# From Rubber Manufacturing to Luxury Living

## How STG is Helping to Transform Former Factory Space to 139 High-End Apartments

## An Incredible History

It was once the only rubber company west of the Allegheny Mountains, constructed in 1871 to produce fire hoses, tubing, and billiard cushions.

As time went on, B.F. Goodrich Company added to their catalog. Industrious workers filled the plant to manufacture tires for bicycles, carriages, automobiles, trucks, tractors, and aircraft. They developed synthetic rubber during World War II and, later, the Mercury astronauts’ spacesuits. The complex grew to encompass three million square feet of space and had its own fire, police, and medical services.

After the fall of the rubber manufacturing giant, the buildings sat unoccupied and unmaintained. The property became Canal Place and buildings were repurposed for office and commercial space. More than 5,000 jobs were created, and the property earned the prestigious Arthur D. Little Award for Excellence in Economic Development

## An Impressive Transformation

Now, 151 years later, the former bustling factory space is undergoing a transformation that STG Electric Services is proud to be a part of. We are the electrical contractor on a $40 million residential redevelopment project to turn Canal Place buildings 10 and 17 into The Goodrich - 139 luxury apartments aimed at attracting young professionals working for nearby employers.

The total square footage is about 250,000 square feet. Building 10 will consist of four floors of apartments, while Building 17 will host three floors of residential units.

The development will include 104 one-bedroom units of about 880 square feet apiece, 32 two-bedroom apartments ranging in size from 1,200 to 1,400 square feet, and three studio apartments at about 400 square feet each.

Phase 1 of the project is scheduled to be completed in October 2022.

## Challenges and Triumphs

When STG was awarded the $3 million contract in 2021, we already knew many challenges lay ahead. We would need to penetrate 10-inch-thick concrete slab floors to make openings for wiring. Concrete ceilings, walls … an entire facility once built for heavy manufacturing would need to be renovated into living space. STG purchased various specialty tools to perform this work.

### Occupied Buildings

After the fall of the rubber manufacturing giant, Canal Place buildings were repurposed for office and commercial space. The complex includes R. Shea Brewing, Missing Falls Brewery, Canal Commons Café & Eatery, contemporary office spaces, storage facilities, and much more. Since the construction team was performing extensive and noisy work amid an occupied space, crews had to work odd hours to avoid disturbing existing tenants.

To meet the timeframe needed, STG carefully devised a schedule identifying prime opportunities to complete our portion of the work. We completed portions of our scope first thing in the morning and found creative ways to ensure productivity while not interrupting the businesses operating around us.

All trades have done an excellent job coordinating with each other to ensure schedule adherence.

### Material Shortages

Material availability has been a major obstacle for most construction projects, and Canal Place has been no exception. Our team identified potential material issues early in the planning phase. We prioritized submittals and purchase orders based on these expectations and were flexible in completing tasks to align with material availability.

### Historical Preservation

Developer Osborne Capital Group is receiving tax credits through the highly competitive Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Program. STG and the entire construction team has adhered to specific guidelines to ensure the historical integrity and aesthetics of the buildings is maintained while meeting the required timeframe.

## A Dynamic Future

STG is installing two JuiceBox electric vehicle chargers in the basement garage and expect to install more as time goes on. Our team will provide training for the tenant management team on how they can program and monitor each charger constantly.

The availability of electric vehicle chargers is likely to attract tenants currently invested in EVs or committed to purchasing one soon.

This project will help fulfill a significant need for more apartments in the heart of Akron that are within walking distance of some of the area’s largest employers, including Akron Children’s Hospital and Purell manufacturer GOJO. In addition to current breweries, eateries, and a fitness center, these mixed-use buildings will eventually include other amenities such as a large patio and possibly a dog-washing area, yoga space, and more.

## A Worthy Project

This project deserves the Excellence in Construction Award for several reasons, including:

* The history of the buildings – BF Goodrich has great historical significance in the region and is the recipient of highly sought state tax credits.
* The challenging aspects of the work – Working through thick concrete floors, walls, and ceilings once used as a manufacturing space, as well as material shortages while working in an occupied space, has necessitated significant planning and careful coordination unique to most commercial & residential construction projects.
* The benefits this project will bring to the area – With 139 luxury apartments located within walking distance of some of the area’s largest employers and equipped with attractive amenities such as electric vehicle chargers, this endeavor is sure to make a significant impact on the area.