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Starr East Asian Library



STARR EAST ASIAN LIBRARY

New York, New York

2009

Renovation of a McKim Mead and White library. Reading room reorganized to better separate staff and public areas while increasing actual meeting zone where patrons and staff interact. Construction work consisted of electrical work, minor finishing, and substantial millwork, including circulation desk, bookcases, workstation table, and security enclosure. Construction Budget: \$720,000
Construction Complete 2009

Project Highlights

Redesign of the public areas of the reading room

Goals of the restoration are to

- Consolidate the reference, reserve, and circulation functions of the library.
 - Create a circulation desk that allows for more flexible staffing.
 - Create clearer zoning between public and staff areas.
 - Reconfigure the staff areas in a way that is more consistent with the axial spatial arrangement of the original McKim Mead & White design.
 - Millwork includes the 42 foot long circulation desk, centered on the entry cross-axis, many bookcases designed to blend in with the existing bookcases, new patron tables, and a new plinth for a World's Fair Japanese woodcarving (the 'Shrine') on the long axis.
 - The new circulation desk is sloped in cross-section to permit continuous access for both wheelchair and physically able patrons. The patron side profile of the desk is stepped and sloped in response to wheelchair clearances; the resulting setbacks create a satisfying play of shadow in the neoclassical setting.
 - All positions in both the staff and the public areas are designed for changeable wiring, easily reconfigurable for future information technologies.
 - Lighting provides workstation lighting through the use of concealed LED strips and general illumination of the library vault concealed in the tops of the new bookcases.
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- Careful editing out of anomalous subsequent incrustations to restore a prominent space to its full glory.
 - Incorporation of modern security systems while minimizing their visual impact on the library.
 - A flexible attitude towards the style of the new elements; whether visibly modern or repeating the style of the existing bookcases, the new additions work to reveal the centering beauty of the space.
 - Reorganized staff areas are more efficient, while providing a larger, more flexible public service



Model study of new bench



Daylight study



Rendering of reception desk









