
Lakewood Public Library: A Classic Goes Green Builders Exchange Magazine (June 2008)

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Lakewood Public Library

A CLASSIC goes green

Reusing existing space

Daylighting

Energy efficiency page 12

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Green design

Classically sustainable

A classic Carnegie library expands to a new life as a civic icon

BY TODD WILLIAMS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHOOTING STAR



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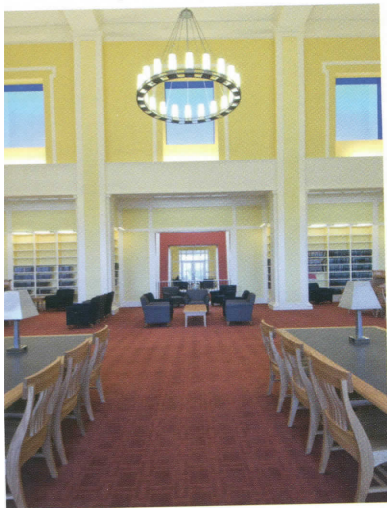
The exterior of the new Lakewood Library keeps classical columns and a splendid exterior treatment.

Since 1916, Lakewood Public Library has been faithfully serving the community from its grand structure on Detroit Avenue. A prime example of the Carnegie Library architectural style, the Lakewood facility was built with a \$50,000 grant from the industrial magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie.

After 90 years of service and being remodeled four times, the library's board of trustees made the decision to renovate and expand the original 55,000-sf building to 93,000-sf. The two-phase, \$17.5 million project designed by noted library architects Robert A.M. Stern of New York, draws on modern sustainable energy techniques as well as traditional European functional approaches to buildings and energy consumption.

He wrote the book

Alexander P. Lamis, managing partner with Stern Architects, a "modern traditionalist designer," was able to incorporate modern technology in both the renovation and the expansion phases without compromising the library's historic Carnegie look and soul. In fact, Lamis often looks to the past in order to find sustainable design elements for the present.



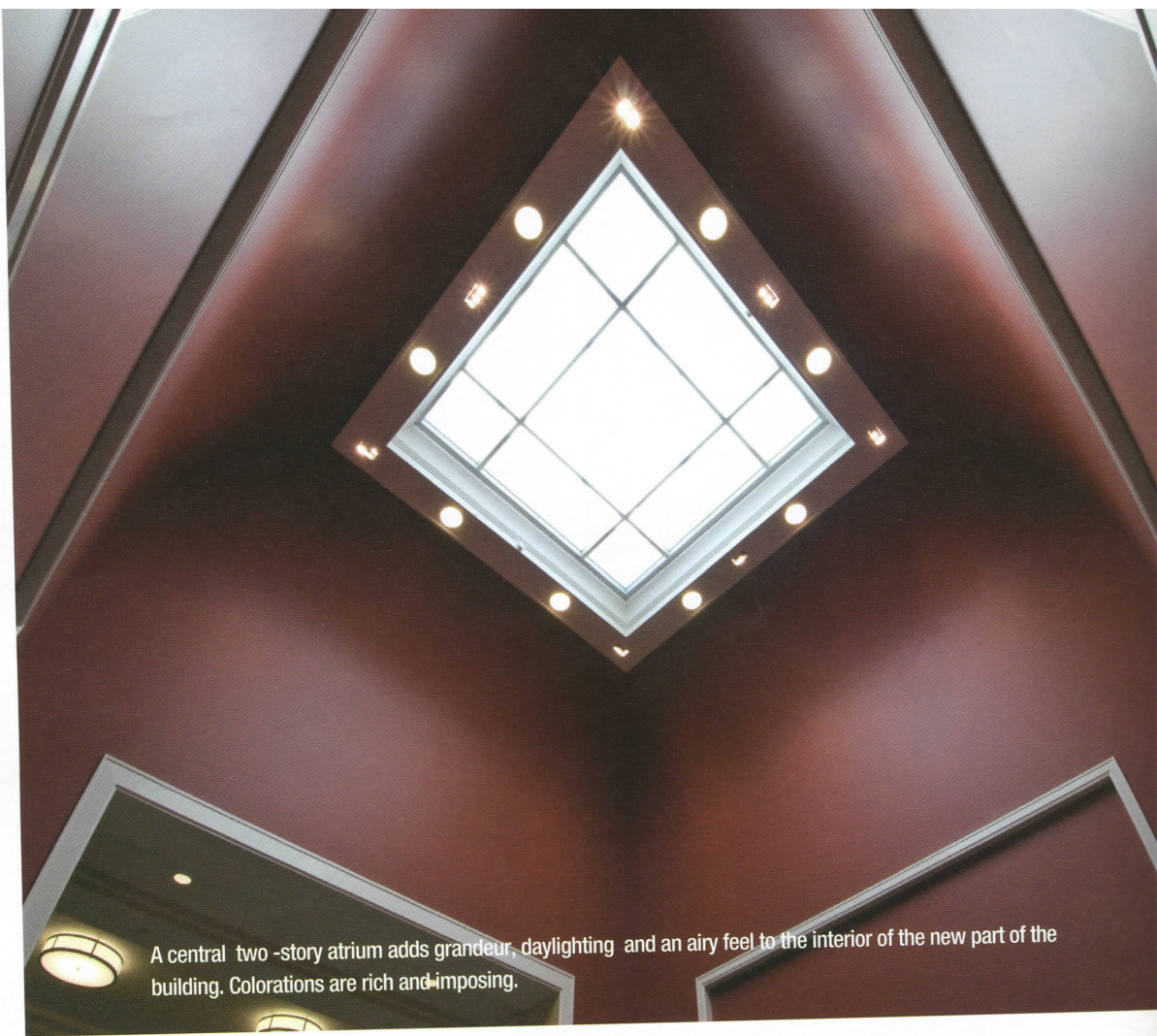
The Grand Reading Room is a favorite area in the new library, impressive but comfy.

