



NICHIHA CASE STUDY

Hilton Garden Inn Modular Project

Modular construction isn't just a passing trend or buzzword. It's increasingly becoming a standard in the construction industry as more and more architects, design-build firms and builders embrace it. And for good reason: Permanent modular construction (PMC) reduces the time it takes to build and number of subcontractors needed, while at the same time allowing for safer job sites and lower construction costs.

A New Prefab Design for an Established Hotel Brand

The team at Architects Orange needed a time-efficient solution for the newest Hilton Garden Inn project in San Jose, California that would also provide cost savings over a conventional construction build. Additionally, they needed a design for the hotel that would bring it distinction in the rapidly evolving city of San Jose, which is seeing vibrant growth with the burgeoning tech and startup culture.

"We wanted to think about the future, to think out of the box, but also respect Hilton and that prototype — without it being a typical hotel prototype," explains Duc Hyunh, design associate at Architects Orange (AO).



PROJECT DETAILS

ARCHITECT

Architects Orange

DESIGNER

Duc Hyunh

LEAD ARCHITECT

Ninad Chaukkar

INSTALLATION MANAGER

Matt Zawadzki

LOCATION

San Jose, California

PRODUCT

[Illumination](#) - Custom Colors

COMPLETION

2021

CHALLENGE

The Hilton Garden Inn project came with brand style requirements, customizations and a tight timeline. The modular construction was specified before the COVID virus hit, but after the project began, the pandemic and California wildfires added further delays to the project.

SOLUTION

Architects at Architect Orange selected Nichiha Illumination panels, which are easily installed and provide a rainscreen and durable protection for commercial buildings, and work well for commercial modular construction projects like the Hilton Garden Inn.

RESULTS

Installers were able to set up Nichiha cladding quickly and efficiently because of the clip installation system, and the Hilton Garden Inn project was completed without significant setbacks—besides a pandemic and wildfires.

The modular construction process allowed for an efficient timeline for the Hilton Garden Inn in San Jose, even during COVID and one of the worst wildfire crises in California at the time.

To do that, they needed quality products that were suitable for modular construction, such as Nichiha's high-performance Architectural Wall Panels.

Prefab or modular construction is one of AO's specialties. "We currently have about 25-30 modular projects, and we do modular in different types of applications, from multifamily residential to student housing to senior housing," explains Ninad Chaukar, lead architect for the Hilton project. "It's very cost-effective, and the sites where they stick-build there can be a lot of waste."

Fast Modular Construction Meets COVID and Wildfires

The modular construction process allowed for an efficient timeline for the Hilton Garden Inn in San Jose, even during one of the worst wildfire crises in California at the time. Time is always of the essence in construction, but this project faced a new level of difficulty. The COVID pandemic brought delays to the project early on, and the weather conditions in the area put pressure on the builders working at the site.



Nichiha's Architectural Wall Panels (AWP) added to the speedy build, but the team at AO selected it for the exterior style impact, as well. "The material is economical and will stand the test of time," says Ninad. "It has great exterior appeal, as well. Just looking at other materials, we thought that Nichiha provided a great commercial product, and it was reasonable for our client's pocket."

Nichiha also worked with the vertical application. "We didn't know if Nichiha could do that. But the technical rep with Nichiha helped and provided us with the confidence that we could install vertically," Ninad says.

Nichiha cladding provides multiple solutions for commercial exteriors and also works well for commercial modular building projects. As opposed to traditional construction, in modular building construction, almost everything is built off-site inside a factory's controlled environment first. "There were 150 rooms, 70 plus modules, shipped one by one from Boise," explains Ninad. "The rooms are completely furnished, with the TVs and lamps and everything, and even the bathrooms were completely done."

Once the modular manufacturers were finished, the modules were shipped to the site in San Jose and the installers could get to work.

"The process was insane; there were all these trucks, then cranes stacking the boxes," says Matt Zawadzki, who managed the installation of the Hilton's exterior.

"It was so organized. I can't remember the last time I had a project go this smoothly. There were days I wasn't getting any calls for the project; it was great," laughs Matt.

“I have a good relationship with our technical rep at Nichiha, and we can always reach out and get help on a project.”

MATT ZAWADZKI
INSTALLATION MANAGER, HILTON GARDEN INN SAN JOSE



Nichiha Helps Builds Go Smoother

Matt has worked with Nichiha before and is familiar with the fiber cement cladding product. “I’ve got Illumination in my office, VintageWood in parts of the office building. It looks great,” he says.

Nichiha cladding helped to make the modular construction process of the Hilton project go more smoothly, especially because of the clip installation system. “It’s the best clip installation system out there, and it’s a huge advantage on any project,” says Matt.

Matt knows that he can rely on Nichiha’s technical team for their responsiveness and service, as well. “I have a good relationship with our technical rep at Nichiha, and we can always reach out and get a tech rep to help on a project,” says Matt. “I’ve been trying to get Nichiha on as many of these projects as possible.”

The smooth installation, technical help and quality control benefits that Nichiha brought to the project helped to make it a successful build. “Nichiha makes it easier to come up with a solution because you can field cut it on-site, paint the edges and you’re good to go,” says Matt.

The architectural team was pleased with the installation as well. The Hilton Garden Inn exterior features a combination of different materials, which includes

Nichiha’s Illumination panels alongside a more standard construction method and finish: stucco. “The Nichiha panels were built-up on the south side of the building, and I was surprised it happened so fast. They had to wait for the stucco guy to finish because it happened so fast,” laughs Ninad.

Modular Construction Plus Nichiha is Fast and It’s the Future

Modular construction is a new concept for people outside of the construction services industry, even for inspectors and city planners, but Ninad sees this type of permanent modular building construction becoming the standard for more efficient building projects. “New mods coming up have the exteriors already installed. There will eventually be no more construction on the site beyond waterproofing. The next wave is faster construction,” says Ninad.

High-quality Nichiha Illumination panels helped to make the Hilton Garden Inn project a successful, efficient build, and also brought an element of style to the exterior. “We needed to energize the design with Nichiha, and we were looking for more innovative solutions. Nichiha was playful to the facade, that’s why you see the various patterns,” says Duc. “It really stands out,” he says.

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Nichiha USA, Inc., a subsidiary of Nichiha Corporation, was established 1998 and is headquartered in Johns Creek, GA. Nichiha Corporation, an international leader in fiber cement technology for more than 35 years, has 13 plants worldwide and markets distinct patterns of fiber cement siding products in the U.S. In 2007, Nichiha opened its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Macon, GA, responding to an increase in demand for fiber cement products in the Southeast market. For more information, call 1.86.NICHIHA1 or visit www.nichiha.com.

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