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September 2004

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What's so great about the city?



Thanks to Chris Brewster of Kansas City, MO for the following story and for the accompanying photograph of his Brookside neighborhood.

My two year old son has gotten into the habit of craving the neighborhood bagel shop every Saturday morning. My wife, infant

Greetings!

Welcome to the September 2004 E-blast. This month we invite you to nominate a cool space in your neighborhood for the Cool Space Awards 2005, and we bring you another creative client's placement profile. In this and future E-Blasts we hope to provide you with information about several urban neighborhoods in Pittsburgh and the SWPA region. We start with our own neighborhood in the City of Pittsburgh - Lawrenceville. If there's a particular neighborhood that you'd like us to feature then let us know! Enjoy, and as always, we appreciate your feedback.

"Old ideas can use new buildings, but new ideas need old buildings." -Jane Jacobs

• **Cool Space Awards Program 2005**

Cool Space Locator, along with our partners, is pleased to present the Cool Space Awards 2005 to recognize unique business locations that exist in walkable communities in Southwestern Pennsylvania. This awards program will celebrate and highlight the cool spaces in our midst while creating excitement about walkable communities and encouraging adaptive reuse in urban and town locations. Hundreds of companies, developers, and building owners in our region have already realized the potential of urban spaces. Acquisition of these properties is usually complicated, renovation costs are high, neighborhoods aren't always pretty, and financial investments are uncertain, yet their numbers are growing every day. It's time to celebrate!

Highlights of the program include a judges panel whose participants have contributed significantly to the economic and physical transformation of our communities, as well as an "April Cools Day" party on Friday, April 1st, where winning spaces will be

son, and I accompany him on our walk to the bagel shop every Saturday. He is able to observe the neighborhood, people, and all of the activity at a pace he can relate to, fostering much discussion for him throughout the rest of the day. He has even come to know very well some of the "regulars" on our walk and at the bagel shop... at two years old. Without sidewalks and without the city, this two-year-old's life would be far less rich and interesting.

What do you love about your city? If you have a photograph of urban life that you would like to see featured here, please send it to us, and be sure to tell us what you love about urban living.

awarded and photographic layouts of those spaces displayed. Spaces that are eligible for awards exist in any walkable community within the Southwestern Pennsylvania region. They are designed to house businesses or other enterprises that employ people and may be located in a current or formerly underutilized building in a neighborhood; located above a retail storefront or on a main street; or they may exist in a commercial building, former industrial building, or large former warehouse.

Nominations for the 2005 awards program are due by January 15, 2005 and can be submitted by anyone; check out our website for more information.

Cool Space Awards 2005

● Creative Placement

Who

Semple Brown Design

What

Full-Service Architectural Design Firm

Where

Liberty Bank Building, 6101 Penn Avenue in East Liberty



Why

Semple Brown Design, based in Denver, CO, has been providing design services for twenty-two years, working mostly on urban and infill projects ranging from single family homes to restaurants to office spaces and even theaters. Andrew Moss, one of seven principals of the firm, opened a new Semple Brown office in downtown Pittsburgh in January of 2004; but their space didn't reflect the innovative character of the company and employees, including designers Andrew Moss and Heather Wildman Figley, and office manager Sarah Rossbach. Semple Brown works with clients that "share their conviction that quality design improves their clients' way of life". Andrew feels that the Cool Space Locator staff understand this conviction, which is why he trusted CSL to help with the search for a new space that better defines

their company. Like many companies with a creative side, he didn't want a run-of-the-mill office space, but one that would be comfortable as well as connected to neighborhood activity.

What Else?

Like many Pittsburghers, Andrew grew up here and graduated from Carnegie Mellon University, but then moved away to Denver where he worked for 12 years. He wanted to come back, not just because his family is anchored here, but because "the city has so much opportunity and could be so amazing" that it nearly drives him crazy! With a great number of pooled resources he believes that Pittsburgh has a lot going for it; Pittsburgh is not like any other city, and the differences excite Andrew. The natural geography and density creates many design challenges. According to Andrew, "the more challenging a project is, the more interesting and unique it becomes".

