

Eastern Columbia Penthouse

Los Angeles, California

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When it opened in 1930, the Eastern Columbia Outfitting Companies' 13-story art deco retail tower in Los Angeles epitomized the height of opulence. Today, this landmark property has been transformed into 147 light-filled loft condominiums with luxurious contemporary upgrades and classic period details.

When the 4,000 square foot, four-story penthouse was purchased, the realtor brought together the new owner and Bryan Gorog, President of BCG Concepts, Inc., to discuss home control. With so many levels, centralized control was essential. "Just the mention of having to cover four flights of stairs to turn off lights or the heat at night was enough to convince the owner she needed a Crestron system," said Gorog.



The penthouse space is very open, laid out in designated areas as opposed to traditional rooms. BCG Concepts minimized cabling issues and provided easy control access by installing Crestron infiNET™ dimmers and thermostats.

BCG Concepts designed a system powered by an Adagio® Entertainment System with AM/FM/XM tuner card (AES-XM) to control four audio and four video zones, 10 zones of lighting, three thermostats and seven motorized Somfy shades. "We wanted to do something powerful, but not over the top," observed Gorog. "The Adagio AES-XM gave us all the functions we needed at a comfortable price point."

The biggest installation challenge in this unique space was due to the historical nature of the building. The floors are separated by sixteen inches of concrete, so every wire that BCG home ran between floors required coring out concrete. The exterior walls are all concrete as well, so there was no chance of running wire to those locations without unsightly cord concealers or conduit.

Ideal for retrofit and landmark installations, Crestron infiNET™ is a wireless mesh networking technology that eliminates the need for physical control wiring. By using this simple, cost-effective solution, BCG installed five one-button switches, six four-button keypads with dimmers, and 10 one-button dimmers in the most convenient locations, minimizing the electrical cabling issues and providing easy control access.



The penthouse space is very open, laid out in designated areas as opposed to traditional rooms. The dining room, kitchen, living room and powder room are on the first floor. There is a sitting room, bathroom, and linen closet (in which the equipment rack is housed) on the second floor. The third floor has a bar area and a loft space that overlooks the floor below, and the top level accommodates the master bedroom and bath.

The equipment rack includes a CEN-IDOC Interface for Apple iPod®, the AES-XM, a Crestron infiNET gateway, and 5-port PoE (Power over Ethernet) switch. infiNET thermostats are located at the first floor entryway, second floor sitting area, and master bedroom. Crestron WAPs (Wireless Access Points) were installed in the living room, sitting area, and master bedroom.

Total home control is accessible from two TPMC-8X touchpanels – one located in the living room, the other in the master bedroom. BCG used buttons on the CLW-DIM4RFs (four-button dimmer and keypad) for control functions as well. For instance, in the master bedroom area, the “house off” button turns off all the lights, drops the shades and sets back the thermostats on the lower three floors. The “house off” button by the first floor exit turns lights, music, thermostats, and televisions off and lowers the shades.

After BCG got the necessary wiring paths mapped out and drilled, everything else fell into place. A great example of installer ingenuity occurred when the owner decided she didn’t like the size of a custom cabinet that had been designed to hold a flat panel and lift at the foot of the bed. BCG removed the lift, shifted the TV to a side table next to the bed, and moved the custom cabinet downstairs, where it was turned into a bar.

Due to HOA (Home Owners Association) restrictions, BCG couldn’t put an antenna on the roof, so they used the DirecTV box as an XM tuner. BCG programmed a “channel favorite button” on the touchpanels, enabling the client to access a layout of 100 XM music channels with names and graphics, so she can switch channels with one button press, without having to refer to a guide.

BCG also created a sophisticated infiNET lighting interface for the touchpanels, which allows the client to change and save all of



her own lighting scenes. This is the third project in which BCG implemented this system, and “clients love it,” Gorog commented. “It gives them the ability to use the system for a few weeks and change the lighting settings without us having to come back for a service call. It works as easy as saving a radio station preset in your car.”

“The system is working great,” concluded Gorog. “When you have the client’s trust, and can bring in your entire team and manage every aspect of the project, you get the best results.”

