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- Jen Chinburg,
Marketing Director

Newmarket Mills Come Alive

BACKGROUND

The Newmarket Mills project was an incredibly large undertaking. The challenge of renovating these old mills after decades of deterioration, was taken on by Chinburg Properties, who now take up residence in a portion of the finished project. These once bustling granite complexes on the Lamprey River required a significant overhaul to make them viable for current use. Chinburg Properties committed to the project with a tremendous investment in money, time, and planning, but needed an added element of design talent to really bring the spaces to life.

The solution? SOMMA Studios.

SOMMA founder Jen Ramsey had been involved with several of the Chinburg mill renovations in the past, and is a passionate proponent of adaptive reuse developments, so it made perfect sense to bring her back on-board for this project.


IMPLEMENTATION/SCOPE

When envisioning the future of the mills, Marketing Director Jen Chinburg saw a place that was clean and renewed, but still rich with antiquity and New England charm. With this goal in mind, she turned to SOMMA. "We asked Jen to develop a design that would celebrate the industrial heritage but give it a fun, new modern look."

Jen took the concept and ran with it.

To make the inside of the mill seem more comfortable, she sketched new design layouts that would take the long, empty feeling industrial corridors and break them





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up into smaller, cozier spaces. Rooms were built to be gathering areas, including lounges, cafes, and mail rooms. The basement floorplan was subdivided to create a fitness center and a club room. To separate each of the floors and give them their own unique feel, each floor was given its own color palette (this also aided in way finding – very helpful in such a large building). Contemporary art and signage boards were picked out to make the inside feel more modern.

Perhaps one of the most fun and unique aspects of the design remodel was repurposing a slew of items found within the old mills, a process that both parties got involved with. “Jen and I actually spent an afternoon walking through a very dark and creepy abandoned old mill dodging pigeons, trash, fire debris, rotting floors and a ‘squatter’ running around on an upper floor,” said Chinburg. “Amid all the refuse Jen found some great pieces to repurpose. It was a lot of fun.”

Some of the found materials ended up as great art pieces adorning the inside spaces. Others became part of the custom-made lighting sconces. And the lobby spaces now host a cool, funky mix of repurposed furnishings.

She came up with so many great ideas, on so many levels, that far exceeded expectations, spoke Jen Chinburg. Her knowledge of design, materials, scale, color, light, signage and construction terminology all came together to help us create a winning space.”

CONCLUSION

SOMMA has become the “go to” partner for Chinburg Properties, particularly for the Mills. Whether it is input on paint colors, design direction for furniture, lighting, or general ideas, Ramsey works with the Chinburg team to come up with a finished look for otherwise raw spaces. Once a direction is decided upon, there’s a confidence exuded from Chinburg enabling Ramsey to personally source the furniture and furnishings and have the Chinburg team implement many of the ideas SOMMA provides.

“I always know I can send Jen an email or give a call about a specific challenge or need and she will quickly respond by meeting me on site, assessing the situation and knowing how to best work with me and with the rest of our team to provide great suggestions to help us keep the ball rolling,” said Chinburg. “I am a fan of Jen’s and admire her approach to design and business and think she is very talented and enjoyable to work with. Having her input into the projects that I work (design and furnishing of the public spaces) on gives me more confidence and peace-of-mind that the ultimate product will be a “win” that presents our work in a very authentic, pleasing and positive way.”

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