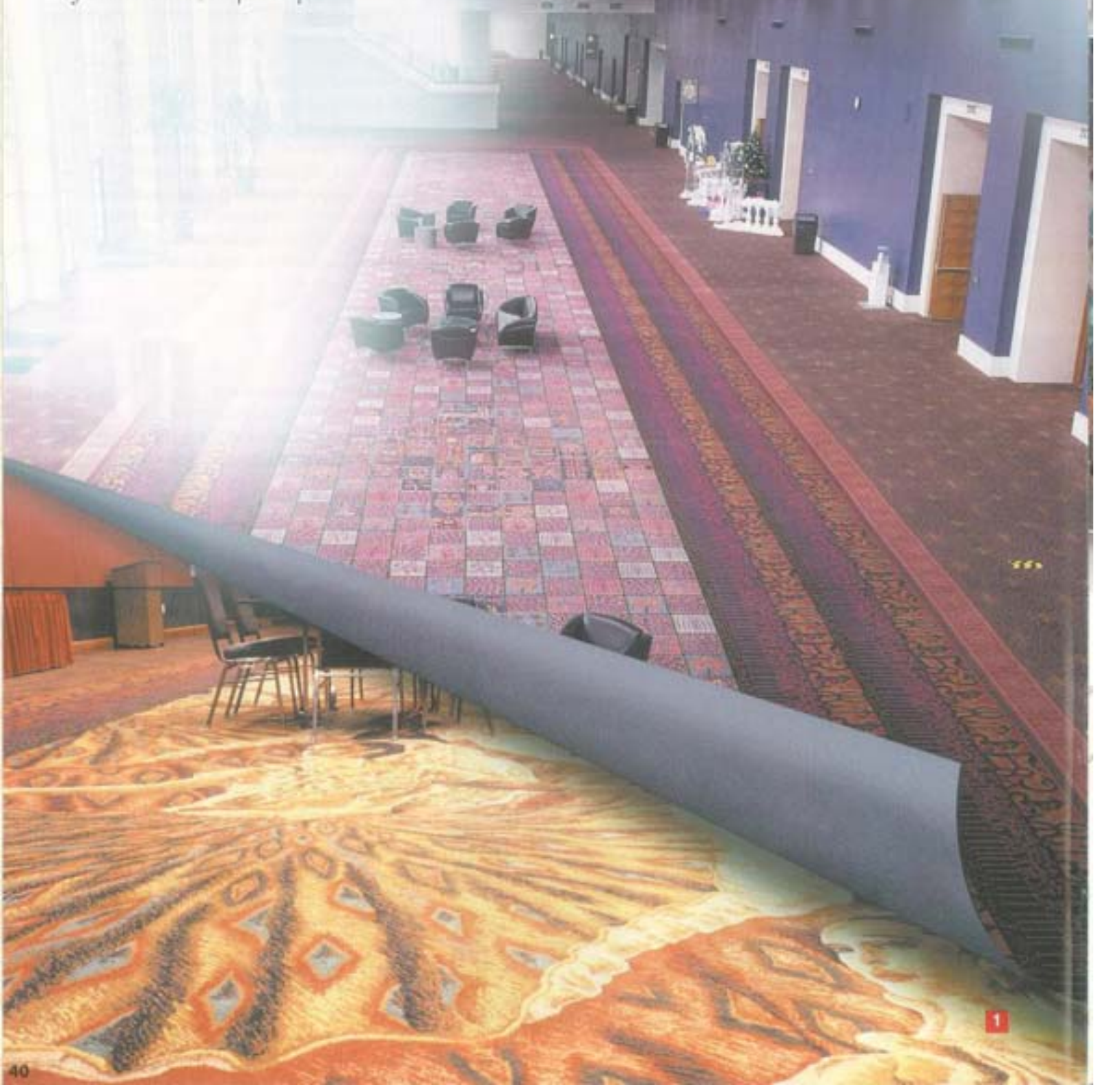


TEXAN CONFERENCE CENTER



ULTRABOND ECO 220 adhesive was chosen for a striking installation in the Herry B. Gonzales Conference Center in San Antonio.

by Diana Chiodi, Mapei Corp.





