

Alderley Edge Restoration of a Late Victorian Encaustic & Geometric Tiled Floor.

The Victorian encaustic & geometric tiled floor on this contract was badly damaged in a number of areas most notably at the foot of the stairs.



This section of damage is over 6 feet long (180 cm) the in-fill is concrete.

I used Exakt saws 3 in rotation to cut around the existing tiles this then allowed me to remove the first layer of infill which was a concrete mix, I used a small Makita hammer drill with a blade chisel attachment to chop out between lines cut with the Exakt saw diamond blades, I took out all the infill down to the original Victorian base which comprised of a rough lime screed sloppy mix with the usual muck that the original builders nearly always throw into the base screed of what will be a tiled floor, in the first rough screed here we found lead scraps from the leaded glass fitters, clay pipe bowls & broken stems, plenty of pipe dottle (the smoked content of a pipe bowl) horse manure, bits of wood, nails, debris from brushing up around the work place. Foundry slag which must have been used as hardcore.



Restored section showing bridge between the new porch tiles and the original floor.

The above bridging section is a device I often use when confronted with an aesthetic & symmetry problem of joining two sections of a floor which are not square to each other or because some radical re-designing has had to take place to produce a workable design and keep the quality of the original floor yet perhaps have combined a new section which won't line up through to an original floor.

During the past 39 years of working on contracts we have found that the tiler's first screed is often full of content from the previous trades or crafts that have been swept up and deposited into the screed along with whatever is used as the hard-core base.

This floor had 3 major sections that had been ripped up and then been filled with concrete , unlike most sections found on other contracts these in-fill sections did not cover pipes or other utilities which is usually the case.

P3.



Wooden planking lifted showing space under the floor board's kitchen door section.

This threshold had lost its encaustic tile threshold at some point and then just had a rough plank nailed down to cover the exposed wooden joists & noggins. After lifting the wooden plank, the square section of concrete was cut around again with Exakt saws to prevent the percussive action of the hammers & chisel being transmitted to tiles that are firm and that I wanted to keep intact.

In the past without the use of Exakt saws we knew that others tiles would lift because of the hammering necessary to remove any concrete would cause tiles to shift. It could turn out that more than 2 or 3 days were added to the contract because of previously firm tiles lifting due to the vibrations caused by hammering; this can be due to the original tiles being fixed so tightly together that any impact is transmitted to numerous tiles.

P4.



