



Modern Comfort Comes to Gatsby Era Gold Coast Mansion

Small Duct System Updates and Preserves History

Sands Point, Long Island is widely believed to be the setting for F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. When one walks into the grand rooms of the stately Hempstead House mansion, on the former Guggenheim Estate grounds in Sands Point, it's easy to imagine the doomed Jay Gatsby dancing with Daisy Buchanan. The Hempstead House has overlooked the Long Island Sound since it was built in 1912 and, in its heyday, represented the opulence and splendor that defined the Gold Coast mansions of the Gilded Age.

Today the 50,000-square-foot estate is a venue for weddings and special events, and has been the loca-

tion for several Hollywood movies and shows, including *Boardwalk Empire* and *Scent of a Woman*. It was designated a Nassau County Park in 1967 and is maintained by the Sands Point Preserve Conservancy.

Sands Point trustees recently decided to upgrade the old heating and cooling systems in the mansion's 4,000-square-foot bridal and groom suites. Not surprisingly, they were looking for better efficiency, as Long Island has one of the highest electric rates in the country.

But they were concerned that installing ductwork to replace the old and inefficient steam heat system would ruin the aesthetics of the historic building.

The Unico System®



Hempstead House's large, open rooms are popular as settings for weddings and period movies and television shows. Adding conventional HVAC ductwork would have significantly altered the estate's original ornate architecture.

Strategy:

Since it was important to protect the integrity of the architecture, Brian Gelber of Stan Gelber & Sons, recommended the small-duct Unico System. The small-diameter, flexible tubing can be woven above ceilings and below floors, hidden and unobtrusive.

"Snaking the Unico ductwork through the ceiling was an intricate process," said Gelber. "Fortunately, the third-floor servants' quarters haven't been used since World War II, so we could use that area as a mechanical room. We opened up the floors and laced the flexible ductwork across voids above arches and domed ceilings without any damage to the original plaster work and moldings. With historic, architectural structures like this, the Unico System is the only solution."

Gelber installed two Unico Green Series variable-speed air handlers with heat pump coils and two outdoor heat pump condensing units. The Unico System allows staff to have zone control for this area rather than depending on an enormous steam boiler hundreds of feet away in the basement. The outdoor units were situated on a parapet roofed porch in the back of the structure, where they are out of all sight lines.

Results:

The high-efficiency Unico System conserves energy while quietly and invisibly maintaining a comfortable

temperature in the portion of the building now reserved for wedding parties as they prepare for the big event.

It's also a quiet system because of insulation in the ducting that works as a sound damper. "You barely hear it operating," Gelber said, adding that the trustees are very pleased with the energy savings and the overall results. "Guests can now enjoy the very best in indoor comfort in this grand building."

Benefits:

- Non-disruptive to historic architecture
- Flexible design and installation
- Discreet supply outlets
- Energy efficiency
- Even, draft-free temperatures
- Quiet operation

Contractor:

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Sands Point Preserve
www.sandspointpreserveconservancy.org

A view of one of Hempstead House's grand staircases. The Unico System was installed in the arched ceiling above this staircase.



Unico System supply tubing snakes through the voids above this intricate arched ceiling without damaging or disrupting the original plaster or masonry.

The parapet roof on Hempstead House's rear porch keeps the outdoor units from marring the skyline of the structure.



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The Unico System®

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Unico, Inc. is the leader in small duct heating and cooling systems and other high-end HVAC systems. The company manufactures all of its products in St. Louis, Missouri, with over 125,000 square feet of modern manufacturing space. The company is well known for extensive use in older, architecturally unique homes and buildings as well as elite, high-end custom homes. The company is family owned and operated and their products are available throughout the United States and Canada, and in over 28 countries around the world.



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