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Specifying Style and Durability with Ceramic Tile





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John Trendell,
Trendell Consulting LLC
TCAA President

Evolution of a Tile Company & TCAA

This spring marks my 46th year in the tile and stone industry. While I truly think the best years are always ahead, I find myself looking back at what has been. I stumbled into this industry with a part-time job during college at Cleveland Marble Mosaic Co. I ended up working for the company full time for six years before deciding that I would strike out on my own. I could not have had a better “apprenticeship” than with a company that always took the high road and is still in business today.

I chuckle to myself thinking how crazy I was at times. Taking the family station wagon and loading it up with tile to the point where I could hardly see over the hood of the car. Well, the company grew. Myself and my employees were all in our 20s and 30s, running from one job to the next. “Hurry, hurry, we gotta get to the next job!”

After about five years of such craziness, we settled down into routines and a permanent office and warehouse. No more working out of our garage and house. It was at about

this time I became a member of TCAA. At first I paid my annual dues but did not participate in any of the association’s programs. Finally, I decided to go to a TCAA convention in Seattle, Washington.

It was like an epiphany! Men and women from all over the country sharing their experiences. I found out that I was not alone in regards to “the good, the bad, and the ugly” when it came to problems and successes in the ceramic tile business. I knew I had to get more involved with TCAA in order to make my own business more successful.

My business ended up becoming a one-generation company. However, many ceramic tile companies are multi-generational. While I had to learn many lessons the hard way, without advice from in-house mentors, I could always count on TCAA members for advice. Today, we baby boomers are retiring, and the next generation is taking over. TCAA is an important resource for these new leaders in our industry, even in long-held family businesses. Maybe even more so for them, given the fact that different perspectives and a different “voice” can be heard.

The ceramic tile industry has gone through many changes in my time. Materials, methods of installation, and certainly technological advances have grown the industry. But for me, the tried and true methods of communicating with others, person to person, have always been the most beneficial. I look forward to getting back to “normal” soon. While it may be a new normal, it will be organizations like TCAA that will help pass down important knowledge to the next generation of leadership.

I hope to see everyone this year at Coverings in July and Total Solutions Plus in October. Just to see people smile and laugh in person will be the greatest of medicines for all of us! ■



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CONTINUING EDUCATION

In conjunction with my President's Message, I mentioned that our workforce was quite young, in our 20s and 30s. Now I know anyone of that age, including myself, certainly has all the answers! (Well, maybe not.) So, it was imperative that as a signatory contractor of the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (IUBAC) that we made sure our employees did indeed become skilled tile setters and finishers who did have most of the answers.

First and foremost, we enrolled our newest workers in Department of Labor (DOL) certified IUBAC apprenticeship programs. But we did not stop there. Through the International Masonry Institute (IMI), continuing education courses in Foreman training and Superintendent training were offered. I would personally take the courses with our employees so that I too, would have a better understanding of the jobsite

demands and personnel management that these leadership roles required. In fact, IMI offered a Contractors' College curriculum for contractors and their staff that I also attended, as did our estimators and project managers.

In recent years, probably the most important evolution of our continuing education program, of which TCAA has teamed up with IMI, is the Advanced Certifications for Tile Installers (ACT). These certifications test seven areas of expertise that certify an experienced Tile Installer as being the best of the best.

Along with the Trowel of Excellence certification that TCAA offers, qualified contractor members, owners, architects, and general contractors can be assured that TCAA contractors and their skilled workforce are the best in the business! 🇺🇸

John Trendell
TCAA Labor Committee Chair
Trendell Consulting LLC

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR TILE RETROFITS



By Scott Conwell,
International Masonry Institute
February 2021

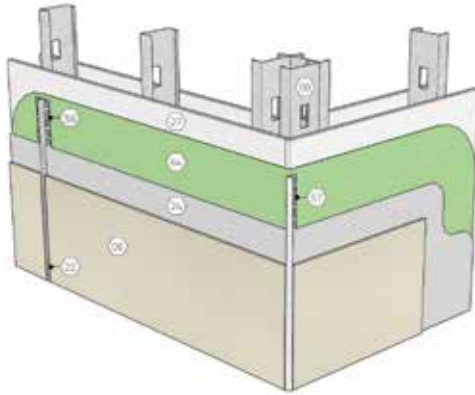
Because it is inherently non-emitting and contains no plasticizers, synthetic materials, or other hazardous ingredients, ceramic tile has long been recognized for its health benefits. Now, tile is in the spotlight as a finish material that combats the spread of disease with its natural non-porosity and ease of cleaning. In light of recent public health

concerns, many facility and building owners are turning to tile finishes for the well-being of occupants.

At the start of the coronavirus pandemic, *Infection Control Today* magazine interviewed a panel of design professionals to gauge how the coronavirus would affect the design of buildings. The response was, “Material

Fig. 1. Hotel floor finish plan, pre-COVID-19.





