

designer PARQUET

HIGH-QUALITY INSTALLATIONS INSIDE THE NHOW HOTEL IN MILAN



*Photo 1.
The outside of the
hotel. The building,
which stands on a
former industrial area
in old Milan, used to
house a factory.*

Milan is the city where, by definition, new trends and fashions appear in Italy. Hotels are no exception and NHow Hotel, belonging to the NH Hotels chain, was a key player in the project to redevelop industrial buildings in the south of Milan, introducing a combination of comfort, technology, cutting-edge interior design, quality materials and carefully chosen coatings. The design layout of NHow Hotel is inspired by the idea of "fluid design", which is a clear departure from any static notion of a hotel in favour of a highly flexible and constantly evolving interior space. In actual fact, this is not just a hotel but also an exhibition space for art and design shows.

NHow Hotel is located in Via Tortona in a former industrial estate in old Milan, close to Porta Genova Railway Station, where the old workshop spaces have been converted into cutting-edge facilities for the services sector. Here again the structure converted into a hotel used to be a General Electric factory. The hotel, which was designed by the architects Matteo Thun and Daniele Beretta, has 249 guest rooms, including 52 executive suites and a 250 m² presidential suite. A work previously displayed at the exhibitions held cyclically at the Milan Triennial is displayed in the hall on a rota basis, while other interior spaces can easily be adapted to host special events, fashion shows and photographic studies. These areas also form a mixed space which is revamped every four months with special multifaceted animated areas for objects, books and art exhibitions.

NHow Hotel is an example of a very urbane and Milanese architectural

style, not very showy but full of surprises. The guest services and materials used for constructing this building are all of the highest quality.

Mapei's Work

Mapei was also involved in constructing NHow Hotel, supplying a range of products capable of meeting the designers' needs and guaranteeing reliability and quality-over-time in installing the various materials used.

Technicians working for Mapei's Technical Service Department recommended using a range of products for preparing the over 8,000 m² of screeds on the levels of the guests rooms and on the ground floors where other premises are located; for installing and grouting the porcelain tiles in the kitchens and the ceramic tiles in the service areas; for laying 6,000 m² of parquet in the guest rooms and a part of the main dining hall.

Preparing the substrates.

Approximately 6400 m² of screeds were installed using TOPCEM* special hydraulic binder and TOPCEM PRONTO* ready-to-use pre-packed mortar with controlled shrinkage. This product is ideal for preparing substrates for the installation of moisture-sensitive floorings and also recommended when fast drying (4 days) is required for quick installation, as in this case. Speed was also one of the main reasons for choosing MAPECEM* hydraulic binder and MAPECEM PRONTO* pre-packed mortar used for forming a further 2,000 m² of screeds for laying moisture-sensitive floors or any other kind of flooring where very fast drying was required (24 hours).

At NHow hotel the substrates were



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Photo 2. The guestrooms and suites sport dark walnut oak parquet floors laid with Ultrabond P902 2K. A fancy, original feature: spotlights installed beneath the roof create striking lighting effects on the floor.

formed on the levels were the guest rooms are located and also in the hall and restaurant on the ground floor. Laying the parquet. The floorings in the guest rooms and suites were made of prefinished brushed oak parquet with a dark hazel-wood varnish (floorboard size: 10 mm thick, 145 mm wide and 1450 mm long). Another Mapei product was used for laying the parquet: ULTRABOND P902 2K* two-component epoxy-polyurethane adhesive. Its two components (an epoxy-polyurethane polymer and a hardener in paste form) are carefully

mixed together to produce a smooth coloured product, which is easy to apply with a notched trowel and has an excellent rib stability. The product is used for installing small and large-sized planks and all kind of wooden floorings onto cementitious screeds; on screeds made from MAPECEM*, MAPECEM PRONTO*, TOPCEM* and TOPCEM PRONTO* as in the case of NHow Hotel; and onto existing wooden, ceramic, marble or terrazzo tile floors, as well as on anhydrite screeds. The adhesive is also recommended for under floor heating systems.



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Photos 3 and 4.
In the spacious presidential suite about 250 m² of clear-coloured oak parquet were laid using Ultrabond P902 2K.

Photo 5.
The dining hall can be divided into two separate areas by a panel curtain. One area sports brushed oak parquet laid with Ultrabond P902 2K.



ULTRABOND P902 2K* hardens in approximately 24 hours at room temperature and turns into a tough film which bonds tightly to any substrate.

Wooden floors are ready for light foot traffic 24 hours after being laid. The adhesive is available in two colours - beige and brown - with the darker shade being used for installing the floors in the bedrooms of NHow Hotel.

For the presidential suite brushed oak parquet (total of 250 m²) was again chosen, only this time it features a clear varnish; ULTRABOND P902 2K* was again used for installation purposes.

If required, the spacious dining hall can be divided into two separate areas by panelled curtains, and the functional separation is underlined by

two different types of flooring. One part has, in fact, a cementitious floor and the other, slightly raised above the concrete surface, is covered with brushed oak parquet with a clear varnish, again installed using ULTRABOND P902 2K*.

Laying the tiles. The designers decided to opt for ceramic tiles for the landings by the stairs and small utility rooms on the floors where the guest rooms are located.

The floors and walls of the hotel kitchens and utility rooms in the basement have been covered with porcelain tiles, again using Mapei products. KERAFLEX* cementitious adhesive with no vertical slip was used to lay the tiles in all these areas. The joints were grouted using KERACOLOR FF* high performance cementitious grout.

*Mapei Products:

the products referred to in this article belong to the "Products for Ceramic Tiles and Stone Materials" and "Products for the Installation of Resilient, Textile and Wood Floor and Wall Coverings" ranges. The technical data sheets are available from the "Mapei Global Infonet" DVD and the website: www.mapei.com.

Mapei adhesives and grouts conform to EN 12004 and EN 13888 standards.

Keracolor FF (CG2): high-performance cementitious grout, polymer modified, water-repellent with DropEffect®, for grouting joints of up to 6 mm.

Keraflex (C2TE): high-performance cementitious adhesive, with no vertical slip and extended open time, for ceramic tiles and stone material.

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

Mapecem Pronto: pre-packed, ready-to-use mortar for fast-setting and drying (24 hours) screeds with controlled shrinkage.

Topcem: normal-setting, rapid-drying (4 days), special hydraulic binder for screeds.

Topcem Pronto: ready-to-use, pre-packed, normal-setting mortar with controlled shrinkage for fast-drying screeds (4 days).

Ultrabond P902 2K: two-component epoxy-polyurethane adhesive for wooden floorings.



TECHNICAL DATA

NHow Hotel, Milan (Italy)

Work: preparation of screeds; installation of parquet in the guest rooms, suites and part of the dining area; installation and grouting of ceramic and porcelain tiles in the kitchens and utility rooms

Year: 2006

Customer: NH Hotels

Project: Matteo Thun and Daniele Beretta

Installation Company: Piastrellando, Lecco (Italy)

Parquet Supplier: Cosmo, Sulmona (Aquila, Italy)

Mapei Distributor: Piastrellando

Mapei Co-ordinators: Angelo Giangiulio, Giuseppe Dal Mas and Marco Cantachin, Mapei SpA (Italy)