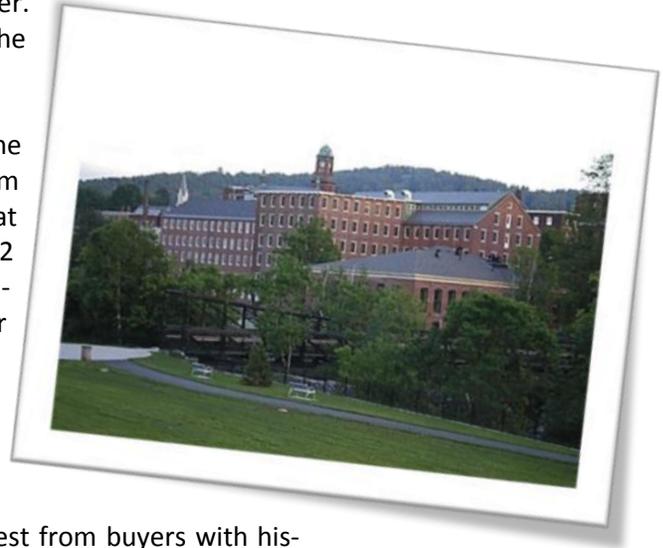


CLAREMONT — PARTNERSHIPS, FUNDING SOURCES, AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

— Nancy Merrill (Director of Planning and Development, City of Claremont)

A walking tour of the Claremont Village Industrial Historic District states, “Together, the buildings of the Monadnock Mills Co. and the Sullivan Machinery Co. present more than a half-mile-long complex of classic 19th century and early-20th century brick industrial structures.” As is often the case in New Hampshire, these buildings line a river and mark the entryway into an historic city center. They have a key visual, as well as economic, impact on the community.

Several of these mill buildings have been tax deeded to the city in various states of repair over the years. Among them were Monadnock Mill No. 6 (1915), which is connected at all six floors to the north façade of Monadnock Mill No. 2 (1853), and the Monadnock Mills Weave Shed (1909). Despite numerous efforts they stayed vacant for a decade or more with no interested buyers. The condition, size, and other infrastructure weaknesses were impediments to private investment. A public private partnership was necessary for successful revitalization.



After a request for developers process that sought interest from buyers with historic rehabilitation experience and the financial capacity to complete a project, the city entered into development agreements with the Common Man Inn & Restaurant, Red River Computer Co., and Sugar River Mills Redevelopment (SRMR). The agreements noted expectations, investments and timelines for both the private and public sectors to advance the project. For the public sector, it was water, sewer, storm water, road, brownfields, and parking investment. For the private sector, it was cooperating on the same timeline with significant private investment in a major redevelopment project. At the time, Monadnock Mills No. 2 and No. 6 were in imminent danger of collapse.

Financing for such a list of both public and private investment was daunting and time consuming, but the end result was so important for Claremont that patience was a small price to pay. Both New Market and Historic Tax Credits were utilized. The buildings were located in a designated tax increment finance district for bonding purposes. Other resources included two federal special appropriations, brownfields funding, Community Development Block Grant funding through the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority, as well as programs through the New Hampshire Business Finance Authority, Claremont Development Authority, and the Capital Regional Development Council.

After the long-vacant mills on Water Street were rehabilitated in 2009, people remarked that it was nice to see the lights on again. Such a small thing, yet a dark and blighted skyline for decades had impacted the entire city center. Throughout those years, however, the city had maintained roofs and security systems knowing that the buildings were important to Claremont and its history, and that eventually someone would see their value. We are grateful to the vision and investment in this community by the Common Man, Red River Computer Co., and SRMR.

Further rehabilitation is taking place in the mill district. The Sullivan Machinery Co. Forge Shop (1902-1911), a vacant building under city ownership, is following a similar process. It will soon be transferred to Claremont MakerSpace for redevelopment. With a mission to encourage creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, the adaptive reuse is fitting given the historic uses of the mills. The Claremont City Council also recently adopted the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Program (NH RSA 79-E) and approved its first application, for the Monadnock Mills Boarding House/Storehouse No. 5 (1836-1839). The building will undergo significant rehabilitation for new business uses. One building at a time, these revitalized mills are transforming Claremont.