KEY NOTES

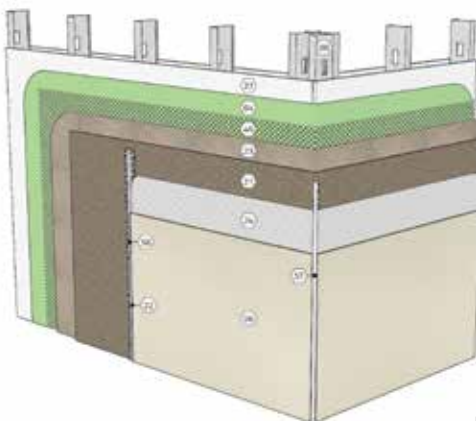
- 06 New wall tile or gauged porcelain tile (GPT) panel
- 08 Existing steel or wood framing, maximum spacing of 16 in. o.c. Note: steel studs must be 20 gauge or heavier and have a minimum depth 3 5/8".
- 22 Grout joint
- 24 Cementitious bond coat
- 27 Existing gypsum board
- 57 Corner profile strip if specified
- 58 Expansion joint profile strip if specified, spaced at intervals per design
- 64 Bonding agent as required

Fig. 2. Tile retrofit detail over existing gypsum board walls, thinset method.

selection, the role of nonporous hard surfaces, is going to be extremely important in fighting infections.”

This article in May 2020 went on to emphasize the importance of materials that are easy to clean, repeating that “nonporous is truly the way to go. These are the surfaces that disinfectants work well on.”

One likely lasting change from the pandemic is the way building owners and design professionals think about interior finishes in public spaces. A *Construction Dive* article published in January 2021 quoted a white paper from Leo A. Daley Architects saying, “Offices, hotel owners, and developers will put a greater emphasis on health-related features like



KEY NOTES

- 06 New wall tile or gauged porcelain tile (GPT) panel
- 08 Existing steel or wood framing, maximum spacing of 16 in. o.c. Note: steel studs must be 20 gauge or heavier and have a minimum depth 3 5/8".
- 21 Mortar bed
- 22 Grout joint
- 23 Scratch coat
- 24 Cementitious bond coat
- 27 Existing gypsum board
- 40 Metal lath fastened into studs
- 57 Corner profile strip if specified
- 58 Expansion joint profile strip if specified, spaced at intervals per design
- 64 Bonding agent as required

Fig. 3. Tile retrofit detail over existing gypsum board walls, mortar bed method.

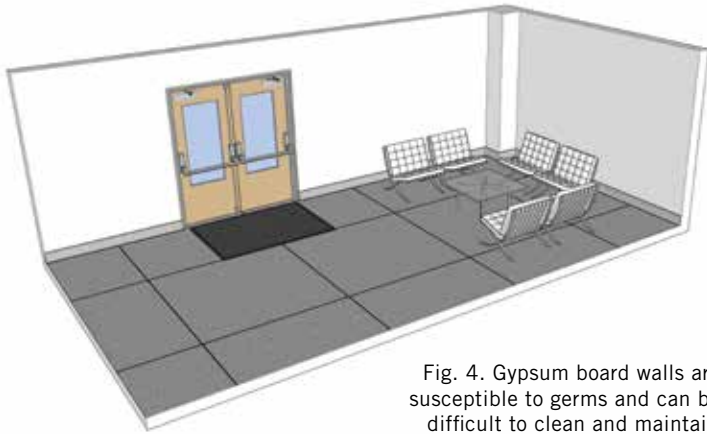


Fig. 4. Gypsum board walls are susceptible to germs and can be difficult to clean and maintain.

antimicrobial finishes to heighten guests' well-being and safety."

Figure 1 shows a floor finish plan of a typical hotel designed before the pandemic. Areas shaded pink represent tile, and areas shaded yellow represent carpet. Tile is specified in the vestibule and lobby, the kitchen, and the hotel room bathrooms. Carpet is specified

in the large dining room, the reception and office areas, all corridors, and all sleeping rooms.

In the *Construction Dive* article, architect Mark Pratt, vice president and global hospitality practice leader at Leo A. Daly, said, "Contractors can expect a lot of retrofitting work needed immediately. For example, a full-service Marriott or

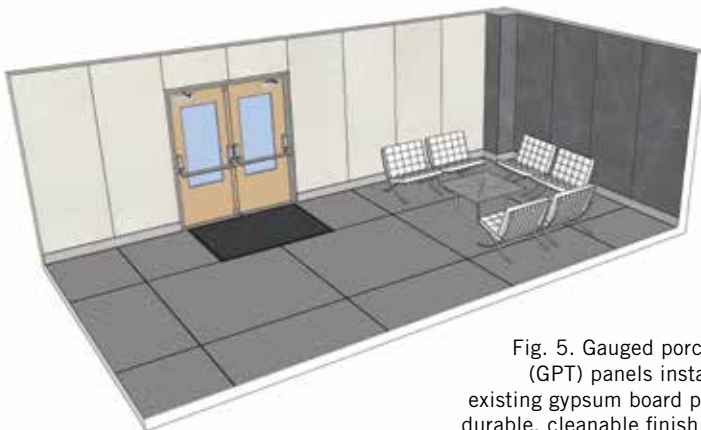


Fig. 5. Gauged porcelain tile (GPT) panels installed over existing gypsum board provides a durable, cleanable finish resistant to germs and pathogens.

Hyatt with carpet in rooms will need solid flooring that feels and looks cleaner.” He went on to suggest that hospitality contractors put together coronavirus retrofit packages covering flooring in hallways and public spaces, and replacing countertops with antimicrobial and antibacterial finishes. “Materials typically used in health care facilities and commercial kitchens like porcelain and solid surfaces will become common in hotels,” Pratt said.

Another retrofit opportunity presents itself for existing gypsum board walls. Ultra-large gauged porcelain tile panels provide a healthy alternative to gypsum board and other wallcoverings that may be porous and susceptible to microbial growth.

