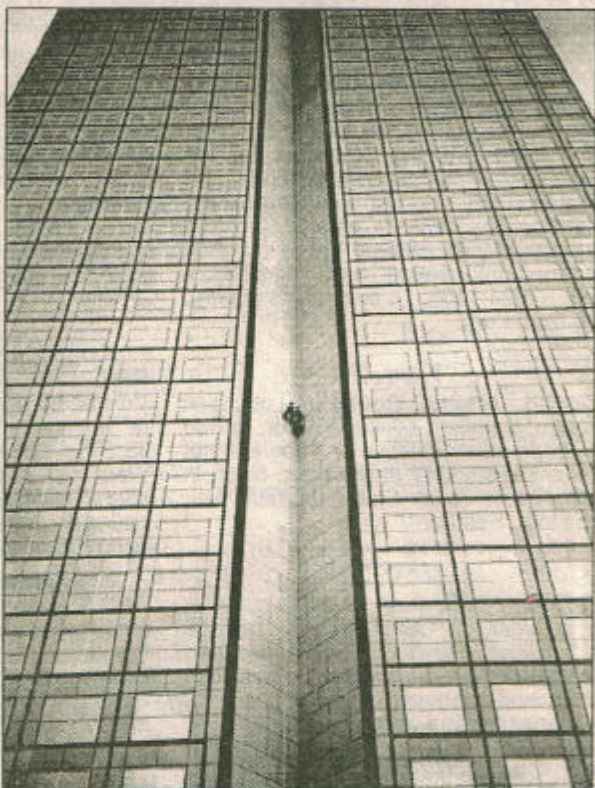


MACHINERY

Rappelling high towers

A job for the skilled, not the faint of heart



Rope Access technicians at work

It would not be surprising if sometime in the near future, the Spiderman-like figure seen high up on a skyscraper's exterior face is in fact, a highly skilled rope access technician from Britain doing specialized building inspection and remedial maintenance work. Instead of erecting and utilizing traditional scaffolding or platforms to conduct intense inspections, the operatives from Ropelink Ltd., use an age old mountaineering technique called abseiling or rappelling, combined with engineering experience, to quickly and cost effectively check structure quality for 'enemies' such as freeze thaw and corrosion damage.

Several years ago, when Ropelink first announced that difficult to access buildings or structures could be maintained or inspected safely, efficaciously and economically by this method, there was cautious interest, or downright skepticism. Today the company has been contracted to conduct work on some of the world's best known buildings and bridges, and

its technological exploits on these towering structures have been creating quite a stir both in the UK and the US.

Individual rope access is much more cost effective, says the company, than conventional and in-house access systems such as scaffolding and platforms. Advantages include, ease of access, speed of setting up and stripping sites, self positioning on designated work areas and lack of intrusion on adjacent working areas. Additionally there is minimal interference on working operations because of its flexibility and speed of mobilization. For instance, set up and access for a 300 to 600 ft building can be accomplished in one day.

Technicians rappel with an independent access working line and a safety line. An element of risk is not accepted, according to Ropelink, and its exemplary safety record and high safety standards back this up. Equipment is individually logged, conforms to OSHA standards and is ID coded, with the hours worked and the type of build-

ings and conditions under which it has been used.

The company specializes in difficult to access buildings - including space frames in atriums, bridges, oil and gas installations, chimneys, and geo-technical services. Ropelink works in conjunction with engineers to test or repair structures, but will train suitable personnel to operate under its supervision. For example, Ropelink has worked extensively with a highly regarded US consulting engineering company, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc., to perform inspections and to provide training for their personnel.

Using rope access allows both hands to be free to inspect, hammer sound, photograph, measure, make notes, drill, core sample, chemical test, apply sealant, paint, install concrete and patch repairs or conduct any other maintenance work required.

For further information contact Ropelink Ltd. in Cheshire, England at 011-44-1565-723456 or email at ropelink@aol.com.