Diversification Among Plastering Contractors

Floors and Walls for the Man with the Trowel—the Plasterer

By Steve Noskin

In the late 1960s and early ’70s plastering contractors were introduced to exterior insulation and finish systems (EIFS), a unique wall system utilizing expanded polystyrene insulation board, reinforcing mesh, and flexible acrylic matrix finishes. At the time, these systems were considered unusual and were accepted with much skepticism and apprehension. Of course, after some 20-odd years EIFS are accepted by building owners, architects and code officials and are installed by plastering contractors. In many areas, EIFS actually comprise most of plastering contractors’ business.

Since 1955 Vitricon has been manufacturing specialty coatings for the construction industry. These acrylic, epoxy, urethane and polyester coatings have been applied to over 500 million square feet of walls, floors and roofs worldwide. In 1979 Vitricon introduced its exterior wall and insulation system, Energex. With the startup and success of the system, Vitricon became familiar with the needs of plastering contractors, noting their expertise and knowledge in the use of the hawk and trowel.

Upon visiting Vitricon’s world headquarters in Hauppauge, New York, many plastering contractors would remark about the various trowelled floor samples exhibited throughout the facilities. One product they found attractive and exciting was Vitriturf, a seamless, trowelled-on cushioned floor surfacing.

The system is composed of a one-component urethane binder mixed with special rubber granules. It is ideal for plastering contractors to apply because it requires the use of a trowel and the ability to “float” the material to the desired thickness and finish.

Vitriturf is a durable, permeable, all-weather, synthetic rubber safety surfacing system. It can be trowelled in three different and distinct systems. System One consists of black SBR or chopped rubber and small EPDM granules embedded in a urethane applied to the substrate. In the application of the base and top coats, the rubber granules are mixed with the binder in a forced mechanical mixer for five minutes until all granules are evenly coated. The blended mixture is then applied by hand trowel to the desired thickness. Trowelling is accomplished by “wetting down” the trowel with diesel fuel and compacting the blended mixture. The trowel is then wiped clean and lubricated with water, and the material is floated to the desired finish. Because Vitriturf is so versatile it may be utilized in many situations requiring a seamless, resilient and shock resistant surface.

Because Vitriturf requires the skill of trowelling and floating a textured material, the plastering contractor should have no problems in learning the techniques involved. The system offers the plastering contractor the diversity of selling his skills for both walls and floors on possibly the same project. For example, on a recent project in New York a plastering contractor was asked by the owner if he know of a product which would be suitable for a pool deck. The contractor showed the owner a sample of Vitriturf and was awarded the contract.

The construction industry is very competitive. Today a contractor must be innovative to get an edge on his competition. Vitriturf can offer the contractor another option in cases where it is applicable. It is available in basic colors which may be blended to yield beautiful patterns with the plasterer’s trowel.