

INTERACTIVITY 2008: GETTING THE BUILDING YOU WANT

BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM CASE STUDY

Goals & Challenges

- Create an entrance clear and easy to find from all points.
- Create a new light-filled lobby with improved visitor amenities and orientation.
- Consolidate exhibits on fewer floors.
- Extract circulation from the galleries.
- Build new traveling exhibits gallery.
- Create an iconic Adventure Center.
- Create a food area with healthy choices and seating.
- Renovate exhibit galleries.
- Improve visitor amenities.
- Provide flexible space for civic celebrations and community gatherings.
- Create fully accessible, green waterfront spaces.

The Campaign for Children's Wharf

*The Campaign For Children's Wharf is a public declaration of our commitment to children – never have we had such a perfect site and moment to **put children on center-stage in the heart of the new Boston.***

The Vision

To do much more to level the sandbox so that all children are ready for school, to be a stronger partner in education reform, to enrich the lives of more children and families, and to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Museum. To transform our site into *a block-long campus* of innovative, fun, effective learning opportunities for children, parents, and teachers.

The First Phase

A \$20-million initiative that will help us to strengthen the impact of our programs and reach 150,000 more children, families, and educators each year.

A Big Vision for Children's Wharf

- 👉 Create compelling reasons for visiting and varied opportunities for learning through exhibitions, theater, and art studios;
- 👉 Transform the entire bridge-to-bridge waterfront into a campus of indoor/outdoor venues that attracts a multicultural audience and provides safe access to the water's edge.

17 Goals for Children's Wharf

1. Consolidate and renovate exhibitions on fewer floors;
2. Extract the visitor circulation from the exhibitions;
3. Build a new traveling exhibitions gallery;
4. Enhance and increase tenant space;
5. Make Museum's entrances easier to find from all points;
6. Create a group entrance with storage and orientation space;
7. Create a new, light-filled multifunctional lobby as the new hub of improved visitor amenities: ease in orientation, ticketing, and visit planning. The central lobby will have dramatic water views and will clearly present the variety of activities available inside and outside the Museum;
8. Make the Adventure Center iconic and a visual statement about the Museum;
9. Offer healthy food options and a spacious eating area in a new food and retail space, with windows or doors opening out onto the water. The views, location, and design will make this comfortable for families and a highly desirable event rental space;
10. Renovate existing space – to house permanent exhibitions, new studios and classrooms, upgraded staff space, and a new KidStage on the first floor;
11. Expand capacity – with new and reconfigured space we can reach 20% more visitors (375,000 to 450,000 base), nearly double our event capacity, serve 40% more school and camp groups, and 20% more teachers;
12. Significantly increase visitor amenities – improved visitor reception and restrooms, space to bundle and unbundle children, easier flow through the building;
13. Provide first class flexible space for civic celebrations, community gatherings and events;
14. Create opportunities for hands-on visual arts learning;
15. Increase our commitment to performing arts through improved theater space;
16. Create enjoyable and fully accessible waterfront green spaces; and
17. Have a greater connection to the waterfront through accessible water-based labs, docks and other facilities.

Getting the Building You Want: And why this is important for exhibits

Understand Your Needs

- Who are your visitors and what do they want?
- Do exhibits need tall spaces?
- Natural light?
- Do visitors need quiet spaces?
- What adjacencies are critical?
- How much future flexibility is required?
- Are there activities that require special floors?
- Bringing large things into the building?

Communicate things, in writing

- Meeting notes
- Email
- Drawings
- Keep things organized, and available
- Remember, no one will remember anything

Stages of Exhibition Realization

Stage 1: Fantasy

- Stage of Exhibit process: Concept design & development complete
- Euphoria, brainstorming; enthusiasm
- Tips: Know what you want; set your priorities; improve your building. Get the most space you can. Hire an owner's rep to lead you through the process.

Stage 2: Reality

- Stage of Exhibit process: Final drawings complete
- Completion of first cost estimate, despair
- Tips: Make a rule that function trumps form. Always. When you hear the word "allowance", pin the architect down and keep notes on file. Keep your life balanced or you'll get an ulcer.

Stage 3: Anger/Compromise

- Stage of Exhibit process: Construction well underway.
- Value Engineering; resource shifting, lower cost materials all round, frustration/rage
- Tips: Don't get caught up in the blame game. We all have the same goal. Of course there needs to be value engineering! If the building was initially under budget, the architects did something wrong.

Stage 4: Denial

- Stage of Exhibit process: Fabrication complete; installation imminent
- Construction completed contrary to expectations; panic alternating with general lack of sensation
- Tips: Did I say, be calm?

Stage 5: Acceptance

- Stage of Exhibit process: Installation complete but awaiting remediation
- Small accommodations but mostly capitulation, exhaustion
- Tips: You will survive but not everybody will be happy with all the results. Get over it.

Conclusions

- There is no substitute for initial clarity
- Some flexibility is a decided advantage
- The best projects grow out of a constructive dialogue between architect and exhibitions
- Hang on to that initial clarity, even when you're really tired
- Remember, it's a team and we all have the same goal