

Preserving History
BUILDING FUTURES



The Story of Revitalizing the
Buda Mill & Grain Co.

WRITTEN BY REBEKAH EPSTEIN

Nestled on the south end of Buda's historic downtown, the Buda Mill & Grain Co. beautifully reflects the area's rich agricultural history while embracing its vibrant present. Once a bustling hub for cotton ginning and feed milling, this historic site has been lovingly transformed into a lively destination that connects the community's past with its exciting future.



Original Building - Buda Mill & Grain Co.

A GLIMPSE INTO BUDA, TX HISTORY

The story of Buda Mill & Grain Co. dates back to the 1880s when local farmer Sam Johnson organized the Farmers Alliance in Buda. In 1890, a committee of Alliance members, including R.C. Barton and D.C. Burleson, established the town's first cotton gin to serve the local agricultural community. This venture laid the foundation for what would become a central part of Buda's economy.

Henry Barton and Will Barber purchased the business in 1911 for \$7,000. Their first move was to expand operations by building the Buda Co-op Gin at the southern end of Main Street. In 1914, the first brick gin on the property, known as the Buda Gin Company, was constructed.

THE BRICK BUILDING,
CHARACTERIZED BY ITS GERMAN-
INFLUENCED ARCHITECTURE
WITH ARCHES OVER CASEMENT
WINDOWS AND ROSE WINDOWS
ON EACH SIDE WALL, BECAME
AN **ICONIC STRUCTURE** IN BUDA.

The cotton gin remained in use until the late 1930s, when the boll weevil infestation and the Great Depression caused a drop in cotton production. In 1929, Henry Barton transferred property ownership to his brother-in-law, B. Watson. Watson rebranded the property as the Buda Milling Company, redirecting its efforts to grinding dairy feed for local farmers. The Watson family ran

the mill until 1963, when Cecil Ruby took over. During Ruby's ownership, the mill served as a storage facility for grain on behalf of the U.S. government.

In 1993, Cecil's daughter, Gay Dahlstrom, inherited the property, and she was determined to preserve it.

A FAMILY'S MODERN VISION

Fast-forward to 2010, when a multigenerational team comprising Gay Dahlstrom, her daughter Dodi Ellis, and Gay's grandson Saenger Ellis embarked on a mission to revitalize the historic site. Saenger recognized the property's potential, while Dodi was eager to work on the design.

"Each of us brought unique perspectives," said Dodi Ellis. "Gay aimed to nurture the property she had cherished for years, Saenger recognized its potential given its proximity to Austin, and I was eager to design and repurpose the old barns."

Their collaborative efforts led to the transformation of the dilapidated metal barns, silos, and cotton gin into a vibrant and charming community gathering spot. The redevelopment's goal was to offer over 27,000 square feet of retail, restaurant, and office space, creating a place where the community could gather to enjoy good food, shop locally, and connect under the shade of giant live oak trees.



Original Building - Buda Mill & Grain Co.

PRESERVING BUDA MILL & GRAIN CO.'S PAST

Throughout the renovation, the team was dedicated to preserving the site's historical essence. For instance, the largest barn on the property, affectionately called "Big 'Un," was a challenging project. Believed to have stored large equipment since the 1950s, the barn



Willow Gardens Yoga in Buda Mill & Grain Co.



Inside Mud Bugs - a Cajun joint

underwent multiple design renditions. The final design featured the original steel structure complemented by an east-facing wall of steel windows, breathing new life into the old workhorse of a building.

Another notable structure on the property is the brick cotton gin building, which features Texas's early German-infused architectural style. Meticulous details, such as the arches above the casement and rose windows, helped maintain authenticity and unique characteristics. No detail was too big or too small. The bricks were sourced from Butler Brick's Zilker Park site and arranged in a Flemish bond pattern.

"As we were working on a permit set for the building, a representative from Butler Brick came out to look at the building since we needed to know what the insulating factor of the brick walls was," added Ellis. "He explained that the bricks were definitely from the Zilker Park location of Butler Brick and built in a brick formation called a Flemish bond, which is rarely used today on new modern buildings because it requires great attention to detail."

CREATING THE PERFECT SPOT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The journey of Buda Mill & Grain Co. truly showcases the incredible strength of vision and teamwork. Thanks to the unwavering commitment of Saenger, Dodi, and the entire Dahlstrom family, this historic site has been revitalized. It's a wonderful place where history meets community, providing a delightful experience that pays homage to Buda's rich heritage while embracing its vibrant future.

"While we were renovating the Old Feed Store, underneath the wonderfully thick wooden floors were the concrete vats filled with molasses," reminisced Ellis. "As soon as you walked in, you were hit with that wonderful smell of hay, feed, and history. This only solidified and fueled our mission to preserve its historical charm."

THE REVITALIZATION OF BUDA
MILL & GRAIN CO. IS NOW
HOME TO A DELIGHTFUL MIX OF
BOUTIQUES, EATERIES, STUDIO
AND SALON, INVITING LOCALS
AND VISITORS TO ENJOY A
VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE.

Among the attractions, St. Montegren's Florist offers beautiful floral arrangements that bring a fresh touch of nature to the community. Willow Gardens Yoga fosters a sense of community and connection onsite through its welcoming classes. Nate's offers a lively music scene, and Mud Bugs-a Cajun joint tempts tastebuds with chef-curated daily dozen features. Additionally Dos Olivos Market, Ma'Coco, The Mercantile at Mill + Grain, Ellipsis Boutique, Salon One 12, and Hays Co. Outfitters provide the perfect dining and shopping destinations.



Roxie's at Buda Mill & Grain Co.

Recently, Buda Mill & Grain Co. welcomed their newest restaurant, Roxie's, a Salt Lick Family restaurant. This new concept by Scott Roberts, owner of Salt Lick BBQ, will use his grandmother, Roxanna's, recipes. The menu at Roxie's will showcase appetizers like pimiento cheese crocks and deviled eggs topped with fried chicken bites; hearty, family-style entrées including crispy fried chicken, chicken-fried steak, and char-grilled steak; and a selection of dessert pies, each inspired by Roxie's original recipes.

THIS PASSION PROJECT HAS
TRANSFORMED
THE FORMER
INDUSTRIAL SPACE INTO
**A LIVELY HUB
OF ACTIVITY,**
HONORING THE TOWN'S
RICH HISTORY
AND OFFERING THE
COMMUNITY A PLACE TO
"STAY AWHILE."



Ma'Coco



The Mercantile at Mill + Grain



Ellipsis Boutique



Hays Co. Outfitters

TOGETHER, THESE BUSINESSES MAKE BUDA MILL & GRAIN CO.
A MUST-VISIT DESTINATION