

# MONTGOMERY AWARDS

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## **Bryn Mawr Village** Lower Merion Township

Bryn Mawr Village, an outstanding infill redevelopment project in Lower Merion Township, received a 2017 Montgomery Award for creative vision, effective site design, and successful collaboration. This impressive adaptive reuse project, a result of decade-long planning efforts and development initiatives, transformed a vacant, underutilized site located in the heart of the Bryn Mawr business district into a vibrant mixed-use center.

### **Vision**

This project involved the adaptive reuse of a 3.1-acre site which contained a distinctive 1920s-era garage and parking lot located near the intersection of Lancaster Avenue and Merion Avenue. The site, located three blocks west of the Bryn Mawr business district, presented the township with a significant opportunity to fill a missing link within the downtown. The vision for the

redevelopment of the site began in 2004 with several planning studies. These initiatives were paralleled by successful revitalization efforts in the business district including the transformative 9,000-member Bryn Mawr Film Institute, a new and expanded Ludington Library, and an expanded Bryn Mawr Hospital and medical office campus. In 2006, these important efforts were complemented when the township embarked on a rezoning effort for the business district. The result was the Bryn Mawr Master Plan, adopted in 2006. A key plan recommendation focused on a new zoning strategy to provide infill redevelopment opportunities compatible with the historic village character. The former garage site was identified in several plans for infill redevelopment, which could advance the township's goals of economic and community revitalization. The new zoning promotes reuse



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of existing buildings in a manner that maintains the historic architecture, visual character, and scale of Bryn Mawr—resulting in a pedestrian-oriented, interconnected, and vibrant Main Street environment.



## Site Design

Establishing a viable site plan was challenging considering the development needs and the physical constraints of the site. The densely developed area is bound by Amtrak railroad corridor, and creating a viable site required the assembly of several parcels, a new access driveway from Merion Avenue, and a one-way egress at Sargent Avenue. This project is the first Class-A retail project built in Bryn Mawr in the last decade. The project totals over 52,000 square feet of retail/office space including 35,000 square feet of new retail space and 17,000 square feet of office. Redevelopment involved a new 2-story 30,200-square-foot building and the adaptive reuse and expansion of the 16,937-square-foot 1-story garage and the 180-space parking lot and 35 off-site spaces. The adaptive reuse of the garage, a prominent red brick structure with terra cotta trim and details, is a signature feature of the development and the main focal point facing Lancaster Avenue. The reuse of this structure, combined with the new buildings and complementary façades, helps to maintain the scale and visual character of the surrounding architecture while providing an appealing contrast. The architecture mirrors both the traditional village brick materials and the cornice lines of nearby historic structures while providing a contemporary contrast with glass and metal façade materials.

Several site design features distinguish the village, including an L-shaped parking lot located between the two buildings and largely behind the buildings, which offers multiple access points to the street network. A new three-way stop at the Merion Avenue bridge and landscape improvements create an attractive pedestrian-friendly connection for nearby residents along Montgomery Avenue and Bryn Mawr College. The parking lot features several sustainable, green elements including a linear bioretention area, a uniquely designed 6- to 8-foot-high board-on-board fence, and a buffer along the railroad corridor. A vertical green wall with climbing plants and simulated windows provides attractive screening along the rear of an





adjoining building. Safe pedestrian movement from the parking lot is accommodated by well-delineated crosswalks and pedestrian areas. A prominently located public plaza and seating area next to the café provide opportunities for outside leisure. The new building has diverse uses including ground floor retailers such as destination restaurants, a signature coffee shop, boutique retailers, a fitness studio, and second floor office spaces.

### Collaboration

The developer worked with the township and community to ensure the site development and design were consistent with the Bryn Mawr Village Zoning Ordinance adopted in 2008. This involved promoting adaptive reuse of the garage, enhancing the village architecture and streetscape, and creating a pedestrian-friendly environment while accommodating a large 180-space parking lot consistent with the Bryn Mawr Master Plan. This shared vision and collaboration resulted in a distinctive commercial center that fits with its surroundings and connects to the larger business district.

Bryn Mawr Village is an excellent example of a well-designed infill redevelopment project. This new appealing retail and office space, which successfully created a more unified business district, serves as an economic catalyst for the community.





## Location

907-931 Lancaster Avenue & 24 N. Merion Avenue  
Lower Merion Township  
Montgomery County

## Project Data

### Land Use

Retail/office

### Tract Size

Gross - 3.1 Acres

### Zoning

BMV-3 and BMV-4 - Village District (Bryn Mawr)

### Building Area

52,000 square feet – +/- 35,000 SF retail; 17,000 SF office

### Parking

180 spaces on site; utilizes 35 off-site spaces & 7 on-street

## Key Features

- Infill redevelopment
- Site planning
- Collaborative effort

## Owner/Developer

Blank Aschkenasy Properties  
300 Four Falls Corporate Center, Suite 360  
West Conshohocken, PA 19428

## Engineer

Bohler Engineering  
1600 Manor Drive, Suite 200  
Chalfont, PA 18914

## Architect

Bernardon Haber Holloway Architects PC  
425 McFarlan Road, Suite 200  
Kennett Square, PA 19348

## Land Planner/Landscape Architect

Glackin Thomas Panzak, Inc.  
41 Leopard Road, Suite 300  
Paoli, PA 19301

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The program acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations, and professionals.

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