

MONTGOMERY AWARDS

Excellence in Planning and Design

2013 Award Winner



AMBLER BOILER HOUSE

Ambler Borough

Ambler Boiler House, located in Ambler Borough, received a 2013 Montgomery Award for the successful revitalization and adaptive reuse of an historic industrial structure into a state-of-the-art office building that incorporates sustainable building design and environmental features. This transit-oriented project, once a brownfield site, recognizes Ambler's industrial heritage while advancing the borough's revitalization efforts and providing environmental and economic benefits to the community.

History

The Ambler Boiler House was formerly the Keasbey and Mattison Boiler House, built in 1887 as a power-generating station for the once thriving Keasbey & Mattison asbestos factory. This landmark building represents the once prosperous industrial history of the borough. Over the years, the building had deteriorated. The site became an eyesore and a reminder of the hazardous contamination left behind after years of





asbestos manufacturing. In 2011, with the help of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, (PADEP) extensive remediation and environmental cleanup was conducted. This project has transformed the site into a unique twenty-first-century environmentally sustainable office building.

Design

The Ambler Boiler House preserved and carefully restored the historic building shell. The building interior was totally renovated and redeveloped into 42,000 square feet of Class A multi-tenant office space. The new building has 3 stories, with the third floor designed as an atrium overlooking the lower floors. Many aspects of the original building were preserved including the original brick facade, the distinctive smokestack, and the original large window openings. While the building interior is contemporary in design, remnants of the original structure—including exposed brick walls and the original roof trusses—still remain. Lush landscaping surrounds the building, and attractive outdoor seating



areas with picnic tables are provided for employees. An exceptional feature of this development is its convenient location within walking distance of the SEPTA Lansdale/Doylestown Regional Rail line. This transit-oriented project encourages train use by providing a safe pedestrian connection to the adjacent train station.

Environmental Sustainability

The Ambler Boiler House earned Platinum certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program from the U.S. Green Building Council. Sustainable strategies and innovative design were used in the rehabilitation of the entire structure, the building systems, and the site. The building uses a sophisticated geothermal heating and cooling system. Roofing materials used reduce solar heat gain, and lighting designs and window materials use high-performance glazing and daylight harvesting. An automated system controls building temperature during off hours. Interior building finishes include salvaged materials and recycled content containing low VOCs. Many products came from local sources. The building has a grey water collection system that reuses rainwater and incorporates environmentally sensitive cleaning methods and products. During the construction process, an ambitious waste and recycling program reduced landfill waste. Other green features include parking spaces for fuel-efficient vehicles, bicycle storage, and showers and changing rooms. The extensive use of lush native landscaping around the building not only beautifies but minimizes water use by requiring less irrigation.

Process and Collaboration

This project is the result of an extraordinary collaborative effort involving years of planning by the borough and many public and private stakeholders. The process began in 2001 with a redevelopment plan for the rail corridor, which had been certified as a blighted area under Pennsylvania Urban Development Law. The plan's goal was to revitalize the underutilized industrial properties in this corridor into a diversified employment center. The borough's vision included maintaining historic structures, addressing environmental contamination, and complementing its Main Street revitalization efforts. As part of this planning process, the Keasbey & Mattison Boiler House was identified for future adaptive reuse. The successful reuse of this former brownfield site was made possible with the help of many individuals and organizations including citizens, the Borough of Ambler, Montgomery County, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County (RAMC), and the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Obtaining conventional financing

was a challenge due to the environmental condition of the property. Through a partnership with RAMC, a financing plan was created that helped combine various private and public funds. This \$16 million development received approximately 75 percent of its funding from local, state, and federal sources; 25 percent came from private sources. Today, the building is 60 percent occupied and 97 percent leased. Currently, 100 employees work at the site. When fully occupied, it will accommodate 160 employees.

Exceptional vision and collaboration have resulted in the redevelopment of this former brownfield site and a successful adaptive reuse that preserves part of Ambler's industrial history. Ambler Boiler House has attracted new businesses and jobs and promoted additional investment along the corridor. This project has had a significant positive impact on the community, enhancing environmental safety, encouraging public transportation, and contributing to the continuing revitalization efforts of the borough.



Before



Location

201 South Maple Avenue
Borough of Ambler
Montgomery County, PA

Project Data

Land use

Office

Zoning

Redevelopment Overlay District

Tract size

1.0 acres

Building area

42,000 square feet

Parking

160 spaces

Key Features

- Adaptive reuse
- Brownfield redevelopment/environmental remediation
- Historic preservation
- Transit-oriented development
- Sustainable design
- LEED/energy efficiency
- Collaborative effort
- Economic impacts

Owner

Ambler BH Development Partners, LP
201 South Maple Avenue
Ambler, PA 19002

Developer

Summit Realty Advisors, LLC
201 South Maple Avenue, Suite 100
Ambler, PA 19002

Engineer

Langan Engineering & Environmental Services, Inc.
2700 Kelly Road, Suite 200
Warrington, PA 18976

Architect

Heckendorn Shiles Architects
347 East Conestoga Road
Wayne, PA 19087

Environmental Engineer

RT Environmental Services, Inc.
215 West Church Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

Structural Engineer

Elton & Thompson P.C.
2615 Jenkintown Road
Glenside, PA 19038

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing Engineer

PHY Engineers Inc.
443 South Gulph Road
King of Prussia, PA 19406

The annual Montgomery Awards recognize the best in planning and design in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The program acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations, and professionals.
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