



Excellence in Planning and Design

2007 Revitalization Award



## AMBLER MAIN STREET CULTURAL AND ENTERTAINMENT INITIATIVES

Ambler Borough

Ambler Main Street Cultural and Entertainment Initiatives received a 2007 Revitalization Award for the commitment and focused effort involved in renewing and enhancing Ambler's Main Street. These efforts have significantly contributed to the quality of life in Ambler and have helped to stimulate economic growth by bringing about the revitalization of existing businesses throughout the community and encouraging greater private sector investment in the area. The renewal and addition of cultural programs and entertainment venues, and the subsequent commercial investment in Ambler, have physically transformed Main Street into a unique and exciting central place for area residents to dine, shop, and participate in local community events.

### Cultural and Entertainment Amenities

Many exceptional cultural and entertainment programs have been instituted or supported by Ambler Main Street, a nonprofit organization dedicated to making downtown Ambler a social, cultural, and business center for Ambler and surrounding areas. Ambler Main Street promotes Act II Playhouse and was instrumental in the redevelopment of the circa 1928 Ambler movie theater, reopened in February 2003. The organization also promotes and supports other cultural programs such as the Art in the Storefront initiative, an outdoor concert series featuring local school musicians, First Thursday events, an annual art show in the Artman Home, a ghost walking tour with the Wissahickon Historical Society, Oktoberfest, which features live music and dancing, and participation in The Big Read program with Montgomery County Community College.





These programs and initiatives have successfully drawn new businesses to the area, including many restaurants, pubs, a new coffee house, and specialty emporiums. Revitalization of the central business district has also spurred additional investment and improvements to local businesses in the community, including new office space, which places jobs near residents.

### Design Elements

The infusion of cultural and entertainment amenities along Main Street took place after careful consideration of the character of existing buildings. Ambler Main Street wisely built on the historic and pedestrian-friendly character of the area—one of the strengths along Butler Avenue. In many instances, the new enterprises renewed historic properties with architectural significance and promoted designs that would encourage pedestrian activity and social engagement while minimizing traffic. Local businesses were subsequently encouraged to apply their own unique storefront designs to enhance the pedestrian experience.





## Process

Ambler Main Street, along with a network of devoted volunteers and partnerships with private sector investors, local and county governments, and private individuals, has successfully implemented, maintained, or supported many of the cultural and entertainment initiatives. The organization continues an endearing, integral connection with residents and visitors by building and maintaining a solid relationship with this diverse group of stakeholders.

Currently there are nine annual events that take place in the borough with the help of local government and over 100 volunteers. Volunteers lead and participate in the marketing, membership, business development, and fundraising efforts. The extensive volunteer program helps to create a sense of community while minimizing overall implementation costs.

The cultural and entertainment initiatives in Ambler Borough have been the catalyst for transformation along Main Street. Ambler's Main Street is a vibrant central place and popular destination in the region. An attractive streetscape and appealing, unique storefront designs provide residents and visitors with a pleasant experience while visiting the community's diverse restaurants and shops, theaters, and events.



## Location

Ambler Borough  
Montgomery County

## Cultural and Entertainment Initiatives Supported Through Ambler Main Street

- Ambler Theater
- Act II Playhouse
- Art in the Storefront
- First Thursday – Progressive dinners, movies, and the Ambler Symphony
- Annual Art Show in the Artman House
- Outdoor Concerts
- Ghost Walking Tour
- Oktoberfest
- The Big Read

## Key Features

- Community focal point and center
- New commercial establishments
- Economic growth
- Historic preservation
- Reuse and rehabilitation
- Extensive volunteer program
- 74 business members
- Over 400 residential members
- More than 100,000 visitors a year to Act II Playhouse and Ambler Theater
- 1,200 members in Act II Playhouse
- 4,000 members in the Ambler Theater

## Project Representatives

Ambler Main Street  
P.O. Box 36  
Ambler, PA 19002

Ambler Borough  
122 E. Butler Avenue  
Ambler, PA 19002-4476



**The Montgomery County Planning Commission** acknowledges outstanding land developments and revitalization achievements in Montgomery County through The Montgomery Awards. These annual awards are dedicated to raising planning and design awareness in our communities. They honor the developers, consultants, organizations, and municipalities for their commitment and contribution in shaping and enhancing Montgomery County.

### Montgomery County Commissioners

Thomas Jay Ellis, Esq., *Chairman* • James R. Matthews • Ruth S. Damsker

Montgomery County Planning Commission, P.O. Box 311, Norristown, Pennsylvania 19404 • [www.planning.montcopa.org](http://www.planning.montcopa.org)