

America's Workplace of the Future Built on a Brownfield Site

Built on the site of an abandoned rail yard along the riverfront in downtown Pittsburgh, PNC Firstside Center is a shiny, new penny for the PNC Financial Services Group and the City of Pittsburgh.

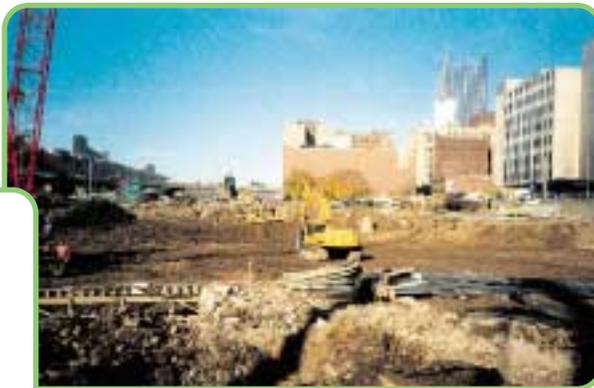
The five-story, \$120 million building, with enough data cable to stretch from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC — 234 miles worth — is a technology hub for PNC. Touted as America's workplace of the future, this state-of-the-art facility not only strengthens PNC's bottom line, but also benefits PNC's workforce, the environment and the Pittsburgh community.

Gary Saulson, senior vice president of PNC Realty Services, challenged PNC's project design team, which included LDA — L.D. Astorino Companies and Dick Corp. to contribute to PNC's return on investment and shareholder value while incorporating green building design principles into nearly every aspect of the project. "Our review of green building design revealed that it's a commercially intelligent approach that pays dividends for many years to come," Saulson said. "The return on investment is enormous."

One of the first and foremost decisions was to locate a prospective site. PNC's goal was to select a location that would not contribute to urban sprawl or unnecessarily waste green space. After considering 17 sites, PNC Realty Services chose the former Baltimore & Ohio railway terminal site located on the edge of downtown Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River. A former brownfield, remediated by CSX Real Property in 1995 under the Land Recycling Program (Act 2), the site was underutilized and not much more than a gravel parking lot at the time of the purchase. Being in a prominent location, the site represented a good fit with PNC's site selection criteria.

Ultimately, Firstside Center was designed to create an interactive and functional workspace for PNC's high-tech workforce. Among the center's employee-friendly amenities: a full-service cafeteria with an outdoor terrace, two break rooms per floor, the first corporate-operated childcare program in downtown Pittsburgh and private rooms for nursing mothers. With stone and glass facades on three sides and a curved southern facade comprised almost entirely of windows, Firstside Center provides many PNC employees with a view of the Ohio River Valley, while more than 90 percent of the employees enjoy some degree of natural lighting.

One of PNC's primary concerns was to select a location that would not contribute to urban sprawl or unnecessarily waste green space.



In Pursuit of Environmentally-Friendly Design

When PNC's growth and expansion necessitated a new building to house the company's growing staff in Pittsburgh, the company began exploring possible site options in and around the city. The new facility needed to consolidate more than 1,500 employees from 20 departments and scattered PNC locations.

The obvious project objective was to build a facility that would best meet PNC's corporate needs. Literally hundreds of different planning, design and development criteria came into play, including **cost, location, employee accessibility, functionality and energy efficiency.**



Would you like fries with that? PNC employees benefit from the Firstside Center's convenient location, accessibility, worker-friendly design and eat-in cafeteria.

"Many brownfield sites in Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the country are located along rivers, providing tremendous opportunities for building with views to the water," David Pecharka, AIA, vice president of sustainable design at LDA — L.D. Astorino Companies, said. "Developers shouldn't see a brownfield as a hindrance, but rather as a chance to capitalize on the **many amenities a brownfield offers**, including **prime location**, urban context and opportunities for attractive views."

The Right Choice for Employees, the Region and the Environment

Through careful evaluation of prospective sites, the PNC site became a successful **urban in-fill** project that provided for the rehabilitation of wasted space and the utilization of **existing infrastructures**, including roads, sewers and bus stops.

For example, a survey of PNC employees had revealed that the majority used public transportation to get to work, and the old railroad site allowed PNC to make mass transit more convenient for its employees while reducing downtown traffic. At the corner of First Avenue and Grant Street, the site offers a number of **transit-related benefits**, including nearby Port Authority bus stops, a 1,200-space parking garage and access to the Eliza Furnace "Rail-Trail" for cyclists and joggers. And, at PNC's request, the Port Authority agreed to construct a new light rail "T" station adjacent to PNC Firstside Center. The new station is currently under construction and scheduled to be completed by late 2001.

PNC even went the extra mile to encourage **environmentally responsible**

transportation options by extending the Eliza Furnace Trail to the edge of the building, providing bike racks for 60 bicycles, installing shower and changing facilities, and building on-site electrical recharging stations to accommodate up to eight hybrid-powered vehicles. And, the site's close proximity to major highways leading into the city helps reduce vehicle congestion entering and leaving downtown Pittsburgh.

PNC's decision to locate this facility in downtown Pittsburgh earned praise from Pittsburgh Mayor Tom Murphy. "PNC has demonstrated its commitment to Pittsburgh, and its loyalty has created jobs for this city and region. There were many other options presented to PNC to build elsewhere, but the company chose to stay right here, in downtown Pittsburgh," Murphy said.

Furthermore, PNC Firstside Center demonstrates the cost-effectiveness of sustainable development and **green building techniques**. The building earned the distinction of being the largest building and the first financial institution in the U.S. to receive the prestigious **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) certification** at the Silver level by the U.S. Green Building Council.

"Many of the green buildings to date have occurred within the nonprofit sector, and as a result, are often dismissed by private developers," Rebecca Flora, executive director of the Green Building Alliance, said. "This large, complex and visible urban building provides testimony to the fact that green is viable, and in fact beneficial, for the private sector."



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A web space dedicated to helping you learn how to protect and improve the environment. The site features the largest collection of environmental videos available on the Internet and is produced by the nonprofit Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania, with financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 877-PA-GREEN.



For more information about the **PNC Firstside Center** contact DEP's Southwest Regional Office at (412) 442-5811.