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55 YEARS

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## **EnviroVantage, an environmental contractor, cleans up York Mills in Maine for Buck Consulting**

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Part of New England's manufacturing heritage, the first of the seven York Mills of Saco, ME was built in 1829 on an island between Saco and Biddeford. The others were completed over the next couple of decades. When the textile industry moved south in 1958, the York Mills closed. Over the last century and a half, the buildings have housed a series of ventures including a local community college.

The total redevelopment effort over the next many months will combine mixed land uses, safe and convenient housing, walkable neighborhoods, an attractive development that respects culture, history and local geography as well as the preservation of critical environmental areas.

After approximately a year of evaluating the capabilities of potential partners, Buck Consulting of Maine chose to partner with Scott Knightly, president of EnviroVantage, to perform the initial environmental cleanup of buildings 3 and 4 with attention to additional buildings being considered. As an environmental contractor with a subspecialty in restoration of old mill buildings - we have experience in over 30 mills in N.H., Mass. and Maine, we provide the developer a hazardous material free environment, dry and ready for the trades to subdivide and then install power, water, HVAC, etc.

We bring to the table not only the necessary selective demolition and sandblasting skills performed by teams that appreciate the value of the old hard maple floors, bricks and stairwells, and then perform the cleanup of debris as needed -- but we also recognize the need to maintain an aggressive schedule as the developer has planned.

One of the more interesting challenges was the need to design, select the manufacturer and then install almost 700 windows in openings up to 16' in height. The fact that the winds off the Atlantic could be strong - the mills being less than one hundred yards to the water's edge - the criteria for the selection was critical. With the owner/developer, we went through several tests before final selection - a window that looked like it belonged to the traditional Maine coast architecture, but with today's efficiency.

As we have done in most of the mills, our sandblasting removed many years of paint and grime off the brick, much of it with a hazardous lead content. Blasting the numerous layers of finish from the flooring allowed for restoration and refinishing. The end result is a wonderful mixture of gleaming wide and narrow hardwood boards making for a spectacular floor.

The third of four challenges we faced involved the need to remove the "ceiling" of each floor, lathes, tongue and groove, sound deadening material, plaster and many years of accumulated dirt and

grime. The ceilings were 12' high and three layers deep and each separated by a short distance making one pull down / removal not in the cards. The process was not only time consuming, but constantly working overhead removing the ceiling dirt with wind off the Atlantic blowing continuously through openings created during the window removal and replacement only made the task that much more difficult. For the workers involved, the steady rain of dirt was less than enjoyable.

But yet, they had a chance to have an even more exciting challenge. For reasons obscure, the herring gulls chose to take up residence over the years in a single stairwell as opposed to spreading their droppings everywhere. The final mission was to clean up three to five feet deep guano droppings in a basement area approximately 100 s/f in size. What more could any demo worker ask for?

Buck Consulting found our work ethic and attention to detail strong, along with our performance and understanding of job requirements and schedules to their satisfaction. We look forward to continuing the relationship into the next phase.

Frank Ronan is the business manager at EnviroVantage, Epping, N.H.

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