Problems of Community Museum

Peter Velez

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Art at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

Recommended Citation

http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/3268
TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Author

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Author

pdm
PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITY MUSEUM

(TITLE)

BY

PETER VELEZ

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1977

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

DATE

ADVISER

DATE

DEPARTMENT HEAD
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. COMMUNITY MUSEUM</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR A CULTURAL CENTER</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure
2. Altes Museum, Berlin ............................................. 13
3. Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska ........ 13
5. Dennis Oppenheim "Annual Rings" .................... 17
6. Walter Demaria "Mile Long Drawing" ............... 18
7. Robert Smithson "Spiral Jetty" ............... 18
8. Dr. Billy Kulver "Sculptured Helium Filled Pillows" .. 19
9. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy "Light Space Modulator" ........ 19
11. I. M. Pei Interior Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York ............................................. 22
12. Krannert Museum Floor Plan, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana ............................................. 23
13. Museum of Science, Boston ............................................. 24
14. Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History .......... 25
15. Museum of Florida History, Tallahassee ............. 26
16. Master Plan Metropolitan Museum of Art .............. 31
17. Interior Gallery, South Dakota University ............ 32
18. Plot Layout ............................................. 37
19. Aerial View ............................................. 38
20. Cultural Center, Eastern Illinois University ........ 39
21. Lobby Gallery ............................................. 41
22. Gallery Layout ............................................. 43
23. Partition Design Concept ............................................. 44
24. Floor Plan ............................................. 45
25. Rear View Projection Wall ............................................. 46
26. Auditorium Sketch ............................................. 47
27. Workshops ............................................. 48
28. Interior Cutaway View Basement Level .............. 48
29. Office Area Cutaway View ............................................. 49
INTRODUCTION

My objectives in presenting this paper are to show the genesis of some large museums, the methods of acquisition of their collections, exhibition space in relationship to today's community museums, and the problems associated with the initiating, acquiring, and operating of community museums. To reach these objectives, I will state the results of my research and present my conceptual design and recommendations for a cultural center.

Two conclusions may be reached relative to the status of museums and collections today.

... First, the museums are not always small by the standards of even a decade past, and they refuse to stay small; second, aggressive acquisition programs assure that the treasures of today will be augmented significantly tomorrow, just as new buildings are being planned almost before the first ones have settled.¹

The collections of tomorrow are achieved by support campaigns from the community. Once a collection is acquired, it must be properly cared for and displayed. This calls for a well-designed facility. Considerations must include location of the structure, how large it will be, and will it be financially feasible to build it after the bids are in for construction.

In addition, there will always be the question of concentration versus dispersion, whether to concentrate the arts in a single place or thread them through a community or campus. If budgetary problems are paramount, the accepted premise may be centralization wherever possible.

The administration of a museum may be compared to the operation of a large corporation. The administrative board must be very aware of budget limitations. There is one prime difference, however, the museum is not turning out a product which provides daily return to the corporate bank. A museum is a constant beggar with one hand out for support but in return it enhances the cultural life of the community through esthetic experiences.

Cultural centers are now in a position of prominence in communities across the country and in many cases are attracting many private collections. In this paper, I will give several examples of universities which are in this position.

The 1950's marked a dramatic upswing in the fortunes of cultural centers. The arts in higher education began coming into their own and into their own buildings. Many are very impressive, some are out-front attention getters, the results of special effects to achieve architectural impact and a cultural esprit. The art center is of value in projecting the image of an institution as a site of culture. It also provides a means of involving the community with the university. However, the cultural center should function as an entity of its own totally independent from the budget of the fine arts department, but under its guidance, if management so dictates.

In communities everywhere there are small groups and individuals committed to exposing art and enhancing the cultural life of the public by enlarging the opportunities for the enjoyment of art. The urge to share the experiences of art with others is not new, for it caused men and women to found some of the earliest museums. However, there are many more people interested today, and what once depended upon persons of great wealth is now frequently undertaken collectively by community organizations and local governments. One consequence is the broad distribution of princely works of art among the smaller museums of America.\(^2\)

Many of the well established museums, such as the Metropolitan Museum and the Boston Museum of Art, have holdings in the greatest treasures of art collections. Acquisition of such art masterpieces may well be impossible for the smaller cultural centers but collections of modern sculpture, folk art, and some master works are available to the community museum. Once obtained they must be properly housed and presented for the full cultural enjoyment of the viewer. It must be a lasting experience, an educationally informative opportunity for the student and practicing artist, who are always in a learning process.

In summary, this paper will have served its purpose if my research has proven the value of the community museum and the contribution a university can make to the total community through such a project.
CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT

In order to place the contemporary community art center in perspective, I shall present very briefly how we got from the large ostentatious museum to our current day simplified structure, and how the early museums were established and how their collections were acquired.

