

Avant | 200 Delaware Avenue Buffalo, NY 14202

## The Challenge

In 2007, Uniland bought a dormant federal building at auction. The 15-story high-rise in the core of Buffalo's CBD would become the city's first true mixed-use infill development. The building would be designed to house luxury condominiums, an upscale hotel, and Class A office space. Redeveloping it would mean rewriting existing city codes to accommodate the necessary installation of new, independent mechanical systems for each use. The building also would require a \$10 million asbestos remediation and was being redeveloped during the economic meltdown that hit the nation in 2007.

## Strategy

Recognizing that these challenges threatened the project's financial feasibility, Uniland leveraged its experience with economic development programs and its relationships with local and state officials. Asbestos abatement was offset by a grant from National Grid, and a focus on sustainable redevelopment drew additional awards, grants and low interest loans.

The redevelopment would retain the building's original structural steel, elevator tower, and nine, high-speed elevators. To introduce a new building concept with three distinct uses under one roof, Uniland's in-house design and construction professionals worked side-by-side with city officials to interpret and apply Buffalo's 50-year old building codes for each independent mechanical and electrical system. To earn public support, Uniland proactively worked with the media and scheduled a public presentation for neighborhood residents.

## Results

Avant continues to positively affect the CBD, spurring over \$450M of investments in its 2-block radius. The building is now on the tax rolls for the first time since 1971. Existing commercial and residential neighbors, especially single family homes, have seen significant appreciation despite depressed sales nationally. Avant's efficient, 25,000 SF-floor-plates fill a gap in Class A office space in a market dominated by dated Class B offerings. The luxury condominiums sell for an average price per square foot that's double the market. The Embassy Suites hotel year-to-date occupancy is 15% higher than its peer group. Avant generated over 1 million construction hours in 2 years; 120 people are employed by the hotel and restaurant; and the office portion helped create or sustain over 600 jobs. In addition, the project meets community needs by expanding the residential base and serving pedestrians & public transportation users. It is also a significant draw for Canadian tourists entering the country from the Peace Bridge, less than 2 miles away.

Client: **Uniland Development Company**  
 Use: **Hospitality, Office, Residential**  
 Size: **405,315 SF**  
 Value: **\$85 Million**  
 Contract: **Design / Build**  
 Architect: **Stieglitz, Snyder Architecture**

