

# Building Stone

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# Dove White limestone lends form and function

Complementing the stone used on Brandeis University's iconic Campus Center, the university wanted an admissions center to be inviting and offer positive first impressions to new and prospective students

**BY JASON KAMERY**

Located 15 miles west of Boston in Waltham, MA, Brandeis University's admissions center is the second building designed by Charles Rose Architects on the post-war campus. The university wished to continue the use of limestone cladding first specified at the campus by Charles Rose Architects for an adjacent limestone campus center. The new admissions center houses all aspects of the admissions department and serves as a gateway to the campus for prospective students and their families. As the first stop for most potential candidates, the building orients visitors by establishing and framing important views of Brandeis' growing campus. The building is also an essential element in the University's recruitment efforts and embraces the institution's values of openness, diversity and academic excellence. Brandeis required an ad-

missions building that would be inviting and contemporary "yet warm" — accompanying the modernist tradition of the campus' existing buildings.

"We worked closely with members of the Brandeis University Admissions Department and with members of the University administration," said Susi Sanchez, principal architect for Charles Rose Architects, Inc., located in Somerville, MA. "We were asked to create an inviting building that offered orienting views to the campus, and created a positive and progressive first impression for the University."

The 24,000-square-foot building was detailed with minimalist restraint in order to emphasize the geometric and sculptural qualities of the building. The stone selection fulfilled both the aesthetic and technical requirements, and had the appropriate hardness to withstand the harsh New England winters.



The new admissions center houses all aspects of the admissions department and serves as a gateway to the campus for prospective students and their families.

“Previously, we had designed a 75,000-square-foot campus center out of limestone and the decision to work in limestone again was to create a material link between the two buildings, which are

at opposite ends of the central green on the campus,” said Sanchez. “Limestone allowed us to create a flush, sculptural surface, accentuating the forms of the project.” The building used 10,000 square feet

of the Dove White limestone, supplied from Valders Stone & Marble, located in Valders, WI, in sizes ranging from approximately 60 x 20 inches to 24 x 28 inches to 32 x 18 inches.

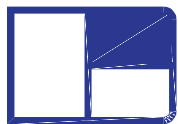
“Valders Dove White limestone is a



The 24,000 square foot building was detailed with minimalist restraint in order to emphasize the geometric and sculptural qualities of the building, as well as the University's core values.



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Type III Limestone by ASTM standards. "This is important because when you consider the factors that ASTM measures: Absorption rate, compressive strength, Modulus of Rupture, Flexural Strength, Abrasion Resistance, Solar Reflectivity Index Rating and the Coefficient of Friction for slip resistance, the testing data for the stone that Valders Stone and Marble quarries significantly surpasses the minimum requirements of ASTM Type III Limestone," said Joe Blommel, national architecture sales for Valders Stone. "As far as we understand, the stone that was initially specified for the project was having failure issues and they were looking for a suitable alternative. Because of the superior qualities that our stone represents, it was the obvious alternative for the project."