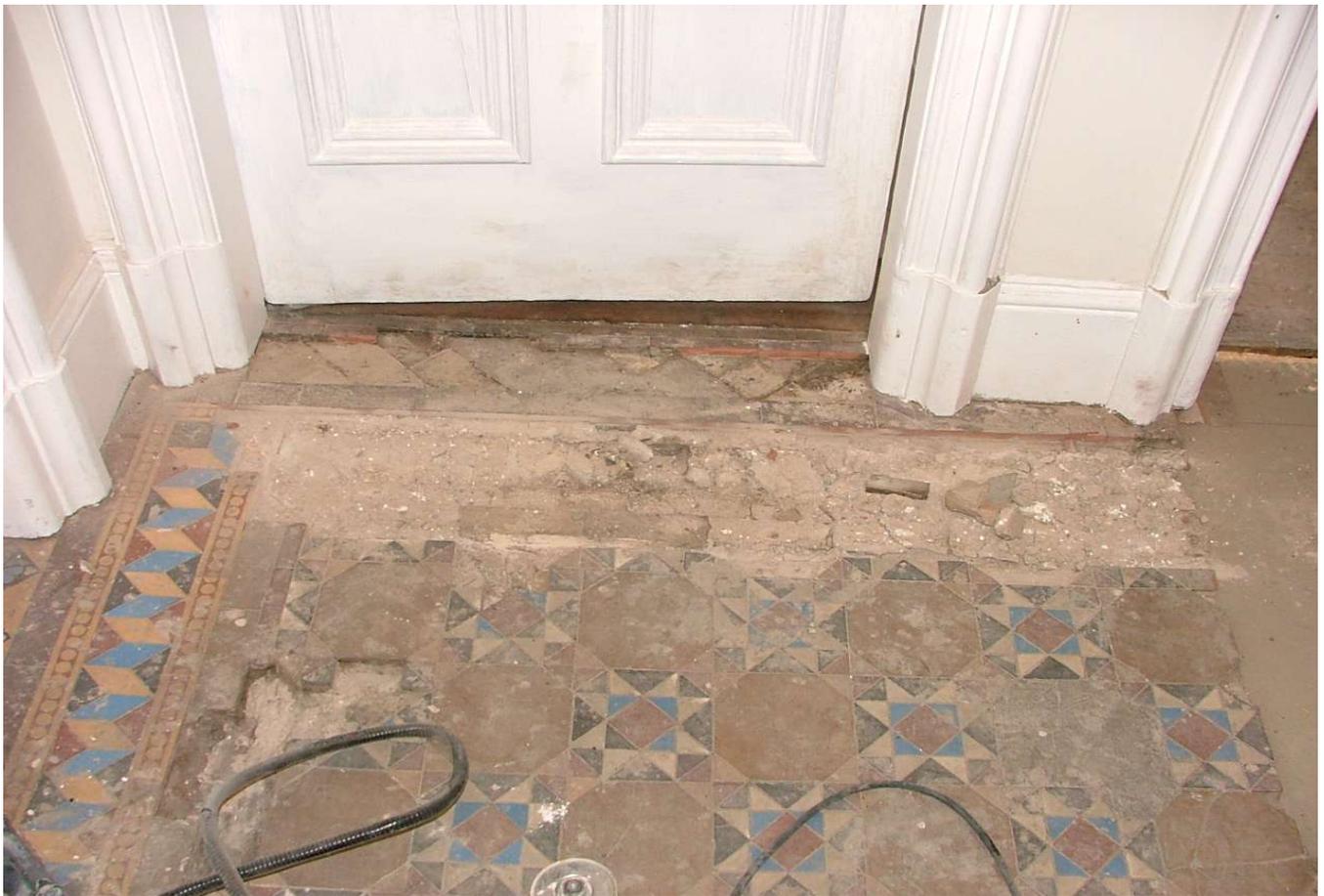
Kitchen door screeded at threshold & area that had been filled with concrete.



Same area marked to align border & threshold tiles.

This area is marked up for the above tiles which will be fitted prior to tiling the missing field tiles.

P5.



Section of in-fill being removed in front of dining room.

As can be seen here this section of infill links with the square section in front of the kitchen door.

