

# A fast and stylish INSTALLATION

Selfridges, the first American-style department store in London, was recently refurbished using a very fast-track system.

Selfridges, located in the heart of London, in Oxford Street, was opened on March 15, 1909. The first store of its kind, Selfridges revolutionised the shopping experience. Its foundations were laid in early 1908 and within twelve months the massive building was completed. The owner, Harry Gordon Selfridge, succeeded in his dream of building an American department store in London. Staff were hired months before the opening and trained in selling the 'Selfridge' way.

By offering a large selection of merchandise, much of it not available at other shops, and all under one roof, the focus was on providing the greatest convenience for the customer.

Selfridge was extremely innovative in the layout of the store and displays, as he intended shopping at the store to be a recreation. Therefore, shoppers were greeted with music and browsing was an all day experience. The store quickly became a national institution. Customers didn't come to buy what they needed, they came for the Selfridges experience. There was a library and a silence room for reflection, comfortable seating, sophisticated restaurants with reasonable prices and appointed reception rooms for French, American and German customers. Selfridge wanted his establishment to

be more than a store. He boasted that he "made the store the third biggest attraction for sightseers in London," next to Buckingham Palace and the Tower of London.

## Mapei's Contribution

August to September 2006 saw the refurbishment of this famous department store. Mapei contributed to the project by supplying products for preparing the screeds and laying over 300 m<sup>2</sup> honed Carrara marble slabs on walkways and lift lobbies of the designer rooms on the second floor, which houses all the fashion shops of famous brands. At this year's Tile Association Awards, a ceremony that praises the products, services and people who work in the British tile industry, Mapei was pleased to nominate HMKM, the architectural consultancy in charge of this project, winner for the 'Best Use of Tile by an Architect or Designer' Award.

The first phase of the works included the formation of screeds in the walkway areas with MAPECEM\* special fast-setting hydraulic binder for fast-drying, shrinkage-compensated screeds.

This product allows ceramic and stone coverings to be installed 3 hours after the screeds' formation. This was especially suitable for the work at Selfridges,



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**Photo 1.** Outside view of the building housing Selfridges department store in London.

**Photo 2.** The screeds were prepared with Mapecem fast setting binder for fast-drying screeds. All the work was carried out in the evening, when the store was closed.

**Photos 3 and 4.** On the second floor floorings sport Carrara marble slabs laid with Granirapid and grouted with Ultracolor Plus.




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because all works had to be carried out when the store was closed in the evening. In order to meet the client's request, a complete system of products was necessary in order to guarantee a very fast preparation of screeds, installation of floorings and grouting of joints.

Once the substrate preparation was completed, GRANIRAPID\* two-component cementitious adhesive was used to bond the 600x600x20mm honed Carrara Marble tiles. The product is particularly suitable for this project as stone materials with high coefficients

of moisture expansion require a fast-drying adhesive that does not stain. It is perfect for rapid re-tiling projects and for flooring that has to be accessed within a short time and is subject to heavy traffic. GRANIRAPID\* is available in white and grey shades and the former was chosen for the works at Selfridges.

The completed surfaces were grouted with ULTRACOLOR PLUS\*, a fast-setting and drying, high-performance grout. Expansion joints were sealed with MAPESIL AC\* mildew-resistant silicone sealant. 



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**\*Mapei Products:** the products referred to in this article belong to the "Products for Ceramic Tiles and Stone Materials" range. The technical data sheets are available on the "Mapei Global Infonet" DVD or at the web site: [www.mapei.com](http://www.mapei.com).

Mapei's adhesives and grouts conform to EN 12004, EN 12002 and EN 13888 standards.

**Granirapid (C2F, S1):** high performance, deformable, fast-setting and hydration, two-component cementitious adhesive for ceramic tiles and stone material.

**Mapecem:** special, fast setting hydraulic binder for the preparation of fast-drying screeds (24 hours), with controlled shrinkage.

**Mapesil AC:** solvent-free, acetic-cross-linking mildew-resistant silicone sealant, available in 26 colours and transparent.

**Ultracolor Plus (CG2):** fast setting and drying, high performance, anti-efflorescence, polymer modified grout, for joints from 2 to 20 mm. Water-repellent with DropEffect® and antimold with BioBlock® technology.



## TECHNICAL DATA

**Selfridges Store,** London (UK)

**Work:** preparing the substrates, laying and grouting Carrara marble slabs on the floorings of the second floors

**Year:** 2006

**Customer:** Selfridges&Co

**Project:** HMKM

**Contractor:** Davies Shopfitting Ltd

**Installation Company:** Signature Stone Ltd

**Mapei Distributor:** Signature Stone Ltd

**Mapei Co-ordinator:** Stephen Quorn, Mapei UK