



What to Consider when Planning Your Brewery

Part 1

So you've decided to start your own craft brewery? Congratulations! Now the hard work begins. There are so many things to consider when opening a brewery, from financials to business plan, trademarks, licensing, and of course, recipes. While these are all critical things you must focus on, yet another is your location. You need to think through things like: How much space do I need? What am I looking for in a space? Where should my brewery be located?

There is a lot that goes into the physical space that will become your craft brewery. Here are just some of the considerations you should keep in mind.

How much space do I need?

- Production space: In general, you need approximately 1 square foot of space for every barrel of production. On the small production end, say 500 BBLs/yr, you will need more than that. Vice versa, on the larger size, +5,000 BBLs/yr, efficiencies can decrease that ratio. But it is a good starting point.
 - What size brewhouse and what annual production are you shooting for, now and into the future?: Be sure you plan for the future. It is much easier to add cellar capacity by bringing in more fermenters, or swapping out smaller ones for larger ones, than it is to change out your entire brewhouse. Get a space that is large enough to handle what you think will be your maximum production volume in 5-10 years, then grow into that. At the very least, maybe you can secure a first right of refusal on an adjacent space, should it become available
 - Direct Fire vs. Steam Boiler vs. Electric: This is a very important variable that should be decided early on. Direct fire is a great system for a smaller craft brewery. They work well for up to 15 BBL systems. Beyond that, you can run into boil issues. Steam boilers add a reliable consistency, but they also bring with them added cost and complexity. For pico sized breweries, electric can be a great option. There are no combustion air requirements, and easy to set up. But you need to consider the batch cost based on utility pricing in your area.



(page 2)

- Packaging options: Kegs, growlers, crowlers, bottles, cans, and even baggies? The options are abundant. Knowing how you want to package will set the stage for the space you need to do it.
- Cold box space
 - How much of my beer will be sold/consumed in my tap room and how much will go out for distribution?: Product turnover will determine how much cold box space you need. Determine your batch size, packaging type, and turnover to determine how often you need to brew, how long you hold onto product, and how much space you need to store that product. Plan for the future at your maximum production capacity, then add 10-15%. No brewer ever said they had too much cold box space. A good rule of thumb is 10-15% of your production volume in SF per BBL.
- Tap room space: This is where your money is made. The best margins are in your tap room. Make sure it is accommodating, comfortable, and represents your brand.
 - How many people do I want to accommodate?: An important factor in determining the size of your tap room. In general, a space can handle 1 person per 15 square feet, comfortably. Understand your market. You want your tap room to be bustling, not a vast expanse where a crowd is spread out, making the space look empty. Understand your production capacity. You do not want to run out of beer.
 - Food options: An important consideration, especially these days. Will you have a kitchen? That is another business altogether. Food trucks? Are they reliable? Neighborhood delivery might also be an option.
 - Patio space: Who doesn't like having a beer on a sun lit patio? Another important consideration, especially these days. Having outdoor space is critical.
 - Event space: A brewery is a great place to have a meeting, birthday party, wedding reception, etc. Event space can be adaptable based on the needs of the event. Be prepared to host these events while still being able to cater to your regulars.

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(page 3)

- Retail area: Beer is not the only revenue generator. Brewery swag is hugely popular, so have a good place to display and sell it. What is more flattering than to see someone wearing a shirt from your brewery?
- Storage: Raw materials in (grain, hops, yeast, empty kegs, packaging), fresh product out (packaged product), waste (spent grain, trash), supplies (parts, tools, etc.) All things to consider and make room for.
- Lab, office, break room, lockers, etc., What are the needs of your brewery? Make sure you allocate space for these things.

Next up, learn about what Utilities you will need and how your Location impacts your project. To find out more, continue your reading with **What to Consider when Planning Your Brewery: Location Part 2.**



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Hauck Architecture is the go-to architectural firm for breweries, working with over 75 craft breweries to date. Mr. Hauck, an avid home brewer and craft beer enthusiast, possesses the skill, experience, passion and reputation for planning and executing a successful project, while coordinating with all engineering consultants, contractors and governmental authorities.

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