



habitat



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Housed in the heart of Friendship, evolveEA has made a name for itself as a firm that considers sustainable design as more than a catch-phrase – to them it’s “a dynamic process of understanding and of redefinition and, at its core, is a cultural phenomenon.” Even their work space echoes that belief, as owner Christine Mondor, AIA explains...



What is the office coffee policy?

Coffee, for us, is more of an experience than a drink. While we make great coffee, we also got to design a space to drink it in – Volutto Coffee is across the street and it has provided creative energy in all senses of the word. Needless to say, we have an account there.



How long have you been in this space?

We moved in 2004, in part charmed by the building’s history of creative enterprises including the Dance Alloy, a fine arts book binder, and other artists. The previous tenant in our space had been a fashion designer and we loved the patina of creativity.

Who designed the office/space?

The space is a pretty simple box with windows at one end and a kitchen at the other. The design was really in the workstation. At the time all three partners and our intern agreed that 4 U-shaped workstations would be perfect for our drawing boards and computers. How things have changed – now we have 9 people in the same space, using the components of the original design!

Would you say the philosophy of the firm is expressed through the design? How?

Our work often focuses on bringing diverse expertise together to solve problems and we have different disciplines in-house and as outside collaborators. The openness and compactness of the space works well to break down territorial boundaries, both physical and psychological.





Why was this location/neighborhood chosen as home base for the firm?

It was home base for Marc and I, and the community group was doing great work. Plus, we loved having dancers and other artists streaming through the building, and Penn Avenue's events like Unblurred.

What amenities are unique to the office?

We are across the street from a beer distributor so we have beer trucks that drive 4' from our back door. I guess we could almost have a "drive-by" beer service if we wanted...

Did you do anything special to meet sustainable and accessibility standards?

We have done a carbon inventory for our space and our operations and found that we have lower CO₂ emissions per person than other service industry businesses but we still had things we could improve. We made a few no cost/low cost changes to the space – like unlamping half of the fixtures that were provided by the building.

With our 2011 carbon offset purchase we will be officially carbon neutral at the close of the year!



What/where is the client base? What are client reactions to the space?

We most often go to our client's space. When we need to host larger groups, we have shared meeting spaces with other tenants in the building or find offsite spaces that provoke our thinking.

How has the work environment influenced the way you work?

We just finished a project where three of us were working independently on different parts of the same project. You would think that being 5 feet or 15 feet apart would be close enough, but we all moved our computers to a single communal table to work 2 feet apart. There is something powerful about co-location and mobile technology makes it possible to keep evolving the concept of workspace. 