

Best of
2004

Brooklyn Museum of Art

Project of the Year - Cultural

The Brooklyn Museum of Art, with an old entrance that one architectural critic said epitomized the dominance of “culture over the individual,” has a whole new look.

That fortress-like entry of the 19th century structure has been softened by a welcoming plaza that radiates from the building's central hall and funnels people through to an airy pavilion. The extensive work on the historic McKim Mead & White structure – part of a multiyear renovation effort that included roof repair and substantial interior renovations – wrapped up in the spring.

The charge to the design team was to reintegrate the building with the site as



menting it is quite another, especially when dealing with a structure past the century mark, suffering from significant façade deterioration. With that backdrop,

“With a building of this significance, this kind of project can get extremely complicated. There is not one straight line in the whole place.”

well as to metaphorically recreate an iconic grand staircase removed decades ago. Most significantly, the team was to create a new public identity for the museum. That none of the work impacted the museum's operations was, in itself, a work of art.

Creating the vision is one thing. Imple-

construction manager Bovis Lend Lease LMB Inc. explored strategies for providing temporary shoring even a year before construction started on the \$40 million job.

Dismissed as impossible or prohibitively expensive by other contractors, Nabco Construction Services – through extensive field investigations – finally devised a

shoring scheme. Requiring the cooperation of the steel erector, it called for the installation of needle beams from below, through the existing floor structure and within a narrow 24-in. space between the bearing wall and exterior partition. The plan also called for the sequenced installation of permanent structural steel so that the temporary shoring never carried the entire load.

In similarly creative fashion, the team also addressed a concern that the shoring scheme had created about the stability of the terra cotta floor structure on the museum's third level. It opened the floor to allow access to the area, removing a >>