

<https://www.post-gazette.com/life/homes/2006/06/17/Heart-of-Glass-Town-homes-lofts-sparkle-inside-old-South-Side-glass-factory/stories/200606170146>

# Heart of Glass: Town homes, lofts sparkle inside old South Side glass factory

Lofts, town homes sparkle in old glass factory

**MARYLYNNE PITZ**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
[mpitz@post-gazette.com](mailto:mpitz@post-gazette.com)

JUN 17, 2006



*One of two circular staircases in a loft at the 15th Street Glassworks leads from the living room to a library lined with cherry bookcases. Developer Dan Doyle lives there. Some of the condos are new construction while others are retrofitted into a building that once was a factory where glass molds were made. Steve Mellon, Post-Gazette*

The 15th Street Glassworks, 15th and Muriel streets, South Side, will hold an open house from 1 to 4 p.m. next Sunday. Prudential Preferred Realty is the marketing agent. Information: 412-488-0347.

---

Disbelief gripped Mary Doyle as she looked over the old, decrepit building her husband bought on the South Side two years ago.

"I just about cried when I saw it," she said.

But Dan Doyle, a blue-eyed, energetic guy with a lumberjack's build, was undaunted. With a team of subcontractors and two Italian brick masons, he transformed the old factory into 15th Street Glassworks at 15th and Muriel streets. They moved walls, tore down an ugly, concrete-block annex and created three town houses and two lofts that are surrounded by a walled courtyard with outdoor parking.

"We tried to respect what the building was originally. It sort of has that European feel to it. I did the courtyard so that it would look like something you would see in Germany," Mr. Doyle said.

The developer's earlier projects included renovating the current homes of Hite Co., SunKing Interactive Group and Lightspeed Grip & Lighting, all in the city's Uptown section.

Mr. Doyle, who grew up in Erie, studied film at New York University, and his sense of the visual is evident. Designed by architect Felix Fukui, Glassworks blends the atmosphere of a small, European enclave with modern construction. Yet it also retains a bit of the building's industrial past.

In the 1800s, the building produced glass molds and was operated by the Ihmsen family through 1874. In the late 1870s, it became a machine shop, then a storm door company and, finally, a limousine business.

The condominium complex includes three town homes, priced at \$475,000 and \$495,000, and two lofts. The larger loft, which has about 3,000 square feet, is occupied by the Doyles and is priced at \$545,000. The other loft, with a room that boasts a 360-degree view of the South Side and Monongahela River, is available for \$525,000 through Prudential Preferred Realty.



*Developer Dan Doyle and his wife, Mary, enjoy the view of the city and the Monongahela River from a deck on the smaller of two lofts. Steve Mellon, Post-Gazette*

South Side residents covet parking spaces like a teenage boy moons over swimsuit models on the cover of Sports Illustrated. So, the inner courtyard, which is paved in exposed aggregate, includes parking. In the winter, radiant heat lines will melt the snow, so residents won't have to think about picking up a shovel.

The Doyles' loft is suffused with warm colors and light. In the living room, ceilings are 18 feet high. Tall windows framed by Hunter Douglas blinds allow sunshine to spill onto the wide-planked, Brazilian cherry floors. Low-voltage cable lights are strung across the living room, kitchen and library. Recessed lighting softens the kitchen, bathrooms and a quiet study.

The kitchen's green granite counter tops contrast beautifully with cherry cabinets and a ceramic tile floor flecked with cornflower blue and gold. Near the Viking stove is a roomy pantry and first-floor powder room that includes an elegant pedestal sink.

In the kitchen and living room, a long ledge made of cherry runs the length of an exterior wall. It could easily accommodate small plants or family photos. A dining room opens out onto an English garden.

Some of the steel beams in the Doyles' loft are stamped "Carnegie" or "J & L Works." It was a chore to install plumbing, wiring and heating and ventilation around those large beams, some of which are 30 inches high and 12 to 15 inches in width, Mr. Doyle said.



***Above:*** A breezeway leads to a courtyard at the 15th Street Glassworks on the South Side. Steve Mellon, Post-Gazette

***Below:*** The interior of a model condominium in the 15th Street Glassworks on Pittsburgh's South Side. Steve Mellon, Post-Gazette



The 22-by-17-foot master bedroom features a 15-foot-long windowsill made of yellow pine salvaged from the former building's annex. A 16-foot-high ceiling looms above a bank of windows 11 feet high and nearly 15 feet wide.

The first-floor bathroom with a spacious shower includes two sinks and a Kohler whirlpool trimmed in tumbled beige marble and cherry trim. All of the doors are 8 feet high and trimmed in shellacked poplar.

In the master and second bedrooms, closets are 8 feet high. Large openings over each of those closets would easily accommodate a flat-screen TV or a Japanese screen with a mirror.

Two iron circular staircases in the Doyles' loft were fabricated by John Walters of Iron Eden in Bloomfield. One staircase leads to a small room that would serve as a great space for yoga.

A second circular staircase leads from the living room to a library that would send any bibliophile into a state of joyful delirium. Lined with cherry bookcases and a window seat stuffed with thick cushions, this room looks down on the first floor and includes a day bed.

In the other loft, a second-floor room features a 360-degree view that overlooks the city and the Monongahela River as well as the steeples of the South Side. The room would be ideal for watching storms, fireworks or for stargazing.

Since this loft has exterior and interior brick walls, Mr. Doyle pumped in five inches of foam to increase the insulation to R-19, well above the standard of R-13.

Dollar Bank and Somerset Trust are offering special financing for the lofts and town homes, which start at \$495,000. Buyers can choose countertops, cabinetry, flooring and fixtures, Mr. Doyle said.