



**Prior Phase I ESA (401-
407, 409 Columbia Street)**

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**PHASE I ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
401-407 AND 409 COLUMBIA STREET
UTICA, NEW YORK**

prepared for

**Adirondack Bank
185 Genesee Street
Utica, New York**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a phase I environmental assessment performed by Geoscience Technical Services Inc. on property at 401-407 and 409 Columbia Street in Utica, New York. The site contains two connected buildings owned by the Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) and occupied by that group and tenants. The property is identified as Oneida County tax map 318.41-2-39 and 318.41-2-40.

Elements of the assessment included a site inspection, discussions with local officials and individuals, research at the municipal and county levels, evaluation of site history, and examination of State and US EPA documents. It updates an earlier assessment performed on 401-407 Columbia Street by Geoscience Technical Services in 1994.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The property is located at the southwest corner of the intersection between Columbia and Cornelia Streets in the downtown section of Utica (Figure 1). In composite, the two lots have a square configuration with an area of 1.17 acres (Figure 2). Frontage includes 225 feet on Columbia and 212 feet on Cornelia.

The building at 401-407 Columbia is a four story brick structure with a full basement. Dimensions are 98 by 148 feet yielding a footprint of 14,504 square feet. The first through third floors are used as offices. The fourth floor is partly leased and the remainder is an unfinished area used for storage. The basement is also unfinished.

The 409 Columbia Street building, which houses the main office of RCIL, is a one story pre-engineered metal building on a concrete slab. It has basic dimensions of 98 by 144 feet with one corner missing resulting in a floor area of 13,904 square feet.

In the late 1800's, the property contained part of the Theodore Pomeroy & Son oil cloth factory. Those buildings were removed by 1899. The present building at 401-407 Columbia was constructed by 1907 and used over the years for a furniture store, clothing factory, light manufacturing, and offices.

Initially residences and later commercial buildings occupied the 409 Columbia lot. The buildings contained part of the clothing factory and also auto sales and service operations. They were replaced in 1971 by the present building. That building was occupied from 1971 to 1990 by a rug company.

The neighborhood contains commercial, residential, and municipal buildings. A large mill building on the west side of State Street is occupied by Brodock Press and a machine company. The Utica City Hall lies one block to the east on Kennedy Plaza. Automotive operations are located on Lafayette and Oriskany Streets to the south. The nearest gas station is a Mobil/Nice & Easy at Court and State.

3.0 UTILITIES AND STORAGE TANKS

The buildings have municipal water and sewer service. There is one catch basin in the rear parking lot which we assume is connected with the City storm sewer system.

Heating of both buildings takes place with natural gas which is piped in.

Fuel oil and coal were used to heat the 401-407 Columbia Street building in the past. An above-ground tank with an estimated capacity of 1,100 gallons is located in the basement near the former furnace. The tank was cut open and is filled with sand or concrete.

Those elements of electrical systems pertinent to environmental assessments are transformers and capacitors which may contain dielectric fluid with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's). No transformers were observed on the property. The ballasts of fluorescent lights, which are present in both buildings, have small capacitors that are assumed to contain PCB's unless labeled otherwise. These do not constitute a soil or ground water contamination threat, but unlabeled ballasts must be treated as a hazardous waste when disposed.

4.0 SITE INSPECTION

The site inspection took place on January 24, 2002. Site photographs taken that day are shown in Appendix A.

4.1 401-407 Columbia Street Building

description At the time of our inspection, this building was occupied as follows:

first floor - RCIL

second floor - Family Services and AIDS Community Services

third floor - Voluntary Action Center, U.S. Care, and RCIL

fourth floor - Computer & Business Inc. and RCIL storage

The first through third floors are laid out for offices, exemplified by the first floor plan shown in Figure 3. In general, each floor has a square hall with offices on the interior and exterior. There is one elevator and two staircases. Finish materials include vinyl and carpet flooring, sheetrock walls, and drop tile ceilings.

That part of the fourth floor occupied by Computer & Business is finished as offices. The remainder, including two large rooms, is unfinished and used by RCIL for storage of furniture, computers, and files. This area has a wood floor, masonite walls, and the original wood and metal ceiling.

