



Complexe Desjardins food-court renovation

Montreal, QC, Canada



Project Information

Project category:
Public Buildings – Renovation

Year of construction:
1976

Year of MAPEI involvement:
2021

MAPEI representative:
François Croteau

MAPEI distributor:
Prosol inc. – Montreal

Project owner:
Desjardins Group

General contractor:
Décarel

Installer:
Les Carrelages Serco inc.

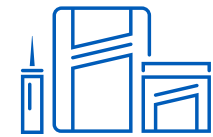
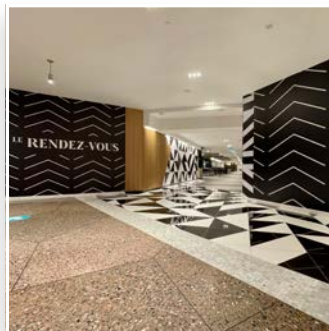
Architect:
Régis Côté and Associates

Photographer:
Ralph Thompson (PhotoImagerie)
and Scott Murray



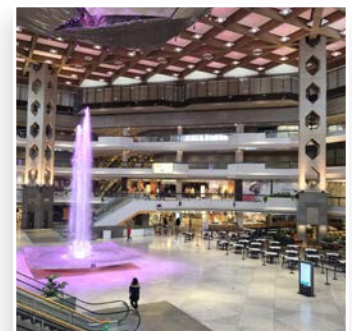
Project Overview

When a nearly half-century-old food court serving three office towers and a shopping center in the heart of Montreal's festival district needed revamping, the owners saw an opportunity to renovate in style. The project incorporated a wide range of tiling options and some innovative features that were made possible using products from MAPEI's Tile & Stone Installation Systems and Floor Covering Installation Systems lines.



Products Used

- Kerapoxy®**
- Mapeguard® UM**
- MAPEI Ultralite® Mortar**
- Novoplan® 2 Plus**
- Primer L™**
- Ultracolor® Plus FA**
- Ultraflex LHT®**
- Ultraflex® RS**
- Ultraplan® M20 Plus**



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MAPEI helps provide stylish makeover for Montreal food court

In the heart of Montreal, Quebec's, famous "Quartier des Spectacles" (French for "entertainment district"), where the renowned Montreal International Jazz Festival and Just for Laughs comedy festival draw hundreds of thousands of spectators, stands the three octagonally footed towers of Complexe Desjardins. Built in 1976, the multifunctional complex became an instant symbol of the new spirit of French-Quebec entrepreneurship as summed up in the slogan, "Maîtres chez nous" ("masters of our own house").

The construction of Complexe Desjardins coincided with Montreal stepping up on the world stage and hosting such landmark events as the 1967 International and Universal Exposition (or, Expo 67) and the 1976 Summer Olympics. Complexe Desjardins also sits right next to the world-class Place des Arts performing-arts center, which is home to the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Complexe Desjardins' massive, central atrium-plaza "La Grande-Place" is the size of a small city block; the plaza's floor is at subterranean level and its ceiling partially incorporates glazed glass a distant five levels above. The food court overlaps the plaza's edge on the bottom level and stretches out under one side of the complex.

In 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic and local public-health measures keeping the complex much quieter than before, Desjardins Group management decided that the lack of

activity presented a great opportunity to spruce up the entire food-court area, which covers about 42,000 square feet (3 902 m²) of walls and floors. The decision was also made to rename the food court "Le Rendez-vous," or "Meeting place," to highlight its fashionable new design.

MAPEI on the job

"In all, more than 20 types of tile were installed, some requiring thin-set mortar, some large-format and some on walls requiring a mortar with nonslump, non-sag properties," said MAPEI sales representative François Croteau, who served as MAPEI's representative on the project.

With 85 years of experience and product development to call upon, MAPEI had all the right products to meet whatever specific challenges the variety of tiling required.

