

# DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES

DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES REFERS TO THE DISPERSAL OR CONCENTRATION OF VARIOUS SERVICES WITHIN THE MUSEUM. DISPERSING OF THE FREQUENTLY USED SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE MUSEUM CAN INCREASE THEIR EXPOSURE AND ACCESSIBILITY

CONCENTRATING THEM IN ONE PLACE MAY PROVIDE AN ECONOMY OF CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE; MORE OFTEN, IT IS A PERCEIVED CONVENIENCE FOR THE MUSEUM STAFF.

## ISSUES:

The decision to disperse or concentrate the various services through the museum depends upon:

1. The goals of the museum and its programs. Is greater involvement a stated goal? If so, offices of curators and other museum workers should be dispersed. If the back stage activities are to become visible, they too might require different adjacencies.
2. The size and complexity of the building: if the museum is very large, or a multi-story structure, children or parents and young siblings should not be required to search for restrooms on different floors or at distant and obscure locations.
3. The conflicting needs of the public and the museum's staff, e.g. dispersed curator's offices might better serve the public, but may handicap the staff.

## QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS:

- \* Easily accessible (in the broadest sense) to the public
- \* Readily available
- \* Visible and identifiable
- \* Clearly recognizable
- \* Non-obtrusive presence so that the on-going ambience and programs will not be disturbed

## APPROACHES FOR DESIGN:

### 1. DISPERSAL:

Sensible distribution throughout the building: services such as restrooms can be dispersed in the building both vertically -- on each floor -- and horizontally, if the floor is of sufficient complexity and size.

Obvious location: services located near a more appropriate -- and predictable -- location. For example, curator's offices could be near their respective thematic zones.

## 2. CONCENTRATION:

Centralization and compactness: placing services in one location, whether central or not, can aid in their identification and in understanding the organization of the building.

Integration of several services to create a unified and more convenient service zone: preschool areas should have adjacent restrooms to facilitate practicing of competence in toilet training.

## 3. ADJACENCIES, NATURAL AFFINITIES AND MULTIPLE FUNCTIONING SPACE

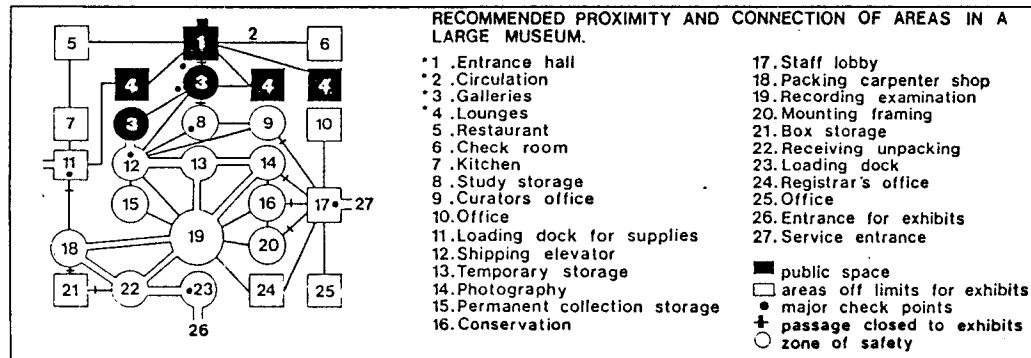
Although parts of the following section resemble a traditional check-list of a program for facility design, it is not intended here to describe a "universal" program. Rather, this is a presentation of most common functions and places in typical museums, and illustrative (but not definitive and prescriptive) of relations each might have with other functions. It is a checklist and an example to be used by the programmers of a new museum to review and examine their own considerations and assumptions.

Adjacencies between several functions in the museum are going to be consistently similar everywhere, e.g., proximity between entry point and coatroom is universally desirable.

It is also clear that adjacencies between many other functions might be different under different sets of circumstances.

For example, children's needs require distribution of rest rooms throughout the building to provide an easy and quick access; similarly, nursing mothers need a place for changing diapers. Zoning for daytime vs. nighttime operation may require partial closing of the building and extra restrooms near the entry and public, night-use area. A one-room museum, or a museum which does not plan to pursue limited nighttime activity would not be affected by both considerations.

