



HAUCK ARCHITECTURE

What Makes A Site Great For A Brewery?

Part One

Determining your brewery location is both personal and practical; its home is vital to the success of your brand. There are exciting benefits to both building into an existing space and creating a location from the ground up. On one hand, there is a nostalgic and environmentally responsible feeling about retrofitting an existing building. On the other hand, building new has fewer limitations.

For this article, we will explore the former, discussing what to look for in an existing structure when determining if it is right for you.

Size of Space for Production

Your most critical decision is determining how much space you need. As a general rule of thumb during early planning, estimate 1 square foot of floor area for each barrel of beer produced per year; this assumes about 10% for your tap room and 10% for cold storage. Larger tap rooms; larger distribution plans with larger cold storage; barrel programs; and other operations may increase the square footage required. Efficiencies, dual use spaces, and an offsite storage may reduce square footage needs. Acquire a space that is large enough to handle what you think will be your maximum production volume in one to 5 years, and grow into it.

Additionally, consider possible expansion into a neighboring space. Are you able to acquire the first right of refusal to take over an adjacent suite if it becomes available? If so, plan your brewery layout to make that expansion easier. The most common expansions are added cellar capacity; cold and dry storage; and packaging. Design your brewery so those areas are easily expanded and do not disrupt the process flow of your brewery. Upgrading the brewhouse is something you might not do right away. It is a critical part of the brewery infrastructure and is much more disruptive to replace.

Physical Characteristics

There are additional physical characteristics of a brewery site that are imperative considerations. Clear height is important when gaging the limitations of what equipment fits in



the space. Does the space have a door that is wide and tall enough to accommodate all of your product deliveries, including large tanks?

Available outdoor space is a benefit for a variety of reasons. Customer patios are a wonderful element of a tap room, enhancing your customer experience. Additionally, outdoor space is also important for spent grain storage, trash, and equipment not desirable to have indoors, such as a hot, noisy glycol chiller; hazardous CO2 tanks; and loud compressors. Having a place to locate these outside, ground mounted, are good things to look for.

Planning, Zoning, and Permit Requirements

Planning, zoning, and permit requirements might limit a particular site. Your architect can help identify zones in your city that would be appropriate for a brewery and a tap room. Planning and zoning codes are not always designed to combine manufacturing and commercial uses in the same areas. In those cases, a use permit may be required. It is important to understand what zones are right for your project; what zones are right with a use permit; and the cost and time a use permit adds to a project. Contact your local economic development director to determine the right zone for your brewery.

Zoning may also have an impact on parking requirements. Most jurisdictions have specific parking requirements based on the square footage and use of the building. If required parking needs have to be provided off-street, parking must be provided on your site. (FYI: Street parking usually does not count towards meeting your required parking needs.) A space that has adequate parking for an industrial building might not have enough for commercial use, but there are sometimes ways around this. Some jurisdictions may allow time of use parking or shared parking agreements with adjacent properties that have a parking surplus.

Building codes, separate zoning codes, may also dictate what you can do with a space, such as meeting the number of required exits from a building. In most building codes, two exits are required when the occupant load of your space is 50 persons or more; these exits need to be half the diagonal distance of the space apart from each other (a third if your building is equipped with fire sprinklers). A garage door does not count as an exit, and an exit door is typically a 36" wide swing door equipped with panic or fire exit hardware. Hiring an architect familiar with breweries and hospitality spaces early in the process can help identify these issues before you sign a lease.

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Up Next...

Utilities! In Part Two, we will explore the utilities you should look for and review the cost to upgrade when scoping a potential brewery location.



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Hauck Architecture is the go-to architectural firm for breweries, working with over 75 craft breweries to date. Mr. Hauck, an avid home brewer and craft beer enthusiast, possesses the skill, experience, passion and reputation for planning and executing a successful project, while coordinating with all engineering consultants, contractors and governmental authorities.

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