Work began in August 2021 when the complex was sparsely used due to ongoing public-health measures that were related to the pandemic. In fact, on the basis of those measures possibly becoming endemic, architects from Régis Côté and Associates included such unprecedented elements as widened walkways to ease social-distancing requirements, as well as the addition of two open-entry areas that are devoted strictly to handwashing – aside from the usual facilities in the public washrooms.

However, the core principle in the firm's design was kept intact, as posted on



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a floor-to-ceiling sign near the food-court entrance (translated from French): “We wanted to create a meeting place offering a range of warm and friendly environments for you to enjoy a meal or a coffee, alone or in good company.”

Under the guise of the general contractor, Décarel, the previous floor coverings were stripped right down to the concrete slab, which was then prepared and profiled before applying a coat of **Primer L** acrylic latex primer to improve the bond of the self-leveling underlayments (SLUs). Either of two fast-curing MAPEI SLUs – **Novoplan 2 Plus** and **Ultraplan M20 Plus** – were applied, based on specifier recommendations for different sections of the floor.

To provide long-lasting quality and added durability, the Les Carrelages Serco team installed **Mapeguard UM** premium-performance, lightweight, waterproofing and vapor-pressure-equalizing underlayment membrane throughout. The unique engineered tri-layered design of **Mapeguard UM** provides crack suppression by absorbing lateral stress from the substrate without transferring this force to the tile, maintaining exceptional bonds.

With an eye towards timesaving, the **Mapeguard UM** membrane was affixed using **Ultraflex RS** premium, rapid-setting tile mortar with polymer. **Ultraflex RS** was applied both underneath the membrane (to adhere it firmly to the substrate) and as a scratch coat on top (to fill the voids). Thanks to MAPEI’s High-Hydrated Cement Technology (HCT™), **Ultraflex RS** offers superior drying-out characteristics for quick curing, allowing the installation crew to apply the next coat within as little as 2 to 3 hours.

As noted above, the mortars selected for tiling in different areas were dependent on a few key factors. For example, very large and heavy floor tiles were set using

Ultraflex LHT polymer-modified, large-and-heavy-tile mortar that is formulated with Easy Glide Technology™ for ease of application with excellent adhesion to the substrate and tile.

Meanwhile, on walls and certain areas requiring a premium-grade mortar,



installers used **MAPEI Ultralite Mortar**, a lightweight, single-component thin-set mortar that can also be used for large-and-heavy-tile and non-sag applications. The versatile **Kerapoxy** was also used in some instances. As a premium-grade, water-cleanable, 100%-solids, high-strength, chemical-resistant, non-sagging, epoxy grout and mortar, **Kerapoxy** offers excellent stain and chemical resistance, making it ideal for use on smaller-format tiles in washroom and countertop areas.

In most areas, including the floors, grouting was completed using the polymer-modified, **Ultracolor Plus FA** grout. It was developed using MAPEI’s HCT to eliminate the common problems related to Portland-cement grout, such as color consistency and efflorescence (the white film that can appear on tile surfaces over time). Additionally,

Ultracolor Plus FA’s formulation incorporates DropEffect™ technology, which reduces surface absorption to help repel water, dirt and grime from penetrating grout joints, thus allowing for easier maintenance.

As an added benefit, all products used in this project were third-party tested and third-party certified for low VOC content and low VOC emissions, achieving Indoor Advantage Gold certification from SCS Global Services to meet California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Standard Method v1.2-2017. The testing of the products is the most stringent type of testing that is available in North America.

While the complexity of the job was exceptional, the quality of the finished food court is eye-popping. Considering the many challenging aspects of installing the various shapes and sizes of tile with their respective technical needs, the whole project came together dazzlingly well. And, it was completed in just four months, equally ready for public gatherings under stringent social distancing and public-hygiene restrictions or for crowds as large as the legendary “joie de vivre” spirit of Montreal’s festival seasons will allow in the years to come.

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