

CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

PROJECT PROFILE

Welland Mills Centre

Thorold, Ontario

Many municipalities across Canada are facing the twin challenges of dealing with industrial land in the downtown area, that has been polluted and then abandoned, and avoiding urban sprawl as the population increases and needs housing. A third challenge also confronting many towns and cities is making affordable housing part of the pool of housing options that are available to their citizens.

Keefer Developments, a private company specializing in "brownfield" reclamation, has redeveloped a multi-use historical site in downtown Thorold, including affordable housing, through a partnership with the town and with senior governments.

Welland Mills is a historic landmark in downtown Thorold. The old stone building is part of a 16-acre brownfield site that had been polluted by a paper mill that once occupied part of the property.

Highlights

An imaginative redevelopment of a heritage flour mill resulted in the establishment of the Welland Mills Centre, which provides affordable housing and has helped revitalize Thorold's downtown.

Client group: Singles and seniors

Developer: Keefer Developments Ltd.

Number of units: 18

Tenure: Rental

Who was involved? Keefer Developments Inc, Regional Municipality of Niagara, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

The Affordable Housing Solution

In 2001, Keefer Developments Ltd. undertook a cleanup project, known as the Gallaher Mills Brownfield Community Improvement Plan, to remove the contaminated soil and develop the valuable property in the city's downtown. The plan included both revitalizing the Welland Mills building and preserving its historic significance while providing much needed affordable and accessible housing.

The conversion project, known as the Welland Mills Centre, is a multi-use residential-commercial building that contributes to the revitalization of Thorold's downtown, while addressing the housing needs of seniors and low-income single people in the community.

Completed in 2006, the renovation of the Welland Mills Centre, which has a historical designation, involved repairing the original stone walls and wooden beams.







Project Profile - Welland Mills Centre

The Centre provides 18 affordable rental units for seniors and low-income single people. The affordable apartments are on two floors, while the other two floors of the four-storey building are set aside for commercial space. One-quarter of the apartments is geared to the occupants' income, while occupants of the remaining units are charged the average market rent according to CMHC data. Keefer has also constructed eight townhouses for sale on the 1.3-acre property surrounding the mill, thus promoting income mixing within the project.

The affordable housing component of the Welland Mills Centre cost a total of \$2.2 million. Through the Affordable Housing Initiative, CMHC and the Province of Ontario contributed \$527,018 towards the project. The City of Thorold waived \$40,392 in development charges for the project and provided \$237,633 in municipal grants. The Region of Niagara waived \$47,880 in development charges, and the developer contributed \$100,000 in equity.

CMHC Contact

Contact a representative of CMHC's Affordable Housing Centre www.cmhc.ca/contactahc