Gauged porcelain tile (GPT) panels are manufactured as thin as 3.5 millimeters, just over 1/8 inches, often precluding the expense of demolishing existing construction. Panel sizes of up to 5 feet by 10 feet result in minimal grout joints and a wall surface with the hardness and resistance to pathogens only porcelain can provide. With hundreds of colors, textures, and patterns to choose from, interiors are benefiting from an aesthetic upgrade as well as a functional one.

The installation of GPT and GPT panels is best left to the experts: trained BAC tile installers and contractors. The material is similar to conventional porcelain tile, but due to its ultra-large format and extremely thin profile, its installation requires specialty skills and installers who meet minimum qualifications, according to the installation standard ANSI

A108.19. For a GPT installation to succeed, it must meet a set of industry requirements quite different than those for conventional tile. For example, GPT has unique requirements for substrate flatness, mortar coverage, troweling technique, embedment technique, and accommodation for movement. The cutting tools and even the trowels are specially designed for this material.

IMI’s retrofit tile detail illustrates newly installed gauged porcelain tile panels over an existing interior gypsum board wall. For an existing steel stud framed wall to be a candidate for tile retrofit, the studs must be 20 gauge or heavier, a minimum of 3 5/8 inches thick, and spaced at 16 inches on center maximum.

In the method shown, the tile is adhered to the existing gypsum board with a cementitious bond coat of latex modified thinset mortar. A primer or bonding agent may be required by the mortar manufacturer. Optional profile strips are shown at the outside corner and at vertical expansion joints in the field of the wall spaced at specified intervals. This detail is a retrofit adaptation of the TCNA method W243.

The use of GPT and other tile as a retrofit finish over existing gypsum board walls can be a cost-effective way to impart porcelain tile’s health benefits and ease of maintenance to lobbies, waiting rooms, and other public spaces. When installed by BAC tile contractors and craftworkers, we can be confident in a beautiful installation that will provide decades of service. ■



Grazzini Brothers & Company • ST. PAUL, MN

Wright County Justice Center—Buffalo, MN

Grazzini Brothers & Company, a nationwide specialty contractor, is a longtime member of the Tile Contractors' Association of America and certified as a TCAA Trowel of Excellence™ Contractor. One of Grazzini Brothers' recent projects involved the ceramic tile and terrazzo finishes at the new Wright County Justice Center: a 150,000-square-foot, four level, courthouse facility addition to an existing Law Enforcement Center located in Buffalo, Minnesota. The construction manager was Contegrity Group, Inc., and the architect was BKV Group.

Greg Grazzini managed this project with over 16,870 square feet of tile finishes being utilized within the elevator lobby, cafeteria, vestibules, locker room showers and restrooms, along with 12,970 square feet of epoxy terrazzo flooring, base, and precast

terrazzo stair treads. The tile portion of the project involved 32" x 63" large format gauged porcelain wall panels, 24" x 48", 12" x 24" and 12" x 12" wall tiles, quarry tile floor and base, mosaic tiles and 4,500 lineal feet of Schluter metal cove, transition strip, and exposed edge trims. All tile was installed by the thinset method of installation and grouted with standard cement-based grout with the exception of the shower stall floors, which required a sloped mortar bed and waterproofing.

One of the challenges on this project was that many of the specified tiles were very close in shade/color, while other tiles were the same color with different finishes. Shipments arriving at the Grazzini warehouse included cartons of tiles that were from the same manufacturer, in the same product line/series, same color, and



same size. Some had a polished finish, some honed, and some matte. This made coordinating material quantities and shipments challenging for the warehouse staff and resulted in extra time required on the jobsite to verify that the correct tile color and finish were being used in the correct locations. Grazzini Brothers utilized detailed shop drawings to ensure that all team members had the same point of reference as to coordination and placement of each material. Keeping all workspaces organized was critical to make certain that different types of tiles and finishes did not get intermixed.

There were a multitude of Schluter metal trim shapes and sizes required for all the different tile thicknesses and transitions to coordinate in addition to the challenging placement of tile colors, finishes and sizes. There were also two different metal cove profiles: one for the wall tile to floor tile transitions and one for the wall tile to terrazzo floor transitions. Grazzini Brothers handled this issue by clearly indicating transition material specifications on the shop drawings, listing the exact trim shape and size for each location. These many variables also required that the project estimate be broken out for each trim profile and size to make sure the proper quantity



of each type was ordered. Shortages at the jobsite would only result in a loss of productivity and hold up progress.

The 32" x 63" large format gauged porcelain wall tile panels presented some challenges that had to be planned for well in advance. This was especially true of the panels that were to be installed at a higher elevation. Grazzini Brothers addressed this by making sure they had adequate manpower on site to assist with lifting and maneuvering the tile panels. Providing tools and equipment specific to the installation of gauged porcelain tile panels allowed their installers to proceed with the installation in a safe and efficient manner.

About Grazzini Brothers & Company

Grazzini Brothers & Company is a nationwide specialty contractor. Since 1923, Grazzini Brothers has provided a full range of tile, terrazzo, stone, and soft flooring installation services. Grazzini Brothers has the financial security, bonding capacity, and credit experience to undertake any sized project throughout the country. 🇺🇸

For additional information about Grazzini Brothers, you may contact Ms. Monique Navarrette @ (651) 994-4148 or mnavarrette@grazzini.com.

