



The Gift Shop of this historical building, home to one of the most visited monuments in London, was recently renovated and given a new look.

A souvenir from the Tower of London Gift Shop

The history of the monument now known as the "Tower of London" began in 1066, when William the Conqueror built a simple timber and earth enclosure on the north bank of the river Thames in London. Over the centuries the structure, originally intended as a residential palace and as a fortress, has been constantly improved and extended by the addition of towers, extra buildings, walks and walkways and served as an armoury, a prison, a place of execution, a mint, a menagerie, a record office, a jewel house and a museum.

The first addition dates back to 1097, when a 30 m high stone structure, originally called the "Great Tower" and later renamed the "White Tower", was completed and enclosed in the complex. In the following centuries many buildings were added to the Tower of London over the centuries, such as the Tower Green, where "privileged" captives (for instance Mary I) were secretly executed, the Bloody Tower, where the young princes Edward V and Richard are traditionally believed to have been imprisoned and murdered on the order of their uncle Richard III, and the Queen's House, which is home to the Resident Governor of the Tower.

The Tower has been the setting for many cruel and violent events during its 900-year history: a number of prisoners and supposed enemies of the British monarchy were imprisoned and, in most cases, executed in this place. Among them one finds many key figures of English history: Thomas More, Anne Boleyn, Jane Grey, two of Henry VIII's wives, Elizabeth I, etc. Today this building, whose outside resembles an imposing fortress, is home to the Crown Jewels of the English Monarchy: all the gold and glitter used in coronations, including 12 royal crowns, are here on display. The Tower also continues to perform its role as an armoury, housing thousands of weapons.

The Tower of London Gift Shop, which provides visitors with postcards and gadgets, lately underwent a substantial renovation intended to enhance its functionality. The work also involved the interior stairwell, where Mapei products were used. The stairway was covered with 'Strata Technical Stone' slabs, made of a quartz-based material, with non-slip inserts, custom cut to size, approximately 120x25 cm. The slabs were installed onto a steel and concrete substrate using KERALASTIC*, a high performance two-component polyurethane adhesive, which is particularly suitable for bonding ceramic tiles and all kinds of natural stone and agglomerates. The work was completed using ULTRACOLOR* fast setting and

drying, high performance grout, which is suitable for interior and exterior, wall and floor applications. The expansion joints were sealed with MAPESIL AC* mildew-resistant silicone sealant, available in 26 colours and transparent. 

TECHNICAL DATA

The Tower of London Gift Shop, London (UK)
Work: renovation of the interior areas, including the stairwell
Year: 2003
Project: First Partnership
Installation Company: Strata Tiles, Minley (UK)
Mapei Distributor: Strata Tiles
Mapei Co-ordinator: Simon Pashley, Mapei UK

**Mapei Products: the products referred to in this article belong to the "Products for Ceramic Tiles and Stone Materials" range. The technical data sheets are available on the "Mapei Global Infonet" CD/DVD and at the web site: www.mapei.com. Mapei adhesives and grouts conform to EN 12004 and EN 13888 standards.*

Keralastic (R2): high performance two-component polyurethane adhesive for ceramic tiles and stone material.

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

Ultracolor (CG2): fast setting and drying grout for joints from 2 to 20 mm, available in 26 colours.

N.B. The product has now been replaced by Ultracolor Plus.



