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Neighborhood development leads to neighborhood revolution

Limited commercial office construction in Manhattan has created a wave of repositioning projects in older Class B and C properties as owners attempt to meet demand created by new and expanding companies. Despite economic uncertainty, vacancy rates remain at historic lows and financing for new speculative office projects is limited.

The repositioning of Trinity Real Estate's One Hudson Square, a 17-story, one-million-square-foot former light industrial building at 75 Varick Street, demonstrates the extraordinary potential of existing properties. The project has not only accommodated corporations seeking flexible and conveniently located space, it has helped to anchor the transformation of the entire neighborhood, which has embraced its original designation on Hudson Square.

A large structure with 70,000-square-foot floor plates, One Hudson Square required significant physical changes to facilitate the increased traffic that commercial office tenants bring. In addition, the common spaces of the building were enhanced to meet aesthetic demands and practical requirements, such as new expanded electrical and telecommunications services, and central air conditioning.

"When we first approached this project we saw numerous opportunities," said Paul Rosen, co-founder of the Rosen Johnson Architects PC. "The client's dedication to the project enabled us to implement a design that handles the expanded traffic in a gracious and comfortable fashion."

Rosen Johnson completely redesigned the building's entrance and lobby, which was expanded to include a new 24-hour concierge desk and 15 passenger elevators. To enable the enlargement of the entrance and the lobby, 2300-square-foot of underutilized retail space was rededicated as circulation space.

Designed to emphasize One Hudson Square's Varick Street and SoHo orien-



tion, Rosen Johnson centered the entrance on the façade and increased its width from one bay to three. The entrance, once flush with the street wall, now sets back 12 feet to provide shelter to the tenants. Contextual and elegant, the new 600 square foot arcade has advanced the building identity.

Rosen Johnson also completely transformed One Hudson Square's 1800-square-foot Varick Street entrance hall into a spacious and inviting lobby. The space now comprises 5400-square-foot and features a new concierge desk.

The lobby was stripped of its Art Deco finishes in the 1960s, and in the interest of preserving this heritage Rosen Johnson incorporated geometric patterns and rich finishes into the redesign such as polished granite, marble, limestone, bronze and wood.

The building was originally equipped with nine passenger elevators. While these elevators were capable of moving the building's light industrial tenancy, additional capacity was required to handle the increase in passengers. Rosen Johnson is currently transforming five freight elevators for passenger use



and adding an additional passenger car in an unused shaftway. The result will be two new elevator banks balanced on the north and south side of the lobby.

As former tenants of the building are repositioned to equivalent light industrial buildings within the owners' portfolio, One Hudson Square has attracted a new tenant base that includes professional service firms in the financial, legal, advertising and technology sectors.

Anthony Johnson, co-founder of Rosen Johnson Architects PC, said: "One Hudson Square has become a remarkable class-A building that will anchor Hudson Square and assure its transition into a premier quality commercial district."