The Sheraton Hot Springs overlooks lovely Lake Hamilton and is situated in a posh resort community of elegant homes and thoroughbred racing.

**Looks Can be Deceiving**

**Exterior Insulation Beats Precast to Pieces—Again!**

Fort Smith Ark., architect Tim A. Risley, AIA, of Risley Childers Anderson Sebourne, Inc., chose Dryvit® Outsulation® in a “Van Dyck” Quarzputz® finish for the award-winning 125-unit Sheraton Hot Springs Lakeshore Resort, a luxury resort overlooking Lake Hamilton in Hot Springs, Ark.

“We initially considered precast concrete panels for this project, but costwise, exterior insulation just beat precast all to pieces,” says Risley. “It’s difficult to compare costs precisely when you’re dealing with such different wall systems as precast concrete and exterior wall insulation because different materials necessitate different design solutions. For instance, with precast we probably would have had to sacrifice some of the detailing work we were able to accomplish. Precast would also have meant heavier gauge steel framing. On the other hand, we probably wouldn’t have needed flashings around the windows or parapets with precast. But in the final analysis, when you add up all the costs, this material enabled us to bring this project in for 40 to 50 percent of what a comparable precast job would have cost.”

“A second factor was the site,” notes Risley. “The hotel sits right at the water’s edge, so we needed a wall system that could be erected without the substantial use of cranes or other heavy equipment. Outsulation is a lightweight skin system that can be manually handled using lightweight scaffolding. This hotel is situated on a very narrow peninsula making it impossible to bring in heavy machinery. Precast would have therefore been logistically impossible.”

The architects also wanted a color and finish that would resemble architectural concrete. “Our design was very form-oriented,” explains Risley, “so we wanted a sophisticated finish without a lot of texture. We also wanted something that would make a visual statement of strength and permanency. Outsulation allowed us to recreate the look of precast panels by imitating the concrete texture. The contractor (Jimmy Albert of Albert
Plastering Company in Fort Smith) field-applied the system to look like panels by putting in expansion joints in accordance with the dimensional format of a typical precast panel.

The result? “When you stand back, it looks like we used a panelized masonry wall system,” says Risley.

Innovative Design . . .

The Sheraton’s unusual design utilizes an introverted architectural form that Risley says was created as a direct result of the interior concept for a central circulation atrium. This unique design necessitated a flexible material that could be fabricated into cantilevered panels. “We found it to be an exceptionally easy material to work with,” Risley notes. “The type of detailing we did would have been extremely expensive and in some cases impossible with precast.”

“Dryvit also offered us the advantage of a system that can go up very quickly,” says Risley. “Quality control was also extremely important to us. When you use precast on large end-wall surfaces, you often end up with a checkerboard pattern because of the color variation. Relatively minor temperature variations in the plant can cause color differentiation. Outsulation’s colors can be more consistently controlled.

Thanks to Risley’s stepped-back design, all units have sun-drenched balconies and water views. The lowrise format maintains a human scale in keeping with surrounding residences, says owner Bob Yoes of Painters Point Development Corp.

Albert Plastering Company used 32,000 square feet of Outsulation with one-and-a-half-inch expanded polystyrene board. Approximately 8500 square feet of Dryvit® Intones®, in a matching shade and texture, were used inside to create an outdoor effect in the atrium, an area that houses the Sheraton’s swimming pool and hot tub.

The Sheraton was used to illustrate an “Emerging Technology” story by Ray Chalmers in the April, 1985 issue of Building Design & Construction. A photo highlighting the project’s use of ECI* metal architectural panels on the roof and facade appeared on the cover of the Spring ’85 issue of Metal Architecture. The Sheraton Hot Springs also placed first in the commercial building division of the Metal Building Component Manufacturers Association Competition and was published in the Spring ‘85 edition of Metal Building Digest.

*Engineered Components Incorporated