



Real Estate

By Jeremy Harrell

T. WEISS REALTY

When you go about amassing a Long Island empire of office buildings totaling more than 500,000 square feet, you're not supposed to be friends with environmental types. It just doesn't work that way.

Unless, of course, you're Ted Weiss, who may be among the few people in the world to develop gigantic corporate complexes while simultaneously earning a standing ovation from the Nature Conservancy. If there's a contradiction packed in there somewhere, Weiss, president of T. Weiss Realty, doesn't see it.

"I've always been involved in outdoor activities and want to maintain the natural resources that brought me out to Long Island," said

"My projects primarily are conversions from what were research and development or industrial buildings."

Weiss, who grew up in the New York City boroughs before moving to the Island in the 1960s. "As a developer, you're torn between growth and business and what brought you out to Long Island."

So far, the Lloyd Harbor resident has been torn too much. His company is rapidly expanding – a new 118,050-square-foot office center in Melville is set to open in November – and he was honored in May by the Nature Conservancy for his devotion to preserving the Island's final few square miles of open space. For both of these feats, Weiss has been named MVP in the real estate industry by *Long Island* magazine.

"With the Nature Conservancy, you can see a direct return," Weiss said. "We're just

blessed here on Long Island."

Weiss didn't take the most direct path to real estate moguldom. He came to Long Island as a physical education teacher at Patchogue High School in 1969 and started a carpet-cleaning business in the 1970s, eventually expanding to installation of all manner of floor coverings.

He focused his attention on the real estate business in 1993, after selling off the flooring business, and has since concentrated his work on two core ideas: owning and managing all of his properties and building those properties on old industrial sites.

It's this second part of his philosophy that makes him a favorite of environmentalists.

"Traditionally, I'm not looking at uninhabited space," he said. "My projects primarily are conversions from what were research and development or industrial buildings. We are actually up-zoning."

Take the example of one property, a former commercial bakery in Melville. "For years, it stood as a white elephant in the middle of the industrial park," he said. Weiss's company converted, however, and added the traditional T. Weiss flourishes of manicured landscaping, gardens and ponds. "It's exactly what Long Island wants: jobs, clean space... It's smart growth."

Eleven T. Weiss buildings "have had prior lives," he said. They were funeral homes, packaging plants and defense-industry facilities. Weiss has described his approach as one of a car mechanic who disassembles every piece of an automobile, scrubs or replaces all the parts,



Ted Weiss, president of T. Weiss Realty

then puts it all back together again.

Weiss' sense of care for his buildings doesn't stop once the final brick is laid, either. T. Weiss doesn't flip its properties for a fast return but builds and holds for long-term value. Weiss forms lasting relationships with the buildings. With the ponds, gardens, high-speed wireless Internet access and other amenities, he takes the management side of the equation just as seriously as the development side. He's so good at it that he's contemplating moving into his Melville Corporate Center III when it's completed this fall.

When that building is finished, Weiss will have more than 600,000 square feet under management. Almost all of that square footage is in Melville, including his Melville Corporate Center I on South Service Road and Melville Corporate Center II on Maxess Road. Weiss believes fervently the Route 110 corridor, and his redevelopment of old properties there, spurred lots of other real estate companies to share his belief in the power of Melville at a time when commerce was still concentrated in Nassau County.

"I think the business community has recognized Melville as the heart of Long Island," he said.

And when Melville is the heart of the business community, it means less construction in other parts of the Island, and it means the boy from the boroughs will get to keep going to clean beaches surrounded by untouched land.

Not bad for a former gym teacher.