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## **ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station Receives Governor’s Historic Preservation Award**

*The award acknowledges NTC Foundation’s outstanding achievements in historic preservation transforming the former Naval Training Center into a cultural mecca.*

**SAN DIEGO, CA (March 16, 2022)** – [NTC Foundation](#), the non-profit organization that oversees the development of ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station, was announced as a recipient of a 2021 Governor’s Historic Preservation Award. ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station was one of seven California recipients of this award and only one of two in San Diego.

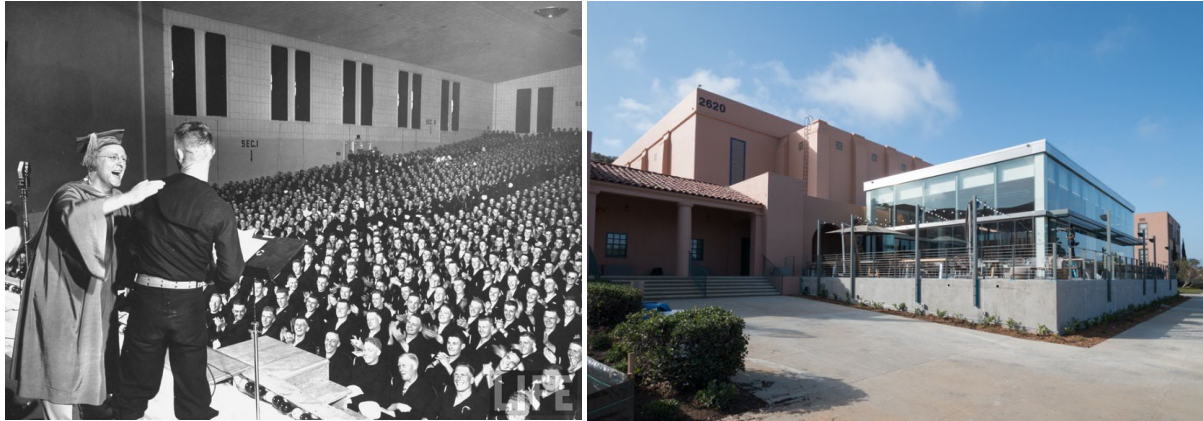
“We are absolutely honored to receive this recognition,” said Lisa Johnson, President and CEO of NTC Foundation. “NTC Foundation seeks to enrich the lives of San Diegans through arts and culture. It has been very rewarding to work on a project that has such a historical significance to our community and that will continue to impact generations to come. ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station is a community of which everyone can be proud.”

In 2000, NTC Foundation was established to renovate 26 historic buildings at the former Naval Training Center and transform them into a significant new flagship destination for arts, culture, and creativity. ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station is a unique location filled with nearly 145 galleries, museums, artists, music groups, dance companies, makers, creators, and distinctive dining experiences.

“Nearly two million young men and women came here to do their basic training and go through Command Schools,” said Alan Ziter, Executive Director of NTC Foundation. “Training has once again returned to the old Naval Training Center in the form of art, music, dance, photography, and more.”

Designed by architect of record Lincoln Rogers and opened in October 1923, the Naval Training Center helped make San Diego a naval town. When NTC Foundation began plans for the renovation of this space, they knew they had to be respectful of the historic buildings and their contribution to San Diego history, while meeting the needs of arts and cultural groups for the next 100 years. Numerous focus groups were held with members of the arts community to understand their needs and wants. NTC Foundation contracted with local architecture firms Roeseling Nakamura Terada Architects (RNT) and then [obrARCHITECTURE](#) on the re-development of the 17 out of 26 buildings completed to date.

"Designing the Arts District Liberty Station has been a transformative undertaking for obr and for me personally," said Christopher Bittner, Founding Principal of obrARCHITECTURE and formerly with RNT. "I've personally invested almost 20 years in re-imagining the former Naval Training Center into what it has become today. Where it once taught young men and women to fight, it now trains them to be artists."



