

## Burlington Mall, Boston, MA

### Aging Boston Shopping Center Gets an Upscale Facelift

The Burlington Mall, located in the northern area of the greater Boston region, is one of the busiest shopping centers in New England. With over 150 specialty stores and anchors that include Filenes, Lord & Taylor and Macy's, it is an upscale center built in the early 1970s. Like most centers of that vintage, the mall was in clear need of an aesthetic update to continue attracting preferred customers. The second floor and food court area had been recently renovated, but the first floor still projected an image from 30 years ago with smoked brick pavers and old, drab 8" x 8" ceramic tile. Owner Simon Property Group, Inc., recognized the need to bring the first floor up to the same aesthetic standards to complement the previous renovation efforts and showcase high-end retailers such as Ann Taylor and Coach.

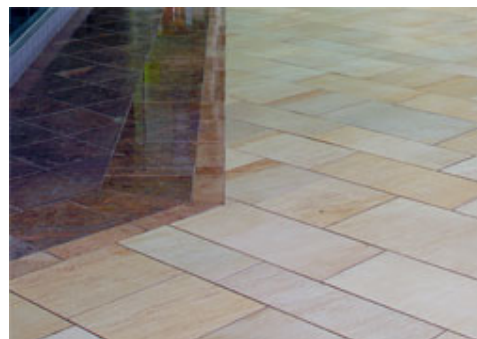
To accomplish this, a warm, neutral palette of unpolished porcelain tile with sandstone and marble accents was selected. This monochromatic scheme was intentional, both to brighten the 80,000-square-foot space and to accentuate the colorful storefronts that line the concourse.

The team assembled to bring the first floor of the Burlington Mall up to date was led by general contractor Whiting-Turner of Baltimore and well-known tile contractor ProFast Commercial Flooring of Ijamsville, MD. ProFast used a complete tile installation system from Custom® Building Products for the project, and Custom provided consulting expertise to determine job specifications and help ensure the desired results.

**"We always prefer to use installation products from Custom because we know from experience that they perform to our standards. We also know that Custom will provide support unlike any other manufacturer,"** said Kevin Killian, owner of ProFast. **"In this case, Custom's lifetime warranty also played into our decision. It gives Simon Property peace of mind to know that the installation is covered for life against failure."**

**According to Killian, the greatest challenge his team of tile installation professionals faced with the Burlington Mall project was surface preparation. "When we began the demolition phase, it was more like an archeological dig. Beneath the old ceramic tile, we found sections of 4-inch mud bed, extensive flash patching and some original brick and concrete that dated back decades,"** he said.

**ProFast professionals removed the mud bed and the brick, ground down the flash patching and reached the original concrete substrate. LevelQuik® RS Rapid-Setting Self-Leveling Underlayment, from Custom, was then applied**



**generously throughout the entire space to fill gaps, correct slopes and create a level, even surface. "We used truckloads of LevelQuik because of the condition of the substrate," said Killian. "All those years of repair and patching left a real mess, but LevelQuik gave us a clean, fresh, level place to start with the new installation."**

Once the arduous preparation phase was complete, the entire first-floor concourse was tiled with unpolished porcelain in a neutral beige with subtle gold shadings and streaks. The area is bordered with polished sandstone in Aztec gold and marble in a medium shade of taupe. The marble is also used for the elevator housings, support columns and planters found throughout the mall, giving the center a clean, upscale look that does not compete for attention with the retail locations.

Custom's RapidSetting Mortar System, a premium, two-part system formulated for time-critical commercial installations, was used to set all floor tile, including the difficult-to-bond porcelain. Its combination of superior bond strength and fast curing allowed ProFast to complete the project quickly, with minimal interruption to the Burlington Mall's operations or inconvenience to its customers. Custom's Marble & Granite Fortified Premium Mortar was used to set marble accents found on the elevator casings, columns and planters. Polyblend® Grout was used throughout to complete the project.

"This is one of the highest quality tile installations that I have seen," said David deBear, architectural consultant for Custom Building Products. "The tile work is so even that you could roll a marble straight down the entire length of the mall. This is especially impressive considering the challenging demolition and surface preparation that ProFast faced on this job."

The Burlington Mall first-floor renovation project was completed in time to welcome shoppers for the 2004 holiday shopping season.

