

Gold Medal Winner
Children's Museum of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



This is an excerpt from:

Building Sustainable Neighborhoods

THE 2007 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE



BRUNER FOUNDATION, INC.

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The Children's Museum At-A-Glance

WHAT IS THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF PITTSBURGH?

- ❖ A children's museum currently serving more than 230,000 visitors per year;
- ❖ An 80,000-square-foot facility that incorporates three centuries of architecture: a nineteenth century historic landmark post office; the early twentieth century Buhl Planetarium building; and a contemporary glass and steel connector whose facade is a kinetic wind sculpture;
- ❖ Incubator space and organizational support for six non-profit child-focused organizations that compliment the mission of the Children's Museum.
- ❖ An art gallery, café, and community meeting space;
- ❖ The driving force behind redevelopment of the North Side of Pittsburgh, a neighborhood devastated by 1960s urban renewal;
- ❖ Part of and a primary developer for the "Charm Bracelet Project" – a conceptual and physical connection among Northside cultural institutions.

PROJECT GOALS

- ❖ Provide an expanded, architecturally distinctive, and "green" home for the Children's Museum – a cultural center whose mission is to "provide innovative museum experiences that inspire joy, creativity, and curiosity."
- ❖ Leverage collaborations with other nearby cultural institutions to create a family district with improved connections between neighboring facilities, to spur redevelopment and to create a new town square;
- ❖ Provide incubator space for like-minded non-profit organizations;
- ❖ Provide the highest quality exhibits and programs for learning and play;
- ❖ Use green design to incorporate environmental awareness into the building and exhibits, and to foster a sense of environmental stewardship among Pittsburgh's children;
- ❖ Preserve historic architecture.

Project Chronology

1972 The Pittsburgh Children's Museum Project. A group of Pittsburgh community leaders, explore the idea of a children's museum, resulting in a mobile museum at Three Rivers Arts Festival, which travels throughout the community.

1983 Pittsburgh Children's Museum opens in basement of Old Post Office with \$5,000 support from Hillman Foundation.

1987 Growing Pittsburgh Children's Museum moves from basement to occupy four floors of Old Post Office.

1991 Pittsburgh Children's Museum deeded Old Post Office by Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. Planetarium program moves from neighboring Buhl building to new Carnegie Science Center.

1998 Collaboration with Fred Rogers supported by Grable Foundation – for development of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* Exhibit.

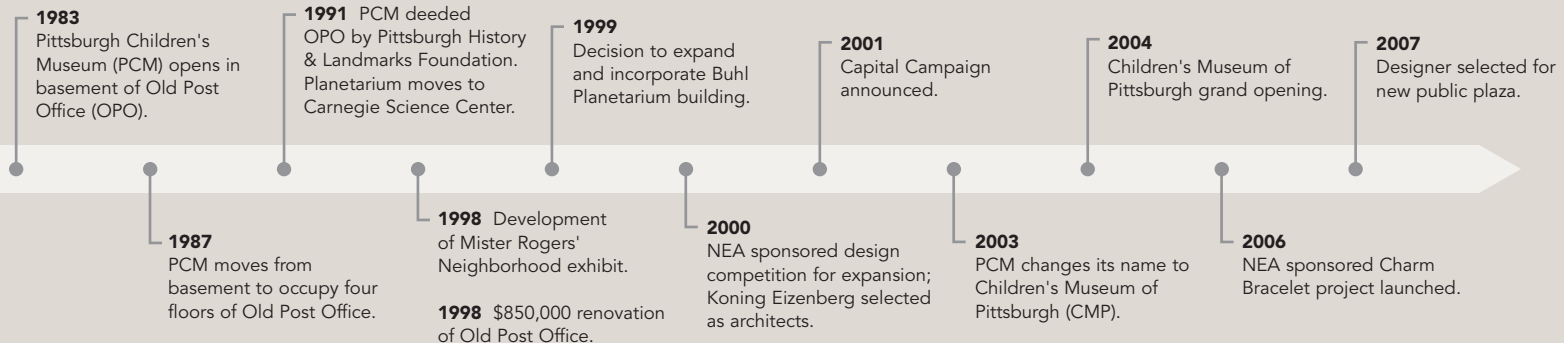
\$850,000 renovation of Old Post Office is completed, providing space to increase accessibility, make setting more user-friendly, add café and space for traveling exhibits, theatre, classrooms and parking.

Dec 1999 Stakeholders gather to discuss shared vision as museum has outgrown Post Office site. They decide to expand but stay in current site by acquiring Buhl building.

Jan 2000 Design charette with stakeholders, community, and others to create vision for expansion project.

Summer 2000 Board conducts Capital Campaign feasibility study.

Fall 2000 NEA-sponsored Design Competition – six firms asked to compete.



Dec 2000 Koning Eizenberg chosen as architects for new facility.

Jan 2001 Hold design Charette on visitor experience.

May 2001 Partner Meeting on resources for new facility.

June 2001 Capital Campaign announced.

Aug 2003 Pittsburgh Children’s Museum changes its name to Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, to emphasize mission over place.

Nov 2002 State funding secured.

Dec 2003 New Hazlett Theater study initiated.

Nov 2004 Grand opening.

Sept 2006 New Hazlett Theater opens.

Oct 2006 NEA sponsored Charm Bracelet Project convenes – four teams invited to submit ideas for district connections of cultural institutions.

Feb 2007 Charm Bracelet vision represented in lectures and an exhibition.

KEY PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEWED

Children’s Museum:

JANE WERNER, Executive Director

CHRIS SIEFERT, Deputy Director

REBECCA MCNEIL, Director of Finance

Board of Directors:

TOM MOLE, Board President–VP for National Account Sales, CIGNA
BLAISE V. LARKIN - Partner, CEO – Madison Realty Group, Inc.

Architects:

JULIE EIZENBERG, Koning & Eizenberg Architecture

DICK NORTHWAY, Perkins Eastman Architects

STEVE QUICK, Perkins Eastman Architects

Community:

MARK ROBBINS, Dean of the School of Architecture at
Syracuse University.

LOUISE STURGISS, Education Director, Pittsburgh History &
Landmarks Foundation

SARA RADELET, Executive Director, Hazlett Theater

CHARLES ROSENBLUM, Carnegie Mellon University & Journalist/
Architectural Critic

REBECCA FLORA, Green Building Alliance

DAYTON BAKER, Outgoing Director, National Aviary

LINDA DICKERSON, Incoming Director, National Aviary

MARK FATLA, Northside Leadership Conference

Foundations:

CHIP BURKE, Grable Foundation

JANET SARBAUGH, Heinz Endowments

Tenant:

LARRY BERGER, SLB Radio

JUWANDA THURMOND, Youth Alive

JUDY HORGAN, Child Watch & former Board member

JOE WOS, ToonSeum

HEADSTART PROGRAM – Pittsburgh Public School District

CYNTHIA KRAPPWEIS, Reading Is FUNdamental

Project Description



Photo: Albert Vecerik/Esto

The Children's Museum is located on Pittsburgh's Northside, only a short walk over the Roberto Clemente Bridge from downtown. But while the distance is small, the physical and symbolic barriers are significant. The Northside has rarely been seen as an important destination by most city residents, and the area of the Children's Museum is separated from downtown by the Allegheny River, a dark interstate highway underpass, and the imposing concrete mass of the 1960s Allegheny Center mall.

