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# REAL ESTATE WEEKLY

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## Ecker Window helps landmark address leap forward



575 Madison

The corner of 57th and Madison is one of the most prominent locations in Manhattan. So when property owners Steinberg & Pokoik decided to upgrade their over 50-year-old office building at 575 Madison, they knew the results had to be eye-catching.

“We had to be, at the very least, competitive with our neighbors,” said the firm’s president, Michael Steinberg, “in aesthetics, utility, and price.”

The result can be seen today: a handsome, tailored,

sleek structure with champagne-colored bands and seamless black windows, rising 27 stories above the street.

But only months ago, the building looked nothing like that at all. “Mundane,” was Steinberg’s description of the original façade, which featured alternating lines of standard windows set back against layers of white brick. “It was a basic ‘wedding cake’ structure,” said Robert Ecker, president of Ecker Window Corporation, the company Steinberg & Pokoik selected to install the innovative window-and-panel system that transformed the building. “The original style was popular in the 1950s, but it’s outdated now,” said Ecker. “We were excited to take on Mike Steinberg’s goal of eliminating the edges, notches and bulkheads to create a uniquely smooth appearance.”

“Our first concept was to affix a skin to the entire building,” recalled Steinberg, “but it was very important to us that the windows should be operable. A skin would have eliminated that.”

After conferring with his architects, Schuman Lichtenstein, Claman & Efron, and his façade engineers, Frank Seta & Associates, LLC, Steinberg called in Ecker, who had accomplished a number of challenging projects for him over the years. “Ecker Window had the qualifications we were looking for: a strong relationship with the window manufacturer, a willingness to adapt, the ability to help us present the concept to our major tenants, and the experience we knew we could rely on.” In fact, Ecker Window has been installing windows in the New York metropolitan area for over 60 years.

“Our job was to work with Steinberg & Pokoik’s designers to develop an innovative solution that fit their vision,” said Ecker. “They wanted the windows to open, but they also wanted a flowing look. That meant there could be no visible indentation between the windows and the panels. It was also essential that we use materials which achieved the reflective appearance the owners desired.” The panel fabrication and installation, by Façade Technology, LLC of Birdsboro, Pennsylvania, worked well into the overall concept.

Ecker Window acted as general contractor for both the window and panel installation, coordinating the job

and giving Steinberg & Pokoik one point of contact for the full project.

The system that Ecker developed in cooperation with the designers, engineers and Façade features Wausau tinted windows, a metal skin hung from the original brick, and decorative, champagne-colored, striped panels that were fitted with beveled openings. “The need for operable windows dictated that the façade couldn’t be seamless in actuality,” explained Robert Ecker. “However, by using a system that has an equal site line, we were able to achieve the desired unified look, at approximately half the cost of reskinning the building in glass. And, because we used high performance windows, we were also able to deliver the added value of significant noise elimination and energy savings.”

Another key factor in the project was that its various phases had a firm deadline. “My retail clients depend on visibility,” noted Michael Steinberg. “So for them, I couldn’t risk having the ground levels covered by sidewalk protection during the holiday season. I set a deadline to have the bridges down by October 31. Thanks to Ecker and Façade’s approach, removal begins October 30th.”

Minimal tenant interruption was also a prerequisite of the job. Considering that 575 Madison Avenue is completely occupied, this was a challenge for a project that called for the replacement of more than 2600 windows over a 27-story span, along with the cladding of all brick elevations. Mr. Steinberg indicated that “the feedback from our tenants was very positive – both in the final appearance and the way the work was managed. The Ecker staff, in conjunction with Façade, prepared our tenants on what to expect, allowed business to flow as well as possible, and handled the job quickly and professionally.”

The end result has also increased the value of the building, bringing it up to a Class A property. “We had envisioned a dramatic and appealing new image for 575 Madison, an appearance that would be true to its environment while simultaneously standing out as a unique and innovative design. Our standards were high, but the final product unquestionably exceeds our