

= Comcast Center (Philadelphia) =

Comcast Center is a skyscraper in Center City , Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , United States . The 58 @-@ story , 297 @-@ meter (974 ft) tower is the tallest building in Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania as well as the nineteenth tallest building in the United States . Originally called One Pennsylvania Plaza when the building was first announced in 2001 , the Comcast Center went through two redesigns before construction began in 2005 . Comcast Center was designed by architect Robert A. M. Stern for Liberty Property Trust .

At the beginning of 2005 , the final redesign and its new name the Comcast Center was unveiled . The building is named after its lead tenant , cable company Comcast , which makes the skyscraper its corporate headquarters . Leasing 1 @,@ 094 @,@ 212 square feet (101 @,@ 656 m2) , Comcast takes up 89 percent of the building . The building features retail and restaurant space and a connection to the nearby Suburban Station . In Comcast Center 's lobby is the Comcast Experience , which is a 2 @,@ 000 square feet (190 m2) high @-@ definition LED screen that has become a tourist attraction . Designed to be environmentally friendly , the skyscraper is the tallest Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building in Philadelphia .

= = History = =

= = = Planning (1999 ? 2004) = = =

In 1999 , class A office vacancy in the city was at 6 @.@ 6 % , leading developer Willard Rouse to envision a new tower . Eventually the developer settled on the location where he constructed this building , a 2 @-@ acre (8 @,@ 100 m2) , \$ 288 per square @-@ foot parcel owned by Equitable Life Assurance Co . In 2000 , architect Robert A. M. Stern began working on a design for a skyscraper being planned by Liberty Property Trust in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania . In 2001 , Liberty Property Trust announced its plan to build the 52 @-@ story One Pennsylvania Plaza in Center City . Anticipated US \$ 400 million , One Pennsylvania Plaza was to be 750 ft (230 m) and made of kasota stone similar to the Philadelphia Museum of Art . The site for the future skyscraper was at 17th Street and John F. Kennedy Boulevard , a site occupied by a building that housed the Defender Association of Philadelphia and a parking lot . Demolition of the building began in 2002 and ended in 2003 .

Cable company Comcast had been looking for possible new headquarters space in anticipation of the end of its lease in Centre Square in 2006 . Comcast was looking for more than 400 @,@ 000 square feet (37 @,@ 000 m2) of office space and developers were actively courting the company for their developments . Comcast was the only employer in the city with major expansion plans at the time . Comcast was considering staying in Centre Square , while also contemplating moving their headquarters to the new Cira Centre building or One Pennsylvania Plaza . Comcast was spread out over 10 floors in two buildings at Centre Square and wanted space on contiguous floors . In January 2004 , Liberty Property Trust unveiled a redesign for the building . The redesign turned One Pennsylvania Plaza into a 60 @-@ story , 962 feet (293 m) tower , making it the tallest building in the city . In the redesign , the kasota stone was changed to a lighter granite and a short pyramidal roof was added . The redesign was a result of discussions that had begun in 2003 with Comcast about moving into the tower .

On January 3 , 2004 , Liberty Property Trust signed a 15 ½ year lease with Comcast and a construction contract with L.F. Driscoll Co . Liberty Property Trust also unveiled another redesign of the building and its new name , the Comcast Center . The now 975 feet (297 m) , 58 @-@ story Comcast Center would no longer have a pyramid top and would have a complete glass facade . The architectural model was created by Richard Tenguerian .

= = = = Controversy = = = =

Liberty Property Trust hoped to get the One Pennsylvania Plaza site designated a Keystone Opportunity Improvement Zone (KOZ). KOZ designation was intended to encourage development in poor , blighted areas by exempting the tenants of the building from all state and local taxes . Designating One Pennsylvania Plaza a KOZ was supported by then Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell , who said it was important to keep corporations within the city . At the time , many of Philadelphia 's big employers ' leases , including Comcast 's , were due to expire , and the employers were considering the possibility of moving out of the city and state . Rendell also said allowing Comcast to enlarge its headquarters by moving into One Pennsylvania Plaza could attract other corporate headquarters to the city . However , other Center City building owners , including Comcast 's landlord at Centre Square , HRPT Properties Trust , were opposed to the plan . They said giving the tower the KOZ designation would give it an unfair advantage because Liberty Property Trust could charge above @-@ market rents since the tax breaks would offset the cost for tenants . The group believed tenants attracted to One Pennsylvania Plaza because of the tax breaks would cause more vacancies in other Center City skyscrapers , rather than attracting more business to blighted areas as intended under the law . In early 2004 , Center City had a vacancy rate of 12 @. @ 8 % .

