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Major Waterfront Redevelopment Unveiled to Revitalize New England City, Designed by The Architectural Team

Lauded and championed by state leaders in Massachusetts, the new best-practice development is anticipated to revitalize the riverfront and the gateway city.

CHELSEA, MASS., March 13, 2014 – A new and innovative mixed-use waterfront complex and boardwalk has been announced for the city of Haverhill, Massachusetts, to revitalize the ailing area on the Merrimack River. The public-private project, master-planned and designed by The Architectural Team, will become a mixed-use home to apartment and condominium dwellers, a satellite campus for the University of Massachusetts–Lowell and new restaurants and retail stores overlooking the river.

The large-scale development will also have green spaces and a new public riverwalk, according to the developers Planning Office for Urban Affairs and the Greater Haverhill Foundation, who are partnered as Merrimack Street Ventures, LLC, and have gained support from government leaders including state Representative Brian S. Dempsey (House Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means), UMass President Robert Caret, UMass–Lowell Chancellor Martin Meehan and Mayor James Fiorentini.

Demolition of the site has been scheduled for late spring to allow for the first phase of the major redevelopment project, to be renamed Harbor Place. Seen as the eastern gateway to downtown, the new development will include an elevated pedestrian plaza above the existing floodwall that has long blocked access to the river from the Haverhill downtown core. Existing buildings, including a Woolworth's store that has sat vacant for 40 years, will be replaced by two new structures: a seven story, 81,000 square foot, glass-and-masonry building with first-floor retail, the satellite university on the second and third floors and upper floor office space as well as a six-story, 80-unit residential building with ground floor retail and commercial space. Below the 25,000 square foot public plaza and boardwalk will be a new parking garage.

“This is a major opportunity to revitalize Haverhill, build community, and encourage investment all along the riverfront, a major asset for residents and visitors,” says Michael D. Binette, AIA, principal of The Architectural

Team in Chelsea, Mass. “We’re thrilled to be part of the team helping to revitalize this gateway city and bring new life and activity to the water’s edge and downtown nearby.” Binette adds that the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Boston chapter played a key role in creating a peer-reviewed redevelopment concept through a community charrette, or design collaboration, as well as a pro-bono study involving its Technical Advisory Panel, or TAP.

First phase unveiled

The first phase includes the \$18 million building, which will begin construction next fall and create about 150 construction positions, says Lisa Alberghini, president of the non-profit Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA), which has developed more than 30 major projects around the region including many designed in collaboration with The Architectural Team. These include the award-winning The Hayes at Railroad Station, completed in 2010, which transformed a historic former shoe packing factory into a mixed-use/mixed-income multifamily community.

The entire area plan for phase one is projected to cost approximately \$80 million. The final build-out will include mixed-income housing, which continues to be in high demand in the area around Haverhill. It will also establish a new Merrimack River Boardwalk, a public boat dock and a public plaza, all connected to the downtown area by a series of pedestrian walkways. “The riverfront will come alive and investment will follow from this



transformational, lifestyle-changing development,” said Alberghini, emphasizing the experience what POUA brings to the new development. State Representative Dempsey (D), whose district is based in Haverhill, has long championed the revitalization of the city. He recently stated that Harbor Place “will change the downtown landscape while promoting one of our

city’s greatest resources in providing access to the Merrimack River.” Dempsey added that the undertaking “will prove to be the most significant development project in the city of Haverhill.”

The university chancellor Meehan said, “We are committed to making access to a high-quality UMass–Lowell education even more convenient for residents of Haverhill and surrounding communities and to help bring economic vitality to the downtown.”

According to city officials, it is anticipated that an adjacent recreational boat dock facility with ocean access “will further enhance this 1-1/2 acre downtown Haverhill waterfront site in the future.” (See www.ci.haverhill.ma.us.)

Official recognition

Another state leader, U.S. Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, said, “During the Industrial Revolution, our region’s gateway cities like Haverhill led the way in powering American innovation. Today, they are continuing that tradition by reinventing themselves to develop new educational, cultural and economic opportunities. Haverhill’s distinctive assets, particularly its extensive waterfront along the Merrimack River, will help spark this new series of economic development projects, which will benefit and impact the city going forward.”

Representative Dempsey added, “Harbor Place is a transformative plan that combines commercial, educational and cultural aspects that will change the downtown landscape while promoting one of our city’s greatest resources in providing access to the Merrimack River.” For The Architectural Team, which is known for its



waterfront projects, large urban mixed-use buildings, and the adaptive reuse of more than 250 historic properties, this development is an opportunity to bring best practices in community revitalization and design to an extraordinary city. “We are very happy to be a continuing part of Haverhill’s renaissance,” says Binette. “This demonstrates not only what we can do to create vibrant, viable

communities through smart planning and local engagement, but it also provides a blueprint for reactivating America’s cities that have lost their industrial base but have so much more to offer today.”

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About The Architectural Team

Founded in 1971, The Architectural Team, Inc. is an 85-person master planning and architectural firm that has grown through its design excellence and commitment to responsive and collaborative client relationships. The Architectural Team has developed a portfolio of distinctive design solutions for a broad range of building types and programs, and has earned more than 90 awards for design excellence. These include the new construction of large urban mixed-use developments, multifamily residential, commercial, hospitality, healthcare, recreational, and academic facilities, as well as a national reputation for historic preservation and adaptive reuse. The firm is located in the restored 1840s-era Commandant’s House in Chelsea, Mass. Visit www.architecturalteam.com.