There are several intersecting histories that created the physical and social context within which the Children's Museum operates—the demise of Allegheny City/Northside Pittsburgh; the mid-twentieth century attempts to revive this area as part of urban renewal efforts; and the late twentieth century collapse of the industrial economy of Pittsburgh.

Most outsiders, and many local citizens, are unaware that until the beginning of the twentieth century the neighborhoods on the Northside of the Allegheny River made up the independent municipality of Allegheny City, which was about one-third the size of Pittsburgh. For years, the citizens of Allegheny City resisted the incorporation of their city into Pittsburgh until, in 1907, against its will and with the help of legislative sleight of hand, Allegheny City was merged into Pittsburgh. In the transition, the area lost status,

identity, and power. Its official identity was largely erased as wards were renumbered, political lines redrawn and streets renamed, and it became known as the Northside. Allegheny Square, the heart of the old municipality, contained a number of significant public buildings including the Old Post Office, City Hall, a public marketplace, Diamond Park (town square), and the first Carnegie Free Library. Citizens in that area argue that the city's largess rarely came their way. As the twentieth century progressed, in spite of pockets of gentrification and development, the area increasingly became known as a low-income and crime-ridden set of ethnic neighborhoods.

In the 1960s the center of old Allegheny City was considered blighted and was thought to be in need of urban renewal. During this period the heart of old Allegheny City was altered when, in "one of the first Radiant City experiments,...(the Urban Renewal Authority) replaced 518 old buildings with apartments, homes, office buildings and a shopping mall known as Allegheny Center."¹ Allegheny Center, the commercial portion of which sits adjacent to the Children's Museum, between the museum and downtown, is now generally considered a failed project, and not just by those who mourn the loss of significant historic structures. The Allegheny Center commercial area has seen diminishing commercial traffic until, in recent years, it finally closed as a retail site. It is currently occupied by office workers with vast amounts of office space, sitting vacant.



The Northside was thus left without an active and thriving center. It is a loose conglomeration of fourteen communities many of which have neighborhood organizations, although these organizations have not been viewed as effective in representing the communities. The Northside developed a reputation for blight and crime, and most residents from other sections of Pittsburgh stayed away. With the depopulation of the city after the loss of the steel industry (see below), the Northside also lost businesses and buildings. One former city official lives in a lovely nineteenth century house on one of the hills surrounding downtown. He notes it used to be five houses from the corner, but now there is no house between him and the corner. The biggest employer in the area is Allegheny General Hospital, which is slowly recovering from its 1998 bankruptcy filing — the largest non-profit bankruptcy in U.S. history. "Now," a Children's Museum board member said, "we are the driver" of change in this neighborhood.

The other critical piece of history that sets the context for the Children's Museum is the steep economic decline of the city and region. Pittsburgh is in some ways the poster child for the urban impact of post war de-industrialization in the United States. For most of the late nineteenth and early to mid twentieth centuries,

¹ *The story of urban renewal In East Liberty and elsewhere, Pittsburgh's dominant public policy tool didn't work out as planned Sunday, May 21, 2000*
By Dan Fitzpatrick, Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Left: Allegheny Center
Right: Northside neighborhood street.

Pittsburgh was a vibrant and economically successful industrial city, relying first on its local veins of ore and later on its gigantic steel mills that employed hundreds of thousands of workers and kept its economy going. After World War II, however, and for a variety of local, national, and global reasons, the steel companies went into decline. In the 1980s, almost all of them closed, resulting in massive layoffs and devastation of the local economy.

The closing of steel mills and other related businesses led to loss of capital and population not just in the city proper but in the entire region, with the concomitant loss of tax base. The city's population dropped by almost half between 1960 and 2000, and population in the metropolitan area fell slightly during that same period. Unlike other older eastern cities that lost population, it was

YEAR	CITY POPULATION	CITY RANK [3]	POPULATION OF THE URBANIZED AREA [4]
1950	676,806	12	1,533,000
1960	604,332	16	1,804,000
1970	540,025	24	1,846,000
1980	423,938	30	1,810,000
1990	369,879	40	1,678,000
2000	334,563	51	1,753,000

not just the result of people fleeing to the suburbs (although Pittsburgh saw its share of “white flight”) but in many cases of people choosing to leave the area entirely.

The damage to the city was, of course, traumatic. With 300,000 fewer residents by the turn of the twenty-first century, many neighborhoods, especially in areas like the Northside, were littered with abandoned buildings and vacant lots, and suffered from the loss of local businesses. As the tax base eroded, the city lost its ability to respond to local problems and significantly downsized the government workforce. The entire staff of the community development agency, for example, was let go when the city fell into deep financial distress and, in 2004, entered a state-organized financial recovery plan.

THE MUSEUM SETTING

The story of the development of the Museum is impressive in part because it happened in a city where many of the structures that would normally support urban redevelopment were absent. First, the City of Pittsburgh could offer little help. It had little money to support development and had lost much of its expertise. As a result the action of urban agencies played a very small role in the story of the museum.

Second, there was no young and growing population in the immediate area and in the region, and, in spite of some signs of turnaround and growth, Pittsburgh's economy was not yet thriving. A board member noted that there was essentially no free market working in the Northside to support the beginnings of the Children's Museum Project. "The economy didn't play a role—nobody could have done this but us." Although many people in the city talk about positive trends, the loss of population has, at best, stabilized. In addition, Pittsburgh's population demographic is one of the oldest of any major city in United States. This demographic picture, however, is changing, and forecasts suggest that Pittsburgh will become noticeably younger in a few years.

The third missing element in the Children's Museum setting was the lack of effective vocal community organizations. While a number of Northside communities have their own organizations and CDCs, and there is even a coalition of organizations in the Northside Leadership Conference, none had taken the lead in organizing development and change in this central space or created an effective presence in the area.

In spite of these problems, Pittsburgh has many strengths and there are significant community assets available to the Children's Museum in addressing its future and the neighborhood's redevelopment. The first and foremost is a remnant of Pittsburgh's days as an industrial giant – the city is blessed with a number of nonprofit charitable



Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

organizations which have very large endowments and which make most of their grants within the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. Moreover, many of these organizations are civic-minded, aware that there is a critical role for them in Pittsburgh, and are willing to collaborate with each other to make change happen. For an organization like the Children's Museum, working with these foundations in lieu of government agencies has its advantages, particularly in the ability to move quickly in response to unexpected opportunities.

