

Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation at the American Museum of Natural History



Location

New York, NY

Status

In design

Client

American Museum of Natural History

Type

Cultural, Educational

Size

195,000 sf

Sustainability

Targeting LEED Gold

Tags

Classroom, Collections Storage, Concrete, Exhibition, Materiality, Museum, Theater

The latest addition to New York's historic [American Museum of Natural History](#), the Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation will embody the Museum's integrated mission of science education and exhibition.

At a time of urgent need for better public understanding of science and for greater access to science education, the Gilder Center will offer new ways to learn about our world and to share in the excitement of scientific discovery.

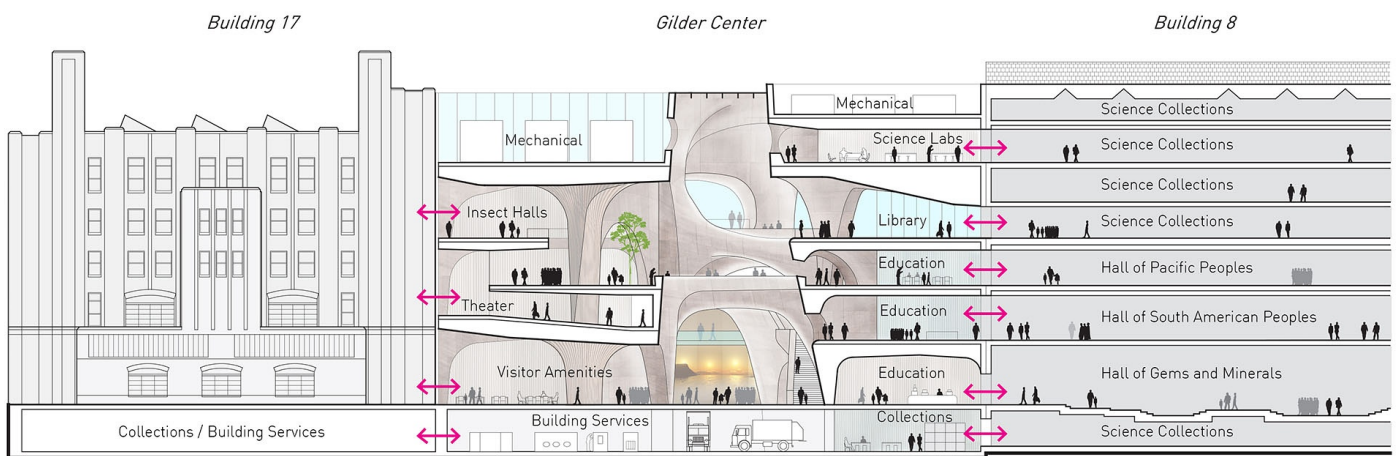
The design for the Gilder Center reclaims the physical heart of the museum and completes connections originally envisioned in the museum's campus master plan between existing galleries. Visitor circulation is enhanced to better accommodate the museum's rising annual attendance, which over the past several decades has grown from approximately 3 to 5 million.

Informed by processes found in nature, the Central Exhibition Hall, which will serve as the Museum's new Columbus Avenue entrance, will form a continuous, flowing spatial experience along an east-west axis. The design will encourage visitors to move beneath and across connective bridges and along sculpted walls with openings that reveal the museum's many programs.

Niche spaces tucked within this central space will house exhibition elements designed by Ralph Appelbaum Associates and exciting new learning spaces, while also revealing more of the Museum's extensive scientific collections. The public will be able to engage with innovative tools used by scientists to gain a deeper

understanding of our world and how science is conducted today.

Main features of the new building will include the five-story **Collections Core**, housing millions of specimens and artifacts from the Museum's collection; the **Insectarium**, the first Museum gallery specifically dedicated to insects in more than 50 years; the **Butterfly Vivarium**, a year-round exhibit that doubles the space of the existing seasonal butterfly conservatory; and the **Invisible Worlds Immersive Theater**, showcasing cutting-edge scientific technologies.



Model depicting the museum's current layout

"We uncovered a way to vastly improve visitor circulation and museum functionality, while tapping into the desire for exploration and discovery that is so emblematic of science and also such a big part of being human. Upon entering the space, natural daylight from above and sight lines to various activities inside invite movement through the Central Exhibition Hall on a journey toward deeper understanding. The architectural design grew out of the museum's mission."

-Jeanne Gang



The Collections Core will house 3.9 million specimens, approximately 10 percent of the Museum's collection.