Dreyfuss + Blackford Architecture to design Sacramento’s Powerhouse Science Center

Project advances rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of prominent historic landmark.

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(SACRAMENTO, CA) – Dreyfuss + Blackford Architecture (D+B) is completing the design of the Powerhouse Science Center which includes the rehabilitation of former PG&E Power Station B. The empty Power Station sits prominently on the banks of the Sacramento River at 400 Jibboom Street, and is visible from Interstate 5 and the American River Bike Trail. The Center will serve as a premier regional leader in informal science education, exploration, and promotion for Northern California. The closest science center of this caliber is located in the San Francisco Bay Area. On June 21, 2016, Sacramento City Council unanimously approved an additional $850,000 for remediation of existing hazardous materials in the historic building.

Power Station B Historic Preservation & Adaptive Reuse

The Power Station was designed in 1912 in the Beaux Arts style by architect Willis Polk, and was formally closed in 1954. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historic Places, and the Sacramento Register of Historic & Cultural Resources.

As a premiere regional science center, the building’s reuse celebrates the original use of the building and the technological advances of energy production early in the 20th Century.

The Powerhouse Science Center project involves the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the existing reinforced concrete and steel building. Consisting of a boiler room and a turbine room, the bipartite layout of the former power generation building will be added to, with a new multi-level structure housing the science center entrance, main vertical circulation and supporting services such as toilet rooms and elevators. Inside the large open volumes, a new
intermediate floor will be added to increase exhibit space. A basement level will augment where piping and crawl spaces used to exist.

Rehabilitation of the significant historic features of the power station will be integrated with distinct but complimentary contemporary architecture reflecting the advancement of technology.

Powerhouse Science Center is targeting U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification rating of Gold.

West Office Exhibition Design of Oakland, California, is designing the interior and exterior exhibits. This is a Design-Build project with Otto Construction of Sacramento, California.

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**Dreyfuss + Blackford Architecture**

Dreyfuss + Blackford Architecture, founded in 1950 in Sacramento, CA, with an office in San Francisco, is a mid-sized firm headquartered in the California capital. The firm serves corporate, public, and institutional markets with solutions achieved through collaboration and innovation. Committed to a sustainable future, D+B brings expertise in architecture, master planning, interiors, graphic design, and construction services. Recently completed projects include The Shop at VSP Global, CLARA Midtown - E. Claire Raley Studios for the Performing Arts at Fremont School, and the Yolo County Woodland Superior Courthouse. [dreyfussblackford.com](http://dreyfussblackford.com)

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**About Powerhouse Science Center**

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Powerhouse Science Center, currently operating its Discovery Campus located at 3615 Auburn Boulevard in Sacramento, will move into the new facility, expanding current services to accommodate more visitors and programs.

**Benefits to Sacramento Region**

Powerhouse Science Center will be an informal science education center designed to complement the surrounding recreational facilities, including Robert T. Matsui Park Waterfront Park and the Sacramento River Bike Trail. The project is located in the River District, a previously industrial and warehouse area transforming into a diverse urban community. “As an anchor civic amenity in Sacramento’s urban core, Powerhouse will unite scientific development with the area’s entrepreneurial drive, serving as a catalyst for neighborhood development and a vibrant component of the River District,” said Harry Laswell, Interim Executive Director of Powerhouse Science Center.

Powerhouse expects to serve 250,000 visitors from 19 counties in Northern California as well as visitors from throughout the United States at its new riverfront campus.
Powerhouse will be an ideal venue for state science expos, as well as special events that unite citizen-scientists and scientific entrepreneurs. Like other informal education centers, Powerhouse will host regional conversations on science-based global issues that are locally relevant such as sustainability, population growth, climate change, agricultural technology, and engineering. Powerhouse will facilitate gatherings among its partners, commercial enterprises and local technology leaders, to help researchers move their discoveries into the marketplace.

Exhibits, Programs and Outreach

The Powerhouse Science Center will be a dynamic epicenter of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, exploration, and promotion for Northern California’s Capitol region. Its mission is to engage and inspire people of all ages to explore the wonders, possibilities, and responsibilities of science. By providing exciting exhibits, public programs, school and community outreach, as well as teacher professional growth opportunities, Powerhouse will help empower our STEM-literate community of tomorrow. Exhibits will focus on the future, leveraging technology to teach us how to be better stewards of our world, ourselves and our universe. These experiences will challenge and inspire young minds to explore water, technology, alternative energy sources, biosciences and consider careers in STEM fields.

A variety of signature science education experiences will be offered, including:

- Interactive, Content-Rich Exhibit Galleries
- Full Dome, Digital Planetarium/Theater
- Aerojet Challenger Learning Center
- Outdoor Simulated Archaeological Dig
- Scientific Discovery Labs/Classrooms
- The Hanami Line by the Sacramento Tree Foundation

Project History & Funding

The Powerhouse Science Center project is in the final stages of a $40 million capital campaign. It has received funding from both State and local government, as well as numerous private company donations. In April 2011, a California State Parks Nature Education Facilities grant of $7 million was awarded to the Powerhouse Science Center. In December 2011, Aerojet Rocketdyne committed $1.5 million for the new Aerojet Challenger Learning Center. The Sacramento Metropolitan Utility District and Pacific Gas & Electric are both major sponsors. In May 2014, the Sacramento City Council voted to provide $7 million in support over 20 years, which was followed by a $6.8 million commitment from Sacramento County. On June 21, 2016, Sacramento City Council approved an additional $850,000 for remediation of existing hazardous materials in the historic building.
Renderings courtesy of Dreyfuss + Blackford Architecture.