



Return to SPIELBERG

This jailhouse-fortress has now been restored to its former glory as a Medieval castle. The renovation work involved the entire east wing, that now looks as stunning as it used to and is open to the public.

"We reach our destination on 10th April. The city of Brünn is the capital of Moravia and Slesia (...) Near the walls to the west there is a small hill and terrible Spielberg Rock, once the home of the lords of Moravia and now the toughest jailhouse in the Austrian monarchy. It was a well-guarded town, but the French bombarded and captured it during the famous Battle of Austerlitz (the village of Austerlitz is close by). This time there was no redevelopment of the fortress, just the rebuilding of part of the crumbling walls. This high-security and extremely tough prison now holds about three-hundred inmates, mainly thieves and murders."

This is how Silvio Pellico described Spielberg Fortress (which used to be a jailhouse back



Photo 1.
Spielberg Castle in
Brno in the Czech
Republic. Once the
home of the lords of
Moravia, it has been
converted into a
jailhouse under the
Hapsburg dynasty.

Photo 2.
The work also involved
the terraces, which
were given new
flooring. Now that the
work is finished,
Spielberg Castle looms
over the valley as
majestic and imposing
as ever.

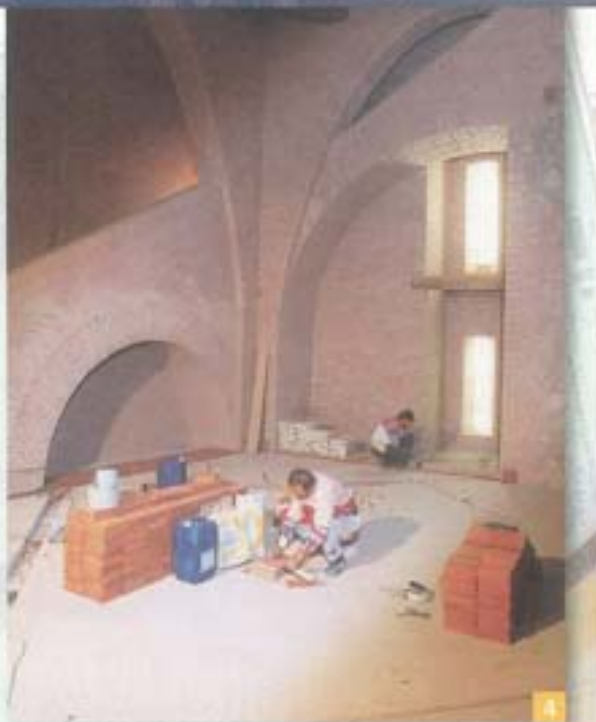


at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and then during the Fascist Occupation) in his book "Le mie prigioni", so that it would forever be engraved in our memories and imaginations as a dark and distant place. But Spielberg Fortress has now been restored to its old status as an ancient castle (the 13th-century home of the Counts of Moravia), without ignoring some of the architectural features from when it was a jail-fortress. At the end of lengthy renovation work carried out from 1994-2000, the east wing of the castle was restored to its former state. The Baroque tower – added on to the original construction under the Hapsburg dynasty – was left as it was to testify to that dark period when it was a prison. The most recent restoration and renovation work was carried out between 1996-97. The repair work on the walls was partly affected by finds made during restoration. Bits of valuable Medieval plaster-work (Gothic finish) on the walls of the Royal Chapel

underwent chemical analysis. This allowed new formula for historical buildings to be developed to copy the original plaster; these products, belonging to the Mapei-Antique range, are outstanding for their special physical-mechanical characteristics, just like those of the original materials. The same care has also been taken over the floors in the various rooms, striving wherever possible to restore the original floors or, alternatively, to use materials designed to recreate the same period atmosphere. The Royal Chapel floors are made of glazed ceramic stone and handmade flagstones. All the other areas are made of non-glazed flagstones. The flooring of the tower terrace, in contrast, is a combination of granite and brick flagstones. All the other areas are paved with non-glazed flagstones.

Work carried out using Mapei products

Mapei worked on the project right from the start. The initial work on rebuilding the rooms



and courtyard was performed under the supervision of workers from the Monument Authority. The ceiling was immediately reinforced with a steel-fibre structure. This had to be done due to the notable weight of the vaults made of 12-15 cm high sandstones. Products from the Mapei-Antique range were used for the walling finish: MAPE-ANTIQUE FC*, clear-coloured cement-free fine mortar for dehumidifying mortars, MAPE-ANTIQUE LC*, cement-free binder for light-coloured dehumidifying mortars, and MAPE-ANTIQUE MC*, pre-packed cement-free light-coloured dehumidifying mortar. All products from the Mapei-Antique range may be used on walls of historical interest because they contain no cement. It is imperative to combat damage due to rising damp when working on old buildings: macro-porous Mapei-antique mortars are highly effective at dehumidifying.

The work was also aimed, where possible, at conserving the building and restoring it to its original state.

Mapei products have served this purpose by reproducing the original finish.

The floors, too, are designed to recreate the old atmosphere that reigned for centuries beneath the ancient castle vaults.

