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HEIDELBERG CITY HALL

The restoration work included the wooden floor in the office of the mayor of this Baden-Württemberg city

by Günther Hermann*

Even though the city castle is still waiting to be officially added to the list of monuments recognised by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, one thing is certain: the ancient university city of Heidelberg, situated in South Germany (Baden-Württemberg), is a unique cultural and artistic centre on the international panorama. Amongst the city around the Neckar River which flows through the heart of the city, characterised by its romantic ancient city centre, there is the City Hall, built in the eighteenth century in baroque style which includes

a sumptuous Council Chamber. The numerous restoration works carried out over the years and the sheer size of the structure bear witness to the various phases and forms of the architectural development of the city. In December 2006, the new mayor Eckart Würzner was sworn in, following the 16 years with Beate Weber as Mayor. The changes at the top were soon followed by the complete restoration of the second floor of City Hall, which included restoration of the more than sixty years old wooden floor in the mayor's office, brought

back to its antique splendour.

The mayor also used the occasion to replace the textile floor covering in the rooms in front of his office with a wooden one, which he believed to be more fitting to the style of the building. In fact, it was the personal wish of the new Mayor that his assistants and guests should be surrounded by the warm, noble sensation typically offered only by a wooden floor.

A Technically Demanding Challenge

The works director for the floor-laying

phase was Gerhard Klotzbücher from Waibstadt, Germany. This master floor layer, since 1987 the titleholder of a company he founded, is an expert in laying all types of solid wooden floors and the restoration of ancient parquet. And his experience proved to be fundamental when the contract to lay the wooden floor in Heidelberg City Hall was awarded. Gerhard Klotzbücher and his wife supervised both the restoration work of the old parquet and the laying of the imposing, new wooden floor to make sure they were carried out to a craftsmen level.

The job involved the restoration of approximately 35 m² of parquet in the mayor's office and the laying of approximately 90 m² of new wooden flooring in the rooms opposite.

All the restoration work in the rooms, from moving the furniture to the installation of new electrics, painting the walls, joinery work, repair and rebuilding of the old floor and installation of the new floor, was carried out in just 14 days.

The new oak floor was laid according to a design inspired by the old wooden floor in the mayor's office, photographed and tailor-made by the company Karl Nied GmbH from Aussamstadt.

This design combined 5x55 cm rectangular slats with 25x25 cm square inserts in the centre, to form a square pattern running diagonally. All the wooden elements were inter-locking and were 22 mm thick.

The "uncommon" shape of the material laid was not the only problem to be overcome by the floor layers. Preparation of the substrates before starting to lay the floors proved to be a particularly delicate operation, because an "impeccable" substrate is fundamental in order to lay a parquet floor with a perfect finish and with

ideal physical and mechanical characteristics.

The first step was to remove the old textile floor and the remains of the adhesive from the entire surface of the substrate. After cleaning the anhydrite screed, PRIMER MF two-component, solvent-free epoxy primer was applied to consolidate the substrate and to improve bonding. Sand was then sprinkled on the primed surface.

The bonding operations for both types of parquet were carried out using ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K one-component silicated polymer-based adhesive suitable for laying all types of parquet. This product contains no solvents or isocyanates, has an extremely low emission level of volatile organic compounds (VOC) and is certified and labelled as EMICODE EC1 R, awarded by GEV.

The lack of water and solvents also guarantees that the product may be applied on both absorbent and non-absorbent surfaces, including old wooden floors and heated floors.

Convincing Workability

Gerhard Klotzbücher and his wife expressed how satisfied they were with the choice to use ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K because they found it so easy to apply.

Apart from making each stroke of the trowel smooth and light, they particularly appreciated the adhesive for its excellent ridge holding, its open time and the fact that it was very easy to clean the wood and their hands.

Thanks to ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K, they were able lay the parquet elements in a diagonal pattern perfectly, and what is more, using an eco-sustainable product. Also, the use of this product made it possible to carry out further operations on the floor within a short time after the laying operations:



Photo 1.
Heidelberg City Hall is located in the centre of this ancient German city. On the second floor wooden floorings were laid with Mapei products.

