

University of Washington

Henry Art Center
Seattle, Washington



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The contextual challenges posed by the renovation of and addition to the Henry Art Center not only afforded the opportunity to recast the 1926 Carl F. Gould building as the primary element of the west campus entry to the University of Washington, but in fact propelled the design and helped to define the program.

A 10,000 square foot, two-story masonry structure, the original Henry was both overwhelmed by large neighboring buildings and compromised by an existing pedestrian bridge. Initially intended to be the north wing of a large, symmetrical arts complex that was never realized, the “old” Henry now contains the permanent collection galleries, Reed Study Center and curatorial offices. Gwathmey Siegel’s three-story addition offsets the original structure with textured stainless steel, cast-in-place concrete and cast-stone. It houses flexible, top-lighted galleries, administrative offices and loading, storage and conservation spaces, as well as a new lobby, museum store and lecture theater.

But perhaps most important, the intervention visually separates the museum and addition from adjacent structures, affording a

legitimate transition, a new sense of place, an expectant and enriched entry sequence and an integration of site, circulation and context.

In counterpoint to the original Henry, the new main gallery constitutes a memorable form to be re-experienced from within. The addition also acts as a carving away of a solid, revealing fragments that interact with the original Henry to re-site it as the asymmetrical—though primary—object in a new contextual frame, unifying the multiple architectural and site issues at the end of Campus Parkway.

Finally, the intervention is an architectural collage that unifies disparate elements in both contrapuntal and asymmetrical variations. The variations reestablish the primary site axis to Suzzallo Library, reconcile the vertical transition from the street to the plaza level and integrate the original Henry façade both with the new sculpture court and gallery entry and with the campus entry. As fragments, the forms imply but do not directly reveal their spaces. Thus anticipation, sequential revelation and memory become as crucial to the experience as the physical manifestation of the complex.

1 *Aerial view from Fifteenth Avenue*

2 *View East from pedestrian bridge*

3 *View of addition from campus*



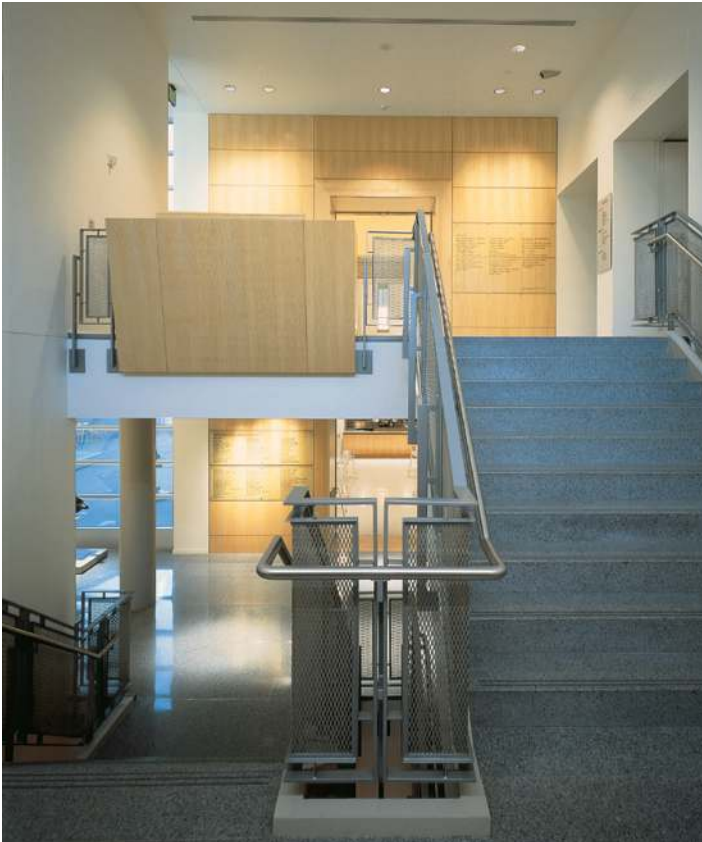
Plaza looking north toward new entry



Lecture Theatre

University of Washington

Henry Art Center



Main stair



Northeast gallery



Main gallery

University of Washington

Henry Art Center

Key Project Information

- New 37,500 square foot, three-story structure creates a new entrance to the campus of the University of Washington
- 9,000 square feet of exhibition space
- Museum store and renovated cafe
- 154-seat lecture theater
- Multimedia gallery
- Classroom and studio spaces
- Storage facilities, sculpture court, public plaza
- Loading and receiving dock
- Renovation of original Carl F. Gould building