Museums are institutions for the preservation, study and display of natural objects or those created by man. If one gives this the slightest thought, there is no end to the objects man and nature can produce in endless variations.

In comparison to old, established, large public museums, art centers are institutions representing our current century of design in relation to types of collections housed and architectural design.

Museums as we know them today were, and still are, grouped or classified by their contents or according to the purposes for which they were established. Following the first method they are divided into museums of art, history, anthropology, natural history, technology and commerce. A museum may be established for any of these main subjects as a whole or for one of the many branches into which the groups may be subdivided.

The purpose for which museums are established divides them into national museums; local, provincial or city museums; college and school museums; professional or class museums; and museums or cabinets for special research owned by societies or individuals. The scheme of classification is
open to the objection that it confuses purpose with ownership or administration, since, for example, national and municipal museums are not merely for the display of objects found within the boundaries of a nation or city but rather for objects collected from around the world.

College and school museums have their immediate purpose in the formation of collections that aid students in undertaking various problems connected with science, technology, or art. There were nearly 600 museums in the United States in 1958, about three-fourths of them attached to colleges or under the supervision of societies. Nearly half of the whole number are entirely or chiefly devoted to natural history and about 10 percent to art, though this proportion seems on the increase and the past decade has witnessed the establishment of several important museums of art.¹

One step taken toward the establishment of public museums was the gathering of great collections for the public to see versus the private collection not open to the public. The public museums made possible the formation of collections of objects of more or less popular interest with their exhibition open to the public either at no charge or for payment of a small fee.

The genesis of government museums is the final step in the establishment of public museums, and the transfer of collections from private to governmental ownership in the U.S. may be said to have started in 1876, although early in 1846 the government possessed collections which were in the custody of the Smithsonian Institution.

Establishment of museums has taken various paths as shown in the following cases in point. Our Centennial Exhibition was the direct cause for the erection of a building for the United States National Museum and of the founding of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, while from the Chicago Exposition came the Field Columbian Museum, the Chicago Art Institute and the Philadelphia

Commercial Museum. The National Gallery of Art and the Freer Collections, installed in a building of their own, both form parts of the United States National Museum, and are the gifts of William T. Evans and Charles L. Freer, respectively. Another impressive personal gift was made by Andrew Mellon in 1936. He donated his magnificent art collection to the nation together with 10 million dollars for erection of a building in Washington, D.C.

Our oldest existing museum, as well as the first public museum in America, is the Charleston (S.C.) Museum, founded by the Charles Town Library Society in 1773. It was later incorporated in the College of Charleston which in 1958 passed into municipal control, thereby taking on a new lease on life. Next to this is the Peabody Museum of Salem, the successor of the East India Marine Society Museum, founded in 1799. It also includes the natural history collections of the Essex Institute. It is interesting to note that most museums had their beginning in the gratification of the desires of private individuals.

The origin of the art museum is to be found in the collections of statuary, paintings, and other works of art assembled by kings, nobles and men of wealth; the inventory of the modern museum of natural history were the cabinets of miscellaneous curiosities brought together by students, merchants, or men of leisure.

Francis Henry Taylor states that the phenomenon of art collecting is too instinctive and too common to be dismissed as mere fashion or the desire for fame. It is a complex and irrepressible expression of the inner individual, a sort of devil of which greater personalities are frequently possessed. The individual collectors mentioned in this paper were highly interesting in their own right and would indeed have been so even had they never collected anything in their entire lives. Collections form the records of the life story of successful men in successful times.
Many of these collections subsequently developed into important public museums. According to one authority, the most striking example, and the one most frequently cited, is the British Museum, which was the final outgrowth of the cabinet and library of Sir Hans Sloane. In the United States the Museum of Comparative Zoology, at Cambridge, Mass., has grown from the collections made by Louis Agassiz for his own use, until it has become one of the most important museums in this country. Even the United States National Museum, if not the direct outgrowth of a private collection, was directly due to the labors of individuals. For its nucleus is to be found in the specimens gathered by the National Institution (later the National Institute), a body organized with the avowed purpose of directing the bequest of James Smithson.

