

2005 AIA/ALA Library Building Awards

Charles Forrest

Every other year, the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA) sponsor a joint award program to encourage excellence in the architectural design and planning of libraries. Awards are given for distinguished accomplishment in library architecture by an architect licensed in the United States, for any library in the United States or abroad. The libraries may be built anywhere in the world, and for this biennial, must have been completed since December 1, 1998. Awards may be given for new buildings, additions, renovations, restorations, conversion to library use, or interior design and refurbishing.

During the week after the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, the 22nd Library Building Awards jury convened at AIA headquarters in Washington, D.C., for two intense days of review and discussion. Consisting of three librarians and three architects, the jury included Charles Forrest, ALA, Emory University, Atlanta; Sheila Kennedy, AIA, Kennedy and Violich Architecture, Ltd., Boston; Anne Larsen, ALA, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Boston; Michael Mills, Fellow, American Institute of Architects (FAIA), jury chair, Ford, Farewell, Mills & Gatsch, Princeton, N.J.; Jeffrey Scherer, FAIA, Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle, Ltd., Minneapolis, Minn.; and Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory, ALA, Sno-Isle Library System, Marysville, Wash.

All six jurors reviewed each of the nearly one hundred and twenty projects submitted. This year's submissions represented an impressive range of library types and sizes, incorporating atriums, coffee shops, and fireplaces and employing bold color palettes, striking design themes, and a strong "wow" factor. Representing more than 5.5 million square feet of new and renovated library space, a combined capacity in excess of 14 million volumes, and more than 33,000 user seats, this year's

projects built, expanded, or renovated handsome, inviting, and functional spaces for more than 10 million library users.

"We reviewed a very impressive and diverse array of projects at all scales, from the largest civic landmarks, to college and university libraries, to special purpose archives, to branch community libraries. The geographic distribution was broad and representative of all areas of the United States," observed jury chair Michael Mills.

The jury's work was challenging, and informed by a lively, ongoing conversation on library design and purpose. "The final selection reflected the range of scales and types of library projects that communities are facing across America. The jury, likewise, represented the breadth of talent focusing on these libraries . . . I enjoyed the intellectual discourse and selection process," commented architect juror Jeff Scherer.

The 2005 AIA/ALA Library Building Awards honor eight very different projects, ranging in size from an architecture school library to the central facility for a major city. All share successful resolution of their patrons' needs into harmonious and beautiful designs. The final awards represent a strong consensus among the jurors of the finest all-around projects submitted.

"I think that the joint awards program represents a significant cooperative effort between the American Library Association and the American Institute of Architects, which mirrors the successful collaboration of the architects and library professionals in the production of these exemplary projects," Mills concluded.

Charles Forrest (libcgf@emory.edu) is Director, Library Planning at Emory University, Atlanta, and a library juror for the 2005 AIA/ALA Library Building Awards.

The AIA/ALA Library Buildings Awards Committee: Behind the Scenes

Jim Kennedy, University Librarian, Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa, and member of this year's Library Building Awards Committee

In June 1963, members convened for what was to become the American Institute of Architects/American Library Association (AIA/ALA) Library Buildings Awards. The award was presented biannually or annually until 1983, when it settled into its current two-year cycle.

The LAMA BES Library Building Awards Committee is charged to administer the joint AIA/ALA awards program, to interpret and publicize the results to the library profession, and to assist in the selection and preparation of award jurors. This year's Library Buildings

Awards Committee, chaired by Beth Babikow, with committee members Dottie Pearson, Janet Hurlbert, Kathryn O'Gorman, Kay Johnson, Melissa Carr, and Jim Kennedy, is to be commended for planning and implementing a very successful event.

Librarians, trustees, and architects are encouraged to enter the Library Building Awards competition. The next awards ceremony will take place in Washington, D.C., in June 2007.