DALTILE DESIGNER HIGHLIGHTS “WELL-BEING” IN 2021

Continuously evaluating future and current design trends as part of her role at Daltile, the brand's lead product designer, Laura Grilli, has termed a key trend for 2021 as “Eudaimonia”. Eudaimonia is a Greek word that can be translated as human flourishing. She describes this as the trend of “Well-Being”.

“Well-Being means first of all being healthy, not only from a physical standpoint, but also from a psychological standpoint,” said Grilli. “Well-Being is always one of humankind’s intrinsic focuses, and after what happened last year, it will be even more so in 2021.”



Daltile's Perpetuo Marble-Look Porcelain Tile featured on the floor.

“The trend of Well-Being incorporates many of the principles of Biophilic Design,” said Grilli. “Biophilic Design means establishing close contact with nature, bringing nature inside our homes and offices. This type of design quite literally starts from the ground up, so selecting the right floor look is fundamental. Thinking about the tile industry, this is the trend of wood, marble, and stone looks such as those found in Daltile’s soon-to-launch new Transio, Enlite, and Perpetuo porcelain tile collections.”

“Daltile’s new Perpetuo marble-effect porcelain floor and wall tiles are perfect for transforming bathrooms and bedrooms into spaces dedicated to wellness while serving as a statement of both taste and lifestyle,” said Grilli. “Perpetuo comes in several formats, including a wave structure/texture wall tile that exemplifies the sensory component of Biophilic Design. We see Biophilic Design quickly growing into a full-sensory experience with soft and tactile materials becoming as important as colors in helping to integrate technology into our homes in a more natural and soothing way.”



Daltile's Enlite Stone-Look Porcelain Tile featured on the floor.

EMERALD



KEY LIME



GARDEN SPOT



“Biophilic Design is also the trend that has brought all the green colors that you have seen lately in our industry, such as Daltile’s Emerald Green, Key Lime, and Garden Spot,” said Grilli.

“Green is the color of growth and health,” explained Grilli*. “It is the color of nature and is considered a refreshing and peaceful color. Green provides restful and secure sensations. It is associated with safety, harmony, stability, and reliability. It is used to relax, but also to revitalize, balance, and encourage. Daltile’s Emerald Green and Key Lime are definitely two colors that express the power of nature. Daltile’s Emerald Green in particular is a pure green that embodies the possibility of new growth and overcoming negativity; this is a great color accent for entrances in hospitality, commercial, and healthcare spaces. Next, we have Daltile’s Key Lime, which is another re-energizing green, and it pairs well with emerald. Then we have Daltile’s Garden Spot, a more muted green and sort of a neutral green. Garden Spot promotes serenity and works very well with all other nature-inspired colors like grays and browns.”

“One of the additional ways in which we will see the trend of Well-Being play out in 2021 is the practice of creating a spa environment at home with calming and relaxing interiors,” added Grilli. “This year, you will hear a lot about home being like a sanctuary—a place where you can feel safe, where you can live and work in a calming and comforting way.”

“Color is one of the main ways to create this ambiance,” said Grilli. “Pastels from

Daltile's Color Wheel collection such as Waterfall, Spa, Biscuit, and Ocean Blue are beautiful pastel colors that symbolize neutrality and create a peaceful, soft, mild atmosphere. Daltile's Waterfall, a light pastel blue, is the kind of color that will be key for 2021; it is the color of a waterfall, but also the color of morning mist, so it is full of positivity and light and is like a breath of fresh air. Daltile's Spa is a color somewhere in between blue and green and is inspired by light seawater, but also by the color of a morning sky. It is a very versatile color because it can be used in different color palettes. It can be relaxing if combined with blues, whites, and beiges, but also playful if paired with pinks, purples, and reds. Then we have a nice neutral like Daltile's Biscuit that is similar to the color of seashells, and last a brilliant and energizing blue such as Daltile's Ocean Blue."

*(*Grilli used a few terms and phrases from graf1.com's Color Meaning and Psychology and from Color Marketing Group's Color Alert.)*

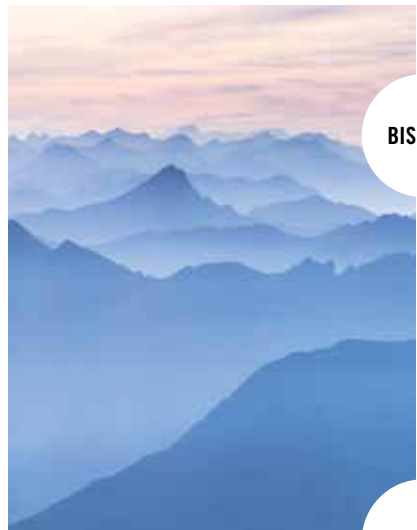
About Daltile

Daltile is the industry-leading brand of ceramic, porcelain, glass, metal, and stone tile as well as mosaics, extra-large slabs, countertops, exteriors, and roofing tile. Dedicated to innovative product development and distinguished style, Daltile provides a rich palette of quality products created to inspire residential and commercial designs. For more information, visit daltile.com and follow Daltile on Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. ■



OCEAN
BLUE

SPA



BISCUIT



WATERFALL



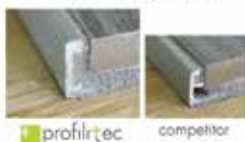
positive profile

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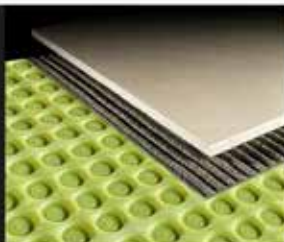


Systems

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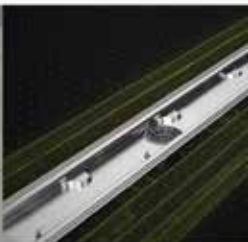
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Ernest Batchelder 1875–1957.
Photo courtesy of Robert Winter.

