LOCATION: Homestead, PA

SIZE: < 1 acre

FEATURES: Proximity to Universities and Downtown, Access to 837, Public Transportation, Adjacent to the Waterfront Development

OWNER: Karl Haglund, Judith Tener & David Lewis, and 225 E. 8th Street Associates LP – (three separate parcels)

CURRENT USE: Office, Loft, and Retail Space

PAST USE: Retail, Lodging, Commercial, and Residential

CONTAMINANTS: None

TOTAL ACTUAL COST: Unknown

TIMELINE

1871 Homestead Bank & Life Insurance purchases over 123 acres of farmland.

1880 Homestead Mill is introduced.

1892 The Homestead Strike occurs.

1942 Homestead Steel Works expands and the buildings are converted into small apartments for steel workers.

1980 Homestead Mill closes.

2005 The Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County gives a façade easement for the Seventh Avenue building elevation and the facades are restored according to historic guidelines.

OVERVIEW

Close to the Golden Triangle, downtown Pittsburgh, the city’s regional amenities, employment centers, and universities, Eighth Avenue has experienced Homestead’s rise and fall. Soon after the introduction of the Homestead Mill in 1880, Homestead was a busy commercial center. For the 100 years that the mill had been active Eighth Avenue alternated between retail, entertainment, and residential use. By 1980, the mill closed and the area was desolate. Homestead entered Act 47, but the successful redevelopment of the Homestead Mill into a shopping mall, The Waterfront, in 1999 pulled Homestead out of municipal bankruptcy. The mall spans the three boroughs of Homestead, West Homestead, and Munhall and is about five minutes driving distance away from the following Eighth Avenue case study properties. Contrary to the expectations of residents, the Waterfront’s prosperity was isolated within their development.

Many residents of the three boroughs realized the disparity between The Waterfront and the nearby Avenues and utilized the assets of the community, in particular, its history. In the 1990’s a group of local citizens was able to place the buildings of Homestead’s Main Street into National Register of Historic Places. Also, seven local businesses and property owners on East Eighth Avenue formed the Down Street Development Consortium to spearhead a revitalization project for the Homestead area.

Some current plans to draw attention beyond The Waterfront include the Seventh Avenue Initiative and “Homestead Happens.” The former is a proposal to repair and renovate the Seventh Avenue-side rears of East Eighth Avenue’s buildings - eyesores visible from The Waterfront. It is funded by the Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County. “Homestead Happens” is a mini-festival that includes a sidewalk sale and bike night.

The consortium secured $380,000 for the construction of 14 loft-style apartments on East Eighth Avenue above the storefronts. The following property owners have been part of this initiative by successfully retaining and rehabilitating these buildings on East Eighth Avenue.

SOURCES


HISTORY

Before this site's redevelopment, 212 East Eighth Avenue was home to a movie rental store. On November 3, 2004 – the same day that Karl and Walt Haglund buy the property – they also start renovations. Two years after, the site is ready to house offices and apartments. The Haglunds completed development in August 2007.

SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

This property was owned by Scott W. Reisch in 1991, Kitty Lesko in 2000, and finally Karl and Walt Haglund in 2004. The Haglunds were able to salvage and renovate the one building on the development. There was no need for zoning changes due to the nature of pre- and post-development site use. There were also no covenants restricting land use and no tax liens on the property.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

There was no need to perform environmental assessments, and the owners reported no contamination found on the site prior to development.
PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
Prior to redevelopment, water, power grid, sewage, cable/DSL, phone, and cellular lines were existing and adequate.

COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE
All of the financing for physical infrastructure came from private funds. Financing for the development itself was made possible from a combination of public and private funds. Of that, public funds made up about 40% of the total funding. These public funds came from development grants and loans from state and local sources.

Specifically, Walter Haglund received $54,286 from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency low-interest loan program for two new apartments in his building at 211 E. 8th Ave.

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED
Because Eighth Avenue is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, much care had to be taken to preserve the history of the area.