Perhaps the most interesting and remarkable story of museum development is that of the Louvre in Paris. Until the French revolution the Louvre Palace belonged to the King and although a section of it, the Galerie d'Apollon, had been organized as a museum as early as 1681 under Louis XIV, it was for the use of the court only. Members of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts could obtain permission to see the King's pictures, but only through influence with the court. This was the general pattern of all royal and private collections with regard to artists. On Nov. 8, 1793, the Louvre was opened to the public for the first time by the First Republic. By this time the collections had been greatly augmented by "loot" from the Napoleonic Wars. Under the direction of a committee headed by the painter, Jacques Louis David, the Louvre was operated chiefly for artists, to whom it was open five days for every three to the general public. Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti writes the following in his book, "Great Museums of the World, Louvre, Paris," published in 1967.
"Since 1939 a long-term plan has been under way to get the collections ready, so that over two hundred thousand objects can be exhibited in the Louvre. The building was certainly not constructed according to modern ideas of what a perfect museum should be; in fact, the building, like the collections, shows traces of almost four centuries of French kings, all of whom, almost without exception, made some additions to the enormous palace.

The present Museum is divided into six Departments and a Cabinet of Drawings which gradually became separated from the nucleus of the painting collection. The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities was the first to become autonomous. It was created in 1800, and was given its present organization in 1846. It includes, among other objects, the important group of Greek vases of the Campana Collection, the so-called "Boscoreale Treasure," composed of more than 100 pieces of Roman jewelry, given to the Museum in 1895 by Baron Rothschild, and famous works of art such as the Venus of Milos and the Victory of Samothrace, both discovered in excavations in the nineteenth century. In 1954 a "Section of Christian Antiquities" was created in order to group together Early Christian, Byzantine and Coptic works which were scattered here and there in various other departments. Aside from its Early Christian sarcophagi, Byzantine ivories, ceramics, glass, gold work and important textile collections, this Section now has also benefited from recent gifts and acquisitions, among them Greek and Russian icons and Coptic textiles.

The Department of Egyptian Antiquities was established in 1826 in order to organize Napoleon's collections. Its first curator was Champollion who first deciphered the hieroglyphs, and in this context Egyptian studies flourished. That year, "Oriental Antiquities" already formed a separate section within the Museum of ancient sculpture; in 1881 this, too, became a separate department. Organized topographically, it is exceptionally rich in Mesopotamian art, which had been brought to the Museum from the excavations at Lagash and Mari.

The "Department of Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Sculpture" was organized around what remained of the Royal Academy and its collections, moved in the Louvre in the eighteenth century. It contains Michelangelo's Slaves, as well as works by Cellini, Goujon, Pilon and others. It is now being enlarged to include the French eighteenth and nineteenth-century sculpture until recently kept in the storerooms. In 1893 another Department, that of Medieval, Renaissance and Modern Art Objects, was separated from this one; it includes all the precious objects from the Royal wardrobe, as well as material confiscated during the Revolution (treasures of the Order of St. Esprit, of the Royal Abbey of St. Denis and of the Ste. Chapelle), as well as the National Museum of Furniture, added to the Louvre in 1901."

Moving from the Louvre to museums in our own country we find that art museums in the United States are supported by endowment or private

---

funds, government aid or combinations of these. Success of the small museums can be attributed to the policy of confining their attention to the immediate vicinity for funds. Two examples of museums established by states are the Illinois State Museum and the North Carolina Museum of Art.

The Illinois State Museum, located in Springfield, was established in 1877. It has occupied since 1963 a modern structure of New Bedford limestone that offers a fine area for exhibits and expansion. It is a general museum of natural history and art and sponsors exhibits, educational services, and research. It has three floors which contain exhibits in developing life, man's venture in culture, and a library. The basement contains the Thorne Devel Auditorium.

The North Carolina Museum of Art was the first in the country to be established by a state and to be supported mainly by state funds. The museum sends out traveling exhibits to schools, libraries, civic clubs, and other museums throughout the state. The North Carolina Art Society donates funds for the purchase of additional works of art.

Benefactors of great wealth have helped large museums to grow. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts both had their inception over a hundred years ago. The third of November, 1869, is considered the true birthday of the Metropolitan Museum for it was then that the suggestion of a gallery of art became an authorization to build such a gallery on the Central Park site. The museum was housed in its own building in 1880. One wing is dedicated to J. P. Morgan for his contributions of ancient Assyrian art and world famous groups of early Christian Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic objects.

The Metropolitan in 1960 acquired the Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection of Primitive Art, an accumulation of objects gathered over the past thirty-five years by then Governor Rockefeller and his late son. The
collection was permanently transferred to the Metropolitan. Objects in primitive art range from 1200 B.C. to the early twentieth century. Also included are five galleries of oceanic art, and seven galleries devoted to the Americas.

In September 1969 the Metropolitan acquired one of the world's most impressive private collections as a gift. It was started in 1911 by Philip Lehman and continued by his son, Robert Lehman, wealthy financier who died in 1969. The collection comprised nearly 3,000 examples of Western European art from the twelfth to the twentieth century. These included paintings, drawings, and objects of decorative art, valued in all at $100,000,000.

