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FLOORING FOCUS: LATEST FLOORING PROJECTS



Several projects prove that flooring can elevate a variety of spaces

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Words by *Emily Martin*

Rolling Stock Yard London

Architecture practice Squire & Partners has completed a nine-storey, 5,500sq m office building for real estate firm Newmark. Located in King's Cross, London, Rolling Stock Yard takes a visual cue from its goods yard past and features a striking, light grey, poured resin-based floor that references railway tracks – a nod to the site's history with freight.

Externally, interpreting a goods yard vernacular sees solid oak sleepers used for the building's shading. Steel and perforated panels also feature – to reference corrugated containers and provide an abstract visual of stacked crates and containers.

Other, internal, features include sinusoidal profile cladding on the walls and a plywood reception behind steel sliding doors – an echo of the doors on a goods train. 'We are putting the railway iconography into the building, but equally we wanted to bring the language of the building outside, inside,' says Henry Squire, partner at Squire & Partners.



The 'railway tracks' on the floor act as wayfinding, guiding you to key areas such as the cafe and lifts. Image Credit: Jack Hobhouse

To avoid cracking due to movement, the thickness of the floor was an

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important consideration. At 10mm, it's much thicker than some of the 3mm micro-screed applications. 'Finding a floor material with the right look and feel [was very important] as we wanted the building to have a concrete, industrial feel,' says Squire. 'This floor manages to deliver that visually and technically as it doesn't crack, as sometimes experienced with concrete floors.'

Yeon Sung Lee, architect, Squire & Partners, adds that 'the tracks involved a lot of craftwork, especially around the junctions, so there was a lot of skill used to portray this graphic'. To achieve this effect a spacer bar was placed before the grey resin was poured, so that the black resin mixture could then fill the void. The floor was then grinded and polished to create the bold finish.



Image Credit: Jack Hobhouse

The tracks also act as wayfinding, guiding you to key areas such as the cafe and lifts. To a degree it has replaced the signage as a more effective solution.

'People spend quite a lot of their time staring at their feet when they are walking,' says Squire. 'For us to have these guiding railway lines means that when you are staring at your feet it is something to look at, but also helps you find your way. Often, signage is in the distance where you can't see it, particularly when someone needs glasses, for example, but these are very literally guiding you through.'

squireandpartners.com

The Clubhouse, Hox Haus Surrey

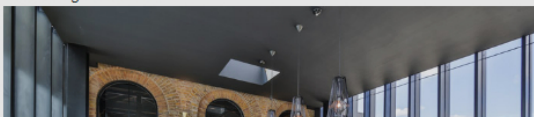
Manchester-based architects and designers 74 has completed the major conversion project of extending and remodelling a Grade II listed, two-storey Victorian brick building in Surrey. The repurposed 453sq m structure, Hox Haus, now serves as the central focus, clubhouse and social amenity for students attending the Royal Holloway, University of London, Hox Park campus.



Amtico Signature Ink Wash Wood was used throughout the clubhouse

Rachel Withey, associate director for 74, says: 'We developed a strong interior design rationale, which worked with the juxtaposition between old and new, creating a series of environments for individuals and groups to harmoniously work, meet, study, relax and have fun.'

The design scheme features flooring by Amtico, which adds texture and an understated elegance to the multipurpose venue. Amtico Signature Ink Wash Wood was used throughout the clubhouse, linking the finishes between the first and ground floors, including the internal stair treads, while Designers' Choice Basket Weave creates a dramatic finish in the first-floor games area.



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Clearly defined zones in the flooring enhances the experience of the building for users.

The colours chosen encompassed the textures and themes used throughout the project, while creating clearly defined zones to enhance the experience of the building for users.

amtico.com

TfL Accessibility Programme

London

For around five years Stoke-on-Trent-based The Surface Design Studio has been working closely with Transport for London to product test a pioneering new floor tile as part of the organisation's Accessibility Programme. It's a response to a problem with a digitally printed floor sticker, which is glued to train platforms to indicate wheelchair access to the trains. Due to the footfall on the platforms the stickers wear out on a regular basis, only lasting for six to 12 months.

The solution: a porcelain graphic tile with a durability of 15 years, which is now seeing a roll-out across the transport network's many stations. It's set to pave the way in tile innovation thanks to the speed of its small scale production.



The porcelain graphic tile should survive for 15 years

'Traditionally, tile printing is produced using a screen-printing method, which was suited for bulk production of a repeating item,' explains Mark Wood, director at The Surface Design Studio. 'Whereas digital printing allows single individual items to be printed [quickly] at reduced costs.'

These porcelain graphic tiles are manufactured the same way as standard floor tiles, with an additional anti-slip property, and feature a hard-wearing pigment that is 'completely UV stable', says Wood, allowing the signage solution to be used in harsh conditions.

