

Cincinnati Museum Center

Cincinnati, Ohio

Role: Design Architect & Museum Planner for Renovated and Expanded Museum; Collaborated with team of local architects, engineers and specialist museum consultants; Collaborated with exhibit design firm (PRD)

Program: Three separate museums sharing one historic building: the Cincinnati Historical Society, the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History and the Children's Discovery Center, immersive history and science exhibits, library, collections storage, Omnimax theater, grand lobby, cafe, gift shop, function spaces, classrooms, exhibit support, and offices

Total Building Area: 500,000 sf

Status: Opened in 1990

Description: Work on this project began in 1980, when a preliminary concept and feasibility study was prepared for the Cincinnati Historical Society in response to their need for additional space to expand their library and archives and create a new history museum. Our services, which spanned a period of ten years, included assisting with the identification and evaluation of alternative sites large enough to accommodate both the new facilities of the Historical Society and an expanded new museum facility for the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History. Following site selection we prepared a Comprehensive Master Plan for renovation of Cincinnati's historic Union Terminal Building as the home for the new 500,000 SF Cincinnati Museum Center which houses both museums, an expanded library and archives, a 285-seat Omnimax theater, a Children's Discovery Center, and a community-operated arts center. The building's magnificent rotunda functions as an indoor urban space unencumbered by new structures or exhibits that would obscure or detract from its architectural splendor and its art deco detailing. The exhibit areas of each museum, located in previously unfinished space below the rotunda, house a variety of exciting walk-through exhibits including a multi-level ice age exhibit, a cavern, a mid-19th century Cincinnati boat landing, and a reconstructed 19th century Cincinnati commercial street lined with a variety of shops. As Design Architect for the project, our responsibilities included developing the basic concept of how the building would be used to house these various facilities, preparing the schematic design and design development drawings for adaptive re-use of the Union Terminal Building, and continuing on as Design Architect throughout the duration of the project. A local architectural firm prepared the construction documents, provided consultation during bidding, and inspection services during construction.



