

**Project:**

Lancaster Marriott
at Penn Square

Location:

Lancaster, PA

Contractor:

CB Flooring LLC

Armstrong Flooring:

2.5mm LVT with
Diamond 10 Technology

Featured skus:

U1061

Benefits:

Modern Aesthetic
Ease of Maintenance
Durability
Stain Resistance

Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square

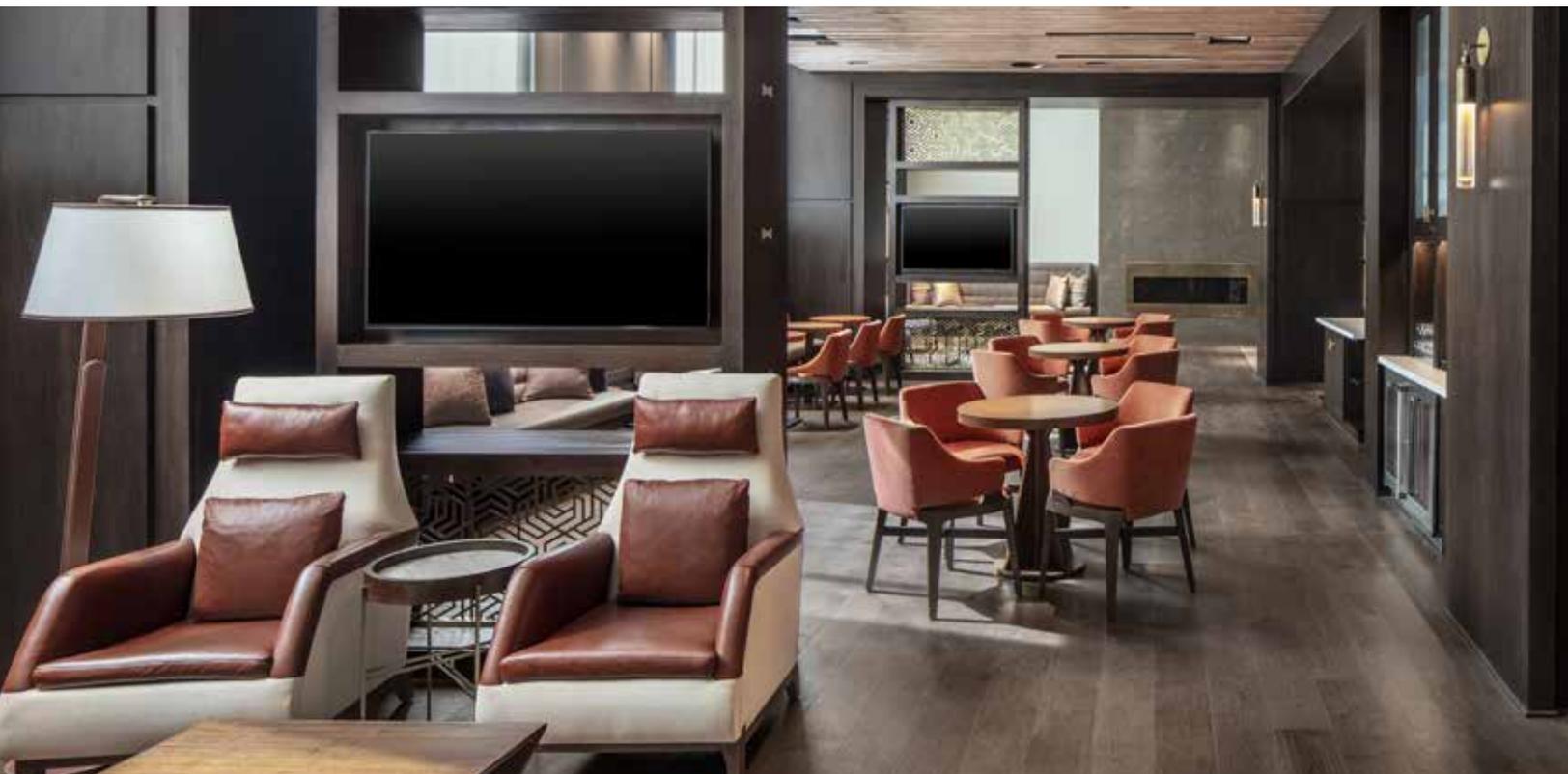
Quaint Meets Cosmopolitan Inside the Lancaster Marriott at Penn Square

"There are countless architectural and historical elements that make this hotel and convention center one of the most unique in the entire country," shares Josh Nowak, general manager of the Lancaster Marriott and Convention Center at Penn Square, located in the heart of Lancaster in Pennsylvania. Lancaster is one of the oldest inland towns in the United States and sits an hour and a half out from Philadelphia, the gateway to the Pennsylvania Dutch and Amish country.

"This is the former site of the Watt & Shand Department Store," begins Nowak, "In the 1800s, three Scotsman came to Lancaster and wanted to sell

goods just like they did in New York City. They opened a store up the street called the New York Store, and that was so successful they had to move to a larger location. That is how they came to be in this present location, in 1880. It was a family run department store for over 100 years, which is unheard of this day and age."

Over the decades, Watt & Shand acquired adjoining buildings on all sides. By 1991, the store was over 220,000 sq. ft. and comprised of seven different buildings that had been bridged together into one collective space.



