

Program Summary:

This renovation and expansion for a regional, world-class museum in Greenwich CT, more than doubles the facility's existing square footage and creates a welcoming visitor experience with clear circulation, generous galleries, and an iconic public face connected to the landscape surrounding.

Program Statement:

This museum is a regionally based, world-class museum located in Greenwich, Connecticut with a multi-disciplinary collection and exhibition program bringing together art, science, and natural history. In 2014, following a national design competition, the museum embarked on a journey to revitalize its campus and carry the institution into the future.

The resulting project is a complete renovation of the original 32,500 sf structure, and the addition of a 42,000 sf new wing providing permanent and changing gallery space, expanded collection storage, and a new public entrance lobby and lecture hall for the museum. Comprising three floors, the expansion more than doubles the existing square footage of the facility and creates a welcoming visitor experience with clear circulation, generous galleries, and sufficient exhibition, storage, and archival spaces for the Museum's growing collection.

The project's vision looked to tie the building to the landscape and the unique geology of the region surrounding. Drawing inspiration from stone quarries found along the Connecticut coast, the team designed a delicately striated façade of cast stone and glass. This exterior, animated by the play of light across the building, changes appearance with the weather and time of day.

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Building Area: (sf)
74,500 SF

Cost per Square Foot:
\$899

Construction Cost
\$67M

Date of Completion:
April 2023



HISTORIC PHOTO OF THE HOME



THE MUSEUM FOLLOWING THE 1992 EXPANSION

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History

The museum is located approximately 35 miles east of New York City. The history of the museum is one of humble origins. It began life as a home, originally owned by a textile merchant.

In 1908, the owner deeded his property to the Town of Greenwich, stipulating that it be used as "a natural history, historical, and art museum for the use and benefit of the public." The first exhibition ever at the Museum took place in 1912 and featured works by local artists known as the Greenwich Society of Artists.

In 1992, the Museum undertook a complete renovation of its 139-year-old building. While built on time and budget, the project was modest in scope, and the outcome was not one that could sustain the museum into the future.

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Wayfinding

Although the 1992 renovation expanded its gallery offerings, the museum suffered from an absence of clear identity and circulation, despite its bucolic context and adjacency to the Park.

The building had always been historically accessed from the north side, which faced the interstate. Wayfinding proved difficult. Visitors to the museum, provided an inelegant entry in the rear of the building largely hidden from view, were required to walk up a hill to find the front door.

At the same time, the entry, adjoining a surface parking lot, felt divorced from the surrounding context.

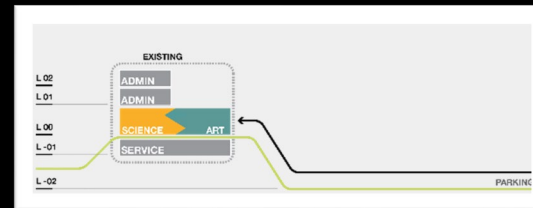
New Beginnings

In expanding the museum, the design looked to add 40,000 SF, and in turn, the building's footprint required to grow to the side and drop down the hill.

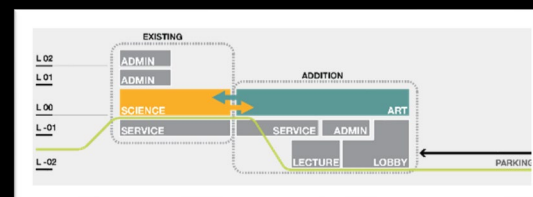
This allowed the team to create a new front entry at the elevation of the park, a beacon truly connected to the landscape and the community.



OLD ENTRY



NEW ENTRY





COASTAL CONTEXT



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Design Inspiration | Quarry

The team naturally drew inspiration from the museum's surroundings, the landscape and its jagged stone outcroppings, and the coastal Connecticut context.

The design concept melds two vernacular precedents—coined “quarry and lace.”

First, the stone quarries that dot the regional landscape became the founding precept from which to “carve” the monolithic massing of the building.



A-315.05

A Beacon

At night, these apertures carved from the massing glow from within, a beautiful spectacle to passerby and a clear beacon of the museum's presence.





“LACE WALLS”



A-315.06

Design Inspiration | Lace

Second, fences built by New England farmers as they cleared their fields of rocks and boulders served as the inspiration for creating voids in the façade to introduce light deep into the interior (and simultaneously glow at night).

As these differently sized and shaped stones were stacked together, the resulting openness led to them being referred to as “lace walls.”

The design reinterprets these two precedents, quarry and lace, to create a rich interplay of texture and contrast across the façade.



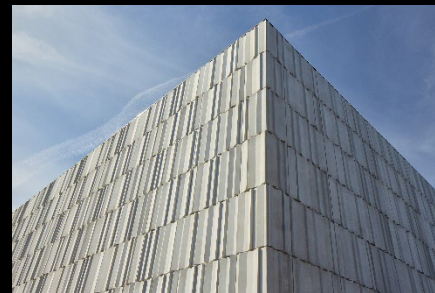
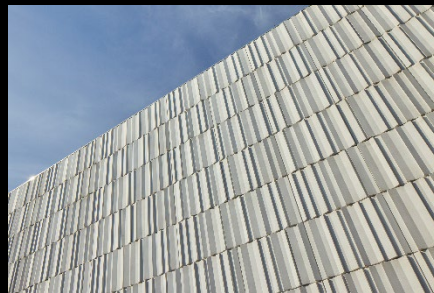
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The Interplay of Light

The facade is composed of several 80-inch modules of precast concrete panels of varying size and shape.