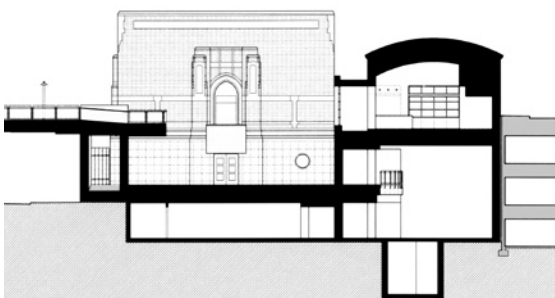
- completion 1997
- gsf 50,000

"In addition to establishing a positive and cooperative working relationship, Charles Gwathmey and the design team brought extensive design talents to the table. Their solution to the complex problem handed to them was original and bold. The team took what most considered to be a liability, an existing pedestrian bridge in an unfortunate relationship with the museum, and turned it into the hinge point of the entire design."

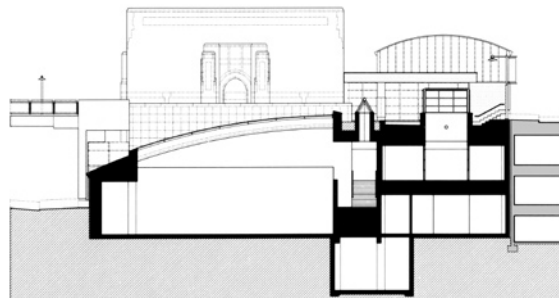
Richard Andrews, Director

"[The] inversion of the expected order—descending to the largest, brightest, and most dramatic volume in the building—is the most compelling aspect of the design. To find this generously daylit and high-ceilinged space in the deepest reaches of the project is a revelation. Gwathmey's dictum that one should experience a museum as a sequence of varied spaces, a kind of unfolding and revealing of artworks with a continuous sense of surprise, has been executed brilliantly."

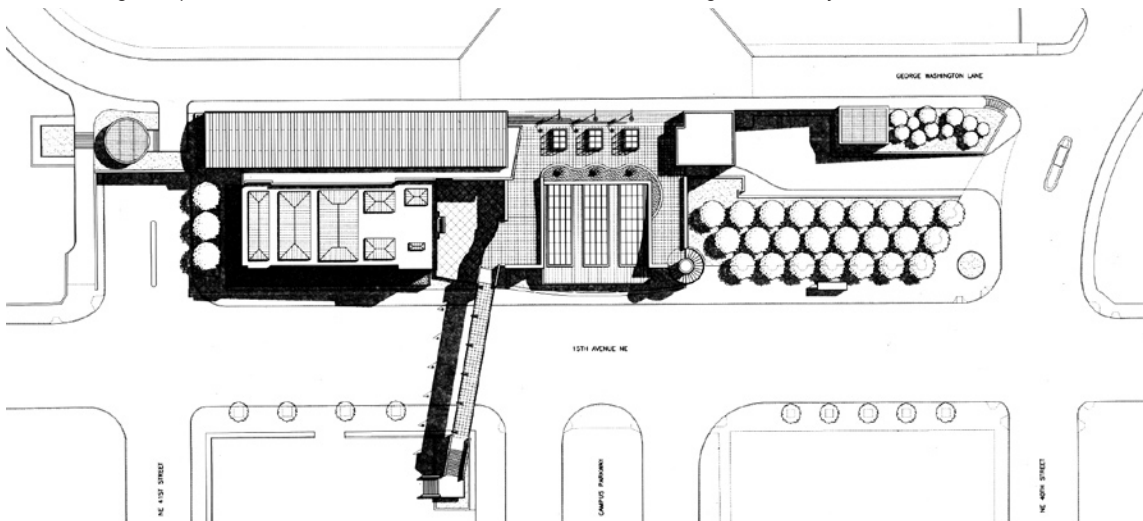
Justin Henderson in "Museum Architecture", 1998



Section through Sculpture Terrace



Section through Main Gallery



Site plan