

UNLIKELY DEVELOPMENT



Rob Jowett

A unique redevelopment of a former hospital in Peterborough is providing much-needed residential use to the neighbourhood and could provide a model for adaptive reuse of similar sites in larger municipalities across the GTHA.

TVM Group is currently redeveloping the site of St. Joseph's Hospital at 384 Rogers Street into a mixed-use development with five buildings four to nine storeys in height, containing 193 residential condominium units, 57 rental units, and 3,278-square metres of at-grade commercial space. Most of the units are in the former hospital buildings, which shut down in 2008. The overall vision for the site was developed in 2012, and construction of the first building completed in 2014. All but one building on the site, a seven-storey building containing 91 condominium units, comprise existing hospital buildings which have been retrofitted for residential use. A site plan application is being prepared for a sixth building, which would see one of the buildings on the site be redeveloped for office uses.

"The intent here was to retain as much of the existing site as we possibly could and

as much of the existing fabric of the buildings as we possibly could," **BNKC** principal **Jonathan King** told *NRU*. BNKC was the architect for two of the buildings in the redevelopment, including the seven-storey condominium.

"There's some amazing old buildings on the site," says King. "It's a turn-of-the-century hospital campus. And you don't

see that type of construction a lot anymore in Ontario."

He adds that the built form of the new condominium building was based on the existing hospital typology to create a sense of continuity in the built form on the site.

King says the redesign and refurbishment of the hospital buildings created some unique challenges for the project, but

that the end product has been very appealing to buyers and renters. He says that most landowners and development companies would be unlikely to take on a project like this, but that TVM specializes in this sort of work and it fits within their overall business model.

"When we got involved, [TVM] was moving on to [redevelop] what was one of the patient wings, which was... a 1911 or 1913 building [which was] First World War era, masonry-constructed, and it had ... a lot of 'hair' on it... a lot of asbestos-containing materials and it had outdated systems, and so, all of that needed as a first step to be stripped away," says King. "Then [we started] the work of seeing what we could retain in order to realize or repurpose it from what was a... patient wing which is four or five storeys [high] to a new rental apartment building, which is what is actually under

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Site plan for the redevelopment of the former St. Joseph's Hospital, which is being adapted for residential use, along with limited commercial and employment space.

SOURCE: TVM GROUP

Photo of St. Joseph's Hospital, which was built in 1890, and was decommissioned in 2008.

SOURCE: TVM GROUP

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construction at the moment.”

TVM’s success in redeveloping the hospital led them to winning a 2019 Brownie Award in the Project Development: Neighbourhood Scale category. **Kilmer Brownfield** environmental director and Brownie Awards judging committee chair **Monisha Nandi** told *NRU* that the Brownie Awards judges found several unique characteristics about the project, including its location in an underdeveloped area of the city and the fact that the project is in Peterborough instead of the larger municipalities where such a redevelopment would seem to be more likely. Nandi was responsible for managing the team of 10 judges and did not render a judgement herself.

“One of the things that stood out particularly was the adaptive reuse aspects of all these buildings,” says Nandi. “In the brownfields world, we often talk about the cleanups required from an underground cleanup perspective, oil and water needing to be cleaned up. One of the things that was particularly interesting about this project was really a recognition of the challenges of managing hazardous building materials in brownfields, particularly when you’re trying to reuse heritage buildings or

interesting former industrial buildings.”

Retaining the hospital buildings, which date back to 1890 and display many historic architectural features, was a major priority for the town, **City of Peterborough** urban design planner **Brian Buchardt** told *NRU*. He says planning staff wanted to preserve as much of the site as possible for heritage and environmental reasons, but were unsure they would be able to find a developer who could take on the challenges associated with the adaptive reuse project. He says redevelopment of the site has been a major benefit to the area.

“It’s very good news for the city of Peterborough. This city, in the recent past anyway, has experienced [an] almost zero vacancy rate with respect to rentals,” says Buchardt. “TVM has done this kind of in advance of a bit of an apartment building development boom going on in Peterborough right now. So... I would say their timing was perfect.”

Buchardt says the neighbourhood surrounding the hospital especially has been seeing a lot of development and will be transformed into a very busy, intensified area.

King says he thinks the project acts as a good model for how to redevelop sites with challenging features while preserving historic elements. He says there has been a recent increase in brownfield redevelopment projects as land supply diminishes, especially across the GTHA. Additionally,

improvements to industry practices around remediating brownfield sites have reduced costs and timelines, making brownfield redevelopment projects more viable for landowners.

“It is absolutely a model to be replicated where possible,” says King. “What’s really exciting about projects like this that you find that [you’re] getting buildings with, you know, historical roots, in the context... of the community that [the project is] in. And you end up having to lovingly work around the existing conditions to come up with what are ultimately much more interesting results than you would if you’ve kind of started from the ground up.” 🌱



Left: Rendering of the redevelopment of existing St. Joseph's Hospital buildings into residential apartments.

SOURCE: TVM GROUP
ARCHITECT: BKVM

Below: Renderings of the new condominium building at St. Joseph's Hospital, which was designed to reflect the site's previous use as a hospital.

SOURCE: TVM GROUP
ARCHITECT: BKVM