BATCHELDER:

Under the Olive Trees

PART ONE

“The history of an industry is often more entertaining to the writer than to the reader. It is like bringing out the family photograph album with the relatives in their Sunday clothes. We all have to start—somewhere and some time.”

These are the words of Ernest Allan Batchelder written in 1925 at the height of his career as a tile manufacturer in Los Angeles. He was 50 years old.

Batchelder was born in Francestown, New Hampshire, where nearly a century before his great-great-grandfather had settled after being relieved of duty in the Revolutionary War. His mother died when he was three, and he was sent to live with his father’s brother, a strict disciplinarian. He later moved to the Boston area, and in 1894 was admitted to the Massachusetts Normal Art School, a tuition-free teacher training college where he studied basic drawing instruction, graduating in 1899 with a diploma certifying him to teach drawing in Massachusetts. He then studied at the Harvard Summer School of Design under Denman Ross, a founding member of the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston.

In 1901, Batchelder was offered a job as an instructor of manual arts at Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena, and he moved to the West Coast. Between 1904 and 1909, he taught design classes intermittently at the Handicraft Guild in Minneapolis, made two trips to Europe, wrote two books and became a recognized authority in design.



By 1909, despite his position as Director of Art at Throop, Batchelder was frustrated with policy changes being made at the school. At 34, his time to strike out on his own had arrived. He purchased property overlooking the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena where he set about to construct a bungalow for himself. Using an illustration of the front of the house, he placed an ad in the *Pasadena Daily News* that appeared on September 16, 1910 promoting his “School of Design and Handicraft,” which was to open on November 15th of that year. Thus, it



Batchelder's bungalow in Pasadena built 1909-10.

to use. In spite of its humble origins, it possessed potential beauty when brought into contact with adequate ideas. We had those ideas and sought to give them expression.... It took three firings to satisfactorily produce our first mantel order. The mantel was laid out on the kitchen floor and personally delivered at the job because we had doubts as to the trustworthiness of expressmen... and, incidentally, feared the owner of the house might change his mind.”

One thing is certain: Batchelder was highly impressed by the success of Henry



Batchelder's garden today looking east.

seems reasonable to assume that his classes began in the garden behind the house at that time. The following November, he took out a permit to build a studio on the site, what he later termed the “birthplace” of Batchelder tile.

In 1925, Batchelder wrote: “Twelve [fifteen, in fact] years ago Batchelder tiles were made in a Pasadena garden under the shade of the olive trees. The clay was brought home from a brickyard wrapped in gunny sacks, all mixed ready



Batchelder's garden today looking west.
Note the roof of the original “studio” below the limb.



Mercer's "Peacock Panel."

Chapman Mercer, whose handcrafted Moravian tiles from Pennsylvania were revered by the proponents of Arts and Crafts in the East. In July of 1907, he ordered a variety of these tiles, presumably for use in his design classes at Throop, and it is not surprising that he installed some of them at his home: one embedded above the stone on the chimney outside, another on his front door, and several intermixed with his own on the tiled fireplace mantel in his living



Mercer's "River and City" adorning Batchelder's front door.

room. Years later in 1948, in an interview with the *Pasadena Star News*, Batchelder acknowledged being a Mercer disciple:

"The greatest of all American potters is the famous Mercer of Doylestown, Pennsylvania. Mercer was 300 years out of his time, probably the only modern artist retaining the glorious touch of the medieval Masters."

By 1912, as his neighbors were objecting to the "soot" generated by the backyard

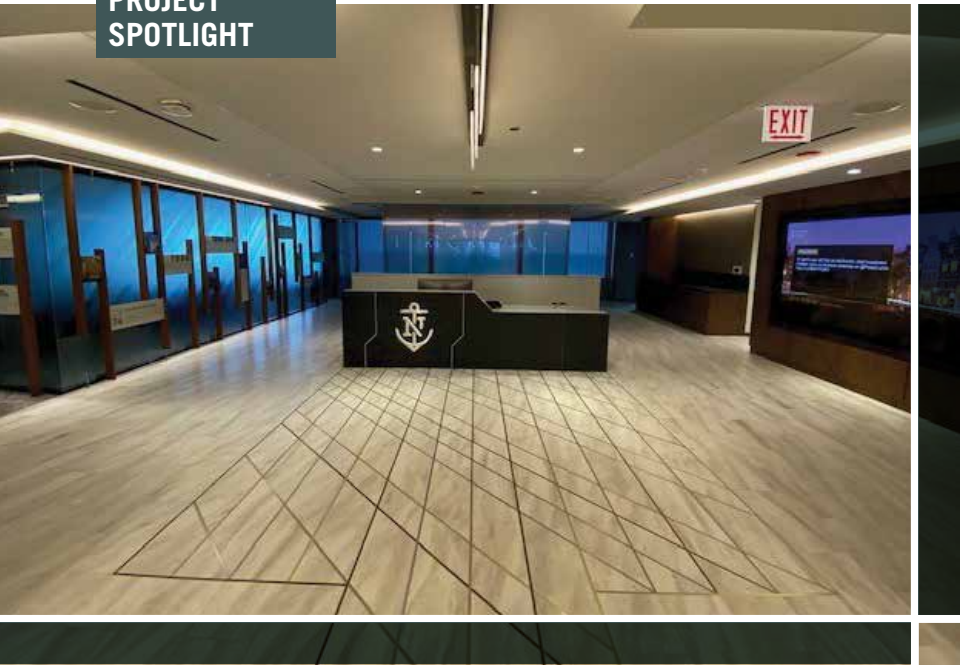


Batchelder's living room fireplace mantel dates to 1912.

kiln and as the demand for his novel ceramic products had exceeded the capacity of his garden studio, Batchelder knew the time had come to leave the olive trees behind and move into the city.

