

James Street Inn

PUB-RR-857

February, 2010

James Street Inn

201 James Street
De Pere, WI
Brown County

.64 Acres

Location: Along the Fox River next to the De Pere dam

Old can be the “foundation” of success, as is the case of a modern hotel literally built on the foundation of an antique mill site.

History

Back in the mid-1800s, the power from the swift running Fox River made it an attractive place to build a mill. In 1858, a mill was constructed in De Pere’s James Street, which remained active until 1982. The site handled flour, feed, agricultural chemicals and seed. The years brought several owners and, more catastrophically, two fires which came forty years apart to the day. Fires on August 9 in the years 1892 and 1932 destroyed the original structure and the rebuilt structure on-site, but the first floor shell remained intact. When the mill finally closed its doors, the site remained idle well into the next decade.

The city of De Pere expressed an interest to purchase the property as part of a redevelopment project to build townhouses and convert the old mill into hotel space. The rich heritage, along with its unique location, prompted two local businessmen to see its potential as a boutique hotel property.



A historical photograph of the Osen Milling Site, circa. 1880s (photo courtesy De Pere Historical Society).

Investigation and Cleanup

More than 100 years of use left a legacy of soil and groundwater contamination at the mill. Remediation began when crews removed a small 500 gallon gasoline tank in the 1970s. A 1986 site assessment found contamination around a 10,000 gallon diesel underground storage tank, which was subsequently removed. In 1993, further investigation identified the extent of soil and



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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groundwater contamination, and about 1,071 cubic yards of petroleum contaminated soil were removed. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program approved cleanup of the site in 1997.

mill, other sites in the area also benefited – namely the Lawton Foundry Town Homes, Heritage Square Professional Building, Fox River Terrace Apartments, Shopko Plaza and a new branch of the Brown County Library.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

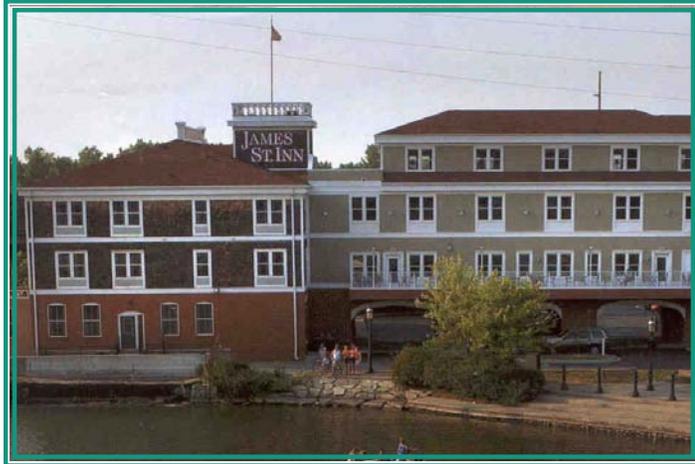
The success of this redevelopment was made possible with cooperation and commitment of the city of De Pere, RR Program, Wisconsin Department of Commerce, and the private partnership of James Street Associates and The Alexander Company.

In addition to the city's creation of the TIF district, financing was made possible in part through Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Award (PECFA) monies used for the tank cleanup. The WDNR issued a Waste Exemption letter to allow replacement of contaminated soils, when further soil contamination was discovered during an expansion in 2002. Also, a 10% tax credit through the federal government was awarded for the use of a prior industrial property.

Contacts

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The James Street Inn features a full-service hotel and restaurant on the foundation of the original mill (Photo courtesy DNR).

Redevelopment

Long before redevelopment became a popular concept, the city of De Pere was way ahead of the game. In 1980 they established a Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) district to stimulate redevelopment in the downtown area.

In 1995 the James St. Inn opened, offering 36 rooms and includes a restaurant and six penthouse suites. All but six of the inn's rooms are highlighted by a view of the Fox River. The Inn also offers a connection to the Fox River trail winding along the waterfront. The redevelopment created 34 jobs, and property values increased from \$82,700 to \$775,400. Along with the redevelopment of the former



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