



Photography courtesy of Mapei

GWWO Architects and RTA Architects

Pikes Peak Summit Complex An Immersive, Sustainable Experience Colorado Springs, USA

From Pikes Peak in Colorado, it looks like the entire wonder of America stretches out below. Katharine Lee Bates, known for writing the anthem *America the Beautiful*, first coined this idea on her way to the summit in 1893. The vistas and beauty that still attract over half a million visitors a year are said to have been the source of inspiration for her famous song. After more than five years of community engagement, multiple drawings and designs by GWWO Architects and RTA Architects, the new Pikes Peak Summit Complex, the highest visitor center in the United States, was finally

completed in 2021, at 4,300 m above sea level. Commissioned by the City of Colorado Springs to make visiting the national historic landmark a more immersive and sustainable experience, the structure is built into the mountainside. Adorned with rock formations, forests and lakes all around, the success of this fusion of nature and architecture owes much to the use of warm colors and rustic materials.

In such a site, environmental respect has to be at the top of the list and so the brief required this building to have a lower environmental impact than its predecessor:

the insulating envelope, cladding and heating system produce 45% energy savings compared to the past; plus, 66% less water is consumed. The structure has two certifications: LEED Platinum and Living Building Challenge.

Mapei, which selected 15 products, played a key role in achieving such results. The company has long championed a low-environmental impact to architecture through its materials. Evidence of this can be found in its latest Sustainability Report, in which it is clear the choice of quality materials and products that contribute positively to reducing gas emissions is essential in achieving the overall sustainability of buildings, especially their energy performance. This complex is an emblematic example of this, a place of history and beauty, but also a space in which the importance of a green approach to architecture is key.

MATERIALS USED

Exterior sign

Mapelastic Turbo, GraniRapid, Ultracolor Plus FA, Mapesil T

Interior

Kerapoxy CQ, Kerapoxy IEG CQ, Ultraflex 3, Mapelastic AquaDefense, Keracaulk S, Primer L, Novoplan Easy Plus, Mapecem Quickpatch

Wastewater treatment system

Planigrout 755, Planigrout 712, Planigrout 728

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