This module size, and the angle and intersection of the precast panels, was carefully orchestrated for the striking effects of light and shadow created when the exterior is illuminated by daylight.

The faceted skin changes appearance throughout the day, the setting sun causing the façade to glitter and shift in the light.



A-315.08

Captured Landscape

As a museum on a hill and with the addition of 42,000 sf of additional massing, the design also orients the new entrance to adjoining Park, providing visitors an immersive landscape experience prior to their entrance into the museum.

This experience is maintained within the museum itself. Because the addition primarily stands apart from the existing house — architecture and landscape teams worked together to develop a courtyard space between the two structures, one that almost becomes an extension of the park into the museum.



COURTYARD



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Light Court

A small “diorama of the site,” this captured courtyard space reveals itself as one enters the lobby, with a stairway following the slope of the hill to the gallery level above.





A-315.10

Sculpture Gallery

A unique sculpture gallery maintains a coffered ceiling and a unique portal to the exterior, a moment to look out on the natural landscape adjoining.



Gallery Space

Expanded gallery space within has enabled the Museum to host new, ambitious exhibits, including this recent retrospective on the New York artist Lois Dodd.

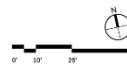
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Floor Plan | Ground



- 01 VESTIBULE
- 02 ENTRY LOBBY
- 03 LECTURE HALL
- 04 MUSEUM STORE
- 05 CAFE
- 06 MECHANICAL
- 07 CATERING / CAFE KITCHEN
- 08 STORAGE / SUPPORT

01 GROUND LEVEL PLAN



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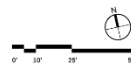
Floor Plan | Mezzanine



- 01 MEZZANINE GALLERY
- 02 OPEN TO BELOW
- 03 LANDSCAPE COURT
- 04 LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
- 05 WORKS ON PAPER STORAGE
- 06 ART STORAGE
- 07 SCIENCE COLLECTION STORAGE
- 08 CARPENTRY / WOODSHOP
- 09 MECHANICAL
- 10 COLLECTION STORAGE
- 11 SCIENCE WORK AREA
- 12 VINYL CUTTER / WORK BENCH
- 13 OFFICE
- 14 STORAGE / SUPPORT

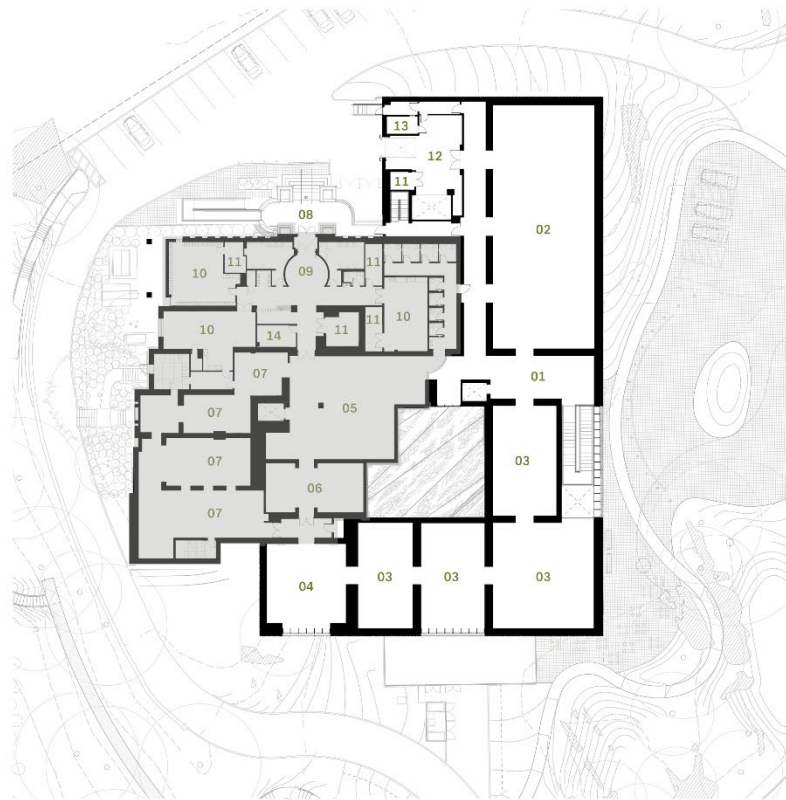
- EXISTING BUILDING RENOVATION
- NEW BUILDING

02 MEZZANINE LEVEL PLAN



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Floor Plan | Gallery



- 01 GALLERY LOBBY
- 02 CHANGING ART GALLERY
- 03 PERMANENT ART GALLERY
- 04 SCULPTURE GALLERY
- 05 CHANGING SCIENCE GALLERY
- 06 MINERAL GALLERY
- 07 PERMANENT SCIENCE GALLERY
- 08 EDUCATION ENTRY
- 09 ORIENTATION
- 10 CLASSROOM
- 11 STORAGE / SUPPORT
- 12 LOADING DOCK
- 13 SECURITY OFFICE / SALLY PORT
- 14 OFFICE

- EXISTING BUILDING RENOVATION
- NEW BUILDING

03 GALLERY LEVEL PLAN