Arcadia University Landman Library, Glenside, Pa. Designed by R. M. Kliment and Frances Halsband Architects

This design, in response to a competition for an addition to a university library, placed a new wing at the south face of the existing library. The resulting new, curved limestone building forms a distinctive presence at the heart of the campus and accommodates 150,000 volumes; a multimedia collection; the college's archives; study seating for 300 in reading rooms, carrels, and groups rooms; multimedia classrooms; and the trustees room. The library strives to provide a variety of spaces and places for reading and study, with controlled daylighting and campus views, including a two-story-high reading room on the second floor that extends the full width of the building and looks out over the campus green. The circulating collection, housed on three floors in the older portion of the building, is adjacent to the study areas and a small café.

"Everyone should have such dramatic before-and-after photos! More than an addition, it's a transformation. It gives a resolution to the campus green, lending it gravi-



tas. The curving facade is a dramatic and elegant gesture, with a degree of restraint—the limestone is a traditional, solid material but with a modern flair. The college is to be congratulated for choosing not to tear down the existing library—they had the imagination to rescue the building and bring it into the twenty-first century."

Category:	Addition/Renovation
Project:	Arcadia University Landman Library
Location:	450 S. Easton Rd Glenside, PA 19038
Client:	Arcadia University
Architect:	R. M. Kliment and Frances Halsband Architects, New York
Library (system) director:	Charles Myers
Completion date:	2004
Gross square footage:	52,200
Volume capacity:	177,500 volumes
Seating capacity:	420
Service pop.:	3,200
Budget:	\$10.5 million
Photographer:	Cervin Robinson



The Georgia Archives, Morrow. Designed by Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum

A highly specialized government entity, quartered in seventeen stories of a dark, monolithic building in Atlanta, asked the architects to create a new building that would redefine the visibility of their mission to the public. The architects' first major intention was to design around how the organization works. On a separate but parallel track, the second major intention centered on designing for how visitors are received and screened for security purposes and how they may enjoy the education, research, and cultural opportunities presented. Operations and public access are designed to be separate, meeting only at specific, secure points. To supplement this technically rigorous program, the architects sited the building to preserve existing stands of trees and the site's natural contours. Additionally important is the building's pervasive natural light, which has been tempered with high-performance



glass to eliminate UV penetration, sunscreens, and porches.

"Takes the hermetic archival library and turns it inside out—everyone who enters can see how the building functions. It establishes an invitation to the public to see their historic resources, and promotes a positive dialogue between past and future. It sits on the site very well, clearly brings the outside in, and offers great staff resources."



Category:	New construction
Project:	The Georgia Archives
Location:	5800 Jonesboro Rd., Morrow, GA 30260
Client:	Development Authority of Clayton County
Architect:	Hellmuth Obata + Kassabaum, Atlanta
Library (system) director:	David Carmicheal
Completion date:	2003
Gross square footage:	172,000
Volume capacity:	257,000 cubic feet
Seating capacity:	168
Service pop.:	State of Georgia
Budget:	\$21 million
Photographer:	Timothy Hursley (top) Gabriel Benzer (left)

**Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library
Renovation, Cambridge, Mass. Designed
by Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture &
Engineering PC**

This 1915 library, designed by Horace Trumbauer, sits at the geographical and intellectual heart of Harvard University. In renewing the building for the twenty-first century, the project called for a renovation that would “simultaneously redefine the academic research library in programmatic and technical terms without losing the aura, comfort, and connection to tradition.” The first phase of the project entailed upgrading and modernizing the building system infrastructure and the original ten-floor, self-supporting stack structure and library support spaces. New systems were threaded through the stacks, and the architects found space within two large light wells for new mechanical space, staff work areas, and two skylighted reading rooms. The second phase involved restoration of the historic public and reading spaces, in which existing features and room finishes were preserved whenever possible.

“A very deft and respectful project that has undone a lot of disrespect done to the building over the years. Subtle, but with a dramatic appropriation of new space in the courtyards around the rotunda. Can serve as a model for this type of adaptive reuse of an existing historical structure. A masterful job; they made it look easy.”