On the 13th of April 1970 the Metropolitan total plan for the reorganization and completion of the museum's building was announced. The project is more than an architectural plan, for it encompasses a close examination of the museum's philosophy of acquisition and exhibition, a look at its entire financial situation, its role in education, and, most important, its service to the public.

The proposal for the Boston Museum was presented to the state legislature in October 1869 by several interested organizations and a charter for a public museum of fine arts was granted early in the following year. Its growth paralleled the Metropolitan Museum. It has never received a subsidy from the state or city but has been supported by private benefaction.

In attempting to bring museums into perspective, we must briefly consider the original concept of architecture in relationship to the collections and our current period of art center design.

First, let's consider the architecture of the very earliest public museums. Early museums (1750-1850) aimed to create more ornate structures in contrast to modern architectural backgrounds of intrinsic distinction harmonious with the objects exhibited and yet wholly in the style of our
day. An example of this modern design is Marcel Breuer garden level of Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Breuer achieves a miracle of spaciousness on a very shallow site by moving the viewer's eye through a number of interpenetrating indoor, outdoor spaces at basement and street levels, example Fig. 1.

A different expression of museum architecture may be viewed in the Altes Museum of Berlin, Fig. 2, built in 1824-28. When one compares the Altes Museum to the present Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, (Fig. 3), one can see that the simplicity of the modern exterior attempts to integrate architecture, art and site or environment. The interior is totally directed to the visual experience of the exhibit rather than the ornamental structures of days past which challenged at every point for attention against the painting or sculpture.

Structures shall continue to rise in the name of art but the management or directorship of such institutions on which their survival may well rest must be mentioned. Who is this person who seldom receives as much recognition as the building and its collection? He is responsible for budget, acquisition, maintenance, personnel and all general administration. Through his efforts he insures the continued survival of the art treasures so the public may view them. A case in point was the appointment of a new director for the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1970. This was one of the year's most notable achievements. Hard put to replace the original team of Alfred Barr and Rene d Harnoncourt under whose guidance the museum achieved international prominence, the trustees managed to enlist John Hightower, Executive Director for the past six years of the New York State Council on the Arts. The art world generally concurs that his experience and commitment in both bringing the arts to a wide public and attracting the support of private industry argues well for a museum plagued with a fiscal deficit,
Figure 1. Garden Level of Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.
Figure 2. Altes Museum, Berlin.

Figure 3. Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, Lincoln, Nebraska.
outgrown physical plant, and criticized for being unresponsive to immediate political and social concerns. For example,

In 1970 the Metropolitan established a new awareness of its responsibility to a growing and democratic public rather than to an elitist group. This is clearly visible in its imaginative plans for renovation and improved educational facilities and is directly traceable to public pressure and outspokenly expressed discontent. It has recently established a trustee's committee on "Decentralization and Community Needs," as have the Museum of Modern Art and the Brooklyn Museum.³

There are no clear-cut paths for survival of a museum as I have attempted to show in this chapter. Those institutions that are large reach their stature because of time, time when art was fashionable and one was able to enhance the family name by giving of collections to museums. Such is not our present climate. Large collections, of which there are many, are not so easily relinquished because of legal ramifications from heirs. There are still some, however, who endow universities with structures and collections. But mainly, it is the public community who supports the project when their interest is aroused. So again enters the planners, directors, and administrators who hopefully can meet the challenge of building for tomorrow.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY MUSEUM

An exhibition today cannot neglect the vital activity in crafts and folk arts which, unhampered by the necessity to conform to imposed standards, reflects the human desire for simplification of form and practical direct vision.

Today the museum building stands as a community symbol along with the church or courthouse. The architect must, therefore, create, inside and out, a symbolic structure which the community can refer to with pride.

The symbolic function of the museum, however, sometimes runs counter to its function as a home for fine arts, this compounds the problem for the architect. A tomb is simple, an office is simpler to design. Each has only one function. The museum has two: the symbolic function of the structure, which creates a visual experience of the exterior, and the entrance hall which orientates the visitor. Modern architecture aims to create, as did the early museums (of 1750-1850), backgrounds of intrinsic distinction harmonious with the objects exhibited and yet wholly in the style of our own day.

It is quite obvious that the quantity and quality of space is probably one of the single most vitally important considerations in the planning of a museum for the most effective presentation of the collections to the community.

In considering what to display in a museum we must realize that there is art created in our present time that is beyond the confines of a museum.
This is called Earth Sculpture, Earthworks, Skyworks, Waterworks, Cliff Wrapped in Canvas, French in Desert, captured stones, shafts of light or luminescent gas filled bags of plastic sent into the sky. Our most recent happening is a Running Fence, by Christo Javacheff, in northern California.

