

NEWS-HERALD

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY

Restoration gives 'living structure' a second chance

By Emily Morris
Staff writer

In centuries past, residents might have traversed the main street of Blooming Glen as they completed their daily errands, saying hi to their neighbors and engaging in commerce.

Now, the renovation of a former cigar factory in the village center brings a similar feel back to the town.

David Halliday, a Pipersville resident with a 35-year history in construction, has spent the last two years renovating the former Ubeek-Havana Cigar Company Building on Route 113 in Blooming Glen built in 1910. The building now contains three stories of professional offices and conference rooms, as well as Pasqualina's Italian Market and Deli in the basement.

Halliday and his wife, Victoria, a landscape architect whose offices are now in the building, had originally planned to have full-sized standard offices in the building. However, upon finding that the market for such offices was slow-moving, the Hallidays had to brainstorm for a better use. The couple found their niche market through an attempt to solve an issue even David Halliday was

addressing: working from a small space within his own home.

"All of the sudden it struck me," said Halliday of the couple's decision to create an inexpensive space where people who typically work from home to cut costs could rent a one-room office. "It's more affordable and a little more professional than working at the kitchen table."

The tenants at the Village Center Office Suites include a massage therapist, a custom builder, a video surveillance company, an attorney, an HVAC distributor, two financial offices, a pharmaceutical company and the office of a family farm.

In fact, Henry Rosenberger, a Hilltown farmer whose Tussock Sedge Farm organic beef offices are in the new building, has said the building is a "community of commerce," Halliday said.

"Because it's not one company, it's a community within the building," said Halliday. The building's tenants share common conference rooms as well as a coffee and copy area on each floor. By design, this forges relationships between the tenants, Halliday said. Additionally, having a deli on the ground floor of the building has been an asset both for the community and the tenants who might like a bite to eat.

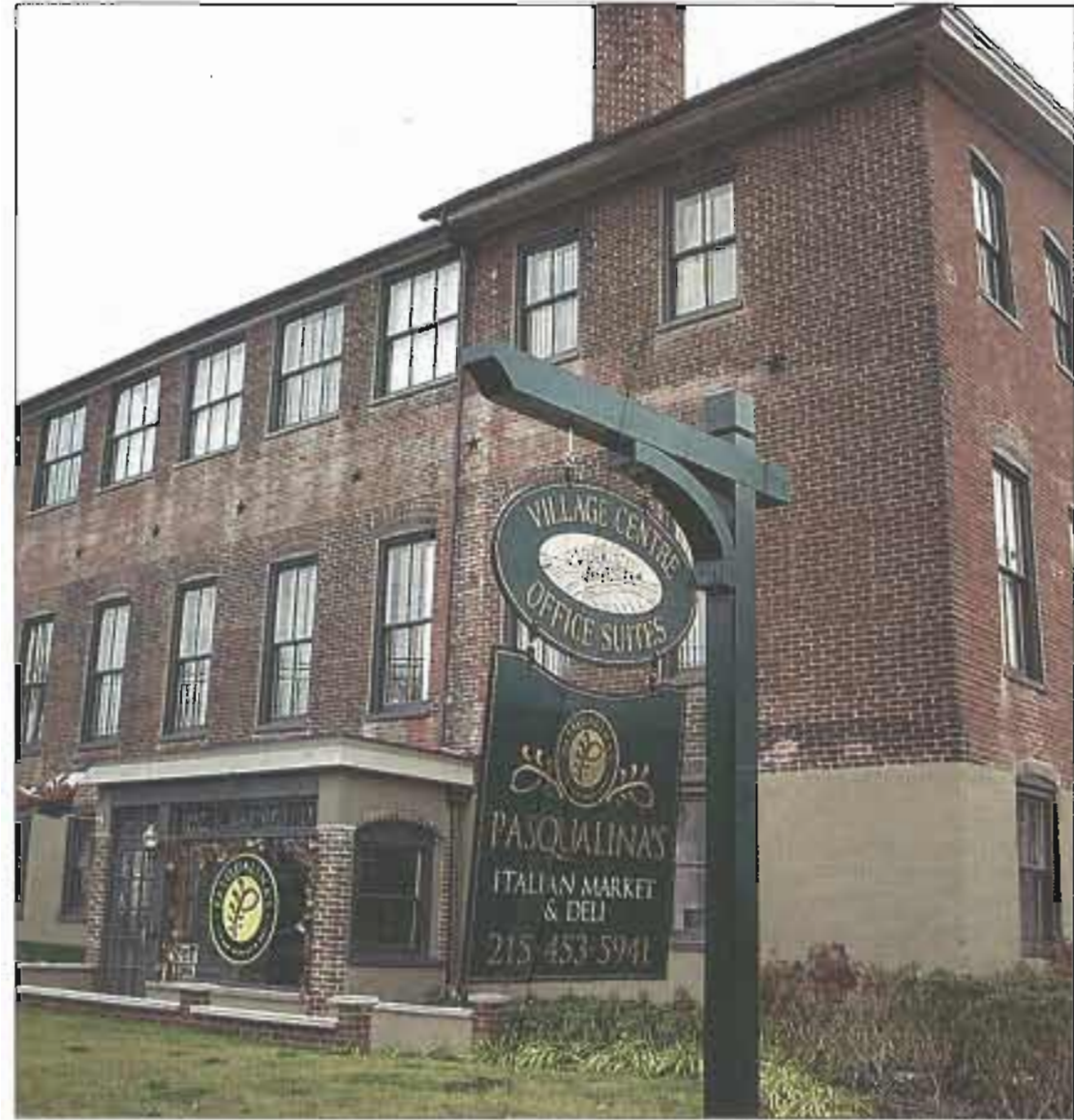
In fact, Patty Gianfelice, owner of the deli, made some life changes of her own when she noticed the renovations of the building. Gianfelice, who lives a few minutes from the old brick factory, had been working in the pharmaceutical industry for years. But the renovations piqued her interest, and in October of 2005, she opened the deli. "I decided to heck with the corporate world," Gianfelice joked.