In addition, Pittsburgh is home to a number of excellent educational organizations, including the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University, which possess both expertise and interest in supporting the endeavors of the museum in exhibit design and research on use and outcomes.

Aerial view of Children's Museum of Pittsburgh.

There also appears to be a base for the emergence of a stronger and more involved community. Although fractionalized in the past, many of the separate communities in the Northside have solid, and in some cases, architecturally interesting building stock. They are also internally cohesive and have a history and stake in seeing the area revive. One local leader said that, in spite of all its problems, Northside communities have strong neighborhood identification and a solid history of volunteerism. Twenty-seven years ago, he recalled, they united to stop a hospital expansion plan and a community college proposal. The closing of the planetarium at the Buhl Building was traumatic for many Pittsburgh natives and neighborhood residents who remember using it as children and then taking their own kids there. It had served as “an emotional touch-stone” for the area. As such, Buhl represented an iconic site that served as a rallying point for community involvement. In addition, although it has not been assertive in the past, the Northside Leadership Conference is showing signs of claiming its place as representative of local residents in the development process.

MUSEUM FOUNDING AND GROWTH

In some ways it is odd that a very small, specialized cultural organization that started only a few decades ago has become the area's prime mover in addressing a very large set of urban issues on the Northside. The Pittsburgh Children's Museum (the name changed



to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh to emphasize its focus on the child over the place) was founded by the Junior League of Pittsburgh. It opened its doors in June 1983 in 5000 square feet of space in the basement of the Old Post Office (OPO), one of the few remaining historic buildings in Allegheny Center that survived urban renewal along with the Buhl Planetarium, and the first Carnegie Free Library and Theater.

The museum quickly expanded and grew to take over all four floors of the 20,000 square-foot Old Post Office building, which was given to them by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation in 1991. Even after a major renovation was completed in 1998, the growth in attendance outstripped the space available. A formative event in its history was the development of an exhibit relating to the children's television show *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Fred Rogers, the star and producer of the TV show, was a Pittsburgh native and was very interested in working with the museum. Children's Museum Executive Director Jane Werner still connects some of the museum's success and basic philosophy to early discussions with Rogers.

Left: Old Post Office.
Right: Buhl Planetarium.

In 1998, the Children’s Museum went to the Grable Foundation to ask for \$80,000 to plan and create a prototype for the Rogers exhibit. In response, the foundation urged them to increase their request to \$840,000, in order to create two traveling exhibits for the benefit of its audience and for publicity, but more importantly for the revenue the traveling exhibit would generate that could, in turn, support other museum activities.

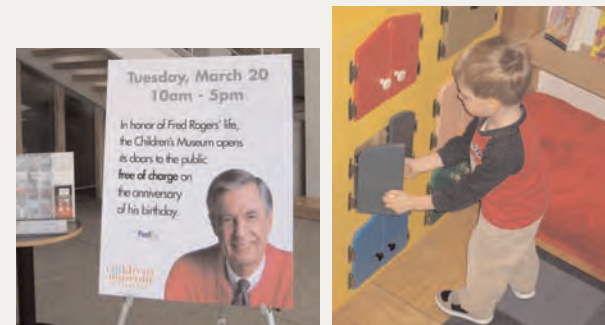
The *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* exhibit was a great success. The museum had 86,000 visitors in six months, which exceeded attendance for the entire previous year. As a traveling exhibit, it generated almost \$500,000 in revenue, which became the basis for an endowment. This success convinced the board and executive director that additional expansion was necessary and even higher attendance was possible. At this point, the Board of Directors met to discuss how expansion might go forward. Although there was discussion about moving out of the blighted area, once the decision was made to stay, grow, and build in that space, the commitment to support and help develop the neighborhood intensified.

It was clear that the long-term success of the museum would depend in part on being connected with a neighborhood that was itself an attraction, or least was not a negative factor in the decision of people from other parts of the city and suburbs to come and visit. In 1999 the Northside was clearly in decline, losing businesses

while watching critical cultural institutions leave (such as the Public Theatre and planetarium). Thus, as plans developed for CMP to grow beyond the Old Post Office to the Buhl Planetarium and the space in between, the executive director and her board increasingly looked at ways to address problems in the neighboring blocks. Those who were part of the early discussions note that, for Jane Werner, the potential of using the Children’s Museum as a linchpin for improvement in the broader area was always a consideration.

It should be noted that the planetarium building was not simply available for the taking. There were others looking at the building, including for-profit operations, and the city was initially noncommittal. Werner and the board were convinced that if they did not move quickly to take over the planetarium, it might well be used in another way or possibly even demolished².

In 1999 a \$300,000 grant from the Heinz Endowment supported a feasibility study of fundraising and a market analysis, and helped



² <http://www.post-gazette.com/regionstate/20000906children6.asp>

the museum to create a professional business plan for an expanded institution. The business plan projected attendance that would peak at 180,000, declining and leveling off at about 150,000 per year (actual attendance has significantly exceeded these predictions and has surged past 210,000 per year).

The museum organized and hosted two charettes (in 2000 and 2001) about needs and possibilities for an expanded facility, followed by a design competition supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and Benedum Foundation. They ran a national search for an architect because “kids deserve the best.” In seeking architecture firms for the competition, Werner noted that they wanted to avoid star architects and instead focused on small, mostly female and minority firms with reputations for creativity. They interviewed two dozen such firms and invited six to participate.

The NEA grant had added benefits in that, in somewhat provincial Pittsburgh, it provided the imprimatur of official approval for the process, which helped the museum to go forward and raise significant additional funds. The competition itself also served to generate local buzz.

As the museum expanded and looked to create a new building connecting the two historic properties its perspective broadened. It began to see its growth as a catalyst for change in the surrounding

neighborhood — the old downtown of Allegheny City. Although the neighborhood, as described above, had been significantly damaged by neglect and ill-conceived renewal, and was widely viewed as poor and unattractive, it contained within a several-square-mile area some significant cultural resources. These included the Andy Warhol Museum, The Mattress Factory, The National Aviary, the Carnegie Library (CMP’s next door neighbor), The New Hazlett Theatre, the Carnegie Science Center, and two new ballparks. The organizing concept was to find a way to connect these institutions conceptually and physically as a focal point of the revival of the Northside. This loose conglomeration of Northside cultural sites came to be called the Family District, and later the “Charm Bracelet Project.” This idea became the basis of the second NEA-sponsored design competition, in which four designers were invited to generate ideas for the broader urban area (see “Design”).