Photo 2.
Heidelberg castle is the pride of the city and one of the most famous German monuments in the world.

Photo 3 and 4.
Wooden floorings were installed in the rooms in front of the Mayor's office. After preparing the substrates with PRIMER MF, wooden slats and square inserts were bonded with ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K.

Photo 5.
ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K adhesive was especially appreciated by floor-layers for its excellent ridge holding and extended open time.





Foto 6. A picture of the wooden floors after completion of the works.

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*Product Manager for Mapei GmbH of the product line for the installation of resilient, textile and wooden floorings

TECHNICAL DATA

Heidelberg City Hall, Heidelberg (Germany)

Period of Construction: 18th sec.

Designer: J. Flemal

Period of the Intervention:

January- June 2007

Intervention by Mapei: supplying products for laying wooden floors in the mayor's office and in the rooms next to it

Designer: Rudolf Vogel, Heidelberg

Client: Heidelberg City Hall

Contractor: Rudolf Vogel

Laying Company: Gerhard Klotzbücher

Works Director: Gerhard Klotzbücher

Laid Materials: oak parquet supplied by Karl Nied GmbH

Mapei Distributor: E. & E. Krauss, Adelsheim (Germany)

Mapei Co-ordinator: Olaf Enke, Mapei GmbH (Germany)

in fact, this adhesive sets quickly and guarantees a strong bond after a very short time.

This proved to be particularly advantageous for a job where the time available to carry out all the restoration work in the rooms (including the electrical work, the painting and decorating) was limited to two weeks.

The final result was perfect: a floor with a particularly high aesthetic impact yet extremely resistant, perfectly suitable

for the rooms occupied by the mayor of this ancient city.

Gerhard Klotzbücher was later awarded the "Parkettwettbewerb" prize, a contest organized by Mapei and HOCO, a German manufacturer of wooden floors, to promote quality and creativity when laying this type of material. The prize-winner was selected by a panel of experts, and was presented to Gerhard Klotzbücher during the 2007 edition of the Domotex trade fair. 

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K

It is a single component, silitated polymer-based adhesive without water, solvents, amines, isocyanates.

ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K is used for bonding prefinished and laminate materials, LAM-parquet, slats, floor-boards and all types of parquet on all kinds of substrates. It is also suitable for heated substrates. ULTRABOND ECO S955 1K has no hazard risk and danger symbols.

It is easy to remove from hands and prefinished elements, and suitable for use by installers who are allergic to epoxy and epoxy-polyurethane products.

It is **GEV** certified as **EMICODE EC1 R**, as a product with a very low emission level of volatile organic compounds (VOC).

PRIMER MF

It is a two-component resin epoxy primer with low viscosity and at the same time having a high penetration capacity in the pores of the substrates.

It does not contain solvents, therefore is not flammable and can also be used in building sites situated near inhabited environments. PRIMER MF can be used for waterproofing cementitious screeds which have a residual humidity content higher than the maximum level recommended for laying wooden and resilient floors; for consolidating unstable and/or mechanically weak substrates; for priming absorbent concrete surfaces before applying epoxy resin-based products. After the application of PRIMER MF and the polymerisation of the resins, the substrate is sound, stronger and more resistant to abrasion.



Mapei Products: the products mentioned in this article belong to the "Products for the Installation of Resilient, Textile and Wood Floor and Wall Coverings" range.

The technical data sheets are available on the web site: www.mapei.com. Almost all the Mapei products for laying floors and walls have been awarded the EMICODE EC1 ("very low emission level of volatile organic compounds") mark by GEV.

Primer MF: two-component solvent-free epoxy primer to be used as an adhesion promoter of Mapeifloor line products and for consolidating and waterproofing against residual damp, cementitious substrates and as an impregnator of unsound concrete floors.

Ultrabond ECO S955 1K (EC1 R): one-component, isocyanate and solvent-free, silitated polymer-based adhesive with an extremely low emission level of volatile organic compounds (VOC), for all types of parquet.