



Sites in Reuse

MacGillis & Gibbs/Bell Lumber & Pole Co. Superfund Site

440 5th Avenue NW, New Brighton, Minnesota 55112



From left to right: the Donatelle Plastics building; the Dalco building; the Main Street Village retail center.

Site size: Total site size is 68 acres; 26 acres of the MacGillis & Gibbs portion of the site are in reuse.

Site Reuses: Several companies operate at Brighton Corporate Park III, including Donatelle Plastics Inc., Dalco Enterprises Inc., a credit union, and various commercial and retail businesses.



INTRODUCTION

For more than sixty years, the MacGillis & Gibbs/Bell Lumber and Pole Co. Superfund site comprised two adjacent pole treating operations in New Brighton, Minnesota. Many in the community long considered the site to be an eyesore. Now, as Brighton Corporate Park III, the site is home to several commercial, retail, and manufacturing businesses.

SITE HISTORY

Both the MacGillis & Gibbs Company and the Bell Lumber and Pole Company began wood preserving operations on the 26-acre site in the 1920s. During the wood pole treating process, pentachlorophenol (PCP), creosote, and chromated copper arsenate (CCA) were used at various times. These chemicals, as well as spills and leakage from processing wastes, led to soil contamination. Solution that spilled during the pole treatment process and dripped off of the treated lumber also contributed to contamination at the site.

When New Brighton was still a small town, the pole yards and pole treating facilities were on the town's outskirts. However, suburban development and highway expansion around Minneapolis in the 1960's centralized the pole yards in the New Brighton urban area. The pole yards were a crude sight in a declining urban center. Contamination

at the site was identified in 1979. At that time, the city of New Brighton had already recognized that the site had redevelopment potential. Bell Pole conducted a remediation plan and cleaned up contaminants on its portion of the site. MacGillis & Gibbs opted to not clean up the contamination on its site.

THE REUSE PROCESS

Soon after both companies were named potentially responsible parties for the site, MacGillis & Gibbs filed for bankruptcy. As a result, the City of New Brighton was faced with the challenge of figuring out what to do with a site that had a bankrupt owner, was severely polluted, and employed few people. The City of New Brighton began the condemnation process so the municipality could buy the MacGillis & Gibbs property with the hope of redeveloping it. This also gave government agencies the access necessary to clean up the site. The entire site was divided into three operable units during the cleanup process.

To help finalize the process of acquiring the MacGillis & Gibbs property, the City entered into one of the first Prospective Purchaser Agreements in the state of Minnesota. By entering into the agreement, the City could feel comfortable with purchasing the MacGillis & Gibbs

property and eventually selling parcels to private companies for redevelopment. The City also purchased properties adjacent to the Superfund site (including a residential property) to include in the redevelopment area. After acquiring the site and some surrounding properties, the City hired environmental consultants to explore the site's reuse possibilities. Together, the City and consulting team developed a reuse plan for the site and proposed it to EPA Region 5. Kevin Locke, the Community Development Director for the City of New Brighton at the time, notes the importance of having a reuse plan early in the remedial process. "Having the plan made the whole reuse process smoother," he says, adding, "If you have a cleaned up site with no clear identified reuse, it makes the process much more difficult."

For one business located across the street from the pole yards, the decision to participate in the redevelopment project was a logical one. Donatelle Plastics Inc. was looking to expand its facilities around the time that the reuse plan was being developed for the Superfund site. The company wanted to stay in New Brighton, and relocating to a larger facility in the proposed Brighton Corporate Park III was a perfect fit. Kevin Locke says that having a new tenant agree to relocate to the proposed park gave federal and state agencies involved in the cleanup process extra motivation to facilitate the site's return to productive use.

BRIGHTON CORPORATE PARK III

After nearly a decade of cleanup activities and construction to ready the site for reuse, Brighton Corporate Park III is now home to more than half a dozen companies and businesses. In addition to the new Donatelle Plastics building, Dalco Enterprises Inc., an industrial cleaning supply manufacturer, built a new headquarters in the Park. The Park also features the Main St. Village, which is home to various commercial and retail businesses. A credit union mortgage operation owns several office buildings in the park and has recently expanded its operations into additional buildings.

Kevin Locke says that significant support from community members helped to ensure the site would be successfully reused. Locke also credits the stakeholders involved in the process for making sure that decisions about the site were made in a timely manner. "Communities are often held hostage to log-jams and finger pointing among agencies and



Office buildings at Brighton Corporate Park III

responsible parties," he said, "but having a motivated leader with a clear vision for reuse in charge of the process helps break the log-jams." In this case, Kevin Locke says that the City took on such a leadership role, and "quarterbacked" the reuse process until it was successfully completed.

Thanks to the efforts of all stakeholders, a site that was once considered "no one's idea of a good neighbor" is now cleaned up and serves as an asset to the local community. Brighton Corporate Park III has boosted the local economy and revitalized a once declining downtown area. Kevin Locke is pleased with the outcome and supports similar redevelopment efforts at contaminated sites, saying, "For the local communities involved, pursuing cleanup of these Superfund sites in a way that gets them back to use is of great value to the community and is simply the right thing to do."

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