

To: Harmon Goldstone

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From: William G. Conway

Subject: General Display Considerations, New Aquatic Bird House

A. Display Presentation.

1. Where possible, each major exhibit should be seen as a unit, presenting a vista, as it were, so arranged that it is seen at some distance separate from other exhibits. This may be accomplished by placing cages at right angles to each other with a winding public space, thus the public, on entering the building, should be immediately presented with a large major display. On turning from this exhibit, another display should present itself, not visible from the building entrance, etc.

2. Individual exhibits now titled Cypress Swamp, Tropical Marsh, Beach, Lake, and Tropical Pond may all be so arranged that they have no glass fronts or other barriers separating them from the public.

a. Open-front exhibits will have several advantages. First, their obvious esthetic advantage; second, the cages may be serviced from the front - there need be no keepers' passage; and, third, the expense of a cage front is eliminated. Several disadvantages which present themselves are, first, an open-fronted scene must be deeper than a cage with a front from the standpoint of appearance and also to keep the birds in the cage. Second, a change of level is almost invariably necessary so that the public will not step over the guard rail into the exhibit. Thus, each open scene should have its ground level somewhat below that of the public's, and/or the guard rail should be backed immediately by a pond or water area worked into the exhibit.

3. Cage fronts other than "open" should in all cases consist of glass. Wherever possible, cage floor levels should vary not only from cage to cage but within a single cage. Glass front cages may not be placed across from open scenes, for open scenes invariably imply very high light level. Glass across from such scenes carries too many reflections. Glass cage fronts need not be straight but may vary. A good system might be indentation of, for example, a three-panel glass front, thus bringing the public, to some extent, within the cage, creating the same effect as the cinerama screen. Small individual cages may have swivel glass fronts, that is, fronts which are pivoted above and below, opened with a special keeper's key and thus cleanable from the front. In general, glass slightly canted away from the public space at the top is more practical from the cleaning standpoint.

4. Cage doors. Where individual cages have hinged or pivoted glass fronts, very large cage doors are not necessary. Where, however, glass fronts are solid, not pivoted, such as in front of a large cage, a big door will be necessary to make replacement of cage decorative material possible. All cage keepers' doors should open out of the exhibit. Cage doors, where possible, should be invisible to the public. This may often be done by placing the access point near the cage front on one side.



5. Cage tops.

a. Cage tops should be high enough and protected by a cage front baffle so that they are not visible to the public. With the exception of the air-conditioned Cliff Face Exhibit, all cages are better off with full skylights, where a maximum of light may be obtained. It may be necessary to install a false wire ceiling below the skylight in some cages.

b. Electric lighting may include some spotlights, fluorescent lights, etc. Lighting need not be at the maximum level required to operate the building in darkness, but enough light must be present for emergency night lighting.

6. All visible cage corners to be rounded.

7. Public space.

a. Public space should be covered by a false ceiling and have an easily cleanable terazzo floor draining to gutters on the sides. Public railings should be simple and extend from the cage front so as to facilitate cleaning of the public area.

b. Possibilities to consider include cage motifs extended through the cage front, thus the Cliff Face Exhibit windows may be bordered on either side by rock outcroppings within the public space behind the guard rail. A decorative island, centrally located within the public space may serve to carry out a swamp feeling; for example, a cypress stump with knees and tropical plants near the Cypress Swamp Exhibit.

c. In general, the public space should be darkened.

d. If open scenes are used extensively, a door or baffle system between scenes must be instituted to prevent the birds from fraternizing in the wrong exhibit. Swinging doors are an obvious solution, a light baffle is possible, and we would like to suggest a modification of this idea so that a decorative lattice-like screen which would avoid the obvious disadvantages of a dark baffle might be considered. Unfortunately, neither of these plans would be so effective as a door.

8. Plumbing, etc. All cages should contain hose connections. Individual cages and perhaps large cages as well should be drained with relatively short curved sections of pipe through open sluice-ways to catch basins before entering the building's main drainage system. While it would not appear necessary to install a larger water heater, a heating coil connected with the building's furnace is important so that pool water may be tempered during the winter. This implies installation of warm water in-put in most cages. The Cliff Face Cage pool and all other cage pools must be drained with very large pipes.

9. Air control. Buildings should be arranged so that air is exhausted from the public space through the cages to eliminate odor.

10. Cage temperature requirements have been covered in a previous memorandum (December 17, 1958).

General Considerations: Cage shapes may vary, bending around corners, etc.