

John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art

Sarasota, Florida

Role: Museum planner for renovations and expansions to the historic Art Museum and Overall Complex; Architect for the Circus Expansion (through design phases)

Program: Permanent and changing art exhibits, circus history exhibitions, library, collections storage, lobby, cafe, gift shop, function spaces, classrooms, exhibit support, and offices

Building Areas: North Addition (109,000 sf), a West Wing Renovation (30,000 sf), an Education Study Center (18,000 sf), and a Museum of the Circus (31,000 sf)

Status: Planning work completed in 1999

Description: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art represents a major cultural amenity to the western Florida region and a world-caliber destination for visitors. In March of 1998, the Museum engaged Verner Johnson Inc. to provide facilities master planning services encompassing the Museum's buildings and grounds and exploring possible connections to adjacent properties owned by others. The Master Plan encompassed four major building components: Museum of the Circus, Education/Study Center, Renovation to the West Wing of the Art Museum, and the New North Addition to the Art Museum. It seeks to solve a number of specific problems relative to collection storage, library growth, exhibition diversification, etc., but it endeavors to do so in the context of developing an overall plan composition which enhances and amplifies the best qualities of the site. The development of the Master Plan has led to several strategic planning concepts:

1. Consolidate future uses with existing facilities to optimize operational efficiencies and minimize building footprints.
2. Increase the park-like quality of the grounds by reducing the presence of vehicles within the portion of the site between Bay Shore Road and Sarasota Bay. Locate parking and service access to the perimeter of the site.
3. Create a single entry point for visitors to allow for better visitor orientation, access control, and consolidation of visitor amenities (such as the museum store, food service, telephones, lockers, etc.)
4. Tell the Ringling story, by use of effective orientation and a route that allows visitors to go in sequence to the Circus Museum, C  d'Zan, and the Art Museum.
5. Remove extraneous structures that are not historically significant in order to increase the quality of the landscaped environment. Relocate the uses accommodated in the removed structures to new, higher quality spaces better suited to the needs.
6. Create a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces to encourage a range of uses, including better accommodation of revenue-producing special events.
7. Exercise the opportunity to build on the Caples property in order to strengthen ties with the local academic community as well as to minimize building on the historic Ringling property.



