

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

OPENDOORS

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



PROPERTY DETAILS	Address:	485 Plainfield St., Providence, RI
	Size:	0.44 acres
	Former Uses:	Ice cream production, jewelry manufacturing, religious worship
	Contaminants:	Lead, asbestos, semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), petroleum products, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)
	Current Use:	Transitional housing for ex-offenders, office and program space
PARTNERS	Owner:	OpenDoors
	Rhode Island Housing, Woonasquatucket Watershed Council, Nickerson Community Center, Weed and Seed Steering Committee, Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development, RI DEM, and the City of Providence	

FUNDING DETAILS	EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant:	\$200,000
	EPA Targeted Brownfields Assessment Grant:	\$50,000
	Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP):	\$850,000
	Tax Credit Exchange Program (TCEP):	\$1,777,801
	Building Homes Rhode Island (BHRI) Funds:	\$760,000
	RI Department of Environmental Management:	\$43,860
	Rhode Island Housing Deferred Payment Loan:	\$94,954
	Corporation for Supportive Housing Grant:	\$25,000
	City of Providence HOME Funds:	\$500,000
	Corporation for Supportive Housing Acquisition Loan:	\$634,500
HIGHLIGHTS	Local Initiatives Support Corporation Grant:	\$15,000
	Developer Fee Contribution:	\$80,500

- Provides much-needed housing and services to support the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals, an acutely disadvantaged population
- Restores a vacant, blighted historic building in a low income neighborhood, helping to raise property values, create a sense of place, and encourage additional investment.

Motivation for Redevelopment: The Silver Lake neighborhood of Providence, Rhode Island faces many challenges. The low-income area has a high rate of poverty, a dearth of service organizations, and a disproportionately high population of formerly incarcerated people. Persons on probation or parole constitute 12% of adult males in Silver Lake. This population is often shut out of the job and housing markets, and without jobs, housing, and social supports, ex-offenders typically strain the social fabric of the community. In response to these issues, the non-profit OpenDoors chose an abandoned, dilapidated brownfield site in Silver Lake as the location for a new facility that offers transitional housing and a resource center to support the reintegration of the formerly incarcerated.

Property History: The OpenDoors facility is housed in a renovated industrial building. The three-story building was constructed between 1915 and 1918 by the Dolby Ice Cream Company (which later expanded and became the General Ice Cream Company) and was used as an ice cream production facility until the 1960s. As trends in the ice cream industry moved towards modernization and consolidation of facilities, the Providence plant became old and outmoded. From 1967 to 1990, the building was used by a variety of companies for jewelry manufacturing. In the late 1990s, the property was purchased by a local church and used for religious worship.

After OpenDoors identified the property as a potential location for its facility, Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) were conducted to characterize the contamination. In addition to the standard Phase I and Phase II assessments, the state required additional investigations, which EPA was able to fund through a Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) Grant. Ultimately, it was determined that the interior of the building was contaminated with lead-based paint, asbestos-containing materials, discarded drums of grease, above-ground fuel storage tanks, boiler ash with elevated concentrations of heavy metals, and other hazardous materials. Exterior contamination included high concentrations of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), and metals in the soil

as well as a 5,000-gallon fuel oil underground storage tank. RI Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM) helped address this petroleum contamination with their EPA Assessment Grant.

Project Results: OpenDoors purchased the property in 2006 and was awarded an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Grant the following year to help cover the site remediation costs. OpenDoors was able to leverage its EPA cleanup funds into an additional \$5 million in federal, state, local, and private funding for capital costs and operations. Construction began in June 2010 and the facility opened a year later.

The completed project includes 19 affordable, energy-efficient housing units and program and office space for OpenDoors. Based on the LEED checklist for new construction, the development was designed and evaluated to LEED Gold standards (uncertified). The project benefits two communities: the immediate neighborhood and the community of ex-offenders in the nearby area and greater Providence. The Silver Lake community benefits from additional services and the restoration of a blighted, historic building. The redevelopment will raise property values, foster a sense of place in the community, and help catalyze additional investment in the neighborhood. For the population of ex-offenders, the project provides access to affordable housing and the services, particularly employment and skills training, necessary to start a new life and break the cycle of recidivism.

TIMELINE	
1915-1918	Building constructed
Aug. 2006	Phase I ESA complete
Oct. 2006	OpenDoors purchases property
Sept. 2007	Phase II ESA complete
Aug. 2009	Supplemental site investigation complete
Dec. 2010	Underground Storage Tank (UST) Closure
Jan. 2011	Site cleanup complete
Aug. 2011	Facility opens