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THE NEW ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

A new building was inaugurated in Athens this year to house archaeological finds in the Acropolis

Since the eighteenth century, archaeological finds dating from the Archaic age to the Roman age have been collected in the Acropolis Museum in Athens. Because of the wealth of pieces and the need to display them better, construction work started in 2003 on a new, larger exposition area, again located at the foot of the Acropolis. In June 2007, the old museum was closed so that the collection could be moved and relocated in the larger, more modern museum which was inaugurated in 2009.

The project for the construction of the new Acropolis Museum – inaugurated on the 20th of June 2009 – included a new structure covering an area of approximately 1400 m^2 to provide a permanent display for important archaeological finds, and which could host more than 3 million visitors a year.

The designers of the museum were the Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi, assisted by his Greek colleague Michalis Fotiades, and represented a difficult and demanding challenge in that it is located close to a masterpiece such as the Acropolis (the building is only 300 metres from the Parthenon), because of its relationship with the new city and the problem of the archaeological digs. At the same time, such a spectacular scenario and the celebrated "Attica light" were also a source of inspiration for the designers. "We have built a museum in the same way in which – we believe – the ancient Greeks would have built it today", stated Tschumi, and this reflects in the panorama, one of a kind in the world, which visitors admire when they reach the museum.

A Museum Opposite the Acropolis

The museum is formed by three main elements: a base, a central part (both in the form of a trapezoid) and an upper part (in a rectangular shape). The geometry of the new museum takes into account the archaeological digs below, while the higher part is positioned in an almost mirror position with respect to the Parthenon, which dominates the front of the museum.

Inside the base of the museum – supported by 94 cement pillars and suspended over the digs in the ancient city which may be viewed through the transparent floor – there is the main entrance hall, areas for temporary exhibitions, an auditorium and various service areas. A large part of the floors on the first floor were made using panes of special glass. A solution which allows the visitors to "amble" along the streets of Athens from the classic period.

A ramp leads to the exhibition galleries in the central body, characterised by a space with twin heights (for a total of 10 metres), supported by imposing columns.

The light and transparency have shown to be the feature points of the project: the external perimeter surfaces are in glass so that most of the inside is lit by natural light, with a spectacular view of the nearby Acropolis.

The use of various types of glass and screened skylights allows the intense, natural light to filter in while, at the

Photo 1.
The external floors in the entrance area were covered with grey and white marble laid using KERAFLEX MAXI, while their joints were grouted with ULTRACOLOR PLUS.

Photo 2.
The glass facades which surround the upper floor of the new Acropolis Museum, through which visitors may admire the Parthenon.

Photo 3.
The photo allows the three levels on which the new museum has been built to be "perceived": the lower two are a trapezoidal shape while the top level is rectangular.

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same time, protecting the gallery from the heat and excessive sunrays, especially during the summer.

Laying in Ancient Attica

Mapei products also contributed in the construction of this prestigious building.

MAPETHERM AR1 one component, cementitious adhesive made from cement, selected sand, synthetic res-

Photo 4.
A partial view of the suspended entrance to the museum and a spectacular view of some of the 94 pillars below.

Photo 5.
A detail view of the transparent panes of glass on the floor which allow visitors to view the digs below.

Photos 6 and 7.
ADESILEX P9 was used to install the porcelain floor covering on the stairs on the first and second floors, which were then grouted with ULTRACOLOR PLUS.

Photo 8.
MAPETHERM AR1 cementitious adhesive was used to bond and smooth over the insulating panels.

Photo 9.
KERABOND was used to bond the ceramic tiles in all the service areas and offices.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

KERAFLEX MAXI

It is an improved **(2)** slip resistant **(T)** cementitious **(C)** adhesive with extended open time **(E)** classified as **C2TES1**. It features high bonding strength, low viscosity, therefore it is easily workable. It is highly thixotropic and recommended for interior and exterior bonding of ceramic tiles of every type and size and stone materials (provided that they are not sensitive to moisture) on conventional substrates such as cementitious screeds and underfloor heating installations; cementitious renders or lime and cement-based mortar; gypsum board as long as firmly fixed.
It is ideal for installations on uneven substrates and renders, without having to level the flooring beforehand.
N.B. The product has been superseded by KERAFLEX MAXI S1.

