

# The Hayes at Railroad Square

HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS

## Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Archdiocese of Boston

■ In the heart of the Merrimack Valley, the Hayes at Railroad Square is an innovative rehabilitation of two old, contiguous mills listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Constructed in 1894 and 1911, the buildings once housed a box factory for the American shoe industry, which had served as major employer in Haverhill.

The Hayes is located just one block from the Haverhill commuter rail station, which provides



access to downtown Boston. The 80,000-square-foot development sits on a one-acre parcel that is within walking distance of the historic downtown area, with its restaurants, small businesses, and an arts district. It also includes commercial space on its first floor, which has increased pedestrian traffic.

The Hayes has 57 one- and two-bedroom flats and duplexes leased at two price points—affordable and moderate/market rate. Thirty-three of the units are reserved for households making below 60 percent of AMI. The remaining 24 can be converted into affordable homeownership units within five years. Nineteen of those 24 units are currently reserved for residents making 60 to 120 percent of AMI.

As part of a region with one of the highest housing costs in the nation, the Archdiocese of Boston through its Planning Office for Urban Affairs was able to use one of the most sophisticated financing models possible in a historic restoration. The Hayes was the first to use the Chapter 40R program, Massachusetts's new smart growth development program. In selected districts, the statute provides

significant incentives such as higher densities, fast-track processing, and regulatory reforms in exchange for a willingness to provide a diversity of housing stock. Under the 40R program, the city approved the plans for the Hayes in only one day!

The developer took advantage of a long list of incentives, including density bonuses for transit-oriented development, historic tax credit equity proceeds, brownfield grants, a partial charitable donation that accompanied the acquisition and lowered the cost, below-market debt financing, and an innovative land swap with the transportation authority to construct a parking garage for residents.

The city of Haverhill, suffering a decline of its industry, embraced the program. The city received an initial zoning incentive grant of \$600,000 and receives an additional \$3,000 for each unit built in the district; at least 20 percent of all units built must be affordable for 30 years to families earning less than 80 percent of AMI.

Throughout the adaptation, the historic integrity of the structure was preserved while modern energy-efficient features were added. The developers restored the facade, the storefront wood framing, and the original smokestack. Among many green features, the high-quality operable windows minimize the need for mechanical ventilation. Where possible, the building walls were insulated to exceed code requirement, foam-core doors are used on the exterior, and the building provides Energy Star-rated appliances.

The Hayes at Railroad Square is an outstanding example of adaptive use and historic restoration. Spurred by the success of the Hayes, developers now have more than 500 units built or under construction in downtown Haverhill.

Among many green features, the high quality operable windows minimize the need for mechanical ventilation. Where possible, the building walls were insulated to exceed code requirement, foam-core doors are used on the exterior, and the building provides Energy Star-rated appliances.



*Models of Excellence*