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272,000-SF Office Will Get Makeover

By Eric Peterson

ISELIN, NJ-Spear Street Capital quietly acquired 101 Wood Ave. South in October, and is now set to launch a major renovation of the 10-story office building. The 272,000-square-foot asset was picked up in the fall from chemical giant BASF for a reported \$71 million, or about \$261 per square foot.

The renovation project for the building, which is located within the MetroPark Corporate Campus, will entail a made-over entryway, an updated lobby, a café and other improvements leading to potential multi-tenant use. On-building signage is also on the table for a major user, and the San Francisco-based Spear has tapped Cushman & Wakefield to fill the building.

"It's the largest block of available space within the tight MetroPark office submarket," says C&W's Bill Brown, who's heading the assignment with Bob Donnelly, Marc Rosenberg and Lauren Ruffino of the firm's Morristown office. Noting that the asset is within walking distance of the MetroPark train station, "the chance to be on a main commuter line to New York is great as mass transit becomes an increasing priority for corporations," he says. "We expect the opportunity will be particularly appealing to Manhattan-based companies looking for cost savings and convenience."

Sovereign Bank and Centenary College occupy a limited amount of space within 101 Wood Ave. South, but the bulk of the building is currently available. An asking price hasn't been listed yet, but comparable space within the MetroPark submarket, including that in immediately adjacent buildings, generally commands asking prices in the \$29 to \$35-per-square-foot range.

"This is a terrific submarket," Donnelly says. "It has drawn several major users in the past few years, and we continue to see interest from tenants looking to establish a local presence."

The asset was built in 1990 as the world headquarters for Engelhard Corp., which was subsequently acquired by BASF. For C&W, the assignment is a rollover of sorts, because the firm was hired by BASF in 2006 to sublease the space when BASF moved out in a consolidation of its New Jersey operations at an expanded site in Florham Park. That sublease effort ultimately translated into the building's sale in October to Spear.

And for Spear, the pick-up represented its second in New Jersey. In 2007, the company acquired [Crossroads Business Center I and II](#) in Bedminster. C&W is also the leasing agent for that property, which it has signed 55,000 square feet of leases in the past 18 months.

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