

Industrial Properties Rehabilitation Case Studies



R.L. Stowe Mill

Washington Street
Mebane, NC

15,214 sq feet
City Library
First quarter of 20th century

Located along the railroad that runs through the center of Mebane, the R.L. Stowe Mill can be clearly seen from the downtown. Built in the first quarter of the 20th century as a facility for Dixie Yarns, who operated the mill for many years, the property was ultimately purchased by R.L. Stowe Mills. The city of Mebane purchased the property with the idea of tearing down the structure or making it into the City Hall. The public library, currently housed in the municipal building, also needed room to expand. After considering several options for the mill property, it was determined that the size of the mill building would provide the right amount of space for a new library. Based on the renovation success of the 1930's post office for use as a new police station, the city decided to renovate the building for its new library.

Quick Stats

Description of Surrounding Area

The mill is located on the railroad across from the central business district in Mebane (population 7,701). Behind the mill is an early residential neighborhood. The Kingsdown Mattress Company and other mill buildings are located on the same street as the new library.

Problems and Resolutions

Building code issues-

Original first floor was sleepers embedded in cinders, consequently the floor would not carry the required load. Three thousand square feet of flooring was removed for reuse and then the first and second floors were structurally reinforced by replacing wood columns with wrapped steel columns.

An interior stairway was added to meet egress requirements. Opening the tower to a two story height provided a challenge to the fire code.

Architects/Builders/Owner

Architect Alley, Williams, Carmen & King, Inc Jeff Johnson, AIA

Builder H.M. Kern

Owner City of Mebane

Cost

Total renovation cost - \$1.2 million includes design, build and environmental. Environmental costs were limited to lead paint and asbestos abatement

Cost estimates for new construction for same use - according to RS Means renovation cost nearly equal new construction cost, however architect feels that \$3-4 per square foot were saved when including cost of demolition that would have been necessary for new construction.

Source of Funding

City of Mebane including private sector loans and
3 cent per \$100 tax increase
Tax credits were not used

Renovation Success

Formally empty mill building now houses public library meeting space.

Source of Funding

Private
Federal and NC state tax credits were used

Use

Mebane City Library

Community Benefits

The new library serves as a community gathering place and source of pride for the community, the Mebane community has made a conscious effort to support and enhance the downtown area. Locating their new library in a historic building maintains the look and feel of the town's central area while providing a public amenity that can easily be reached by walking from the downtown and nearby residential areas with the recently completed library. The idea of locating a public service in a historic building is not new for Mebane. The Mebane police station was relocated into the renovated post office in 2004.

Description of Property

15,214 square foot masonry structure

Date of Construction - First quarter of 20th century

Date of renovation - 2004-2005

Description of Outcome

Status - Completed Fall 2005