



Case Study:
DePaul Carriage Factory Apartments

SWBR

Historical Background:

Originally founded for the production of horse-drawn carriages, the Cunningham Carriage Factory was one of the oldest manufacturing factories in Rochester. The name, "Cunningham" was synonymous with luxury and quality products, all of which were hand-made. Each vehicle was approached as a limited-edition masterpiece. Through the 1920s the company was able to reinvent itself again and again, producing ambulances and hearses, and tanks for the war effort. In the late twenties, they shifted yet again, extending their first-rate design capabilities into aviation; however, The Great Depression tempered the success of that endeavor.

Scope:

The project consists of the adaptive reuse of a 5 story factory with brick masonry load bearing exterior wall construction with heavy timber beams, columns and floor decking. The exterior single pane windows of the building were in great disrepair and required complete replacement.

Design Intent and result:

We see this project as an opportunity to memorialize the quality efforts that took place in the building for close to 80 years. The James Cunningham name was revered all over the world for being makers of high quality transportation vehicles from coaches and carriages to airplanes. We feel that the re-purposing of the building takes an understanding and respect the past, but also should connect and be relevant to the future use. Meetings with the Susan B. Anthony district and other community stakeholders brought to light the need to turn this vacant building from its current contribution as a place for delinquency and debauchery to a beacon of hope for the community.

Delicate care was taken to allow the design to showcase the original patina of the building while in tandem support the repurposing of typology from a factory to a multifamily housing project. We also framed many drawings of the original Carriage and car designs as well as photos of the building that were generously given to the design team by relatives and former workers families in the factory and placed them around the building. After some understanding of the building history, we discovered that the new lobby and community spaces were once the main paint shop. A loading dock was added to the building in the 1980's which covered most of the wall and three windows at the new entry. The loading dock was removed and one of the three windows became the entrance door. The existing glass skylight was boarded up and the exposed steel trusses rusted in many locations. After a thorough structural analysis, the trusses were reinforced in key locations, sanded and painted. The boarded up skylight was removed and new energy efficient curtain wall glazing was put in its place.

By listening to the community neighbors and leaders, our design team creatively weaved the positive historical aspects of the James Cunningham and Son Company. We not only restored a building that was on the verge of collapsing but also creatively repurposed existing materials that could no longer function as was intended into something purposeful and beautiful for today.

Building Area: (sf)
72,000 Square Feet

Construction Cost
\$23,000,000

Date of Substantial Completion:
December 2014

Location of Project:
**33 Litchfield Street
Rochester NY 14608**

Type of Project:
Adaptive Re-use

**PARTNERS INCLUDE:
Christa Construction, the City
of Rochester, CPC, DePaul,
Goldman Sachs, Monroe
County, New York HTF, NYS
HCR, NYS Office of Mental
Health, Red Stone Equity
Partners, LLC, Susan B.
Anthony Neighborhood
Association**



Before image of the entrance of the former Cunningham Carriage Factory



Carriage Factory Apartments new entrance signage, focal wall and entrance canopy to the building



The large exterior single pane hung windows of the building were in great disrepair and required complete replacement



Restored entrance to the Carriage Factory Apartments including brick re-pointing and structural repairs to the exterior masonry



Existing conditions of the interior before restoration



Renovation on all floors to accommodate 71 affordable and special needs apartments



Amenities include: environmentally friendly systems and materials including ENERGY STAR heating and cooling equipment, appliances and light fixtures and Green Label certified floors



Renovation on all floors to accommodate 71 affordable and special needs apartments



Window replacements with historically correct wood windows in similar style as existing



Existing glass skylight was boarded up and the exposed steel trusses rusted in many locations



Wood that was salvaged was repurposed into accent walls and ceilings in the lobby space



Beams and girders that were no longer structural were repurposed into benches in the lobby



An original Cunningham carriage was purchased from a Vermont collector and is displayed centrally in the lobby with the floor and wood surrounding it being the wood from the original flooring.



New interior entrance lobby and Community Room for the resident use