

# South Carolina State Museum

Columbia, South Carolina

**Role:** Planning and Conceptual Design

**Building Area:** 212,000 sf

**Description:** The new home of the South Carolina State Museum will be the handsome 1890's Mount Vernon Mills Building, which originally housed the nation's first electric powered textile mill. This historic structure is located on a 16-acre site overlooking the Columbia Canal, easily accessible from all major highways into the City of Columbia.

The \$2 million project, which will be completed in several phases, will ultimately contain 212,000 sf of space in the building, which will be shared by other state agencies. The museum will include 86,500 sf of long term and temporary exhibition areas that will tell the story of the history, natural history, science, technology, and art of the State of South Carolina.

In order to provide a sequence of dramatic interior spaces and point of orientation for visitors, a series of two-story-high spaces will start at the museum's public entry on the south side of the main mill building and proceed northward and up through the building. Most of the existing windows will be bricked in to provide a black box environment for the exhibition galleries. However, a selected few, shaded by awnings, will be left open, offering views to outside public areas and providing additional locational clues for visitors. A large outdoor space, created by the L shape configuration of the original mill building, and annex, will be used for extensive outdoor exhibits including some small historic buildings and large artifacts such as a locomotive, a carousel, and an airplane. Outdoor dining, a public amphitheater, and formal gardens will also be provided for the enjoyment of the public.

Our museum planning work included assisting the South Carolina Museum Commission with the delineation of the museum's purpose roles, and programs, preparation of job description, projection of capital and operating budgets and revenue potential from admissions, parking fees, gift shop sales, and other activities, and preparation of a work-time schedule to guide phased implementation of the project.

Verner Johnson, Inc. will continue as the design architects throughout the duration of this project. The Columbia-based firm of McNair Johnson and Associate, Inc. will have basic responsibility for contract documents, bidding and inspection services during construction. Exhibit planning and design was provided by Gerald Hilferty and Associates of Middleport, Ohio.

