



Project:

WAC Bennett Library - Main Floor Renewal

Library Name:

Simon Fraser
University Library

1. Describe the scope of the building project, and its major goals and objectives.

The WAC Bennett Library opened in 1965 as part of the original SFU campus complex on top of Burnaby Mountain. This project was the most significant renovation to the seven-story building in the last 17 years. A substantial portion of the Library's main floor was renovated, approximately 17,000 sq ft.

Goals of the renovation:

- Create a more welcoming and engaging entry façade for the Library, and enliven the Convocation Mall outside the Library, by enhancing the relationship between the two through improved visibility and flow
- Improve user experience and highlight high demand services by Integrating check-out, reference, and reserves into a single service location
- Increase student seating through the creation of a new lounge and reading area; ensure student requirements for comfortable seats, tables to work on, and power for devices are met
- Facilitate teaching and programming with a new Student Learning Commons and Library classroom/events room
- Expand the Student Learning Commons consultation area to meet student demand
- Increase visibility of Special Collections materials by locating new exhibition cabinets in a high traffic area
- Improve comfort for students and staff by upgrading climate control at the entrance
- Promote self-service, enhance convenience for faculty and students, and reduce repetitive transactions for staff by adding an automated book return at the entrance and intuitively located self-checkouts inside the Library
- Maintain full library operations during the renovation, including 24/7 openings for exam periods
- Honour the architecture of one of the original buildings on campus and a historically significant example of the Brutalist style, designed by Arthur Erickson and Geoffrey Massey, with Robert F. Harrison as architect



Before: View Upon Entry

2. Describe the involvement of library staff, board members, the community, or other official bodies in planning and design of the project.

The project was initiated in response to student demand for improvements to the Library. Student and Library User Surveys for the past several years had consistently identified the need for improvements to library facilities and comfort:

- Bennett Library was the fourth-highest student priority for building improvements at SFU, requiring more more/improved carrels, seating, study spaces and electrical outlets
- SFU Library fell most below user expectations in the Library as Place category, specifically by not providing a comfortable and inviting location that inspires study and learning

Library staff were involved at every stage of the project:

- A Task Group with membership representing all service points made the initial recommendations for improvement
- Staff were consulted throughout the concept planning and design development stages, and during the renovation whenever decisions which would impact them were required

Support for the project came from the Vice-President Research, the University Priorities Fund and Library endowments.

University Facilities championed the proposed project as meritorious, and once it was approved managed the project.



NEW :View Upon Entry

3. Comment on ways in which the project:

- a) made maximum and effective use of the building site

The renovation capitalized on the Library's central campus location by improving visibility and flow to the highly trafficked Convocation Mall. Where once shelves of laptops blocked the view, full-height windows welcome students in.

- b) made efficient use of internal space

By right-sizing Reserves, combining the Reference, Checkout and Reserves Desk into one, and eliminating the former Sorting Room, we were able to repurpose space to create a new classroom/programming room, expand consulting space, and maximize student study space.

- c) provided flexibility for future needs

Space is delineated using dividers and glass walls, which can be removed or moved in the future without damaging the building interior. Wireless is available throughout, with standard and USB power at every seat. Where possible furniture was chosen over purpose-built elements, to allow for ease of relocation.

- d) showed creativity and innovation

The use of a circular Service and Reserves area in the centre of the floor facilitated flow and complemented the very rectilinear architecture. Self-serve and service points were re-located to facilitate unmediated discovery and reduce confusion, for example the Service desk, book return, and self-checks. Glass walls contribute passive climate control at the entrance. Areas are dual or triple-purpose: the consulting/study area and the programming/class/study room.



NEW Learning and Events Room



EXPANDED Learning Commons Consultation

4. Evaluate how well initial goals and objectives were met.

Bright, inviting and comfortable – the WAC Bennett Library Main Floor Renewal is turning out just as planned. All of the project goals have been met, and some exceeded.