Buhl Planetarium detail.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM PHILOSOPHY

The Museum's mission is "to nurture children's innate joy, creativity, and curiosity...provide developmentally appropriate exhibits, programs, and opportunities for play both inside and outside the museum... serve as a resource for families and build meaningful partnerships with schools and community groups." This involves creating an educational resource by using exhibits and programs to present learning opportunities in attractive, non-didactic, non-threatening ways. The Museum's goal is to provide opportunities for "imagination and discovery" while taking children and their families seriously ("we don't do cute"). They see the museum as an art and cultural institution as well as an educational one.

The Children's Museum core values are reflected throughout the facility, in its exhibits and its programs as well as in the design of the museum itself. The focus is on family and child centered development, collaboration, sustainability, good design, cost effective operation, and research as a basis for continuous improvement.

Werner, who has served as Executive Director throughout the design and expansion process, has worked in several large museums including, Philadelphia's Franklin Institute, as director of exhibits, and Carnegie Science Center, where she had experience with large-scale interactive exhibits. She began with the Children's Museum



as Program and Exhibit Director, and had hands-on experience creating and assessing prototypes for new exhibits.

One of the key concepts of CMP is that kids should play with "real stuff." The museum therefore puts thirteen museum educators on the floor at all times to run the museum and supervise children's interaction with exhibits and materials. (Interaction between staff and visitors is very important to the museum experience.) The museum tries, as much as possible, to avoid exhibits that focus on computer and video screens in favor of "real" experiences. Kids may use real tools, and they have the opportunity to get messy with art material and water.

One of the few computer screen experiences available in the museum is a commissioned interactive art piece called "Text Rain," by Camille Utterback and Romy Achituv, in which visitors can use the video image of their hands to catch and move letters as they float down the screen, providing an alluring way for young children to directly interact with and manipulate letters and words.

Left: Hands-on display.

Right: Museum Director, Jane Werner.



An advantage of “real stuff,” the museum staff points out, is that it is more attractive to older audiences and not just children. A goal of the museum (and the new design) was to create space and exhibits that involved families and children together in the experiences and exhibits. The “real stuff” theme is reflected in the titles and content of many of their spaces – the Studio (work with paint, papermaking, silk screening, etc.); the Workshop (bang away with hammer, nails, etc.); the Garage (work on a real car); the Theater (work with lighting, stage craft); the Attic (experience memorabilia such as old clothes, photos, etc., as history lessons); the Backyard (with plants, water, outdoor activities). Waterplay is unusual in encouraging what other museums would consider to be too messy — playing with and in large pools of water, such as building and sailing boats, creating fountains, etc. Children and parents are supplied with rain coats, boots, and a large bank of hot air dryers to minimize the mess.

PARTNERS & PROGRAMS

Organizations using the museum’s “incubator” space were identified as partners in collaborative projects and include: Child Watch (an organization that works with kids who are in the court system), Head Start Pre-K Classrooms (Pittsburgh Public Schools), Reading is FUNdamental (RIF), the Saturday Light Brigade (a radio show that broadcasts from the facility), UPCLOSE (University of Pittsburgh Center for Learning in Out of School Environments), and ToonSeum (a new museum celebrating the art of cartooning). Collaborations outside the building include the New Hazlett Theater, the Carnegie Libraries of Pittsburgh, Lydia’s Place, Point Park University, Three Rivers Art Festival, *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* sweater drive, and a variety of museum programs.

The idea of having partners in incubator space has a dual purpose. First it is meant to provide support for these fledgling organizations by offering affordable space and the opportunity for collaboration. At the same time the incubator space supports the Museum

Water Play exhibit.

Text Rain exhibit.

through rental income. More central to the mission, though, is the idea that through these partnerships, children can be better served. Many children's museums "try to do it all" on their own and in so doing stretch their own resources and get involved in areas beyond their core expertise. At the Children's Museum, they "play to their strength," and instead of putting on theatrical productions, they have partnered with the nearby New Hazlett Theater. Rather than engaging solely in child advocacy, they work with Child Watch, which specializes in that area. Instead of developing their own reading program, they support the work of Reading is FUNdamental, and instead of creating a school, they provide space and support to Head Start, which runs pre-kindergarten classes in the museum for the Pittsburgh Public School system. (The Children's Museum gives each parent of children in the program free annual memberships to the museum.) In that way, they touch on a broad variety of key developmental areas by supporting partners who have the same basic core missions (to serve kids and families) and, in the end, do a better and more effective job than if they had ventured out to create these programs alone.

The museum also believes in research, testing, and prototyping to improve the quality of exhibits and the learning they provide – in part as an outgrowth of Werner's own background and experience in prototyping and exhibit design. They work in partnership with researchers from the University of Pittsburgh to conduct research on

learning in informal settings as feedback into the design process, and try out exhibits which may be altered depending upon their success.

Less discussed is the role of art in the design and operation of the museum. Art, however, does play an important role throughout the museum. First, art is quite literally an integral part of the facility, as the Ned Kahn sculpture "Articulated Cloud" encompasses much of the façade of the new structure (see "Design"). In addition, art is central to the exhibit philosophy – as something kids should see, touch, and learn from. This shows in two ways. First, newly commissioned art pieces are dispersed throughout the facility, usually moving, kinetic touchable, and implicitly or explicitly demonstrating a principle of physics. The facility budget, tight as it was, included \$500,000 for art, not including the exterior wind sculpture. Finally, older art works also dot the space – there are 1,125 artifacts, including pieces by Warhol, Haring, an important puppet and doll collection, original puppets from the Fred Rogers' television show, and many others, as well as framed pieces of stained glass and giant clocks salvaged from demolished historic buildings and supplied by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. In many cases these are available to kids and are often touchable, not separated at a distance in glass cases as one might expect. They thus become an integral part of the museum experience.

The New Hazlett Theater, located adjacent to the Children's Museum, shows how the museum has taken advantage of a potential crisis to create an opportunity to forward its agenda. The Carnegie Free Library and Music Hall facility (commissioned by Andrew Carnegie in 1889) is two buildings joined around a courtyard. It served as a home to the Allegheny Branch of the Carnegie Library and the Pittsburgh Public Theater. In 1999, the PPT moved to downtown Pittsburgh and the theater half of the building was left dark. The Children's Museum, working with the Andy Warhol Museum, began a fundraising project that saved and restored the site, and created a new non-profit to run the theater. Today the New Hazlett Theater presents a variety of theatrical productions and is home to a number of performing groups. An historic space that might have been vacant now functions as a central part of the plan for the Charm Bracelet Project and is directly connected, via a pedestrian pathway, to the museum.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning and design process for the Children's Museum has been a unique and imaginative one. First, it involved a highly participatory and collaborative process from the start, using charettes and community meetings at several points to integrate ideas of various players and stakeholders, generate excitement, and to familiarize the community with the ideas being considered. Design competitions



were also used to generate interest and buzz and to crystallize ideas and values surrounding museum growth and expansion. It is interesting to note that even though the primary focus of design was the Museum's "real stuff" program, sustainability and preservation also played an integral part of early discussions.