Built in 1942 during WWII, **Luce Auditorium** (Building 35) was used for training films for sailors, live entertainers and recreational films open to the community. Now home to The LOT, the entry of the lobby maintains the original wood stage floor and concrete presidium upon which notable performers such as Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and Nat King Cole once performed.



The **Dick Laub NTC Command Center** was a space for the highest-ranking officers that overlooked Preble Field, one of the marching plazas. Base leadership would host meetings with visiting dignitaries in this building. Today, this building serves as the focal point of the 26-building campus with an interior that remains largely unchanged featuring stunning Philippine mahogany.



The **Barracks** buildings were once the center of Navy life for recruits. Each building housed about 100 sailors. NTC Foundation wanted to transform these buildings into spaces that nurtured collaboration and community engagement. These buildings are now home to numerous working artist studios and ground floor retail, galleries and cafes.



**Buildings 175 (Dorothea Laub Dance Place) and 176 (Dorothea Laub Music & Arts Center)** were classrooms, used for education in everything from dentistry and cooking to laboratories that taught how to build and take apart torpedoes. The classrooms now teach the arts in dance, music and more with interiors that remain largely the same. The former library, **Building 177**, is now a premier event venue due to its large open space in the center, cement pillars and high ceilings.

**Buildings 201 and 202** were administrative buildings, with 202 being used specifically for payroll which evidence of that can be seen through the teller windows that still exist on the exterior of the building along with walk-in safes on the first and second floors. These buildings are now home to numerous non-profit organizations, galleries and museums including Visions Art Museum, the San Diego Watercolor Society, Hire Heroes USA and New Americans Museum, which has repurposed one of the built-in cement safes as a recording studio.

**The Quarters** were temporary homes to the highest-ranking Navy personnel and their families. These four homes are each accompanied with a one-acre garden and overlook the base. Over 100 years later, Banyan Tree Learning Center now calls one of these buildings home.

NTC Foundation is thrilled to continue their partnership with obrARCHITECTURE on the remaining nine buildings including **Building 178**, the former base exchange and recreation building. This multi-level space featured a bowling alley in the basement and a disco on the second floor. NTC Foundation plans

to transform this 41,000 square-foot building into a performance venue with two state-of-the-art, live theaters.

NTC Foundation will be presented with their award at a ceremony in Sacramento on April 27. To learn more about NTC Foundation and to help support in their redevelopment of ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station, please visit [www.ntcfoundation.org](http://www.ntcfoundation.org)

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#### **About NTC Foundation**

NTC Foundation was established in 2000 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit to enrich the lives of San Diegans by renovating this signature community asset and creating, facilitating, and operating ARTS DISTRICT as a 100-acre creative district. Visitors experience the arts, culture, creativity, and cuisine that are the hallmarks of the San Diego region and enjoy innovative experiences in a historic setting at Liberty Station that inspire lives for generations to come. [www.ntcfoundation.org](http://www.ntcfoundation.org)

#### **About ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station**

ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station is San Diego's largest Arts & Cultural District located in historic buildings at the former Naval Training Center in the Liberty Station neighborhood, near Downtown on San Diego Bay. With 100 park-like acres, the ARTS DISTRICT is home to nearly 145 museums and galleries, artist studios, dance companies, fine dining, creative retail and other organizations that showcase San Diego's creative community and provide innovative experiences for the public.

[www.artsdistrictlibertystation.com](http://www.artsdistrictlibertystation.com)

#### **About obrARCHITECTURE**

obrARCHITECTURE is a hospitality architecture and design firm specializing in civic, cultural, hospitality and restaurants, educational, and residential projects. Founded in 2008, obrARCHITECTURE has worked with NTC Foundation on ARTS DISTRICT Liberty Station for over 20 years and has preserved some of the best historic Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. [www.obrarchitecture.com](http://www.obrarchitecture.com)