

Success Story Sunday: Ames Shovel Shop, Where History Becomes Home

EKelly | Sunday, June 15th, 2014 | [No Comments »](#)

Beacon Communities is just wrapping up on one of their most successful projects to date, which shows us just how wonderful the conversion of an old factory to a boutique apartment community can be.



The Ames Shovel Shop, located in Easton, Massachusetts is a 19th century industrial complex, composed of several granite buildings, most of which were constructed between 1852 and 1885. Strong demand for shovels, due to the expanding railroad system and later the American Civil War, made Oakes and Oliver Ames Jr. very wealthy men. Ames shovels continued to be the standard issued shovel for the U.S. Army up until 1952, when the company ceased production in Easton.



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In 2008 the vacant complex was listed on our Most Endangered Historic Resource list and in the following year, the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed Ames Shovel Shop on their 11 Most Endangered list as well. In 2012 Beacon Communities purchased the property and began the transformation.



Through their adaptive reuse of the many buildings on the site, they gave new life to an old building, while still speaking to the Ames Shovel Shop history. The granite exteriors were kept and other historically significant aspects, such as barn doors and stonewalls, were replaced. At each entrance there is a plaque that explains the original use of the building, providing residents and visitors with insight into history of the new apartment community. The interiors of each unit fuse modern apartment elements with original details, like granite headers and exposed beams. The whole site is beautifully landscaped, connecting buildings with paved paths and flower and stone gardens.

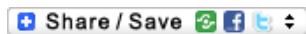


We'd like to congratulate [Prelwitz Chilinski Associates](#), [Beacon Concepts](#), [Keith Construction](#), [Halvorson Design](#), and [Beacon Communities](#) for their impressive work in revitalizing a historic asset to the commonwealth. The Ames Shovel

Works adaptive reuse is an exemplary historic preservation project that many more underutilized mills across Massachusetts can follow, in both plan and spirit.



If you have a project you'd like us to feature for Success Story Sunday, email me at anyaw@preservationmass.org, message us on [Facebook](#), or use [#successtorysunday](#) in a tweet or instagram post!



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