There is more to come... ■■

Joseph A. Taylor
President, *Tile Heritage Foundation*
Cesery Award recipient in 2003
www.tileheritage.org



Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co., Inc. • CHICAGO, IL

Northern Trust—Chicago, IL

Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co., a longtime member of the Tile Contractors' Association of America and a TCAA Trowel of Excellence™ Certified Contractor, was selected to furnish and install over 25,000 square feet of ceramic tile as part of a major renovation project at 333 South Wabash in Chicago. This project was the result of Northern Trust signing a lease for 462,000 square feet of office space in this 44-story skyscraper located in the central business district of Chicago and known for its signature red exterior. Northern Trust is a global financial services company. The architect was HED Design, and the general contractor was Executive Construction, Inc.

When asked about challenges on this project, Todd Tollakson, Trostrud's senior project manager on this project, said, "The biggest challenge was the high level of skill that was required in almost every area of ceramic tile installation throughout the project. In addition, coordination of work on up to five floors at a time and a crew that consisted of up to 16 men was difficult to say the least. As project managers we like to think it is our proficiency and preparation that makes a project successful, but that is only the beginning. The real coordination is carried out by our field personnel and foreman. Shawn Baker, our foreman on this project, was exceptional in his

duties. His ability to assign the right installer to the task needed was integral to the success of this project. He did all this while keeping up with a demanding schedule set by the general contractor. He is one of the most talented tile installers I have worked with during the past 28 years.”

Eighteen different tile types were involved, which included tiles from Daltile, Stone Source, Renaissance Tile, and Ceramic Technics. Installation materials were from the product lines of Mapei and Bostik. Schluter Systems transition strips were used throughout, with the exception of 1-inch-wide metal accent strips, custom made by Ceramic Tool Company, that were used in the 44th floor lobby.

Due to the size of the project and the use of 18 tile types, installation methods varied. The 17 floors of core restrooms



required floating/leveling the substate at an average depth of 2 inches utilizing Mapei’s Mapecem Quickpatch followed by waterproofing with Mapei’s AquaDefense membrane. The restroom floor and wall tiles were installed with Mapei’s LFT mortar and grouted with Bostik’s TruColor grout. In addition, there were pantry areas on each of these floors that required backsplashes of varying tile types. All porcelain tile backsplashes were installed with Mapei’s LFT mortar, and glass tile backsplashes were installed with Mapei’s Adesilex P10 Glass Tile Mortar. They were then grouted with Mapei’s Rapid Setting Ultrasound Plus FA.

The main reception area on the 44th floor was the focal point of the Northern Trust project and involved 2,200 square feet of porcelain tile flooring. 12” x 24” tiles were installed around the perimeter of a 340-square-foot accent pad consisting of a combination of

12" x 24" and 12" x 48" tiles cut in a parallelogram shape. In lieu of grout joints between each tile, three different colors of one-inch-wide stainless steel bar stock, supplied by the Ceramic Tool Company was utilized. Mapei's Kerabond/Keralastic System was used for installation pursuant over an application of AquaDefense Antifracture Membrane. Expansion joints were caulked using Mapei's Mapesil T silicone sealant.

Most of the ceramic tile work occurred on occupied tenant floors and had to be performed during off hours, with access to each floor being scheduled through the general contractor 72 hours in advance, and deliveries being scheduled a minimum of 48 hours in advance. The project spanned over a period of approximately six months and was successfully completed last year with a Silver LEED Certification.

About Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co.

Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co. was founded in 1929 by Earl J. Trostrud, Sr. It ceased operations during World War II and started up again in 1946, performing mostly residential and small commercial installations until 1958 when the company's focus shifted to large commercial jobs. Today, it is one of the largest ceramic tile contractors in the metropolitan Chicago area.

Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Co. was awarded the TCAA Trowel of Excellence® certification in 2012. The company's president, Earl J. Trostrud, Jr., was the recipient of the 2013 Carl V. Cesery Award, one of the industry's most prestigious awards. ■

For more information on this project, please contact Todd Tollakson at (630) 327-6688, or to learn how Trostrud Mosaic & Tile Company can ensure the success of your next tile installation project, contact Brad Trostrud at (630) 595-3700.



Specifying Style and Durability with Ceramic Tile



By Roxanne Morris,
Marketing & Media Relations Manager
Tile Council of North America

The reason ceramic tile is the reigning surface material specified for kitchens and bathrooms is because—it lasts. In these high-traffic areas of the home, ceramic tile’s durability repays homeowners with decades of low-maintenance service. End of discussion? Hardly.