The unfinished basement is divided into four sections, each elongate in the north-south direction. The east section contains the new and old furnaces, the decommissioned oil tank, and utility entrances. The other sections are used for miscellaneous storage and a cooling unit is located in the west section.

chemicals Other than cleaners, the only chemical items observed were located in the basement. These included two dozen 1 to 5 gallon containers of paint in a metal cabinet; and fourteen pint to 5 gallon containers of paint and 1 gallon of thinner elsewhere. The containers were intact and there was no staining on the floor.

asbestos-containing materials About 115 linear feet of overhead pipe were covered with asbestos insulation at the time of our 1994 assessment. This was removed during renovations conducted subsequently and we observed no asbestos insulation in January 2002.

Vinyl flooring and drop ceiling tiles, which are present in the finished sections of the building, may contain an admixture of asbestos if they were installed prior to the mid-1980's. Installation dates are uncertain and probably varied. Vinyl flooring and drop ceiling tiles are categorized as non-friable materials which would not release asbestos fibers to the air unless disturbed. Disturbance could result from remodeling or removal.

lead paint Based on the building age, lead paint could be present on interior surfaces predating 1978. Many of the older surfaces have been replaced during remodeling, but some probably remain. We observed paint to be in a good condition.

4.2 409 Columbia Street Building

The interior of 409 Columbia Street contains the main RCIL offices and is laid out as shown in Figure 3. In addition to offices, rooms include the lobby, a library, a conference room, a kitchen, the ADS activities room, and rest rooms. Finish materials include carpeted and vinyl flooring, sheetrock walls, and drop tile ceilings.

chemicals The only chemical-type items observed were located in the kitchen

closet and included 30 to 40 pint to gallon containers of cleaners, ammonia, and bleach used for maintenance.

asbestos-containing material and lead paint RCIL completely remodeled the building interior in 1991 shortly after acquisition. This infers that asbestos-containing materials and lead paint would not be present.

4.3 Grounds

Grounds include a paved parking lot in the rear of the buildings bordered by a strip of landscaping, and a courtyard to the west of number 409. One catch basin and a sewer manhole were present in the parking lot pavement. The ground surface was wet which prevented identification of oil staining.

We observed no fill pipes, fill ports, or vent pipes for underground tanks outside the buildings. No solid waste was present.

Immediately adjacent properties include a parking lot for the Kennedy Plaza Apartments to the south and O'Brien Plumbing & Heating Supply to the west. The Salvation Army Thrift Store and Shepard Paint & Wallpaper are located to the north across Columbia Street. A large building occupied by Mohawk Valley Hospital Equipment lies to the east across Cornelia.

5.0 MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

Tax Assessor Documents in the Utica Tax Assessor's office included the property description as summarized in Section 2.

County Clerk Land records in the County Clerk's office show the following chains of ownership for the parcels.

401-409 Columbia Street

1994 to present - Resource Center for Independent Living
 1993 to 1994 - Savings Bank of Utica
 1989 to 1993 - Nancy Jones
 1987 to 1989 - Savings Bank of Utica
 1983 to 1987 - Mohawk International
 1983 - Robert Cardillo
 1977 to 1983 - Charles Gaetano and Gaetano Realty Corp.
 1942 to 1977 - Tudor Williams Realty Company

409 Columbia Street

1990 to present - Resource Center for Independent Living

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1972 to 1990 - Kymark Realty Corp.
1971 to 1972 - Meelan Rug Company
owner prior to 1971 - Utica Urban Renewal Agency

Codes Enforcement The Codes Enforcement files for the property included the following:

401-407 Columbia Street

- permits, inspection reports, and CO's for remodeling conducted in 1989 and 1994-1995.
- a 7/21/83 hazardous materials report for former tenant Electromark listing 55 gallon containers of ethyl acetate, acetone, nitrocellulose, anhydrol solvent, and hexane.
- 1987 tenant complaints about poor air quality and an indoor air survey performed by Galson Technical Services.

409 Columbia Street

- permit to erect a steel Butler building for a retail rug company issued in 1971.
- permits, inspection reports, and CO's for a 25 by 90 foot addition and RCIL remodeling in 1990 and 1991.