'From my research there is no other product in the marketplace that can offer such durability and light protection,' says Wood. 'In hotter countries, such as in the Middle East, signage solutions fade. The ceramic pigment solution will not fade, so the potential of the market is extremely large.'

thesurfacedesignstudio.com

**CMMA Châlons-en-Champagne,
France**



The atrium staircase is made of natural oak and HI-MACS. Image Credit: Eric Vanden

When entering the 2019-renovated HQ of insurance firm CMMA, in Châlons-en-Champagne, it's hard not to notice the staircase made of natural oak and HI-MACS. Architects Patrick Planchon and Franck Deroche, and fine woodworker Landry Gobert, have successfully combined function with aesthetics in a structure that serves as the veritable 'backbone' of the building. It's a direct response to the client's original specifications: a backbone that would connect all of the sections. The result is a monumental atrium staircase, with the different departments and reception areas wrapping around it on three storeys. Planchon says that 'after testing various materials, HI-MACS stood out for its performance and ability to embody the desired monolithic look, thanks to an absence of visible joints. This choice was confirmed by the ability for... Gobert to work it in accordance with the architects' designs.'

The stairs and landings have been covered with oak slat panelling attached to the metal frame. The wood, varnished natural oak with a matte finish, is an extension of the ground-floor parquet and adds a touch of nobility and warmth to the site.

Further enhancing the wood, the railings – installed all along the path of this atrium structure, with the exception of the landings – are clad with 12mm bonded, seamless HI-MACS Alpine White panels.



The atrium staircase is made of natural oak and HI-MACS

Each office space is arranged in perfect accord with the staircase – which sets the tone as soon as a visitor sets foot inside – with varying warm tones including woody colours, the grey brown of the wall cladding, and the deep red of the furniture and decorations, set off by the immaculate white of the HI-MACS.

himacs.eu | landrygobert.com

Pulitzer Amsterdam



Havwoods timber can be found throughout the hotel. Image Credit: Sander Baks

The Pulitzer Hotel in Amsterdam has completed its 18-month-long renovation by Lore Group. (For more information on this project, see our recent [hotel focus](#).)

Havwoods timber can be found throughout the hotel: both smooth and textured products from the Venture Plank, Henley and Trapa ranges, as well as a couple of different herringbones. The hotel's lobby is sited in a building that was once a warehouse and features Havwoods's End Grain flooring – a nod to end grain being traditionally used under steel carts because of its durability and longevity. Each offers a characterful finish for the sumptuous and luxurious interiors of this historic, high-end hotel.

havwoods.com

Evoo – The Barzzeria Yorkshire



Allura Wood LVT in various colourways was used

The natural aesthetics, durable performance and extensive colour palette of Forbo Flooring Systems' Allura Wood luxury vinyl tiles (LVT) collection have all played a significant role in creating a contemporary, stand-out environment for Evoo, a new 'barzzeria' in Barnsley, Yorkshire.

Evoo – The Barzzeria is a pizzeria and bar, which combines authentic Italian cuisine with cocktail culture, giving it its 'barzzeria' status. Set in a once prominent building that was left derelict for years, Julie Poulter Interior Design was tasked by the client to create 'the best-looking bar' in Barnsley. Subsequently, the project has been awarded a 'Commended' in the Fly Forbo competition.

Julie Poulter says: 'Due to the concept of the "barzzeria", the client wanted to set Evoo apart from other restaurants and bars in the area and this reflected heavily in the design. We needed to create a fresh and inviting environment, which comprised of zones, including a VIP area that could be adapted from lunchtime eating to evening drinking. With the help

of bespoke wall art, fitted furniture and an impactful floor design, we were able to achieve this.'

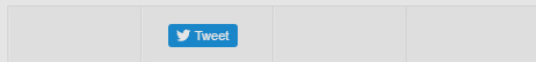
A combination of Allura Wood LVT in various colourways – Oyster Seagrass, Seaweed Oak, Denim Oak, Royal Solid Oak and Seagrass Timber – was installed throughout the building in a herringbone pattern. The contrast of the light grey, dark blue and dark brown shades helped to create a dramatic ambience for the restaurant.

Due to the large space and nature of the bar, the planks were arranged in this design to act as a subconscious wayfinding tool, to encourage customers to follow the path and move through the building.

'I have used Forbo's floor coverings for many projects over the years and I enjoy using them because of their environmental credentials,' says Poulter. 'For Evoo, I knew that the Allura Wood LVT collection would be perfect, thanks to its unrivalled characteristics in terms of design, and sustainability – Allura is phthalate-free, contains up to 50% controlled recycled content in its backing, and is manufactured and designed in Europe using 100% renewable electricity. In addition, not only did the flooring need to be aesthetically pleasing, but we needed to be mindful of durability, due to the amount of footfall that the barzzeria would receive.'

Allura Wood LVT benefits from advanced production technology to ensure maximum dimensional stability and high scratch and stain resistance, so that the appearance of the floor remains in top form.

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