

Case Study: CROMLEY LOFTS—Virginia’s First LEED Gold-Certified Condominium:

- Location: Old Town Alexandria at 1210 Queen Street
- Building Type: Multi-Family Adaptive Reuse Condominium
- Built in 1910 as a warehouse in this railroad corridor, and over time has been used as a Commercial Laundry Facility, a Meeting Hall, Artist Lofts and Offices for Architects and Designers
- Originally 9,000 sf; With the 2007 completed addition, the project now comprises 11,000 sf total
- Currently, there are two one-bedroom penthouses and six two-bedroom lofts

Developer Bill Cromley purchased this deteriorated historic warehouse in 2004 and by 2007, Cromley Lofts became the first historic preservation/adaptive reuse condominium project in Virginia to earn LEED Gold-Certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. Many of the warehouse features were retained, including exposed brick walls with original paint, original curved wooden support beams, rough-hewn high beams and warehouse-sized windows. If original materials were too deteriorated to be used in this project, Cromley used historic construction materials, including wood floors from century-old hearty pine culled from a dismantled textile mill.

With a goal of bringing “good urban design and green to reality,” Cromley went to great lengths to ensure that this development would showcase simplicity in its urban design while providing a sustainable, safe and healthy living environment. In order to maximize the energy-efficiency of the project, the design team doubled the required insulation R-values (R-25 wall insulation and R-50 ceiling insulation), installed 14 SEER rated air conditioning, double-paned Argon-filled windows and installed only Energy Star appliances. Cromley went so far as to offer a \$50 discount on a unit’s condominium fee if the owner did not use a car to commute to work. Low-or-no-VOC paints, carpeting and sealants were used to ensure superior indoor air quality, non-CFC refrigerants were used, and low-flow faucets and dual flush toilets were installed to conserve water. Because of the efficient fixtures and appliances throughout the building, power consumption has been reduced by 20% and water consumption by 30% compared with condominiums built conventionally.

Some of the most stunning features of this building include the addition of the vegetated green roof and sustainable landscaping. The green roof helps reduce the impact of direct sun, which



Figure 1- Before



reduces ambient air temperature and filters storm water run-off, extending the life of the roof. The native landscaping will provide at least 30% green space within 5 years, which will give passive cooling to the building as well.

Cromley Lofts is located in the heart of Old Town Alexandria, within a half mile of the Metro and a quarter mile to public transportation. The eclectic and unique design couples the rustic and industrial features of the historic building with sleek, modern appliances, open floor plans and superior energy efficiency. For all these reasons, Cromley Lofts is a fitting example of the environmental benefits of combining “green building” with historic preservation and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.