

Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk

Renovations

Location	Norwalk, Connecticut	Size	32,000 sf (new addition) 115,000 sf (existing buildings)
Architect	Beyer Blinder Belle	Cost	\$31 million
Services	MEP/FP	Completed	2021



The Maritime Aquarium is a science museum and aquarium located within a complex of historic riverfront mill buildings in Norwalk, Connecticut. Founded in 1988, its mission is to protect and encourage an appreciation of the Long Island Sound ecosystem and our global environment through living exhibits, marine science, and environmental education. The aquarium currently serves approximately 500,000 visitors per year, including 150,000 school children.

In 2017, the aquarium undertook a major expansion and facilities upgrade. The phased project included three major building additions, two of which are now complete: a new wing housing a harbor seal exhibit in a two-story, 150,000-gallon, saltwater tank; and a new 4D theater.

A key challenge of this unique project was the construction of major spaces on a constricted urban site, while remaining open to the public and providing care and support for a population of live animals. Specialized engineering systems were required to accommodate the life support systems for the aquarium animals, construction of aquarium tanks with large windows for public viewing areas, and advanced technology for the special effect movie theater.

Mechanical systems include hydronic variable volume air handling units and a dedicated roof-top chiller plant. All mechanical components were specified to withstand corrosion, a common danger in saltwater and seacoast environments. Meanwhile, tailored plumbing and electrical infrastructure were integrated to facilitate the operation of the 4D theater, inclusive of a water treatment system, compressed air setup, and a special effects distribution network.



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