

Case Study



The Music Center Plaza Renovation

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Official Project Name

Plaza Renovation

Project Location

135 North Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Client

The Music Center

Owner

The County of Los Angeles

Cumming's Role

Cumming was the owner's representative responsible for managing the design and funding process, running the weekly OAC meetings, managing the project budget, coordinating owner consultants and the design-build team, conducting monthly schedule reviews, performing building commissioning, and developing and presenting monthly executive reports to the County of Los Angeles.

Contractor(s)

Matt Construction — Design-Builder

Architect(s)

Rios Clementi Hale Studios

Other Major Consultants/Vendors

Nabih Youssef Associates — Structural Engineer
AMA — MEP Engineer
Risha — Pedestal System Structural Engineer
D7 Consultants — Waterproofing Designer
Holdenwater — Fountain Designer
Historic Preservation — Historic Resources Group

Start Date

December 19, 2016

Original Completion Date

July 1, 2019

Actual Completion Date

May 21, 2019 (5+ weeks ahead of schedule)

Original Budget

\$40,000,000

Actual Final Project Cost

\$41,300,000. The budget was increased by \$1.3 million to add the Hope Street LED media displays and Grand Avenue banner towers.

The Purpose of this Project

This project was conceived in 2002 for multiple reasons. The first was to provide critical infrastructure maintenance to a 50-year-old structure that was experiencing substantial water intrusion and had an aging fountain. The second was to improve the visual and physical connection of the east side of the campus to Grand Avenue, which had become increasingly pedestrianized due to the addition of Grand Park, the Broad, Walt Disney Concert Hall, and other destinations on Bunker Hill. The third reason was to enhance accessibility on and through the plaza, which connects the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Theatre.

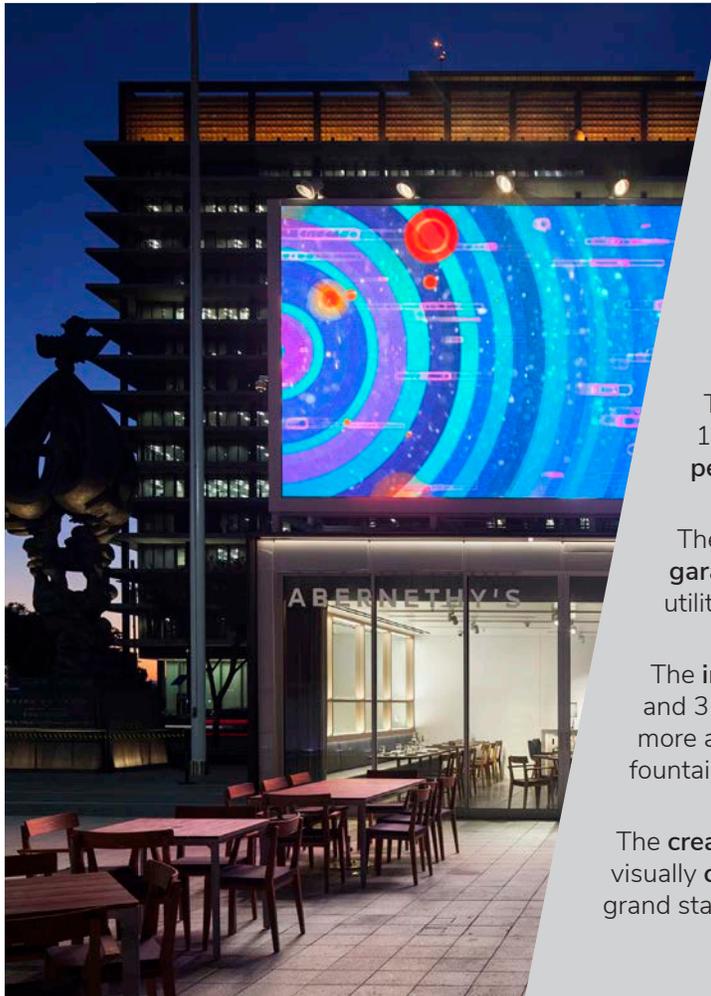
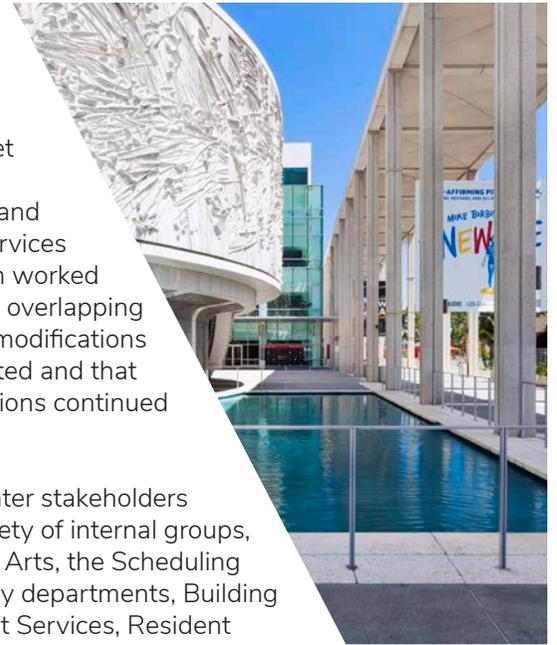
Key Stakeholders and Their Concerns

Our ability to build meaningful relationships with every stakeholder and member of the team ensured a collaborative and trusting mentality going into every challenge. Whenever an unexpected challenge surfaced, we were in close communication during the troubleshooting process.

