Pearl Brewery is a 22-acre historic and industrial site on the banks of the San Antonio River that served as a major brewery from 1881-2001. Its original Spanish-style structures were built for brewing, bottling, storage and shipping. When beer production ended in 2001, it left a void in activity near the famed Riverwalk and San Antonio College. Developer Silver Ventures purchased the site in 2002. Today, Pearl Brewery is a culinary and cultural destination set amid a tapestry of historic and contemporary structures, gardens, plazas, public pathways, open spaces and tree-lined streets.

As a dynamic and evolving environment, Pearl is committed to stewardship and learning. It’s home to the Culinary Institute of America | CIA, San Antonio, restaurants, a farmers market and food events coexist with bike stores, children’s bookstores and health clubs. The Pearl Stable, a former home for draft horses in the 1880s, and Pearl Studio, a “contemporary warehouse,” provide unique places for myriad events. This historic gathering place, once renown for beer production, today is a welcoming place to eat, play and learn along the banks of the San Antonio River.

**Challenges**

- Transform an abandoned historic site, and surrounding neighborhood, into a vibrant historic adaptive re-use destination for residents and visitors that celebrates the site’s authenticity, local culture and history.
- Determine best uses and designs for indoor and outdoor buildings and open spaces to maximize the site’s potential as a community gathering spot and revenue generator.
- Develop a new organizational structure for management, planning and revenue generating programming of public spaces.

**Services Delivered**

MJMMG was contracted by Silver Ventures in 2005 to provide strategic consulting services on all aspects of property redevelopment in collaboration with the developer, City officials, and community to re-envision the site. This included:

- A preliminary needs and analysis study of the site: Creating Viable Public Spaces at Pearl Brewery: A Preliminary Study.
- Concepts and designs public spaces for varied uses in “Village” atmosphere — such
as an amphitheater, sculpture garden, public plaza, multi-use grass park, arts and craft passageway, wedding garden and open-air dining areas — to accommodate full spectrum of possible programming from civic and cultural events to large and small gatherings. These concepts capture the distinct Spanish flavor of the spaces and multicultural signature of San Antonio Public space entity management role, structure and services.

- Preliminary cost analysis of public space operations.
- Developing an organizational structure, management plan, programming, event programming and management, and leasing strategies.
- Site analysis of physical and infrastructure needs of Pearl’s public spaces to support public space activation. Critical to our recommendations was activating the site 24/7 through diverse uses, including securing anchor tenants focused on education and innovation, retail that serves neighborhood interests and tourists, and programming space for public activities and events.
- Strategic planning for the Pearl Farmers Market, including establishing organizational, operations, financial and management structures, marketing strategies and sustainable features.

Results

- The vision has become a reality: Today Pearl Brewery is a place where education and learning come together with exemplary living and diverse venues for dining, commerce, culture, arts, industry, shopping and hospitality.
- It attracts a diverse target market, including students and faculty of San Antonio College and CIA, young people driving the creative economy, and tourists enjoying the nearby Riverwalk. The village includes a diversity of major and neighborhood-serving tenants such as the CIA, local coffee houses, Hotel Emma and health studios to make activate the site night and day.
- Each year, hundreds of events of all sizes are held such as a farmer’s market, children’s yoga, maker exhibits and Latin jazz.
- Programming at public spaces is generating income to offset their costs. This includes a popular farmers market that was made possible after local officials agreed to alter existing legislation to allow it with extensive collaboration involving MJMMG and developer Silver Ventures.
- Pearl Brewery has an extensive recycling program and a water-recycling program, and has implemented a popular bike-sharing program.

“MJMMG provided vital input into developing a sustainable business plan.”

Christopher “Kit” Goldsbury | Silver Ventures