

MONTGOMERY AWARDS

Excellence in Planning and Design

2021 Award Winner



Cricket Flats Lower Merion Township

Cricket Flats received a 2021 Montgomery Award for transit-oriented development (TOD) concept, context-sensitive design, and collaborative public process. This successful infill project involves a 5-story mixed-use building on Cricket Avenue in downtown Ardmore, just a short walk from the Ardmore Regional Rail station. The building, totaling 100,063 square

feet, includes four residential stories above a commercial ground floor, with parking integrated within the building and underground. This exceptional project, the result of an extensive public participation process, contributes greatly to a walkable downtown Ardmore with its comprehensive streetscape improvements and effective circulation plan.

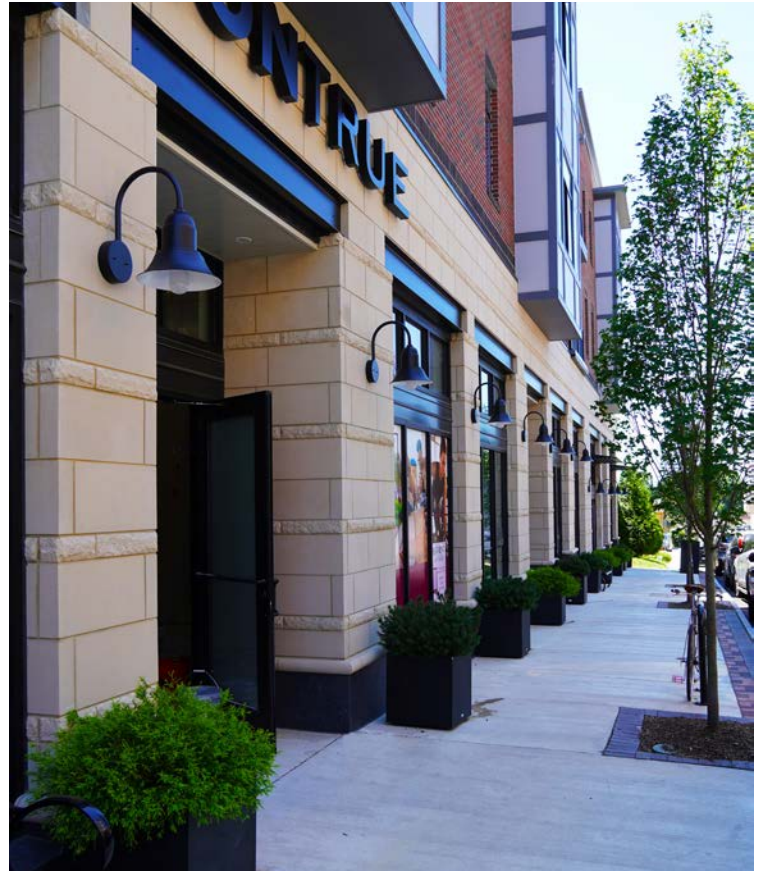


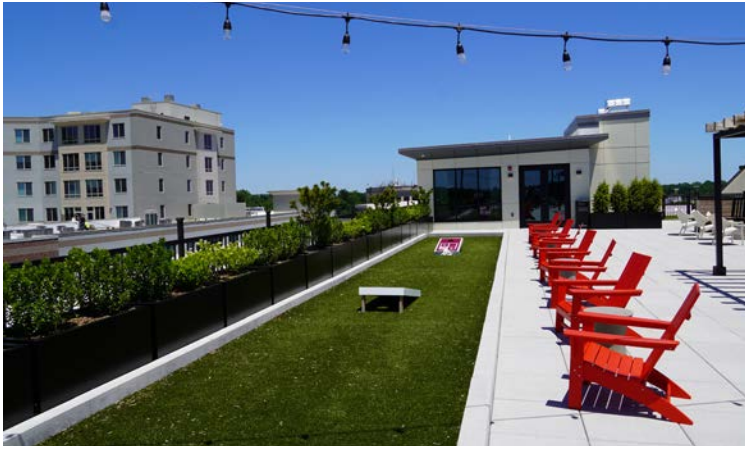
TOD Concept

This project is located within a compact downtown area surrounding the Ardmore station and the Suburban Square shopping center, which offers urban amenities within a suburban environment, and is a short train ride to Center City Philadelphia. The current zoning allows for a maximum building height of 4 stories, but Cricket Flats was developed under the MUST (Mixed Use Special Transportation) district of the township's previous zoning code, which applied to commercially zoned land within a half mile of the Ardmore station and allowed buildings up to 9 stories and 100 percent lot coverage. The mix of commercial uses and 77 one- and two-bedroom residential units matches the density and land uses that are optimum for a successful TOD project. All vehicular access to parking is located on Trolley Way, an alley along the rear of the building, which creates a pleasant walkable experience due in part to the absence of any vehicular driveways along the frontage. This vibrant, pedestrian-oriented environment along Cricket Avenue, with over 10,000 square feet of commercial frontage, was also enhanced with an improved wide sidewalk that allows for outdoor dining, street trees, landscaped planters, and benches. In addition, pedestrian circulation is extended by an open-air corridor that runs through the building and connects Trolley Way and public parking to Cricket Avenue and the four commercial storefronts.

Context-Sensitive Design

This successful TOD infill project, which replaced a combination of vacant buildings and an auto body shop, exemplifies context-sensitive design in both its massing and use of materials. The stepback of the two upper stories reinforces the existing 3-story street frontage of adjoining buildings in this historic district and allows more light into the neighboring property. The use of a material palette to create a distinct base, middle, and cap breaks up the mass of the building and complements the adjoining building design. The commercial ground floor base is built in masonry block, and the residential second and third stories are brick with a contemporary interpretation of bay windows. The





