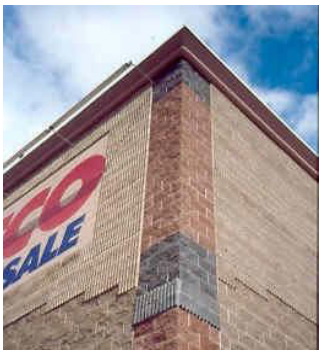
Architectural Coloured Concrete Block Walls

TEXTURES AND PROFILES

Architectural Concrete Blocks allow the designer to combine colour, texture and profile to provide a limitless range of building appearance options. They are available for both structural and veneer applications. Architectural structural units offer economic and environmental benefits from their efficient combination of structure and finish.

Smooth and “Splitface” textures can be used separately, or in combination to create a wide variety of wall detailing possibilities. The Splitface effect is produced by splitting two units apart with hydraulic blades after curing during production process.

Ribbed and Ledge profiles allow the designer to play with light and shadow, both vertically and horizontally, to achieve unique design effects which change with the direction of the sun through-out the day. They are produced by combining custom moulds with the splitface technique described above.



Multiple Coloured splitface and 6-rib

Combination of coloured split ledge and natural splitface

COLOUR OPTIONS

Colour can be provided the by either surface coatings or integrally coloured units.

SURFACE COATINGS

Colour in concrete block walls can be provided by surface treatments such as paint and tinted water repellants. Quality elastomeric paints are available in a multitude of colours, which can be used to create a wide variety of architectural patterns and details. They offer excellent weather resistance in wet climates. Tinted water repellants provide an alternative colour approach, with slightly less effect on surface texture.

INTEGRAL COLOUR

Integrally coloured units are produced with oxide additives blended into the concrete block mix during the manufacturing process. A range of earth tone colours is readily available – contact local suppliers for colour samples. Coloured mortars are usually used with coloured block to solidify the colour impact, and to simplify cleaning after construction. These units are usually produced on a custom order basis, with only a few weeks lead-time.

Painted splitface with smooth band

The application of a clear water repellant to integrally coloured block walls after they are completed and cleaned is recommended in wet climates such as coastal BC. This maximizes weather resistance and helps to keep the walls cleaner over time. Some block manufacturers also offer proprietary integral water repellant systems to further improve weather resistance.

Painted smooth for school corridor (Kid Proof !)

CAUTION FOR COLOURED SMOOTH BLOCK

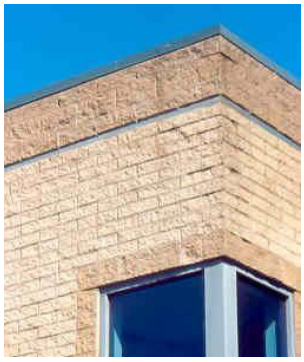
Due to the nature of the manufacturing process, integrally coloured block walls in a standard, smooth texture generally display a wider colour range than the consistent colour provided by splitface texture units. This can be observed by viewing typical smooth grey coloured walls, or the backside of a splitface structural wall.

This wider range can occur because the “slick” on the smooth exterior surface of the block has a high cement and colour content, which is affected by small changes in moisture content, temperature and curing during manufacture. This is not the case for a splitface surface, because the splitting process exposes the consistent interior of the block mix.

Coloured splitface.

Smooth block walls may also be more difficult to clean because cleaning materials and processes can have more affect on the smooth surface than would occur with a splitface texture. (see Section 1.6 of the MIBC Technical Manual for further discussion on cleaning masonry)

For these reasons, the specification of integrally coloured smooth units is not recommended for large wall elements, without a review of these concerns by the designer with the block manufacturer. The surface coatings discussed above provide simple alternatives.



Multiple colours of full and half-high splitface with smooth band

Combination of coloured splitface with natural smooth units framing the windows and half-high smooth in vertical recess.