Fire Department The following calls for issues other than alarm malfunctions and smoke detectors were made to 401-407 and 409 Columbia Street by the Utica Fire Department during the past two decades:

- 2/18/86 - odor of cleaning fluid
- 6/10/86 - odor of smoke
- 12/28/88 - odor of stalin
- 12/14/91 - roof blown off #409
- 1/20/94 - exhaust fumes
- 3/18/96 - gasoline leak (presumably from a car, possibly on the street)

6.0 SITE HISTORY

Information used to reconstruct the history of 401-407 and 409 Columbia Street included deeds and other municipal information; 1874 and 1907 Oneida County atlases; Sanborn Insurance maps from 1884, 1888, 1899, 1925, and 1950; Utica city directories; and aerial photographs taken in 1957, 1977, and 1984. Copies of the Sanborn maps and photos are included in Appendix B.

Uses of the properties based on these sources of information are summarized as follows:

401-407 Columbia Street parcel

1874 to late 1880's - occupied by Thomas Pomeroy & Son oil cloth factory. Oil, paint, varnish, and lead were stored on-site. Operations included painting, varnishing, printing, sizing, rubbing, and coating.

1899 - parcel vacant except for a small hand laundry at the corner.

1907 - present building constructed, labeled J. Cox.

1925 - building shown as 3 stores at street level; clothing factory on the 3rd and 4th floors.

1935 to 1970 - primary building occupant Williams & Tudor Furniture. At times, the upper floors were occupied by a clothing factory. A restaurant and confectioner were also briefly present.

1970 to early 1980's - building vacant.

1983 to 1987 - Mohawk International, later called Electromark manufactured tools and equipment for etching of metal in part of the building. Their operation is further discussed in Section 8.1. The remainder of the building was partly used for offices.

1987 to present - the building was used exclusively for offices during this period. RCIL became the owner in 1994.

409 Columbia Street parcel

late 1880's to early 1900's - occupied by residences.

first half of 20th century - north section occupied by a large building extending to the west. The building contained an auto sales & service operation on the ground floor and a clothing factory on three upper floors. The rear section, coinciding with the present parking lot, was occupied by another building with an auto sales & service facility.

prior to 1970 - former buildings removed.

1970 to 1990 - present building constructed and occupied by Meelan Rug Company.

1990 to present - interior remodeled and occupied by RCIL.

Due to the passage of time, there is no specific information on the storage, use, and disposal of chemicals and petroleum products used by the oil cloth factory and auto sales & service operations.

7.0 REVIEW OF STATE AND FEDERAL INFORMATION

7.1 Geologic Setting

The U.S. Geological Survey topographic map shows that the property is located on the lower flank of a hill sloping gently north towards the Mohawk River (Figure 1).

Surficial sediments are mapped as lacustrine sand deposited in a lake which occupied the Mohawk Valley during retreat of the last continental glacier (Cadwell and Dineen, 1987). Bedrock, which is buried beneath the sand, consists of the sedimentary Utica shale (Fisher, Isachsen, and Richard, 1970).

The property lies over a productive ground water aquifer extending along the Mohawk valley (Bugliosi, Trudell, and Casey, 1988). The area has municipal water service. Based on a 1982 atlas, there are no community water supply sources within a one mile radius.

7.2 Environmental Information

The following state and federal documents were searched for references to 401-407 and 409 Columbia Street and nearby properties.

NYS DEC documents

- inventory of inactive hazardous waste sites
- spill list, 1990 to present
- inventory of bulk petroleum storage tanks
- list of leaking underground storage tanks (developed from the spill list)
- locations of solid waste landfills

US EPA documents

- RECRIS (inventory of hazardous waste generators; transport, storage, & disposal facilities; and facilities subject to corrective action)
- CERCLIS (overall federal inventory of hazardous waste sites)
- National Priorities List (Superfund sites)

One reference was found to the subject property, namely an NYS DEC spill incident report dated 2/13/87. The incident concerned chemical drums left in the

basement when Electromark moved to another location. This incident is discussed in detail in Section 8.1.