In 1998 CMP was renovated to include the entirety of the Old Post Office (then considered a stretch for the institution whose annual budget was about \$1 million). The resulting rise in attendance, demonstrated to the museum's administration and board that the right setting could attract significant numbers of families. It also showed that fundraising for such endeavors could be successful. As the Children's Museum quickly filled and almost as quickly outgrew its renovated space, Werner began to look around for possibilities for more significant expansion. Proposals considered expanding out over the back parking lot of the Old Post Office, but Arthur Zeigler, the doyen of Pittsburgh preservationists, convinced them to look to the neighboring Buhl building, recently vacated when

Left: Sculpture inside CMP.
Right: New Hazlett Theater.

the planetarium exhibits moved to Carnegie Science Center. Buhl was not only immediately adjacent to the museum, but was also an icon of Pittsburgh history. Many area residents remember going to the planetarium as children, and the building was a beloved part of their childhood experience.

The Heinz Endowments provided a grant of \$300,000 to conduct a market analysis, create an architectural feasibility study, develop a fund raising plan and produce a business plan for the proposed expansion. CMP used these funds to run charettes with varieties of stakeholder groups to discuss needs and options for the new space. The planning process and the resulting studies convinced the board that the expansion was feasible.

All in all, the expansion involved one year of planning, three years of design and fund raising, and one year of construction. The challenges of designing for a site made up of two historic buildings from different eras, separated by a city street led to submission for an NEA grant for funds to support a design competition to explore options for linkages. Werner identified 24 qualified firms, staying away from “star-architects” in favor of a small, creative, women and minority firms that would be more likely to attend to the Museum’s values and needs. Phone discussion and subsequent requests for qualifications from each firm helped Ms. Werner and the local design committee select six firms who were invited to

compete. Werner notes that this became a competition for ideas, based on compatibility of values and approaches to families and learning, and not specific design ideas. A national jury of 9 professionals recommended Koning Eizenberg as a firm that “really got us.”

Werner noted that the NEA competition had other benefits besides allowing for an extended competition. The NEA competition “gave us a stamp of approval” and helped raise money. The federal grant provided credibility within the local community and created a buzz about what was going to happen at that site. The original concept as laid out in the NEA proposal included creating a greenway to serve as connector to the Carnegie Library and a community park in the sunken front plaza that was a product of the earlier urban renewal. These features, though, were put aside and have become a central part of the next design effort, which will have a more external focus.



Artifacts from Northside building, now located in CMP parking lot.

The design program that emerged from charettes and extended discussions called for a “warm and welcoming” facility that should be open to the community and provide opportunities for life long learning. The facility should emphasize shared family experience – encouraging the whole family group to be involved in the exhibit rather than parents watching children interact with a display. The program emphasized a setting and exhibits to encourage curiosity and open exploration – they wanted to limit the directiveness of the floorplan, in that there should be no wrong direction to walk and no prescribed order of exhibits. The museum experience should be an informal exploration, not prescriptive and didactic learning. Exhibits offer interaction with real cars, shop tools, water, and craft materials and tools. Throughout the exhibit design, quality (both aesthetic and function) is key since “kids deserve the best” and “we are only going to do one ...and we want it to be the best.”



Photo: Albert Večerka/Esto

DESIGN

The architects represent the design of this facility with a metaphor from an old Chinese proverb of giving kids “roots and wings.” The space is rooted in the historic setting and soars in the new modern addition. It also roots children in an open, visible, and safe space, but allows them independence to move through and interact with “real stuff” throughout the facility. The new contemporary steel and glass structure is sandwiched between (and serves as a counterpoint and connector to) the Old Post Office, with its late nineteenth century Italian Renaissance style and the Buhl Planetarium’s early twentieth century “art deco design (that) mixes classical architectural form with allegorical sculpture in a forward-looking streamlined aesthetic.” The three storey entry of the new building opens to a large, friendly public space which contains the entry and welcoming area, as well as exhibit and meeting space. The entry is approached through a covered porch with a swing, providing an intimate, almost residential feel.

The use of light, color, materials, and art create museum space that is open, warm, and interesting. Visual access across spaces is intended to entice and promote curiosity (and child safety) without being overwhelming in level of stimuli. The long entry hall allows children and parents to orient themselves to the facility and see where they want to go. Exhibits are intended to be used in both long and slow interactions.

Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto



The older buildings serve multiple uses – the Old Post Office holds offices and several exhibits, including a “kid climber” made up of ropes and nets that let kids safely and independently climb nearly to the dome (recently taken down to be replaced with a more accessible version). The Buhl building has a café, theatre, and display space. The historic integrity is generally maintained and some features are easily visible from the inside through the large openings. A large window was punched into the north wall of the Buhl building for interior light as well as a view of the Carnegie Library.

Preservation was always part of the museum’s goals, and became integral in the design process. First, preservation represents sustainability in the recycling and reuse of previous structures. Second, the iconic buildings are important symbols of the past for this historic community and evoke positive memories in many residents,

including those who grew up in other sections of the city. Finally, the Post Office and planetarium add variation of style, texture, and materials to the site.

Art is considered important and integral to the design, as demonstrated in several ways. First, and most obvious, is the signature sculpture “Articulated Cloud” by Ned Kahn (2003 MacArthur Foundation “Genius” award winner) that is integral to the building’s façade. The original Koning Eizenberg design was for a polycarbonate “folded doubleskin translucent polygal structure” (a “white lantern folded like a Noguchi lamp”), but this design was dropped because it was too costly for the available budget.

The final design was the result of a close working relationship between architects and artist that resulted in a façade which is a kinetic sculpture. The surface is covered with thousands of five-inch acrylic flaps or squares, hinged at the top, that are attractive when still but mesmerizing on a windy day when they become a soft, wavy mass, visible from inside through windows, but also filtering moving light into the interior. It is “intended to suggest that the building has been enveloped by a digitized cloud.”³ The internal lighting and transparent/translucent skin allows the building to emit a bright but gentle lantern-like glow brightening Allegheny Square at night, and is intended to serve as an actual and metaphorical beacon in the Northside neighborhood.

Left: Looking into CMP through new window.
Right: Play structure in Old Post Office lobby.

³ <http://nedkahn.com/wind.html>

GREEN ARCHITECTURE

“Green” design was not the prime design directive, but was rather a natural and basic part of the program evolving from the core value of supporting sustainability. The Children’s Museum sought designers with interest and experience in green design and brought in an advisor – Rebecca Flora – from the Green Building Alliance. In the end CMP became the largest U.S. children’s museum with a LEED Silver designation, although they emphasize that the rating was not the goal. Rather, Werner and Flora said the focus was on creating sustainable design where it made sense and fit the museum’s mission. Rather than trying to maximize LEED points, “we looked for the right points,” i.e., those that supported the museum’s mission and setting.

