

Architect Statement



Under the design leadership of DesignGroup principal Michael Bongiorno, AIA, the museum design team has developed a bold and novel design strategy. DesignGroup asked provocative questions of CMA about both the relationship of the museum to contemporary culture and the museum's physical relationship to the city and its citizens. From those questions, the design evolved out of our deep understanding of the particularities of the site, the imperatives of the programmatic relationships, and the redefinition of the museum's relationship to its physical and social context. The building design, then, is a reflection of the museum's ambition to be more visible, relevant, and connected to the community as a meeting point between art, the public and the physical city.

Experientially, the project was guided by the study of the poetics of light, by harnessing the power of simplicity and essentialism, and by defining the visitor experience as a cinematic procession. Strategically, there are five noted features of the building design planning:

- The Atrium of Light
- Cinematic Facades
- The Upper Gallery
- The Special Event Spine
- Setting the Historic Jewel

The building design concept is simple: a long bar of gallery space on the east side of the site is separated from the 1931 Ross Wing by a sky-lit concourse and entry forecourt which serve as the central organizing element of the project. The purpose of the concourse, in addition to acting as a hyphen between the historic wing and new addition, is multi-fold: a lobby, a cueing space, an event space, a meeting point, a circuit to connect to multiple program elements. A series of bridges at the second floor crosses this concourse and connects the new galleries to the existing building. Recognizing that the historic 1931 Ross Wing is a beloved community icon, the new addition maintains the visual integrity of the original building exterior to the greatest degree possible. The addition will have a very different, but complimentary design to the 1931 Ross Wing. From an architectural perspective, the original building is an historic jewel, and the wing will become more of a setting that highlights the beauty of it.

The museum's presence to the north and south is announced through "cinematic facades" that allow a dialogue between the museum interiors and the surrounding neighborhood. The entry forecourt is a gently sloping covered walk defined by, and accessing, the new sculpture garden to the West and a green space along Washington Avenue to the East. Semi-public program elements such as the retail store and café are strategically located with relation to outdoor spaces in order to provide the maximum amount of ground floor activation. The café is able to fully open itself to a terrace overlooking the sculpture garden by way of large folding glass wall panels. The new special event space, axially related to Derby Court, sits on the second floor overlooking the sculpture garden to the north. The sculpture garden is then accessed by stair from an outdoor terrace serving the special event space.

The entry forecourt is a gently sloping covered walk defined by, and accessing, the new sculpture garden to the west and a green space along Washington Avenue to the east. It serves as the museum's main entrance. Semi-public program elements such as the retail store and café are strategically located with relation to this forecourt and other outdoor spaces to provide the most ground floor activation possible. Large folding glass wall panels allow the café to be fully opened to a terrace that overlooks the sculpture garden.

The large new sculpture and event garden is designed to accommodate the Museum's compelling collection of outdoor works, in addition to events and dining. The Washington Avenue lawn is a tree-lined green space that serves the entry forecourt and will be the location of an iconic sculpture. The integration of these terraces, gardens, balconies and related elements allows for seamless, unwinding gallery experiences and total immersion in the Museum's collection.

On the building exterior, time-honored and context-specific materials are used in new ways. The exterior building materials include pre-patinated copper, Indiana limestone and curtain-wall glazing. A durable building water table of granite also serves as exterior pavement within the forecourt and garden, as well as interior flooring within the entry concourse.

The copper is deployed on the upper gallery using a proprietary system arranged in a pattern scripted by DesignGroup. Certain panels are perforated and screen a discreet light source that changes the character of the building in the evening. Strategically placed glazing and roof monitors are intended to create both framed views and opportunities for natural lighting. Much of the exterior building wall materials are continued into the building interior.