



# Sustainable by Design: Hamilton Square, Philadelphia

The Hamilton Square development in Philadelphia serves as a testament to the impact of strategic parking planning in an urban campus environment. But it also contains lessons learned regarding sustainability in the built environment.

## Smart Urban Planning Utilized in West Philadelphia

Located in a once blighted area of West Philadelphia, the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) utilized the Hamilton Square project to integrate parking and retail, creating a more sustainable and attractive community to serve its students, as well as residents of the surrounding area.





By locating dense structured parking on an urban infill location, the university followed best practices in urban planning and smart growth. These are the very concepts now enumerated and encouraged in the United States Green Building Council's LEED rating system.

These same elements also are embraced and proposed by the Green Parking Council and the Green Garage Certification Program.

### Garage Part of Mixed-Used Development

The project incorporated an 800-space parking structure with a grocery store located on the ground level, a movie theater, retail stores and a café and restaurant space to enliven the public domain and create a renewed sense of community.

The inclusion of the grocery store filled a critical need for students, local residents and businesses; it created a connection to the city by providing a tangible benefit.

### Project at Center of Vibrant University Community

The Hamilton Square project proved a significant catalyst for the revitalization of the area, and today serves as an exciting place of community on Penn's campus, with a bustling street and activity throughout the day and evening.

The concept of retail frontage at grade in structured parking is now a fairly common concept in parking planning and design—which was not always the case.

The attractive and vibrant Hamilton Square corner

features a sidewalk seating area to activate the streetscape, and encourages patrons to enjoy life inside Philadelphia.

This promotes sustainability and an active lifestyle by encouraging patrons to walk and bicycle, decreasing the need for vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled.

### Strategic Planning Aids in Using Land Effectively

The Hamilton Square project is just one of many planning efforts implemented by the University of Pennsylvania to utilize available land effectively.

The university's strategic planning efforts have helped to accomplish these goals, while creating more opportunities for open space, increasing connections for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles, and improving the quality of life and community for students, faculty and neighbors.

Constructed before the widespread acceptance of rating systems, the message of Hamilton Square is a lasting one.

Rating systems are critically important to the built environment and the parking industry, but they are not necessarily required to achieve a sustainable building or environment. What is necessary is careful attention to planning, best practices and the application of meaningful sustainable strategies. ■



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