

FACILITIES PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Washington, D.C., and Suitland, MD

Client: Smithsonian Institution

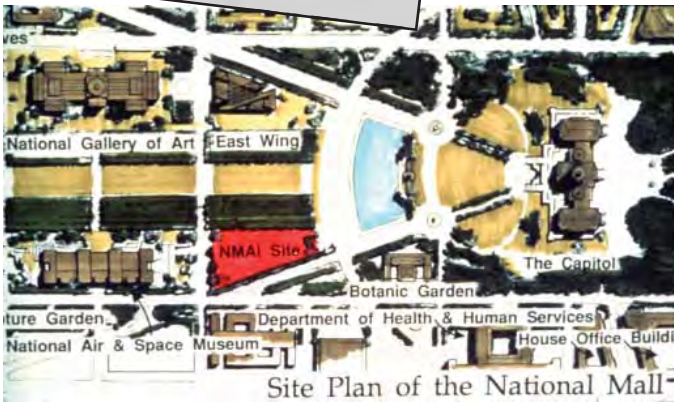
Completion: 1992 (program); 1998 and 2004 (museum projects by others)

VSBA assisted the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in developing detailed architectural program requirements and design guidelines for a new museum to be located on the last remaining site on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and for a collections care, resource, and outreach center and research facility to be built in Suitland, Maryland. As the first national facility focused on Native American cultures, the Smithsonian sought to create a non-traditional museum both as a center

for cultural activity, outreach, education, and study, and as an environment for appropriate display of significant collections from the Northern and Southern hemispheres in their native contexts. VSBA’s program of requirements was an essential first step preceding the architectural design, which was to be carried out by other firms.

The Museum program evolved from an intensive series of consultations with Native American communities and other constituencies and experts. These consultations evolved into guidelines for building siting, massing, and materials; use of cultural symbolism in architecture; qualities of indoor and outdoor space; nature of visual connection to the elements; character of ceremonial and performing arts spaces; division of study and collections spaces between Washington and Suitland; criteria development for the appropriate display and care of objects in accordance with tribal traditions and contemporary museum practice; and incorporation of computing and communications-system requirements for the Museum’s extensive outreach programs and interactive exhibition and research facilities.

VSBA also developed detailed functional and qualitative criteria, detailed programs of spaces, pre-design studies, environmental impact assessments, archaeological investigations, site design criteria, and construction cost and operating estimates.



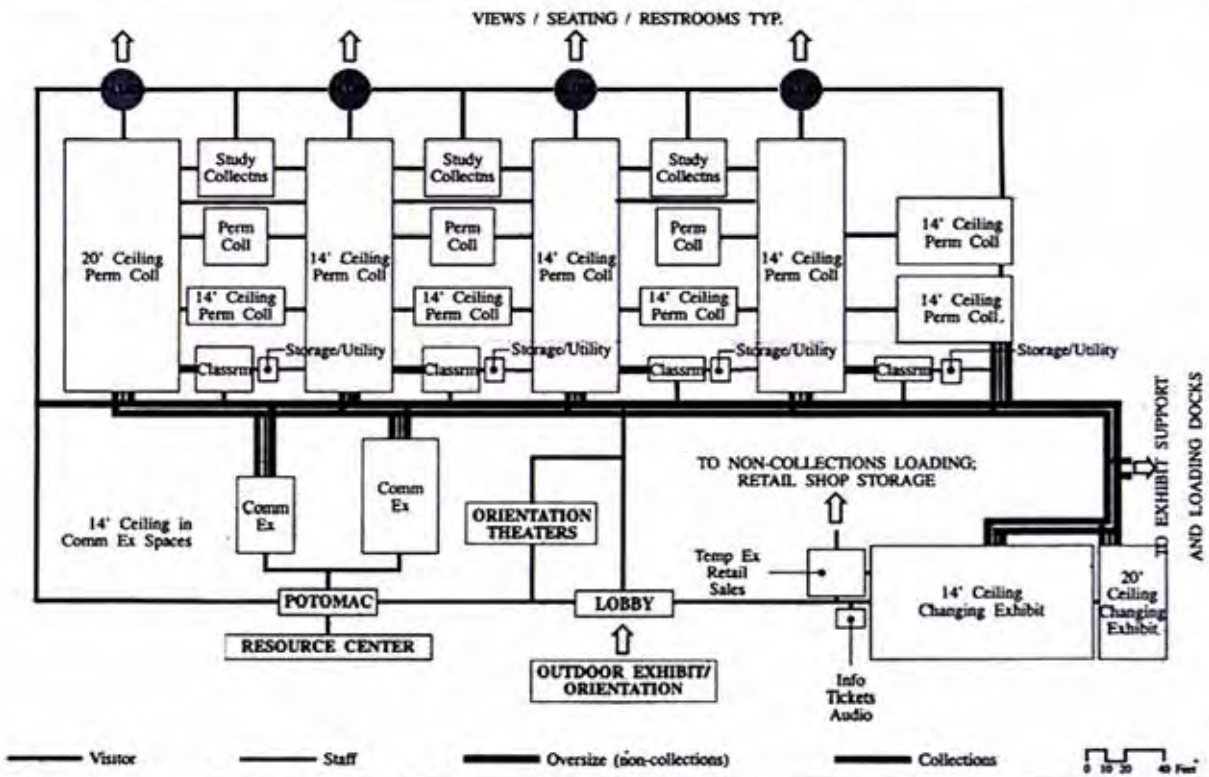
The Cultural Resources Center, six miles southeast of the National Mall in Suitland, Maryland, opened in 1998; the 250,000 sf NMAI opened in 2004.

Awards: Federal Design Achievement Award, 1995



EXHIBITION GALLERIES RELATIONSHIP DIAGRAM

MALL



National Museum of the American Indian
 Master Facilities Program: Mall Volume 3 September 15, 1993