



‘A very sweet project’

Closed, crumbling and unused, a former gas station morphed into a chic, neighborhood ice cream parlor and gathering spot.

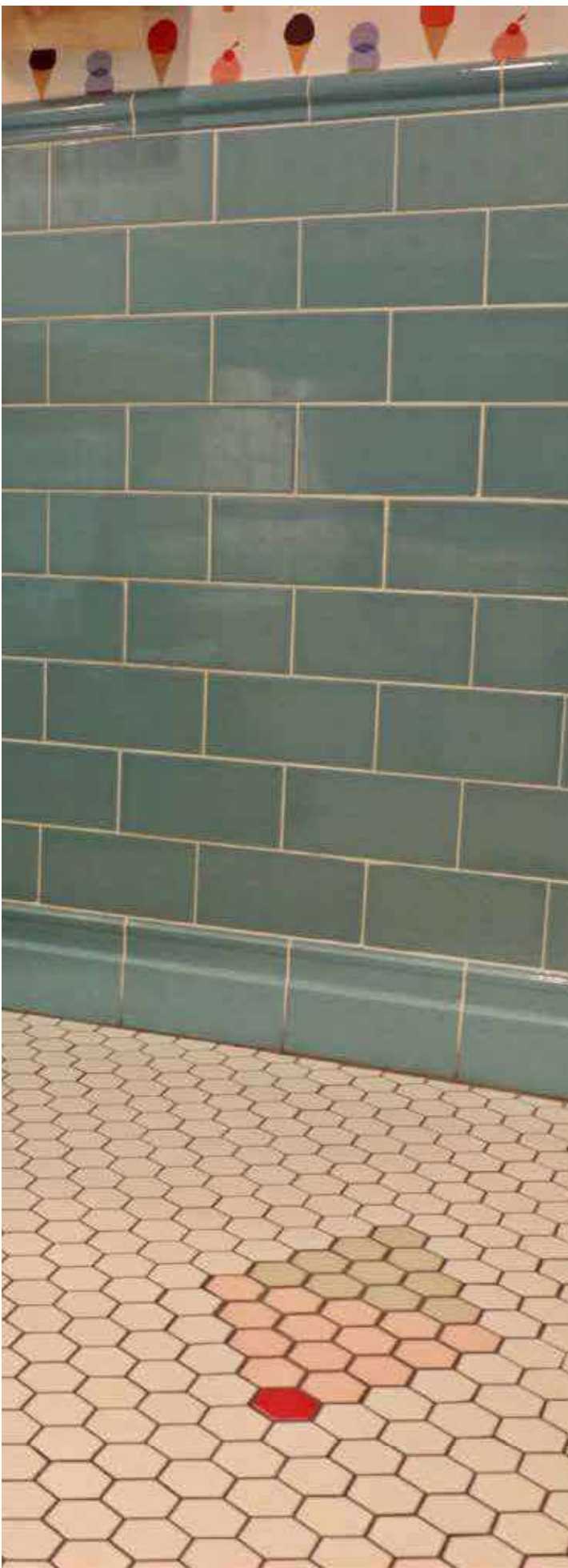
By Ron Treister



Located in the heart of idyllic Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, nearly 100 years old and vacant for at least a decade, a little building was in a condition of total disrepair.

And it clearly called out for a new identity.

“Honestly, it’s the most unoriginal idea,” says Liz Joy, who now owns Joy Ice Cream Social. Joy had continually heard her patrons say they thought the small white and blue building should be converted into an ice cream shop. Living within walking distance of the old building and ready for an occupational change, Joy forged ahead and bought the building. It soon became a family affair after her husband, Tom, a Senior Associate at Engberg Anderson Architects, developed design plans and coordinated with contractors throughout the renovation process.



Photos courtesy of Jen Hermes

Kowalske Kitchen & Bath, a design-build remodeling company located in nearby Delafield, Wisconsin, was chosen to bring the flooring to life. Byron Bye, the firm's Production Manager says that because the building had been vacant for so long, a number of items had to be immediately addressed. For example, there was distinct cracking throughout most of the indoor flooring area. As a result, all indoor flooring areas had to be painstakingly cleaned before new flooring was installed.

Bye had worked with Bostik tile installation systems for many years at his own shop prior to joining with Kowalske. "We needed the ultimate in high-performance systems regarding leveling the subfloor and then adhering/grouting the tile. So, a meeting was set up with Kirk Grossnickle, Midwest Territory Manager for Bostik.

For starters, they addressed the floor leveling challenge, and quickly agreed upon Bostik's SL-175, a premium, cement-based,



self-leveling underlayment used to create a smooth, flat or level surface prior to the installation of floor coverings. Its long working time, low shrinkage and leveling properties helped with demanding applications like this.



"Because of its very strong bond of the tile to the building's floor, we agreed upon Bostik Big Tile & Stone, a polymer-modified, large and heavy tile mortar that is generally used for installations to set large format tiles," Grossnickle says. "Big Tile & Stone may also be used for uneven tile and stone thicknesses... or to minimize lippage, which is why it was recommended for this project. And 1900™ Epoxy Modified Grout & Mortar Admixture was selected due to its excellent workability, easy cleanup, and superior chemical resistance."

To complete all of the above, Bye and company were positive it could easily be done in a month. By doing so, they met Joy Ice Cream Social's July 4th, 2023, grand opening deadline.

But then something came up. Another contractor that had been given the go-ahead to handle the building's drywall, painting, plumbing, finished carpentry, and more, for one reason or another, opted out of the project. "Because we knew what was going on in addition to our flooring work, because we are deadline-sensitive... and because we relished challenges, we asked to take over all those project functions," Bye says. "Thankfully, we were granted this request."

"To say it wasn't crazy, would be a gross understatement," Bye says. "But working with Liz and Tom, Kirk, and all the others involved, we somehow made every one of our Independence Day deadlines. And all of the above added up to a very, very sweet project!" ■



Photos courtesy of Liz Joy