

Rust Belt Remediated



PROJECT: Manistee River Street Remediation

CHALLENGE: Contamination was preventing the redevelopment of a piece of prime real estate

SOLUTION: Move the dirt, not the building

OWNER: Rio Vista, LLC

CONTRACT PRICE: \$314,000

DESIGN ENGINEER: Nordlund Associates

CONTACT: Jim Nordlund, Jr. (231) 843-3485

LOCATION: Manistee, MI

DATE COMPLETED: May 2012

PARTNERS: Orshal Contracting, Manistee Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

SELF PERFORMED: 65%

In the 20th century, if a building no longer served its purpose, it was torn down to make way for a new one. Fortunately, we've evolved, and many well-built, historic and beautiful buildings are getting facelifts and all-new, 21st century uses.

Take the two-story brick building on River Street in downtown Manistee, which for decades was a car dealership, complete with a full-service repair center and garage. The result of years and hundreds of cars through the repair center? Hundreds of pounds of waste and contaminants into the basement and earth below, including everything from motor oil to heavy metals to coal ash and coal clinker chunks (leftover heating fuel) from the heater circa 1900 they used to warm the building.

A developer hoped to renovate the site into retail and residential units, and worked with Manistee's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to acquire a grant from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to pay for the removal of contaminated materials and allow the redevelopment to take place.

Team Elmer's was selected to do the removal work, which took four weeks, a staff of more than six, and a 111-foot crane to help remove everything discovered under the building.

The first floor boards, onto which cars were driven for repairs, were removed and replaced.

The crew then removed what was found in the basement, removed the basement floor and the coal ash contaminated sub-soils, and replaced it all with new sub-soil and a concrete floor. Along the way, Team Elmer's pros also discovered some damage to the foundation, and shored that area up for future building.

The contaminated material was packaged and shipped to Type 2 landfills for safe storage.

Perhaps the lesson is that we can use 21st century ideas and technology to use what we already have... and it's always simpler to remove dirt than an entire building!

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