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LGBTQ landmark Brewer's Hotel and Bar goes up for sale on Liberty Avenue in Lawrenceville



Brewers Hotel and Bar, a landmark of Pittsburgh's gay community since the 1980s, is on the market for sale as the owner seeks to retire.

TIM SCHOOLEY



By [Tim Schooley](#) – Reporter, Pittsburgh Business Times
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As a gay person, Sidney Sokoloff isn't exactly totally impartial when it comes to his hopes for his new listing even as he realizes the potential for new ownership could mean a different plan for 3315 Liberty Ave.

It's the kind of traditional urban commercial building dating to the early 20th century whose current ownership has steered the Brewer's Hotel and Bar from the 1980s AIDS crisis to a renovation amid the Covid-19 pandemic for what is now considered to be Pittsburgh's oldest gay bar.

"It's a queer landmark," said Sokoloff, president of Ross-based Speciality Group, on the important role the Brewer's has played for Pittsburgh's LGBTQ+ community. "It would be a shame for it not to remain as one."

Sokoloff and Specialty Group are marketing the business and property for sale as longtime owner Carol Held seeks to retire, expected to mark the end of her family's ownership of a local institution her father owned and operated before her.

The property sits near the top of a hill on Liberty Ave. just beyond the Strip District, located across the street from the former [Pittsburgh Brewing Co.](#) complex as well as near new apartment projects that include [the 377-unit Brewers Block](#) as well as the 112-unit [Mulberry Lofts](#), both within walking distance.

Sokoloff expects new development investment will continue in the nearby vicinity for a property he said has great visibility.

Sokoloff acknowledges the property and business come with broader investment potential than the niche operation for which it has long served.

Long a smoking-permitted venue, ownership put the main floors of the bar under a thorough renovation during the pandemic, switching to nonsmoking, in a facility that has two sub surface levels, used for dancing and other events, with the floors above outfitted for 12 sleeping rooms.

Sokoloff acknowledged Held's ownership tenure in which Brewer's "became a pioneering establishment that recognized and catered to the needs of the LGBTQ+ community," serving them in various community needs beyond operating as a bar.

Sokoloff noted how the hotel above the bar helps to provide housing and shelter for gay people.

The property and business, which includes a hotel license [to allow alcohol sales](#), are being marketed for a list price of \$1.2 million for a building that totals more than 5,700 square feet.

The business continues to operate while the property and business are marketed for sale.

While he laments the loss of gay bars in the city, including just across the bridge from Brewer's where Donnie's Place closed in the year before the pandemic, Sokoloff made clear his personal hopes don't suggest any limits on potential new ownership.

"I wouldn't say it's a requirement but it's a hope that it remains in the community," said Sokoloff.