ARCHITECTURAL FACT SHEET

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum has renovated its home, the Carnegie Mansion on New York City’s Museum Mile, transforming a grand early-20th-century residence into a 21st-century museum. The nation’s only museum devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design, Cooper Hewitt now has 60 percent more gallery space to present its important collection and temporary exhibitions and offers an entirely new and invigorated visitor experience, with interactive, immersive creative technologies.

The transformation of the Carnegie Mansion respects the spirit and character of the landmark building, restoring key elements to the original grandeur while providing much-needed upgrades to lighting and signage; more flexibility to reduce installation time and better accommodate object handling; and above all, enhanced public access on every level.

Through reprogramming portions of the mansion and the adjacent townhouses, as well as reconfiguring conservation and collection-storage facilities, the project increased the museum’s total exhibition space from approximately 10,000 square feet to 17,000 square feet, including the 6,000-square-foot gallery on the mansion’s third floor, which has never before been used for public exhibitions.

OPENING

December 12, 2014

LEADERSHIP

Caroline Baumann, Director; Brooke Hodge, Deputy Director; Barbara A. Mandel, Chairman, Board of Trustees; and Beth Comstock, President, Board of Trustees

ORIGINAL CARNEGIE MANSION ARCHITECT

Babb, Cook & Willard (completed 1902)

ARCHITECTS

Gluckman Mayner Architects, New York; Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners LLP, New York; Diller Scofidio + Renfro, New York

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Hood Design, Oakland, CA

PROJECT COST

$91 million project, includes $81 million renovation/expansion and $10 million endowment

PROJECT TIMELINE

April 2007
Project architect and designers chosen; mansion design unveiled

May 2009
Phase 1/Collection moved to off-site conservation and storage facility

March 2010
Phase 2/90th Street townhouses groundbreaking

August 2011
Phase 2/Townhouses complete, mansion vacated

January 2012
Phase 3/Mansion construction begins

Dec. 12, 2014
Public opening

June 2015
Garden opening

MAJOR FEATURES

ORIGINAL DESIGN FEATURES

Built for the family of Andrew Carnegie, the Carnegie Mansion was the first private residence in the United States to have a structural steel frame and one of the first in New York to have a residential Otis passenger elevator (now in the collection of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.). Other innovations were the inclusion of central heating and a precursor to air-conditioning. In the cellar, a pair of enormous twin boilers were fed by coal transferred from storage bin to furnace by a coal car that traveled over a miniature railroad track.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND MODERNIZATION

The integration of new mechanical/electrical systems, fire egress stairs, ADA accessible routes and fire detection and sprinklers were carefully integrated into this National Historic Landmark. A Historic Structures Report and a Preservation Plan were generated by Beyer Blinder Belle to inform work and, aided by materials conservation studies, the Great Hall and Stairs, the Teak Room and other significant spaces on the first two floors were meticulously restored. Historic spaces were documented and representative finishes and details were saved as part of the important historic record.

UNIQUE PIVOT SYSTEM

A 2,000-pound “secret” pivot door in the Great Hall conceals back-of-house functions.

A unique new pivot system of cornices on the third floor preserves historic detailing while accommodating the installation of large design objects.
EXTERIOR
The project included cleaning and repair of exterior masonry and the historic wrought-iron fence.

NEW ENTRANCES
A thorough refurbishment of the 91st Street foyer has removed a dozen layers of paint to reveal magnificent Caen stone, restoring the graciousness of the main entrance to the mansion. The new public garden entrance on 90th Street creates a heightened street presence for the museum.

GALLERIES
First-floor galleries have been restored to provide improved spaces for an interactive introduction to design.

Second-floor galleries have been expanded by converting existing office space to provide more room to showcase the museum’s collection and temporary exhibitions.

There is a new 6,000-square-foot gallery on the third floor, which has never before been used for public exhibitions.

CONSERVATION LAB AND REGISTRAR
Additional major improvements to the mansion include a new conservation lab and conveniently located and enlarged registrar spaces.

GARDEN & TERRACE
Hood Design is evolving the original Richard Schermerhorn Jr. design from 1901, using durable local New York schist as terrace pavers, garden pathways and in the re-imagined rockery, tying the garden to its larger context of Central Park. The garden, which will be free to the public, will be fully realized in summer 2015.

COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN LIBRARY
The Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Library was moved from the mansion to the townhouses at 9 East 90th Street in 2011 as part of Phase Two of the renovation project. The new Library includes the Arthur Ross Reading Room; an additional elegant, quiet study room; the Fred and Rae S. Friedman Rare Book Room; reference spaces; a workroom; open stacks; and offices.

RETAIL & CAFE SPACES
SHOP Cooper Hewitt has been relocated from the Carnegie Library on the western end of the first floor to the eastern end of the first floor, adjacent to the new café.

Tarallucci e Vino will operate the new café, which has expanded communal seating, and increased service times. The café will feature a greenmarket-inspired menu and will open daily at 7:30 a.m.
SUSTAINABLE FEATURES & MECHANICAL SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

In keeping with Cooper Hewitt’s public mission of design, the building project is seeking LEED Silver certification from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green-building rating system. LEED achievements include:

- Recycling and/or salvaging 75% of construction waste and creating a construction waste management plan
- Optimizing energy performance by 10.5%–14%
- Purchasing green-e-certified electricity supply for 2 years, for 35% of the building’s electricity demand
- Reducing water use by 40%

Not visible but crucial to the project were the careful integration of many mechanical system improvements including: lighting, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical, fire protection, security and data infrastructure throughout the building, as well as the discreet introduction of fire sprinklers throughout the mansion’s main floors.

DIMENSIONS & FIGURES

Exhibition Space
17,000 square feet

Education Space
3,146 square feet

SHOP Cooper Hewitt
1,450 square feet

The Arthur Ross Terrace & Garden
7,600 square feet

Tarallucci e Vino café at Cooper Hewitt
600 square feet