

## THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF HOUSTON

*Architects: Jackson & Ryan Architects in association with Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.*

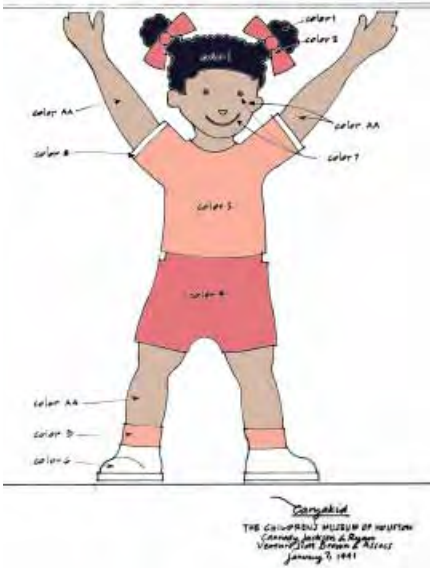
*Location: Houston, TX*

*Client: The Children's Museum of Houston*

*Area: 43,000 gsf*

*Construction Cost: \$3,900,000*

*Completion: 1992*



VSBA's design for the Children's Museum of Houston acknowledges -- indeed, exploits! -- the inherent dichotomy of a museum's requirements for flexible exhibition areas and permanent, memorable spaces evoking an institution's special character. At the Children's Museum, a colorful "classical" facade with large letters greets children from the parking area and playground. The "Kids' Hall," with its rainbow-colored arches and rhythmic arcade, provides an imageable counterpoint to more generic exhibition spaces. Running the full length of the building, it serves as the organizing spine of the facility.

The Museum contains galleries for hands-on exhibits, classrooms, an auditorium, art studio, and gift shop as well as offices for Museum staff. The shed-like exhibition area rests at the back and interior of the site, while the permanent, institutional part of the building is closer to Binz Street. Workshop spaces for producing and maintaining exhibitions are located in a separate building, economical in its construction and somewhat remote from the main building to make less obtrusive the dust and noise it can produce.

Elements of both traditional Classical and Modern architecture are incorporated in the Museum's design. The main facade adapts a symbolism deriving from monumental institutions typical of the adult world, while the colonnade along Binz and the brightly painted "caryakids" along the side playfully refer to traditional Classical architecture. The small scale of the decorative detail complements the big scale of the columns; the symbolism is adult/monumental/museum but the detail is friendly in its secondary scale and playful as a riff on the adult norm for museums. The other parts of the building are modern and utilitarian in order to accommodate the flexible uses within. In a light-hearted way, the building resembles the Houston Museum of Fine Arts up the street with its original masonry, Classical façade, and juxtaposition of the Mies van der Rohe facade to its back and sides.

*Awards:*

APEX Certificate of Merit, Houston Chapter, Associated General Contractors of America, Inc., 1994.

AIA Architecture Honor Award, Houston Chapter, 1993.

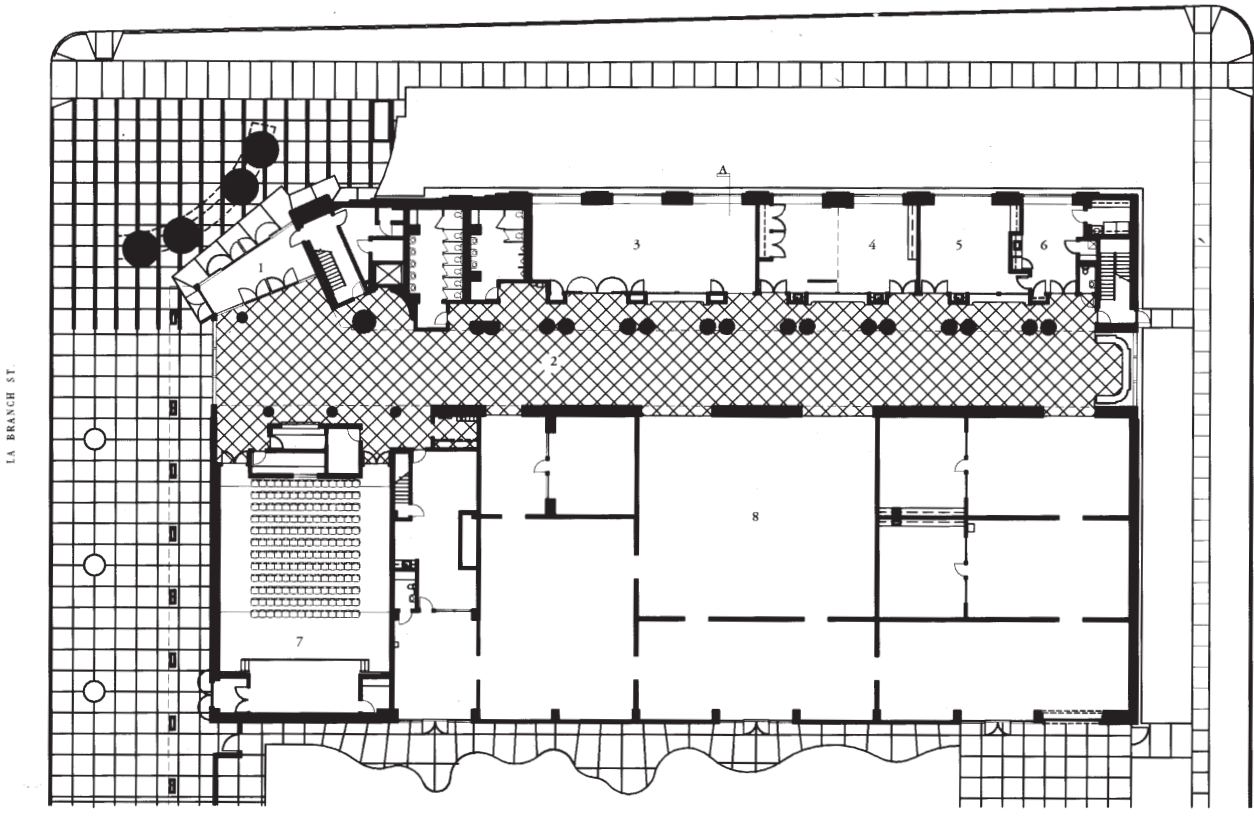
Houston Legacy Award, Houston Business Journal, 1993.



The Children's Museum of Houston



BINZ AVE.



- 1 LOBBY
- 2 KID'S HALL
- 3 GIFT SHOP
- 4 CLASSROOM
- 5 CELEBRATIONS
- 6 WORK ROOM
- 7 AUDITORIUM
- 8 GALLERY

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



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