Business has gone well so far for Gianfelice with so many new developments sprouting up in the area and a great feel in the building.

"I wanted to avoid strip malls, because they have no character," said Gianfelice.

When Halliday purchased the building two years ago, it was unoccupied. The owner at the time was figuring out the best use for the building when the Hallidays offered to purchase it. The couple had been looking for an old factory to purchase and renovate, with the hopes of restoring the building and placing it on the historic registry with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The owner was not interested in selling initially, but it wasn't long before the Hallidays received a phone call that the owner was willing to sell.

The building was in sound condition when Halliday purchased it, but would require some



News-Herald photos - NATALIE MASSAGLIA

The Village Center Office Suites in Blooming Glen features small offices for rent to accommodate small one-person businesses that may have once worked from home. David Halliday of Pipersville recently renovated the building and restored it with the intent of placing it on the National Historic Registry.

looked like.

There are several misconceptions about the historic registry, Halliday said. People often associate the registry with strict restrictions on what can and cannot be done to a building; however, that is only

"There are always surprises when you open something up," said Halliday, whose jovial nature and passion for architecture seem to lend themselves to the type of struggles a building restoration can include.



While a new stairway had to be added to the old factory to meet code, Halliday deliberately kept the old paneling and beams exposed to show original architectural features of the building.

liday purchased it, but would require some changes to be placed in the historic registry – a goal for the couple. Victoria Halliday specializes her landscape architecture in land preservation and community development. David Halliday was also enrolled in the historic preservation program at Bucks County Community College at the time, where he was able to use a great deal of resources to help find out about the history of the building in order to best restore it to what it might once have

cannot be done to a building; however, that is only the case in an area where a Historic and Architecture Review Board (HARB) is located. Because the local area does not have one, the only restrictions Halliday faces are linked to the tax credits he receives for preserving the building.

While it usually costs more to restore a building to meet historical preservation standards, tax credits can be granted to offset some of that, Halliday explained. Additionally, Halliday, who is a Bucks County native, has a passion for land preservation and historical preservation. The preservation of nearly 500 acres of Henry Rosenberger's farmland surrounding the building was one reason the couple decided to invest in the building itself.

"I think Blooming Glen's a wonderful village," said Halliday. "And I think this is a significant building in a little village. It adds character to the village, and putting it on the national registry – it creates a permanent record of the history of the building available for the public to see."

In order to restore the building, the Hallidays worked with architect Chris Sipes of the Perkasié firm Keystone Architecture. The two were seeking someone who would allow them to help with the planning in a more primary way.

"My wife really had tremendous input on the outcome of the design," said Halliday. "Chris was very willing to be a part of that rather than being the center of everything."

Sipes created the design for the building, and some additions were made including providing a second stairwell off the main lobby to meet building safety codes, and a ground floor entrance to the building to access the deli. In fact, the basement of the building, which holds one office, a conference room and the deli, used to be a mechanic's garage.

Sipes also worked to help the couple as the design needed alterations when the reality of the interior of the building strayed from the ideal conditions planned for in the design.

lion can include.

"Where we're sitting right here, they were repairing cars," Halliday points out about the conference room's former life. "I think that's neat."

In fact, the conference room also used to serve as the sweating room of the cigar factory. Steam would have entered the room through pipes, allowing the tobacco to become pliable enough for a cigar maker's needs. Halliday researched a great deal of the history of the building at the Spruance Library at the Michener Museum.

