

Floors & Walls

A stunning example of marble is One King William Street, a project by NFTMMS member, TRI Contracting

Old materials still working well in the present day

Natural building materials used thousands of years ago are growing in popularity today. The most dramatic are marble and terrazzo and it is very easy to see why these high-performance, aesthetically-led products are still so popular and specification demand for them is escalating.

The National Federation of Terrazzo Marble & Mosaic Specialists is the national organisation keen to maintain and improve the standards of craftsmanship and technical control on which the industry depends. Its founding aims remain to this day and apply equally to mosaic, marble, granite, limestone and quartz, which require similar but subtly different degrees of craft skill together with quality in execution and deep knowledge of the materials and how they perform. To further the aims of the federation, technical advice and assistance with specifications is freely

given. Detailed specification sheets covering terrazzo, marble and mosaic are all available for the serious specifier and designer.

Marble

With marble, the variety of colours and veins inherent in this rich natural product, coupled with the different surface finishes, lend themselves to the most prestige of applications – especially where high durability and low maintenance, coupled with fine quality and stunning aesthetics, are required to enhance high traffic projects, such as shopping centres,

supermarkets, public areas and transport hubs and prestige foyers.

The ability to embed colour and enjoy freedom of design, as well as create patterns and forms, is limited only by the designer's imagination. Marble is an extremely versatile material and its suitability for floors, walls, stair treads, risers and skirtings means that it will also be used extensively within projects to create visual impact. A stunning example of this is One King William Street, a project by NFTMMS member, TRI Contracting.

Terrazzo

Centuries-old terrazzo is also an extremely versatile material which can be applied in situ to floors and other surfaces, made into tiles or cast into moulds of almost any shape. It is probably the most widely used of all hard floorings, certainly in heavy traffic areas, such as shopping malls, airports, railway and underground stations, hospitals and supermarkets. It can be equally formed into staircases, skirtings, column bases and almost any shape and used on walls.

Including the standard products, terrazzo offers an extraordinary design freedom with its physical shape, patterns and colours all able to be customised to order. Federation member, Quiligotti, explains that different levels of finish can be specified ranging from honed to polished, while bespoke designs with logos and decorative graphics are possible with water jet-cutting. All this means that the smooth seamless surfaces are ideal for wheeled and the heaviest traffic applications. Its hardwearing performance will outlast most flooring materials and provide the lowest possible life cycle cost.

A great example of terrazzo in action is shown at the Margot restaurant in the heart of Covent Garden in a project by Fabled Design using Quiligotti's – another NFTMMS member – Quil-X Large tiles.

Other materials

Granite is a hard and adaptable material and more suitable for worktops and counters, being denser than marble and thereby more resistant to staining. It is also suitable for paving and cladding in tile or slab form. Modern cutting methods enable granite to be cut thinner making it more competitive in price and reducing shipping costs. Various finishes can be applied to the surface, as with most hard surfaces, to suit the area to which it is applied.

As many will know, mosaics have been used for over 2000 years. It is a work of art, adorned with coloured fragments, known as tesserae, made from various different materials. The most popular form comprises all types of minerals and rocks and also glass, mainly consisting of coloured smalti (opaque glass paste) and precious smalti (gold and silver). The creation of a mosaic work of art requires design skills, innovation and traditional craftsmanship using methods that have changed little over the years.

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