
UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON

Architectural Description



W THE HARRY AND JEANETTE
EINBERG
MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Dear Members of the University Community:

As our new Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library approaches completion, I thought that you would enjoy a programmatic and architectural description of the building written by Richard J. Leonori, A.I.A., the project manager for Leung Hemmler Camayd, P.C.

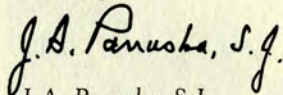
The architects relate the building compositionally to a symphony. "There is so much going on" that it takes time to understand fully.

The remarkable interior, not yet seen by most of you, merits a description by itself.

This new structure "centers" our campus, and nothing seems more suitable for this purpose than a library.

Enjoy.

Sincerely,



J.A. Panuska, S.J.

The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library

In the late 1980s the University of Scranton embarked on a campus expansion program, the heart of which centers around the new 80,000-square foot Weinberg Memorial Library designed by the architectural firm of Leung Hemmler Camayd, P.C.

The \$13.3 million library has a capacity to house 330,000 volumes and seats more than 700 users at closed and open study carrels and tables. Instruction and office spaces serve an additional 300 people.

In addition to accommodating the University's library collections and archives, the structure is a resource and information center linked to major libraries nationwide. The library incorporates open runs of conduit to address future technological improvements; expansion plans foresee an addition to the north side.

The library is the geographic and intellectual center of the campus; it is designed to function in that capacity both aesthetically and functionally. The building is L-shaped, allowing for the creation of a landscaped plaza between the library and the Gunster Student Center. In addition, the library steps back and away from the student center to maintain views and a sense of spaciousness. The north wing of the L houses stack/study spaces on all floors; the south wing accommodates a variety of public service and administrative functions.

The first floor includes circulation services, the Pro Deo et Universitate Room, a 12-station computer laboratory, study seating and three small-group study rooms. A basement story, accessible only to library personnel by a separate staff elevator, will serve as a book storage area containing compact, moveable stacks.

A monumental staircase to the second floor leads directly to the reference desk and collection, current periodicals, microforms, and interlibrary loan services. The third floor contains a technical services staff work area, two bibliographic instruction labs with a central audio-visual control room, and three small-group study rooms.

The special collections, archives and administrative offices are located on the fourth floor, along with a small conference room, a staff work area, four group study rooms and a specially designated quiet study area. The Heritage Room on the fifth floor overlooks both the campus and the community and features an art frieze depicting Scranton's heritage in art, science and religion.

Architectural Description

The building draws from and responds to its square, urban site. It takes all its colors, textures and materials from neighboring structures. The north wing housing the stacks and the mechanical spaces is rectangular in nature and the first-floor windows are surfaced in the University's characteristic orange iron-spot brick. Windows here are square and, to add detail and refine the wing's scale, a square grid of cast stone and black granite divides the brickwork. This wing, in its broadest outline, recalls the earlier buildings of the campus, such as St. Thomas Hall. In turn, a balance of symmetry is created between St. Thomas Hall and the stack wing of the library that gives prominence to the administrative area of the library.

In order to break down the mass of the five-story structure and to better differentiate the special nature of the administrative wing, that part of the building is clad in a light grey cast stone panel. The wing features limestone-colored cast stone cornices and balusters. These materials are reminiscent of the buildings and the wall of the Scranton Estate. A grid of University brick and black granite continues the square-grid theme of the stack wing in a complementary way.

This wing is more sculptural in nature, and the cubic form of the wing is eroded at the four corners and at the first two floors. A colonnaded area is formed that allows for covered entries at both the Monroe Avenue and plaza sides. The most prominent grade level feature is the semi-circular, two-story glass-walled Pro Deo et Universitate Room, which is open 24 hours. This transparent volume captures space that is both inside and out of the building's main confines. The exterior skin of the wing continues behind the glass to form interior walls to deliberately create a space that belongs ambiguously to both the building and to the Commons. During the hours of its nighttime operation, the Pro Deo Room will create a beacon at the heart of the campus, drawing students to its function and providing a bright and secure setting for nighttime study.

The areas between the brick wing and the cast stone wing are recessed and clad in spandrel glass to separate the two volumes visually. The fifth floor at both wings is recessed from the face of the building and given a different surface treatment to

visually lower the structure. The brick and cast stone areas of the building correspond roughly in height to the neighboring Gunster Center and St. Thomas Hall. The dark grey fifth floor becomes not unlike the mansarded top floor of The Estate and is treated as a penthouse. Here the Heritage Room features a curved translucent roof that at night will reinforce the beacon concept for the building. The roof of the fourth level outside the reading room is paved and landscaped to create a formal outdoor garden with spectacular views of both the campus and the city. This green space in the air attempts to replace the landscaped area lost at grade level.

The building incorporates a number of historic devices to soften the effect of its compositional abstraction, further break down the monumental scale of the building and bring about the feeling of traditional academic settings. Incorporated are cast stone Gothic arches at the entries, carved memorial inscriptions, cast stone mullions at the bay of the Pro Deo Room, pierced balusters at the roof garden and the strategically placed, rotated and banded chimneys. These items pay tribute to the great Collegiate Gothic structures of the past and endeavor to prevent the building from appearing too modern or too corporate.

The building incorporates a number of themes and sub-themes based on the square. The site, the structural grid, the windows, and the open plaza are square; the decorative treatment of the skin is a square grid. A sub-theme is the diamond, or rotated square. That motif can be seen in the chimneys, the carpet patterns, the reference and circulation desks, and the planted area of the plaza. The building articulates, but then joins, its various elements to create a visual dialogue that allows for multiple interpretations.

All told, the building accommodates a complex and varied program of spaces and functions on a very tight site. The building is so central that it needs to reconcile all the buildings around it; the building's mass is so large that, visually, it needs to be broken down. The library makes every effort to blend and merge into its context, appearing to be several buildings rather than one, joining to and continuing a stone wall at the plaza and creating a corner post at the neighboring tennis courts. The structure steps back at critical corners and at edges to minimize its mass. The architect's intentions are a humanized monumentality that is intellectually engaging while offering color, texture and some degree of visual comfort.

—Richard J. Leonori, A.I.A.

**UNIVERSITY OF
SCRANTON**
