The respectful repurposing of a landmark
Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates (VSBA)
DECORATED SHED
provides a new home for Drexel University’s
College of Media Arts and Design (CoMAD).
Though the building is not protected by any
preservation guidelines and the original archi-
tects are still practicing, the designers under-
stood the importance of honoring this early
example of modern mannerism in the design
of the adaptive reuse.

To transform the former 130,000 square-foot
office building and 13,000 square-foot annex
(once a daycare center), the design concept
embraces the realities of the shed—a cost-ef-
fective, four-story commercial box. Key goals
driving the project include bringing together
disparate CoMAD departments (including ar-
chitecture and interior design, digital media,
entertainment and arts enterprises, fashion
design and merchandising, graphic design,
and product design) in one location and en-
couraging cross-collaboration between dis-
ciplines. To both meet the client’s goals and
honor VSBA’s decorated shed, the design
concept focuses on respecting the original
intent, making more with less, and offering
adaptable spaces for learning.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
150,696 SF (adaptive reuse + addition)
$46,100,000 (project total)
RESPECTING THE ORIGINAL INTENT

original intent = decorated shed + clipped corner + future expansion
revealed structure (floors 1–3)

# reconfigured floors  

#M new mezzanines  

## connection/collaboration  

--- atrium cut  

▲ north to annex
ADAPTABLE SPACES FOR LEARNING

- Lobby space adapted into rooms
- Lobby space adapted for multiple uses (i.e., café seating, pop-up retail shop, and lounge area)
mezzanine space adapted for presentation/critique
connection/collaboration space adapted for gallery/exhibition
annex
connection to shed

main level          connection/collaboration     south to shed

shed mezzanine level

atrium cut