

2018 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Digital Media Arts Center



Located in a historic district of industrial and residential character, Chapman University's Digital Media Arts Center (DMAC) reinforces ties to the neighborhood by historically restoring the 1922 California Wire & Cable Company building – one of the first industrial businesses in the City of Orange and consequently one of the major employers. Chapman University, the City of Orange and the State of California share the same historic preservation and adaptive re-use goals. Part of Chapman's strategic goals over the past 20 years have been to expand educational offerings in facilities that relate to the historic fabric of the larger community. The university worked closely with the Old Towne Preservation Association, the Orange Barrio Historical Society, and the City of Orange's Historic Planner to incorporate their knowledge and expertise into the project.

This historic adaptive reuse of the original 1922 building integrates perfectly into the university's mission as both a leading cultural institution and an important proponent of the preservation of the City of Orange's heritage. Considered a contributing element to the Old Towne Orange Historic District, the California Wire and Cable Company building embodies important industrial history for the City of Orange and California. The project meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and was reviewed by the City of Orange under entitlements having no significant negative impact on a listed historic resource. This is an adaptive reuse making it possible for the continued economic use of the building.

The condition of the building was poor. The existing roofing membranes were failing. The unreinforced masonry walls did not meet seismic safety standards. Essentially an open warehouse structure as found, the rehabilitation effort retained and restored walls and roof, maintained extant openings, re-opened closed window openings, retained historic metal sash, and added new compatible metal sash. Exterior paint was removed to uncover original red brick finishes; lime mortar was used to repoint masonry joints. Missing features were reconstructed based on archival documentation, including a demolished high parapet at the corner built for signage. An exterior trellis added on the north face and designed in a simple style for compatibility with the industrial character of the building, is removable with no impact to the historic structure. The interior partitions are non-structural, set into a large space. The open character and asymmetrical approach to the interior improvements retains the visual character of a large open building space.

The design of the Digital Media Arts Center (DMAC) provides an ideation lab or digital creative collaboration studio for faculty and students to exchange ideas and further their craft. The facility creates a home-away-from-home, heart and soul for the college and an off-campus "center" with a 24/7 operation. Where new materials exist, they complement the industrial aesthetic in a modern way. It seems fitting that this building was originally the California Wire and Cable Company, a high-tech company of its time, and today the building is used to teach students digital arts, a high-tech field of today that depends on the bandwidth capabilities provided through....cable!

Learn more about the [Digital Media Arts Center](#).