

WEST SIXTH BREWING COMPANY

DCA.KY.GOV/BROWNFIELDS

ENVHELP@KY.GOV

502-564-0323



A brownfield was transformed into a popular entertainment and business center.



Brewhouse at West Sixth Brewing Company

Early in 2011, Joe Kuosman, Ben Self, Robin Sither and Brady Barlow searched for a location for the craft brewery they wanted to open in Lexington. The men knew they wanted their business to be in a neighborhood near downtown, be environmentally friendly and sustainable.

By August, the partners found the perfect site in the city's historic Northside Neighborhood, at the corner of Sixth and Jefferson streets. The place they chose to establish their West Sixth Brewing Company was the former Rainbo Bread Company.

West Sixth's owners say they were excited to be able to locate their brewery in such a great neighborhood and looked forward to breathing life into the huge building, which had been unoccupied for so long. Besides being close to downtown, the old Rainbo building was not overly expensive. Fortunately, it already had a cooler in the back, floor drains and industrial utilities, all of which were perfect for the new craft brewery.

The 90,000-square-foot structure was designated as a brownfield and certified for brownfield zoning for adaptive reuse by the Kentucky Brownfield Redevelopment Program. Since the building was passed over for redevelopment by other groups in the community because of lead and asbestos concerns, the property qualified as a brownfield in Kentucky.

Brownfields are properties that are abandoned or underutilized due to real or perceived contamination. In this case, it was mostly perception-based as there was little remediation needed. Meeting the brownfield criteria made the property eligible for flexible zoning in Lexington, allowing West Sixth to invite nonproduction-based tenants into the facility and for expanded parking. This enabled the owners of West Sixth to invite businesses and nonprofits into the brewery building who might not have had the chance otherwise. The redeveloped two-story building, which also has a basement and dates back to 1880, is now called The Bread Box.

Key to Success

Brownfields may not seem attractive, but they often are more cost-effective than vacant land since they have an infrastructure and utilities in place.

A large portion of the historic building consists of large, open rooms with industrial-style windows. One of the attractions for the owners was that the floors, walls and roof were intact, so there were lots of original parts to the building, with things that could be reused. In the room where the brewery is housed, the original yellow tile walls remain, still in good condition. Several rooms have original tile floors. Portions of the old maple loading dock and wood from the University of Kentucky's Memorial Coliseum were used to form the bar area for the brewery. Metal came from the mixers in the upper floor of The Bread Box.

"All the windows needed steel lintels," says Ben Self. "Part of the floor was on a concrete

slab, while there was a crawl space under the rest of it. All of the copper had been stolen. The windows were blocked in and had to be removed. But the building has lots of architectural character with several features, including its barreled roof. If you are considering the purchase of a brownfield, go for it, but expect surprises and challenges."

Besides the brewery, tap room and beer garden in the front corner of The Bread Box, the building hosts "other companies and community organizations that share our values, beliefs and commitment to the community," according to the owners. Some of those businesses and organizations are the Broke Spoke Community Bike Shop, Cricket Press, Roller Girls of Central Kentucky, Bluegrass Distillers and Smithtown Seafood. FoodChain is a nonprofit focused on urban indoor food farming production and education that includes growing vegetables and raising tilapia in a vertical farm. There are also artist studios in The Bread Box.

"The neighbors are happy because the street corner has gone from being blighted to becoming a vibrant, positive influence," says Self.

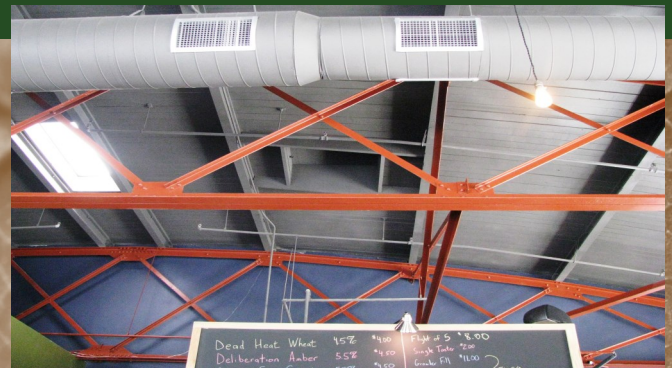
West Sixth Brewing Company is one in a series of projects transforming the Jefferson Street area into a restaurant and entertainment corridor. Part of the Legacy Trail, a biking and jogging path, is near the building. The Bluegrass Community and Technical College campus is to the west, and Transylvania University is a few blocks east.

"We measure success not only by making great craft beer, but also by how it helps our community. We will always strive to protect our environment even if it costs us more to do so. The microbrewery donates six percent of its profits to local charities and nonprofit organizations that make our community a great place to live," Self said.

Another measure of success is that West Sixth Brewing Company is the first Kentucky brewery to can its beer and has the ability to produce 1,200 barrels per month.



Wood from the loading dock and UK Memorial Coliseum was used in the bar area.



The barrel ceiling