Columbus Metropolitan Library Whitehall Branch

The new Whitehall Library is a 19,500 square foot new branch library located on 3 acres along a main arterial road in a suburban community in Columbus. The building was conceived as a new generation library, going beyond the traditional role as a repository of books and serving as a vital community center, a technological portal to information and a source for lifelong learning.

The design goals are simple. The building should be inviting, accessible, transparent, open and flexible. This creates a hyper- legibility where building access, functions and wayfinding are simultaneously evident: an important attribute for a public building.

The single story, pedestrian-scaled structure is sited broadside to the main thoroughfare to the north. The gentle bow-shape of the building responds to the linear site and emphasizes the center entries. Exterior facades are composed of metal panels and storefront glazing with greater transparency at the public areas and lesser at staff and support areas.

The north pedestrian entry and south vehicular entry are each signified by a proscenium of terra cotta with views through each extending through the building. The entry sequence is defined by a compression created by the interior welcome zone that connects the entries and bisects the main public space.

The library's main public functions are defined by a large, rational, rectangular space accommodating a children’s area, teen area, commodity computing, book stacks and a quiet reading room. The simple configuration and a raised access floor throughout create maximum flexibility to respond easily and effectively to rapidly changing functional demands. The predominant light here is northern and reading-friendly.

The public space expands vertically with warped ceilings of exposed structural steel beams and opens to views of the meadow grass landscape. With these pastoral views and the more urban views of the busy street to the north, the library's connection to and identity with the community is made evident.

**Sustainability**

The project is expected to earn a LEED Silver certification with the following features:

- alternative transportation options (bus, auto, bicycle, pedestrian)
- conservation of remaining undeveloped site
- landscaping with water efficient, native plantings
- stormwater quality and quantity control
- daylighting, sun control louvers and fins
- low flow plumbing fixtures
- high-efficiency lighting and occupancy controls
- high-efficiency HVAC systems and controls
- furniture with recycled content and FSC wood
- low-emitting interior materials

Efficient exterior envelope assemblies, LED fixtures with daylighting controls, variable refrigerant flow mechanical systems and exhaust air energy recovery were utilized in making the project thirty-six percent more efficient than ASHRAE requirements (Baseline: 387,792 kWh; Project: 250,048 kWh).
EAST-WEST SECTION LOOKING NORTH