In that sense, less emphasis was placed on using green design to save money – by reducing electrical costs, for instance — than providing a healthy environment for kids, by using non-toxic materials, and bringing large amounts of daylight into the facility. In addition, the museum purchases energy from renewable sources, has dual-flush toilets (which required a variance in Pittsburgh’s plumbing code that will make it easier for other new spaces to adapt this water-saving feature), no-irrigation landscaping, and on-site photovoltaic panels. They also worked with contractors to recycle building materials and influenced the city to create a policy that

now promotes recycling of all building materials. Flora notes that the green aspects of the design were not very expensive since they were integral to the design from the start, adding as little as 3% to building costs, with some compensating (though as yet uncalculated) return on operating expenses. Green design of the building became an exhibit, with many sustainable aspects of the facility on display for touching, viewing, and discussion.

The most salient green features of the Children’s Museum:

1. The Museum developed an innovative program where “items of value” (things such as marble panels, doors, light fixtures etc.) were salvaged from the existing historic buildings (diverted from landfills) and made available to



Wind sculpture and detail of plastic flap.

the community at large through a third-party nonprofit organization. This promotes conservation through the reuse of building materials.

2. The Museum purchases 100% of its electrical power from renewable sources (wind, hydro electric) and owns a 3 kwh photo voltaic system.
3. The expansion was built within close proximity to public transportation. Provisions were made for bicycle parking and locker rooms with a shower for staff.
4. The expansion utilizes dual-flush toilets, low flow urinals and aerators at all faucets and no irrigation in the landscape, thus reducing water use.
5. The mechanical systems are fully commissioned — all systems are tested and synced up, monitored and controlled with a digital automatic system. The museum has no CFCs in the mechanical equipment. The building's energy is optimized to perform at approximately 15% better than a base case of similar characteristics.
6. The Museum has walk-off mats and special controls in the plumbing at janitor closets to control pollutants being tracked through the facility.
7. CMP has maintained 100% of the existing building shell and more than 50% of the non-shell (interior walls and ceilings). The museum diverted over 60% of construction waste to recycling companies.
8. CMP is using building materials that use high quantities of recycled products and are locally manufactured and/or locally harvested.
9. The Indoor Air Quality meets the industry standards for healthy environments, there is no smoking in the facility, and the Museum monitors carbon dioxide emissions. Also, the Museum can permanently monitor the thermal comfort levels to insure that they comply with industry standards for temperature and humidity levels.
10. Materials and Products: All adhesives, sealants, paints, carpets, and composite wood are certified low-emitting — that is, they are formaldehyde free and have low volatile organic compounds, thus reducing off-gassing to near-zero levels. A significant quantity of the wood used on the project is certified — that is, it came from forests that are managed in a sustainable fashion.
11. CMP has a white roof that minimizes “heat islands”.
12. CMP has identified a specific area in the facility for the collection and storage of recyclables. The Museum has recycle programs for office materials, the cafe etc.
13. CMP collaborated with the Green Building Alliance of Pittsburgh and Conservation Consultants, Inc. to develop new educational programs for visitors based on the LEED process and building features.

14. As a result of the LEED effort, the CMP now uses cleaning products that utilize a variety of measures towards providing ecologically sound, environmentally preferable, non-toxic products, as well as a specially formulated and non-toxic ice melter.

FUTURE PLANS – CMP AS CHANGE AGENT

The original NEA proposal for the 2000 grant suggested that the expansion process would address exterior space surrounding the buildings, including the sunken plaza south of the Buhl Building and a greenway connecting the site to the Carnegie Library. The final scope of that effort, however, was limited to the two older buildings and the new construction. The vision of impacting the neighborhood around the museum, however, never changed, and in fact it has expanded. The successful museum expansion provided a model for “culturally led development within a distressed neighborhood”. With the Museum firmly established, respected, and successful in its new expanded quarters, and with over 230,000 people passing through the turnstiles yearly, the Museum became a credible change agent for the ongoing revitalization of Allegheny Square and the Northside.

CMP's larger vision is focused on taking the existing cultural resources in the area and creating physical, programmatic, and



symbolic connections so that they would function as a unified cultural district. This plan was at first called the “Family District” and later became the “Charm Bracelet Project,” seen as a more inclusive term with the cultural sites being the “charms” and the connections providing the bracelet. The enhancement of pedestrian connections among nearby cultural institutions is made easier by the fact that several of them, including the Children’s Museum, are located within or adjacent to The Commons, a long greensward with mature trees and meadows that connect many of the different cultural venues. The other local cultural attractions include, in addition to CMP, the National Aviary (currently undergoing a major expansion), the Mattress Factory (museum of contemporary installation art), the Carnegie Library (now emptied after a lightning strike and fire), the Carnegie Science Center, the New Hazlett Theater, the Andy Warhol Museum, Artists Image Resource, and the baseball and football stadia on the river, all within a few blocks of the Museum. The presumption is that a cultural district would have the critical mass of interest and opportunities to attract more visitors from further distances who would spend long periods of time, and presumably more disposable income, in the area. CMP is the creator, leader, and manager of this process.

Left: Donor Wall in Main Lobby.
Right: Detail of Charm Bracelet exhibit.

“(The Charm Bracelet) is a collective enterprise led by cultural institutions seeking to strengthen district connectivity, promote collaborative action among stakeholders and city agencies and the charms, and leverages the assets of its participating institutions to generate meaningful and innovative community change. It is organic and evolving. Ultimately the intent is to generate innovative solutions to the challenges created by local government devolution and neighborhood fragmentation.”

A local community leader notes that he and his organization were initially skeptical of the museum’s expansion and its pretensions toward leading a community development process. The community and the museum have, however, developed a strong working relationship and trust in each other, in part because the museum demonstrated that they “respected the emotional importance of the place” with their sensitive adaptive reuse of the older buildings. The community organization now sees itself as a “willing partner” working with the museum for the benefit of the community.

The latest NEA proposal, submitted in 2005 (awarded in 2006), requested funding for a design competition to generate ideas for strengthening the linkages among these institutions. Because only



half the requested funding was available, the competition model was changed by eliminating the judging, making this, instead, an extended idea-generating process (Chris Siefert noted that “the more ideas, the merrier – it was a ‘collab-etition.’”). It was unique in that the invited teams represented different but complimentary design disciplines (architecture, art, graphic design, and urban planning) who came together for a joint three-day meeting on site in October, 2006 for “an immersive introduction to the site” — touring the cultural venues and neighborhood and speaking to community representatives and other stakeholders, after which they went back to their studios to develop panels representing their ideas. They were free to present programmatic, streetscape, or marketing/branding solutions for connecting these “charms.”

