

## 2012 Blueprint Awards - Historic Revitalization

### Award of Excellence Historic Revitalization 2012 Blueprint Awards

#### ***Merced Theatre Foundation - Merced Theatre, Merced, CA***

#### **Projects Summary and Photos**



was built in 1931 at the corner of Main Street and Martin Luther King Way in downtown Merced. The architectural style of the building is Spanish Colonial Revival. Probably the most prominent feature of the Theatre is its one hundred-foot high tower displaying the City's name in neon lights, which has served as a highly visible symbol for the entire community for many years.

The Theatre's interior was originally a 1645 seat "Mediterranean atmospheric" auditorium, including cloud effects and stars floating across the ceiling; and towers, battlements, and balconies adorning the walls. The Theatre property on the Main Street frontage included a row of shops with second story apartment units.

For decades, the Theatre served as a focal point in Merced's community life, hosting not only movies, but all kinds of live entertainment and civic and educational events. Even through the 1950s and 1960s, the Theatre provided Merced's largest auditorium and performance venue. A series of remodels over this forty-year period damaged some of the historical architectural integrity of the building, but it remained fundamentally intact.

United Artists (UA) acquired the property in the 1970s and owned the Theatre through 2002. In 1979, United Artists converted the auditorium into a four-plex movie theater. UA removed the charming ornament of the original interior, destroying the Mediterranean villages along the walls, and dividing the original auditorium into four small theaters. UA allowed the apartments and retail space next to the Theatre to go vacant. Although the Theatre remained in operation as a movie exhibition house, it continually decayed.

The Theatre was added to the National Register of Historical Places in June of 2009.

The Merced Theatre Foundation, the City of Merced Redevelopment Agency and the community partnered to restore the Theatre to its previous grandeur, including restoring the auditorium to its original single hall, Mediterranean style configuration. The Merced Theatre Foundation received its largest contribution: \$1 million from retired orthopedic surgeon Art Kamangar. The theater portion of the building is named in his honor.

The ten apartments and five commercial store fronts were remodeled and open for occupancy in April, 2007. The Theatre reopened its doors for the first time in years on April 21, 2012. The iconic building now stands as the centerpiece the city's downtown, which seems increasingly more

#### **Primary links**

vibrant. Total project cost was \$14.5 million. Funding was obtained from the community, redevelopment funds and the California Cultural and Historical Endowment.

## Photos

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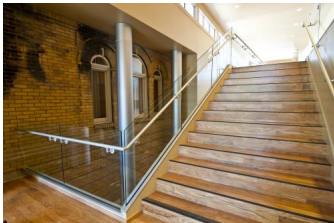
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## Award of Merit Historic Revitalization 2012 Blueprint Awards

### *City of Turlock, CA - Carnegie Library and Arts Center*

#### Projects Summary and Photos



The Carnegie Library was opened in 1916 as one of more than 1,689 libraries built by Andrew Carnegie across the United States, including libraries in New York and Washington DC. Turlock's library history dates from a 1907 Women's Improvement Club project. The building served as Turlock's public library until 1968, when the present library now operated by the County of Stanislaus was built. The building has served as an arts center since 1982, developing in the process a second venerable tradition. In 1992, the local arts commission became the caretaker of this important City building and secured its place on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. Renamed the Carnegie Arts Center, the building has provided a unique venue for art exhibits, theater, concerts, poetry readings, art classes and more since its recent rehabilitation completed on February 28, 2012.

McGregor & Knapp and Hugh Y. Davis designed the building in a Classical Revival style with Spanish influence endemic to the San Joaquin Valley. The building is located on a tree shaded lot at the corner of North Broadway and Florence streets, two blocks from Downtown Turlock immediately adjacent a residential area in which substantial craftsman bungalows predominate. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993 and has served as a focal point for the historic commercial core of the City, influencing the design of newer development including the adjacent public safety center currently under construction.

#### Primary links

Rehabilitation of the Carnegie Library and Arts Center was required when the building was gutted by fire in the early morning of November 23, 2005. Ultimately the cause of the blaze was determined to be vandalism and arson. Once the debris was cleared, the foundation and the exterior brick walls were all that remained of the building.

The recently completed project includes the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the original building, a new 18,000 square foot building addition, and the development of a public plaza. New reinforced shotcrete walls were constructed on the interior of the surviving masonry walls of the original building to provide seismic stability. The floor and roof of the building were reconstructed, and new electrical and mechanical systems were installed.

The expansion project includes a large, two-story atrium that connects the historic Carnegie Library to a newly-constructed addition housing gallery display and performance space. The newer building offers a contemporary interpretation of the classic features that characterize the original Library. The rhythms, shapes and patterns of the Library are clearly visible in the design of the addition which is set back on the lot to frame and accentuate the rehabilitated historic building. The charred brick wall of the original Library, now on the interior of the new atrium, serves as a dramatic backdrop to the primary circulation spine of the arts center, its black markings recalling a tragic episode in the life of the building.

The historic building now houses two arts education classrooms on the lower level and a multi-purpose meeting room and gallery on the second, main floor. A formal visual arts gallery, multi-purpose performing arts venue, member's gallery, offices and catering kitchen were included as part of the new construction.

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A joint initiative of San Joaquin Valley Councils of Governments representing each of the region's eight counties, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the Great Valley Center

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