Category:	Renovation
Project:	Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library Renovation
Location:	Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138
Client:	Harvard University
Architect:	Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture & Engineering PC, Boston
Library (system) director:	Nancy Cline
Completion date:	2004
Gross square footage:	320,000
Volume capacity:	3.5 million
Seating capacity:	772
Service pop.:	8,000
Budget:	undisclosed
Photographer:	Peter Aaron/ESTO Photographics



**Issaquah (Wash.)
Public Library. Designed by
Bohlin Cywinski Jackson**

This new, 15,000-square-foot library offers its hometown an expansion and modernization of library services in a more prominent and centralized location in the historic downtown core. The cedar-sided structure used an exaggerated building height to meet both the library's programming needs of one level and the city code's call for multifamily urban structures. A trellis and canopies help maintain human scale at the street level. On the corner of the site is a large covered area, or agora, that serves as a sheltered gathering place and marks the entrance to the building. Activity in the library's multipurpose room, adjacent to the agora, is visible to the street. Doors open to the outside for special events. Entering the building from the agora, one passes through a wood-lined lobby and under a pair of tilted columns into the main space. Additional round columns taper slightly as they rise to meet the wood-lined ceiling. Light filters in the clerestory windows to highlight



a delicate metal truss at the spine of the building.

"Library as lodge. Local vernacular architecture that is very much of its place, with a great reading room that is a simple and elegant solution. Effectively addresses the program requirements for a branch library—inviting and cozy, you go there for a sense of community. Proves that libraries can succeed at every scale."

Category:	New construction
Project:	Issaquah Public Library
Location:	10 W. Sunset Way, Issaquah, WA 98027
Client:	King County Library System
Architect:	Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, Seattle
Library (system) director:	Bill Ptacek
Completion date:	2001
Gross square footage:	28,000
Volume capacity:	124,000
Seating capacity:	117
Service pop.:	75,000
Budget:	\$4.1 million
Photographer:	Fred Housel



Austin E. Knowlton School of Architecture Library—The Ohio State University, Columbus. Designed by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects with associate architect Wandel and Schnell Architects

When considering this library as part of the program for their school of architecture, the faculty wanted to create an information and knowledge resource that also could serve as a space away from the work environment of the design studios. This two-story glass-box, book-lined room accommodates 30,000 volumes and seating for 70 people in 40 table seats and 30 lounge chairs—each designed by a famous architect or designer. The library has an ample circulation desk with a closed reserve area, staff offices, workroom and storeroom, copy room, reference and journal areas, digital library, and rare book room. With reading rooms at either end—and library services in the middle—the space allows staff to interact easily with the users and maintain control of the space. Located at the end of the building's circulation system, overlooking a roof garden, the library is both very visible and removed from the major action of the building. As a small indication of the library's success, it drew more than 20,000 visitors in



its first three months of operation while serving a population of 750.

“A little jewel box, and a striking example of architecture integrated with library design. The clarity and scale of the plan exemplify a smaller project where the space issues are solved in an innovative way. Not a typical library, but it fits in that context, and it works in the larger facility—the library reflects the customer.”

Category:	New construction
Project:	Austin E. Knowlton School of Architecture Library, The Ohio State University
Location:	275 W. Woodruff Ave. Columbus, OH 43210-1138
Client:	The Ohio State University Austin E. Knowlton School of Architecture
Architect:	Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects with associate architect Wandel and Schnell Architects
Library (system) director:	Jane McMaster
Completion date:	2004
Gross square footage:	19,200
Volume capacity:	30,000
Seating capacity:	78
Service pop.:	750
Budget:	\$3.2 million
Photographer:	Timothy Hursley



Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Brookline. Designed by Loysen + Kreuthmeier Architects

The architects were charged with turning a nondescript, two-story concrete block with a zero lot line into a dynamic storefront library. The program called for doubling the library's space, which included expanding the children's department and adding an Internet café, popular library, and "self-help" stations. Daylighting the windowless building proved the greatest design challenge, the architects said. A new interior lining peels away from the rigid concrete shell and, with the addition of a light wall, allows natural light from skylights and clerestories to penetrate the spaces. To transform the low-ceiling basement into a delightful children's library, plaster ceilings tilt fancifully to fit HVAC equipment. Although the library has doubled in size, the new building, which has applied for LEED certification from the U.S. Green Buildings Council, has a zero increase in energy consumption over the old building.