The remainder of Section 7.2 concerns the environmental condition of nearby properties.

hazardous waste sites Five inactive hazardous waste sites are listed by NYS DEC within one mile:

Bossert Manufacturing Corp. - 0.83 miles northwest
Mohawk Valley Oil - 0.66 miles northeast
Monarch Chemical Co. - 0.63 miles northeast
New York Emulsion Tar Products - 0.64 miles northeast
Niagara Mohawk Harbor Point property - 0.80 miles northeast

Of these, all but Monarch Chemical Co. are listed by US EPA in the CERCLIS which is an overall federal inventory of known and suspected hazardous waste sites. Also in the CERCLIS are:

421-423 Broad Street - 0.38 miles east
Utica Harbor - 0.68 miles northeast

There are no sites on US EPA's National Priority List (Superfund clean-ups) within a mile.

hazardous waste generators A total of twenty operations within a quarter mile are registered for hazardous waste activity under US EPA's RCRA program. The closest are:

Brodock Press, 714 State Street
Fisher Auto Parts, 327 Lafayette Street
Mather, Evans & Diehlcó Inc., 509 Lafayette Street
Metzler Printing, 317 Lafayette Street
Miguel's Body Shop, 320 Lafayette Street Rear
Nice & Easy #8, 501 Court Street
UAP Engine Rebuilders, 446 Lafayette Street
Utica Printing & Mailing, 422 Lafayette Street
Victory Markets, 400 Columbia Street

Registrants are required to manage, store, transport, and dispose of hazardous waste in accordance with state and federal regulations.

spills The NYS DEC spill inventory, which extends back to the late 1970's, documents thirty-nine incidents within an approximate quarter mile radius. These are

listed in Table 1. One was the 2/13/87 incident at the subject property discussed further in Section 8.1. The remainder dominantly involved releases of petroleum products and were distributed as follows:

Columbia Street - 4 incidents
Court Street - 6 incidents
Genesee Street - 15 incidents
Kennedy Plaza - 1 incident
Lafayette Street - 1 incident
Oriskany Street - 6 incidents
State Street - 1 incident

The Columbia Street incidents occurred at the OTB facility (#232, two incidents), the Daily Double Cafe, and along the street (leak from a moving vehicle).

registered petroleum storage tanks Bulk petroleum storage tanks have been registered with NYS DEC by the following operations within an approximate one block area:

Empire Bath & Kitchen, 600 State Street
Globe Mill Joint Venture, 721 & 811 Court Street
H. J. Brandeles Corp., 300 Lafayette Street
Nice & Easy #8, 501 Court Street
The Salvation Army, 400 Lafayette Street
Utica City Hall, 1 Kennedy Plaza

Registration is required if the cumulative capacity of above-ground and underground petroleum tanks, whether active or inactive (removed), exceeds 1,100 gallons. Some registered tanks have been removed.

chemical bulk storage tanks and major petroleum storage facilities No chemical bulk storage tanks or major petroleum storage facilities are located within a quarter mile from the subject property.

8.0 RECENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

8.1 NYS DEC Spill Incident #867005

Electromark, which was a tenant at 401-407 Columbia Street from 1983 to 1986, used a variety of chemicals, some flammable, in connection with their manufacturing of hardware and equipment for etching of metals. An NYS DEC report dated 9/3/86 stated that Electromark was operating as a small quantity generator of hazardous waste. The inspection found no violations of New York State hazardous

waste regulations.

Electromark moved to a new location at the end of 1986. An NYS DEC spill report dated 2/13/87 stated that 25 to 30 drums had been left in the basement of the building, some with contents which had spilled to the floor and entered cracks. Tenants were complaining about odors. The spill unit closed the incident on 2/18/87 and referred the matter to other branches of NYS DEC.

NYS DEC issued a fine to Electromark on 3/3/87 for not properly marking drums with flammable contents as hazardous waste.

Harry Warner of NYS DEC made a follow-up inspection documented in a letter dated 4/1/87. He stated that all drums, including those with hazardous waste, had been removed. When at the site, he did not notice any odor and observed no spilled materials on the floor. Mr. Warner opined that the problem was the result of an industry sharing a building with tenants that are not used to industrial conditions. This appears to have concluded the matter.

Documents pertaining to Electromark and the drums are contained in Appendix C.

8.2 Indoor Air Quality at 401-407 Columbia Street

Tenant concerns about building air quality first surfaced in early 1987 at the time of the Electromark incident. Galson Technical Services was engaged to conduct an air quality survey and evaluate the building ventilation system. Recommendations included providing more outdoor air, increasing the humidity, and creating positive pressure to keep fumes out of offices. The drums were subsequently removed. It is not certain whether additional measures were taken at that time.