Firstly, the original red bricks were removed and then put back in place. The substrate was prepared using PRIMER G*, synthetic resin based primer in water dispersion. All the stone and brick flagstones were installed using KERAFLOR*, cement-based powder adhesive ideal for using with ceramic and strip tiles with high lugs and ribs, large tiles, terracotta and natural stone. KERAFLOR* can be laid on irregular substrates with beds of up to 15 mm without preliminary levelling. KERAFLOR* is mixed with ISOLASTIC* additive in a 2:5 dose to obtain an elastic adhesive.

ULTRACOLOR*, fast setting and drying grout, was used for grouting the joints, because it does not produce efflorescence. This is vital when working on old buildings, in underground locations, or any places where the humidity is high. MAPESIL AC*, solvent-free acetic-crosslinking mildew-resistant silicone sealant, was used for the expansion joints.

The east wing was completed on 15th November 2000, and the opening ceremony took place on the 24th of that month.

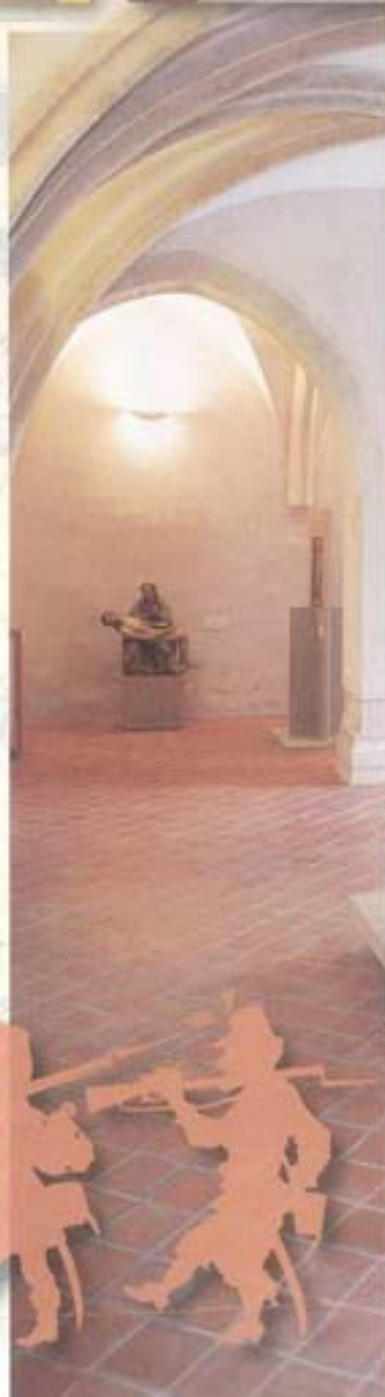
Since then, the doors of the "toughest life-imprisonment jail in the Austrian monarchy", converted into a museum, welcome in hoards of keen and curious visitors, all very happy that they can go home when the sun sets.

Photo 3.
After reinforcing the ceilings, the plaster-work was restored using products from the Mapei-Antique range, making it possible to recreate the old finish.

Photos 4 and 5.
The floors were laid using Kerafloor adhesive mixed with Isolastic flexible latex additive, installed over the substrate prepared using Primer G.

Photo 6.
An inside room: the flooring and plaster-work are now finished. All the products used have been carefully selected to faithfully recreate the original state.

Photo 7.
One of the castle floors after work has been completed. After restoration, completely revamping the overall image, the old jailhouse has been converted into a museum.





*The products referred to in this article belong to the "Products for Ceramic Tiles and Stone Materials" and "Building Speciality Line" ranges.

The technical charts are contained on the "Mapei Global Infonet" CD and from the web site:

www.mapei.com.

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



Primer G: synthetic resin based primer in water dispersion.

Kerafloor (C1 mixed with Isolastic it turns into C2): cement-based powder adhesive for ceramic tiles (adhesive thicknesses of up to 15 mm).

Isolastic: flexible latex additive for mixing with Kerabond and Kerafloor (adhesive thickness of up to, respectively, 5 and 15 mm).

Mapesil AC, solvent-free acetic-crosslinking mildew-resistant silicone sealant, available in 26 colours and transparent.

Ultracolor (CG2): fast setting and drying grout, used for grouting joints from 2-20 mm, available in 26 colours; does not produce efflorescence.

Mape-Antique FC: clear-coloured cement-free fine mortar for dehumidifying mortars on stone, brick and tuff masonry.

Mape-Antique LC: cement-free binder for light-coloured dehumidifying mortars, ideal for repairing damp stone, brick and tuff masonry.

Mape-Antique MC: pre-packed cement-free light-coloured dehumidifying mortar for repairing damp stone, brick and tuff masonry.

TECHNICAL DATA

Spielberg Castle, Brno, Czech Republic

Work: repairing the plaster-work on the walling and resurfacing the floors in the inside rooms, courtyard and terrace.

Project and Works Management: Brno City Council

Contractor: Stavební Firma Tocháček s.r.o., Brno

Year: 1997-2000

Surface Repaired: 2,000 m² (using MAPEI-ANTIQUE LC), 3,000 m² (MAPEI-ANTIQUE MC) 4,000 m² (using floor installation products)

Materials Installed: glazed and unglazed handmade flagstones

Mapei Products: MAPEI-ANTIQUE FC, MAPEI-ANTIQUE LC, MAPEI-ANTIQUE MC, PRIMER, KERAFLOR+ISOLASTIC, MAPESIL AC, ULTRACOLOR.