

li Company of the Month

RECENT PROJECTS INCLUDE THE MANHATTAN LAMINATES/MECHANICS BLDG. MATERIAL SITE Space Technology Inc.'s roof lifting gives new life to low clearance buildings throughout the country

MELVILLE, NY The need to renovate "obsolete-height" buildings in order to make them desirable in today's market, seems apparent. A simple solution, yet sophisticated in its application, is to lift the existing roof to enlarge the building's capacity. This process has been dramatically breathing new life into low-clearance structures throughout the country, thanks to Space Technology Inc. (S.T.I.).

Many older properties were constructed before today's tall clearances and modern storage and retrieval equipment were ever anticipated. Many were originally built to house manufacturing operations, which are rapidly diminishing. This has left many formidable sites sitting dormant, usually in prime locations. The patented "E-Z Riser" method for lifting a building's original roof intact, has rescued brokers and owners, as well as potential buyers and tenants, from considering these sites "un-marketable."

Recent History

As an example, Manhattan

the new owner's growth, far into the future.

Pujia had just completed another sale of a nearby building, again thanks to S.T.I.'s ability to increase its height. In that transaction the buyer, Grand Machinery Exchange, needed to create enough headroom for a 30-ton crane. That roof was lifted from 18' up to 32', which then made the building suitable for its intended use. Many similar S.T.I. roof lifting projects have been featured in publications such as *Long Island Business News*, *New York Newsday*, and *The New York Times*, among others.

Other clients who have benefited from this innovative roof-lifting process include: Nikon Camera, Firestone Rubber, Nature's Bounty Vitamins, Allied Van Lines, Hewlett Packard, Colgate Palmolive, Office Max, Linens 'N Things, FMC Corp., Best Buy, and Dow Chemical/Union Carbide. Building sizes have ranged from 10,000 to over 1 million s/f. Many have been performed for rela-



Before: The Manhattan Laminates/Mechanics Building Materials site



After: The Manhattan Laminates/Mechanics Building Materials site

Laminates, a division of Mechanics Building Materials, a rapidly growing company that is also the original distributor of Formica brand products, needed to consolidate multiple facilities into a warehouse in the N.Y. metro area. Company president, Kevin Brady, found an appealing location, but its 22,000 s/f warehouse area was too small to accommodate his large inventory. On the suggestion of his broker, John Pujia of Greiner Maltz, he called in S.T.I. to enlarge the structure's capacity by lifting its roof from 16' up to 28' clear. This proved to be a quick and inexpensive step that transformed the available site into a facility that will accommodate

tively small companies, who were especially cost-conscious, and needed to maximize the use of their s/f by increasing their cubic space, creating clearance for additional storage, equipment, or for a second level.

The Company

While S.T.I. conducts its sales from New York, and utilizes its engineering and steel production facility in New Jersey, its coverage is fully nationwide. The company recently completed the task of lifting a 115,000 s/f roof section, part of a 3 million s/f production plant in Detroit. The task was performed for Daimler Chrysler's Diesel division, while full production line operations continued all around the lift area. The



Shown is Allen in front of the completed Manhattan Laminates/Mechanics Building Materials site.

roof was lifted an additional 12' to make room for new assembly line equipment, required to produce a new generation of engines that will meet stricter emissions standards. The alternative to the roof-lifting solution would have been to demolish the roof deck, structure, lighting, heating, and sprinkler systems, and rebuild them at a higher elevation. The cost would have been prohibitively high, and much more time consuming, aside from the disastrous interruption of operations.

S.T.I.'s two owners, Stuart Goldring and Jeffrey Allen, have been actively spreading the word about the dramatic benefits of the roof-lifting process since 1987. With combined backgrounds in warehousing equipment and construction management, they have had a major impact on the real estate market, by enabling deals to be made on properties previously deemed obsolete. They state that since structures vary widely, in order to provide specific responses, the company offers free estimates anywhere in the USA.

The Process

According to its informative website, www.Rooflift.com, S.T.I.'s process is sophisticated, but easy to comprehend. Existing vertical steel columns supporting the roof structure are cut at their bases, and encased by new steel "sleeves." Specialized hydraulic jacks atop these sleeves then lift the old columns simultaneously. This causes the entire roof to rise, at the astonishing rate of one foot every hour, along with its lighting, piping, and rooftop equipment, undisturbed. The additional height is then enclosed with new upper wall structure.

The procedure is so non-disrup-

tive, that it has even been performed in occupied warehouses, while ongoing operations continued without interruption. One example involved a 40,000 s/f warehouse for Ben Elias Industries, a garment wholesaler. From its original 14' clearance, the roof was lifted an additional 21', up to a remarkable 35' height, all while full activities continued. In these occupied situations, the new upper wall structure is uniquely installed prior to lifting, and rises into position at the very same time that the roof is lifted, providing security and weather protection throughout the project.

The Future

When asked, S.T.I.'s Jeff Allen confides that, while they have enjoyed remarkable growth in the past, they have still only "scratched the surface" of existing and potential demand. He

says that "the clear benefits of the process and its enormous cost-effectiveness have grown even further over the years, as we've expanded our capabilities and efficiencies, and certainly blossomed as real estate values have increased."

It seems that by carving out a niche, serving the real estate market by "upgrading its inventory" by lifting the roof of buildings to two or three times their original height, S.T.I. has tapped into a "win-win" relationship with brokers, owners, developers, builders, architects, warehouse equipment dealers, and end-users. This would be an impressive relationship to build in any industry, but especially valuable when it involves real estate, with its growing demand, yet finite supply of natural resources. S.T.I.'s star appears to be rising, along with each client's roof.



Before: The Ben Elias Industries site



After: The Ben Elias Industries site