[0007] Because the “design” or “contrast” carpet tile areas is positioned at and extends inwardly from an edge of the carpet tile, it is contemplated that cuts on similar tiles do not necessarily have to formed such that the “design” or “contrast” carpet tile areas on the respective tiles can vary from tile to tile. In some examples, at least some of the design elements area on otherwise like tiles can vary, and in an installation of such tiles some tiles might appear to have misplaced design carpet tile areas. It is contemplated that an assembly of such tiles with design” or “contrast” carpet tile areas positioned at and extends inwardly from an edge of the carpet tile can appear to a viewer to be intentional and attractive. In someexamples, such intentional, attractive variation of tile appearance can also be achieved by using design elements having different sizes, shapes or other features of appearance within the “design” or “contrast” carpet tile areas as well as differing off-edge positioning.

[0007a] In view of the above, according to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a carpet tile having first and second end edges and first and second side edges, the distance between the first and second end edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a length of the carpet tile, the distance between the first and second side edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a width of the carpet tile, the carpet tile comprising: a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion of the carpet tile has a width and the second portion of the carpet tile has a width, wherein the second portion extends inwardly from a selected side edge of the carpet tile to an interior edge, wherein the respective widths of the first and second portions of the carpet tile combine to define the width of each carpet tile, and wherein the ratio of the width of each carpet tile to the width of the second portion of each carpet tile ranges from about 2.5:1 to about 20:1; wherein the first portion has a background pattern comprising at least two colors; and wherein the second portion has the background pattern and a contrast pattern intermixed with the background pattern, the contrast pattern comprising at least one contrast color different than any one color of the at least two colors of the background pattern, wherein the combined first portion and second portion cooperate to form a carpet tile having a side edge-oriented contrast pattern region.

[0007b] According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a carpet tile system comprising: a plurality of carpet tiles, each carpet tile having first and second end edges and first and second side edges, the distance between the first and second end edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a length of the carpet tile, the distance between the first and second side edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a width of the carpet tile, each carpet tile comprising: a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion of the carpet tile has a width and the second portion of the carpet tile has a width, wherein the second portion extends inwardly from a selected side edge of the carpet tile to an interior edge, wherein the respective widths of the first and second portions of the carpet tile combine to define the width of each carpet tile, and wherein the ratio of the width of each carpet tile to the width of the second portion of each carpet tile ranges from about 2.5:1 to about 20:1; wherein the first portion has a background pattern comprising at least two colors; and wherein the second portion has the background pattern and a contrast pattern intermixed with the background pattern, the contrast pattern comprising at least one contrast color different than any one color of the at least two colors of the background pattern, wherein the combined first portion and second portion cooperate to form a carpet tile having a side edge-oriented contrast pattern region, wherein the plurality of carpet tiles are positioned relative to one another such that the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of each carpet tile has a particular orientation relative to the side edge-oriented contrast pattern regions of adjacent carpet tiles, and wherein the plurality of carpet tiles are configured to cooperatively define at least a portion of a floor covering.

[0007c] According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for forming a floor covering, the method comprising: selectively positioning a plurality of carpet tiles relative to one another on a flooring surface, each carpet tile having first and second end edges and first and second side edges, the distance between the first and second end edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a length of the carpet tile, the distance between the first and second side edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a width of the carpet tile, each carpet tile comprising: a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion of the carpet tile has a width and the second portion of the carpet tile has a width, wherein the second portion extends inwardly from a selected side edge of the carpet tile to an interior edge,

wherein the respective widths of the first and second portions of the carpet tile combine to define the width of each carpet tile, and wherein the ratio of the width of each carpet tile to the width of the second portion of each carpet tile ranges from about 2.5:1 to about 20:1; wherein the first portion has a background pattern comprising at least two colors; and wherein the second portion has the background pattern and a contrast pattern intermixed with the background pattern, the contrast pattern comprising at least one contrast color different than any one color of the at least two colors of the background pattern, wherein the combined first portion and second portion cooperate to form a carpet tile having a side edge-oriented contrast pattern region, wherein the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of each carpet tile has a particular orientation relative to the side edge-oriented contrast pattern regions of adjacent carpet tiles, and wherein the plurality of carpet tiles cooperate to define at least a portion of a floor covering.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate several aspects described below and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention. Like numbers represent the same elements throughout the figures.