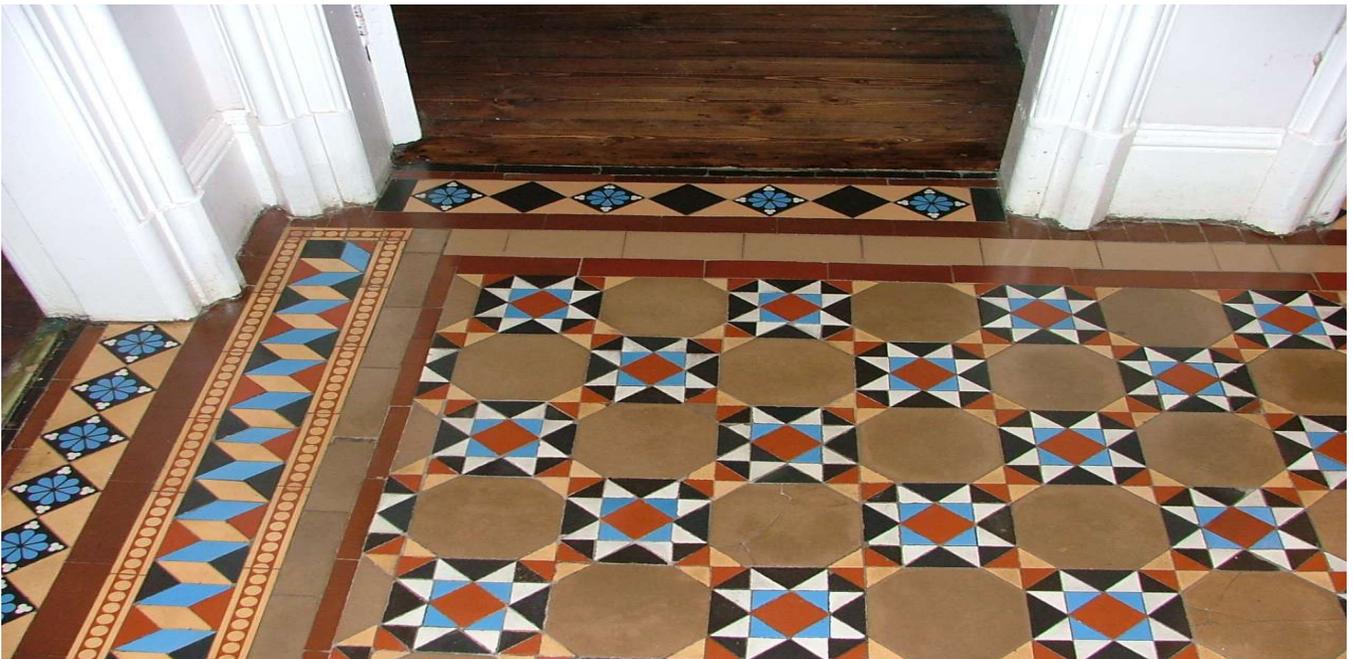


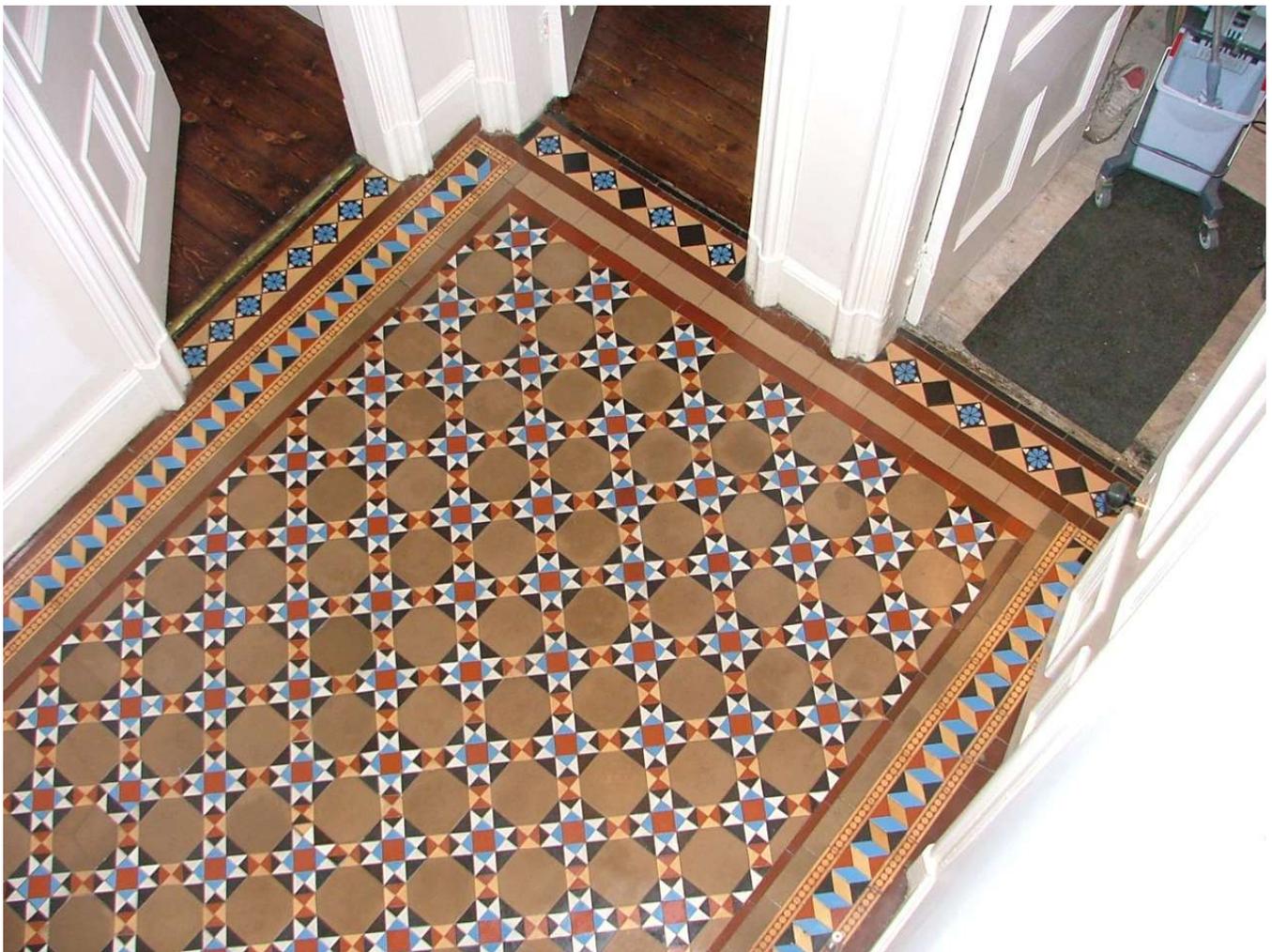
P6.

