

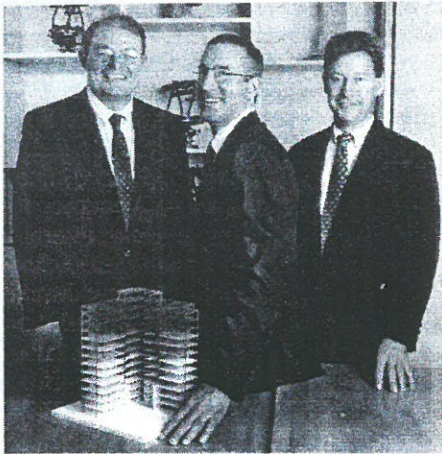
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For Gilsanz Murray Steficek LLP, it wasn't so much the times as the people



The structural engineering firm opened new offices in New Jersey and California this year, a move partner Ramon Gilsanz said came because the firm now has the right people for the job. "We wanted to expand because we have the people for it, because we could," he said.

The company, which opened an office in Essex County, NJ in May and just opened another in Los Angeles in September, specializes in structural design and blast resistant design of structures and facades. The firm recently added building envelope design consulting to its repertoire.

The firm was formed in 1991 by Gilsanz, Philip Murray and Gary Steficek. For the prior five years, they had been working as structural engineers for Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill in New York City when that company closed its structural engineering division in the midst of the early '90s recession. "It took some time to get established, but business began to come in, and now the firm handles about 300 projects a year," Gilsanz stated. "We do a lot of small projects," he said. Of course, there have been many larger projects as well. Since then, the firm has tackled projects ranging from the Bertelsman Building, AOL Time Warner's Interiors, the NJ Transit Hoboken Terminal and Yard and Presbyterian Hospital. "We do from very small projects to very major ones, like 300 Madison," he said. While most projects have been in and around New York City, a few have been in other parts of the country and abroad in Europe. "Current projects include one in Spain in collaboration with HKSE, a Chicago based structural engineering firm," he said.

In July 1999 Joseph Blanchfield, an architect with over 25 years of experience much of it at the New York office of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, joined the firm in order to bring a new dimension to the practice: building envelope design consulting. "This effort has dovetailed very well with the traditional structural engineering disciplines of the firm," Gilsanz said. The building envelope related work now undertaken by the firm includes both the design of new, as well as the restoration of facades, roofs and waterproofing systems.

The firm has won numerous awards, most recently the 2002 Gold Award from the New York Association of Consulting Engineers for their work on the Center for Well-Being at the Ross School in East Hampton, 2002 AIA Long Island's Archi Award for Municipal / Institutional Projects for the Mildred Brown Senior Thesis Building at the Ross School, and 2002 NY Landmarks Conservancy's Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award for Neue Galerie, 1548 Fifth Avenue and in 2003 for the restoration of the Winter Garden in downtown New York City.

Evidence of current projects could be seen all around the office. Gilsanz pointed out a row of models on a shelf. "That's a high rise. That's an antenna we're doing for the MTA," he said, before pointing out a small, abstract sculpture. "This is one we're doing for an artist," he said, explaining they do consulting work for artists creating large sculptures.

The company tries to distinguish itself from other companies in the structural engineering field with attention to service for its clients and technical ability. "I think we distinguish ourselves with our high quality service to all our clients," Gilsanz said. "The company also tries to take good care of its employees," he said. A survey by Structural Engineer magazine found them to be the seventh best structural engineering company to work for in the country. "I think there's also the organization and attention to detail we have," he said. Blanchfield, head of the Building Envelope Design Division stated: "Among other things, the company produces detailed blueprints, often supplemented with photographs, for its building envelope jobs. I find more and more architects really appreciate this level of detail!"

The expansion is going well, according to company officials. "As of August, the New Jersey office was already working on several jobs, including one for the local schools," said Anthony Pagnotta, one of the associates heading up the new office. Gilsanz himself is one of the people heading up the Los Angeles effort. "Expanding to new markets is good for the firm, and not just for the additional business that comes in but because we're exposed to new people and new ways of doing things," Gilsanz stated.

For the future, Gilsanz says he sees business picking up. "We see the construction market growing and we will grow right with it!" he stated.