In conclusion, while it is difficult to generalize about adjacencies, an example for possible proximities and connection diagram follows:



Roubilard, 1983

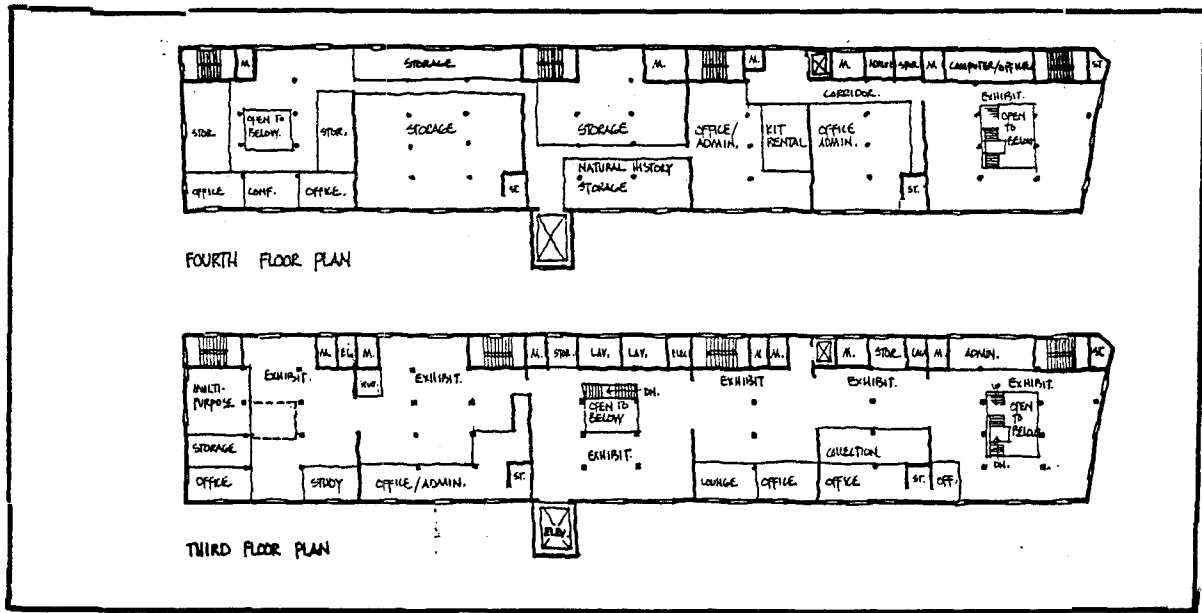
A longer and different list of functions is presented here as a programming checklist:

Parking  
 Bus drop-off point  
 Entry/exit point(s)  
 Control point  
 Rest rooms  
 Gathering/holding area  
 Gross motor activity area  
 Coat room  
 Orientation zone  
 Toddler's activity/display area  
 Children's activity/display area  
 General activity/display area  
 Storage  
 Administration and staff  
 Display workshops  
 Restaurant(s)  
 Retreat and rest areas  
 Snack room/dining for kids  
 Museum store  
 Library  
 Seminary room/party room/lounge  
 Theater/performing arts hall

EXAMPLES:

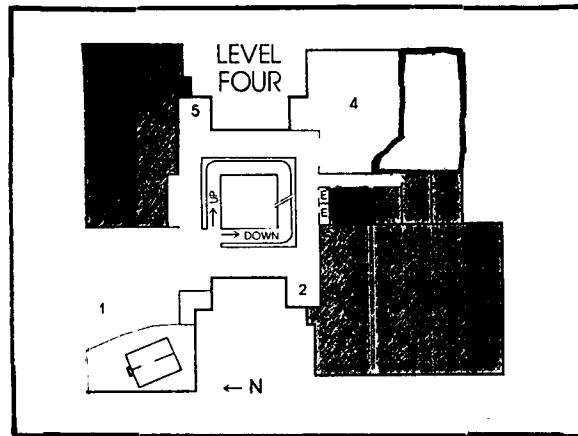
Boston Children's Museum

Curator's offices are located near their related exhibits, and are accessible to the public. This arrangement makes for greater mutual involvement of the public with the staff, and it fosters more and better communication regarding the museum's contents and programs.



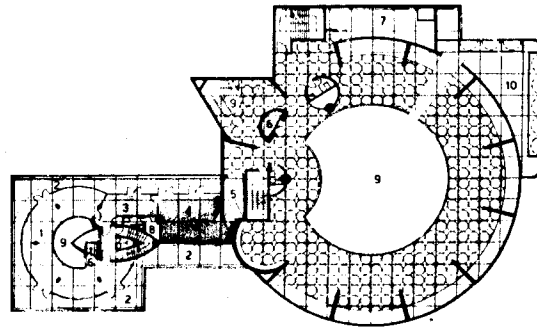
Playscape  
The Children's Museum  
Indianapolis Indiana

To enter the 2-7 year-old discovery area visitors pass by the restroom core. The location is the same central place on every floor.



Third Floor Plan  
Solomon Guggenheim Museum New York  
Frank Lloyd Wright 1959

Some basic services such as restrooms are almost evenly distributed both vertically -- on each of the five floors -- and horizontally, in each "wing" of the museum, without using too rigid symmetry or arbitrary repetition.



RELATED PRINCIPLES:

\* ACTIVITY CORE