Because of the amount of damage and the fact the kitchen thresholds tiles were missing I decided to use the remaining encaustic tiles and split them equally between the two thresholds = dining & kitchen thresholds I put black tiles in place for the missing encaustics, the clients declined to have new encaustics made as the cost for one mould and subsequent new tiles is costly. However the revised format blends well and does not look out of place.



Dining room threshold with encaustics which are lifted to be spaced into the kitchen threshold.





Re-set tiles in both thresholds keeping symmetry & aesthetics of the floor intact! The remnant of the damaged border was lifted so that the tiles could fix the missing section on the right-hand of the floor = kitchen door section, the main field tiles were extended to fill in the missing border section and a red & oat tile band was fixed the full width of the floor which after cleaning & sealing looks to have been part of the original floor plan rather than a new addition.

Victorian floor restoration will always need to include innovation both of the practical tiling e.g. a bridging section or the inclusion of new tech like the Exakt saw or the other valuable additions we now use such as the Fein Supercut which is used with the rasp heads to safely grind down the screed bed to allow enough depth to put adhesive and a tile back into place.

Everyone of our tile floor restoration contracts starts the same way, pictures are taken of damaged or missing sections, a count is made of how many tiles will be needed a time is allocated to the removal of concrete in-fill if any (which is often) we then work out how to best to begin, usually this entails clearing the floor of everything on it, normally building materials, litter & general rubbish.

More pictures are taken as it is wise to have a pictorial reference to fall back on both to show how bad a condition the tiled floor was in prior to our Co's restoration and also to avoid problems from clients whose memory of the floor damage is a bit hazy.

Once the pictures are taken all loose & damaged tiles are lifted also on this contract the floor was given a rough clean because the floor was so heavily soiled it was impossible to determine the individual shapes or colours of tiles in many areas.

All the lifted /collected tiles are now checked over to see which are salvageable even broken pieces can be used e.g. a small triangle can be cut from bits of tiles. All the collected tiles are then cleaned = the edges and backs have any adhering mortar chipped off them and then they are sorted to colour/shape & size ready to be re-fitted as & when needed.

Removing mortar is one of the many invisible jobs undertaken that are absolutely necessary to produce a top class job, it is also one of the jobs that a client is unaware of.

Some people may think the above prep could be done later in the project but that is not true this works needs to be done at the beginning so the tiles saved can be tabulated and the amount needed can be calculated that is not something to leave too late.

All the heavy work is done at the same time = breaking up the concrete sections of in-fill, this work has to be done until completed as this involves lots of hammering & drilling therefore any loose tiles will all be affected in one go rather than breaking up over a period of time as each section is lifted.

On this contract a small porch had suffered movement and had dropped away from the house causing part of the hall floor to heave and a couple of stone steps leading up to the house via the porch to split.

The section in the hallway had lifted causing a hump in the floor this area was lifted and a new screed was laid flattening out the hump, this allowed the bridging section to be fitted flat to the rest of the tiling.

The existing porch tiles were lifted to be used to restore the main floor, the porch border tiles were retained to give continuity across the two areas of floor, a new tiled floor was fitted using tiles bought from Craven Dunnill at Jackfield these tiles are made to match authentically the original Victorian tiles = square edged imperial sized tiles.



Porch tiles lifted to be used in main floor.



New tiles from Craven Dunnill with original border retained.
The replacement main tiles are the same shape as the original field tiles
=octagons.

P10.

The new bridging tiles section mirrors the main field tile with a subtle colour way difference.



Main floor fully restored.

