



Covelli Expansion

Project Spotlight: June 2007



LOCATION:

Warren, Ohio

OWNER:

Sam Covelli

ARCHITECT:

Phillips/Sekanick Architecture

TILE CONTRACTOR:

Norm Barron, Barron Tile Company,
Youngstown, Ohio

TILE SUPPLIER:

Buckeye Ceramic Tile Distributors,
Warren, Ohio

TILE INSTALLATION SYSTEM:

LATICRETE International, Inc., Bethany, CT

LATICRETE DISTRIBUTORS:

Daltile Beachwood, Ohio
Buckeye Ceramic Tile Distributors, Warren, Ohio

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By Eric Carson

Sam Covelli, named Northeast Ohio's 2005 Entrepreneur of the Year by the accounting firm Ernst and Young, has made more than a few good business decisions during his highly decorated 30-plus year career.

His firm, Covelli Enterprises, ranks as one of America's leading franchisees, making its mark first with McDonald's in the 1990's, and now with Panera Bread and most recently O'Charley's restaurants. After selling all 43 McDonald's locations in 1998, Covelli has launched 120 Panera units in Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Central Florida, and 50 more O'Charley's are already in operation or on the way for virtually the same territory in 2007.

With success comes size, and Covelli's staff has more than tripled since 2000, necessitated the expansion of his own Warren, Ohio corporate headquarters. Needing not only a significant increase in space but a facelift for the existing exterior, Covelli made another bold, yet wise decision. After careful consideration, Covelli opted out of plans to mechanically fasten large format granite cladding over existing masonry, deciding instead on a thin porcelain veneer and direct adhesive approach with a revolutionary product and practice from LATICRETE, the world leader in the development of innovative systems for the installation of ceramic tile and stone.

Driven by the desire to innovate, LATICRETE has pioneered dozens of industry firsts in both products and services, and of one those products: LATAPOXY® 310 Stone Adhesive, powered by the exclusive LATAPOXY 310 Cordless Mixer, represents both the future and the present for the installation of large format tile or stone on vertical surfaces.

A two-component, high strength construction epoxy, building code approved by ICC, LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive offers major advantages over mechanical anchoring, plaster and wire, and even the thin-set method of installing veneers. The first major benefit is speed of installation. Available in a standard 45 minute set version or a rapid five minute version, with a combination of the two being used in the Covelli project, LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive with the

LATAPOXY 310 Cordless Mixer is capable of tripling productivity while significantly reducing labor costs in the process. Equally as important, LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive allows for quick and easy plumb adjustments while the stone is in place to compensate for uneven walls and thickness variations that may be present in the stone, a major factor in Covelli's decision to scrap the original plan and instead choose the LATICRETE® adhesive system. LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive, even in volatile Northeast Ohio weather, with humid summers and frigid winters, was ultimately the proper choice for the new exterior façade at Covelli headquarters.

"We brought LATICRETE to the table," said Mark Bleggi, a LATICRETE supplier from Buckeye Ceramic Tile Distributors. "I think it's the best product out there. I wanted no problems. The walls are in and out and we were able to make adjustments. I don't like thinsets out here in this weather. With LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive, it was just shoot it with the gun, up and gone. The system well exceeded anything else we could have used."

The Covelli expansion presented Phillips/Sekanick Architecture with a host of unique challenges, including the fact that construction took place in the winter months in Northeast Ohio. But there was more, the three-story building consisted of two distinct substructural materials, with the first two floors, representing the majority of the 39,460 square feet of space, comprised of split-faced block masonry, and the third floor of sheathed metal framing. Due to the inherent nature of split-faced masonry units, the bottom two floors lacked surface consistency, a variable that only served to highlight the benefits of LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive's ability to compensate for uneven substrates. Not only was the LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive system a much faster method of installation, there was no need to apply a time consuming scratch coat in the preparation stages, another way the system helped slice labor costs on the Covelli project.

For the existing third floor and the ensuing third



floor expansion, also comprised of metal framing and sheathing material, a polycarbonate ventilated rainscreen cladding system was mechanically anchored, for minimal load impact to the metal framing.

“When investigating the various techniques for mounting the tile finishes, it was suggested that we consider an epoxy adhesive for masonry applications from LATICRETE,” said Kim Phillips of Phillips/Sekanick Architecture. “First met with skepticism by both the installer and our firm, due in large part to unfamiliarity of the technique and materials, we launched an exhaustive investigation. Provided with all available research materials by the supplier (Bleggi), and after demonstrations in the field by Mr. Brian Cotterman, the LATICRETE technician, the team of owner, architect and installer were convinced that the product was the most viable solution for this project.”

To install the 2' x 4' Altair Series porcelain tiles from Imolla in two different finishes, a honed dark gray on the recessed bottom floors and polished gray on the protruding second level, Norm Barron of the Barron Tile Company in nearby Youngstown braved temperatures as low as 12 degrees with a crew of six experienced installers. The advantages of LATAPOXY® 310 Stone Adhesive were clearly noticeable. The product maintains perfect workability at temperatures as low as 50 degrees, and accommodates non-plumb walls by allowing up to one-inch spacing between the substrate and veneer, which was ideal for the pre-existing masonry walls at Covelli headquarters. And most importantly, LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive eliminated the need for constant and timely scaffolding adjustments. Instead of finishing a few rows a day, the strength of LATAPOXY 310 Stone Adhesive allowed for as many as 20 rows in a day to be completed vertically, which when complete created a perfectly even surface in the form of a ventilated façade.

The large format porcelain tiles were not grouted, but rather caulked with LATICRETE® Latasil™, with each individual tile essentially acting as its own expansion joint in the freeze/thaw environment. In addition,

Barron installed the same porcelain tile in a spot where he said, “Nothing would hold but this epoxy,” as ceiling tile for a pair of outside balconies.

Phillips, the lead architect on the project, continued: “An additional advantage was gained in the ability to install the adhesive system throughout the winter months in Northeast Ohio in a relatively short timeframe, therefore producing a labor savings over a more conventional mechanical fastening system. The direct adhesive approach also allowed for field adjustments to achieve a plum, flat appearance without numerous mechanical adjustments.”

While the Covelli expansion project was certainly unique, most notably the exterior specification of a stone adhesive in a freeze/thaw environment, it's the LATICRETE commitment to research and technology, and the subsequent development of products uniquely positioned to improve construction practices in the field of tile and stone installation that continually leads to the architectural specification of LATICRETE system materials.

“Although this was the first initial use by our firm of this particular LATICRETE product,” Phillips said, “our extensive use of various other LATICRETE materials, and the subsequent demonstration provided the confidence to utilize this product without much hesitation. The owner, architect and installer are all very pleased with the method, material, and most importantly – the result.”





Corporate Headquarters:
LATICRETE International, Inc.

One LATICRETE Park North
Bethany, CT 06524-3423 USA
800.243.4788
203.393.0010

www.laticrete.com

Latin America: 1.203.393.0010

Europe: 34.96.649.1908

Middle East: 917.7.244.6396

India: 91.40.2337.8775

China: 86.21.139.1812.3215

Asia Pacific: 852.2526.6660

Australia: 61.3.9933.6111

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