

Monroe Science Center

Monroe, North Carolina

Role: Architect for New Children's Science Museum

Program: lobby, permanent & changing exhibits, gift shop, multi-purpose space, admin work areas

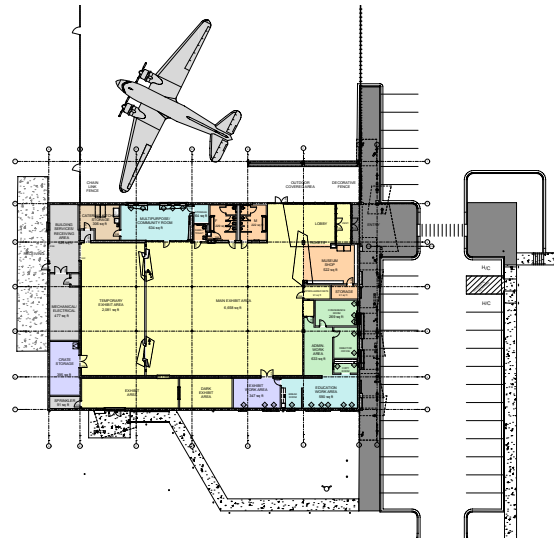
Building Area: 16,000 sf

Status: Opening January 2020

Description: Verner Johnson worked with the City of Monroe, NC and the Monroe Tourism Development Authority to redevelop an abandoned property on the edge of downtown. The Monroe Tourism Development Authority determined that a hands-on science and learning-themed facility would not only be an asset for city and county residents, but would serve to attract residents from surrounding counties.

Verner Johnson's task was to convert a one story, windowless brick building, originally built as a grocery store, into an exciting new children's science museum within a very tight budget. We developed concept options for the exterior with the approach to let the existing building be a neutral background for a playful, eye-catching and engaging entry sequence from the street and the adjacent parking area into the building.

With the Center's focus on science learning for a toddler to teen audience, we chose to express structural and architectonic design elements to respond to the mission of the museum as a facility to inspire inquisitiveness. Floating in front of the existing building, sloped steel tube columns of varying dimensions playfully support colorful, shaped canopies in a myriad of geometries. Outdoor exhibit panels





and simple interactives are part of the entry experience sequence, including the playful, anagram-like building signage. The canopies float at varying heights, like staves of written music, with each letter of the building's signage floating above like notes of different values.

An outdoor seating area serves as a waiting area to enter

a feature WW II cargo plane that will be exhibited adjacent to the building. Verner Johnson is also leading the exhibit design, aiding the City of Monroe in developing cohesive exhibits experiences in the fields of Aviation/Aerospace, Agriculture, Biomedical, and Hands-on Science.