

Project Summary

Purpose of the project

Union Square is a mixed-use development in New Hope, PA, consisting of repurposed 19th century factory buildings that had been in use up to late 1980s. Bounding the site to the south is the train yard and station for the New Hope and Ivyland railroad, a restored steam train line giving tourist rides. In addition to renovating the existing structures, new buildings were planned, including an extension of the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown and a brewery/restaurant. Since the town is known for its lack of adequate parking, the boro required this project to provide ample parking for both its tenants and tourists. The developer wanted to mitigate the impact of all these parking areas while establishing a robust and unique character that would not only reflect the site's history, but ensure the success of its tenants by competing with the strong pull of the adjacent, popular downtown area.

Role of the Landscape Architect

We worked with the developer to create detailed planting and paving concepts. We made suggestions for the existing site plan as to how to break up the parking areas with tree islands and generously sized unit-paver crosswalks. Pavers were selected carefully, to coordinate with the buildings' worn brick hues. We proposed paving the entire main vehicular entry with unit pavers; this area is where the project met the richly pedestrian-scaled fabric of the town, and was a highly visible part of the development.

We prepared a planting plan for the whole site, selecting plants for their drought tolerance and durability in a "brownfield" situation. Trees provide needed shade, and the train yard view was screened.

We helped locate a developer-purchased hippopotamus fountain within the project, in front of the Michener Museum extension. We were responsible for the installation of this fountain, in addition to the plantings for the entire development.

Local Significance

- Union Square redirects New Hope's growth to brownfield land; areas already disturbed by development.
- Restored structures preserve the history of the town in architecture, while providing an asset in the form of revenue-producing office and retail space.
- The project's character helps attract and retain office and small business tenants, giving some balance to a town whose tourist industry has grown out of proportion in relation to its other sectors.
- The Hippo fountain has become a successful landmark for both locals and visitors alike to meet up.

Special Features

- Large areas of reusable unit pavers were used to enhance and define pedestrian areas.
- Lush, drought resistant plantings soften the built environment, while providing strong year-round interest.
- An abundance of grasses were used intentionally to suggest both the meadows often found around old factory structures, and the countryside that still surrounds the town.
- A playful hippo fountain in front of the Museum provides the relaxing sound of water. It sits in an abstracted wetland of grasses and perennials. This garden

butts against a curved seat-height wall that matches the building's watercourse, where visitors can sit and enjoy the fountain up close.