



The Brooks Arcade building houses the headquarters of AlphaGraphics in addition to several residences and other businesses.

Brooks Arcade a 'model' of downtown living, working space

By Christie Hawkes

Walking into the AlphaGraphics building at 300 S. State St. in Salt Lake City, it is immediately obvious that this is more than just the headquarters of an international franchise system. It is a community of businesses and residents, a prime example of a successful mixed-use building. "This is a model of what the city would like to see, people walking to bus stops and light rail, living where they work," said Chris Kirk of Commerce CRG, the

structure's leasing agent. "AlphaGraphics took the initiative years ago. You are starting to see more residential space mixed with business and retail, but AlphaGraphics led the way."

AlphaGraphics purchased the historic Brooks Arcade Building from the Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency (RDA) in 2001, pledging to restore the building and preserve its façade. To help offset the costs of the restoration project, AlphaGraphics received a \$5.2 million

RDA incentive package. In exchange for the \$1.7 million grant and \$3.5 million low-interest loan, AlphaGraphics agreed to restore the building's façade, develop the roof-top level for residential use and occupy two floors of the structure for at least four years. Jay Cooper, director of new franchisee services for AlphaGraphics, says the company met all of the requirements of the contract.

In addition to being the world head-
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quarters for AlphaGraphics, the building is home to America First Credit Union, Charles Schwab, Chrysler Financial, Beans & Brews, East Coast Subs, Five Star restaurant and two new tenants — the Utah chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Konica-Minolta. Sitting atop the building are nine condominiums, a rooftop garden and two hot tubs. As Kirk points out, visitors to the building can see their financial advisor, visit a friend and get a cup of coffee or a meal all without leaving the building. Five of the condominiums are home to full-time residents, three house part-time residents and two of the units are currently on the market. Two office spaces remain available.

From a residential perspective, Neil Grottegut, president of the building's homeowners association, said it couldn't be more perfect. Salt Lake City has a thriving arts and entertainment industry. "I am in the UTA free rate zone and within walking distance to just about any venue except the University of Utah," he said. "It's convenient, and we have a great community. I couldn't ask for a better place."

A love of the arts is one of the driving forces that brought Natalie Kaddas, half of the husband and wife team that own Beans & Brews, to the downtown location. Beans & Brews is a year-round sponsor of the Utah Arts Council and part of the monthly gallery stroll. The coffee shop displays the

works of a different artist each month, including on at least one occasion the artwork of a Beans & Brews barista. In the beginning, Kaddas said she was desperate to have artists come and begged them to participate — now they are not only coming to her, there is a waiting list.

In addition to being at the heart of Salt Lake City's arts community, being a tenant of the AlphaGraphics building has other draws for Kaddas as well.

"The community in this building is fantastic," she said. "It feels like more of a family. I don't feel like this little business owner. I have people I can bounce ideas off of, people who have a vested interest in my success."

Many of the condominium owners and business tenants come down for their morning coffee, and the Beans & Brews staff knows them well, not just their favorite beverages, but also what's happening in their careers and personal lives.

Kaddas and the other tenants also say having the building's owner on site is a definite advantage. If there is a problem, the landlord is right there. Kirk said it has helped in the leasing efforts as well.

"Usually all commercial buildings have management on site, but when you have the owner right here, you can feel a real sense of family," he said. "Not only do you need a light bulb changed, but you may really want to say 'Hi' to the people."

Cooper says AlphaGraphics works hard to sustain the community environment in the building and, according to the

tenants, it is working. AIA Utah, one of the building's newest tenants, applauds AlphaGraphics' global view and its willingness to accommodate AIA Utah's efforts to build a space that will qualify for a LEED Platinum rating. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System provides a metric with which to measure a building's sustainability. Applicants receive credits for specific achievements in the categories of water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resource, indoor environmental quality and innovation in design.

"LEED rating eliminates companies 'greenwashing,' putting in a bike rack and a shower and calling themselves sustainable," said AIA Utah member Garth Shaw. "LEED actually puts some numbers, a metric, to how sustainable these features are."

Shaw is quick to point out that AIA Utah has taken a reasonable approach to being green. "You won't see a pile of compost in the corner," he said.

What you will see is that the lights are concentrated where the close work is done and kept low over the walkways. Sensors are built into the lights, so that as the daylight increases, the electric lights dim proportionately. If no one is in the room, a heat-activated sensor turns off the lights and ventilation to that room. The office is full of recycled materials, from the carpet squares on the floor to the reception counter, which is made of trestle wood reclaimed from the railroad tracks at the Great Salt

Lake.

Just being located in the AlphaGraphics building contributes to AIA Utah's chance of achieving the LEED Platinum rating. Earning LEED credit for being in an urban dense location requires that there be 91,000 square feet of useable space to an acre. Parking structures do not count. That the AlphaGraphics building is part of an area more than twice that dense is impressive.

"No one gets the urban density credit," Shaw said. "This project has 186,000 square feet per acre. This is a dense urban location. That supports the environment."

The façade of this building may be more than 100 years old, but everything else about it is cutting edge.

"AlphaGraphics is setting the standard," Kirk said. "The tenants are the beneficiaries of AlphaGraphics' added amenities and technology."

When AlphaGraphics bought the building eight years ago, it was home to crumbling sandstone, pigeons and their droppings. Now it is home to state-of-the-art under floor cabling, reflective lighting and a growing community of businesses and residences."

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