In mid-1994, Eisenbach Engineering conducted a limited air quality study in the building for RCIL after employee complaints about stale or stagnant air. Results for the first, second, and third floors showed nothing out of the ordinary for temperature, carbon dioxide, and humidity. Humidity was somewhat high on the first floor and carbon dioxide was slightly elevated on the second floor.

Another air quality survey was performed in March 1996 by CNA Insurance Companies, responding to a lawsuit from an employee alleging health impacts from poor air. Monitoring included dust, hydrocarbons, formaldehyde, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide. Results showed one of six carbon dioxide levels elevated and a somewhat low humidity. Other monitoring parameters were within acceptable limits. Some white powder was observed on the basement floor and walls, and bird guano was present in an old elevator shaft.

While the survey data showed no air quality problems which could lead to sickness, certain recommendations were made by CNA and implemented by RCIL. Actions included:

- eliminating the white powder in the basement with bleach.
- securing the old elevator shaft and treating bird guano with bleach.
- adjusting the air handling system to increase humidity.
- cleaning a possible growth on a moist steel plate with bleach.

There have been no indoor air quality issues since these actions were taken in 1996.

Texts from the Eisenbach and CNA reports are respectively contained in Appendices D and E.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

This phase I assessment has identified three significant environmental issues at 401-407 and 409 Columbia Street: past land use, the Electromark drum incident, and indoor air quality.

past land use An oil cloth factory which occupied the 401-407 Columbia Street parcel during the late 1800's stored and used oil, paint, varnish, and lead. During the first half of the 20th century, the 409 Columbia Street parcel contained car sales and service facilities which would have stored and used automotive fluids and also generated waste oil and used anti-freeze. There is no information on past storage, management, and disposal practices for the substances in question. It has now been about 50 years since the automotive operations were active and over 100 years since the oil cloth factory was present. Any petroleum-based contaminants released to the subsurface would have undergone considerable degradation and dispersion over the years. At this point, it would be difficult to distinguish latent contaminants originating from past land use from those released in the numerous documented spill incidents which have occurred in the area. Thirty-five incidents are documented in the past 20 years within a quarter mile of the property, including some involving leaking underground tanks. Others undoubtedly occurred before NYS DEC began keeping records. It is likely that ground water has undergone regional degradation in the downtown Utica area and differentiation of specific sources may be problematic.

Electromark drum incident Electromark left 25 to 30 drums in the basement of 401-407 Columbia Street when they departed in late 1986, including three containing hazardous waste classified as such on the basis of flammability. The NYS DEC spill report stated that there was some leakage and fluid had infiltrated cracks in the concrete. The drums were subsequently removed. A follow-up inspection by NYS

DEC documented the removal and noted no evidence for spillage. The report suggested that the incident may have been exacerbated by the proximity of office workers to an industrial operation.

indoor air quality The Electromark incident triggered employee complaints about poor indoor air quality at 401-407 Columbia Street in 1987. Galson Technical Services evaluated the ventilation system and recommended upgrading. Removal of the drums appears to have addressed that round of complaints. The issue resurfaced in the mid-1990's when an employee sued RCIL claiming health impacts from poor air quality. Eisenbach Engineering conducted a limited air quality study in 1994 and CNA Insurance Companies performed more comprehensive monitoring in 1996. Neither group documented any significant problems. CNA recommended steps to eliminate bird guano in an old elevator shaft, increase humidity, and eliminate potential biological growth. These were implemented by RCIL and the air quality issue has not resurfaced.

Two issues of lesser significance concern 401-407 Columbia Street. They include the possible presence of an asbestos admixture in older vinyl flooring and drop ceiling tiles, and possible lead paint on surfaces pre-dating 1978. These phenomena are common to most older buildings in urban areas. Asbestos insulation was removed from overhead pipes in the basement as part of remodeling conducted in 1994.

The above comments are based on a site inspection and information accumulated during this environmental assessment. Geoscience Technical Services, Inc. can not be held responsible for any latent environmental problems which may subsequently be discovered during any detailed site investigations.

10.0 REFERENCES CITED

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