two upper stories, designed as the stepped-back cap in a “birthday cake” style, provide for a rooftop common space with spectacular views of Ardmore and Center City Philadelphia and use fiber cement panels, which create the appearance of a recent addition. The extensive use of glass along the street frontage and in the upper stories matches the existing rhythm along Cricket Avenue. Cricket Flats adds significant density while being sensitive to the existing architecture and massing on the street and succeeds in retaining the fabric of the neighborhood. In addition, the LEED-inspired design approach includes a second-floor green roof, an extensive stormwater management system, and energy efficiency.

Collaborative Public Process

The developer led an extensive public process that not only improved the overall design of the building but also led to unanimous approval of the plan. The building stepback, which helps in reducing the massing of the building from a pedestrian perspective along the street, was accomplished through successful collaboration with the township’s Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB). The board, wanting the building to fit seamlessly within the historic district, was also influential in the selection of the material palette, which was discussed at eleven public meetings over the course of a year. The township was instrumental in having Trolley Way provide the only vehicular access from the back of the building. The developer met with all of Ardmore’s organized civic groups several times and hosted multiple advertised public gatherings to present the project to members of the public who may not otherwise attend a civic meeting. In addition, through a private-public partnership with Lower Merion Township, the developer provided the use of the Cricket Flats site as a temporary open-air parking lot operated by the township for the rental rate of \$1 annually during the construction of One Ardmore Place across the street.



Cricket Flats, the successful result of an extensive public collaboration process, is an excellent example of an outstanding transit-oriented infill development and serves as a model for future development. This appealing mixed-use addition to Cricket Avenue has enhanced the area through a context-sensitive design approach that blends the building into the neighborhood and adds significantly to an inviting, vibrant streetscape that enriches walkable downtown Ardmore.



Location

65 Cricket Avenue
Lower Merion Township
Montgomery County

Project Data

Land Use

Residential Mix Use (77 residential units and
10,738 commercial sf)

Tract Size

0.71 Acre

Zoning

MUST Overlay

Building Area

143,860 SF

Parking

107 (77 residential; 30 commercial)



A display of cricket balls, an homage to the Merion Cricket Club that was located on Cricket Avenue for a short time, greets residents and visitors in the lobby. In the background is an abstract painting of downtown Ardmore.

Key Features

- Innovative Planning Concept
- Collaborative Effort
- Streetscape Enhancement
- Architectural Design

Developer

Core Development
283 2nd Street Pike, Suite 110
Southampton, PA 18966

Architect

BartonPartners
700 E. Main Street, Suite 301
Norristown, PA 19401

Landscape Architect

DAS Architects
1628 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 1300
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Land Planner

SITE Engineering Concepts, LLC
622 Lancaster Avenue
Berwyn, PA 19312

Engineer

Larsen & Landis
11 W. Thompson Street
Philadelphia, PA 19125

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The program acknowledges the high-quality work and commitment of communities, organizations, and professionals.

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