"A shimmering construction of nylon slung between steel posts, Running Fence issues from the sea at Bodega Bay in Marin County, wending 24½ miles up hill and down dale, over ten public roads (including Highway 101) and through dozens of farms, to finish inland near Petaluma, Calif. For an artwork, it has consumed staggering amounts of time, manpower and materials: 300 students, 2,050 posts, 165,000 yds. of material, miles of wire and hundreds of thousands of hooks."¹

These works constitute events or things that are frequently too vast, fragile, temporary or distant to be experienced for long by many persons; often they can only be heard or read about. They can be commissioned but are difficult to purchase, impossible to see, and meaningless to own. Surely they cannot be exhibited in museums. Michael Heizer's ground sculpture, Fig. 4, in 1968 in Massacre Dry Lake, Nevada, cannot be owned and nature shall in time refill the surface to its original configuration. Also added to this method of artistic expressions are examples of works of Dennis Oppenheim, Fig. 5, Walter DeMaria, Fig. 6, Robert Smithson, Fig. 7 (Dr. Billy Kulver, Fig. 8, sculptured, helium filled, pillows).

Sculpture which may be housed and purchased for museums include works such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Light Space Modulator 1923-30, Fig. 9, Birch Reisinger Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Here light and motion sculpture needs to be lighted and presented in proper artistic space environment for maximum visual experience.

As we view the expression of modern sculptural art, we should also view the expressions of the architectural directions employed in art centers. We shall take a brief look at some select examples.

Figure 4. Michael Heizer, "Isolated Mass/Circumflex."

Figure 5. Dennis Oppenheim "Annual Rings."
Figure 6. Walter Demaria "Mile Long Drawing."

Figure 7. Robert Smithson "Spiral Jetty."
Figure 8. Dr. Billy Kulver
"Sculptured Helium Filled Pillows."

Figure 9. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy
"Light Space Modulator."
Figure 10. Frank Lloyd Wright "Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum," New York.
First let’s look at the cathedral-like effect of the architecture of interior space (Frank Lloyd Wright’s interior of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Fig. 10). The building and art only tolerate each other.

Frank Lloyd Wright wrote about and practiced what he called an "organic" philosophy of architecture – one in which buildings assert their kinship with nature through their rugged materials and cave-like spaces. But only in the Guggenheim Museum did he base his design quite openly on the structure of a natural object: the building is like an enormous nautilus shell. Repetition has also served as the primary compositional device in the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, here the architect took the curve as a basic motif.

He was independently ahead of European architects in many ways: in his understanding and exploitation of modern technology, in his revolt against the stultifying architectural baggage of the past, and in his aesthetic innovations – that is, his ability to deal with the dwelling as an art object, as something both beautiful to look at and a delight to live in. Wright’s forays into social philosophy and community planning have not been as universally praised as his achievement in domestic architecture, although they are worth serious attention and have been provocative of healthy debate.

Further probing into current day art center expression of space is found in the words of the brilliant architect I. M. Pei. The interior of the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, Fig. 11, is an example of his use of a monumental scale in a small museum building and what can be achieved by unaffected attention to fundamentals. A practical device for washing the walls with light and modest amount of wall allows art to breathe.

Another example of his work is the Paul Mellon Arts Center, Choate School and Rosemary Hall, Walliford, Conn. Both are symbolically and literally a gateway between two Connecticut prep schools, Choate and its newly adopted

---

Figure 11. I. M. Pei Interior Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York.
Figure 12. Krannert Museum Floor Plan, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.
Figure 13. Museum of Science, Boston.
Figure 14. Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.
Figure 15. Museum of Florida History, Tallahassee.
sister, Rosemary, which moved from Greenwich, Conn., to Walliford in 1971.
The new arts complex is essentially two buildings diagonally bisected by a
broad curving pathway. The art center has six levels.

The previous two centers have exposed us to the design of space
approach with very different conclusions in architectural design, but both
still concentrating on the maximum presentation of works of art.

The Krannert Museum, University of Illinois, is a very good example
of modern design and space utilization. Galleries are located on ground
level and basement, Fig. 12. Space layout of galleries and visitor flow
are easily accomplished with works presented in excellent levels for viewing
and exposed to well arranged lumination. Located at the entrance is the
information office. Also available at this point are various books and
pamphlets on current exhibits of the Krannert. The facility has security
guards at entrances and it is equipped with climatic environment for the
comfort of visitors.

