

AHP Stories: Massachusetts

The Hayes Plays Role in Downtown Haverhill Revival

AT ONE TIME, THE FACTORY buildings at the edge of downtown Haverhill were a major center for shoe manufacturing in the U.S.

But by the start of the 21st century the industry's glory days had long since passed. The factories were silent, the downtown commercial district in decline.

In recent years, the city formulated a plan to revitalize its ailing downtown by converting those largely vacant industrial spaces into a mix of housing and ground-floor commercial space.

It was a plan that resonated with the nonprofit Planning Office for Urban Affairs, which was invited by the city to consider redeveloping one of the vacant factory buildings into affordable housing.

The Planning Office's plan to convert the Hayes building, a former box factory on Granite Street, into affordable housing and commercial space made sense on multiple levels, says Lisa Alberghini, president of the Planning Office.

"With the Hayes project, we had the ability to create affordable workforce rental and ownership housing, help revitalize the downtown, create construction jobs and permanent jobs, and clean up a brownfield site," Ms. Alberghini says.

Located in a Chapter 40R smart-growth zoning district that provides municipalities with financial incentives for building compact developments near public transportation, the Hayes development includes 57 rental units (33 supported by Low-Income Housing Tax Credits), five market-rate units, and 19 units for residents at 80 percent of area median income. The Hayes



and the conversion of two other former factory buildings nearby have added some 500 new residences downtown.

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston's Affordable Housing Program awarded the Hayes at Railroad Square a \$400,000 grant and a \$650,000 subsidized advance (with a \$197,678 advance subsidy) through members Pentucket Bank and Bank of America Rhode Island, N.A. The AHP awards supported the affordable-housing component of the initiative.

Ms. Alberghini says an optometrist has leased one of the Hayes' three ground-floor commercial spaces, an interior design firm has leased a second space, and an attorney has expressed interest in the other space. "It was very important for the city that we have ground-floor retail space," she says.

"These are three interesting small businesses that could help create economic activity in the area."

In addition to providing affordable housing, the Hayes redevelopment has played a key role in a city plan to build a new municipal parking garage adjacent to the site. The Planning Office contributed a portion of the Hayes property to the city for construction of the garage. In return for the contribution, the city will set aside parking spaces in the garage for Hayes residents.

"The Hayes development has involved collaborations around land, parking, and the revitalization of downtown," says Ms. Alberghini. "What this development accomplishes as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts and greater than what is possible in most developments." ■