

SPACES AND PLACES



ARTSPACE, FOUNDATION TEAM UP FOR PHILLY STUDY

Thanks to a major grant from the William Penn Foundation, Artspace is conducting a survey to determine the space needs of individual artists and arts organizations in metropolitan Philadelphia. While it is customary for Artspace to conduct preliminary artist market and feasibility studies in communities where we work, the opportunity to deeply examine the space needs of a city's entire arts and culture community is new to us.

Olive Mosier, Director of Arts and Culture for the William Penn Foundation, has been hearing about space as an issue among local arts and culture organizations since joining the Foundation five years ago. Philadelphia has a large and vibrant cultural sector.

Yet many small and midsize performing arts groups have expressed frustration about a lack of performance and rehearsal space in town. Further, the city's many historical organizations face a shortage of proper archival and collection space. It was this feedback from the community that prompted Mosier to adopt a plan to formally address space.

The Foundation conducted a number of studies of arts and culture space needs. Each time the need was clear, but the Foundation concluded that actual creation and viability of new space was beyond its expertise.

Enter Artspace. Familiar with Artspace's work at creating viable spaces for artists and arts organizations, Mosier called us up. She was connected with Chris Velasco, Director of Consulting and New Projects for Artspace. Several conversations later, Artspace was invited to submit a proposal to the Foundation to broadly study the space needs of the local arts and culture community, and, based on our findings, to

make recommendations for the development of three types of facilities. Recommendations will include potential sites and business plans for each facility.

"This initiative offers us a chance to be involved in the vanguard of community-driven development at the intersection of the arts, affordable housing, small business development, and economic empowerment," says Velasco.

The William Penn Foundation, founded in 1945 by Otto and Phoebe Haas, is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Greater Philadelphia region through efforts that foster rich cultural expression, strengthen children's futures, and deepen connections to nature and community. In partnership with others, the Foundation works to advance a vital, just, and caring community.

Artspace staff and Swan Research consultants Rebecca Swan and Michelle Rowland worked this summer to create an on-line survey for artists and arts organizations to assess needs. Focus groups were formed to provide field participation and feedback throughout the survey process.

The survey went live on Sept. 8. On Sept. 12 the Foundation hosted a public kickoff meeting to generate awareness and interest. The survey will be followed by extensive review and analysis.

Recommendations from Artspace will come later in November, and by next spring Artspace will begin looking for potential facility sites. The Foundation will continue to work with Artspace around the actual implementation and development of sites.

According to Mosier the kickoff meeting was a great success and a strong indication that the project is on the right track.

"This project is a huge investment for the Foundation and we've entered this initiative in a serious way," she said. "We would not have taken this on if we felt that space needs were insignificant, and we feel proven correct by the response to the kickoff meeting."

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OUR NEW PROJECT PORTFOLIO

Way back in 1999, Artspace published a Twentieth Anniversary Report of Progress, a hard-cover spiral-bound book that included pictures and descriptions of all our projects. People have been asking us ever since when we planned to publish a new edition.



Well, now we have. Our new Project Portfolio, a compendium of more than 20 Artspace projects in operation or development, is hot off the presses. While it's not quite as fancy as the Twentieth Anniversary Report, it contains many more pictures as well as a wealth of statistical information.

The Portfolio includes everything you'd ever want to know about every Artspace project, from number of live/work units to total square footage to overall construction cost to the name of each and every contributor.

In conjunction with the new Portfolio, we have completely redesigned and updated the Artspace website. I invite you to check it out at www.artspaceusa.org; I think you'll find it much easier to negotiate and much more informative as well. Among other things,



you can download any Project Portfolio page as a PDF file. Give it a try and let us know what you think.

CHRIS VELASCO: ARTSPACE'S AMBASSADOR

When does a project become an Artspace project? Not until Chris Velasco says it does.

OK, it's not that simple. But Velasco is certainly the one most likely to put a new project on our organizational radar. As Artspace's Vice President of Consulting and New Projects, he visits communities all over the country to talk about Artspace's mission and determine whether we have a role to play in helping them reach their cultural development goals.

As its name indicates, Consulting and New Projects is the division of Artspace that focuses on providing advisory services to communities with space-related arts issues and on identifying potential new development projects.

It keeps Velasco on the move: in the last 12 months, he estimates that he's logged 100,000 air miles and spent 175 nights on the road.

Velasco joined Artspace in 1993. For his first five years he was both an Artspace employee and an Artspace tenant as a resident of the Tilsner Artists' Cooperative in Saint Paul. "We had precious little consulting work at that time," he recalls. "It was all we could do to get our projects completed."

But by the mid-1990s, as Artspace's national reputation began to grow, it became clear that someone needed to serve as the organization's representative to communities interested in hiring Artspace to develop new projects. The role fell to Velasco.

These days Velasco and his C&NP colleagues, Teri Deaver and Peter Sieve, field dozens of inquiries every month from communities seeking help with their

cultural development agendas. Not every call leads to a visit, of course. In some cases, Velasco says, communities have unrealistic expectations; in others, their projects aren't a fit with Artspace's arts-oriented mission.



"But when we believe that we might be of service to a community, we go there. We spend two days meeting with artists, with civic and business and financial leaders, with as many stakeholders as possible. And in that intensive series of meetings we can give them a lot of feedback about whether their project should go forward."