- New storefront windows open the Library up to the Convocation Mall to a degree that exceeded all expectations, welcoming students and satisfying the University's desire for a livelier Mall



- An integrated hub combining information and checkout services with reserves within a dramatic circular space at the centre of the main floor has eliminated user confusion formerly caused by multiple and hidden service points



- New student seats have exceeded our target of 100; overall the project added 220, some as consequential renovations on other floors, increasing student seating in the building by over 17%



- Students are delighted by the new lounges with comfortable seating, good sized tables and power at every seat



- The new Learning and Events room is a success and is being used daily by the Student Learning Commons for teaching, after hours as study space, and for public events such as the recent Freedom to Read Week reading by Raziel Reid



- The expanded and enhanced Student Learning Commons consultation area is fully utilized during consultation times, and doubles as a popular study space in the evening



- State of the art museum cabinets allow Special Collections to display rare materials safely and securely in a highly visible location.



- Improved climate control via heat curtains and double-glazed windows mean staff and students are more comfortable, and allows areas near the entrance to be used effectively



- The automated book return and additional self-checks save both user and staff time, and use of both is increasing steadily



- The Library remained fully operational throughout the renovation, thanks to careful staging, and opened 24/7 during exams



- New areas are delineated by dividers or glass walls, maintaining the long vistas and allowing the original heritage interior to shine

5. Document any community response to the project.

Students have responded enthusiastically to the renovations on Twitter:

- Outlets, cozy chairs, and collaborative spaces as far as the eye can see! Loving the reno progress at @sfu_library. (Tweet Mar 13 2014)
- Ecstatic about the newly powered work stations @ sfu library with 4USB slots and 2 outlets PER work stn. (Tweet Mar 20 2014)
- Love the @sfu_library new check-in system. Convenient and fancy! (Tweet Jan 02 2014)

In addition, we interviewed students and asked why they had chosen to study in the newly renovated space:

- First reason again was its “really” comfortable furniture compared to other places on-campus. Users specifically liked the chairs and movable tables.
- Second was power: The comfortable seating was made perfect by power outlets; having plugs everywhere was “definitely a big bonus” and they kept mentioning outlets as an advantage.
- According to users, the space has a “wonderful ambiance” and a “community vibe” to it. It has certain elements which make it feel like home including the fireplace, sofas and an open plan, and at the same time it has a serious vibe as one wants “to sit here and get work done”.
- Users made mention of the fact that the open plan makes it easier to see people around working (something they don’t have at home) and “even though you aren’t studying with other people, just seeing other people studying makes you focus more on what you’re supposed to do” (peer pressure to study).
- Apart from being new, modern, warm, relaxing, bright, colorful, cheerful and welcoming (keywords used by to describe the space), they liked the fact that the Lounge is accessible – conveniently located next to the entrance and close to other amenities such as the front desk, printers, washrooms, the bus stop, Starbucks, and West Mall Centre.
- Students reported more studying and better learning and see these as one of the ways study spaces like the lounge can affect their university experience: they get more work done and feel good about themselves!



NEW Study Area



NEW Student Lounge

SFU News included an article on the renovation April 20, 2014:

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W.A.C. Bennett Library party celebrates 'new front door'



SFU Library has completed an extensive renovation of the main (third) floor of its Burnaby campus W.A.C. Bennett Library — and library staff are inviting the university community to help them celebrate on Wednesday, May 7, from 3-5 p.m.

The Open Spaces! Bright Ideas! grand opening will feature an official welcome, cake, ribbon-cutting ceremony and opportunities to explore the revitalized space, try out new services, view exhibits and lounge on the cozy seating. Students can also enter to win an iPad Mini and other prizes by completing entertaining activities. For more details, visit <http://at.sfu.ca/LpiFiz>.

The new features on the main floor include an integrated hub combining information and checkout services with reserves within a dramatic circular space at the centre of the main floor. The library entrance was also renovated to provide better climate control and integration with Convocation Mall, and space for an automated book return. The revitalized space also encompasses a new Learning and Events room, student lounge, and enhanced Student Learning Commons consultation space.

