MALL OF SAN JUAN

Project Spotlight

CUSTOMER: Taubman Company
Bloomfield Hills, MI

ARCHITECT: Hobbs + Black
Ann Arbor, MI

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: DICK/Bird
Clairton, PA

TILE CONTRACTOR: Gemstar Canada Inc.
Bolton, Ontario

CONSULTING ARCHITECT: Professional Consultants International
Avon, CT
Challenge

The Mall of San Juan project faced three major challenges:

**Location and Scale** — As with any island, Puerto Rico is limited in its ability to produce large quantities of materials. This is an especially difficult hurdle for such a large project. The Taubman Company needed a supplier that could deliver the right materials on time.

**Exacting Design Specifications** — The project required the highest level of quality and care. For example, to reduce the chance of cracking the Mall of San Juan’s design team insisted that all stone be installed upon a two inch (50 mm) wire reinforced mortar bed rather than directly over concrete. The Taubman Company needed a partner that could assist with the design and testing of their approach.

**Varying Tile Orientation and Type** — The project called for differing types of stone in varying colors to be used on both vertical and horizontal surfaces. The Taubman Company benefited from a team that could supply expert testing, technical services and creative problem solving.

Fortunately, LATICRETE and the tile contractor GemStar were on hand to supply the best products in a timely manner, serve as true project partners and provide expert counsel when needed.

Situation

With Nordstrom® and Saks Fifth Avenue® serving as its retail anchors, the Mall of San Juan is the first upscale mall in Puerto Rico.

This two-level, enclosed mall, features a 179,000 sq. ft (16,630 m²) natural stone floor spanning the property’s common areas. The floor uses several different types of stone in varying colors to create a sweeping wave pattern.

LATICRETE was deeply involved in the project and helped its owner, the Taubman Company, and its architects, Hobbs + Black design and construct a state-of-the-art facility.

“Concrete always cracks and Taubman needed a true high-performance solution to protect from cracks coming through the tile. Mall floors must be exceptionally flat and on a floor this size, it would be complicated and needlessly expensive to line up all the mortar joints with the concrete expansion joints.”

— Wayne Hoerning
LATICRETE International Regional Manager for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

“We know that one key to saving time and money is fast installation times. So we proposed using a non-mechanical method — LATAPOXY® 310 — to adhere large stone panels on all the interior walls. The Mall of San Juan’s owners agreed to this approach and the outcome speaks for itself.”

— Dano Rossi, P. Eng
Gemstar Canada Inc.
A LATICRETE Solution

LATICRETE provided critical support to the architects and contractors well before any materials arrived onsite, determining the proper bed and adhesive required for each of the multiple different stone types. LATICRETE arranged for testing conducted by the Tile Council of North America prior to specifying the materials.

Once construction began, LATICRETE facilities were able to quickly deliver materials from its production facilities. This was especially important when 53 ocean shipping containers were required for the delivery of the mortar alone.

Initial application specifications called for LATICRETE® 4XLT polymer-fortified adhesive mortar, as it’s designed for large module tile and stone. 4-XLT can be built up thicker than traditional thin set mortars and provided a good solution for the heavy and large module tile and stone finishes. TCNA’s extensive testing provided assurance the 4-XLT would provide the proper adhesion.

4-XLT is a multi-use, polymer-fortified adhesive mortar. 4-XLT offers tremendous utility including non-sag wall installations, large and heavy tile mortar build up of up to 3/4” (19 mm) and thin-set applications of floors.

A full thick bed installation system consisting of multiple LATICRETE materials was utilized on the project, starting with 3701 Fortified Mortar Bed.

3701 Fortified Mortar Bed is a polymer fortified blend of carefully selected polymers, portland cement and graded aggregates. 3701 Fortified Mortar Bed does not require the use of latex admix, you only need to add water to produce thick bed mortar with exceptional strength.

Since mall projects typically have aggressive timetables, the project specs called for rapid-setting and easy-to-use PERMACOLOR® Grout and LATASIL™ sealant.

PERMACOLOR is an ANSI A118.7 compliant rapid-setting, high-performance, color consistent cement grout that provides a grout joint that is dense and hard.

LATASIL sealant is a high performance, one component, neutral cure, 100% silicone sealant designed for ceramic tile and stone applications. Applicable wherever stone must abut another type of surface, LATASIL provides a flexible sealant joint that matches the color of PERMACOLOR Grout.

As the job unfolded, tile contractor GemStar noticed the stone on the walls called for mechanical anchors which affected the space’s uniform appearance. GemStar recommended the Mall of San Juan, instead, use LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive to adhere large stone panels on all the interior walls.

LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive is a two-component, high strength epoxy adhesive, formulated for spot bonding of tile and stone installations on vertical surfaces. It maintains its non-sag consistency at high temperatures up to 95°F (35°C) and offers a fast, permanent bond with a rapid 45 minute to one hour set time.

Outcome

LATICRETE, GemStar and the Taubman Company are all happy with the project’s outcome.

In fact, the Mall of San Juan project is being done in conjunction with several other Taubman malls in the continental US, all of them very challenging projects. LATICRETE products are being used extensively throughout. The Taubman Company and Hobbs + Black know how LATICRETE products perform well from previous experience, recently at five malls including Sarasota, FL and Springfield, VA.

LATICRETE is proud to now be included in Taubman’s specifications, and to have earned sufficient trust to be called upon to help resolve demanding problems when they arise.