



# South Bank

3401 Grays Ferry Avenue

## *Press*

### **OVER THE RIVER: PENN SOUTH BANK IN GRAY'S FERRY WILL BE A KNOWLEDGE GATEWAY**

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***PENN GAZETTE***

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**“A research campus that marries the university with commercial enterprises and encourages entrepreneurialism, Penn South Bank will be a vehicle for transformational discovery and research.”**

– Amy Gutmann, President, University of Pennsylvania

The great shipping wharf is gone. So too the pigment powder mill and the automotive paint laboratories. The parking lots and warehouses are mostly quiet. Only a handful of workers drive into the 23-acre site each morning, a pale shadow of the once bustling enterprise that for decades was the workplace for many hundreds, most recently as home to DuPont's Marshall Laboratory and paint-production facility.

First industrialized at the end of the Civil War when Harrison Bros. & Co. built a factory complex to produce white and red paint pigments, the site, located on the south bend of the Schuylkill River, was an ideal gateway for trade. Linked directly at the bend in the river were rail lines heading north, a deep water pier for ocean-going ships, and Gray's Ferry Road leading south to Baltimore.

In 1917, DuPont purchased the facility to gain market dominance in paint manufacturing, eventually focusing its efforts there in the automotive market. By July of 2009, all that had come to an end. The workshops and laboratories were shuttered, and the site stood unoccupied.

But this is not another tale of urban decline and the hollowing out of America's industrial base. Standing at the windswept water's edge of the South Bank property, what you sense is not the quiet of despair. It's the hush of anticipation. Recognizing both a good deal and a great opportunity, Penn purchased the site from DuPont two years ago. The decision to expand our campus across the river was not made lightly, or in haste. Rather, it reflects a rational and thoughtful culmination of the first phase of Penn Connects, the land use and campus design plan we unveiled in 2006 to advance Penn as a premier urban research university over the course of the next 20 to 30 years.

Here's a quick summary of what we achieved in the initial years of the plan. Working with our partners in campus development, we added nearly 5 million gross square feet of new or renovated space to our campus. We vastly improved student housing. We opened Penn Park and Shoemaker Green, two jewels of urban green space at the eastern end of our campus. We significantly improved energy efficiency through LEED certification of all of our newest buildings. These accomplishments built upon and enhanced significant development potential for future academic, research, and cultural programs at Penn.

In much the same way as the mission and scope of university activities has evolved over the years, our physical infrastructure—and the footprint of our campus—must change with it. Penn's first president, Thomas Sovereign



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Gates, saw the University through the depths of the Great Depression to nearly the end of the Second World War. In that time, the scale of our operations, the scope of our efforts, and the expectations that an embattled nation placed upon us changed dramatically.

“A great university which has the duty of preserving and passing on knowledge,” President Gates remarked, “must also keep abreast of the current of the times and contribute its full share to the important tasks before us.” This insight is no less true today. Increasingly, our nation’s universities—Penn now foremost among them—fuel our society and world with new discoveries and ideas, and also help turn the fruits of those discoveries into new businesses and economic opportunities.

This is indeed one of our greatest calls to action in the global economy of the 21st Century, and the need to “contribute our full share to the important tasks before us” has never been greater.

Penn South Bank is destined to play an important—and I hope one day pivotal—role in that effort. A research campus that marries the university with commercial enterprises and encourages entrepreneurialism, Penn South Bank will be a vehicle for transformational discovery and research; for promoting the culture of commercialization; for inspiring economic growth; and for creating new relationships to industry across all 12 of Penn’s schools. The 23-acre site and 250,000 square-foot of existing facilities are well suited to accommodate research and prototyping in the material and physical sciences. Light industrial manufacturing, commercialization, business incubation, and technology transfer will all be at home at Penn South Bank. The site also enables us to free valuable academic space at the heart of campus by relocating certain essential services to a more energy efficient space. For example, a new university data center is currently in design at Penn South Bank.

The long-range strategy for Penn South Bank is research-led economic development out of collaboration among university researchers—who advance knowledge—and entrepreneurs, who bring exciting new knowledge to market. Our aim is to create an environment that incubates ideas and encourages entrepreneurialism—in short, to provide rich soil for collaborative creation. It will not be an industrial gateway linked by rail, roads, and wharves. Rather, Penn South Bank will be a knowledge gateway, offering our nation and businesses a convenient and effective entrée into the world of Penn know-how and discovery.

We are pursuing this aim on both sides of the river. West of the Schuylkill, in our core campus, two extraordinary projects in particular will further Penn discoveries in vital fields, and help introduce those discoveries locally, nationally, and globally. Our soon-to-be-completed Krishna P. Singh Center for Nanotechnology will be the new headquarters for cutting-edge innovation in this critical interdisciplinary field. Nanotech researchers from across Penn’s campus as well as neighboring institutions will work here, forging ahead on discoveries that will forever change our world. We were able to make room for the Center by moving Penn’s transportation operations to Penn South Bank, a double-win for efficiency and for opening vital space at the eastern Walnut Street gateway to our campus.



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At the southwest corner of campus, Penn's new Neural Behavioral Sciences Building will bring together under one roof the Psychology and Biology Departments, the Biological Basis of Behavior Program, and the Penn Genomics Institute, creating a vital hub for life sciences at Penn. The strategic location along University Avenue, in close proximity to the School of Arts and Sciences, Perelman School of Medicine, Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, and Dental Schools, will spark integration of knowledge, teaching, and research among these fields.

On both sides of the river, Penn continues to fulfill its potential as an eminent urban research university. If there is one salient truth about cities, it's that they are never finished. So too with great urban universities. It is in our institutional DNA to evolve, to take advantage of new and changing opportunities to further our core academic mission.

Before South Bank was Penn's, long before it belonged to DuPont—even before the signers of the Declaration of Independence gathered in Philadelphia to challenge an empire—it was quiet home to George Gray, licensee of the ferry that crossed the Schuylkill. In those days, it was the launching point for Philadelphia road traffic—goods, people, news—bound for points west and south.

Now, like Penn, Gray's Ferry is evolving. It will be a launching point once more, but now for innovation and economic growth. It will be a ferry again, but one that carries ideas and discoveries to people everywhere. And the University of Pennsylvania will be at the helm.