Poster Text:

Built in 1926, Beury is a unique blend of Late Gothic Revival and Art Deco. The National Bank of North Philadelphia was the original owner of the building. As World War II swept through the 1940’s, Beury provided rooms to serve as a rationing board office for Philadelphia. It was the largest designated air raid shelter. In 1995, the new owner, Mohammed Mizani, attempted to remove asbestos from the building by using unskilled labor of homeless people. Mizani was found guilty and the building was left abandoned. In 2017, Shift Capital announced plans to renovate. In the most recent development, the plan is to convert it into a Marriott hotel. Today, the most famous feature of The Buery is the signature graffiti, “Forever Boner”. Urban legend says the graffiti was made by two rivaling artists, one named Boner and the other Forever. When plans of development reached the news, there was so much public opposition to the removal of the graffiti that the developers promised to pay homage to the tag and keep it.

Personality:

Old military veteran

Tattooed

Couple of war injuries

Under-appreciated for military service

Misfortune post military service

Book Text:

Battered and bruised, The Bruery building is an old military vet who has been left abandoned for nearly two decades. It is a tale about war, neglect, crime, and hope for redemption. This highrise is a tattooed, infamous badass in Philly who still has much to offer.

Built in 1926, architect William H. Lee, a well known theater architect, designed this 14-story apartment building with a unique blend of Late Gothic Revival and Art Deco. A few years after completion, the National Bank of North Philadelphia moved in, and the building was named “The Beury” after Charles Beury, the president of the bank. As World War II swept through the 1940’s, Beury provided rooms to serve as a rationing board office for Philadelphia. It was one of twenty-eight facilities designated as an air raid shelter, and out of the twenty-eight, Beury was the largest holding up to 2,600 people. By 1985 it was abandoned, despite earning its place in the National Register of Historic Places, a medal of honor that did it little to no good. In 1995, then owner, Mohammed Mizani, attempted to remove asbestos from the building by using unskilled labor of homeless people from the city’s center city homeless shelter. After Mizani was found guilty, the building was once again left abandoned. In 2008, there was hope for Buery to become a new home for several displaced city offices that would have housed 900 state employees, but with the hefty price of $30 million, the plans never came to pass. For a decade Buery struggled to find investors that would take a chance on it. Finally in 2017, Shift Capital announced plans to renovate. The initial plan was for 80 apartment units, but in the most recent development the plans have changed to be a 160 room Marriott hotel with a ground floor restaurant. Today, the most famous feature of The Buery is the signature graffiti, “Forever Boner”. Urban legend says the graffiti was made by two rivaling artists, one named Boner and the other Forever. When plans of development reached the news, there was so much public opposition to the removal of the graffiti that the developers promised to pay homage to the tag and keep it. And so The Beury Building lives on, with a hopeful future, still standing strong and proud as “Forever Boner.”

Notes:

Built in 1926

Architect William H. Lee designed this 14-story apartment building with a unusual blend of Late Gothic Revival and Art Deco

Classic Art Deco trappings on the interior

Ornate terracotta rooftop

Willima H. Lee was known as a theater architect

Housed the National Bank of North Philadelphia

named after Charles Beury, the first president of the National Bank of North Philadelphia

During WW2, Room 1018 served as a rationing board office in Philadeelphia

1 of 28 facilities designated as an air raid shelter

Was the biggest of the 28

Could hold up to 2600 people

Listed in National Register of Historic Places in 1985

1995, then owner, Mohammed Mizani, was found guilty of illegally removing asbestos from the building

Used unskilled labor of homeless people from the city’s center city homeless shelter

In 2008, civic leader pushed the building as a new home for displaced city offices

Would house 900 state employees

Would have cost $30 million

This pursuit failed

Buery building trapped in a dilemma

Restoration and population of the building could bring much-needed income and traffic to a poverty stricken area, but that same poverty make it undesirable for anyone to invest in.

If a building stands vacant for more than 20 years, it is highly unlikely that anything will happen to it on the market without significant government incentives

In 2017, Shift Capital announced plans to renovate the building into 80 apartment units

50 would be for low-income renters

Others leased to those with physical disabilities

In 2019, plans shifted to being renovated into a 160 room Marriott hotel with a restaurant on the ground floor

Project was awarded a $477,00 state grant for sidewalks, streetlights, ADA ramps, and trees

Due to public demand

Developers promise to incorporate the locally famous “Boner 4Ever” and “Forever Boner” graffiti on the sides of the building into the redevelopment