



Friday, December 17, 2010

Hoboken Brownstone Company Receives Governor's NJ Environmental Excellence Award

By Betsy Kraat

HOBOKEN, NJ--Hoboken Brownstone Company has been awarded a 2010 Governor's New Jersey Environmental Excellence Award for its efforts to transform a seven-acre brownfield site in Jersey City into a sustainable urban mixed-use community utilizing energy-efficient building science that is expected to set the bar for the future of environmentally-responsible development in the United States and beyond.

Hoboken Brownstone Company principals George Vallone and Daniel Gans accepted the award in the category of Innovative Technology from New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin during the 11th annual award ceremony and reception recently held at the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton. The recognition is one of many public and industry accolades Hoboken Brownstone Company has received in its history for innovative and creative approaches to development on urban Brownfield sites.

Hoboken Brownstone Company was recognized for Van Leer Place, a sustainable Brownfield Transformation Project which will consist of more than 480 homes and 7,500 sf of retail space on the site of the former Van Leer Chocolate Factory at 110 Hoboken Avenue in Jersey City. A panel of experts scored the project highest in the Innovative Technology category based on five criteria: Documented Environmental Benefit, Meeting Needs, Leadership/ Innovation, Coverage and Replicability and Education and Outreach.

Conceptualized with the support of the Federal Government, the State, and the City of Jersey City, the trailblazing Van Leer Place is being developed as a "NJ Energy Master Plan Technology Demonstration Project" with assistance from PSE&G's Energy Efficiency Economic Stimulus (EEE Stimulus) Program. A \$3.6 million grant was awarded to the developers by PSE&G as part of the EEE Stimulus Program, approved by the NJ Board of Public Utilities to promote energy efficiency and to stimulate economic growth and job creation.

"Over the past several decades, residential and commercial buildings have emerged as the largest consumer of energy and carbon emissions, using more energy and emitting more carbon dioxide than either industry or transportation," Mr. Gans points out. "This is particularly evident in dense urban areas such as Jersey City. As a result, government on the Federal, State, and local levels have made a conscious effort to encourage and promote programs and development practices that lower energy consumption in mixed-use buildings in City settings.

"With the help of the initial funding from PSE&G, we've been able to research and determine how effective and energy efficient specific building designs can be. Early computer energy models based on the design we created for Van Leer Place indicates this building will operate at 64% less energy than typical residential buildings when completed in 2013, greatly outperforming the standard of 20% more energy efficiency the New Jersey Energy Master Plan set as its goal by 2020."

Van Leer Place is expected to help build the foundation for future energy codes and environmentally-sensitive building practices. To do so, Hoboken Brownstone Company has enlisted some of the State's most well-respected voices and institutions on green development, including Jennifer A. Senick, Executive Director at Rutgers University's Center for Green Building – responsible for The New Jersey Green Building Manual which serves as the premier guideline for green construction in the state -- and Christine Bruncati of The Center for Architecture and Building Science Research at NJIT which will be responsible for measuring and publishing the results of the demonstration project.

In addition to a geothermal test well at Van Leer Place -- which has demonstrated the energy potential and efficiency of a well as an integrated alternative energy delivery system in a dense urban setting -- the building is designed to demonstrate Insulative Mass Wall Technology (IMW) using Aerated Autoclaved Concrete (AAC), energy recovery ventilation (ERV) and renewable energy, all integrated harmoniously in a holistic design.

The IMW building technology is an approach to green and high-performance building enclosures in which energy use avoidance, particularly during peak periods, is the primary objective. "Energy use avoidance" means dramatically reducing the need for energy and consequently reducing the combustion of fossil fuels, which dramatically reduces carbon emissions.

To achieve a high-performance building, three critical elements will be included in the design, a Mass Wall construction which creates a super-insulated and low air-infiltration building enclosure capable of thermal storage, a balanced ventilation system with energy recovery capabilities and appropriate alternative energy sources, especially solar hot water and geothermal technologies. When all three elements are integrated harmoniously, they can produce buildings capable of 50% to 90% energy savings when compared to standard buildings.

The homes at Van Leer Place will be situated in two six story buildings right across Hoboken Avenue from one another. In addition to the buildings themselves, the transit-oriented community will feature a New Jersey Transit pedestrian walkway to the 2nd Street Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Station in Hoboken. Jersey City will be the beneficiary of a new ¾ acre park that will be built by the developers adjacent to the Van Leer Place South site and will have a dog run and community garden.

Hoboken Brownstone Company

www.HBrownstone.com