The firm is currently working with client East Liberty Development, Inc. on the revitalization of the four blocks surrounding the East Liberty Presbyterian Church (the East Liberty Town Square Project). Andrew feels that the neighborhood has some of the greatest potential in the City of Pittsburgh - "East Liberty has everything going for it, including the location, access, parking, and the core building infrastructure."

To learn more about Semple Brown Design, visit their website.

Semple Brown Design

● **Featured Neighborhood: Lawrenceville**

Lawrenceville, one of Pittsburgh's oldest neighborhoods, was founded in 1814 and was home to major industry throughout its early years.



Although the neighborhood suffered during the closure of the steel mills, it is now one of the hottest growth districts in town. One such growth area in the neighborhood is the Penn Main district, where the business corridors of both Penn Avenue and Main Street serve as connectors between

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Friendship, Bloomfield, The Strip District, and Downtown. Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh is currently constructing its new green facility on Penn Avenue, making the area desirable to both new businesses and residents. On Butler Street, many turn-of-the-century buildings have been restored to house storefronts and upper-level office and loft spaces. The diversity of shopping, dining, and entertainment (including the legendary Arsenal Lanes bowling alley) serves both residents and visitors from around the region. Vacant lots along Butler Street are also available for new construction.

Lawrenceville is home to the Catalyst Building, a fully restored former schoolhouse (complete with the original chalkboards), that houses a variety of commercial uses. The Regional Industrial Development Corporation (RIDC) is redeveloping a former chocolate factory into commercial and light manufacturing space. This building is adjacent to the CMU Robotics Institute and the Ice House Artist Studios. A new green building under construction at the corner of Butler and 36th Streets, the Blackbird Lofts and Artist Studios offers upper level residential loft space and first floor space for artisan and design studios.

A wide range of ethnic restaurants draw visitors from around the city, including Tram's, Taste of India, La Filipiniana Teody's, and Regina Margherita Pizzeria. In addition, fish sandwiches rule in Lawrenceville. Three neighborhood institutions are known for serving up fried fish in style: Nied's Hotel, Cigna's, and Sufak's Round Corner Hotel.

Thanks to Pam Devereux of the Lawrenceville Corporation for contributing the content of this article.

Lawrenceville Corporation

- **16:62 Design Zone**

As part of the Lawrenceville Corporation's 16:62 Design Zone initiative, businesses in Lawrenceville and The Strip District work together to promote the growth of Pittsburgh's design district, a regional destination for



customers seeking products and services in interior design. The district is now home to nearly 90 businesses, including architecture and interior design firms, art galleries, artisan studios, home furnishing showrooms, custom furniture and metalworking workshops, and shops featuring regionally made art, fine crafts, and gifts. In addition to offering unique products, many of these businesses provide great examples of adaptive re-use of buildings. A former "provision company" is now home to Slaughterhouse Gallery & Studios, and an undertaker's stable is the home of Kingsland Scott Bauer Architects and Riverside Design Group.

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16:62 Design Zone

- **Pittsburgh Flood 2004**

Friday, September 17, 2004 marked a very wet day in history for Pittsburgh, where all of Allegheny County received record



rainfall, 6.5 inches of rain in 24 hours, remnants of Hurricane Ivan. The city just doesn't look quite the same with Point State Park and the Fountain under several feet of water.

The current number of damaged or destroyed homes and businesses in the County stands at 7,112, but the number is expected to grow. The Pittsburgh Technology Council is offering Ivan Business Recovery, where you can lend a hand to businesses in need after last Friday's storm or find the support you need to get your company back up and running. Visit the Tech Council's website to offer or request pro bono services.

[Pittsburgh Technology Council](#)

- **About Us**

Cool Space Locator, a project of the Tides Center (PA), is a non-profit that helps find locations for office based organizations in Pittsburgh's urban core. Aside from working directly with companies to find space, we work with government, economic and community development agencies, and commercial property owners to help boost the growth of office based jobs in the great urban commercial districts of Pittsburgh. We are supported by:

- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- The Heinz Endowments
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- Roy A. Hunt Foundation
- State of PA; Stay Invent the Future
- The Urban Redevelopment Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
- City of Pittsburgh, Mayor's Office
- Councilman Bill Peduto