“In the mid-1990s the store was sold to Bon Ton, a former department store chain.” Nowak goes on to say, “After about two years, Bon Ton shuttered and the building went dark for a long stretch until three civic-minded people in the community bought it with the intention to save it, because it’s such an icon.”

The Beaux-Arts style façade remained intact through the process of a public and private partnership that transformed the building into the Lancaster Marriott and the Lancaster County Convention Center. Officially opened in 2009, the convention center is publicly owned, and the hotel side is privately owned, yet it’s an entirely integrated operation as one facility.

“It works beautifully,” says Nowak, “Customers really don’t know whether they’re on the hotel side or the convention center side and that’s exactly how we want it. It was designed with stacked meeting space so people can get from the hotel to the meeting spaces very expeditiously.”

“The composition of events and business that we were attracting was heavily in the meetings vertical. So, we wanted to create a destination for that, that had not existed in our 270-year history prior to this building being built. What we found was the demand for guest rooms was exceeding what we had set originally, at 301 rooms.”

To answer this need, a new 12 story tower went up that included an additional 115 guest rooms, 100,000 square feet (about the area of a Manhattan city block) of event space, and a new rooftop bar.



“Everything was meticulously considered in design,” says Nowak. The existing 301 rooms were entirely upgraded to meet the same premium aesthetic being built into the new rooms as part of the addition, along with newly conceived restaurants, and one of the finest concierge’s lounges Marriott has in North America, the M Club Lounge.

“A lot of people know the Lancaster brand – the Pennsylvania Dutch, the rolling countryside, Amish outlet shopping – but downtown is different. We wanted to introduce people to a downtown experience. The culinary scene, the art scene, entertainment. All of that was considered when thinking about reigniting our existing guest rooms, as well as introducing these new dining and lounge offerings. How do you take advantage of the sweeping views of one of the oldest in the cities of the original 13 colonies? How do you mirror the design of the room with the experience, with the views, and everything else that we have to offer?” asks Nowak.

The design vision, distilled down, would be ‘heritage meets modern.’ This was especially emphasized in the guest rooms, and in particular the decision on flooring.

“The flooring in the guest rooms was selected with great consideration as far as what made it look the most sleek, modern, easy to work with, easy to clean, what customers want – that’s been a fun part of the project,” says Nowak. “With the guest room specifically, we had feedback about the previous carpet – that people felt skittish. People didn’t necessarily equate the carpeting with being the cleanest product or design.”

To answer that customer feedback, which they collect via surveys sent out after every stay, the Marriott team selected Armstrong Flooring’s hard surface 2.5 mm LVT in a wood look.

“The optics for customers is they believe that (Armstrong LVT) looks more sanitary, it’s been disinfected, there’s a cleaner, slicker feel to it and over time it still looks new, it keeps its look a lot better than high volume traffic on carpet. That adds a lot of value,” shares Nowak.

Long-term durability was also a key factor. “The designer that helped us select Armstrong LVT said, ‘These are the things we’re seeing that have worked very well in other hotels of high volume like yours.’” explains Nowak.

When it comes to maintaining the rooms that drive such an economic engine in the heart of the city, Nowak explains the difference LVT has made in their cleaning protocols.

“The upkeep on vacuums adds up. If you think about it, normally we would have nearly 30 housekeeping at one time. That’s 30 vacuums to buy and maintain, and the time it takes to clean out vacuum bags, replace them, from a maintenance standpoint. There’s a lot of efficiencies there for sure, transitioning from carpet to LVT.”

To best streamline their protocol, the Marriott team partnered with Armstrong Flooring to ensure the environmental services team was well prepared to care for the new flooring.



“It took a little training and collaboration as to what cleaning products we use, so we worked with the manufacturer (Armstrong) to figure out the recommended products and ways to clean without causing wear and tear. For the LVT we mainly lightly spray and Swiffer.”

The hotel and convention center are seeing shifts already from the business guest to now increasingly welcoming the leisure guest, and families.

“We had to quickly reinvent ourselves again and again, and that speaks to the product of our rooms and how the design versatility blends with everything else so wonderfully.”

The achievement of heritage meets modern is not to be missed, inside this veritable and literal piece of history.

“You’re walking through a façade that dates back to an 1898 department store, and then greeted with the Montgomery House, built in 1804. This facility was built around the historic home, and now on three sides it’s preserved inside our lobby, and you can go inside and hold smaller meetings or special occasions.”

Further toward the back of the facility, during a phase of construction, a section of the Underground Railroad was unearthed, determined to be a remaining relic of a property previously owned by Thaddeus Stevens and

Lydia Thompson Smith. The excavated cistern, where they concealed freedom-seekers, and adjacent areas behind and below Stevens’ properties will provide interpretive spaces to contemplate the experiences of enslaved people escaping to freedom and the work of the Underground Railroad in Central Pennsylvania.

Yet cutting through these deeply consequential pockets of history, guests can find themselves within a few minutes time in The Exchange, an ultra-modern rooftop bar delivering panoramic views of the city, and the M Club Lounge, where guests can enjoy 24/7 access to premium wi-fi, craft drinks, and artisanal menus.

The M Club Lounge is another area where Armstrong Flooring hard surface LVT was selected to execute this vision of heritage meets modern, while delivering both guest satisfaction alongside ease of maintenance and cleanliness efficiencies.

“Many people speculated that the size of this hotel, when it was originally built, was too much.” says Nowak, “But the demand exceeded expectation, and that is why we built the new tower - to bring even bigger events to Lancaster, and we’re well on our way to doing that.”