



Project overview

Vertical Access was retained by N.K. Bhandari Architecture & Engineering, P.C. to assist with the investigation of paint coatings on the exterior of the Little Joe Draw Tower in Corning, NY. Discoloration of the paint coating was observed from the ground, requiring hands-on and close-visual inspection in order to determine the causes. The scope of work included investigation and documentation of existing conditions, as well as live-feed video and discussion of conditions in real time. Vertical Access also performed paint adhesion tests at representative areas on each of the four sides of the tower.

Building description

The Little Joe Draw Tower was built by Corning Glass Works (now Corning Incorporated) in 1912 for the production of glass thermometer tubes. The tower is constructed of poured-in-place concrete and is topped with a square cupola. Using the vertical draw method, hot glass was pulled up through the interior of the 175-foot tower, creating a long, thin tube that was then cut to length. Glass production at the tower ceased in 1973, but the structure is preserved as a recognizable icon of Corning Incorporated and the company's industrial and historic role in the city of Corning. A painted illustration on all four sides near the top of the tower shaft depicts the silhouette of a glassblower, "Little Joe."

Scope of work

- Used industrial rope access to perform hands-on inspection and documentation of conditions such as paint failure and discoloration.
- Documented several different types of paint failure, performed paint adhesion tests at multiple locations on each of the four tower facades, and determined causes of discoloration observed from the ground.
- Used high definition video with audio commentary to record conditions and real time discussion of findings.
- Documented bulged and hollow areas of fiberglass repairs, which were not apparent from visual inspection from the ground.

Building owner

Corning Incorporated

In collaboration with

N.K. Bhandari Architecture & Engineering, P.C.

Photo by Vertical Access