

Facts & Figures

Owner: Columbus Consolidated Government, Columbus, GA

Type of Project: Additions and renovations to a convention center

Architect: Hecht, Burdeshaw, Johnson, Kidd and Clark, Inc., Columbus, GA

Construction Manager/General

Contractor: Holder Construction Company, Atlanta, GA

Size: 110,000 square feet (additions); 180,000 square feet (renovations)

Cost: \$36.5 million (total)

Construction Time:

June 2002 - May 2004

The Need: Additional space to host larger conventions in Columbus

The Challenge: Constructing the building's footprint in the river's floodplain and accommodating existing events during construction

Supportive Team Members

Bartimaeus Inc.
Window Treatments

The Big Dog Companies
Demolition

Pleasants Contract Hardware
Doors, Frames & Hardware

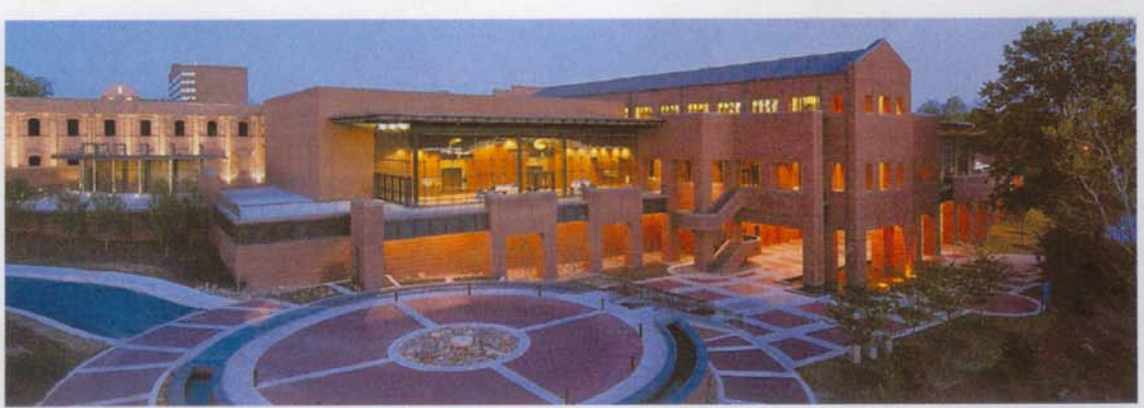


Photo courtesy of Mike Culpepper Studios, Columbus, GA

Columbus, Georgia

Columbus, Georgia Convention and Trade Center

Since 1979 the circa 1853 Columbus Iron Works has housed the Columbus, Georgia Convention and Trade Center. Although its massive brick walls, huge timbers and exposed ceilings still represent the best of 19th century workmanship, additional space was needed, prompting a two-phased, multi-million-dollar addition and renovation project that more than doubled the center's existing space.

"The need was to increase the amount of convention space to attract business to the Columbus area," said Don Miller, senior project manager at Holder Construction Company, the project's construction manager/general contractor. "Working around the previously scheduled events was our challenge. The Phase I addition was built while events were held in the existing facility. While Phase II was being renovated, the convention center held events in Phase I."



Photo courtesy of Jim Cawthorne, CPP, Columbus, GA

However, prior to beginning the project, there was some concern that the site itself would not be large enough to accommodate the expanded center, particularly because of an onsite river. The project team used creativity and innovation to find a workable solution. "This was the premier site for the convention center," said Phil Johnson, vice president, designer, project architect and principal in charge at Hecht, Burdeshaw, Johnson, Kidd and Clark, Inc., the project's architect. "Our challenge was adding several large spaces with no place to put them. But that challenge also provided us with the opportunity to incorporate the river's magnificent views."

Once the design details had been worked out, work on Phase I began. Built over the floodplain between the existing convention center and the riverbank, the 85,000-square-foot addition features balconies and big expanses of clear glass overlooking the river, and includes a 22,000-square-foot ballroom, a kitchen, a dining area and 30,000 square feet of pre-function space. Original exterior brick was matched with new brick in sympathetic colors.

Phase II remodeled the original convention center and upgraded

the mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) systems; renovated an existing 20,000-square-foot wing that had not been updated in the building's 1979 remodel; and replaced the circa 1979 amphitheater with a 25,000-square-foot, two-story infill building.

As a result of the additions and renovations, portable, tiered seating is now available for up to 7,500 people, providing facilities for family shows, sporting events and top-name concerts. Additionally, there is ample room for 450 10-foot by 10-foot exhibitor booths during trade shows and conventions. Thirty-eight loading docks allow easy access to the exhibit halls, and ramps and elevators provide entry to persons with disabilities. Sheltered passage is provided to both levels of the convention center from its 426-car, multilevel garage. Ground-level parking is also available around the complex perimeter.

"An architect maybe only gets a chance to work on a building like this once in his lifetime," said Johnson. "Our goal was to do justice to this wonderful old building and the equally fine remodeling that occurred in 1979. We weren't disappointed." ■

— R.G.