

Candlewood Suites

PUB-RR-903

August 2011

Candlewood Suites

56 Copeland Avenue
La Crosse, WI
La Crosse County

1 acre

Location: A commercial section of La Crosse, between a busy thoroughfare and a wetlands.

One brownfield redevelopment lead to another in La Crosse. The result is a sparkling new extended-stay hotel.

History

Copeland Avenue in La Crosse is a long stretch of Wisconsin Highway 53 with a variety of commercial businesses on each side. In 2006, developers turned one former brownfield site on the avenue into a retail strip, anchored with a Festival Foods grocery store.

As a result of the redevelopment, another developer saw the area as primed for new growth. They targeted two properties just north of Festival Foods for redevelopment.

One of the properties had long been home to an auto dealership. The other was used for a marine repair businesses. In 2007, the properties were considered underutilized: a used car dealership and night club took up only small portions of the properties.



Dilapidated buildings were part of the reason this prime commercial property was underutilized (photo courtesy BT Squared).

Investigation and Cleanup

Assessment of contamination began with with Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments. Additionally, a site investigation and a remedial action plan were developed. Site investigation work, including soil and groundwater sampling, detected contamination by polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and lead.

Benzopyrene was also documented on the property beyond the hotel and parking redevelopment area to the east, along the La Crosse River and wetlands. The ground was raised in elevation by 4 feet with clean fill material bringing the area up out of the floodplain.

After the environmental assessments were completed, redevelopment plans for a new hotel were considered in the design of a remedial action plan. Three types of remedial action were used—soil excavation, engineering and institutional controls, and natural attenuation. Using the three techniques provided for both technical and economic feasibility, and assured compliance with public health and environmental standards.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

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<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr>



During the cleanup phase, approximately 368 tons of lead- and PAH-contaminated soil were excavated from the site and properly disposed of in a local landfill. Approximately 1,300 cubic yards of the PAH-contaminated soil was excavated and recompacted to engineering and environmental specifications, then covered by a parking lot on site.

A vapor barrier or venting system was installed, although not required due to the lack of the lack of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).



The new Candlewood Suites extended-stay hotel opened in 2010 with 92 rooms (photo courtesy Borton Construction).

Redevelopment

In 2009, both Copeland Avenue properties were combined and sold to NSD Hotel, LLC, a local developer.

The company constructed a four-story, 52,000 square-foot hotel on the property. Cost of the redevelopment is estimated at \$8.5 million. A solar water heater reduces the hotel's energy use, by pre-heating the hot water.

The hotel operates under the Candlewood Suites brand, and opened in May 2010. It provides 92 units with full-appliance kitchens in multiple-room suites. Guests on the east or back side of the hotel get a view out over wetlands and the La Crosse River. The hotel employs 15 people.

The two existing businesses formerly operating on the two properties relocated nearby.

Developer Mike Keil of NSD Hotel Associated, Inc. noted the benefits of working with brownfield properties.

"I would much prefer to redevelop a brownfield site than going out to the edge of town to develop a greenfield," Keil said.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The assessed value of the original properties with improvements was approximately \$550,000. The 2010 assessed value of 56 Copeland Avenue is \$2,436,700 - more than four times the original value.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided technical assistance and case closure through its Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program. Additionally, at the request of the property owner, the department issued a General Liability Clarification Letter in 2006.

The former 54 Copeland Avenue property was granted closure with continuing obligations in 2010. According to DNR, a pavement cap, currently a parking lot, is to be maintained over a specific area of the property, and the building serves as a structural impediment from direct contact with the soils. Four-feet of clean fill must be maintained on the east portion of the site along the river.

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