

Museum of Science

Boston, Massachusetts

Role: Architect and Museum Planner for Expanded Science Museum Facilities

Program: Interactive science and natural history exhibits, changing exhibits, lobby, parking structure, gift shop, dining, special events, classrooms, collections storage, exhibit design and support, offices, visitor services and other support areas.

Building Area: 446,000 sf

Status: West Wing opened in 1972; Hall of Energy opened in 1980; Children's Discovery Room opened in 1993; Sixth Floor Special Events Areas opened in 1997; Computer Museum opened in 1999.

Description: The Boston Museum of Science is one of the outstanding natural and applied science museums in the world. Over the past quarter century it has initiated many contemporary concepts of science exhibits that have since been emulated throughout the world. It is a lively, modern, flexible institution with dynamic and far-reaching programs which have captured the interest and enthusiasm of millions of people, young and old.

Our long range master plan of 1965 included the phased construction of new exhibition structures, parking, and other support facilities. We were the architect for all phases of this new construction phase, including the West Wing Exhibition Building (85,000 sf of exhibit area, Lobby and Orientation Area (including the 55-foot-high window wall view of the Charles River), a 900-car parking garage, exhibit design and exhibit maintenance, and the Hall of Energy Building, which contains the largest air-insulated Van de Graaff generator in existence. The West Wing Exhibition Building, which more than tripled the amount of exhibit space in the museum, was designed as a long span, maximum flexibility exhibition area. Much of the space allows for mezzanine construction for special exhibit purposes. The central and major exhibit well, used for technology and space exhibits and as a point of orientation for museum visitors, is 55 feet high.

This initial expansion was accomplished in five phases over a 14 year period of planning, design, and construction. Subsequently, VernerJohnson provided planning and architectural services for several phases of renovations and expansions over another 15 year period. These included new lobby/ticketing upgrades, a new Children's Discovery Room, a Special Events Suite, a Computer Lab and others. The Museum remains one of the top science centers in the world, currently ranked 6th worldwide and 3rd in the US for annual visitation. It continues to grow and evolve, setting new standards within the museum community.



