

**ARMA**Tile Ltd  
*innovation in tile design*

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## **The Tile Association Awards 2011**

Category:

Excellence in Multiple Retailing

Compiled by:

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“Armatile have excelled themselves in creating three showrooms that not only showcase the best tiles in Europe, but also create huge added value to the customer through the services that they offer. With this in mind, they surely must be the only choice for tiles in Northern Ireland.”

**Cesar Perez, Export Manager, Pamesa Ceramica**

“Like all consumers, I shopped around different stores when choosing the right tiles for my new build. However, I found it difficult to picture how the tiles would look in my new house and that is where Armatile came to the fore. With their unique design service, site visits and fantastic technical advice, they made the whole process easy. I would definitely recommend Armatile to anyone”

**Rose McCluskey, Customer, Armagh**

“Armatile’s showrooms represent a massive step up for tile retailing in Ireland.”

**Editorial piece, Ulster Tatler Interiors Magazine,**

## ***INTRODUCTION***



Armatile are one of the longest established tile & natural stone retailers in Ireland. Our first outlet opened in Armagh in 1975 and was closely followed by 2 other outlets situated in Belfast and Newry.

It is however, the developments of the last 4-5 years that have firmly established Armatile at the head of the tile retail business in Ireland and the UK. The comments you read on the previous page are merely a snapshot of some of the feedback we have received since we completed our £5m investment in our showrooms in early 2006.

Our long established experience in the tile industry, along with our focus on the provision of innovative design and accurate technical information have ensured that we remain at the head of the tile industry.

In this document I will give an insight into the aesthetics of our 3 showrooms, which will reveal why they have been described as the best in Europe by several representatives of major European tile manufacturers.

I will also concentrate on the various showroom services we offer which prove that not only have we provided customers with the best environments in which to purchase tiles, but the level of service, support and advice that we offer is the best available.

## ***ARMAGH SHOWROOM & HEAD OFFICE***

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Our Armagh showroom and head office premises opened in October 2005 on Station Road in Armagh. In addition to our tile and marble showroom, this premises is also the HQ for our Distribution & Contracts departments. Our Tile Design & Cutting plant, with water-jet facilities, is also situated on this site.

## *Armagh Factory*

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The Armatile factory is now complete incorporating new machinery and innovative technology to remain at the forefront of the tile industry in the UK and Ireland. The size of the factory has effectively doubled, allowing for more employment.

## NEWRY SHOWROOM

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Our Newry showroom was the first of the three to be redeveloped and this showroom reopened in July 2003. Since then there have been a number of minor refits, along with a major renovation in December 2009 to ensure the showroom keeps up to date with the latest trends in display and design. Our main warehouse (60,000 sq ft) is also located in Newry.

## **NEWRY SHOWROOM**



Some of the display settings in Armatile's renovated Newry showroom



## ***BELFAST SHOWROOM***

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Our Belfast showroom has been open at its current site since December 2005 and is located on Boucher Crescent – Northern Ireland’s most lucrative strip of commercial real estate. The location, in one of Northern Ireland’s premier retail parks ensures high visibility.

## THE ARMATILE ETHOS



The central focus of Armatile is to deliver on our promises. The market we operate in is quite small from a population point of view. The population of Northern Ireland is approximately 1.5m with a further 4m (approx) in the Republic of Ireland.

In order to cater for this market we have to offer a range of products that covers the full spectrum of customers. We distinguish ourselves from the competition through our unique design and manufacturing facility which is located at our Head Office in Armagh.

We specialise in the design and manufacture of decorative tile pieces for both domestic and commercial applications. The impression may be that this sort of service is only available to purchasers at the top end of the market but we have developed a range of products that ensure all our customers can avail of this unique service.

The product options available to customers include:

***A small decorative border to accompany the floor or wall tiles they have chosen. This is available in ceramic, porcelain, marble, steel, glass or a combination of these materials. We produce a standard off the shelf range as well as offering a bespoke design service for customers who wish to create something unique for their project. As well as this we also offer **bespoke mosaics** from tile, marble, glass and stainless steel***

***A feature panel for an entrance hall – again, we offer a standard range of off the shelf designs or customers can change the tiles we use or the design to suit their own specific requirements.***

***A Victorian Floor Design – once again, we manufacture a range of off the shelf Victorian designs or we offer a service where we can recreate a damaged Victorian floor or create a new design based on the customers specification.***

The central focus of this service is that Innovative Design is not the luxury of the wealthy and with a little careful thought and consideration, this option is open to all our customers.

## ***A LOOK INSIDE OUR SHOWROOMS***

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Over the next few slides we will present a few images from inside our 3 showrooms which will reveal a little more about the type of product and service offering you can expect from Armatile.

### ***Belfast Reception Area***

We wanted to create that 'wow' factor as people entered our Belfast showroom. This design was created using our Waterjet cutting facility and there are small LED lights inserted into the blue and white circle designs.

This design was created in partnership with our showroom designer, Warren Cannon of Cannon Design (Belfast).

The tiles used are from Italian factory FAP.





