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Exterior Designs Inc. completes retrofit of 250,000 s/f Franklin Realty Building in the Worcester Business Park

February 18, 2009 - Construction Design & Engineering

Exterior Designs Inc. (EDI), a Manchester, NH-based company that specializes in exterior cladding, has completed the total retrofit of the 250,000 s/f building that was the former home of Worcester-based shoe giant, Thom McCan. Though the building has undergone several renovations since it was built in the early 1900s, including a complete residing of the building with corrugated metal, the building was outdated and was in need of a major face-lift.

The property, located at 67 Millbrook St. in the Worcester Business Center was purchased by Franklin Realty Advisors in 2007. The Boston-based real estate development firm acquired the building with the intention of converting it to Class A office space; only 70% of the building was fitted-up for offices while 30% was warehouse space. Franklin Realty contacted Exterior Designs for their help with the project.

Mike Dion, president of EDI remembers, "The client was originally interested in insulated metal panels for the exterior of the building. However, after researching their options, they opted for Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems (EIFS) for the project. The existing conditions of the corrugated metal panels and the concrete building structure created numerous inconsistencies and irregularities in many areas. Using EIFS not only provided the client with additional design options, it made the building's irregularities an easy challenge to overcome."

Exterior Designs faced other challenges with the job: notwithstanding the sheer size of the building; 600 feet long, 80 feet deep, and 5 stories high, the numerous punched-in windows presented several obstacles. In addition, the building was partially occupied and would continue to be so during the entire project; and of course, the project time line was aggressive and positioned it to begin during the winter months (in what proved to be one of the snowiest winters in recent history).

Challenge, however, is what the professionals at Exterior Designs thrive on. EDI utilized swing staging to employ the most strategic ways to work around existing conditions. Being mindful of the building's occupants, EDI kept the perimeter clean and fully operational without negative impact to the current tenants.

EDI project manager Steve Torla said, "Franklin Realty enlisted our company to provide more than exterior services. We handled everything from the rough carpentry, to the removal and installation of the nearly 650 new windows, to constructing the drywall and ceilings. We coordinated most aspects of the job -all while the building was over 50% occupied. As a result of working so closely with the client, the lines of communication were completely open and access to direct feedback added to the efficiency and ease of the job."

The end result is a building that has been totally transformed. The retrofit has actually changed the exterior profile of the building. Charles Norton, president of Franklin Realty could not be happier with the outcome, "We were thrilled with the prospect of rehabilitating this landmark building. When we

contracted with Exterior Designs, we knew we were in good hands -but we ended up being in great hands. The new look of the building, coupled with the professionalism of the EDI team, has made this entire process painless and has exceeded all of our expectations."

The building, one of the largest in the area, is now a state-of-the-art office building. Exterior Designs utilized various materials to complete the project. ACM panels were incorporated into the entryways, and framed canopies were constructed, covered with sheathing and finished with the panels to create design elements that added dimension to the profile of the building.

Exterior Designs Inc. has been a leader in the exterior cladding industry for over a decade. EDI has completed over \$100 million in projects throughout the northeast.

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