

Facts & Figures

Owner/Developer: Brockton Centre Street, LLC, Boston, MA (a joint venture between Juliano enterprises and Cathartes Private Investments)

Type of Project: New lofts in a renovated shoe factory

Architect: BKA Architects, Inc., Brockton, MA

General Contractor: Tedeschi Realty Corporation, Rockland, MA

Size: 89,000 gross square feet

Cost: \$8.45 million (total)

Construction Time: May 2004 - October 2005

The Need: Urban lofts in a suburban area that make use of an abandoned factory

The Challenge: Dealing with constructability issues in the historic building



Supportive Team Members

All-Phase Electrical Services, Inc.
Electrical Contractor

Canton Masonry, Inc.
Masonry

Gleeson Powers, Inc.
Caulking & Waterproofing

New England Gypsum Floors
Floor Underlayment & Cementitious Decks

Sign Design, Inc.
Sign & Graphic Solutions

Tower Blast & Paint Inc.
Sandblasting



Brockton, Massachusetts

Lofts at SoCo



Photos courtesy of Todd Pollock

The invention of the McKay Sewing Machine in 1851, which could attach soles to the upper section of a shoe without using pegs, helped expand the industrial town of Brockton, Mass. It became one of the largest shoe-producing centers in America when government orders came in for army shoes during the American Civil War. By the 1930s, Brockton was home to approximately 60 shoe factories employing more than 30,000 workers. Today, the area is no longer dependent on these factories, leaving many of them abandoned.

One empty shoe factory realized its future through a residential adaptive reuse project. The 100-year-old, 89,000-gross-square-foot Etonic shoe factory is now home to the Lofts at SoCo.

According to Michael Juliano, president of Juliano Enterprises, the project's owner/developer in a joint venture with Cathartes Private Investments, renovating the historic factory to house lofts allowed not only the preservation of an obsolete building, but also the provision of urban-style lofts in the suburban community. "The opportunity to revitalize a

piece of Brockton history while providing quality new housing was intriguing," he said. "There is uniqueness inherent in the history of the building that can't be overlooked, [and] from an aesthetic standpoint, exposed brick and beam construction captures the flavor of traditional urban loft living that is often only available in major urban centers...."

The seven-story building now contains a media room, a fitness center and storage on the below-grade floor, and 64 residential units on the six above-ground floors. The lofts range in size from 885 square feet to 1,126 square feet and include two bedrooms; two bathrooms; expansive windows; wood floors; nine-foot-tall, sandblasted wood ceilings; granite countertops; stainless steel appliances; and custom paint.

Constructability issues with the historic building posed challenges to the team early on.

"While there were not any major roadblocks during the project, the greatest challenges faced... were issues that arose during the construction phase, and which are not uncommon in other loft buildings," said Juliano. "Generally speaking, these construction obstacles are assessed...when the property is acquired and are merely an accepted part of the renovation of a 100-year-old [factory]. The [team] worked tirelessly to ensure all constructability issues were appropriately addressed and solutions were considered with the end user in mind at all times."

Keeping future residents in mind throughout the project has resulted in a high-quality adaptive reuse that is garnering a wealth of positive attention. In fact, the Lofts at SoCo has been so successful that, according to Barry Koretz, AIA, president of BKA Architects, Inc., the project's architect, many other factory-to-residence conversions are now taking place in the area. It seems Brockton has found a modern way to hold on to its industrial history. ■

— Kelli Cook