

Museum of Science and Industry

Chicago, Illinois

Role: Design Architect for Underground Parking and New Lobby; Museum Planner for the entire Museum including its Renovation and Expansion.

Program: Immersive science exhibits, changing exhibits area, domed IMAX, lobby, cafe, gift shop, function spaces, classrooms, exhibit support, and offices.

Status: Underground Parking and Lobby Expansion completed in 1998.

Description: Housed in an 1893 structure originally constructed as the Palace of Fine Arts of the Chicago World's Fair, the Museum of Science and Industry is the largest science and technology museum in the Western Hemisphere and has nearly 400,000 sf of exhibit space.

It is the most visited science center in the US (fourth most visited worldwide), the museum began working on its ambitious MSI-2000 Master Plan in 1988. Major objectives of this plan were to enhance the institution's international reputations as a leader in informal interactive science learning: develop a new Exhibit Thematic Zone Plan that would coherently organize the museum's extensive exhibit areas; and bring extensive building mechanical, electrical and structural systems up to contemporary museum standards capable of supporting current and emerging exhibition and communications technologies.

In 1990 through 1993, as part of these earlier planning efforts we developed a Conceptual Physical Master Plan which established major space reorganization concepts that guided development of the museum's new exhibition plan, clarified and documented the museum's current and future space requirements. Summarized below are major challenges of the 1993 Master Plan.

- Provide a special arrival experience for visitors from the time they enter the museum's site.

- Create a more appropriate setting for this historic building.

- Identify the optimum location for an underground garage.

- Provide an exciting, unique and accessible underground connection between the garage and the museum.

- Transform and reorganize the museum's public program areas to improve visitor "way-finding" through future newly effectively creatively to the needs of future audiences.

- Improve the ambience and maximize the earning potential of several significant revenue centers; retail and food service operations, the Omnimax theater, and special events facilities.

VernerJohnson was the Design Architect for the Underground Parking Structure and connected New Lobby Expansion. This phases allowed the Museum to be surrounded by public park space, as originally designed in 1893.



