



RUBBER FOR THE SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

Project: Sonnwendviertel Learning Campus Vienna, Austria

Building developer: City of Vienna, www.wien.gv.at

Architect: PPAG architects, Wien, www.ppag.at

Products: noraplan® unita, laid area totalling 9.600 m²

Date of installation: 12/2013

Installation areas: Classrooms, common areas, hallways

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The advantages of nora flooring come to light at the Sonnwendviertel Learning Campus

Education of the highest order under one roof. The Sonnwendviertel campus at Vienna's central station is the first time a new pedagogical concept was made reality through architecture. The city conducted a pan-European tender procedure for the learning campus, which consists of a kindergarten, elementary school and a new middle school. Won by the Viennese architecture firm PPAG architects, their task was to develop a learning environment which suits the realities of modern schooling. The result is a building with an entirely new kind of room concept, where 'market squares', educational rooms, unrestricted classes and a spacious exterior provide the ideal conditions for innovative instruction. When it came to choosing the flooring for the model project, the architects and users selected the rubber flooring from nora systems. "We wanted a healthy, hygienic and robust floor with great ergonomic comfort", explains architect Georg Poduschka from PPAG architects. "The nora rubber flooring fulfilled our requirements in every aspect".

High degree of walking and standing comfort

At the Sonnwendviertel Learning Campus, the boundaries between individual educational areas are meant to blur. The instructors rely on individual support and focus on free learning instead of teachercentred teaching. Changing groups of children, some of different ages, complete tasks and work on projects together. "The basic organisational elements of the building are the so-called clusters, units consisting of four classes each along with a project room and a team room for the teachers", explains Poduschka. The heart of the campus is the 'market places' with adjustable furniture which all of the children in a cluster can use together.

"The flooring plays a major role in the building concept", the architect goes on to explain. It isn't only the kindergarten kids who play on the floor, because the older pupils often sit on the floor and use it as a work surface to learn, write and paint. "That's why we decided to install under-floor heating and select a flooring material with great ergonomic comfort". The "Made in Germany" rubber flooring, which PPAG





architects had already used in various other projects, has a number of advantages in this respect. It's both the best suited for installation on top of under-floor heating and warm on the feet itself. Not only that but its long-term resilience takes some of the burden off the back and joints, making it easier to move and stand. This is helpful for teachers' long-term health and ensures greater security, too: if children stumble and fall down, they won't hurt themselves on the soft nora floors. In addition, the rubber floors lessen sound echoes and thereby contribute to better acoustics in the building.

Low-emission, safe and economical for upkeep

The interior air quality is also important for a healthy learning environment. "The city of Vienna has very strict environmental standards which every construction material used in learning campuses has to fulfil", reports Poduschka. Through the "ÖkoKauf Wien" initiative, the city ensures that all of the products it procures are environmentally friendly and sustainable. Reduced packaging, phosphate- and formaldehyde-free

products, no PVC, no chlorine bleach, no aggressive cleansers, no tropical wood – these are only a few of the demands made on environmentally friendly procurement. The nora rubber floorings were a perfect fit for the concept. They are low-emission certified by internationally renowned environmental institutions and contribute to a much healthier indoor climate. Another critical factor was the fire safety qualities of nora floors; clued they comply with the strict fire safety category Bfl-S 1. In addition, because of their extremely dense surfaces, rubber floors are especially resistant to wear and tear and do not need any sealants, so they are easy and economical to clean and continue to look good for decades. "The low cost of maintenance and the low life cycle costs of the nora floors were equally important to us in our decision taking", the architect emphasises.

Award-winning design

Last but not least, the noraplan unita laid in the learning campus impressed the architects with its extraordinary appearance. The granite particles sprinkled in the matte rubber reflect light in all its facets, creating ever-changing



effects on the floor depending upon the angle of incidence and the location of the viewer. The “red dot design award 2012” and the “Good Design Award 2012” were both granted to nora systems for this remarkable product design.

After working there for eighteen months, the teachers and pupils are very pleased with the ambiance and the construction materials used. Compatibility, value for money, comfort and design: nora floorings offer full service around the world, not just at the Sonnwendviertel Learning Campus.

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nora systems GmbH
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