Joseph A. Wetzel Associates of Cummings Point Road, Stamford, Conn.,
has designed some exciting new concepts around the country. A conceptual
plan and design for conversion of existing scientific hall into a new
integrated exhibit on human health is the Museum of Science in Boston,
Fig. 13. They also took on the special challenges in security, scale,
lighting interpretation for a new complete design for a major new Hall of
Minerals and Gems at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History,
Fig. 14. The Memphis Park Pink Palace Museum in Tennessee went to a master
plan for an unusual changeover from general museum to a regional museum of
natural history and social history. The design for this project allowed
for phased construction of exhibits. In addition to these already mentioned
many museum concepts have been prepared and have undergone some type of
change, such as Maine State Museum, Augusta, Ga.; the Mississippi River
Museum, Memphis, Tenn.; and Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee, a very interesting concept and design for the new state history museum, Fig. 15. They have also prepared a new conceptual design for a new Natural Science Museum for St. Paul, Minn.

Other very significant projects have taken place in construction or development of new museums. In 1974 the Joseph A. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden opened its doors in the nation's capitol. The Smithsonian Institution owns title to the art collection. This is Washington's first major facility devoted exclusively to modern art and puts it in the big league with such art centers as New York City and Los Angeles. The nation's taxpayers footed the bill by erecting the museum and will pay the cost of maintenance. Hirshhorn has been very generous, giving not only his remarkably rich collection of art but also one million dollars toward the construction of the 16-million-dollar museum.

...36 years previously Congress had legislated the creation of a new gallery as a foil to the collection of old masters in the National Gallery of Art, the gift of Andrew W. Mellon, which was under construction on the mall. The building itself is considered a "large piece of functional sculpture" without architectural distractions.

In February 1973, the new Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton, Mass., opened its doors.

...of Tryon Hall, the newest and fourth home of the Smith College Museum of Art. The museum occupies one building in a large fine arts center. The Art department is housed in the adjacent Hillyer Hall which contains offices, library and studio spaces, and lecture halls. The net construction cost for the entire complex was 7.5 million dollars. The museum should provide the art and art history student, the general student,

---

and the community at large with a laboratory in the visual arts where a basic acquaintance with works of art can be gained. This was the basic theme in developing the museum.

A permanent Exhibition of American Art has been set up permanently in a rambling series of Beaux-Arts Rooms in old Yale Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn. These once grand and ample rooms have now been divided by more or less freestanding partitions into exhibitive spaces that are smaller, brighter, and are meant to encourage close and detailed study of objects on display. The goal of the exhibit of this part of the Yale collection is to create an exciting teaching museum and stimulate and excite the student (and the public) to see things in relation to its fellows in time and space, to see art objects individually and collectively as manifestations of the culture and creativity that is America.

The Walker Art Center may be the best modern museum in the U.S. The new center, built on an almost impossible site next to a freeway in Minneapolis, Minn., is a very modest-looking six-story high cluster of boxes covered, head to toe, with a neat and understated veneer of plum-colored iron-spot brick. It has elicited rave reviews from artists who have exhibited there.

The sculptor, Louise Nevelson, told us that it was one of her great joys to have had an exhibition at the new Walker. "The architect has captured, for our times, the space concept of contemporary, creative minds," and she added, "I know of no other museum that quite captures the need of the artist as this one does."  

What makes the new Walker Art Center such a critical success is that its architect, Edward Larrabee Barnes, performed an act of deference. He deferred completely to those whose work would inhabit his building. Roughly 130 feet square above ground, the building rises, in the manner of a three-leaf pinwheel, like large staircases, in which the broad landings are all

---

galleries. Each gallery is white on white walls, ceilings, and white terrazzo floors. The terraces, like all other outdoor surfaces, are rendered in brick-on-brick.

The New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art makes architectural overtures to Central Park. Strong, almost flamboyant, structural gestures mark such Kevin Roche-John Dinkeloo structures as the Knights of Columbus Tower and the careful site planning and precise formal arrangement of their College Life Insurance buildings and the Center for the Arts at Wesleyan University. These aspects converge in the master plan for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fig. 16. The plans announced in 1970 calls for adding 325,000 square feet to the museum's present structure in Central Park, increasing gallery space by a third, as well as reorganizing and redesigning existing facilities.

Texas has experienced a veritable rash of art museum construction throughout this vast state in recent years. Texas' new museum growth must surely be due to its growing population, the increase of art awareness and the fortunate existence of a goodly number of art patrons located in art center areas. In October 1972, three museums opened, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi, and the Amarillo Art Center. Several other museums had opened within the previous year or two in other parts of the state. In the state capitol, the Tyler Museum of Art opened in March 1971. Houston's Contemporary Arts Museum began its second quarter-century of life in a new gleaming, angular building. The Houston Museum of Fine Arts opened in January 1974 introducing a four-million-dollar addition designed by Mies Vander Rohe. And at Forth Worth, the Art Center Museum has doubled its present space by adding a new wing with 30,000 square feet. From the Panhandle to the Gulf Coast, there has been a boom in Texas.
The Temple of Dendur Wing (sections, model) will define the north edge of the Museum with a pristine canopy of glass. A moat, supposedly evoking the mood of the Nile, will enhance the ancient work.