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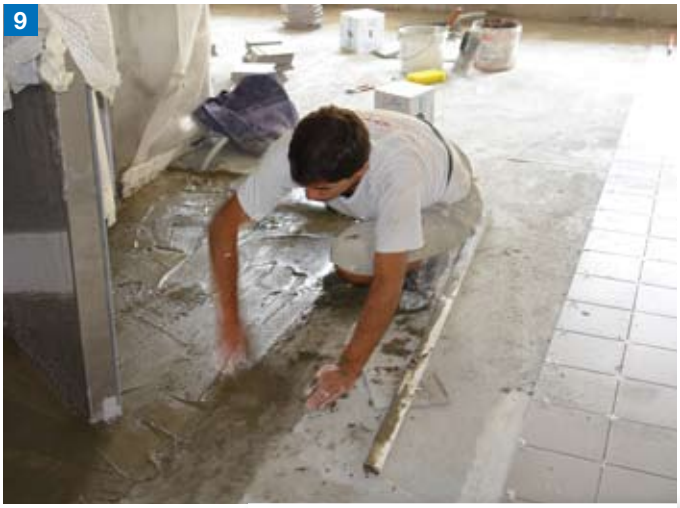

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ins and special additives was used to bond and smooth over the 1700 m² of insulating panels laid in the area which houses the machine room.
KERAFLEX MAXI high-performance, cementitious adhesive with no vertical slip and extended open times was used to lay the external floors made using large slabs of white and grey marble in the entrance area and in the inside foyer on the ground floor (for a total surface of 1600 m²).
ADESILEX P9 cementitious adhesive was chosen to install the porcelain floor covering in the rooms on the first and second floors (for a total of 1500 m²), while KERABOND cementitious adhesive was used to lay the ceramic tiles used on the floors in the office, the cloakrooms and the despatch areas and the walls and floors in the bathrooms.
ULTRACOLOR PLUS fast drying and setting, anti-efflorescence grout, with DropEffect® and anti-mould with BioBlock® technology, was used to grout all the joints.
MAPESIL AC solvent-free, silicon sealant available in 26 different colours was used, on the other hand, to seal the expansion joints.
Two thousand five hundred years after their original construction, the magnificent examples of the artistic skills of the ancient Greeks have "moved house" from their sacred rock to a new site which, quite rightly, may be considered their new home, and Mapei may proudly declare to have contributed in its construction.

TECHNICAL DATA

Acropolis Museum, Athens (Greece)
Designers: Bernard Tschumi and Michalis Fotiades
Year of Construction: 2003-2009

Period of Intervention: 2007-2008
Intervention by Mapei: supplying products for installing marble slabs on the entrance floors; for installing porcelain tile and ceramic floorings in inside service areas and offices; for grouting these floorings' tile joints; for bonding thermal insulation sheets in electromechanical rooms.
Client: Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture Protocol & Cultural Heritage
Works Director: Ioakeim Pringipakis, Aktor
Laying Company: Aktor (Athens)
Laid Materials: marble, ceramic tiles and porcelain tiles
Mapei Distributor: Alto, Koropi (Athens)
Mapei Co-ordinators: Ioannis Koropoulis, Mapei Hellas (Greece); Fabio Fenech, Mapei SpA (Italy)

Mapei Products: *the products mentioned in this article belong to the "Products for Ceramic Tiles and Stone Materials" and "Building Speciality Line" ranges. The technical data sheets are available at the web site: www.mapei.com. Mapei's adhesives and grouts conform to EN 12004 and EN 13888 standards. Mapei adhesives have been awarded the CE mark in compliance with Annex ZA, standard EN 12004. Almost all the Mapei products for laying floors and walls are also GEV-certified.*
Adesilex P9 (C2TE, EC1 R): *high performance cementitious adhesive with no vertical slip and extended open time for ceramic tiles.*
Kerabond (C1, EC1 R): *cementitious adhesive for ceramic tiles.*
Keraflex Maxi (C2TES1): *high performance cementitious adhesive, with no vertical slip and with extended open time for ceramic tiles and stone material. N.B. The product has been superseded by Keraflex Maxi S1.*
Mapetherm AR1: *one-component cementitious based adhesive and smoothing compound for insulation systems.*
Mapesil AC: *solvent-free, acetic cross-linking, one-component mildew-resistant silicone sealant.*
Ultracolor Plus (CG2, EC1): *fast-setting and drying, high performance, anti-efflorescence, water-repellent grout for joints from 2 to 20 mm with DropEffect® and anti-mould with BioBlock® technology.*