



St. Louis Public Library's Central Library Project Lookbook



When a library as famous and well visited as the St. Louis Central Library (St Louis, MO) undergoes a massive renovation, great care and consideration must go into the planning process. The iconic building was constructed in 1912 based on the Italian Renaissance style and was frequently visited by people from all over the world. But the historic majesty of the structure could not make up for the lack of modern amenities necessary for a library to thrive in the 21st century.

There were several challenges that needed to be addressed as the planning began. There was an absence of technology integration in the building, as well as a lack of communal spaces for patrons to use for study and collaboration. Areas that have become essential to a library's success as a community resource, like computer labs, ten spaces and even meeting rooms, were missing from St. Louis Public Library's Central Library.

ON-SITE SOLUTIONS | HIGH-DENSITY MOBILE



Spacesaver mechanical assist high-density mobile shelving. The library repurposed some of the original glass floor tiles and used them as a wall on the ground level. The use of high-density mobile shelving enabled the library to consolidate the collection from their seven-tiered central system onto just three interior mezzanine-like floors, plus the basement level of the library. Not only does the new stack space meet fire and seismic codes, it is brighter and easier to navigate.



ON-SITE SOLUTIONS | STATIC SHELVING



LED lighting was installed onto the Spacesaver cantilever-shelving units throughout many areas of the library, including the fine arts, science and technology and rare books rooms. This required a special base for the cantilever units onto which the vertical lighting fixtures could be affixed. Custom glass end panels were used in the areas with LED lighting integrated into the shelving. The glass panels are subsequently illuminated – making the stacks look almost like works of art themselves, and create a design feature unique to the St. Louis Central Library.



ON-SITE SOLUTIONS | STATIC SHELVING



Special red, acrylic end panels were used on the cantilever-shelving units in the showcase space on the main level of the library called The Center for the Reader.

Glass end panels were also installed on the cantilever shelving used in the media room. Because these cantilever shelves were designed with pullout drawers to store disks and other media like DVDs, no lighting was integrated.



ON-SITE SOLUTIONS | ROLLING CARTS



In many of the reading rooms, the original bookcases lining the walls were restored and put to use, but in some cases the wooden shelves were cracked or damaged. Shelves were “harvested” from the Government, Business Law & Languages room and used to fill any gaps. Spacesaver then provided metal cantilever shelving to sit inside the original wooden cubbies.



ON-SITE SOLUTIONS | ROLLING CARTS



In the children's area, cantilever shelving was outfitted with a custom base, wrapped in solid surface and then placed on heavy-duty casters so that the area is completely reconfigurable on the fly by the library staff.



OFF-SITE SOLUTIONS | HIGH-DENSITY MOBILE



A high-density mobile storage system is also installed in the off-site storage facility mainly used for storage of low-use material and research that is located just three blocks from the main library building.

This system is made up of cantilever shelving and half-height laminate end panels. As a closed access building, the units could be functional vs. Highly aesthetic. This helped reduce costs while still maximizing the available space.



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OFF-SITE SOLUTIONS | STATIC SHELVING



There is also static cantilever shelving installed in the off-site storage facility on the first and second floor. Though mobile was used on the lower level, only static could be installed on the higher floors due to load capacity. End panels were omitted altogether to save on costs—again, since this is a private facility.

The shelves were originally designed to be seven tiers high, but due to the size and shape of the books stored in this facility the movers adjusted the shelves to be six tiers high as they completed the move.



REPURPOSED SPACES |



The high-density mobile storage used throughout the library and off-site helped open up existing spaces in the building for new functions. There is now a teen room, which incorporates study areas, lounge seating, and even a small theater-like TV viewing area.

The library also added a café, a book club meeting room, and a studio for movie, music and video game access. A stunning addition to the library was a full size auditorium for concerts and live theater. This space is located on the basement level, and replaced an old coal bin.



AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- **2013 Library Building Award** presented by the American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- **Popular Choice Winner of the Architizer's People's A+ Choice Award of Libraries**
- **Most Enhanced Awards for 2013** presented by Landmarks Association of St. Louis
- **ALIVE Magazine's 2013 Hot List Best New Cultural Venue Award**
- **Saint Louis CNR (Construction News and Review) Finishing Touch Awards**
- **National Award of Merit for its Revitalization Exterior Lighting** presented by an online panel of lighting designers and architects.



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