The stakeholders for this project included the County of Los Angeles and The Music Center. The County of Los Angeles had three separate entities that participated in the project: the Board of Supervisors, which was concerned with ensuring the relevance of the space for the community's needs for decades to come; the Chief

Executive Office, which wanted a high-quality project that met the budgetary requirements; and the Internal Services Division, which worked to confirm that overlapping infrastructure modifications were coordinated and that parking operations continued smoothly.

The Music Center stakeholders included a variety of internal groups, including TMC Arts, the Scheduling and Technology departments, Building Services, Guest Services, Resident Companies (such as opera and theatre groups), the Safety Department, and more. Our individual relationships with the various Music Center department leaders were a key factor in the project's success. Their investment in providing information and making timely decisions kept construction running smoothly.



Overall Scope of Work

The **construction of five new one-story pavilion buildings:** restaurant, bar, welcome center, restrooms, and café.

The **refurbishment of the fountain.**

The relocation of the Jacques Lipchitz Peace on Earth sculpture 175 feet to the west to **increase plaza capacity from 2,500 people to 5,000 people.**

The **reinforcement of concrete beams and columns in the garage** below the five new structures, along with the relocation of utilities prior to doing so. This was a nine-month process.

The **installation of a pedestal paver system** (4,000 steel pedestals and 35,000 square feet of pavers) to make the plaza one level and more accessible. Previously it was recessed 30 inches around the fountain and had only two wheelchair ramps.

The **creation of a new “front door”** for the plaza that physically and visually **connects its east side with Grand Avenue** via a reconfigured grand staircase, along with escalators and garden overlooks.

Proprietary or Unique Processes/Procedures

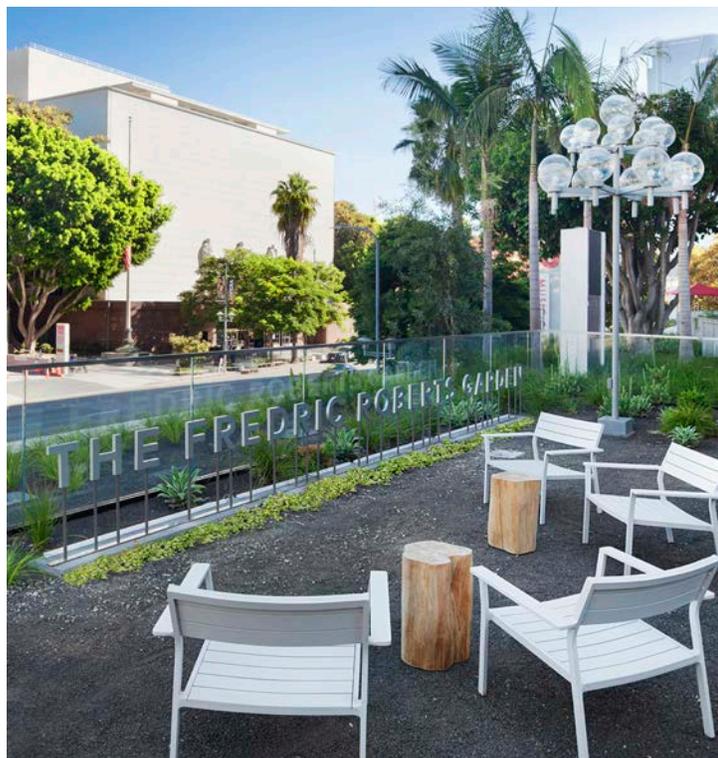
Cumming was able to offer a comprehensive suite of services efficiently and effectively. The collaborative expertise offered by our project management, cost management, scheduling, and commissioning teams was critical to advising our client with regard to cost and schedule implications — this made a difference on countless decisions throughout the project.

Unique Project Challenges

This project encountered numerous challenges, one of which was the relocation of the 15-ton Lipchitz sculpture. When we removed the stone veneer base, we discovered

that the steel base underneath was completely rusted — the predictable result of being located over a fountain for 50 years — and had been painted with lead-based paint. Thanks to our veteran historic preservation consultant, Peyton Hall, we were able to track down a local structural engineer, Michael Krakower, who specializes in historic bronze sculptures; they confirmed there wasn't an imminent life safety threat. We collaborated with these two consultants, our art conservator (John Griswold), the structural engineer of record, and the design-builder's steel subcontractor to design a custom rigging apparatus to stabilize the sculpture before abatement and demolition could proceed.

The press response has been overwhelming in its assessment of the public-private collaboration to reinvest in and revitalize Downtown LA's epicenter of culture and open space.



Project Outcome

The project has been enormously successful for the County of Los Angeles, The Music Center, and especially the residents of Los Angeles. There have been a dozen large events hosting thousands of visitors since it opened in August 2019 – Dance DTLA, a sing-along with the LA Master Chorale, and resident company galas, to name a few. On a daily basis, one can observe employees and visitors from the Hall of Administration, the courthouse, the Department of Water and Power, and The Music Center enjoying a coffee while watching stunning artistic filters on the LED screens, eating their homemade lunch in the gardens, or eating Jason Fullilove's buttermilk pie before a performance. The press response has been overwhelming in its assessment of the public-private collaboration to reinvest in and revitalize Downtown LA's epicenter of culture and open space.