

A Concrete Walkway for All Weathers

By Irina Condurache

Vestavia Hills City Center's stained concrete pavements needed renovation, and where another failed, MAPEI's *Mapecem*® 102 succeeded. Fifteen thousand square feet of bedraggled concrete called upon the expertise of Precision Concrete Construction's repair team, who used *Mapecem 102* and *Planicrete*® AC as the chosen instruments to do the job right. Upon completion of the restoration, in a unique finishing step, the concrete was stained. Vestavia Hills City Center is a success story that both MAPEI and Precision Concrete Construction take pride in sharing.

Vestavia Hills City Center is a beautiful 378,000 square-foot mall erected in the town of Vestavia Hills in the Birmingham area of Alabama, where family values meet comfort in the unique tradition of small American towns. Stained concrete was chosen to decorate the city center's pavements. Only two years after being laid, the concrete installation began demonstrating failure. Upon noticing the potholes and the crumbling concrete, Baker AIG, the owner of Vestavia Hills City Center, turned to Precision Concrete Construction for assistance. Mike Portwood, of Precision Concrete, knew that to ease the frustration of Vestavia Hills' owners, no compromise was acceptable; so he chose MAPEI's line of Concrete Restoration Systems as the repairing product.

After removing 15,000 square feet of dilapidated concrete, the repair team proceeded with the restoration operation. *Planicrete AC*, a concentrated liquid-latex admixture, was added to *Mapecem 102*, a fast-setting cementitious mortar, to enhance performance so that the concrete reparation, unlike the first attempt, would last for a very long time. The installers applied and screeded the *Mapecem 102* mixture on the mall's central area, which extended between the stores and around the fountains. The application went smoothly, and thanks to *Mapecem 102*, quite easily.

Following the application, the real challenge arose. *Mapecem 102* had never been stained before, but the expectations for results were high. Mike Portwood and his team were concerned about whether the *Mapecem 102* would accept the stain or whether the staining would fail and compromise the appearance and coloring of the concrete. However, as a cementitious product, the *Mapecem 102* accepted the stain well, and the operation concluded successfully. Today, nothing but beauty and taste are evidenced in the stained concrete of Vestavia Hills City Center's walkways. In fact, the pretty light brown color selected for the staining married *Mapecem 102* very elegantly, and the light color variations are very pleasing to the eye.

Needless to say, the reception to the new walkways was excellent! Mike Portwood was so pleased with the results that he is going to present the installation at an upcoming meeting of his regional chapter of the International Concrete Repair Institute.