

Le Westin Hotel, Montreal

Sometimes It's All about the Surface Preparation



This unique project found its beginnings in three very old buildings in the heart of downtown Montreal. The Starwood Group, which owns the Westin Hotel chain, planned a new Le Westin Hotel in downtown Montreal, and they also wanted to relocate their business offices for Westin in this space as well as provide for office space leasing in the same complex. The group started by purchasing three sites: The first was previously a parking lot on the corner of Rue St. Antoine West and Rue St. Pierre. The second was the former Montreal Gazette Journal newspaper building next door on Rue St.

Antoine built in 1953 The third site was the late-19th century Montreal Star building that backed up to the Gazette building at 231 Rue St. Jacques; this building from 1896 was the first concrete building erected in Montreal.



Plans called for the first four floors of the former Gazette building to be turned into the business offices for Westin plus a fitness area, pool and spa. The space on the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth floors were designed to house commercial tenants, while the ninth floor was designated to provide huge ballrooms for the hotel. An entirely new Westin Hotel was built on the corner space, and extra hotel rooms fill the former Montreal Star building.

Because the Gazette building had previously housed a newspaper business stretching through its nine levels, the floors on each story had to be completely re-structured. Much of the flooring space was pitted by industrial tools used to service the presses, and the presses themselves had been anchored to the floors with concrete "pilings". Thick layers of epoxy had been applied to the floors in these production areas to prevent contamination of the concrete by ink and grease from the presses. Once the pilings were demolished, the floors had to be scarified in those areas to remove grease and oil that had sunk up to 1/2 inch deep into the concrete. Many different kinds of surfaces had covered the Gazette building's floors over the decades, including terracotta tile and VCT tiles. Once the old floor coverings were removed, the entire area was shotblasted.



MAPEI products were used extensively in the surface preparation of all the buildings before carpets, tile and stone were installed. In some areas of the Gazette building, there were significant depressions that needed to be filled before the floors were leveled; here the workers screeded *Mapecem*[®] 100 to cost-efficiently bring the depressed areas in line before pouring the self-leveling underlayments.

All floors in the Gazette building were leveled with *Ultraplan*[®] M20 Plus (200,000 square feet) after priming with *Primer L*[™] and, in some spots with *Planibond*[®] EBA. In total, the contractors used 140 1136-kilo (2500-pound) Supersacks of the self-leveling underlayment. . Each morning between 3:00 and 5:00 a.m., two vans from GEROQUIP, a major distributor of concrete products and equipment in the Montreal area, would bring the Supersacks to a tower crane, where they were lifted to the fifth floor; from there the *Ultraplan M20 Plus* was mixed and pumped to each of the floors as needed.



Novoplan[®] 2 and *Primer L* were used to level an additional 50,000 square feet in the old Montreal Star building. This building and the new 22-story building next door to the Gazette on Rue de St. Antoine now house 454 guest rooms in the Le Westin Hotel Montreal.

All floors and walls in the bathrooms were waterproofed with Mapelastic HPG, and the Porcelanosa ceramic tiles were set with Chembond Magniflex 8830 (a MAPEI product) and grouted with *Keracolor*[™] S and U. The owners of Le Westin Hotel particularly like the tile treatment in the showers of this flagship hotel, installed by Olympique Tile (Canio Di Cairano, project manager). The shower tiles have the appearance of Crema Marfil stone but the durability of ceramic tile.



In the lobbies, Canio di Cairano's team from Olympique Tile set the floors and walls with a chocolate-colored Saraceno limestone from India interspersed with a white Statuario marble from Italy, using MAPEI's *Ultraflex*[™] 2 mortar with Low Dust Technology. They carried this pattern throughout the first floors of three buildings, bringing continuity to the disparate spaces. The Saraceno limestone was quarried in India and then shipped to Italy to

be dressed by skilled craftsmen. Peribonka, a Quebec granite, was installed outside on the entrance to the commercial offices, using MAPEI's *Granirapid*[®], a fast-setting, efflorescence-free mortar. *Ultracolor*[®] Plus was used to grout the joints.



In the lobby of the hotel, Le Westin has placed a piece of extraordinarily colorful artwork that originally resided in the lobby of the Gazette Journal building. The work by artist Jean-Paul Mousseau was executed in shimmering primary colors and is said to be based on the paintings of Mondrian. It is believed that this piece of artwork was the inspiration for the colors in the glass panels covering the front of the Palais de Congres (Montreal's premiere convention site) just across the street. Canada's Minister of Culture asked Le Westin to keep the artwork, so it is displayed in the lobby, offsetting the dramatic chocolate and white limestone-and-marble installation on the floors.



All of the floor coverings, from the tile and stone in the lobbies to the carpet in the hallways and ballrooms, reflect the superior surface preparation that allowed them to give an elegant finish to the new Le Westin Hotel and office spaces. The *Ultraplan M20 Plus* and the *Novoplan 2* self-leveling underlayments gave the installers beautifully level and smooth surfaces to work their magic on!