

The design of this architectural masterpiece was
THE SPENCER THEATER inspired by its
 dramatic New Mexico backdrop.

by Craig Hamilton



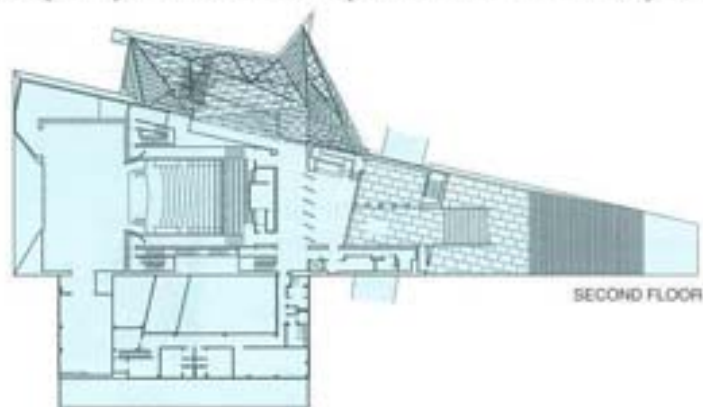
Gleaming white in the distance like the temple of an unknown civilization, a building stands out in bold relief on the flat, windswept mesa in the high desert of southeastern

New Mexico. It's neither a mystery nor a mirage, however, but the very real fulfillment of a dream: the Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts.

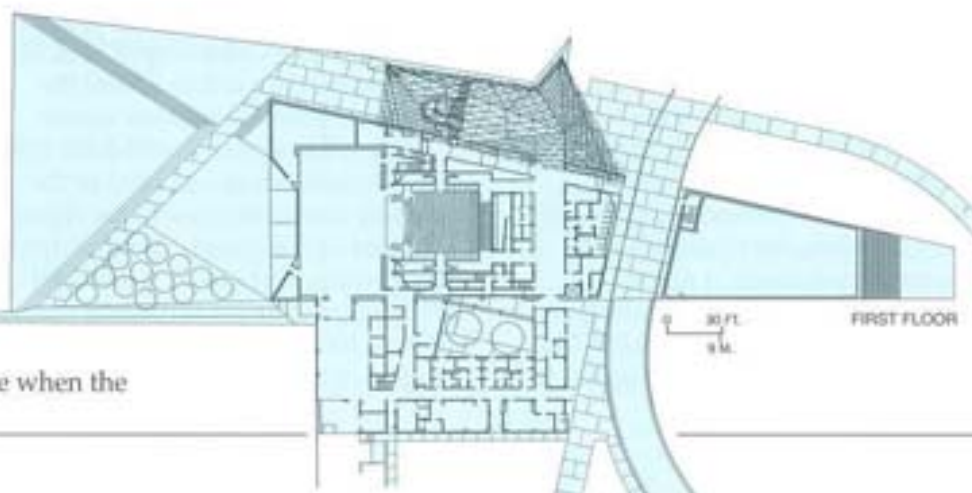
It all started in 1948 when Mrs. Jackie Spencer moved to the little town of Alto, New Mexico after her marriage to A. N. Spencer, a prominent local cattle rancher. Many years later, while attending an outdoor concert in Boston, Massachusetts it occurred to Mrs. Spencer that her corner of the American Southwest would provide a magnificent setting for music. It took fifteen years and twenty million dollars for Mrs. Spencer to make her dream come true when the

514-seat theater finally opened in October, 1997.

Mrs. Spencer wanted to locate the theater in splendid isolation on the mesa near Alto. One day while she was scouting out the terrain with some friends, one of them came across a type of template once used for making violins. Half buried in the ground, it had probably been there for a hundred years. The discovery was interpreted as a sign. The theater was subsequently built on a 20-acre parcel of land on that very site,



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

PHOTO 1



a few miles from the town of Ruidoso.

For renowned Albuquerque architect Antoine Predock, the telephone call from Mrs. Spencer seemed like a dream, too: a private client with large resources and above all, vision. Mrs. Spencer was clear about wanting an elegant building rather than the usual Southwestern adobe. Inspired by the view of the majestic Sierra Blanca on the horizon, the highest peak of the Sacramento Mountains, Predock designed a wedge-shaped building with a facade of bleached Spanish limestone, chosen because its high mica content makes it reflect the sunlight.

Mapei was there to provide critical solutions to the construction challenges of the unique architectural design. Over 60,000 square feet of cementitious backer units were mechanically fastened over steel studs to form the substrate veneer of the theater. MAPEI PRP-315* was then trowel applied over the entire veneer of the cementitious backer units to provide a waterproof substrate suitable for the harsh New Mexico climate. At an altitude of 7,200 feet above sea level, the theater would experience tremendous changes in dimension due to the influences of the climate. Thermal gain, due to scorching heat during the day and freezing temperatures at night, demanded a waterproofing material with superior capabilities. MAPEI PRP-315 was selected for several reasons. Its



PHOTO 2



fiber reinforcement coupled with its elastomeric qualities ensured its ability to resist the movement dynamics that the

PHOTO 3



installation would endure constantly on the mesa. Furthermore, its cementitious nature provided complete compatibility with the White Grani/Rapid KER 318* bonding mortar used to adhere the bleached Spanish limestone veneer.

Grani/Rapid mixed with KER 318 Flexible Admixture was used as the bonding mortar because of the rigors imposed by the climate. Temperatures in the morning could be as low as 45°F (7°C) and during the afternoon soar as high as 100°F (38°C)! In spite of these demands, the superior

Photo 1
Cementitious backer panels are fastened over steel studs to form the substrate veneer of the theater.

Photo 2
White Grani/Rapid KER 318 bonding mortar was used to adhere the limestone slabs over MAPEI PRP-315 waterproofing (visible in the photo). MAPEI PRP-315's elastomeric qualities ensure its ability to resist the movement dynamics of the installation.

Photo 3
Detail of the bleached Spanish limestone being readied for installation.

Photo 4
The limestone facade brilliantly reflects the sunlight.



Jackie and A.N. Spencer, benefactors of the Spencer Theater

open time, hydration characteristics and workability of the Grani/Rapid System allowed the work to continue at a steady pace. KER 200, #00 White*, polymer modified, sanded cementitious grout was used to finish this beautiful installation.

The Spencer Theater required the vision and generosity of Mrs. Jackie Spencer, the artistic talent of Mr. Antoine Predock and the technical prowess of MAPEI to provide this wonderful gift to the people of New Mexico.

TECHNICAL DATA

Project: The Spencer Theater for the Performing Arts, Ruidoso, New Mexico, USA

Built: 1997

Architect: Antoine Predock

Stone: Bleached Spanish Limestone fabricated in Italy

Waterproofing: MAPEI PRP-315*

Bonding mortar: White Grani/Rapid mixed with KER 318*

Grout: KER 200 #00 White*

General Contractor: PCL Construction Services

Tile Contractor: Artcraft Granite, Marble and Tile Company /Mr. Butch Woelfel

Tile Distributor: El Paso Tile and Stone

Mapei Coordinator: Bob Brown

*The products mentioned in this article are manufactured by Mapei Corp. (USA).



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