VERTICAL access

CASE STUDY

Adding Value to a Pre-Purchase Inspection

Conditions affecting future repairs at the exterior marble that were not previously identified were documented and quantified by Vertical Access, giving the purchaser a stronger position in the sale negotiations.

Situation

As part of its due diligence work, a consulting team responsible for a property assessment report for a building being purchased in Washington DC had identified some conditions on the exterior façade where a closer look was warranted.

Challenges

The initial visual inspection of the exterior was performed from the ground, from the roofs of the building and from setbacks of an adjacent building, aided by high-powered binoculars. For the follow-up investigation, they had originally planned to use a swing stage to access the façade for the "hands-on" inspection, but swing stage contractors were unable to obtain permits required for the swing stage work, which was estimated to take three to five days. Vertical Access was consulted and contracted to perform the investigation

Actions

On Friday of the same week, VA mobilized to perform the hands-on inspection of representative areas of the façades. Because of the location of the building in downtown Washington DC, the work was planned for the weekend to minimize disruption to building tenants and pedestrians. During site work on Saturday ground closures were set up and manned by VA personnel while three VA technicians performed the inspection.

The structure was well-suited to the industrial rope access approach. At most "drop" locations, tie-back anchors installed and certified for swing stage rigging were used as the main anchor points for each technician's working line and fall protection line. Steel dunnage supporting large mechanical systems was used as anchors at other locations. The flat roofs and terraces of the building made it easy to move around from one rigging area to another and to get on rope for the inspection of the façades.

Back in the office on Monday, VA completed its condition survey report and delivered it electronically to the purchaser's team of consultants that afternoon. The use of TPAS® for direct digital annotation and quantification facilitated immediate preparation of project deliverables. The deliverables included hundreds of photographs linked to annotated elevation drawings and a spreadsheet of condition quantities extracted from the survey data.

Results

Quantities of existing conditions documented in the investigation allowed the purchaser's consulting team to prepare cost estimates and other information affecting the purchase negotiation. The value of a hands-on inspection as part of the pre-purchase investigation was clear. Conditions affecting future repairs at the exterior marble that were not previously identified were documented and quantified, giving the purchaser a stronger position in the sale negotiations.

In finalizing the purchase price, VA's client was able to negotiate a reduction of the final purchase cost by an amount almost equal to 30 times VA's total fee. This project also demonstrates the benefits of rope access as a means of providing access to buildings and structures. Using lightweight rope access rigging systems, three VA technicians were able to perform 13 drops, covering over 40% of the façade area in one day. TPAS was the final piece of the puzzle, which allowed VA to deliver organized and usable data to the client within two days of the completion of the investigation.