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Inside Globe Mills

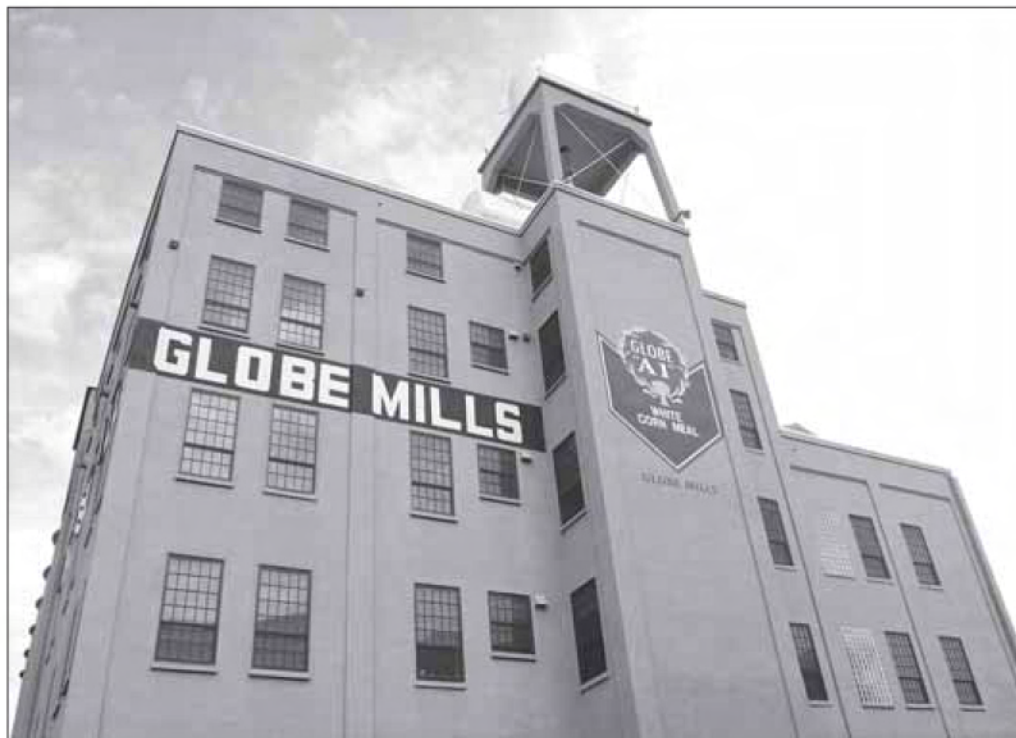
A nearly century-old industrial complex gets a modern makeover

By Julie Foster

Recently, Sacramento architect Michael Malinowski took me on what he calls his “loop tour” of the award-winning Globe Mills project at 12th and C streets. Once called the most blighted piece of property in the city by *The Sacramento Bee*, Globe Mills is now an energy-efficient, transit-oriented development with 114 senior apartments in two new buildings and 31 market-rate lofts in the converted mill building. Construction on the project began in 2005, and the first tenants moved in last year.

“We have so few real industrial spaces in Sacramento,” Malinowski says. “There are some that have been made to look industrial, but they are not the real thing.”

Malinowski designed the \$38 million urban infill project, situated on 1.6 acres in the Alkali Flat neighborhood. It is a prime example of a successful adaptive reuse of a historic structure. The development team included GMA



Globe Mills at 12th and C streets offers both senior living and lofts for the urban professional

Investors, made up of Cyrus Youssefi of CFY Development, Inc., and Skip Rosenbloom of Globe Mills LLC. The Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency provided \$14.97 million in financing, including federal grants and local redevelopment funds.

We began our tour in the dramatic lobby with its high ceiling and exposed concrete walls lined with art detailing the history of the project. We then wound our way through the old silos of the mill, which according to Malinowski was essentially a giant

machine for moving, processing and storing grains and cereals.

The mill was built in 1914, and the silos were added in 1942. It was operational until the 1970s. A fire in 1996 consumed all but the exterior walls of the mill and the water tower. At one time, the city considered tearing down what was left of the burned-out structure.

The loft apartments are either studio or one-bedroom units. Several have 18-foot-high ceilings. Each unit is different, but all have stainless steel appliances, an open floor plan,

large windows providing stunning views of the city, maple cabinets, exposed conduits, wood windows with galvanized steel trim, granite countertops and secured parking. In these units, just enough of the original graffiti has been left on the concrete walls to add some color and intrigue the imagination. The contrast between the rough concrete walls and the smooth, modern finishes in the kitchen and bath is a quality some people appreciate.

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From the authentic urban lofts, our tour took us into the senior units, where the feeling immediately changed. The feeling is softer, with fewer rough edges. The floors are covered in colorful carpet. There is a community room with comfy chairs, a big-screen TV, pool tables and kitchen facilities.

Malinowski is especially proud of the natural light-filled hallways in the senior units.

"Each hallway ends in a large window," he says. "This may seem like a small thing to do, but it was hard to arrange."

He also designed an open stairway to encourage people to walk, a sort of visual invitation to be mobile and use your body.

After a walk through the pleasant community garden, which boasts a remarkable fountain made from industrial salvage from the mill, we ended back in the lobby.

The architectural issues Malinowski confronted were complex. The 1996 fire had gutted the mill. The remaining walls had to be shored up, and extensive work on the foundation was required. A recent press release states, "Concrete shear walls and floors had to be poured to form corridors and individual apartments and over 250 concrete cuts were required to connect the mill building to several adjacent concrete silos which now serve as elevator shafts and stairwells."

Malinowski praised the individuals who worked on the project, citing the ironworkers who constructed an interior stairway and those men who cut through the concrete.

"For six months, the demolition guys got suited up in their protective gear and hung on ropes on the walls inside of these silos, cutting into the walls that were caked in grain," he says. "Those guys were strong, fearless and they liked the pay, but it was nasty work and went on for months and months."

For a history of the project and before-and-after photos, go to globemill.com. Julie Foster can be reached at julieincarmel@hotmail.com.



The foyer at Globe Mills pays homage to the old mill



One of the lofts



The bedroom in one of the units available for rent