At first glance it is a striking sight. It looks like a huge picture painted on the floor; in actual fact it is a highly effective installation inside the Henry B. Gonzales Conference Center in San Antonio, Texas. The picture (as can be seen in photo 1) is imprinted on the carpet and is part of a new covering which, drawing on a range of designs and elaborate art work, covers an overall area of 32,000 square metres.

The conference center had already been extended over previous years. About 34,000 square metres were added on during the first period of extension work from 1997-1999. A later phase, using Mapei products, was completed in Autumn 2001. The project was developed in the wake of an economic boom in the city of San Antonio, as employment figures shot up by 55,000 in just five years.

The local authorities therefore decided to take this opportunity to make the city more competitive, furnishing it with a new conference center and at the same time rewarding the community by creating even better job prospects.

Michael Schanzer, president and founder of Argosy Floor Covering Inc., told us how important it had been to opt for Mapei products. As Mr. Schanzer said: "I knew that I would need a large amount of adhesive, so I was not going to leave it to chance when it came to choosing the right product." He also went on to point out that: "We needed a product that had a good warranty, was installer friendly, and had a long working life with extended tacking properties that allowed for any adjustments required. Just as important was our working relationship with the manufacturer."

After comparing Mapei's products to those of six other manufacturers, Argosy Floor Covering Inc. opted for ULTRABOND ECO 220*, a multi-purpose carpet adhesive for epoxy coatings ideal for heavy-duty commercial installations. ULTRABOND ECO 220's properties were so impressive that Mr. Schanzer decided to use it for all his projects. ULTRABOND ECO 575* and ULTRABOND ECO 710* solvent-free adhesives were also used for some smaller areas of the center. The concrete substrate was smoothed over using ULTRAPLAN M20*, together with PLANIPATCH* fast-setting patching compound.

"I was not involved in the design of the Conference Center, but I felt personally attached to it. The size of the task at hand and intensity involved in making it come to life made us want to take part in every aspect along the way." The Conference Center project (some of whose premises can be seen in photos 2 and 3) was the largest pure wool project in the USA in the year 2000. The high-quality wool used came from South American sheep, which were carefully tracked and monitored from birth by the National Wool Institute.

"We worked with the inhabitants of San Antonio as living proof of the city's history, culture and lifestyle. We worked against this background in developing the main motifs of the final carpet design," so the architect from Kell Muñoz Architects, Steven Tillotson, told us. He was responsible for the overall carpet design.

Tillotson, and his assistant designers John Kell and Luis Trivino, decided to work with the artist Silvia Muñoz.

"It was a real challenge right from the start. We consulted with the staff at Options Taipei, the carpet manufacturer, and we realised we had to reduce the number of colours being used from 40 to 13 for each design," so Tillotson told us, referring to constraints imposed by the frame being used for manufacturing the Axminster carpet.

The work lasted four months and was carried out in separate phases by a team of 6-40 installers, eventually being finished in 2001. Thanks to the help of Mapei and the working relationship between Kell Muñoz Architects, Clark Construction, the general contractor, and San Antonio city officials, the floor covering turned out to be a seamless work of art.

"The products referred to in this article are manufactured and distributed in America by Mapei Corp. (USA) and Mapei Inc. (CDN).

For further information, consult the web site: www.mapei.com.



TECHNICAL DATA

Henry B. Gonzales Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas (USA)
Construction Work: installing an inside carpet
Year: 2000-2001
Project: Kell Muñoz Architects (San Antonio)
Works Management: Steven Tillotson from Kell Muñoz Architects
Carpet Designs: Silvia Muñoz
Installation Company: Argosy Floor Covering (San Antonio)
Material Installed: "Axminster" wool carpet from Options Taipei, Singapore
Mapei Products: ULTRABOND ECO 220, ULTRAPLAN M20, PLANIPATCH, ULTRABOND ECO 575, ULTRABOND ECO 710
Mapei Retailer: CSI, Inc.
Mapei Co-ordinator: Carol Hould, Mapei Corp.