[0009] FIGS. 1-3 are top views of exemplary carpet tiles as described herein. FIG. 1 displays an exemplary carpet tile having an abstract contrast pattern as described herein. FIGS. 2-3 display exemplary carpet tiles having contrast patterns formed of a plurality of parallel stripes as described herein.

[00010] FIGS. 4A-4C display exemplary stripe configurations for contrast patterns thereon various exemplary carpet tiles as described herein.

[00011] FIGS. 5A-5D display exemplary rotational configurations for the carpet tiles as described herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A carpet tile having first and second end edges and first and second side edges, the distance between the first and second end edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a length of the carpet tile, the distance between the first and second side edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a width of the carpet tile, the carpet tile comprising:

a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion of the carpet tile has a width and the second portion of the carpet tile has a width, wherein the second portion extends inwardly from a selected side edge of the carpet tile to an interior edge, wherein the respective widths of the first and second portions of the carpet tile combine to define the width of each carpet tile, and wherein the ratio of the width of each carpet tile to the width of the second portion of each carpet tile ranges from about 2.5:1 to about 20:1;

wherein the first portion has a background pattern comprising at least two colors; and

wherein the second portion has the background pattern and a contrast pattern intermixed with the background pattern, the contrast pattern comprising at least one contrast color different than any one color of the at least two colors of the background pattern,

wherein the combined first portion and second portion cooperate to form a carpet tile having a side edge-oriented contrast pattern region.

2. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the first and second portions of the carpet tile extend the entire length of the carpet tile.

3. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the carpet tile is substantially rectangular.

4. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the contrast pattern is spaced from the selected side edge.

5. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the at least two colors of the background pattern comprise a majority color and a minority color.

6. The carpet tile of Claim 5, wherein the contrast pattern comprises the minority color and at least one contrast color different from the majority color and the minority color.

7. The carpet tile of Claim 6, wherein the contrast pattern is formed from a plurality of yarn tufts, and wherein at least some of the yarn tufts of the at least one contrast color have a height greater than at least some of the yarn tufts of the minority color proximate the yarn tufts of the at least one contrast color.

8. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the contrast pattern is printed on the carpet tile.

9. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the carpet tile has a tufted face.

10. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the carpet tile has a woven face.

11. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the carpet tile has a fusion-bonded face.

12. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the contrast pattern comprises a plurality of substantially parallel stripes.

13. The carpet tile of Claim 12, wherein the carpet tile has a warp axis extending between the first end edge and the second end edge and a weft axis extending between the first side edge and the second side edge, and wherein each stripe of the plurality of stripes has an elongate length extending parallel to the warp axis and a width extending parallel to the weft axis, wherein the elongate length of each stripe is greater than the width of each respective stripe.

14. The carpet tile of Claim 13, wherein at least one pair of adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes have a substantially equal length.

15. The carpet tile of Claim 13, wherein at least one pair of adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes have a substantially equal width.

16. The carpet tile of Claim 13, wherein the respective elongate lengths of the plurality of stripes are randomized among the plurality of stripes.

17. The carpet tile of Claim 13, wherein the respective widths of the plurality of stripes are randomized among the plurality of stripes.

18. The carpet tile of Claim 13, wherein at least two adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes are spaced apart along the weft axis.

19. The carpet tile of Claim 13, wherein at least two adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes are staggered along the warp axis.

20. The carpet tile of Claim 12, wherein the carpet tile has a warp axis extending between the first end edge and the second end edge and a weft axis extending between the first side edge and the second side edge, and wherein each stripe of the plurality of stripes has an elongate length extending parallel to the weft axis and a width extending parallel to the warp axis, wherein the elongate length of each stripe is greater than the width of each respective stripe.

21. The carpet tile of Claim 20, wherein at least one pair of adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes have a substantially equal length.

22. The carpet tile of Claim 20, wherein at least one pair of adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes have a substantially equal width.

23. The carpet tile of Claim 20, wherein the respective lengths of the plurality of stripes are randomized.

24. The carpet tile of Claim 20, wherein the respective widths of the plurality of stripes are randomized.

25. The carpet tile of Claim 20, wherein at least two adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes are spaced apart along the warp axis.

