

ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

The RAND Corporation Headquarters

Santa Monica, Calif.

DMJM Design

RAND's social theories inspire its figure-8-shaped headquarters

The RAND Corporation, a nonprofit policy research institution, had occupied its original 15-acre headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., since early 1953. Over time, as RAND experienced steady growth, the aging facility suffered from increasing maintenance and operating costs and limitations from an inflexible infrastructure. Moreover, where RAND was once the only research organization of its kind, today there are a number of firms that do similar work—meaning it had to offer a world-class workplace to compete for and retain talented employees. With expectations of using its new headquarters for another 50 years, RAND wanted a building that would provide functionality and flexibility, supporting its office culture and illustrating its analytical approach to problem-solving.

Housing nearly three-quarter's of RAND's entire workforce, the new 310,000-square-foot facility provides workspace for 1,100 employees; it also includes a café, videoconference room, event rooms, a conference center, and the campus of RAND's Pardee Graduate School. In designing such a large and complicated structure, DMJM Design took a page from RAND's own playbook. It organized the building within a figure-8-shaped floor plan: the figure 8, according to RAND's mathematicians, increases the probability that researchers from different departments will have chance encounters with each other in the hallway. This shape, moreover, corresponds to RAND's nonhierarchical, egalitarian organization—and, to boot, its internal circulation pattern lacks dead ends.



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Sustainable design was a high priority for RAND, demonstrating its commitment to conservation of natural, client, and institutional resources. The client worked closely with DMJM Design to identify green elements that achieved the best balance in terms of aesthetics, performance, and cost. Sustainable features include operable windows and lighting controls that allow employees to regulate environmental conditions at their individual workstations; raised floors that incorporate wiring and air distribution; and slender floor plates that allow more than 90 percent of employees direct access to light and views. The building earned a LEED Gold Level rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Formal name of project:

The RAND Corporation Headquarters

Location:

Santa Monica, Calif.

Gross square footage:

310,000 sq. ft.

Total Construction Cost:

\$90 million

Owner:

The RAND Corporation

Architect:

DMJM Design