

Palm Beach In Winter

by Phil Jonassen

AWARD WINNER “HEAVIEST BUILDING ON DOLLIES”

In December of 1999, I had received a call from my friend Kim Brownie wondering if I would like to spend the winter in Florida. We have enjoyed working for Kim before numerous times and didn't hesitate to say yes.

He had a job in Palm Beach for me to do, he said, and I better fly down and make sure



▲ This aerial view of the mansion shows the tight working area that was encountered during the move. Four self propelled dollies provided the moving force for this rotation of ninety degrees and eliminated the many changes of rigging that would have been required in this cramped area.



▲ Rigging the tie rods for the ninety-degree rotation of the house. The rotation was made in a clockwise direction and the hub of rotation was underneath the house.

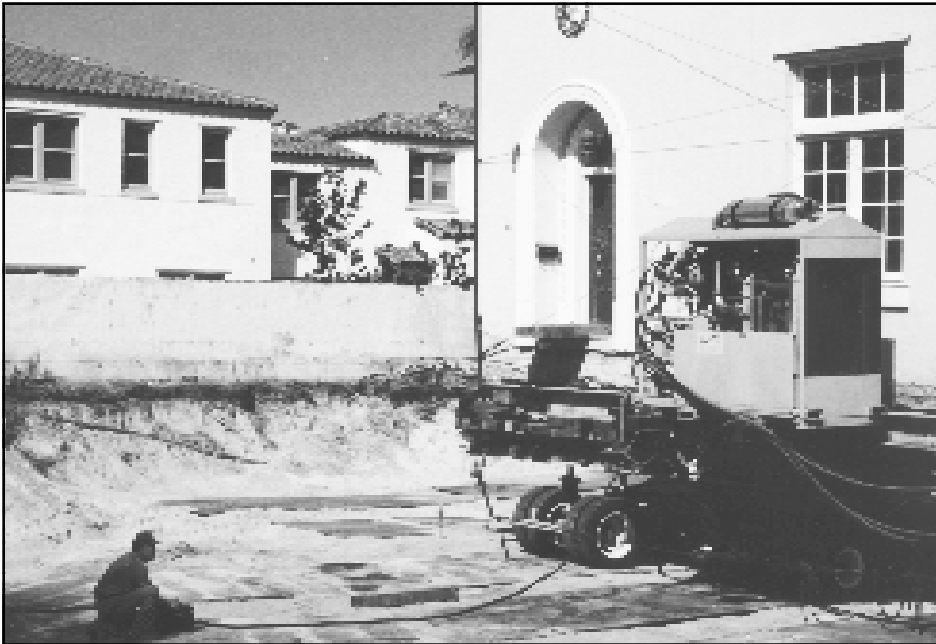
I wanted to do it. Kim picked me up at the Palm Beach airport and we went to check out this “job for Phil.” Typical Brownie come on, warm weather and sand... We got to the prospective site and pull into a beautiful estate about 100 yards from the ocean, with a huge 1920s mansion.

“Now wait a minute, Brownie, what are you getting me into?” I asked. “It isn't too bad,” he says, “they've already tore down half of it.” As it turns out, the house has to be

quarter turned and move to the end of the lot so that the previous ocean view would now be facing the side street. The developers for this site want the ocean view lot to put a \$15 million home on. So I weigh the options, (Michigan weather vs. Florida weather this time of year) and tell Kim “Oh, Ok. I’ll do it!”

We arrive at Kim’s shop in the first week of January with my power dollies, pumper, jacking machine, and the Posi-trac. My crew consisted of my sons Ryan and Chad, Paul Burmeister, and a couple of other stowaways we didn’t find until we got there. The owner of the soon to be moved home rented the boys a 1920s hotel about 3 blocks from the job site, with a Publix conveniently across the street. I was more than welcome at Kim’s guest house.

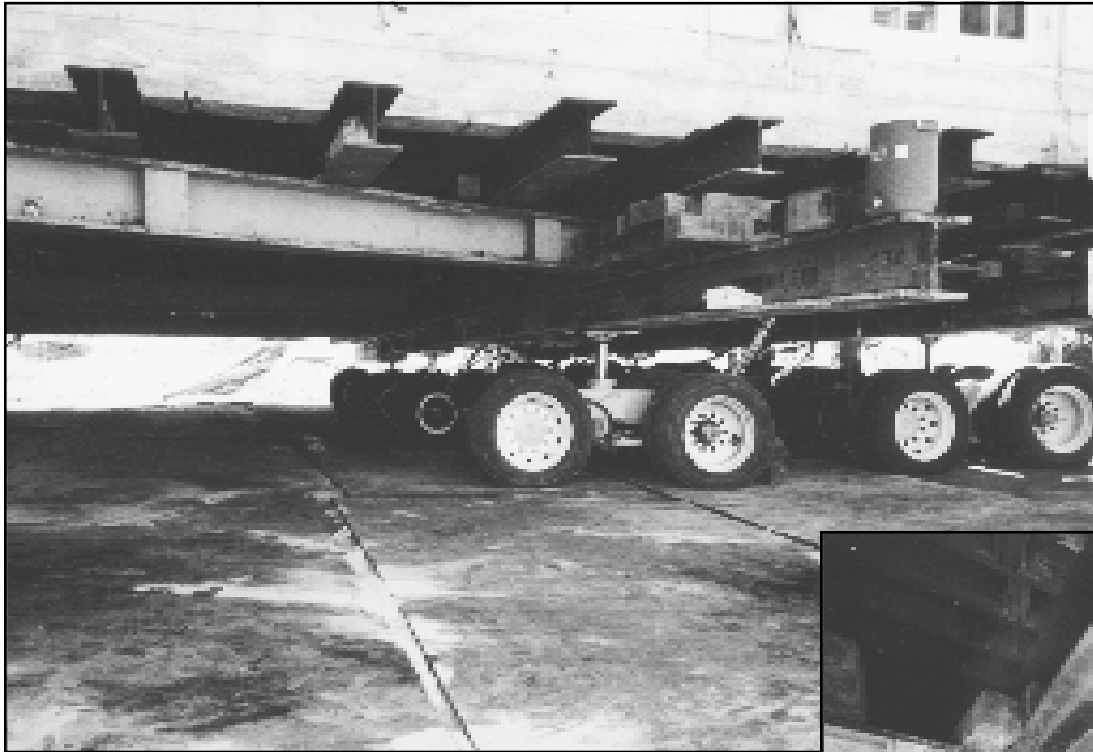
The house was very fragile. It had been stuccoed and had some settling damage from



