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JAMAICA PLAIN, ROXBURY

19th century mill and brewery in Boston reopens as apartments

Posted by Matt Rocheleau October 7, 2011 11:05 AM

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From left to right, WinnCompanies managing principal Gilbert Winn; WinnCompanies CEO Samuel Ross; State Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez; HUD regional administrator Barbara Fields; city neighborhood development department director Evelyn Friedman; WinnCompanies chairman Michael Putziger; director of the state's housing finance agency Tom Gleason; director of the housing and community development department Catherine Racer; City Councilor Michael Ross; WinnDevelopment president Larry Curtis; Bank of America Merrill Lynch Community Development Banking executive Maria Barry.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A historic, 19th century mill left vacant for nearly three decades officially reopened this week as a 95,000 square-foot, 62-unit apartment complex near the convergence of the Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, and Roxbury neighborhoods.

Two connecting buildings formerly known as Pickle-Ditson were renovated into "Oliver Lofts," a mixed-income housing community at the corner of Terrace and New Heath streets.

Many aspects of the original structures were preserved during the one-year, \$24-million rehabilitation, including existing floors, columns, original wood and concrete ceilings, heavy timber, load bearing masonry and cast-in place concrete, the property's renovators said.

The complex was built in 1867 as the Highland Brewing Company, one of several breweries in the area. In 1925, the Oliver Ditson Company, a music publishing facility, purchased the site, according to building renovator and manager WinnCompanies' website. In the mid-1900s, the R&S Pickle Company occupied the four- and five-story buildings before a number of publishing companies took over until the late 1980's.

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publishing companies took over until the late 1980 s.

More than 380 workers were hired during construction, and half of those work hours were filled by city residents, officials said.

The redevelopment company said it held a ribbon-cutting at the complex during a ceremony Thursday afternoon attended by partners who supported the project.

Along with support from the federal housing and urban development department, the city contributed \$750,000 and the state pitched in \$2.5 million, officials have said.

“There were many different partners who helped make today a reality for the 62 families who will call the Oliver Lofts home,” Gilbert Winn, managing principal of WinnCompanies said in a press release. “We are confident that these partnerships, which have helped WinnCompanies turn these long-vacant buildings into a state-of-the art, mixed-income, energy efficient facility, will help to ensure the vibrancy and strength of the Million Hill community for years to come.”

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