



The Shed is a 15,000-square-foot courtyard area at the Crown Center. The skeletal steel canopy features planters and raised garden beds, which are nourished by two large tanks that capture rainwater.

Building Blocks: Crown Center

By: Frank Jossi April 16, 2015 1:00 pm

Address: 1227-1331 Tyler St. NE, Minneapolis

Description: Multi-tenant office building complex

Website: hillcrestdevelopment.com

Built: 1920s-1970s

Occupancy rate: 99.5 percent

Lease rates: \$8 to \$14 per square foot net

Owner: Hillcrest Development LLLP

Architect: Unknown

Property description: The Crown Center is a jumble of 12 adjacent one- and two- story buildings surrounding a courtyard parking lot in front of the popular Bauhaus Brew Labs.

The 2.5-acre complex features the typically appealing warehouse aesthetic of large windows and exposed brick walls knit together by less-than-linear corridors. Parking surrounds the building on all sides.

The newest addition to the 164,000-square-foot Crown Center is a 15,000-square-foot area known as "The Shed," which sits in a courtyard area. Available only to tenants and invited guests, the community green space celebrates the Crown Center's industrial roots with many eye-catching features. The skeletal steel canopy leaves much of The Shed exposed to the elements. Planters and raised garden beds are nourished by two large tanks that capture rainwater.

"The Shed is a commons area of a kind that doesn't exist in any other Northeast property," said Scott Tankenoff, Hillcrest managing partner. "It's become a highly desirable part of Crown Center."

Tenant mix: The roster includes more than a dozen photographers, several architecture and advertising firms, and Bauhaus Brew Labs. The two largest tenants are the furniture company Blu Dot and the medical device company Tactile Medical. More than 300 people work in businesses housed in Crown Center.

Interesting tidbits: Hillcrest bought the former Crown Iron Works and Electric Machinery Co. in 2008. By all accounts the brown brick buildings were falling apart and "dangerous," he said. The complex had 35 to 40 small business tenants and a handful of immigrant families squatting in buildings with severe structural, foundational and infrastructure issues.

"It was an unsafe, code-deficient building that was a disaster," Tankenoff said.

The project could not have worked without the support of grants from local, state and county agencies totaling \$1.6

million, he said. Within 90 days, Hillcrest's contractors turned the blighted urban brownfield site by removing 10,000 tons of contaminated soil and asbestos and shoring up structurally unsound walls, floors and foundations.

The company then rehabilitated all the buildings. "Crown Center was the most challenging project we've ever renovated," Tankenoff said.

Below are more photos of Crown Center by staff photographer Bill Klotz:



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