

I. Interior Finishes and Accessories

1. Introduction

This portion of the Facility Standards includes interior finish and accessories guidelines to be followed by the Consultant in the course of a project at the University of Chicago. Materials should be selected for their appropriateness of use in the given area both for wear and performance. When specifying interior finishes, consideration should be given for a material's: durability, ease of maintenance, safety (i.e. slip-resistance), high sound-absorption properties, low VOCs (volatile organic compounds), high light reflectance (especially at areas without natural daylight), high recycled content and locally sourced materials.

Sustainability

In keeping with The University of Chicago's commitments to support sustainable initiatives, materials specifications should consider materials with: low VOCs (volatile organic compounds), high light reflectance, high recycled content and locally sourced materials. Paints, adhesives, substrate materials and other finish specifications should emit no or low VOC's. Specifying finishes (especially wall finishes) lighter in value will increase light reflectance within a room, possibly reducing the energy levels required to light a room. Utilizing materials with high recycled content and also specifying locally sourced materials helps to reduce landfill waste and carbon emissions expelled to transport goods cross country.

Renovation Projects

Renovation projects should give consideration to specifying materials which will coordinate with existing finishes (scheduled to remain) or provide some relief to removal and/or replacement of existing materials. For example, at areas where existing 4" high wall base is scheduled for removal, new wall base should be specified at 4 1/4" in order to conceal any marring at the drywall. Renovation projects retaining a great deal of existing conditions should encourage the design team to select finishes that will coordinate with and be maintained similar to existing finishes to remain.

2. Guidelines

a) Interior Finish Considerations

Durability

The selection of materials should primarily address the appropriateness of use in each given area. Level of wear (i.e.: high vs. low traffic areas) and resistance to staining and damage should be considered based upon the needs of each type of space. Consideration should be given for selecting materials with a stable construction, high psi (pounds per square inch) indentation resistance. Homogeneous sheet goods may provide superior durability at areas

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with high levels wear or heavy pivoting loads, including lab spaces. It is also encouraged to select materials that have proven performance records for 5 years or greater and warranties (material and labor to replace defective product) for 10 years or greater.

While performance-driven specifications are preferred, it is understood that budgets and programmatic needs will vary from project to project, which may call for some deviation from the priorities listed above. For example, while VCT (vinyl composition tile) flooring may not offer the best performance attributes, it is a cost-effective and readily available material and may be required per limiting project criteria. While these selections are not encouraged, variances from the guidelines may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Ease of Maintenance

Finish specifications should allow for easy maintenance. Stain resistant materials, including solution dyed nylon carpets, vinyl flooring incorporating a stain resistant properties high-performance paints, and vinyl upholsteries support intentions to ensure long life-cycle performance by ensuring that materials can be easily cleaned to maintain a good appearance for a long period of time. Modular carpet allows for damaged sections of carpet to be easily replaced and the inherent cushion back provides better wear and more underfoot comfort. Broadloom carpets may be appropriate for areas with uneven floors; a cushion backing should be considered for these locations.

Carpets with a dense and low loop-pile structure offer better ease of maintenance and more longevity to the life of the product. It is advised to select carpets with pattern (and more than one yarn color) to aid in hiding soiled areas. Carpets medium to dark in color value will provide better stain hiding.

Laboratories, food service areas and high traffic spaces are subject to staining incidents and materials for these areas should be selected to have stain resistant properties to ensure long life-cycle performance. Sheet flooring, such as a vinyl with stain resistant properties and heat-welded seams meets stain resistant and slip resistant criteria important for a laboratory. Reduction of seams improves ease of maintenance.

No-wax flooring specifications should be considered as a building-wide strategy. No-wax flooring offers benefits in reduced maintenance costs, better slip-resistance and reduced environmental impact. Universal specification of the same or similar materials as much as possible allows for easier maintenance of facilities. Wax or no-wax solutions should also be reviewed with the sustainability and operations representatives at Facilities Services.

Safety

Wet environments, including both areas with plumbing fixtures as well as lobbies and vestibules to the outside, should be given special consideration to receive flooring materials with a COF (coefficient of friction) of greater than .75.

Interior Glass

See Building Envelope Standards Section H for additional requirements.

Acoustical Control and Ceilings

Evidence-based design studies indicate that improved acoustical control in learning environments, and workspaces in general, contribute to better retention of information learned. In keeping with providing the best learning environments possible, it is strongly recommended the selection of materials give consideration for acoustical control in learning and work spaces. Flooring materials like carpet and rubber flooring; ceiling tiles with high NRC (noise reduction coefficient) values and acoustical wall panels offer good sound control properties. Rooms accommodating a larger occupant loads should increase the sound absorption properties of materials.

Specifiers should refer to technical recommendations for sound transmission and reverb characteristics when evaluating materials for specification. Sound transmission loss (STC) is a single number rating system quantifying the transmission of sound between rooms. Transmission of sound can be better controlled through construction mounting assemblies of walls and ceiling surfaces. The following matrix provides guidelines based upon these standards.

As ceilings are often accessed by mechanical engineers for maintenance and repair work, more robust 9/16 or 15/16” grids are preferred over thinner (Fineline) grids, which tend to get damaged easily. Specifiers should use a 15/16” grid at areas requiring mechanical equipment access above.

Attic stock

It is encouraged for facilities to adapt a streamlined approach to specifications in order to reduce product inventory and to ease maintenance. Each project should allow for some reserve of products specified to hold in attic stock. All materials must meet or exceed local code requirements. All materials should be installed in compliance with manufacturer’s instructions. It is encouraged that materials under consideration have been proven to work effectively in environments similar to the type of area it will be proposed for installation.

b) Interior Finish Matrix

The selection of high-performing interior materials has a significant impact on the life-cycle performance of a building. The following matrixes provide guidelines for specifications based upon room type. These room types are intended to represent a given room type’s specifications, regardless of what kind of building the room occurs in. The matrix outlines criteria proposed to satisfy our most important objectives.

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