“ IT'S AN INCREDIBLE PRIVILEGE TO DO WHAT I DO. ”

If the answer is yes, the next step is for C&NP to bring Artspace's other divisions into the picture "to help shape the project based on the community's vision and the practical constraints. Somewhere between those extremes we try to arrive at a project that can be funded and completed."

Does the constant travel wear thin? Sometimes, Velasco admits. "But it's an incredible privilege to do what I do, especially because Artspace has evolved to the point where we never have to select a project where we can't provide high-quality service. I really like that."

HOW YOU CAN HELP ARTSPACE MEET THE BUSH FOUNDATION CHALLENGE

Every year Artspace conducts an annual fund campaign as a way of building individual support for the work we do to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations. The annual fund is critical to Artspace as a source of general operating support and a tool for creating visibility within the broader community.

This year the annual fund provides an important opportunity to Artspace. The Bush Foundation, based in St. Paul, has pledged \$50,000 to Artspace, contingent on our ability to double the number of

individual donors to the campaign.

This challenge is a wonderful opportunity for Artspace to increase our donor base.

If you've considered donating to Artspace in the past, this is the year. Your gift of any size will have a tremendous impact on our effort to meet the Bush challenge. We are grateful for the chance to build support for our work, addressing the space needs of artists and arts organizations here in Minnesota and across the country.

Thank you for your support!

ARTSPACE HELPS KATRINA HOMELESS

With a native New Orleanian on staff and housing as our experience, we gathered one morning, post-Katrina, to figure out what Artspace could do to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Could we provide money? Goods? Homes? And then it occurred to us that although we have very few vacancies in our live/work projects, we did have units to offer: one in Galveston, and six in Houston.

We immediately contacted our property managers to put a priority on renting to those displaced by Katrina, waiving our usual artist preference to anyone displaced.

In Houston, New Orleans jazz vocalist Tricia "Teedy" Boutte and her mother, Lolet, now share an apartment in the newly opened Elder Street Artist Lofts.

Boutte and her family lost their long-time New Orleans home to Hurricane Katrina. "The minute I saw this place," Boutte told the Houston Chronicle, "I knew I wanted to be here."

At least 15 other former New Orleanians, members of the New Birth Jazz Band, have found lodging in the Elder Street building.

CORRECTION

Our Spring 2005 newsletter failed to mention a valuable partner in the recently completed Sterling Market Artist Lofts project in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation (BEDCO) played an important dual role as both financier and funder of the project. We regret the omission.

IN THE WORKS

AFFORDABLE SPACE FOR ARTISTS ON BUFFALO'S MAIN STREET



An Artspace project is coming to Buffalo — our first in the state of New York!

Artspace is developing a 60-unit live/work project at the historic Breitweiser Building at 1219 Main Street. Built in 1914 as an automobile factory, the Breitweiser is one of Buffalo's most significant historic buildings. Now it will live on, renovated and updated as an affordable home for artists and their families. The \$16.5 million project will consist of 36 units in the five-story Breitweiser plus 24 units in six new fourplexes on vacant land immediately behind it.

The Artspace Buffalo project has received enormous political, federal, state, and local support, beginning with strong leadership from the Mayor's office and an editorial by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton in October 2004.

"The expertise that Artspace brings to projects will help jump-start new economic initiatives throughout the state of New York," Clinton wrote.

Nearly \$1 million in pledges has come in from local philanthropic sources, and the project has received one of the largest allocations of low income housing tax credits in Artspace history.





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HOUSTON PROJECT HAS FIRST ARTSPACE ‘GREEN ROOF’

The Elder Street Artist Lofts, which opened this fall in Houston, will soon have the first “green roof” ever installed in an Artspace project.

This vegetative roof system, which covers approximately one-third of the roof area, is designed to save on the building’s heating and cooling costs, reduce the need for insulation, and prolong the roof’s life span. It will provide an aesthetically appealing outdoor space for meetings, art making, and relaxing. The base is already in place; the plants will be installed later this year.

For Artspace, the green roof in Houston is a sign of things to come. After 25 years of developing space for artists and arts organizations, Artspace occupies a unique niche in the affordable housing industry. Our primary mission is to create, foster, and preserve space for artists.

These days, however, our work addresses a broad range of public policy areas, including affordable housing, historic preservation, economic development, and cultural facilities development.

Over the last year, Artspace has identified a new policy objective: sustainable building. Sustainable building, also called “green” or “high-performance,” means developing buildings in a way that significantly reduces their impact on the environment compared to conventional methods.



At Artspace we are learning to understand our work as sustainable in nature because nearly all of our live/work projects involve adaptive reuse of existing structures.

By restoring older buildings, Artspace participates in keeping communities vibrant while “recycling” existing infrastructure such as roads, sewage systems, electrical lines, public transportation, and parks. Artspace has transformed warehouses, schools, factories, and office buildings into artist live/work facilities.

Artspace is moving forward with our sustainability initiative by incorporating new practices in our development process. We recently drafted a Sustainable Development Protocol statement and formed a Sustainability Advisory Committee. To view a copy of the Sustainability Protocol, please visit our website at www.artspaceusa.org.