As our homes become more and more a canvas for expressing our personal styles, ceramic tile surfaces offer an unlimited array of options for color, shape, size, pattern, and layout that can be used both inside and outside. The aesthetics of ceramic tile have blurred the lines of traditional use with a creative palette appropriate for every surface, making ceramic tile an incredibly versatile style choice.

The perfect union of smart and stylish, ceramic tile’s high-performance features offer once-considered “behind-the-scenes” benefits that have now taken center stage:

Health and Hygiene Benefits

Traditionally considered a place to rest and recharge after work, school, and socializing, homes are now our makeshift

offices, classrooms, gyms, studios—you name it. This increased use furthers the marketplace’s growing demands for hygienic surfacing materials like ceramic tile that support easy sanitization and contribute to cleaner settings. Ceramic tile has advantages that make living in a hygienic world easier:

- **Easy to clean:** Wiping with soap and water¹ is all that’s needed to clean up most messes—no harsh chemicals are necessary.
- **Disinfectant-friendly:** Occasional use of stronger cleaners and disinfectants will not dull or damage ceramic surface materials.
- **Antibacterial:** Ceramic tile is inhospitable to the growth of bacteria.
- **Antimicrobial:** Options are available with antimicrobial properties that can suppress and even destroy harmful microorganisms, such as mold, fungi, bacteria, and viruses.
- **Hypoallergenic:** Ceramic tile contains no allergens, and allergens in the environment such as dust, dirt, and pollen are easy to remove and can’t penetrate tile’s hard-fired surface.



Environmental Benefits

The Tile Council of North America (TCNA) is leading an industry-wide collaboration to provide a transparent and comprehensive Material Ingredient Guide. This guide will highlight ingredients used by the tile industry—materials that building occupants can feel comfortable using and living with day after day.

Some nonceramic surface covering options contain harmful pollutants that we may be especially wary of when we spend more time at home. Ceramic tile helps create a healthy living environment and contains none of the following contaminants:

- **Volatile organic compounds (VOCs):** Some VOCs emitted by nonceramic building products can contribute to a wide variety of health problems, including “sick building syndrome.”² Because ceramic tile is produced (fired) at extremely high temperatures, removing all organic content, it is an “inorganic” material and has zero VOCs.
- **Formaldehyde:** Some wood products contain formaldehyde, and certain levels of formaldehyde can irritate

Gauged porcelain tile countertops that “waterfall” down the sides of kitchen islands are gaining popularity due to their durability and ease of cleaning compared other surfaces; they are stain, scratch, flame, and water resistant.

medical conditions such as asthma and other respiratory disorders. Have a client concerned about indoor air quality? Specify ceramic tile. Ceramic tile does not contain formaldehyde.

- **Polyvinyl chloride (PVC):** PVC is a resin used in some vinyl flooring and is regularly a subject of concern among health experts and builders. Ceramic tile is free of PVC.
- **Plastic:** Ceramic tile contains no plastic and has none of the health or environmental concerns associated with plastic. Designers and architects can help reduce plastic use by specifying ceramic tile.

Green Building Benefits—Transparency

One of the major considerations for specifiers when a “green” product is desired is transparency, or giving honest information about the environmental and health aspects of a product.

The 2020 North American industry-wide Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) for ceramic tile,³ certified by UL Environment, provides transparency in six major environmental impact categories.

When comparing the environmental impacts reported by EPDs for other flooring types, the EPD for ceramic tile reports significantly lower impacts. “Not only does the North American industry-wide EPD for ceramic tile show it has the lowest global warming potential and fossil fuel depletion (i.e. lowest carbon footprint), it also shows ceramic tile to have the

lowest overall impacts in photochemical oxidant creation (smog), ozone depletion, acidification, and eutrophication potential when compared to publicly available EPDs for other flooring materials,” says Bill Griese, TCNA’s Director of Standards Development and Sustainability Initiatives. “Ceramic tile is the proven green choice for the good of the environment.”

In addition to directing people toward sustainable construction materials, EPDs can help meet transparency requirements and achieve green building points. Participating in green building programs is ideal for any number of reasons, from creating greater energy- and cost-efficient buildings to catching tax breaks.

Specifying ceramic tile covered by the ceramic tile EPD can help meet requirements of many leading green building programs, including:

- LEED v4.1
- Green Globes ANSI/GBI 01-2019
- NAHB National Green Building Standard
- International Green Construction Code (IgCC) powered by ASHRAE Standard 189.1
- Collaborative for High-Performance Schools (CHPS)
- CALGreen
- GSA P-100 Facilities Standards

Mortar and grout manufactured in North America are also covered by EPDs, and most green building standards⁴ provide additional credit for each product used, so you can likely achieve additional points with the mortar and grout in your project in addition to the tile. The ceramic tile industry EPD “package” (tile, mortar, and grout)

provides triple ingredient transparency and recognition in green building programs.

Innovation Benefits

Aside from time-tested examples of ceramic tile’s beauty and durability (e.g. historic examples dating back thousands of years), Lesley Goddin, Editor of *Tile Letter*, points out that the ceramic industry continues to evolve. “New applications have arisen as the technology of these products—and the skills to install them—have evolved,” says Goddin. “Enter COVID-19, and these options are gaining ground, not simply because of their beauty, but also due to more-important-than-ever considerations like durability, easy maintenance, disinfecting—and in some cases—inherent antimicrobial qualities.”

Innovations in ceramic tile manufacturing have led to new sizes and thicknesses of tile, broadening the scope to include more outdoor use, as well as furniture applications (tables, countertops, built-ins).

