



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

September 14, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Liam Garland, Director, Public Works

Subject: Mental Health Services Center Renovation Project Wins APWA National Award

INTRODUCTION

The Mental Health Services Center Renovation Project has been selected as one of the American Public Works Association's (APWA) Public Works Projects of the Year for 2021. The project first won regional recognition in February 2021 from the Northern California Chapter of APWA for the category for historical restoration/preservation for over \$5 million but less than \$25 million. In July 2021, the project gained a **national** award from APWA in the same project category. Projects were selected based on demonstrated excellence in construction management techniques, safety performance and program, community relations, environmental preservation, unique or unusual accomplishments, and climate resiliency and sustainability.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Mental Health Services Center Renovation project is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goal provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities.

The honor and recognition of receiving a national APWA award highlights the City's vision in selecting, scoping, and funding this important project. The award recognizes the groundbreaking nature of the renovation of this 95-year-old building into a modern facility that preserves many of its historic features and incorporates energy efficient and innovative designs and building systems. Using this project as a pilot, these efforts are expected to have an impact on other building renovation designs throughout the state for the next decade.

The ribbon cutting ceremony for this project was on April 14, 2021, and it is now open and serving over 350 adults with ongoing clinical case management services per year.

BACKGROUND

This renovation project had a unique focus on climate resiliency and sustainability. The newly renovated building is all electric (no natural gas); has new state of the art HVAC and electrical systems strategically selected and designed to reduce energy consumption;

further reduces energy consumption through the use of 5 skylights and 34 daylighting tubes; employs a dual electric vehicle charging station with the capacity to add an additional dual station in the future; and generates more energy than it consumes through the 118 solar panels purposefully placed on its crowded rooftop. The culmination of all this is a Zero Net Energy (ZNE) building – pending verification of energy usage and consumption during the first 12 months of occupancy.

The building at 2640 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Berkeley, California was built in 1925 and designed by James Placheck, a prolific local architect. It served the community as a mortuary for almost five decades before being revived in 1971 as the Rainbow Sign. The Rainbow Sign was a “vibrant black cultural arts center — a 1970s Bay Area hub for black art, music, cinema, literature, education and civic gathering — that drew cultural icons from across the country, from Maya Angelou and James Baldwin to Huey Newton and Nina Simone.”¹ The building’s historical significance is highlighted in the current U.S. Vice President’s 2019 memoir, *The Truths We Hold*. Vice President Kamala Harris dedicates pages to her experiences at the Rainbow Sign and how it and Berkeley’s ethnic communities shaped her: “My favorite night of the week was Thursday. On Thursdays, you could always find us in an unassuming beige building at the corner of what was then Grove Street and Derby. Once a mortuary, the building I knew was bursting with life, home to a pioneering black cultural center: Rainbow Sign.”

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

One goal of the new mental health facility was to incorporate as many net zero energy facility improvements as is feasible. A net zero energy facility has a positive environmental impact and has economic advantages over the long-term. Some net-zero features in this project include solar panels, energy efficient heating and air conditioning, and low flow fixtures.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

There are no anticipated future actions associated with receiving the award.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

There are no anticipated fiscal impacts.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

- 1: APWA Reporter Magazine – Projects of the Year
- 2: Photo of Project Award

¹ <https://news.berkeley.edu/2017/09/19/rainbow-sign/>



REPORTER

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION / July 2021 / www.apwa.net