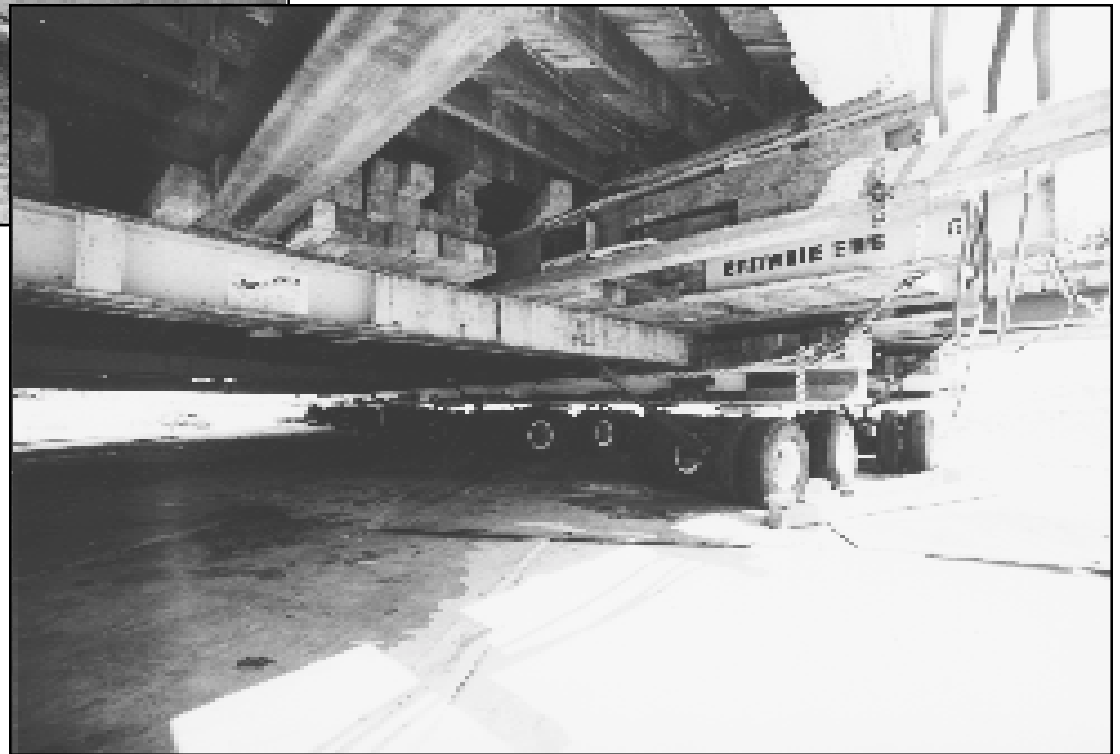
▲ The power for the move is provided by the engine and hydraulic pump, with Phil in control with the remote control on a thirty-foot cable.

► This shows the left rear power dolly for that zone. The corner angle and the cables were added for compression on the apparent two-piece cement blocks that formed the structure.





▲ The lead zone at the front had eight dollies, two of which were hydraulic powered dollies. In the sand, steel plates are a necessary part of the job.



▶ The rear two zones has six dollies each, with one powered dolly in each zone.

hurricanes. It was 94' across and about 8' from a very expensive looking concrete fence. The building was 60'x60' on the main living quarters with an additional 34'x24' in maids quarters off the side. There were 3 fireplaces, concrete floors in the ballroom area, and marble floors in the foyer, hall and ballroom.

The walls were 12"x24" concrete blocks. Very unusaul, as they were like two 4"x12"x24" blocks with 1/4" wire holding the two halves together. With a light, you could look into the ends of the blocks where an addition was removed and look right between the web-wires all the way down the wall. I then decided to cable the house together after seeing how the wall blocks were made.

It took us about two weeks to dig the house out and get it ready for steel. We used 3 main beams in a splayed layout with 4 rocker beams to

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