Figure 16. Master Plan Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Figure 17. Interior Gallery, South Dakota University.
Thus far we have discussed a perspective of some art centers and some artistic creations that cannot be housed within the confines of the center, finally leading up to those we can and the architectural genius of space concepts that have become a reality. But, we have not discussed the question of collecting or collections.

To present this point I shall use as an example the Memorial Art Center of the campus of South Dakota State University. The center opened in 1970, twenty years after noted painter Harvey Thomas Dunn (1884-1952) gave his paintings to his native state to be maintained on the campus. The largest collection of his work, fifty-seven paintings, is housed here. Another benefactor, Vera Way Marghab, whose husband owned the world-famous Marghab linens, gave the campus a collection of linen. Each piece of Marghab linen is of museum quality. Mrs. Marghab gave the memorial center a very large collection - over 1,500 pieces representing over 267 designs.

The idea of an art center for South Dakota originated with the South Dakota Federation of Women's Clubs in 1948. The Federation initiated fund raising for construction of a memorial art center and gave its collection of paintings to the center for display. This collection included work by such prominent artists as Thomas Hart Benton, Oscar Howe, Joe Jones, Rockwell Kent, and Reginald Marsh. In addition to the collections, about ten exhibitions are brought into the center each year. Support for this center ranks high from alumni of South Dakota State University and is governed by a board of trustees.

The space arrangement, Fig. 17, is very well planned on both levels. Two-thirds of the cost of the facility was raised from private sources and one-third from matching type grants. The gallery area is spacious and very well luminated and equipped with systems for the precision control of temperature, humidity, and security.
Administering the total needs of an art museum is more time consuming than just collecting objects and arranging displays on gallery walls and sculpture stands. The necessary functions are never obvious to the visitor. But knowing what to collect, searching for it, authenticating pieces by scientific examination and researching their history is a never ending task.

The museum director is always on the line to make a decision to verify or take a hard look at a presumed treasure, whether as a gift or offered for sale.

A university is very capable of assuming the task of verification and study of objects or paintings under the guidance of its distinguished art faculty. The university can also pursue standards of excellence in presenting fine arts from the inception as a community museum. Such a course contributes to the success of the program and continued growth in its holdings.
CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR A CULTURAL CENTER

The art center is of value in projecting an image of the institution as a site of culture. It also provides a means of involving the community with the university.

Cultural art centers are like time capsules storing treasures from a hundred years past to be viewed daily as constant reminders of artistic creative expression through periods when artists created according to the mood of their time.

Art centers contribute to teaching the young community to understand its past through works of modern art, folk art, and collections of the past. The constant changing face of art produces exhibits that are transient in nature, which are a very integral part of maintaining the interest of the community and university.

Construction of a culture art center will more than likely be shaped by a tight budget and a series of design innovations never before assembled in one structure. This is the hope we envision. An art center structure typifies one way to house art and sculpture, but as for all projects before being committed to the architectural stage, it should be planned-in-depth to include the establishment of a Fine Arts Commission or ad hoc committee to study the matter by visiting other universities, consulting experts and acquiring conceptual drawings of suggested designs.

In designing a center the visual exterior concept in relation to its environment is paramount. The lighting system should be well planned in
order to wash the exhibits with lighting which will expose the display concentrating on its intended focus of interest, room sizes and proportions, and relative placement within the building of exhibits. These factors are a pressing and continued requirement for the art center director.

The building should contain sufficient workshops so that students can work in varied media. Space, arranged according to function, must lead in a logical sequence from one gallery to another.

My (proposed) concept of an arts center consists of a single building composed of three wings extending out from a lobby gallery which acts as the hub of the building with spokes protruding out in three directions, each having its own function. There are three levels within the structure, Fig. 18. The art center, in keeping with its growth design, is planned to allow for possible future expansion. If more room is needed, additions can be added to the several wings without affecting the basic concept of the building.

It is essential that the building be located on an appropriate site ample enough to not crowd the center into other structures. The direction should be to let it breathe within the environment so it will blend with the natural landscape, see Fig. 19. A parking area is required on two sides of the structure, Fig. 18. This will accommodate traffic and approaches on both sides of the building. The back wing of the building would consist of a civic center requiring access from the rear of the parking lot to stage door to facilitate any function requiring movement, loading and unloading of materials required for various events.

