



Brent Lloyd
Managing
Principal,
BrightView
Design Group

Landscape Design Differentiates Old Airport Control Tower's Appeal as Entertainment Destination

For decades, the old airport control tower in Stapleton stood as a blighted feature that seemed misplaced among the thriving community now home to 75,000 residents. The ultimate purpose for this unique space was long-debated, eventually yielding big rewards as a much-needed and well-designed space for the community to gather, while also showcasing the important role landscape and outdoor space can play in enhancing a property's success.

The airport control tower is now home to Punch Bowl Social, designed by OZ Architecture, which recently marked its first full year in operation. Standing as a premier example of not only visionary preservation and adaptive reuse, the project also leveraged landscape architecture to create a successful dining and entertainment destination.

Notable is the restaurant's 14,000 square feet of outdoor space – one of the largest in Denver – which brings forward design elements that embrace the restaurant brand's "eater-tainment" theme and celebrates the outdoors while establishing additional areas for social activation and community building.

While the outdoor space surrounding a restaurant can sometimes be an afterthought, in this case, the client was looking for this space to play an equal if not elevated role in attracting customers by creating a unique and engaging experience. With nearly half of the restaurant's square footage dedicated to outdoor space, we designed the area to be both appealing and functional to serve as a platform for the restaurant's success.

This was accomplished by extending the mid-century modern design theme from the interior



Punch Bowl Social in Stapleton presented a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to enhance and revitalize an iconic structure.



Elements from the original Stapleton Airport, like this Denver, Colorado sign, contribute to the mid-century modern aesthetic.



Nearly half of the restaurant's square footage is outdoor space, showcasing the important role landscape architecture can play in enhancing a property's success.

and leveraging design solutions to intentionally define and create a series of five outdoor "rooms." As a nod to the design theme, a waterless pool was developed to cre-

ate a "twist" on the amenity complete with blue turf and flexible seating that includes beach loungers and inflatable-style "fake pontoon" chairs.

Outdoor activation was a priority, so we designed the spaces to include areas to host a variety of outdoor games and programs including bocce courts, pingpong and cornhole surrounded by expansive patio areas, event lawns and stadium seating. Each outdoor zone was designed to be both appealing and flexible to host a variety of community activities from traditional cocktail hours to outdoor yoga, expanding the reach and appeal to visitors, and contributing to its recognition as a "neighborhood gem" in the 2018 Mayor's Design Awards.

It was important the space support the context of its neighborhood as well, and the successful conversion also required alignment with Stapleton's strict requirements for landscape design, sustainability and water quality/drainage. The design also contributes to street-level activation within a large plot of previously underutilized land adjacent to one of Stapleton's largest neighborhood parks.

For commercial property owners looking to differentiate themselves, one of the first places to look should be green space. Whether large or small, evaluating its capacity to serve as additional gathering space for the community or tenants, a space to introduce health or wellness initiatives, or upgrade to improve street-level activation – all of which were taken into account at Punch Bowl – landscape improvements are often quickly rewarded ways to improve value and contribute to the overall success of the property.



A waterless outdoor "pool" is one of five zone, defined through unique landscape design, designed to facilitate community gathering.

Brent.Lloyd@brightview.com