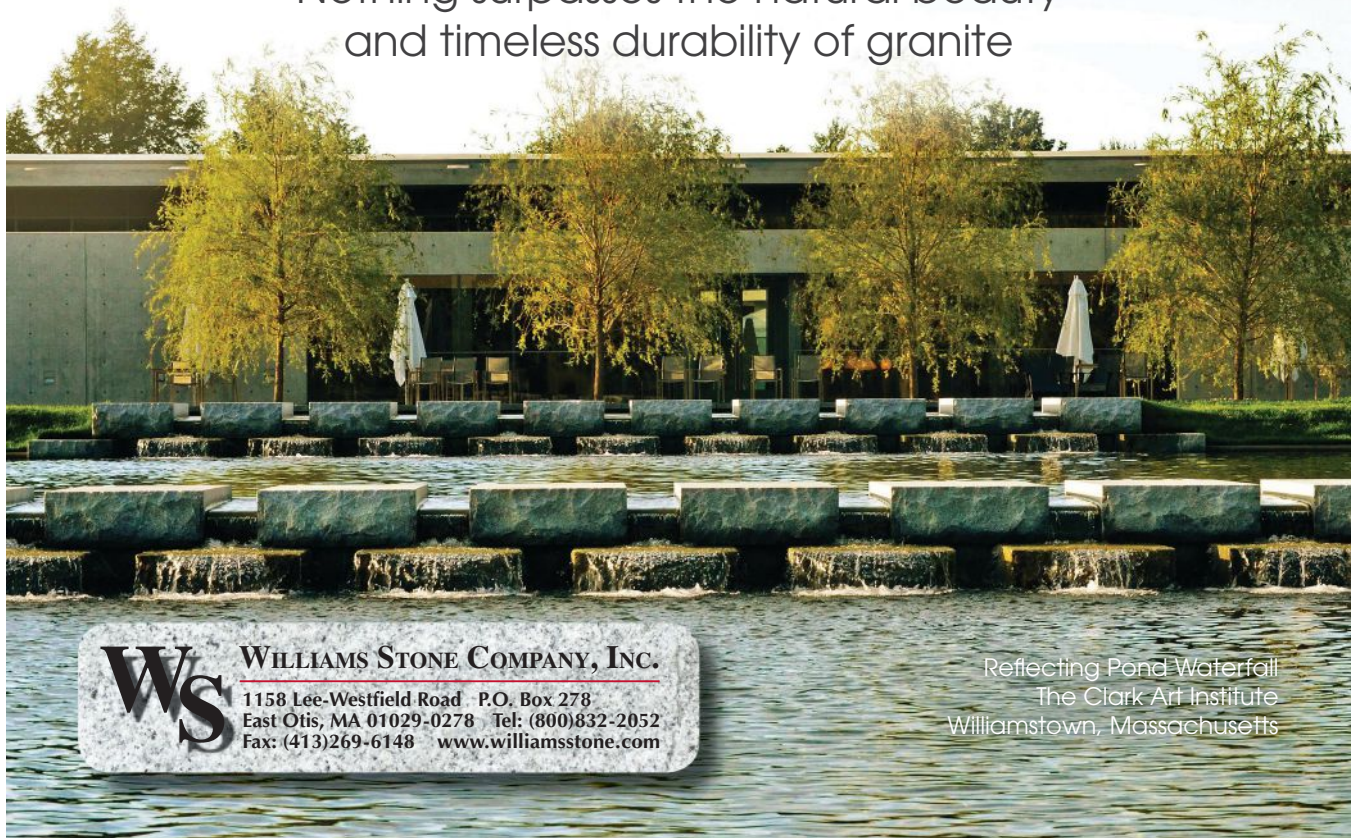
The minimalist limestone detailing provided another technical advantage. Special care was given to the detailing of the exterior envelope in an effort to create a virtually maintenance-free building. Exterior wall mockups of alternate construction assemblies were erected, water tested and reviewed by the team's envelope consultant, Building Envelope Technologies, Inc. As such, the building envelope is true to the dual character of the project, where modernist functionality meets minimalist sculptural form. "Decisions around the installation method took a great deal of time and care," said the architect. "We also spent a lot of time looking at the scale of the stone relative to the overall facades. We visited the site weekly and reviewed the anchoring of each stone piece. We

reviewed mock-up panels for the building. We were interested in anchoring methodology, sealant, water tightness, integration of adjacent materials, corner details and flashing."

The interior materials chosen to complement the limestone cladding include American sycamore paneling, artisan plaster and acoustical fabric ceilings. Large expanses of glass punctuate the monolithic limestone cladding to give the building its open and transparent character.

Designed to LEED Silver standards, the planning and construction of the project took approximately two years and the reaction of the project has been enormously positive, and the academic community, prospective students and visitors alike have embraced the new structure, giving it high praise

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Special care was given to the detailing of the exterior envelope in an effort to create a virtually maintenance-free building.

for both form and function. “The building has been received very positively and still is setting the standard for future

buildings on campus,” said Sanchez. It has received several awards including the Boston Society of Architects

Design Award, the Society of American Registered Architects Design Award and a 2016 Tucker Design Award. ■

## Admissions Center at Brandeis University Waltham, MA

**Architects:** Charles Rose Architects, Somerville, MA; Reed Hilderbrand Associates Inc., Watertown, MA (Landscape)

**General Contractor:** John Moriarty & Associates, Inc., Winchester, MA

**Stone Installer:** Fred Salvucci Corp, Burlington, MA

**Stone Supplier:** Valders Stone & Marble, Valders, WI

### Juror Comments

*“The designers of this university welcoming and admissions center were asked to use limestone cladding to honor the palette and warmth of the other stone buildings on campus. The project has a robust and energetic massing that is complimented by the use of stone, meticulously detailed and crafted to provide a seamless texture of alternately sized horizontal bands of limestone. This is not easy to do given the geometry of the structure, but it appears to be executed faultlessly. The stone gives the building a beacon-like quality as if it is lit from within. The gestural form, clothed in its warm mantle of stone panels must be an irresistible draw for both visitors and students, thus achieving its purpose.”*