The basic structure (Fig. 20) should reflect the environment around it. This is accomplished by the use of fogged mirrored glass on the exterior walls of building on upper surfaces complimented with pebble stone panels around the bottom of the exterior edges of the building. When one approaches
Figure 18. Plot Layout.
Figure 19. Aerial View.
Figure 20. Cultural Center, Eastern Illinois University.
the center, it shall reflect the mirror image of the stone panels as you move toward the front entrance. Fountains in constant flowing motion will reflect changing water sculpture in the mirror surfaces. One should immediately experience a visual happening in any direction you may turn as you approach the entrance. At the street approach as one enters the main courtyard your vision shall focus on the fountains. Looking to the entrance one may see the main lobby gallery which is open to the viewer by a large glass panel extending to the second level of the center. This approach shall extend to the community a showcase view of the interior after closing hours.

At night the main gallery (Fig. 21) shall be lighted so one may look from outside without entering and see a circular panoramic view of the lobby. Sculpture and paintings may be placed without competing with each other. Light from the main dome will reflect sufficient light for sculpture located on the floor area. The main column in the center of the lobby is cylindrical extending to the main dome, giving the effect of a large umbrella. The main posts of the cylindrical column are spaced out and are made of translucent material which, being lighted from the bottom and top edge, will transmit light through the column giving the visual effect of lighted rails of light going up to the dome. Within the center of the cylindrical center there will be a live tree supplemented by rock sculpture. The tree should reach to the upper dome level. The top of the cylindrical inner dome should be a transparent skylight so as to afford natural light to the lobby during daylight hours.

Beginning at the base of the cylinder on the lobby level will be a circular staircase leading to second level galleries. The outer walls will be made of polished hardwood stripping to create a spiral effect as it rises upward.
Figure 21. Lobby Gallery.
All galleries, offices, civic center, door to rear courtyards, and workshop will have access from the main lobby gallery. The main effect of this gallery design shall be to have no apparent wall that gives the feeling of a square room. But being of circular design it will tend to make people feel they can walk in a circle with no obstacles in their path other than leaving through one of the passageways into a gallery or second level. This will afford more concentration on viewing exhibits.

Galleries shall extend from both sides of the main lobby on both first floor and second level. There should be sufficient gallery space to accommodate permanent collections of sculpture and paintings, temporary exhibits, and the addition of a permanent folk art collection. Depending on the extent of the collection, there should be area sufficient to subdivide and locate it according to major periods in cultural history as desired. A typical gallery, Fig. 22, should have a lighting system that can be adjusted to the object being displayed. Track lighting with dimming control would be most effective. Center display panels are traditionally flat partitions. I would recommend curved partitions in addition to flat so that exhibited area may also take a different perspective on occasion to create visual interest and effect. Fig. 23 is a recommended design for this effect. On the main level one gallery shall have a rotunda effect (Fig. 22) encircled on ceiling with track lighting. This specialized gallery should be paneled in warm earth tone effect and should be utilized for area displays requiring maximum viewing effects. Galleries will extend full length of wings, Fig. 24. At this point I suggest an experimental gallery wall (Fig. 25) consisting of a rear view projection wall with the capability to carry ten frames. This would introduce a method of superimposing graphic, happening optics, or a photographic display that would form changing abstract compositions. The total effect would be panoramic in style.
Figure 22. Gallery Layout.
Figure 23. Partition Design Concept.
Figure 24. Floor Plan.
Figure 25. Rear View Projection Wall.
Figure 26. Auditorium Sketch.
BASEMENT LEVEL

Figure 27. Workshops.

Figure 28. Interior Cutaway View Basement Level.
Figure 29. Office Area Cutaway View.
Benches would be available in the gallery area for sitdown viewing, if desired.

The center would also provide space for various civic functions or related university activities that may be held in this auditorium area. Entrance would be from the main lobby directly behind a spiral staircase. Upon entering one would go up steps leading to height of second level. Seat arrangement is directed downward back to the main level where a stage is located for maximum viewing. This auditorium should be equipped with all necessary types of acoustics for proper sound distribution to accommodate events being conducted. A sketch of the layout, Fig. 26, will suggest some treatments of the interior and proposed layout.

A cultural center would not be complete without a workshop large enough to conduct teaching, permit extensive projects of repair, and provide work areas for originality in sculpture and painting, Fig. 27. Also, there will be a storage area located at basement level and restrooms in addition to a civic center room for community functions, Fig. 28. On the main lobby level on both sides of the auditorium will be located office space, conference room, studios, and restrooms. The outer walls facing the back courtyards are transparent glass, Fig. 29.

The culmination of this project would be to place the committee in a cultural involvement on a continuing level. The concept I have designed is a possible solution, an expression of complex functional requirements, balanced by a desire to provide the most accessible, delightful, and open space. It would be a place affording an experience of satisfaction, either as a casual passerby or as a patron of the arts intent upon learning and exploring the plastic and visual arts - or the creative arts.

Service to the community is a two-way street. It brings university and community closer together with equal benefit to both.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


