

Providing space for artists benefits community

4 ◀ **NORTHRUP KING BLDG**

an organization that works with underrepresented artists to create space that allows them to continue their practice. Public Functionary currently occupies multiple studios and exhibit space in the building and has evolving needs, Bishop said.

Artspace also has met with the Northeast Minneapolis Arts District board, said Josh Blanc, a Northeast artist, resident and Arts District board chair. “They gave us the opportunity to weigh in, and they embraced us. I have yet to see a negative concept ... they’re doing ecological things, they’re doing thoughtful planning, and they’re including a lot of people that are marginalized, people who don’t always even get an opportunity”

Blanc reflected on how artists who started out in the district have developed over the years into mid-career and full career artists with evolving space needs. Sometimes lack of space can lead experienced artists and valuable mentors to leave the community, he said. “So now they will be offering opportunities for those artists to move to the next level, and there’s space for them.”

Artspace’s specialization means that they know what artists’ needs are, such as good lighting, electrical power for equipment like kilns and welders, and flex workspace, something the Arts District advocated for, Blanc said. “They have an execution record that shows that they understand what they’re up against.”

Stormwater showcase

The passage between the two buildings slated for the live/work spaces will be transformed into Stormwater Street, a system of roof drains, native plant beds, and trenches that collect and control the rate of flow of stormwater, essentially filtering and pretreating it before it reaches storm drains. Open runnels along the street will carry the water away from the site and to the drains. “It’s right there for people to see and enjoy and get that connection of ... how stormwater is managed,” said Alicia Beattie, capital projects and stewardship specialist for the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization, which awarded



Current view looking north at the area that will become Stormwater Street. At right, the outside of the six-story building and the interior of the high-ceilinged top story.

(Photos by Karen Kraco, inside by Margo Ashmore)

\$750,000 for the project.

Signage explaining the stormwater features and the native plantings will be an educational aspect of the project and worked into the community spaces.

Beattie said the design is expected to remove about 80% of the phosphorus and 92% of the sediment from the runoff coming from about 11 acres of impervious surface at the site that currently flows to the river untreated. The work that is being funded is above and beyond the treatment required by city ordinance, she said.

“I don’t think I’ve ever been involved in a project where stormwater has played such an important role,” said Greg Handberg, senior vice president for properties at Artspace. After rainfall the parking surfaces on the Northrup King campus become “Lake Van Buren” as Handberg calls it, referring to one of the streets that runs through the site.

Community connections

Other improvements to the site, which is bounded by railroad tracks and accessed by turning a series of corners, will open the Northrup King space to the surrounding neighborhood. “We have very much turned our lens outward a little bit ... We’ve been trying to spend a lot of time thinking about how this campus fits within the larger Northeast Arts District area,” said Handberg.

On the northwest corner of the

property, opening an existing gate onto 18th Avenue Northeast near Monroe Street will make it easier to get to the nearby Solar Arts and Casket Arts buildings. Adding a bike lane and a pedestrian way along the railroad tracks will provide easy passage from Central Avenue to the various buildings on the campus and to the gate on 18th, Handberg explained.

The physical connections are not the only ways the community will benefit from providing space for artists, said Brenda Kayzar, of Urbane DrK Consulting. Kayzar is a Northeast resident and economic development consultant who specializes in the creative sector.

Kayzar, a former board member of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association, puts into context how the presence of artists in the Northrup King Building – and elsewhere in Northeast – connects to the local economy. When the building was converted into studio, gallery, and retail spaces, she said, “you have ... 350 small businesses, all these entrepreneurs, that are producing something. They go out, and they shop, they go have lunch, they go buy coffee, they go buy supplies and then ... they also think about living in the area. They become residents.”

Live/workspaces have the potential to be “a little bit scary” in terms of development, she said, because the upgrades that are required to convert the industrial spaces into residential spaces



bring the places much closer to the possibility of condo conversion and pricing the artists out of the space. “But in this case, because it’s Artspace, and they’re a nonprofit developer, and they hold their buildings, and their mission is affordable live/work artist space, we couldn’t have a better situation.” Given that Artspace is committed to keeping the already-occupied portions of the site intact, while enhancing it with affordable living space, she said, “It’s really kind of a win-win.”

Waiting and seeing

“It’s very positive,” said Loretta Bebeau. “It seems like they’re making this a showcase project.” She said that she is not overly worried about the future of her studio, but nonetheless, “Every-

body is just watching, listening.”

That’s true for Jack Pavlik. He has concerns that the residential space might result in “quiet hours” and affect his ability to work with metal and woodworking equipment during off-hours. He said that when he inquired about this when the plans were presented to Northrup King tenants, Artspace said that hasn’t been a problem at their other properties.

“Artspace gave a supportive response to my concern, and that was appreciated, but we won’t know until we have live-in tenants in the building,” he said.

Full disclosure: Northeaster reporter/photographer Karen Kraco co-manages a studio/gallery in the Northrup King Building.

This holiday season, **Eastside Food Co-op** is on a mission to end chronic hunger through our partnership with **mercato.**

You can help do your part just by shopping online. Every order you place helps feed a family in need. Because every meal counts.



Online scheduling now available!

P Park Dental
Silver Lake

ROOTED IN THE
COMMUNITY

Morning, evening and Saturday hours

Doctor-owned, locally loved

2600 39th Ave NE, Suite 225
St. Anthony, MN 55421
763-781-7475

parkdental.com

Trusted dentist for the **Vikings**