The proposal to develop the Charm Bracelet Project/Family District plan was in four phases:

- 1) Program – identify existing plans of other organizations (mid-2006);
- 2) Competition (late 2006);
- 3) Exhibition and public viewing/discussion of entries in the Children's Museum (late 2006, early 2007);
- 4) Implementation (early to mid-2007).

In spite of changes in funding (eliminating the jury for the competition), they were largely on time, and in spring 2007 were finishing the exhibition of ideas and readying a community process to develop implementation plans. In April they received \$100,000 from the Grable Foundation to hire a Charm Bracelet Program Manager and implement a demonstration project.

The design ideas from the four teams – Colab Architecture, Ithaca; Muf Architecture Art, London; Pentagram Design, New York; and Suisman Urban Design, Santa Monica – were put on display in the Children's Museum on February 13, 2007 as "raw ideas" for perusal, comment, and review by the community. "This is not a master plan," Werner noted, "but a "bunch of ideas."

The most current project emerging from the Charm Bracelet effort has been the Allegheny Square Competition, to revitalize the barren plaza in front of the museum. Six design teams engaged in a community design charette followed by a series of community meetings, and the proposals they submitted were on display in the museum lobby in the fall of 2007. The winning design, by Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture of San Francisco, tries to reconnect the space to the city by allowing streets that had been cut off to run adjacent to the plaza, and emphasizing the relationship with the adjoining cultural institutions and neighborhoods, through design elements and views. Werner, though, sees this design as a beginning, "a baseline," to spark further conversations with the community that will lead to a final plan.

FINANCES

The Children's Museum could not rely on local government for funds for planning and design of the facility, other than basic infrastructure on the surrounding streets. State funds, however, did come from the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program and accounted for \$9 million of the \$29 million raised in total. The city also gave the museum the land between the Old Post Office and Buhl, and Buhl was leased for \$1 per year for 29 years from the city. Other than funds from NEA grants for design competitions (which required 50/50 matches), remaining funding for the institution has come



©Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture

The winning designer's conceptual plan from the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Square Park Design Competition.

from local non-profit foundations, corporations, and individuals. The museum's relationship with the foundations goes back to its inception 25 years ago when it was helped by a \$5,000 grant from the Hillman Foundation, and continued to the \$29 million raised for construction of the expanded facility – \$6 million of which was used to support the museum's endowment. The endowment helps programs remain sustainable and is an important part of yearly operating income. Construction was supported by a bridge loan of \$12 million generated by six-year bonds. These were retired early — after only two years — saving the institution \$350,000 in interest. There was 100% participation by the Children's Museum board in the fundraising campaign.

The Museum supports its operation from several primary sources. Approximately 60% to 70% of its income comes from ongoing revenue sources (entry fees, rental fees, café and shop sales). This is considered high for such institutions and is considerably better than income projections, which had estimated only 50% earned income at this point in time. Additional income comes from grants, annual giving, and interest on endowment.

One of the Children's Museum's core values is to be efficient and cost-effective in use of resources. It has received a four-star rating from the Charity Navigator, identifying it as a non-profit with low overhead expenses and efficient use of its revenues.

CMP PROJECT BUDGET		
SOURCES		
	Board	\$ 2,706,328
	Individual	804,093
	Corporations	794,080
	Foundations	15,527,836
	Government	9,012,750
Total Revenues		\$ 28,845,087
Uses		
	Construction	\$ 13,140,982
	Architects/Engineers/Consultants	2,458,000
	Exhibits	2,479,780
	Art	436,457
	Programming	117,000
	Administrative	1,674,218
	Development	602,800
	Marketing	623,000
	Endowments	5,500,000
	Reserve	1,812,850
Total Expenses		\$ 28,845,087

CMP OPERATING ACTIVITY FISCAL 2006

REVENUE		
	Unearned Income	
	Annual Campaign	\$ 347,802
	Program Grants	344,311
	Operating Grants	241,000
	Fund Raisers	175,040
	Sponsorships	45,000
	Contributed Services & Equipment	366,812
	Total Unearned Income	\$ 1,519,965
	Earned Income	
	Admissions	\$ 689,880
	Memberships	303,044
	In-house Programs	20,567
	Outreach	127,554
	Classes	18,747
	Birthday Parties	78,523
	Building Rental	52,751
	Retail Sales	92,102
	Exhibit Rental	109,500
	Contracted Revenue	33,041
	Stuffer Sales	1,872
	Parking	116,380
	Café	367,022
	Interest income	16,058
	Miscellaneous Income	16,727
	Partner revenue	65,990
	Total Earned Income	\$ 2,109,758
	Net assets released:	
	For operations	45,000
	Endowment draw	248,170
	Total Revenue	\$ 3,922,893

ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

The CMP has an active and involved Board of Directors, composed of civic and business leaders, which meets six times per year. Anne Lewis, President of the Board of Directors throughout the expansion process, led the successful fundraising and initial planning effort. She is the museum's first board emeritus and is credited with much of the museum's success. Ms. Lewis hired Jane Werner as Executive Director in 1999. Together they formed a dynamic team.

Ms. Werner is acknowledged by the board, staff, and community as not just a strong leader for the institution, but as a visionary with respect to the museum's role in the community as an organizer and catalyst for change. It is largely through Ms. Werner's focus that the museum has taken on the Charm Bracelet Project and the redevelopment of Allegheny Square. She has a great deal of credibility with a previously skeptical community as someone who follows through with promises for participation and involvement in planning.

All of the participants with whom we met credit Werner not only with the museum's successes, but also with pushing forward changes in the Northside, increasing collaboration among organizations, and creating a bright outlook for the future of the museum and the neighborhood. This is not, however, a one-person organization. Werner has given a great deal of thought to managing succession when she leaves the post – down to having written instructions in

CMP OPERATING ACTIVITY FISCAL 2006		
EXPENSES		
	Personnel	\$ 1,439,880
	Benefits	133,024
	Payroll tax	137,415
	Administration	9,079
	Postage	25,702
	Staff Training	7,541
	Professional Memberships	11,381
	Contracted Services	141,847
	Rent and maintenance	351,376
	Exhibit Rental	101,875
	Utilities & Services	219,465
	Telephone	5,857
	Insurance	138,781
	Printing and Publications	55,619
	Legal/Accounting	53,874
	Service Contracts	365,713
	Supplies	200,604
	Interest Expense	116
	Travel	30,784
	Cost of goods sold	214,171
	Advertising	115,038
	Miscellaneous	42,615
	Cost of Direct Benefits to Donors	103,934
	Total Expenses	\$ 3,905,691



her desk drawer about which consultants to call “if I am hit by a bus.” The museum staff appears to be competent and enthusiastic at all levels of the operation.

