

UWM Cambridge Commons

PUB-RR-904

August 2011

UWM Cambridge Commons

1436 East North Avenue
Milwaukee, WI
Milwaukee County

4 acres

Location: A busy commercial street on Milwaukee's near North Side, bordering the Milwaukee River.

A brownfield redevelopment provides the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee another new and modern residence hall.

History

Like many properties in Milwaukee, the former Hometown Service Station site had been in commercial and industrial use for nearly 100 years before it became a brownfield. The site was home to an ice harvesting operation, a coal distribution facility and a roller skating rink, before it was purchased by Hometown.

When Hometown left the site, it languished for several years, along with a neighboring property across the Milwaukee River that Hometown also had owned. However, when that neighboring property was successfully redeveloped, developers turned their attention to the northeast corner of East North Avenue and the river.



An empty lot provided the starting point for the new UWM Milwaukee Residence Hall (photo courtesy John J. Hnat/DNR).

Investigation and Cleanup

An investigation of the property revealed three leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs), which had stored diesel fuel and fuel oil. An additional above-ground storage tank for waste oil and three hydraulic hoists also needed attention.

Tests recorded soil contamination from the LUSTs, including levels of polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), petroleum volatile organic compounds (PVOCs) and metals above state health standards.

In 2005, crews removed the underground storage tanks. In subsequent years, 950 tons of contaminated soil were removed, while the remainder was allowed to remain in place and naturally attenuate.

The footprint of the eventual building, courtyard and parking area served as a cap over the residual soil contamination.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/rr>



Redevelopment

Looking to expand living options for new students, the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) Real Estate Foundation sought to build two new residence halls. Both ended up being located on brownfield sites.

In January 2008, UWM celebrated the opening of the sparkling new Riverview Residence Hall, directly across the river from the former Hometown Service Station site (see PUB-RR-829 for more details).

The success of the Riverview project helped spark the completion of the Cambridge Commons Residence Hall—a beautiful, energy-efficient, mixed-use building, which opened to students in 2010. The hall can accommodate 700 students in high-end suites, and also includes classrooms and space for three retail businesses.

Green design was paramount for architects, and the residence hall achieved a rare Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold designation after completion. Among the eco-friendly features of the Cambridge Commons are two green roofs, a monitor that lets students view how much power they're using, and a 20,000-gallon tank to collect all rainwater on the property.

Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance
Many partners came together to complete the Cambridge Commons project.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program worked with the site's environmental consultants to approve the remedial action plan, provide technical assistance and approve an exemption to build on a historic fill site. The DNR also granted site closure with the continuing obligation that the property owner must maintain structural caps over the residual contamination.



The stunning new Cambridge Commons Residence Hall will be home to 700 students (photo courtesy John J. Hnat/DNR).

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce provided funds to remove the LUSTs through a Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Award (PECFA) of \$634,132. An additional \$800,000 was provided by Commerce through the Blight Elimination and Brownfields Redevelopment (BEBR) Program.

The UWM Real Estate Foundation and Mandel Group Properties, Inc., partnered to develop the residence hall. Cost of construction is estimated at \$50 million, while remediation costs were \$900,000.

Contacts

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