

# REBUILDING LIVABLE, ENDURING COMMUNITIES

## Using Rehabilitation as Framework for Revitalization

### MOVIELAND AT BOULEVARD SQUARE

Richmond, VA

#### SYNOPSIS

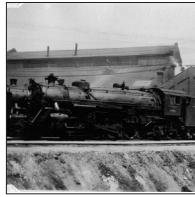
Located on The Boulevard in a former industrial district of Richmond, Virginia, Brooks Transfer looked like any large, 20th Century complex of utility buildings on a large expanse of land. Under-utilized and in need of repair, the buildings had once been updated by the addition of metal panels to its facades. The project challenge was to take this industrial site and create an attractive state-of-the-art movie complex.

Robert Mills served as Project Principal and Project Manager for the rehabilitation of the industrial complex, consisting of two surviving historic industrial buildings, an iron foundry and a brass foundry, once at the heart of a sprawling locomotive manufacturing complex. The remarkable transformation features a 52,000 square-foot, 17-screen movie theatre with stadium seating and a café.

Before the project began, the buildings were encased in unsympathetic yellow metal cladding, giving little indication to its historical significance. Upon examination, the complex of buildings appeared to be older than stated. Historic research indicated that the buildings formerly had served as the American Locomotive Company, one of the largest locomotive manufacturing facilities in the country, operating between 1887 and 1949. As a result of this research and encouragement to the client, a case was made to the Department of Historic Resources and National Park Service that these buildings deserved recognition as historic landmarks. As a historic investment tax credit project, important historic features were identified and preserved, while a contemporary cinema complex was created within the historic framework.

Robert Mills, in association with the Department of Historic Resources, paid careful attention to the entry sequence and lobby so that the history of the building could be understood through the visitor's approach. Numerous compatible infill structures were added to the original historic ones in order to fulfill programmatic requirements.

The cinema complex has captured the imagination of the community by incorporating the building's rich industrial history in Movieland's design. The project has helped to stimulate and sustain economic development of the Boulevard District and Scott's Addition, the historic neighborhood where the project is located. The new Washington Redskins' Training Facility and the rehabilitation of the FFV Cookie Factory into residential use are two of the more prominent re-developments occurring in the neighborhood.



*Historic*



*Before*



*After*

#### DESIGN FIRM

COMMONWEALTH ARCHITECTS

#### COMPLETION DATE

2009

#### ROLE OF NOMINEE

Project Principal, Project Manager

#### AWARDS

2010 ULI Richmond – Best Overall Project  
2010 ULI Richmond – Most Innovative Project  
2010 AIA – Richmond Merit Award  
2009 Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods – Best Commercial Renovation  
2009 Virginia Downtown Development Association – Award of Merit



*"Part of the appeal is the way it creatively bends the building from one purpose to a different, seemingly incompatible use, while allowing remnants of the past to coexist side by side with the present."*



Ron Nyren  
Urban Land Magazine



Robert Mills, FAIA

Exhibits