

THAMES STREET LANDING

259 Thames Street, Bristol, RI 02809

Project Completion Date

Project was completed in phases between 2000-2004

Developer

Miles Avenue Property Development Company

Project Type

Historic Rehabilitation, Brownfield Remediation: Mixed Use— retail, office, hotel and residential

Total Project Cost

\$7.2 million



Event deck
Photo: Christie Moulton



Photo courtesy of
Newport Collaborative Architects

COMMUNITY SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES SUPPORTED BY PROJECT

- Locate in, or adjacent to, established centers, making use of existing buildings and infrastructure and connecting to existing streets
- Preserve open spaces and farmland
- Promote compact building and neighborhood design
- Mix uses
- Provide range of housing types for range of incomes
- Create pedestrian-friendly communities that utilize transportation alternatives
- Capitalize on existing assets to protect or create distinctive, attractive places and public amenities.
- Follow environmentally sensitive building and site design practices
- Encourage citizen and stakeholder participation
- Foster creative public-private partnerships to finance project and maximize resources

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Location

Located on the State Street Dock, on the waterfront, one block away from the downtown Bristol's main street on public water and sewer. A mix of residential and commercial uses lies along the opposite side of Thames Street.

Compact Design

2.2 acre site includes: retail establishments, a restaurant, pub, offices, short-term rental apartments, and a 40-room hotel.

Mix of Uses

- ◊ Residential
- ◊ Retail/Office
- ◊ Hotel

Pedestrian-Friendly Elements/Transportation Alternatives

The project created a boardwalk that continues, approximately one tenth of a mile, to Independence Park where it connects to the East Bay Bike Path. The project is also one and a half blocks from the bus line. Located within approximately a 1/2 mile radius are a library, two banks, five churches, a post office, two mini marts, several schools and daycare centers, two parks, more than half a dozen restaurants and town hall.

Existing Assets/Public Amenities

The project rehabilitated historic buildings and created the first section of a boardwalk that provides public access along the waterfront.

Green Building/Site Design Practices

Between 15,000 and 20,000 yards of contaminated soil were identified throughout the property and either removed or encapsulated. A stormwater infiltration system allows water to return to the ground beneath the parking lot.

Citizen/Stakeholder Participation

Community input was obtained through the planning board, zoning board, both local and state historic boards, and the RI Coastal Resources Management Council.

Public-Private Support

Financing for the project was a challenge, as most banks refused to back the project. Private funds, a commercial bank loan, plus state and federal historic tax credits allowed the project to go forward.

Federal:

Historic Tax Credit: \$437,507

State:

Historic Tax Credit: \$656,261

Private:

\$7.2 M

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF BRISTOL



Architect

Newport Collaborative Architects
<http://www.ncarchitects.com/>

KEY SMART GROWTH ELEMENTS

Brownfields Remediation

This project showcases how waterfront properties contaminated by previous uses can be reclaimed to provide the basis for waterfront revitalization. Thames Landing was a bustling maritime center in the 18th and 19th centuries. As time passed, the shipping industry faded and it became a commercial and manufacturing area, and eventually a lumberyard. These various businesses dealing in coal, wood, and lumber produced a build-up of contaminants. Contamination at the site consisted of lead, arsenic, petroleum, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). The site was left as an unusable eyesore for Bristol residents and visitors.

A development company led by local resident Lloyd Adams bought the abandoned site in 1997 and began the development project in 1999. Between 15,000 and 20,000 yards of contaminated soil identified throughout the property required removal or encapsulation.

Creative Design

The project challenged the developers to navigate between the conflicting requirements of historic preservation and the structural requirements for building in a flood zone. The final product was accomplished through innovative design approaches and compromises between regulatory agencies. The results are historic buildings with exteriors restored to their 18th century appearance and new structures that are fully compliant with current coastal and floodplain regulations. Due to FEMA requirements an ice cream shop was designed so that it is actually removable in the event of a flood.

Reconnecting with the Historic Harbor

Great care and attention were devoted to preserving the character of this historic site. Its 200-year history is reflected in several of the existing buildings – the original brick Bank of Bristol (1797), the wooden William Taylor Store (1798), Byron Diman’s Counting House (1800), and the stone DeWolf Warehouse (1818). Developers and Architects worked with the local historical society and examined photographs of the area as it appeared in the early 20th century.

PROJECT SUCCESS TO DATE

In 2003 this project won a Phoenix Award, a national award administered by the EPA which recognizes excellence in brownfields redevelopment. This project has also received much local recognition, winning both municipal and state awards. The project has served as a catalyst for additional redevelopment, including the transformation of a nearby manufacturing facility into condominiums.

CASE STUDY PUBLISHED 9/2008