

Owner

Boston College,
Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Architect

McGinley Kalsow & Associates Inc.,
Somerville, Mass.

Engineer of Record

LeMessurier Consultants,
Cambridge, Mass.

Contractor

Phoenix Bay State Construction
Company Inc.,
Boston, Mass.

Precaster

Bétons Préfabriqués du Lac,
Alma, QC, Canada

Precast/Caststone Consultant

Building & Monument Conservation,
Arlington, Mass.

Best School, Co-Winner Restoration of Boston College's Gasson Hall Tower Chestnut Hill, Mass.

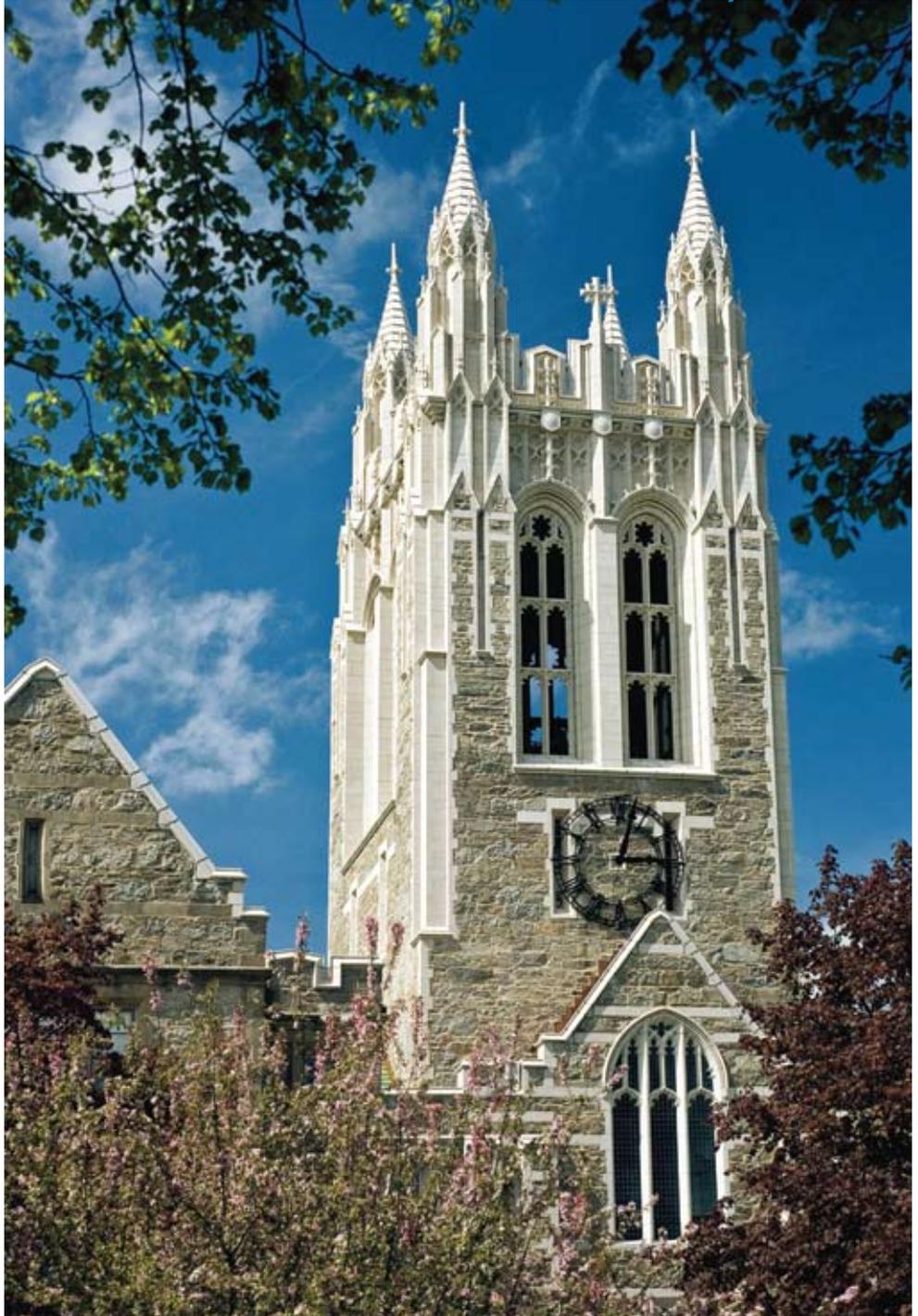
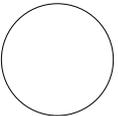


Photo courtesy of Lee Pellegrini.



Repairing and restoring Gasson Hall Tower on Boston College's historic Chestnut Hill, Mass., campus was no small feat. The 96-year-old hall was the first building constructed on the campus, and its 175-ft-tall (53 m) tower has become a landmark in the community. After nearly 100 years of exposure, the original cast stone was weathered and starting to fail.

Architects relied on the versatility of precast concrete to faithfully replicate the details of the tower, replacing the original cast stone with new matching cast stone. The walls were constructed of local puddingstone, while all of the original trim and ornamental details were fabricated from cast stone tinted to resemble limestone.

To compensate for the loss of detail due to weathering, each unit was refinished by hand to simulate natural stone tooling prior to making a mold from that unit. To improve durability and long-term performance, a new anchoring system was engineered and some small units were combined to create larger units with false joints.

Because the worksite was restricted and the geometry of the tower complex, each unit was numbered to identify its location in the wall and each stone was delivered to the jobsite in the sequence that it would be set.

Mold and pattern making took 11 months, and production of the nearly 3300 units took about a year, with the more than 450 unique shapes. The units were installed as they were cured, and installation took 14 months.

"For many years precast concrete has expanded its technical capabilities, increased its structural capacities, and improved durability and performance characteristics," says the architect, Wendall Kalsow of McGinley Kalsow & Associates in Somerville, Mass. "This project advances the aesthetic frontier of precast and cast stone and demonstrates its potential role in significant historic preservation projects."

JUDGES' COMMENTS

This project was cited because of its really unusual nature. It's a precast concrete solution to replace what was a cast stone product, and it really provided an example of how an architect can use precast concrete to really re-create an authentic gothic structure. The thoroughness of the detail and the cleverness of the connections and the effective form reuse were considered remarkable.

Photo courtesy of Wendall Kalsow.



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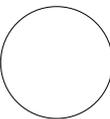


Photo courtesy of Chris Ripman.



Photo courtesy of Ed Film.