

Team Consolideck® Newsletter

Fall 2010

Consolideck® Profile *The Grid*

They wanted a gleaming, polished concrete floor for their showroom, like the ones they saw in Europe.

Unfortunately, what the owners of Philadelphia-based Tague Lumber Company had for their new Malvern, Pa., showroom was 8,500 square feet of old, greasy, dirty greenish-gray concrete. Spalls marred the floor, some as big as 35 square feet. Pock marks and crumbled expansion joint edges also defaced the concrete.

About 5,000 square feet of the former big-box pet store floor had been covered with VCT tiles. It bore the tell-tale grid where spent cleaning fluid carried solubilized contaminants through the tiny joints between tiles and soaked into the concrete.

Another 3,500 square feet, part of an addition, had never suffered VCT, but was still dirty and chipped.

Tague Lumber Company tapped Jamison Masonry Restoration, Philadelphia, to clean, grind and polish their floors.

"We're a masonry restoration company, but we've always had tie-ins with concrete and floor restoration," commented Vice President for Operations Jim Jamison.

The Jamison crew began with a water clean-down of the dirty concrete, using auto scrubbers to remove loose dirt and grime. The wash-down prepped the floor for a more advanced treatment using Consolideck® SafEtch®.

The blend of mild acids, degreasers and detergents in SafEtch® not only provided a further cleaning effect, it removed a small amount of surface cement and part of the embedded "grid" pattern.

Then they got down to business, Jim said, cutting a four-foot-wide swath across the floor with a heavy-duty diamond grinder-polisher.

They started dry grinding with 30-grit metals, and moved up to 150-grit metals, removing several mils of concrete along the way. They exposed a good-looking black aggregate in some areas on their way up to 100- and 400-grit resins.

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The grid -- Faint and faded, but still there after grinding and multiple polishings and cleanings.

photos courtesy John Cavalieri, Specialized Inc.

At 400, the techs treated the floor with Consolideck® LS® lithium-silicate hardener/densifier, using low-pressure sprayers.

LS® makes the concrete harder and denser by filling the concrete pores with the tough calcium silicate hydrate that makes concrete hard to begin with.

It also helps polishing go faster and get better results, because there's more surface area for the diamond polishing pads to work on.

For their next step, the Jamison crew took the floor up to an 800-grit finish.

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"The shine really popped at 800," Jim said.

"That's because of the good job the guys did with cleaning and grinding early on."

After popping the shine even further with 1500-grit resins, they applied a micro-thin coat of Consolideck® LSGuard®. The glossy protective coating bears the "LS" prefix because it contains lithium-silicate, which contributes an additional hardening/densifying effect.

The technicians burnished the LSGuard® into the polished concrete with a high-speed propane burnisher and a diamond encrusted pad, raising the already glossy finish to a nearly mirror-like level.

That's when they saw it.

Newly installed overhead lights, combined with daylight from big, newly cleaned windows, shone brightly on about 2,000 square feet of polished floor in the showroom's front.

The brilliant light illuminated a grid-pattern from the removed VCT that hadn't been previously apparent. SafEtch® and grinding had

taken out some of the grid, but the new, brighter lighting showed that the old contaminants weren't beaten yet.

That's where the company's masonry restoration expertise came in handy.

"We decided to lift it out with Restoration Cleaner," Jim said.

PROSOCO's Sure Klean® Restoration Cleaner is used for breaking up heavy carbon crusts and layers of dirt and grime on older and historic buildings. It's not normally recommended for



"Some of the guests seemed more interested in the floors than in the displays," Jim said.

concrete, or for interior use. But Jamison Masonry Restoration's long experience with restoration cleaning – since 1989 – pointed to the powerful cleaner as a likely, if unorthodox, key to unlock the oily outlines.

Applied with low-pressure sprayers, Restoration Cleaner partially dissolved the layer of stained concrete for rinsing away with clean water.

In the end, some of the grid pattern stayed, though the Restoration Cleaner faded it to an acceptable level.

"Tague Lumber wanted a shiny floor," Jim commented. "but they also wanted to keep an industrial 'old floor' look."

Altogether, the work took about three weeks. Feedback was excellent, reported Jim, who was among the VIPs invited to the grand opening of the Tague Lumber showroom, now filled with lavish displays of the latest home-building and improvement products.

There was only one small problem, Jim said, which no one could have foreseen.

"Some of the guests seemed more interested in the floors than in the displays," he said.



At the beginning of the project, dry-grinding revealed a handsome large, dark aggregate, hidden for years.