



Medico-Dental Building San Francisco, CA

Machinery noise / Tenant disturbance

Client
Medico-Dental Building

Mitigation Costs
< \$1,000

Completion
2001

Work Scopes
Noise Testing
Noise Isolation Design

Sometimes, noise problems are not what they appear. This is particularly the case when several different noise sources exist, and conclusively identifying a problematic source is difficult.

The Medico-Dental Building lies just off Union Square in San Francisco. Built in 1924, the building primarily houses professional offices for medical providers, as well as a few architects and engineering offices (including ours). On the first floor, uses include garage space, a coffee shop, and an art gallery.

A set of recirculation pumps and air compressors was installed in a basement level mechanical room to serve the specialized utilities needs of the medical offices. Unfortunately, the mechanical room lies just below the art gallery. A relatively sensitive tenant, the noise impact to the gallery was modest but clearly present. Over time, noise complaints were lodged against the building owner by both the tenant as well as by City inspectors.

Because the compressors were the noisiest pieces of equipment in the mechanical room, the building staff assumed that the compressors were the cause of the noise problem. Building management tried unsuccessfully to reduce noise levels from the compressors. Eventually, an expensive custom housing was fabricated to enclose each set. Still, the problem persisted.

Testing by our firm revealed that, while the compressors generated the most noise in the mechanical room, the pumps generated the most noise in the gallery. Mitigation at the pumps, rather than at the compressors, was the key to resolving the noise complaint, and the gallery owner now enjoys an improved environment.

