



The \$24.2 million Yarn Works renovation provided 29 one-bedroom, 58 two-bedroom, and nine three-bedroom apartments.

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**YARN WORKS** | Fitchburg, Mass.

# NEVERENDING YARN

**111-year-old mill** becomes a mixed-income multifamily community.

**O**NCE UPON A TIME the 111-year-old Nockege River Mill Building, located on the banks of the Nashua River near Fitchburg, Mass., spun yarn. Now, its long ago purpose lends itself to a new moniker: Yarn Works.

Yarn Works is a mixed-income, adaptive-reuse community of 96 rental units, 40% of which are reserved for low- or middle-income individuals and families.

The original mill was designed by F. P. Sheldon & Son and built in just five months. The Architectural Team (architect) combined a mix of renovation, preservation, and new interventions: repointing the entire brick envelope, replacing almost 300 8x12-foot windows, and raising the entire first floor above a 100-year floodplain.

The structure required extensive reinforcement to supplement the existing granite footings. Instead of building a new foundation, general contractor Colantonio, Inc., added small stub columns supported by the original granite. Steel beams replaced collapsing interior wooden ceiling trusses, adding crucial reinforcement while maintaining the mill's historic character.

The masonry façade was retained according to methods approved by various state and federal renovation

standards.

Two million bricks were cleaned and repaired as needed. The mortar composition was analyzed to match the original. A custom steel entry that acknowledged the character of cast-iron and steel beams used throughout the original structure was constructed.

All 57 market-rate and 39 affordable oversized loft homes offer bountiful natural light, wood-plank ceilings and floors, exposed brick and original beams, and ceiling heights up to 15 feet. A 3,000-sf community room, media area, fitness and yoga center, on-site bike storage, and green space round out the lifestyle amenities.

– David Malone, Associate Editor



**PROJECT SUMMARY** **BUILDING TEAM** The Architectural Team (submitting firm, architect) **Ideal Design** (interior architect) **Odeh Engineers (SE)** **Colantonio (GC)** **DETAILS** 182,500 sf **Total cost** \$24.2 million **Construction time** January 2016 to September 2017 **Delivery method** Design-bid-build