IMPACT

The museum has made a significant impact in the immediate Northside neighborhood and the Pittsburgh cultural community, and appears poised for a much larger impact as their ongoing plans develop. As a children’s museum, they have completed a successful expansion and now have 30,000 square feet of exhibition space shared among two significant historic structures connected by a contemporary glass and steel structure. The Children’s Museum is clearly on the map nationally as a museum that is well known and respected by its peer institutions. It has developed a model which includes its exhibition style (“real stuff”), its organizational approach (incubation and collaboration), and its civic place (change agent) that is generating interest in the museum community. The museum also appears to have become known among young

Pittsburgh metropolitan area families as a destination. Attendance is very high and growing – up 154% from 2004 to 2006. A large proportion of users come from outside the immediate neighborhood.

The role the Museum played in the reopening of the New Hazlett Theater as a separate non-profit institution has had a significant impact on the neighborhood. Collaborating with the Andy Warhol Museum, the city and the Northside Leadership Conference, the Museum led the fundraising efforts to renovate and hire an Executive Director for the theater. The theater is now booked through 2009.

The Children’s Museum has already made a significant impact on the neighborhood(s) of the Northside, and as they continue to develop the Charm Bracelet Project, the impacts will become greater. The Museum has managed to bring together a coalition of neighborhood groups and cultural institutions, supported by civic organizations and funders. Other cultural institutions report improvement in their attendance and credit much of their success to the energy from the Children’s Museum and development of the Charm Bracelet Project. The nearby National Aviary, for example, has seen a significant increase in public attendance and is undergoing a \$22 million expansion after which they anticipate a doubling of their current attendance of 120,000 annual visitors. The Children’s Museum is clearly and without dispute the leader of a process that has people envisioning change and development in this blighted area.

Assessing Project Success

SUCCESS IN MEETING PROJECT GOALS

1. *Provide a new, architecturally distinctive and green home for the Children’s Museum – a cultural center whose mission is to “provide innovative museum experiences that inspire joy, creativity, and curiosity.”*

The Children’s Museum is very successful in having completed an expansion process that resulted in significantly expanded, high-quality space for its exhibition and organizational goals, with a strong presence of art and a design that serves its educational philosophy and provides space for partners, while preserving two locally meaningful buildings. It has been highly successful in increasing visibility nationally and attendance locally.

2. *Leverage collaborations with other nearby cultural institutions to create a family district with improved connections between neighboring facilities, spur redevelopment, and create a new town square.*

The CMP is the clear and acknowledged leader of redevelopment in the Northside. In addition to reopening the New Hazlett Theater, they have created a symbolic and marketing connection among cultural institutions in a family district as the Charm Bracelet Project

and are on the verge of a project that may add a physical dimension to the connection. Already institutions perceive themselves as part of a larger Northside group, and public perception may also be changing.

3. Provide incubator space for like-minded non-profits.

The Children's Museum provides space and other support for a number of successful and competent institutions with which they partner on a range of innovative programs. It is not clear how appropriate the term "incubator" is (vs. partnership space), as most organizations appear settled in for the long haul.

4. Provide the highest quality exhibits and programs for learning and play. "We are a partner and a resource for people who work with or on behalf of children."

Exhibits appear to be of very high quality—not gimmicky—and largely fit the "real stuff" model. Exhibits are educational in a non didactic way and combine learning and art. The Museum has research from UPCLOSE that supports effectiveness of their approach.

5. Use green design to incorporate environmental awareness into the building and exhibits to foster a sense of environmental stewardship among Pittsburgh's children.

The Children's Museum has placed an emphasis on environmental stewardship both in its building and in its exhibits. They use the building's sustainable elements as learning tools. The focus is on



healthy environments for kids (safe materials, reduced outgassing, and efficiency of resource use).

OTHER MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Reputation and Perception

The CMP is nationally known and respected and appears regularly on the cover or in articles of magazines supporting preservation, sustainable design, and museum operations. Other institutions and neighborhood leaders recognize the Children's Museum's inclusive leadership style in their ongoing decision-making processes. Local foundations are eager to provide ongoing funding and see it as a success of their past funding policies. The museum has shown an ability to attract top talent and is providing a model for other local cultural institutions.

The Children's Museum has also been instrumental in changing the identity and perception of the Northside. Once an area to be avoided, the Northside is fast becoming a much-visited venue. The museum is unquestionably the major reason for this shift, but as

arts and cultural venues play an increasingly important role in urban revitalization, its neighbor cultural institutions and the networking they are doing is also a contributing factor.

Replicability

The CMP is reputedly being used as a model nationally, in particular by the planners for the National Children’s Museum in Washington, D.C., as well as other children’s museums across the country. They are respected for their approach to learning, for their exhibit design, the partners program, and as a model for serving as an agent of change in the local community.

As noted above, the Children’s Museum seems to be viewed in the museum community as a replicable model – certainly on the educational front and in terms of being a catalyst for neighborhood change. The museum offers an interesting model for exhibition design, one that runs against the grain of many current museums (eschewing virtual displays for real stuff and producing the design in-house through a prototyping methodology), and is a model in terms of its use of art in a children’s setting. The Children’s Museum has demonstrated to other cultural institutions in Pittsburgh that dramatic growth is possible. It has also inspired the local neighborhood organizations to believe that change is possible in their community and to step up to take on their share of the role.

SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee commended CMP for excellence in all aspects of project development. The Museum builds connections among diverse groups of people; makes a positive design contribution to the local urban landscape, and provides a new model for place-making using complex collaborations among culturally oriented institutions in the area. The Committee was impressed by the leadership role CMP has played within the community, and noted that this goes beyond the purview of a children’s museum. They also noted, however, that it will be important to demonstrate how this role can be institutionalized as both the museum and neighborhood leadership undergo inevitable changes.

The museum’s community building effort was viewed as especially powerful in the way various players and institutions are talking for the first time, and are using their adjacency and shared missions to grow individually and as a group. In this way the Committee felt that the Museum’s effort has established momentum in the area, has been innovative and & transformative, and continues to contribute to the local economy.

The Committee noted that CMP’s leadership role in the community makes it different from most other children’s museums in the country. They observed that many cultural institutions tend to be inward



Photo: Albert Vecerka/Esto

looking and are not usually focused on their relationships to other cultural institutions in their cities. The Museum provides a model of a cultural institution stepping into the civic arena and being more effective by taking a leadership role in the larger environment. Its efforts helped to catalyze change in ways that have resonated through the Northside. The Museum's success takes on special importance, as Pittsburgh's Northside, and Pittsburgh in general are difficult places to work, given the enormous loss of jobs and population in the previous decades.

Finally, the Committee saluted the excellent design of the museum, incorporating historic preservation of a beloved local institution with and elegant new design that is also an environmental sculpture. In considering the excellence of the design, and the preservation of two historic landmarks on the Northside of Pittsburgh, the Committee felt that "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. There is something about the place that is catalyzing change."

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