"We're delighted with the results," says Natalie Gick, the associate university librarian for adminis-

trative services who managed the project, which was completed on time and on budget.

"This is essentially our new front door and we wanted the space to be as bright, inviting and comfortable as possible, filled with innovative places to conduct research and study in as well as areas for exchange, collaboration and quiet contemplation.

"It's been completely revitalized to accommodate the contemporary use of library collections for teaching and research, the rapid growth in collaborative studies, SFU's primary focus on student, research and community engagement, and the central role of digital technology in all university activities."

The brightly lit entrance both draws people in and enlivens the outside Convocation Mall, says Gick. "Spacious study lounges with modern, comfortable furniture and multiple power outlets stretch on either side of the entrance. And services—both high-tech self-serve options and from librarians and assistants—are readily available, front and centre."

Also visible from the entrance is the glass walled "jewel box" learning space for writing, learning and library workshops and events showcasing the university's connections between learning, research and community.

Revitalizing the W.A.C. Bennett Library is a key element of the SFU Library's current strategic plan and a centerpiece of its fundraising priorities.

<http://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2014/w-a-c--bennett-library-party-celebrates-new-front-door.html>



NEW Book Drop



Before



NEW Main Entrance - Interior



Before



NEW Study Area



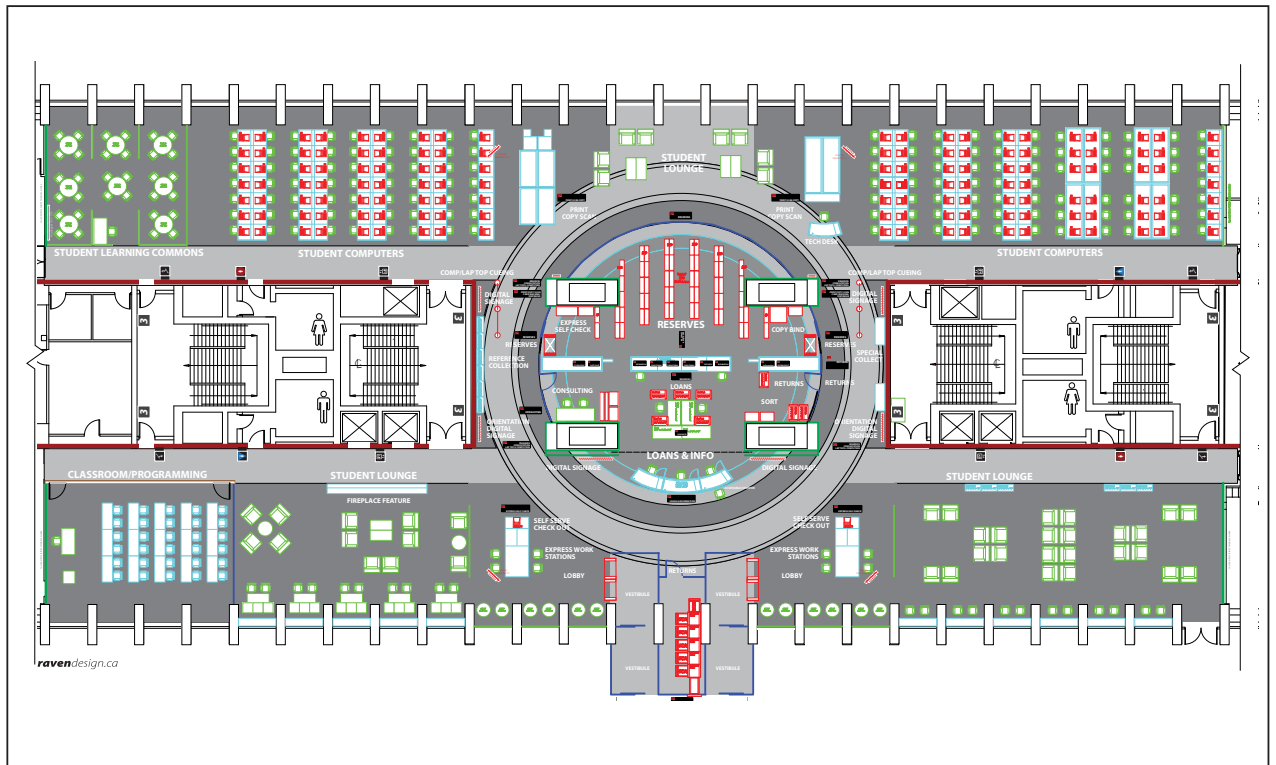
BEFORE



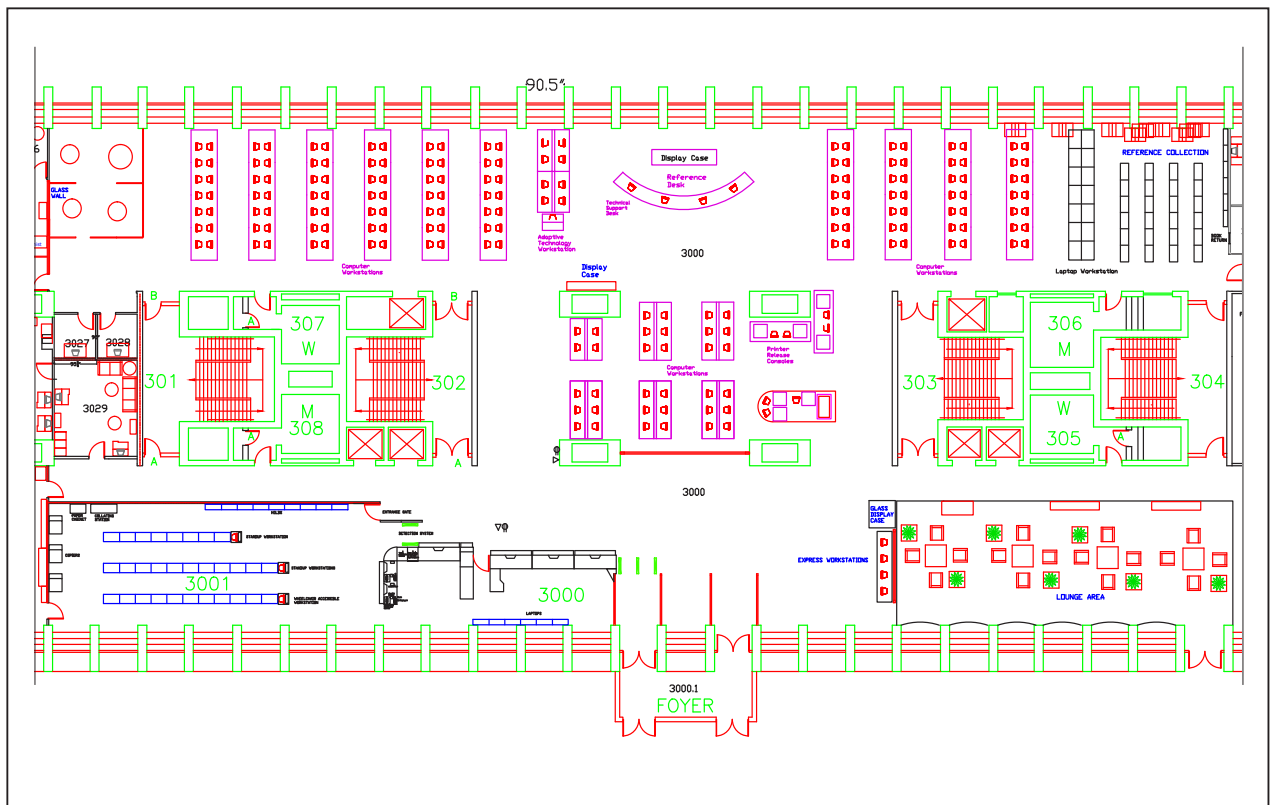
NEW Reserves Stacks



Before



NEW Floor plan



Before