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Brokers Sells Building, Thanks to Lifted Roof

ja Jeff Allen



Space
Technology

Real estate brokers and developers are often faced with an inventory of available industrial buildings in favorable locations, but insufficient in size. To make these facilities attractive to prospective tenants or buyers, they need to do some creative thinking. The process of lifting an existing roof to create more interior space has been growing in popularity, as the key to rejuvenating dormant real estate properties.

The most common examples are those structures that were originally erected to house manufacturing or assembly type operations. Do to shifts in the economy, as needs have changed, their low height now renders them obsolete. Yet these same locations are perfectly situated to support the expanded need for warehousing and distribution of merchandise, often manufactured far from home. Potential users of these facilities often overlook the fact that, if only the ceiling heights were increased, these buildings would serve them well.

A recent case in point is the former Computer Associates building at 1765 Expressway Dr.



Before.



During.

North in Hauppauge. This 50,000 s/f property was vacated by the software producer, and placed on the market for sale. The only detraction from its prime location, right on the service road of the Long Island Expressway, was its low 18' clear height.

When John Pujia, a broker for Greiner-Maltz Real Estate of Woodbury showed the site to a potential warehouse user, it became clear that its storage capacity would not accommodate the client's growth. Rather than assuming that only more s/f would solve the problem, Pujia looked upward. He turned to Space Technology Inc. (S.T.I.) of Melville to provide their service of elevating the existing roof to 32' clear, which would dramatically increase its volume and value. While this first client ultimately chose another building to purchase, Pujia never



After: 1765 Expressway Dr. North, Hauppauge.

forgot that the concept of roof-lifting could prove to be critical ammunition in his arsenal for attracting users to obsolete-height buildings.

A year later, he introduced that same building to Paul Merandi, owner of Grand Marshall Machinery. Merandi also found the site appealing, except that his business required the use of a 32' high interior crane. Once again, the roof-lifting process was the natural solution. The deal was consummated, based upon the knowledge that S.T.I. would provide its unique procedure, and create the crucial headroom.

The project, including the required engineering, the steel and equipment for lifting the roof intact (bringing up all the utilities with it), and enclosing the new upper wall height with insulated steel panels, was impressive. According to the informative website

www.Rooflift.com, S.T.I. has implemented this patented process nationwide, for industrial users as diverse as Nature's Bounty Vitamins, Restaurant Depot, Nikon Camera, and retailers including Office Max, Linens 'N Things, and Best Buys.

When existing low-clearance properties need to be adapted to make them appealing, the process of roof-lifting has proven to be a cost-effective, deal-making tool for brokers, developers, and REITs. It has stimulated activity, enabling users to lease or buy otherwise "obsolete-height" buildings, and transform them into more modern structures, and more valuable assets.

Jeff Allen is a partner of Space Technologies Inc., Melville, N.Y.