This is a bathroom and wet room setting in our Belfast showroom. We have included quite a few of these large room setting displays in our showrooms as we find it allows the customers to visualise the design in their own home more effectively. We try and use unusual design twists to help our customers look beyond the traditional tiling layouts.



Here is an example of one of our many water-jet cut design pieces. We have a number of them located throughout our showrooms to showcase our own manufactured range.



Another value adding piece in our showrooms are the underfloor heating displays. We sell underfloor heating mats from Flexel and these working displays let our customers feel the warmth of the mats and therefore dispel any fears about tiles being too cold.

## 2011 Developments

In the last year we have added a number of new features to our showroom. Our room setting displays have been updated with new ranges of tiles across our three stores in Belfast, Newry and Armagh. We have also started to produce the “Logos and Legends” series in our showrooms with the design and manufacture of images made out of tiles to our customer individual specification. We have also launched our new online shop [www.armatile.com](http://www.armatile.com)

## Logos and Legends



### Water-jet cut Mohammed Ali panel



George Best



Gaelic Players used in  
Sports club Tiling



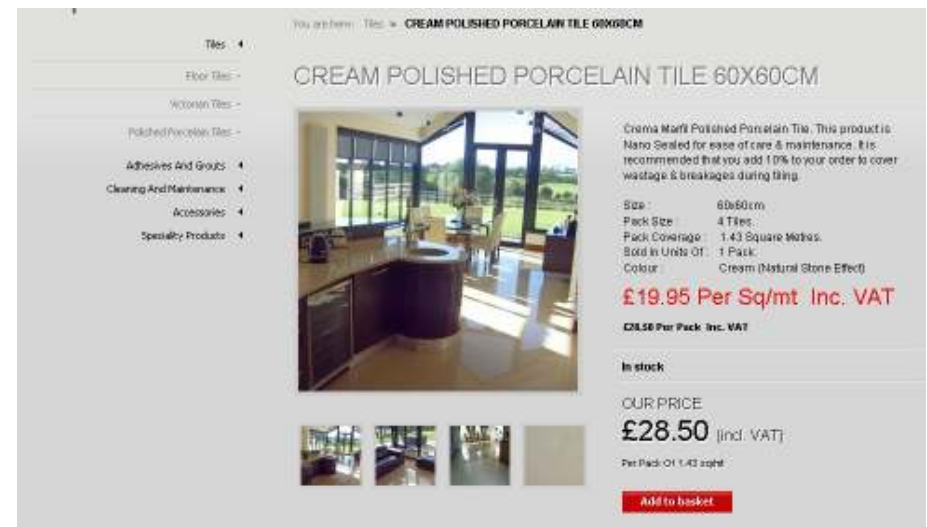
Gaelic Athletic  
Association (GAA)



This illustrates the recently launched Logos and Legends range in our Armagh showroom. We can make custom made logos or iconic images for our customers.

Over the years we have inundated with requests for specific logos or club crests, family crests etc. This market is becoming increasingly popular we are now in a position to offer this service.

August 2011 - armatile launch our new improved website  
this includes a new on-line shop.





We continue to develop the idea of including more interactive elements into our showroom displays. We also launch a new range of Kitchen panels like the one on the right above.

These images show our 'Interactive Kitchen Display' concept. Along with our kitchen tile display boards we have introduced samples of kitchen work tops and doors which allow customers to select the correct tiles on the spot. We found that a lot of customers wanted to take samples away in order to check against their kitchen doors and worktops and this display concept reduces the requirement for this.

This display also reduces pressure on the showroom sales team as when the showroom is busy the customers have an interactive display which keeps them occupied until they can be dealt with.



In each of our 3 showrooms we have developed Natural Stone Galleries which have a different look and feel to the rest of the showroom. The means of display is different, the colour scheme of the area has its own character and the lighting is more subtle.

This is in recognition of the fact that the marble and natural stone market is almost an entirely different market than the tile market and therefore has to be presented and sold in its own unique manner.



The Stone Galleries in our showrooms all contain much larger concept displays such as the one shown above in order that customers can fully appreciate the elements of natural stone products that make them so appealing.

As can be seen in the display above, by giving the material a substantial amount of display space, customers are able to fully appreciate the shading of the material. It is not possible to do this on small static display boards.

## AREAS OF THE SHOWROOM



The above image shows graphics defining the 'Inspirational Stuff' area of our showroom. This area is devoted to the materials which represent the latest trends in tiling.

Also in this area we display our own manufactured materials as defined earlier.

The other defined areas of our showroom are – Kitchen tiles, Bathroom tiles, Natural Stone, Floor tiles, Consultation & Library Areas.



We have used imagery from the quarries of our suppliers in our Stone Galleries to define these areas.



In this area of our showrooms we showcase our own manufactured range of Victorian-style tiles called the Cathedral Range. This range is becoming increasingly popular for residential homes as people look to give a traditional look to their house.

## CONSULTATION & LIBRARY AREAS

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Each of our 3 showrooms contain several consultation areas where we can sit and discuss plans, display concepts, measurements etc with customers.



The Library areas within our 3 showrooms contain a multitude of information for visitors to the showrooms.