Where the bricks of the building were in dire pair, a mason carefully handmade new bricks to match the existing bricks. The aluminum replacement windows were replaced with wood windows that met the guidelines of the historical preservation specifications. So, the storm windows are interior rather than exterior. Copper gutters and downspouts were added, which were likely what would have been used on the building in its original state.

Inside, exposed beams and joists give tenants and visitors a peak into what the original building would have looked like. Even where the new stairway wraps up to the third floor, an exposed area of paneling and plaster creates a lasting memory of where a floor once cut through.

Overall, the Hallidays strived to create something that would add to the community, but still celebrate the heritage of both the building and the village itself. And it seems to agree with the locals.

"Above and beyond the call of duty, they went," said Bernie Newton, owner of the motorcycle shop across the street, as he enjoyed one of his regular chats with the deli staff.

For Halliday, the goal was to preserve the building and provide it with a use that would give it life for years to come – and he feels as though he's done just that.

"They really are living structures – buildings," Halliday said. "If you don't use them, they really deteriorate quickly."

Ye Olde News

10 years ago Nov. 27, 1996

Charles L. Bolton of Bolton's Turkey Farm in Silverdale has 4,500 birds that will be dressed and ready for purchase for Thanksgiving Dinner. Bolton points out all his birds are naturally raised without chemicals or artificial additives and are sold fresh, not frozen.

In October the Sellersville Fire Dept. responded to 24 calls. An average of 27 firefighters responded to these calls logging more than 437 hours in service. During the heavy rains on Oct. 19, the department was in service for more than 12 hours.

Perkasié Garden Club, under the direction of Elsie Bartram, plans to make next spring the most beautiful one in Perkasié's history. Orders are being taken for cement planters from Club members. The planters are 24" high and 23" square and when planted, weigh 500 pounds. They will not be placed on sidewalks or curb areas. They will be placed in front of, or near, the member business. There will be a plaque attached stating the donation of the business. The Garden Club will maintain the planters.

An outdoor flag-raising ceremony to honor American Prisoners of War (POWs) and those Missing in Action (MIAs) was held at Pennridge High School on Tuesday, Nov. 19. A group of students representing a variety of organizations and civic groups attended the ceremony at the

Upper Building flag pole, located near the gymnasium entrance.

20 years ago Nov. 26, 1986

A 23-year-old man now living in Massachusetts has been charged in the arson fire more than a year ago which destroyed the Montgomery – Bucks Farm Bureau feed in Dublin.

It was standing room only as more than 40 people jammed the West Rockhill Township municipal building last night to urge supervisors to continue the legal battle against a proposed quarry. The proposed quarry, in the planning stages since the late 1960s, would be located in Naceville, near Shady Lane and County Line roads, just north of Ridge Road. The township has fought the plan for more than 17 years and together with neighboring Salford Township, spent more than \$100,000 in legal fees.

Turkeys for Thanksgiving are 63 cents a lb. For a 10-16 lb. turkey, cranberry sauce is 16 oz. for 39 cents, Libby's pumpkin is 79 cents for a 29 oz. can and Stove Top stuffing is 6 oz. for 89 cents.

Technically, when Pennridge meets Quakertown tomorrow morning, neither the Rams nor the Panthers will gain anything in terms of league standings. Because the Bux-Mont League no longer exists, tomorrow's Ram-Panther game technically means nothing. No wins or losses will be added to either team's

league record. But don't tell either the Panthers or the Rams such things. In terms of neighborhood bragging rights, tomorrow's game means everything.

40 years ago Nov. 24, 1966

Effective today, November 24, the News Herald will be published on Wednesdays instead of Thursday for an experimental period, the management announces. The shift to Wednesday as the weekly day of publication is being made in response to considerable requests for the change from both retail advertisers and readers. There is also a growing trend in the weekly newspaper industry to publish Wednesday.

Officials for the Reading Company said Friday that a decrease in freight shipments both in and out of Perkasié prompted their request for a change in the status of the Perkasié railroad station from that of an agency to a non-agency facility. If successful, the railroad will remove the only employee from the Perkasié station.

Santa Claus will make his debut in the Pennridge area tomorrow, Thanksgiving Day, arriving by plane at the Pennridge Airport, Ridge Road. The public is invited to witness his landing at the airport. His arrival launches the annual Christmas season in the area, although merchants earlier began distributing their Trade 'N Travel bonus coupons in the district.



Debbie Kulp, an employee at Pasquelina's Italian Market & Deli, peers between all the fresh meats, breads and salads the deli has to offer. The market and deli is located in the basement of the newly renovated building in Blooming Glen.