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Question & Answer with John Karman of Stephen Wessling Architects

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John Karman, senior project manager, building envelope specialist of Stephen J. Wessling Architects, Inc. recently met with John Picard, president of the New England Real Estate Journal for a Question & Answer on RCI, Inc. and the BioMed Realty Trust roof replacement project.

Question: Can you tell us about the RCI?

Answer: RCI, Inc. is an international association of professional consultants, architects and engineers specializing in the specification and design of roofing, waterproofing and exterior wall systems. The association was first formed in 1983 as the RCI (The Roof Consultants Institute) and in 2006 expanded its mission to include waterproofing and exterior wall systems (ie: the complete building envelope). There are 24 regional affiliated chapters across the U.S. and Canada that operate as an extension of the international association.

In 2008, Wessling Architects, along with several other New England firms spearheaded the inception of the New England chapter of RCI. I am entering my third term as president of the New England chapter. The association and its foundation is strongly based on the education of its members to provide the industry with the latest technology and a high level of building envelope design. RCI offers professional certifications in several disciplines of roofing, waterproofing and exterior wall consulting along with numerous programs and benefits. More detailed information on RCI, Inc. is available at www.rci-online.org.

Question: How does the RCI impact commercial real estate?

Answer: RCI, Inc. impacts commercial real estate in numerous ways from the beginning to end, as a concurrent process of the real estate industry. We use our expertise in building envelope in the due diligence of properties for real estate professionals, as well as the consulting aspect for the repair and restoration of all types of commercial real estate. Forensics, life cycle analysis, capital planning are just a few of the services utilized.

Question: Tell us about your project at BioMed Realty Trust, Inc?

Answer: In 2013, BioMed Realty Trust Co., a national life sciences real estate industry leader, requested that Wessling Architects design and oversee the roof replacement at 270 Albany St., Cambridge. The building is currently used as a biomedical research/office facility for Sanofi-Aventis (a top 10 world pharmaceutical company). The building was originally constructed in 1922 and was converted in 1998 in an award winning adaptive re-use project.

Wessling's evaluation concluded that the existing main roofing system required replacement. The new design included the latest industry materials and design improvements.

Question: What were the challenges during the project?

Answer: Complex existing rooftop HVAC equipment, which serviced the laboratories, required reorganization and upgrading. A significant challenge of the project was replacement of the roof in a

fully occupied and operational life sciences laboratory building.

Question: What do you foresee in the future with BioMed's projects?

Answer: BioMed Realty Trust is a fully integrated, self-administered and self-managed real estate investment trust and a national leader in the life sciences real estate industry. They provide cutting edge services from developing and managing existing buildings as developing new buildings for their focus industry. Wessling Architects provides BioMed Realty with the service, commitment and skillset they need to thrive in their industry. We have multiple projects in the planning and capital improvement stage with BioMed Realty Trust and see a bright collaborative future with this organization.

Question: Who was part of the project team?

Answer: The team consisted of Wessling Architects as lead architect and building envelope consultant; BioMed Realty Trust Co., Inc. as the building owner and manager; Sanofi, Inc. (locally known as Genzyme, Inc.) as the tenant; facilities manager Feeley MacAnsepie, Inc. as the general contractor and roofing/sheet metal contractor; and JC Cannistraro, Inc. as the mechanical contractor. The collaboration and high level of professional coordination of these team members resulted in a high quality, successful project which was completed in December 2013.

More information on BioMed Realty can be obtained at www.biomedrealty.com and for Wessling Architects can be obtained at www.wesslingarchitects.com.