

Brownfields

Success Story

Redevelopment Gets Fired Up

Norristown, Pennsylvania

Chartered in 1852 and located six miles north of Philadelphia in Norristown, Pennsylvania, Humane Fire Engine Co. No. 1 moved into its first fire station in 1854 before settling into its permanent home in 1888.

Engine Co. No. 1 stood as a pillar in the community, helping those in need. But a lack of volunteers eventually forced the firehouse to close in 2012.

The Cleanup

Two years later, in an attempt to help revive the community and find a purpose for its historic firehouse, the City of Norristown applied for and received a \$400,000 Brownfields Assessment Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment conducted on the property revealed several Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) associated with the historical uses of the site. The RECs were evaluated as part of a subsequent Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and, having identified no impacts, redevelopment was allowed to quickly move forward.

In 2014, the property was purchased by owners who spent nearly \$600,000 over two years to renovate the three-story building. The Norristown City Council also provided a \$100,000 Federal Community Development Block Grant to cover the cost of equipment in exchange for the promise of creating three full-time jobs at the site. The new owners were also awarded a \$7,200 municipal grant to restore the façade of the historic building.

The Benefits

The Five Saints Distillery opened in 2016. The 9,000-square-foot property features alcohol stills and a bar and displays memorabilia from the Humane Fire Co. The micro-distillery also acts as a music venue and hosts yoga classes every Saturday morning. "Norristown is ready for revitalization," the owner says. "And we want to help make it happen."



Opened in 2016, the Five Saints Distillery offers four different liquors distilled on premises, acts as a music venue and even hosts yoga classes every Saturday.

EPA Grant Recipient:

The City of Norristown, Pennsylvania

EPA Grant Type:

Brownfields Assessment

Former Use: Firehouse

Current Use: Distillery

“The reuse of the historic building is critical. This will be a magnet for tourism and help bring pride to Norristown.”

*Jayne Musonye,
Norristown Director of
Planning and Municipal
Development*

For more information:

Visit the EPA Brownfields website at www.epa.gov/brownfields or contact Stephanie Branche-Carter at Branche.Stephanie@epa.gov.