Both sides of the issue hired law firms , lobbyists , and business associates to promote their positions to city and state officials . A report by the Center City District said if both One Pennsylvania Plaza and the Cira Centre , another skyscraper in the KOZ controversy , were filled by corporations moving from other Center City office towers , the city could lose US \$ 153 million by 2018 . A report released by the group of building owners opposed to KOZ says the two buildings could cost the city almost US \$ 91 million a year . In contrast , a report issued by a consulting company hired by Liberty Property Trust said that a KOZ designation for the skyscraper could generate US \$ 27 million for the city . Critics of the KOZ designation also claimed that close relationships between Liberty Property Trust and Comcast and the Rendell administration were inappropriately influencing the governor 's position on the issue . When Rendell was mayor of Philadelphia , David L. Cohen , a Comcast executive vice president , was Rendell 's chief of staff , and William P. Hankowsky , Liberty Property Trust 's chief executive , was director of Philadelphia 's development agency . Rendell dismissed the claims , saying " Every building owner in town was a contributor to me . "

Chances the bill would be passed ended in November 2004 when House Republicans in the Pennsylvania General Assembly decided not to bring the bill to a vote . Later that year , Governor Rendell released US \$ 30 million from the Redevelopment Assistance Budget to Liberty Property Trust . Through the state 's Department of Economic and Community Development , Comcast received US \$ 12 @. @ 75 million that included a US \$ 4 @-@ million opportunity grant , US \$ 6 @. @ 75 million in job @-@ creation tax credits , and US \$ 2 million in job training assistance . Despite the failure to gain KOZ status , the project received US \$ 42 @. @ 75 million in financial incentives from the state .

= = = Construction (2005 ? 2008) = = =

The official groundbreaking ceremony was on March 31 , 2005 . The ceremony , which was held at night , featured a light show coordinated with the song " Elevation " . The song was composed specifically for the event by Curtis Institute of Music graduate Steven Hackman and recorded by the Curtis Institute of Music Orchestra . The groundbreaking also featured Kodo , the Germantown High School Drum Line , and a 6 feet (1 @. @ 8 m) tall ice sculpture of the Comcast Center .

As the building was under construction , in March 2006 , Liberty Property Trust ran into trouble with Philadelphia 's Plumbers Union Local 690 , which had issues with the building 's waterless urinals . The waterless urinals were part of the plan to make the Comcast Center an environmentally friendly building because they would save an extra 1 @. @ 6 million US gallons (6 @, @ 100 m3) of water a year . The plumbers union opposed the waterless urinals , claiming they were unsanitary and would provide less work for the plumbers . Philadelphia 's Plumbing Advisory Board approved the waterless urinals on April 5 after a compromise , which stated that the building 's owners and city officials would monitor the performance of the waterless urinals , was reached . Piping that would

allow water to flow to the urinals in case they needed to be converted was installed in the Comcast Center , which Liberty Property Trust says was always part of the building 's plan .

A week later , on April 13 , Liberty Property Trust sold an 80 percent interest in the Comcast Center to German real estate firm CommerzLeasing & Immobilien AG , a subsidiary of Commerzbank AG . The deal completed Liberty Property Trust 's planned recapitalization of the anticipated cost of the building , and the value of the joint venture , called Liberty / Commerz 1701 JFK Boulevard L.P. , included mortgage debt and equity .

