufacturing environment provided a better fit and finish. It also allowed for the inclusion of brick veneers on the exterior, giving the parking structure its distinctive look that matches the campus architecture. Because completing the structure within a tight schedule was paramount to our business plan, having the ability to fabricate the pre cast panels within a warm environment allowed us to construct over the winter months when pouring concrete outdoors is a difficult and expensive proposition.

I hope my comments are beneficial to your decision making process, and that I invite you to our campus to tour the ramp and view the construction first hand. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide you with any additional information or help arrange a visit.

Sincerely,



Rick Tonder  
Director, Campus Capital Projects & Planning