



# ROOMS WITH a BREW

E5W proved to be more than just an abbreviated address for Jennifer Trow.

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**Trow opened Village Bean, a coffeehouse in Des Moines' East Village, six years ago, but last summer needed a change. Her previous space was too large and expensive to heat and cool. She checked around the neighborhood until she found the E5W building at E. 5th Street and Walnut Avenue.**

"It just felt cozy," Trow says.

The five-story building opened in summer 2009, and owner Tom Howard of ST Howard Development says he has received copious compliments on its appearance.

The lower two levels are reserved for business—Village Bean and other businesses occupy the first floor, while the upper levels feature condominiums with hardwood floors.

"Have you been upstairs?" Trow asks with urgency. "The views are amazing."

Iowa's capitol can be seen in the condos that face east; westward-facing units offer the skyline of downtown Des Moines. While Howard admits the commercial real estate market is rough right now, his amenity-laden condos have been a relatively easy sell. Just two of the 28 units are unoccupied.

The project began as two buildings, explains David Voss of ge Wattier Architecture. The other was slated for E. 5th Street and Grand Avenue.

"We called it 'The Bookends,'" Voss says. "The idea was to expand Locust Street (located between Grand and Walnut), to give it some width."



**Offering two floors of commercial space (above) and three floors of residential space, E5W incorporates two types of brick to mesh with existing buildings in the East Village.**

**Views are a major asset of E5W (opposite & right),** showcasing both the downtown skyline and the Capitol. With only two condominiums available, the units' stunning sightlines combined with their modern feel and proximity to downtown make them a relatively easy sell.

The project was later halved, and Voss proceeded with a design that would feature a modern urban look that still fit the older neighborhood. The precast concrete structure features three distinct tones: red brick, which complements many surrounding buildings; brown brick that looks like sandstone; and untouched concrete.

Voss also paid particular attention to the surface depth of the exterior, creating multiple angles to form a unique aesthetic. The E5W building also contains varying window proportions.

"In your brick façades, it's a little bit more traditional in that we'll have a casement and a transom across the top. When we're in the more modern portion, it's a much more vertical proportion," Voss says.

The openable windows are oriented to capture prevailing winds and aid building ventilation.

Trow says many E5W residents are Village Bean customers, and she further benefits from the high pedestrian traffic in the neighborhood. Better yet, fewer points of entry and smaller windows have made her utility bills "almost nothing" compared to her previous building. **la**