On June 18 , 2007 , the Comcast Center was topped out . The ceremony , which was held in the building 's future plaza , featured the raising of a steel beam to the skyscraper 's highest point . The beam was signed by workers and guests and as it was raised , on account of tradition , an American flag and a tree sat on the beam . Also sitting on the beam was a statue of Philadelphia founder William Penn . The statue was there to counteract the 1980s " curse " of Billy Penn , which prevented Philadelphia 's sports teams from winning a championship following the construction of buildings taller than the statue of William Penn on top of the 548 feet (167 m) Philadelphia City Hall . The 25 inches (640 mm) statue of William Penn remained on the beam until it was stolen . The statue was replaced and the " curse " ended when the Philadelphia Phillies won the 2008 World Series .

Even though the building had not officially opened , Comcast office workers began moving in early December 2007 , ahead of the scheduled completion in March 2008 . The Comcast Center officially opened on June 6 , 2008 . A study sponsored by Comcast and Liberty Property Trust said the construction of the Comcast Center created 17 @, @ 200 jobs and generated US \$ 2 billion of economic activity for Pennsylvania . Despite opposition by other building owners to construction of the Comcast Center , by the time most space in the Comcast Center had been leased vacancy rates in Center City offices were falling and rents were rising . Even HRPT Properties Trust had leased 70 percent of the space Comcast vacated by 2007 . The predictions by opponents did not occur mainly because Comcast ended up leasing 89 percent of the building and the offices for the Comcast Center 's second largest tenant , Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania , were new to the city .

= = Building = =

The Comcast Center is a 58 @-@ story , 975 feet (297 m) glass skyscraper located at 17th Street and John F. Kennedy Boulevard in Center City , Philadelphia , Pennsylvania . The tower is the tallest building in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania and is the nineteenth tallest building in the United States (tenth tallest by roof height) , and the tallest building built in America outside of New York City or Chicago since 1993 . The 1 @, @ 250 @, @ 000 square feet (116 @, @ 000 m²) Comcast Center has 58 floors , of which 56 are occupiable . The structure of the Comcast Center comprises a central concrete core with steel framed floors . The building 's exterior features a glass curtain wall made of lightly tinted , non @-@ reflective low @-@ emissivity glass . The tower tapers inward towards the top and features two cutouts near the top of the building on the north and south sides . To prevent the tower from swaying too much in the wind , the Comcast Center contains a 300 @, @ 000 @-@ US @-@ gallon (1 @, @ 100 m³) double @-@ chambered concrete tuned liquid column damper , the largest such damper in North America . Receiving a gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating in April 2009 , the Comcast Center is the tallest LEED building in Philadelphia . The building was designed to use 40 percent less water than a typical office building , and the plaza was designed to reduce heat @-@ island effect from the pavement by 70 percent . Reducing air conditioning and lighting costs , the low @-@ emissivity glass curtain wall blocks 60 percent of heat while allowing 70 percent of the Sun 's light inside .

The skyscraper has 1 @, @ 238 @, @ 000 square feet (115 @, @ 000 m²) of rentable space , including 36 @, @ 000 square feet (3 @, @ 300 m²) of restaurant and retail space called The Market at the Comcast Center . 16 @, @ 500 square feet (1 @, @ 500 m²) of retail space is on the underground concourse while the rest is located on the street level . The building features high ceilings with some floors having a ceiling height of 13 feet (4 @. @ 0 m) . The lower floors on the south side of the building feature four three @-@ story stacked atrias . The building also features a

500 @-@ seat concourse level dining court and an 87 @-@ space private underground parking garage . ThyssenKrupp provided the building 's 30 gearless elevators , seven hydraulic elevators , and two escalators .

The Comcast Center faces a half @-@ acre public plaza . The plaza , designed by Lucinda Sanders of OLIN , sits over underground railroad tracks . It features a seasonal outdoor restaurant , Plaza Cafe at Table 31 , that is sheltered by a trellis . Between the cafe and the building entrance is a choreographed fountain designed by Wet . The tower 's entrance is a 110 feet (34 m) tall winter garden . The winter garden entrance directly connects to the underground concourse of Suburban Station . The building also has a lobby entrance that leads to the Arch Street Presbyterian Church adjacent to the tower .