Outdoors, gauged porcelain panels are being used increasingly more as ventilated facades—resistant to fading in the sun and can withstand the damaging effects of repeated freeze/thaw cycles.



Gauged porcelain tile panels/slabs can be as large as 15 by 5 feet, and as thin as 3.5 millimeters, and gauged porcelain pavers can be as thick as 2 centimeters.

Manufacturing innovations have been matched by style innovation to produce endless design possibilities. In addition to size developments, you'll see creative designs featuring transitional installations that mix surface materials as one surface transitions into another surface, delineating different spaces. Conversely, ceramic tile options can allow the same tile design to be used for both indoor and outdoor spaces, forming a unified aesthetic that integrates indoor-outdoor living spaces.

The Benefit of Industry Standards

Virtually every category of ceramic and glass tile has standards—defined criteria for identifying and specifying the material that will suit a particular use based on its material properties, such as water absorption, breaking strength, coefficient of friction, etc. Tile installation products (grouts, mortars and underlayments) also have standards guiding their appropriate use, and standards exist for how ceramic products should be installed. The industry's stringent standards for this product category result in standardized and reliable performance.

Additionally, there is the *TCNA Handbook for Ceramic, Glass, and Stone Tile Installation* which contains quick reference details covering most common installation methods and their service rating from "Residential" to "Extra-Heavy" and everything in



Outdoor pavers, popular for patios and walkways, can be installed with mortar and grout, or laid simply on a gravel or sand substrate. Ceramic tile adds unique style options for outdoor spaces and durability that surpasses natural stone and cement.

between. It also includes helpful guides for selecting products (various tile types, setting materials, membranes, backer boards, etc.), installation requirements, specification writing, and installer and contractor qualifications.

Specifying Qualified Labor for a Successful Installation

To ensure ceramic tile is installed correctly, according to the design, and to industry standards, specifying qualified labor is essential to the success of the installation. Installers who are committed to their craft, who stay up-to-date with new materials and techniques, and who regularly upgrade skills are key to an installation realizing the designer's original intent.

Scott Conwell, director of industry development with IMI, stresses the importance of using tile installers who are trained and skilled in best practice installation techniques like those taught

under the curriculum of the International Masonry Industry Training and Education Foundation (IMTEF) and joint apprenticeship and training committees. Conwell said, “Design professionals can ensure qualified labor on their projects by requiring credentials like IMTEF training, a TCAA Trowel of Excellence contractor, or ACT certified installers in their specifications.”

Performance Value

All of ceramic tile’s benefits add up to significant value, from the value of how we choose to spend our dollars to the value we place on caring for our family and our planet. In terms of dollars and “sense,” ceramic tile pays off in the lowest life cycle cost for flooring options compared to other flooring materials. Because ceramic tile lasts significantly longer and requires less upkeep, it costs less to install and maintain per square foot than other (nonceramic) flooring options over the lifetime of the building. (Scharf-Godfrey Life Cycle Cost Study ⁵).

When specifying to meet a project budget, additional costs of maintenance and replacement are factors to consider for every client. Choose a surface covering that’s long-lasting, saves money and time, benefits the environment, and maintains its original appearance for decades.

Ceramic tile delivers health benefits for the occupants of a space, as well as artistic value. Additionally, because each tile is hand-laid, ceramic installations provide customization opportunities simply unattainable with other surface options. Its stain resistance, scratch resistance,

and fade resistance keep ceramic looking beautiful and clean (always in style) long after other surface options have failed.



Before your next project, explore WhyTile.com—the tile industry’s inspirational and educational

resource. Why Tile® grew from a growing need to guide consumers with accurate information about surface choices, as well as to assist designers, specifiers, contractors, and other industry stakeholders with communicating the advantages of ceramic tile using research-based messaging and content. Why Tile content is free to use. For additional tools and tile resources, such as ready-to-use videos, ads, and social content, consider becoming a Why Tile Partner at partners.whytile.com. There’s no fee to join, and partners are notified whenever new resources become available. For more information on ceramic tile standards, visit TCNAtile.com. 🇺🇸

¹ Why Tile® Top Tile Maintenance Tips. www.whytile.com/easy-care/

² The Sick Building Syndrome. Joshi, Sumedha. *Indian Journal of Occup & Environ Medicine*. 2008 Aug; 12(2): 61–64. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2796751/

³ EPD Transparency Summary for Ceramic Tile Manufactured in N. America. whytile.com/library/epd-transparency-summary-ceramic-tile/

⁴ Tile and Green Building Credits and Requirements. Tile Council of North America (TCNA). www.whytile.com/library/tile-green-building-credits-requirements/

⁵ Life Cycle Cost Study for Floor Finishes, Scharf-Godfrey. *Tile: The Natural Choice*, 2018 Ed. Tile Council of North America (TCNA). <https://whytile.com/library/life-cycle-cost-study/>



Trowel of Excellence™ Certified Contractors

Trowel of Excellence certification designates that a company consistently delivers outstanding skilled craftsmanship and superior management practices. Trowel of Excellence contractors employ only the best trained and most knowledgeable installation professionals and demonstrate their commitment to performing at the highest levels of industry standards, ethical business practices and financial responsibility on each and every job. That's why the Tile Council of North America and Atrivu both recognize Trowel of Excellence certification in contractor qualifications language which is included in the *TCNA Handbook*, *MasterSpec*, and *BSD SpecLink*.

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