



# A Successful Transformation: Winston Commons

Mount Airy, Philadelphia, PA

## Site Description

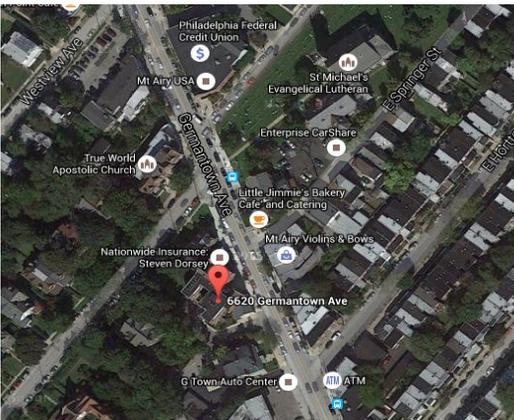
Historically used for commerce and trade as a Specialty Store, the 1898 building sat vacant for five years before renovation began in 2004 to make it the Winston Commons by 2006. The property was bought by Mt. Airy USA in 2002 for \$250,000, putting the project in motion that converted the former store into 20,000 square feet of modern retail space and six condos. To-day, the building is listed as a contributing

building on the Germantown Avenue National Historic' District. Winston Commons is a \$4 million mixed-use condominium and retail development that broke ground in 2005.



## Environmental Issues Addressed

Repairing the facility required power washing the brick and installing a new facade on a portion of the 19th Century building. Demolition was required but the site was not contaminated. The restoration project involved infill, brownfield redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and historic preservation. The site was assessed using a \$200,000 EPA grant awarded to the City of Philadelphia.



Location of site at 6622 Germantown Ave

## Leveraged Resources

Mt. Airy USA received a Home and Garden Television Network and National Trust for Historic Preservation Restore America grant of \$50,000. The collective investment totaled to \$7 million, including a capital grant of more than \$1 million from Governor Rendell, \$2 million from other grants, and \$2 million in private donations. Leading Federal involvement in the project was through the city's use of CDBG-funding from HUD.

**EPA Grant Recipient: City of Philadelphia**

**Year Awarded: 2003**

**Grant Types: Assessment**

**Former Uses: Specialty Store**

**Current Uses: Apartment complex and Retail space**

# Behind the Transformation

## Current Use Features

The project consisted of 20,000 total square feet, with six market-rate condominium units, ground floor commercial including a coffee shop, and 11 parking spaces. The Commons contains a mix of retail and condo units. Development of the property included historic restoration of several buildings for retail and residential reuse and contributes to national Germantown historic district. The units come with \$50,000 forgivable second mortgages that help bring the prices below what a similar condo in Center City Philadelphia would command. That stretch of Germantown Avenue is surrounded by established residential neighborhoods, including 11 new low- and moderate-income townhouses in the 200 block of East Montana Street that the development corporation recently completed.



Apartments at the former specialty store

## Community Benefit

The Commons is nationally recognized model of successful racial and socio-economic integration. In 2008 it was awarded the William Penn Awards of Excellence, Sustainable Urbanism and Best Conversion or Adaptive Reuse. That same year it also won Philadelphia Business Journal's Best Real Estate Deals Judges' Choice Award



All photos courtesy of Hugh Loomis

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