



Innovative Tile and Stone
Installation Systems

Harvard Law School Project Spotlight: February 2012



LOCATION:
Harvard Law School
Cambridge, MA

ARCHITECTURAL FIRM:
Robert A. M. Stern
New York, NY

STONE CONTRACTOR:
J.A.J. Co Inc.
Medford, MA

FLOORING CONTRACTOR:
Joseph Cohn & Son
North Haven, CT

LATICRETE DISTRIBUTOR:
Daltille
North Haven, CT and Woburn, MA



Harvard Law for the 21st Century: Wasserstein Hall, Caspersen Student Center and Clinical Wing Project

by Tanja Kern

Harvard Law School is renowned for turning out highly qualified attorneys who become leaders in every area of law, and part of the school's success relies on offering its students state-of-the-art facilities that honor both technology and tradition. This is certainly the case with the school's most recent project, the Northwest Corner Complex. A beautiful blend of natural stone, tile, metal and glass, the project sets a new standard for construction on the Harvard campus. LATICRETE was fortunate enough to be a part of this historic \$130 million project that is transforming both student life and learning.

It became increasingly clear in recent years that some of Harvard Law's core facilities needed expansion to support an enlarged curriculum, expanding research and clinical programs—not to mention a steady increase in the number of faculty. The school's current facilities just couldn't meet the demands of its 1,900 full-time students and the planned program expansions.

University administrators hired Robert A. M. Stern, Architects, LLP to tackle this massive project. The 38-year-old New York-based firm has extensive experience in educational facilities. Most recently, the Stern team designed Spangler Hall for the Harvard Business School—a highly successful facility that serves some of the same “gathering-place” purposes that the new center would serve. Stern's firm conducted the programming and site planning for project along with the design 250,000 square-foot project.

The new complex houses three centers: Wasserstein Hall, an academic center designed

for 21st century education; the Caspersen Student Center, a central gathering place for students; and the Clinical Wing, which will house the school's expanding clinical programs.

Harvard Law's former Dean Elena Kagan worked closely with Stern's team to ensure that Wasserstein Hall would incorporate both historic and modern aspects. While the exterior facade include features and materials reminiscent of the more traditional architecture seen at Harvard's Austin and Langdell halls, they pair well with more modern elements such as a glass curtain wall that overlooks a courtyard.

“It will dramatically improve the teaching environment, provide new spaces for student activities and significantly strengthen the learning community,” Kagan said. “Like the law itself, this project has solid grounding in the past but looks toward the future.”

The Northwest Corner complex is expected to receive Gold LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), one of the highest award levels for environmental design. Although project managers did not specifically aim for Gold certification, the Law School incorporated environmentally friendly materials as long as they were financially feasible. The building takes advantage natural light and reuses rainwater from the roof for irrigation. Seventy-five percent of the construction waste was also recycled or reused rather than being sent to landfills, according to a report on the sustainability of the project.

The project included a variety of natural materials, and Medford, Mass.-based J.A.J. Co. Inc.,

known for its stone and masonry expertise, was responsible for many of the Northwest Corner complex stone installations.

Vinnie Penta and his crew installed 30,000 square feet of natural slate on the floors and 10,000 square feet of Portuguese limestone on the walls.

“For those types of installations, we always use LATICRETE® 3701 Fortified Mortar Bed,” Penta says. The one-step, pre-mixed mortar is designed to save stone contractors time on the job because it does not require any jobsite blending. It is also ready for foot traffic in just 16 hours. “I’ve been here for 16 years and we always use LATICRETE products for the installations,” Penta says. “For this project, we particularly relied on LATICRETE for their technical expertise because we had three arches that spanned 30 feet. The limestone was very large and heavy, and we needed to ensure that each piece adhered properly. “We typically rely on the LATICRETE 310 high strength Epoxy mortar for these difficult applications.”

The new student center was designed to be a gathering place and will serve as a home for student organizations, journals and social activities. For years, the university lacked the facilities to house these activities well, and this new building will not only house the activities, they will provide a backdrop for students to hang out, work together and generate a great buzz of activity.

That buzz includes expanded dining options, complemented with a new state-of-the-art dining facility in Harkness Commons. New this fall, students and staff will enjoy a wood-fired pizza oven menu, Asian stir-fry stations and gelato.

Joseph Cohn & Son, a premier commercial flooring installation firm based in North Haven, Conn., was hired to install the tile in the new kitchen and

public restrooms. “To install the new 12 x 24-inch and 12 x 12-inch tiles, we had to make sure that we had a good base, so we used LATICRETE self-leveling underlayment mortar,” says Robert Monico, vice president of Joseph Cohn & Son. “This wasn’t a new floor—we had some existing materials to work around—so ensuring that we had a level subfloor was the single most important element in creating a quality finished floor.”

LATICRETE 86 LatiLevel™ underlayment allowed Monico’s team to pour the leveling agent from a feathered edge to a 1-inch thickness in one pour, making it a fast and durable solution for a host of flooring issues. It produced a smooth, flat surface with excellent durability.

The team then used LATICRETE 272 Mortar gauged with the LATICRETE 333 Superflexible Admix to install the ceramic tile. This high-performance cementitious powder was mixed with latex for a strong, durable installation.

To make certain that the tile would remain looking new for years to come, the team finished the installation with LATICRETE SpectraLOCK® PRO Premium Grout, which Monico uses because it’s stainproof, extremely durable and color uniformity.

“We’ve been using LATICRETE products for 30 years,” Monico says. “In fact, we use LATICRETE for 99.9 percent of all the jobs we do. For a job as large as the Harvard Law project, we just know we can trust these products to perform well and have long-lasting durability. Our reputation relies on it.”

