**Variations on a Theme**

Indiana Limestone has long been used as cutstone in monumental buildings. Cathedrals, banks, office buildings all have used it, sometimes as much for its image of solidity, strength and timelessness as for those real qualities.

But Indiana Limestone is known as well for its other, equally serviceable form: standard products sold by the ton or lineal foot and used in thousands of low-rise buildings, residences and other types of light construction.

The most familiar of these products is strip ashlar. It is an alternate for brick in price and installation, but the visual and practical results are an improvement on the busy-ness of brick walls. Instead of 20% mortar area, limestone ashlar construction averages less than 8%. Individual stones may act as lintels, eliminating the need for angles to span window and door openings. Stone sills eliminate the multiple joints which fail and admit water in brick sills.

After the owner occupies his building, the advantages of Indiana Limestone ashlar become even more apparent. Greater weight per piece results in better mortar compression and more weather-tightness in walls; the light-neutral color of Indiana Limestone reflects a greater percentage of summer sun. This reduces air conditioning costs.

Given both the aesthetic and practical advantages of Indiana Limestone standard products, plus their low in-the-wall cost, it is not surprising that architects and builders consistently specify these materials, or that their clients appreciate the solid track record of century-proven Indiana Limestone.

Indiana Limestone’s list of standard products includes “sill stock.” These rectangular slabs are sawed to varying thicknesses and widths and are used as sills, coping, jambs and headers. Their smooth surfaces complement the usually rougher faces of the ashlar material. Or, their light-neutral color contrasts to darker brick. Jambs and headers have the effect of unitizing delicate wall openings and weather surfaces to add a strength built-up elements cannot equal.

Window and door openings are sensitive to lateral building movement and compressive forces. Lintels or headers of solid stone eliminate the need for lintel angles; they support brick or stone above and do not require painting. Limestone jambs protect masonry work return; they resist racking that results from lateral thrust.

Not only are such door and window openings structurally more sound, but they contribute to improved esthetics through the “framing phenomenon” which prevents openings from appearing simply as holes punched in the walls.

Sill stock used as coping also protects upper wall surfaces. It is more effective and less expensive than metal coping or gravel stop, and is usually considered more pleasing esthetically. Coping stones provide wash and drip protection to keep walls dry. Properly installed, stone coping will outlast and outperform metal substitutes.

Quoins can be built of sill stock to reinforce and delineate building corners. Quoined corners may be viewed as purely decorative, or as suggesting an architectural style, but they serve a very sound structural purpose in strengthening corners to resist eccentric forces and uneven settlement.
The key to these standard products is their versatility. From a simple substitution of three-height splitface ashlar for energy-intensive brick to an imaginative juxtaposition of rustic ashlar, weathered barn siding and stone-rimmed plantings, the uses of Indiana Limestone standard products present architect, builder, developer and their clients with a varied palette of inexpensive building blocks.

Neither special skills nor tools are required to install these useful materials. Their presence in a building signals thoughtful architecture and client concern for image as well as conservation because Indiana Limestone is the least energy-intensive material in common use. It saves billions of BTU's annually over brick, concrete, glass and steel.

Beyond these advantages, standard products have all the qualities that exist naturally in other forms of Indiana Limestone. They are weather-resistant; they require little or no maintenance to retain their natural, light-neutral color tone; once in place they work passively to keep interior temperatures at the selected levels. Standard products are available from a wide network of distributors and dealers. They require no heavy in-house investment in engineering or detailing, and no time-consuming instruction in their use is required.

No other building material available contributes so generously to good architecture, sound construction and low maintenance as Indiana Limestone. In any of its forms, this natural stone product is an economical one. Standard products of Indiana Limestone offer so wide a range of benefits that their popularity is no surprise.

Splitface ashlar (lower photo) may be set with ordinary mortar, or with darkened mortar as shown here. Shorter lengths (shown in the middle photo) deemphasize horizontal lines and give a rustic appearance. Broken roughface slabs may be set on edge in a webwall pattern to create an even more rustic appearance (upper photo).
Often seen in conjunction with rockface, splitface, or step applications and brick work, decorative railings or balustrades add a touch of class to the project which utilizes them. The beauty and workability of Indiana Limestone, combined with its weather and wear resistance, produce designs and uses of almost unlimited application. I.L.I and its member companies will be happy to comment further on the availability, installation, and maintenance of such products.

Indiana Limestone step treads have been used for all types of buildings. Properly installed and maintained, they will give many years of service. The recent trend toward the increased use of natural stone in residential architecture, coupled with continuing commercial and institutional applications, has resulted in an increased use of Indiana Limestone standard products including flagstone which is ideal for pool decks, patios, and stoops, stone for retaining walls, garden terrace steps and other landscaping uses, and the step treads and balustrades pictured on this page. Though available in various styles, the pictured treads are sawn six sides, then rockfaced.
Indiana Limestone is classified by ILI, both by color and by grade. The colors are buff, which varies from a light creamy shade to a brownish buff, and gray, which varies from a light silvery gray to shades of bluish gray. The grading system takes into account the grain structure and prevalence of natural characteristics in the stone. The grades are select, a fine to average-grained stone having a controlled minimum of the natural characteristics; standard, a fine to moderately large-grained stone permitting an average number of natural characteristics; and rustic, which is a fine to very coarse-grained stone permitting an above-average number of natural characteristics. Variegated stone is defined as an unspecified mixture of grades, permitting both the buff and gray colors. Specifications of variegated stone may receive an uncertain percentage of individual stones containing both colors, while other stones may be all buff or all gray. Illustrated in the picture on this page, variegated stone is generally cost-effective, while giving a unique look to the building. While variegated Indiana Limestone has been used on various types of buildings, it is especially attractive when used in standard products such as random and coursed ashlar, in both smooth and splitfaced finishes.

The subtle shading of Indiana Limestone cannot be fully captured by photographs. This is especially true of variegated Indiana Limestone, which contains an unspecifiable percentage of both color tones. For this reason, interested parties are urged to obtain samples of Indiana Limestone from ILI member companies. A current membership list is available upon request.

The first commercial Indiana Limestone quarry opened in Stinesville, a small town west of Bloomington, in 1827, though the stone had been used prior to this by early settlers for cabin sills and foundations, as well as for memorials. Though it is found only in Lawrence, Monroe, and Owen Counties in Indiana, ILI believes that, utilizing current quarrying methods, a 500- to 1000-year supply of this amazing material, the Nation’s Building Stone, remains available.