

197 Water Street, Keene

Overview

The former John P. Rust wooden pail mill was located at 197 Water Street in Keene. This mill, after a long manufacturing history, was being used as a warehouse. With assistance from the ODD fund the mill was renovated into an assisted senior living center.

History

The John P. Rust bucket factory and its property have seen many uses over the years. In the late 1800's it was the New Hampshire Molded Granite and Terra Cotta Company and in 1894, was sold to the Indurated Paper Company. Five years later, the late John P. Rust bought the plant, and made it the new headquarters for his wooden pail factory. Here, pails and packages of various sizes and styles were made for the use of preserve manufacturers and packaging houses.

In 1902, disaster struck when a fire destroyed the building (\$30,000 loss in 1902 dollars). Later that year, it was rebuilt, creating the brick mill building that stands today.

At A Glance:

Site Location: Downtown Keene

Site Profile: Former Perkins Machine Mill
Redevelopment

DES ODD Fund Reimbursements: \$99,040

Outcomes:

- Approximately 1,600 tons of petroleum contaminated soil removed and properly disposed of.
- Site investigation completed.
- Closure of the site.
- \$15 million redevelopment into a 109 unit assisted senior living center

Environmental Assessment and Cleanup

In January 1986 petroleum contaminated soil was discovered during the installation of underground utilities. In 1986 Groundwater Technology installed five groundwater monitoring wells and confirmed the presence of groundwater contamination. In May 1986 two 10,000 gallon #2 fuel underground oil tanks were removed from the property. A series of site investigation activities and groundwater monitoring rounds occurred from 1986 until DES closed the site in 2002. In May 2006 geotechnical borings were installed in preparation for eventual site redevelopment. Boring S-4 was installed in the former underground storage tank area and a soil sample taken from the boring was found to be petroleum contaminated. On May 24, 2006, groundwater samples were collected from two groundwater monitoring wells still present from the original site investigation. One of the wells exceeded the State groundwater quality standard



Soil excavation project

for two tri-methyl benzene compounds (new standards were created for these compounds years after the initial investigation of this property).

Site redevelopment activities were ongoing and design plans included significant areas of new construction at this property. It was very important for the completion of the redevelopment project, as a result, to address the soil contamination. DES worked with the environmental consultant for the property to develop and approve a soil excavation remedial project for the site. The excavation took place in three phases starting July 2006 and ending August 2007. Approximately 1,600 tons of petroleum contaminated soil was removed and disposed of offsite. Monitoring wells were installed after completion of the soil excavation and based on data showing groundwater meets state groundwater quality standards the site was closed.

Redevelopment Project Status

The mill complex was renovated into Bentley Common at Keene and construction was completed in October 2008. The redevelopment project received a glowing write up in the March 2009 edition of Design Magazine. The finished project created 109 studio, single and double apartments for seniors (assisted care). The finished construction square footage of the project was 88,547 square feet of new construction and 18,473 square feet of renovation. The total cost of the project was \$12 million for the new construction and \$3 million for the renovation work. Amenities of the property include a “hike and bike” trail that runs along a small stream bordering the property and various lounges and card rooms that find frequent community use.



Picture of the interior of the Bentley Common



The Revitalized 197 Water Street Property