**COLUMBUS MUSEUM OF ART - MARGARET M. WALTER WING ADDITION**

**Project Overview**

This two-story building project consists of three parts: a major addition of nearly 62,000 square feet, a major renovation of the CMA’s 32,000 square foot 1974 Wing addition, and associated site work related to a new main entrance, sculpture garden, and dependent outdoor spaces. The construction budget was very aggressive for an art museum addition/renovation; while most major museum construction costs range from $700-$1200 per square foot nationally, the design and construction team for this CMA project collaborated closely to meet a budget of $350 per square foot.

**Design**

The design team asked a series of provocative questions of CMA about both the relationship of a museum to contemporary culture and the importance of a museum’s physical relationship to the city and its citizens. The building design is a reflection of the answers to the questions, in addition to CMA’s stated ambition to be more visible, relevant, and connected to the community as a meeting point between art, the public, and the physical city. Over the course of many years, CMA has changed and adapted to a new age – away from a “hallowed hall” and toward an experience for visitors of all ages who come to enjoy the collection and to socialize. It was the CMA’s desire to create a place without barriers, where people from all walks of life could come to “hang out.” This placed the CMA at the vanguard of a new movement among art museums that focuses not only on art, but also on visitors and their experiences with each other through art. In doing so, they are capturing an audience that may be overlooked and that may have overlooked the CMA in the past.

The building and site design concept is simple: a long bar of gallery space on the east side of the site is separated from the historic Ross Wing by a sky-lit concourse and entry forecourt, which serve as the central organizing element of the project. The purpose of the concourse, in addition to acting as a hyphen between the Ross Wing and new addition, is multi-fold: a lobby, a queuing space, an event space, a meeting point, and a circuit to connect to multiple program elements. A series of bridges at the second floor crosses the concourse and connects the new galleries to the existing building. Recognizing that the historic Ross Wing is a beloved community icon, the new addition maintains the visual integrity of the original building exterior to the greatest degree possible.

Pre-ticket, semi-public program elements such as the museum store and café are strategically located with relation to outdoor spaces in order to provide the maximum amount of ground floor and front door activation. The café is also able to fully open itself to a seating terrace overlooking the sculpture garden by way of large folding glass wall panels.

The museum’s presence to the north and south is announced through “cinematic façades” – floor-to-ceiling glass walls filling the entirety of the north and south face of the galleries. These façades are critical, CMA mission-driven gestures that engage the surrounding context day and night; on the one hand, they allow a view of activity within the museum to the passerby; on the other hand, the museum visitor, once inwardly focused, is now able to look out to the surrounding city.

A new special event space, axially related to the historic Derby Court event space in the Ross Wing, sits on the second floor overlooking the sculpture garden to the north. The sculpture garden is then accessed by a stair from an outdoor balcony serving the special event space. The net effect of this event “spine” is that it can create a seamless experience beginning at the ceremonial Broad Street entry of the historic Ross Wing and ending at the new sculpture garden.

The large new sculpture and event garden is designed to accommodate CMA’s collection of outdoor works, in addition to events and dining. The garden is a pre-ticket space, usable by the general public as a semi-public space during museum operation and working in concert with the pre-ticket museum café. The garden is loosely divided into three parts: The Sycamore Grove, The Event Lawn, and The Birch Walk, each having a different character and scale to accommodate a variety of experiences and uses. The Washington Avenue lawn is a tree-lined green space that serves the entry forecourt and is the setting of an iconic sculpture that anchors the corner of Washington Avenue and Gay Street. The integration of these terraces, gardens, balconies and related elements allows for seamless, unwinding gallery experiences and total immersion in the CMA’s collection of art.

On the building exterior, time-honored and context-specific materials are used in new ways. The exterior [building materials](http://www.designbuild-network.com/contractors/construct_materials/) include pre-patinated copper, Indiana limestone and curtain-wall glazing. A durable building water table of granite also serves as exterior pavement within the forecourt and garden, as well as interior flooring within the concourse.

The copper is deployed on the upper gallery using a proprietary system arranged in a pattern scripted by the design team. Certain panels are perforated and screen a discreet light source that changes the character of the building in the evening. Strategically placed glazing and roof monitors are intended to create both framed views and opportunities for natural lighting. Much of the exterior building wall materials are continued into the building interior.