This site is completely redeveloped, and the development was able to create four jobs.

* First of three properties included in “8th Avenue Offices and Lofts in Homestead”

Case Study Completed in Summer 2008 by Melinda Angeles

SOURCES


Judith Tener and David Lewis
Five and Ten Lofts
213-215 East Eighth Avenue**

LOCATION: Homestead, PA
SIZE: < 1 acre
FEATURES: Proximity to Universities and Downtown, Access to 837, Public Transportation, Adjacent to the Waterfront Development
OWNER: Judith Tener & David Lewis
CURRENT USE: Commercial and Residential Space
PAST USE: Commercial and Residential Space
CONTAMINANTS: None
TOTAL ACTUAL COST: Unknown

TIMELINE
1880 Homestead Mill is introduced.
1924 F.W. Woolworth Company moves into the space.
1980 Homestead Mill closes.
1988 A fire destroys the upper floors of the property.
1999 Judith Tener and David Lewis purchase the property.
2000 Tener/Lewis receive a grant from the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation and restore the Eighth Avenue Facade.
2007 A green roof is installed in the Lewis property.
2008 “Five and Ten Lofts” is ready for occupancy in June.

HISTORY
The area containing this site was undeveloped until 1871 when Andrew and Ann Harper bought the lot. The Harpers built a two-story house, listed now as 215 East Eighth Avenue. When this property changed hands to John and Malissa Irwin in 1885, it was subdivided into three lots and sold to his three daughters. Eleven years later in 1896, John Irwin designed a three-story building for the property now known as 213 East Eighth Avenue. By 1912, a third story was added to the 215 East Eighth Avenue property, as well. In 1924, F.W. Woolworth stepped in and occupied the first floors of 213-215 East Eighth Avenue. Woolworth’s Five-and-Dime Store was the major tenant there for nearly 40 years, with a billiard parlor in the rear and office & residential space on the top floors. In the 1960’s, Woolworth’s Five-and-Dime Store closed and was replaced by Gil’s Discount Store. It did not last long, and by the late 1970’s the first floor was rented out to a Pennsylvania State Liquor Store. A fire in 1988 destroys the upper floors of the property and leaves those floors vacated. In 1990, the last tenant, Rite Discount Stores, rented the first floor. They moved out in 1995.

Four years later, Judith Tener and David Lewis purchased the property. Since then, they have received grants and loans to assist in the redevelopment of the site into “Five and Ten Lofts,” aptly named in recognition of the site’s history.

http://www.cmu.edu/steinbrenner/brownfields/
SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL

Since 1924, these two buildings were primarily commercial with residential spaces on their second and third floors. Ownership of the commercial space has changed hands from F.W. Woolworth (1924-1960’s), the Grand Billiard Hall (1929-?), the Family Loan Company (1945-?), Gil’s Discount Store (1960’s-1978), the Pennsylvania State Liquor Store (1978-1990), and Rite Discount Stores (1990-1995). The residential space on the top floors included Floyd and Grace Osborne (1929-1951), O.W. Colgan (1929-?), Irene Knepsheid (1929-?), James Gould (1929-?), Edna I. Neen (1929-?), Patrick O’Hare (1945-?), William J.C. Lamb (1945-?), Helen H. Winner (1973-1978), and John and Patricia Gentilcore (1978-1998).

After it became vacant when Rite Discount Stores moved out in 1995, Judith Tener and David Lewis purchased the property. There were no covenants that restricted development; however, there were many tax liens imposed on the property. All are paid now.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

There was no need to perform environmental assessments, and the owners reported no contamination found on the site prior to development.

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

No additional parking structures were needed on the site. Tenants are allowed permit parking in a municipal lot across the property, and metered parking is available.

Before this site was redeveloped, cable/DSL was nonexistent and the water, power grid, and phone lines were existent but inadequate. All public utilities were made adequate by the developer, and each unit is cable and internet ready.

Frequent buses allow easy access to Oakland and Downtown Pittsburgh, while stores, theatres, and bars are within walking distance.

COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Funding for the development was made possible by a mix of public and private sources. According to the Steel Valley Enterprise Zone, millions of private dollars are being invested in properties, including Lewis-Tener and Ranii. Also, the Mon Valley Initiative and the Homestead-area Economic Revitalization Corp. provided $103,142 towards the development of Five and Ten Lofts. The Initiative provided $162,856 to renovate six apartments in two buildings at 216-218 East Eighth Ave. David Lewis also received a grant from the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation (PHLF) to restore the Eighth Avenue Façade of his buildings. In addition, Three Rivers Wet Weather, a non-profit venture involved with improving water quality, gave a grant towards adding a green roof to this property.

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Because of the fire in 1988, Tener and Lewis internally reconstructed both buildings. A PHLF grant allowed them to restore the building’s façade. They also repaired the roof and replaced missing and fire-damaged windows.

By 2007, structural stabilization, the framing of apartments, and green roof installation were completed. Although the roof costs about 25% more than a normal one, it will save on utility costs for the residents by helping insulate and improve the water quality of runoff.

In June 2008, the Five and Ten Lofts became ready for occupancy. Since then, all units have been occupied except for one.

** Second of three properties included in “8th Avenue Offices and Lofts in Homestead”

Case Study Completed in Summer 2008 by Melinda Angeles
BROWNFIELDS CENTER

Joe Ranii and 225 East Eighth Street Associates, LP
225 and 227 East Eighth Avenue

LOCATION: Homestead, PA
SIZE: < 1 acre
FEATURES: Proximity to Universities and Downtown, Access to 837, Public Transportation, Adjacent to the Waterfront Development
OWNER: 225 E. 8th Street Associates LP
CURRENT USE: Loft and Commercial Space
PAST USE: Boarding House and Curiosity Shop
CONTAMINANTS: None
TOTAL ACTUAL COST: Unknown

TIMELINE
1871 Homestead Bank & Life Insurance purchases over 123 acres of farmland.
1880 Homestead Mill is introduced.
1892 The Homestead Strike occurs.
1980 Homestead Mill closes.
2005 The Redevelopment Authority of Allegheny County gives a façade easement for the Seventh Avenue building elevation and the facades are restored according to historic guidelines.
2007 The Ranii property begins development in October.
2008 The development for the Ranii property is scheduled to be completed in October.

HISTORY
This site was once home to a curiosity shop in the first floor and a cheap boarding house above. The curiosity shop and boarding house ceased operations when 225 E. 8th Street Associates purchased the property in 2003. The two buildings on the site were inactive for four years until the owners renovated them to include loft and commercial space in October 2007.

SITE ASSEMBLY AND CONTROL
When the buildings housed a curiosity shop and flop house, Ann Stewart was the owner. In October 2003, 225 E. 8th Street Associates, LP purchased the property. The two buildings that existed on the site before development were able to be salvaged. The whole 8,800-square-foot building on 225 East Eighth Ave. was used, while only 3,300 square feet of the 4,100-square-foot building on 227 East Eighth Ave. were salvaged.

There were no covenants in the buildings’ deeds that restricted land use, and the site’s current zoning is consistent with its past zoning.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS
There was no need to perform environmental assessments, and the owners reported no contamination found on the site prior to development.

http://www.cmu.edu/steinbrenner/brownfields/
PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
The water, power grid, sewage, cable/DSL, phone, cellular, and fiber optic were all existing and adequate prior to development.

COSTS & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE
A lot of the financing for the development of this site came from private funds. According to the Steel Valley Enterprise Zone, millions of private dollars are being invested in properties that include this one.

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNED
The site is still in the construction phase and is scheduled to be completed in October 2008, a year after development started. Also, because the area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, much care had to be taken to preserve the architecture of the building.

*** Third of three properties included in “8th Avenue Offices and Lofts in Homestead”

Case Study Completed in Summer 2008 by Melinda Angeles

SOURCES

