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Forest City's 305-unit Hamel Mill Lofts wins 2010 Mass. Historical Commission Preservation Award

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The Hamel Mill Lofts project has been selected as the winner of the 2010 Preservation Award by the Mass. Historical Commission for the category of 'Restoration and Adaptive Reuse.' The project was honored at the Mass. Historical Commission's 32nd Annual Preservation Awards ceremony in May at the State Archives Building in Boston.

Forest City hired architect, DiMella Shaffer and construction manager, Callahan, Inc. to design and build this most prestigious project.

Hamel Mill Lofts, created from three former shoe mills and a turn-of-the century power plant, is the largest redevelopment project in the history of the city. Located in downtown and just steps from the commuter rail, the project features 305 new housing units, retail space and resident community amenities.

The project included restoration of the four historic buildings' exteriors, while the interiors, with exposed elements like timber beams and brick walls, were designed to maintain the look of the original structures. The apartment units are available in either 1 or 2 bedrooms, and range in size from approximately 900 to 1,100 s/f. Along with apartments, Hamel Mill Lofts includes several tenant-use spaces: a cyber caf  , pool table room, bicycle storage area, gym, media center, conference area, and ample on-site parking. Construction of the project is nearly complete and the buildings are almost 60% occupied, with well over 165 leases in place. In addition, 20% of all units at Hamel Mill Lofts will be rented as "affordable".

The project was nominated for the state historic preservation award by mayor Fiorentini himself.

"Hamel Mills has transformed what was once an abandoned series of old, dilapidated shoe mills and tanneries into an award-winning upscale urban village that has beautified downtown Haverhill while preserving its industrial past," said mayor Fiorentini. "With much attention to detail, Forest City Residential is attracting new residents to Haverhill while maintaining a tribute to the tradition and legacy of the millworkers who made the city great in its shoe manufacturing heyday."

"The remarkable scale of the restoration and adaptive reuse of the Hamel Mill Lofts demonstrates a strong commitment to historic preservation that goes well beyond what is normally expected, representing a significant achievement," said secretary of state Galvin.

"Hamel Mill Lofts is the perfect example of how a public/private partnership can reinvigorate a historic city, generate new taxes on a building that was underutilized for decades, and breath new life into a streetscape during one of the most difficult economic times of a generation. Through the hard work of the city of Haverhill, the state of Mass., and specifically the Mass. Historical Commission, Hamel Mill Lofts is now the premier loft rental community in the region, where only 3 short years ago it was a contaminated brownfield. Haverhill's history as the home to a thriving shoe industry is now captured in Hamel Mill Lofts, from the stitching machines that decorate the amenity

spaces to the mushroom columns typical of early 20th century architecture. Forest City is proud to have been a part of such a transformative project."

Hamel Mill Lofts is one of many adaptive re-use projects that Callahan Inc. has completed and/or has underway. Callahan, Inc. is a full service construction firm, specializing in construction management, general contracting and preconstruction services.

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