PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

CONTRACTOR
Marcello Tile Company
Albany, New York

CUSTOMER
Macy’s® Herald Square
New York, New York

APPLICATOR
Pyramid Floor Covering
New York, New York

GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Structure Tone Incorporated
New York, New York

ARCHITECT
Callison Architects
New York, New York
Situation

When the world’s largest department store, Macy’s® Herald Square, began an unprecedented 3-year, $400 million renovation, the project became the ideal showcase for the remarkable range of LATICRETE® floor preparation products and installation systems, including the LATICRETE® SUPERCAP® System.

While the spectacular renovation plans included everything from restoring the store’s historic wood elevators to adding a new table-service restaurant, there was significant focus on expanding retail selling space by converting stock rooms and offices — areas possibly over a century old — that had never required the professional flooring treatments used on the Macy’s public sales floors. This included evaluating 80,000 sq. ft. (3,716 sq. meter) of wood flooring on the store’s fourth floor and determining the best method to prepare the entire space for the installation of large ceramic tiles.

Challenge

The first challenge was how best to create a new floor substrate over uneven, decades-old 3/8” (1 cm) thick T&G hardwood. Stephen DeGaray, President of Pyramid Floor Covering, the LATICRETE SUPERCAP applicator in New York City, said, “We were standing on the fourth floor, in a space that was built just after the turn of the 20th century. The retail floors had been renovated and covered many times over, while some of the office and stockroom space had hardly been touched — in some places it was the original wood floors. A lot of history for Macy’s, but a lot of challenges for us.”

In some areas, as much as three inches (7 cm) of self-leveling material would need to be poured to level out the floor and compensate for substantial deflection. The project specifications demanded complete moisture control, flatness specifications in compliance with Division 9 standards, and given the age of the building, a keen focus on minimizing the weight load of the substrate and tile materials placed over the old hardwood floor.

The second challenge? One story down on Macy’s third floor, home to their womens’ sportswear and menswear departments, not to mention a Starbucks® coffee bar, it was “business as usual” during the renovation project. It was crucial that nothing fell or dripped from the fourth floor work area onto the sales floor directly below.
A LATICRETE® Solution

Pyramid’s LATICRETE application team began by lining the entire 40,000 sq ft (3,716 sq. meter) wood floor with a leakproof barrier, consisting of 6 mil polyethylene sheeting. To ensure superior bonding and strengthening, galvanized wire lath was fastened over the poly sheathing.

The patented pump truck from LATICRETE® SUPERCAP® was stationed on the side street next to Macy’s®, and Pyramid was able to safely pump quick-drying LATICRETE SC500LW self-leveling material from street level directly to the fourth floor. The project was divided into five phases, the largest of which included the pouring of 25,000 sq. ft. (2,322 sq. meter) of material during a single overnight shift.

In order to reduce the overall weight of the self-leveling surface, Pyramid’s project team proposed an innovative solution, substituting glass beads as the aggregate instead of sand, resulting in a 1/3 weight reduction on the floor.

Outcome

Within hours, the poured LATICRETE SUPERCAP substrate was safe to walk on and inspect, to confirm the entire surface met the extremely demanding tolerances for flatness and floor deflection. Contractor Marcello Tile Company used the LATICRETE® line of premium thinset and grout products to install thousands of 12” X 24” (30 mm x 61 mm) ceramic tiles on the new fourth floor at Macy’s Herald Square. By using a broad range of Laticrete products, the project qualifies for an enhanced warranty.

“On a project of this size, in a landmark building like Macy’s®, we can’t afford any surprises or delays,” said Dominick DeAngelis, CEO of Marcello Tile Company. “The only surprise for me was how smoothly the application process went, and how perfectly the Laticrete products worked together.”

— Dominick DeAngelis,
CEO of Marcello Tile Company