"Great example of a small-scale project with a lot of invention, yet remaining sensitive to the program requirements. The circulation desk and gathering space are very fresh. Daylighting is carefully inserted in a simple but effective way. Great scale for an urban project—the information marquee is a witty and surprising element on the street."

Category:	Renovation
Project:	Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Brookline
Location:	708 Brookline Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15226
Client:	Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Architect:	Loysen + Kreuthmeier Architects, Pittsburgh, PA
Library (system) director:	Herb Elish
Completion date:	2004
Gross square footage:	12,418
Volume capacity:	38,000
Seating capacity:	83
Service pop.:	4,000 (before renovation)
Budget:	\$2.9 million
Photographer:	Courtesy of the architect



Salt Lake City Public Library.
Designed by VCBO Architecture LLC,
with design architect Moshe Safdie
and Associates

This 200,000-square-foot facility is part of an ambitious program by the library to double its space for collections, establish a landmark in the city's civic core, and create a lively interactive public space currently missing in the downtown area. The new library features a triangular main building, an adjacent rectangular administration building, a glass-enclosed urban room, and a public piazza. Its reading galleries, which replace the traditional formal reading room, accommodate the community of readers in intimate spaces that are private yet visually connected to magnificent exterior views. The library's sloped and curving wall has become an icon for the city, and the shops and food establishments at its base weave the site together. The wall also defines a connection to the city's former library, which will become an arts and science center. The library's roof garden offers spectacular views of the city and surrounding mountains. The library also is a 2004 national AIA Honor Award for Architecture recipient.

"The library as a grand civic project to complete the downtown square. The scale of the project matches the



scale of the city and landscape. The organization of the space is about movement and locational variation, and manages to create public spaces that are still intimate, in spite of the scale. Wayfinding and intuitive organization is nicely done—the atrium gives a constant point of reference. The interweaving of public and private spaces is key—acknowledging the importance of community exchange is a powerful statement."

Category:	New construction
Project:	Salt Lake City Public Library
Location:	210 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84114
Client:	Salt Lake City Public Library
Architect:	VCBO Architecture LLC, Salt Lake City, UT, with design architect Moshe Safdie and Associates, Somerville, MA 02143
Library (system) director:	Nancy Tessman
Completion date:	2003
Gross square footage:	240,000
Volume capacity:	700,000
Seating capacity:	975
Service pop.:	918,280 (greater Salt Lake City area)
Budget:	\$92 million
Photographer:	Timothy Hursley



Seattle Central Library. Designed by a joint venture of OMA/LMN (Office for Metropolitan Architecture and LMN Architects)

The design goal for this library was to redefine the library as an institution no longer exclusively dedicated to the book, but as an information story in which all forms of media—new and old—are presented equally and legibly. Unlike traditional libraries, Seattle Central Library is organized into spatial compartments that are dedicated to and equipped for specific duties. Each platform is a programmatic cluster that is architecturally defined and equipped for maximum performance. The spaces between the platforms function as trading floors where librarians inform and stimulate. The library's unique book spiral addresses the ongoing problem of subject classification. For example, in 1920 the library had no classification for computer science, but by the early 1990s the section had exploded. Using the Dewey Decimal System, the architects arranged the collection in a continuous ribbon—running from “000” to “999”—the subjects form a coexistence that approaches the organic. Each evolves relative to the others, occupying more or less space on the ribbon, but never forcing a rupture. The library also garnered a 2005 national AIA Honor Award for Architecture.



“It brings a lot of energy to a downtown library with an incredible street presence and great good will for the library’s community. Its continuous display of books sets the stage for rethinking how books can be used in relation to other information technologies in completely different ways. Demonstrates that a program-driven project can give great results—it takes courage and commitment on a grand scale, from both the architect and the city.”

Category:	New construction
Project:	Seattle Public Library
Location:	1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104
Client:	Seattle Public Library
Architect:	OMA/LMN a joint venture (Office for Metropolitan Architecture/LMN Architects)
Library (system) director:	Deborah L. Jacobs
Completion date:	2004
Gross square footage:	400,000
Volume capacity:	1.5 million
Seating capacity:	1,321
Service pop.:	563,400
Budget:	\$155 million
Photographer:	Pragnesh Parikh