26. The carpet tile of Claim 20, wherein at least two adjacent stripes of the plurality of stripes are staggered along the weft axis.

27. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the contrast pattern comprises an abstract pattern.

28. The carpet tile of Claim 1, wherein the majority of the contrast pattern is positioned proximate the selected side edge.

29. A floor covering comprising a plurality of carpet tiles of Claim 1 positioned thereon a flooring surface.

30. A carpet tile system comprising:

a plurality of carpet tiles, each carpet tile having first and second end edges and first and second side edges, the distance between the first and second end edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a length of the carpet tile, the distance between the first and second side edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a width of the carpet tile, each carpet tile comprising:

a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion of the carpet tile has a width and the second portion of the carpet tile has a width, wherein the second portion extends inwardly from a selected side edge of the carpet tile to an interior edge, wherein the respective widths of the first and second portions of the carpet tile combine to define the width of each carpet tile, and wherein the ratio of the width of each carpet tile to the width of the second portion of each carpet tile ranges from about 2.5:1 to about 20:1;

wherein the first portion has a background pattern comprising at least two colors; and

wherein the second portion has the background pattern and a contrast pattern intermixed with the background pattern, the contrast pattern comprising at least one

contrast color different than any one color of the at least two colors of the background pattern,

wherein the combined first portion and second portion cooperate to form a carpet tile having a side edge-oriented contrast pattern region,

wherein the plurality of carpet tiles are positioned relative to one another such that the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of each carpet tile has a particular orientation relative to the side edge-oriented contrast pattern regions of adjacent carpet tiles, and wherein the plurality of carpet tiles are configured to cooperatively define at least a portion of a floor covering.

31. The carpet tile system of Claim 30, wherein the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of a first carpet tile at least partially abuts the side edge-oriented contrast pattern of an adjacent carpet tile.

32. The carpet tile system of Claim 30, wherein the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of a first carpet tile is spaced apart from the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of an adjacent carpet tile.

33. The carpet tile system of Claim 30, wherein the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of a first carpet tile at least partially abuts an end edge of an adjacent carpet tile.

34. A method for forming a floor covering, the method comprising:

selectively positioning a plurality of carpet tiles relative to one another on a flooring surface, each carpet tile having first and second end edges and first and second side edges, the distance between the first and second end edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a length of the carpet tile, the distance between the first and second side edges of the carpet tile corresponding to a width of the carpet tile, each carpet tile comprising:

a first portion and a second portion, wherein the first portion of the carpet tile has a width and the second portion of the carpet tile has a width, wherein the second portion extends inwardly from a selected side edge of the carpet tile to an interior edge, wherein the respective widths of the first and second portions of the carpet tile combine to define the width of each carpet tile, and wherein the ratio of the width of each carpet tile to the width of the second portion of each carpet tile ranges from about 2.5:1 to about 20:1;

wherein the first portion has a background pattern comprising at least two colors; and

wherein the second portion has the background pattern and a contrast pattern intermixed with the background pattern, the contrast pattern comprising at least one contrast color different than any one color of the at least two colors of the background pattern,

wherein the combined first portion and second portion cooperate to form a carpet tile having a side edge-oriented contrast pattern region,

wherein the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of each carpet tile has a particular orientation relative to the side edge-oriented contrast pattern regions of adjacent carpet tiles, and

wherein the plurality of carpet tiles cooperate to define at least a portion of a floor covering.

35. The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of selectively positioning the plurality of carpet tiles comprises positioning the plurality of carpet tiles relative to one another such that the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of a first carpet tile at least partially abuts the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of an adjacent carpet tile.

36. The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of selectively positioning the plurality of carpet tiles comprises positioning the plurality of carpet tiles relative to one another such that the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of a first carpet tile is spaced apart from the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of an adjacent carpet tile.

37. The method of Claim 34, wherein the step of selectively positioning the plurality of carpet tiles comprises positioning the plurality of carpet tiles relative to one another such that the side edge-oriented contrast pattern region of a first carpet tile at least partially abuts an end edge of an adjacent carpet tile.