Visitors are free to browse or they can discuss their specific issues with a member of our showroom sales team.

Information in these libraries includes:

Product brochures

Product wallets

Cleaning & Maintenance Specs

Adhesive & Grout specs

Technical Advice Notes

Copies of BS Standards

Swimming Pool information

CD-Roms with images and settings

## PLASMA SCREENS



In each of our 3 showrooms we have a number of plasma screens on display. These show a variety of product and project images from our portfolio. In addition to this we also show our television advertising campaign images on these screens.

## CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS



We have introduced play areas into the 3 showrooms. The result of this has been that customers spend more time in the showroom as their children have been given something to entertain them.

## TRADE COUNTER



In addition to the other excellent aspects of our showrooms, in our Belfast showroom we have recently updated and re-opened our Trade Counter for which we stock many accessories for tilers and DIY enthusiasts alike, including Lithofin cleaning, sealing and maintenance products, Rubi cutting tools and accessories and Sigma cutters.



## **SHOWROOM SERVICES**



In addition to providing customers with a welcoming environment in which to purchase tiles, we also offer a range of services to our customers which enhance our offering and ensure the whole experience is positive. I have detailed some of these below:

### **SHOWROOM NOTICES**

We offer customers advice on shading etc through customer information points throughout the showroom.

### **QUOTATIONS SYSTEM**

Our quotation system allows us to record all required customer information including contact details along with all required product information and prices quoted. Each quotation has its own unique reference number which can be easily recalled should the customer re-visit the showroom.

Each quotation is also followed up by the relevant member of the showroom sales team within 7 days (or within the time stated by the customer during their visit). We also maintain regular checks on our conversion rates from quotation to sale.

### **FREE SAMPLES**

Free samples are available to all customers visiting our showrooms

### **DELIVERY SERVICE**

We offer delivery throughout Ireland from any of our showrooms and this is complimented by our strong distribution network.

### **DESIGN CONSULTATIONS**

Customers are free to discuss design possibilities with any member of our showroom sales team with no obligation to purchase. We also offer a free service where a member of our qualified design team will visit a customer's home to discuss colour schemes and designs on site.



## **SITE VISITS**

Where required we can visit the home of a customer and measure the spaces they are going to tile. This is a free service and we offer this in order to ensure we are happy that the measurements are correct. The result of this is that it reduces the number of returns we are subject to as a result of incorrect measurements being given. We also make sure that our suppliers, such as Mapei, make regular site visits to help decide on the best technical solutions for our customers.

## **STAFF UNIFORMS**

All members of our showroom sales team are required to wear our uniform which consists of:

Male: Black trousers, Black shirt, Branded Armatile Jumper and red tie

Female: Black trouser suit and white top.

## **TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTES**

One of the most important aspects of the showroom services we offer is the provision of our own technical advice notes, available freely throughout various points in our showrooms. We currently have 10 advice notes including:

***Correct procedures to use when tiling with underfloor heating***

***Adhesive and Grout specifications for natural stone installations***

***Cleaning & Maintenance specifications for natural stone installations***

***Marble Care & Maintenance***

## **SHOWROOM MUSIC**

Our showrooms have light, low-volume music playing in the background to create a nice ambience for our customers as well as to continue with our lifestyle ethos.

## **HOLD MUSIC**

We also play pre-recorded music to our customers on hold. This music is accompanied by recorded information on our products and services. These are explained to the customer on hold, and the voice and music used here connect with all other marketing outlets that we use.

# ROOM SETTING IMAGERY

In addition to the digital product presentation available on the plasma screens throughout the showrooms, we also offer customers the option of browsing through hard copies of some of the room setting images that we have on disk. Some of these images are detailed below.



## **STAFF & CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

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In order to ensure that all members of our showroom sales team are full aware of all the information required to properly assist customers, we run a number of training initiatives at our 3 showrooms. These are detailed below.

### Technical Training Sessions

Our main suppliers of tile related products all conduct regular breakfast training sessions at our 3 showrooms. These run from 7.30am to 8.30am prior to the showroom opening. Our main suppliers of these type of sessions are:

**Rubi      Mapei      Lithofin      Schluter      Flexel**

These sessions are attended by all the members of the relevant showroom sales team as well as our distribution and contracts sales representatives.

Tilers are also invited along in order to help develop their technical knowledge.

In addition to the morning sessions detailed above we also have regular tilers nights at our 3 showrooms where the above companies conduct further training sessions with our tiler and builder customers.

## **CONCLUSION**

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As can be seen from the information in this document the product and service offering that we provide is extensive. Our emphasis on ensuring the customer has access to the highest standard of information and advice from our showroom sales team ensures that the promises that we have made through our showroom developments can be delivered on.

The constantly evolving nature of the retail market ensures that our showrooms will never stand still and we fully accept and welcome the fact that in order to maintain our position at the head of the tile retail business in Ireland, we have to remain aware of the latest display ideas and design trends.

We are confident in our ability to react quickly to changes in the tile retail market and we will continue to offer our customers the best tile retail experience possible.

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