The exterior lighting scheme of the building was designed by Quentin Thomas Associates , and consists primarily of white LEDs color @-@ temperature matched to the fluorescent lights used by the interior . Along each floor , the corner spandrel panels feature upward and downward @-@ facing 4,100K LEDs to create the appearance that the length of the building has been bottom @-@ lit by spotlights . The only major consistently active color element can be found at the top of the tuned mass damper ; a single row of color @-@ changing LEDs that is programmed to commemorate special events . For example , the top would be colored pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month .

Philadelphia Inquirer architecture critic Inga Saffron described the Comcast Center as " a respectable work of architecture " that was " dignified in its stance on the grid , generous in its relationship to the city , responsible in its treatment of the environment . " She felt the tower 's shape reminded her of a giant flash drive . Saffron said the building excelled at the street level , praising the plaza , concourse , and its connection to Suburban Station . In 2009 the Comcast Center was awarded the Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence in the Americas category for the transformation of what was once mostly a vacant lot into a transit gateway .

The design had many post @-@ 9 / 11 features to improve building security .

The building was featured prominently in scenes of the film Devil (2010) .

= = = Art = = =

The Comcast Center 's winter garden entrance contains two works of installation art . The Comcast Experience is a 25 @. @ 4 feet (7 @. @ 7 m) tall , 83 @. @ 3 feet (25 @. @ 4 m) wide , 2 @, @ 000 square feet (190 m²) high @-@ definition LED screen situated on a wall in the winter garden . The screen is composed of 7 @. @ 8 million , 4.66mm pitch pixels housed in 6 @, @ 771 LED modules of the type used in the Barco NX @-@ 4 panel . The installation , designed and produced by Niles Creative Group , premiered on June 6 , 2008 , and runs eighteen hours each day . The content of the video includes panoramic views of Philadelphia historic sites , images of space , dancers , acrobats and actors moving around a background designed to mimic wood paneling of the walls of the lobby . Another part of the installation displays images of cranes and machinery forming the design of a clock that tells the correct time of day .

The Comcast Experience quickly became a popular tourist attraction , prompting city officials to add the Comcast Center to its tourism website . Between Thanksgiving and New Year 's Day 2008 , a holiday video was included as part of the installation .

The second piece of art is Jonathan Borofsky 's Humanity in Motion . Located in the glass atrium of the winter garden , Humanity in Motion shows ten life @-@ size human figures walking across ten horizontal poles positioned at different levels of the atrium . At ground level , looking up at the stainless steel figures , are two more figures shaped to look like a father and son .

= = Tenants = =

Comcast is the skyscraper 's largest tenant , leasing 1 @, @ 094 @, @ 212 square feet (101 @, @ 656 m²) , or 89 percent of the building . Their children 's cable network Sprout records or transmits their live studio @-@ based programming from studios based on the 30th floor . The second largest

tenant is Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania , which leases 56 @, @ 000 square feet (5 @, @ 200 m2) of office and retail space . Other tenants include TelAmerica Media Inc . , which leases 23 @, @ 528 square feet (2 @, @ 200 m2) , Center City Film and Video , which leases 11 @, @ 498 square feet (1 @, @ 100 m2) and the Judge Group , which leases 6 @, @ 427 square feet (600 m2) .

Comcast 's office space was designed by Daroff Design + DDI Architects and Gensler . Comcast 's space is topped by a conference room floor with the executive offices on the four floors below it . Below that are more offices and then , on the 43rd and 44th floors , is Ralph 's Cafe , a two @-@ story cafeteria space for employees . Below the cafe is the training center called Comcast University . The rest of the space is used for content and programing teams and customer service . The interior design of the offices are designed with a variety of shape and color ranging from the open white space of the upper offices to the colorful walls of the training center . Other designs include a glass and stainless steel staircase that wraps around a four @-@ story column of flat @-@ screen monitors and connects the executive floors .

The retail portion of the tower includes numerous shops and eateries . The shops and eateries include national and regional chains , and initially featured a restaurant called Table 31 . Table 31 , which had a cafe on the plaza and a restaurant spread over three floors in the tower , was owned by Philadelphia restaurateurs and chefs Georges Perrier and Chris Scarduzio . The restaurant was named after a popular table at the former Perrier and Scarduzio establishment Brasserie Perrier . Table 31 closed in 2013 , amid a dispute among its owners , and was replaced by another upscale steakhouse .