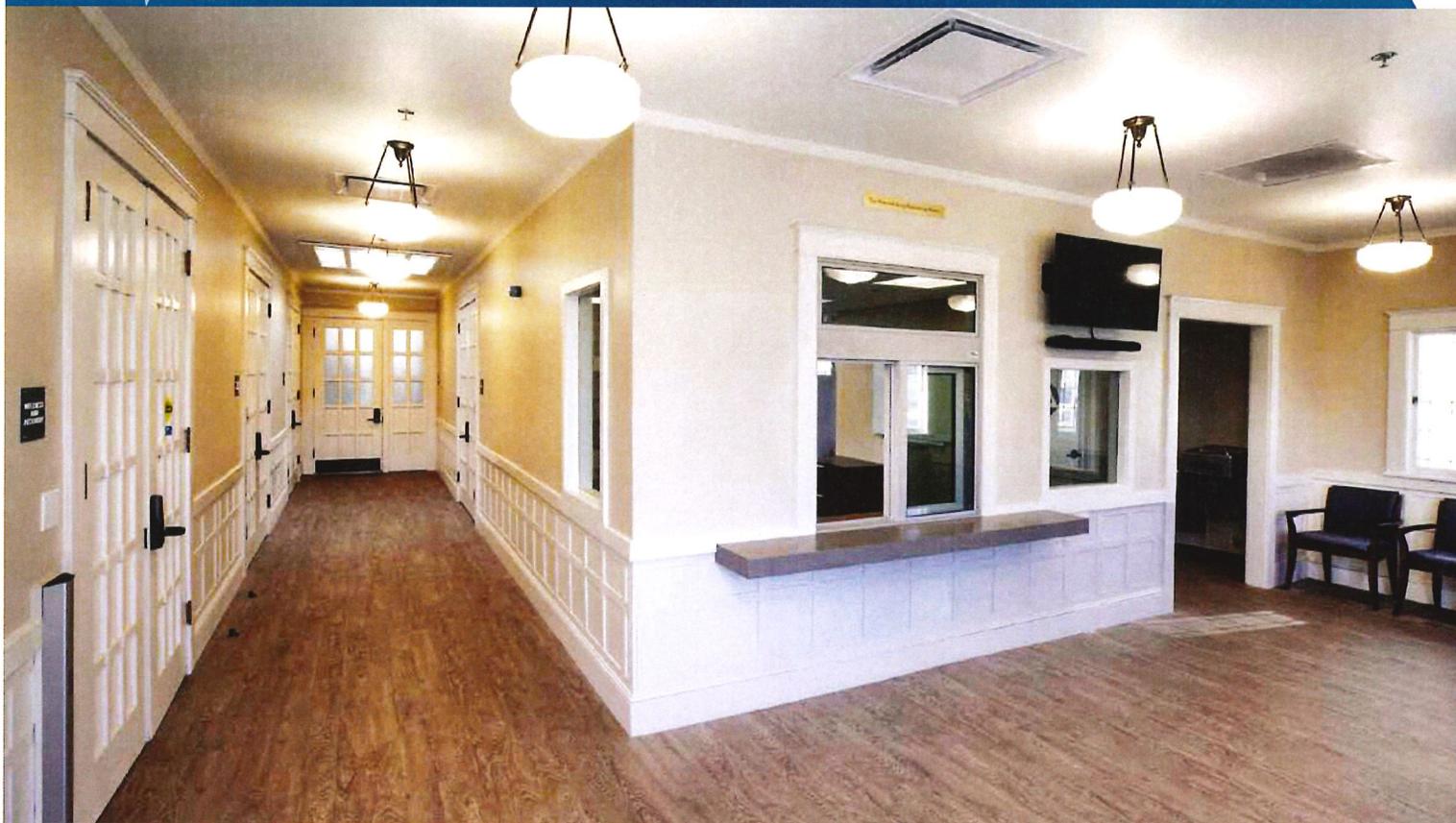
PROJECTS OF THE YEAR

See pages 28-57 for the
22 outstanding projects selected in 2021

INSIDE:

- Annual Transportation Issue
- Virtual Snow Conference highlights
- Highway Asset Management: Kiwi-style





Mental Health Services Center Renovation

Managing Agency: City of Berkeley, CA, Primary Contractor: B Bros Construction, Primary Consultant: ELS Architecture, Nominated By: APWA Northern California Chapter

The Mental Health Services Center (MHSC) renovation project was a comprehensive renovation of a historic building designed to be environmentally conscious (net zero energy), seismically safe, and accessible for community services. The MHSC renovation was substantially completed by December 18, 2020.

At the onset of construction, the MHSC project's schedule indicated completion in March of 2020. Once underway, time extensions were granted by the City of Berkeley (the City) due to a litany of unforeseen conditions, such as the removal and remediation of an underground storage tank; additional abatement of asbestos and lead beyond what was anticipated; additional demolition of a safe room originally constructed in 1925 with 16-inch-thick reinforced concrete walls; additional

demolition of a room found in the building's crawlspace; COVID-19 related delays; and more.

Although these surprises delayed the eventual completion and re-opening of the facility, it was important that they were addressed and handled properly. In the end, the newly renovated facility was able to meet the project's overall goals because of the project team's focus on addressing challenges head on.

As part of the renovation project, a historical resources consultant conducted research into the building's history and past historical surveys. They determined that the building is identified on the State's Office of Historic Preservation Historic Property Directory as a "3s", which means that it "appears eligible for the NR [National Register] as an individual property through survey evaluation."

The project's design team identified elements of the building's architecture that were part of the original 1925 build and held historical significance. It was determined that the building exterior envelope, the large community gathering room dubbed "the chapel," the mezzanine overlooking the chapel, and the first room off of the main entrance would be preserved and restored. The remaining portions of the building would need to be gutted, tactfully rebuilt and modernized.

The intent of the current renovation project was not to restore the building to its original interior condition. It has gone through at least two major previous interior alterations and is no longer used as it was originally constructed (as a mortuary). So, although extensive renovations were required, the project was able to meet historic regulatory standards.

AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

APWA



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

2021

**PUBLIC WORKS PROJECT
AWARD**

HISTORICAL RESTORATION/PRESERVATION

————— ••••• —————
**\$5 MILLION LESS THAN
\$25 MILLION**

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES CENTER
RENOVATION PROJECT**

**City of
Berkeley**

DELIVERED