For instance, the author of *Greening the Library: An Overview of Sustainable Design*, has studied the top plans of great 19th century libraries such as the Boston Public Library, completed in 1895, and the New York Public Library, finished in 1911, to glean sustainable design features as applicable to his modern designs.

For example, Lamis sees the use of natural light and rectangular floor plates as basic elements in sustainable library design. "In a rectangular building, it is preferable for a long axis to run in an east-west direction. This is because it is more difficult to control east light in the morning and west light in the afternoon than to control north

and south light, which trace symmetrical arches through the day," Lamis explains. He notes that the Lakewood Public Library fits neatly into the criteria for sustainable design because of its east-west orientation on Detroit.

Just like traditional builders and designers, Lamis uses large windows and skylights to provide a natural lighting environment that mirrors the great libraries of the past. To this end, there are two skylights along the east-west corridor.



A central two-story atrium adds grandeur, daylighting and an airy feel to the interior of the new part of the building. Colorations are rich and imposing.

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The Grand Reading Room is set off by a pair of murals showing Lakewood as a city of commerce and of residences. Centrally located, the room contains a variety of workspaces and comfortable sitting areas. Light is abundant throughout.

These skylights span the atrium of the new building of the library to the new grand stairwell (note: the old staircase had been removed during a prior renovation) in the renovated structure, allowing natural light to penetrate the center of the library.

CBLH Design was selected as the associate architect to work with Stern's office to prepare the construction documents and provide construction administration, according to CBLH principal Marc Bittinger, AIA. "We were very diligent in our efforts to interpret the design intent," he says. "Today's technology of on-line document sharing of information made the coordination of drawings more seamless. Each detail could be reviewed and updated to the team's satisfaction."

Energizing

An extensive, programmable occupancy sensor system controls lighting in many areas of the library, significantly reducing energy consumption. Photo sensors throughout the structure read the amount of natural light



Skylights and interior windows bring daylighting into all areas of the building.

coming into the building and adjust the levels of artificial light accordingly, he explains.

Other lighting features in the building, according to Mark Panzica, of construction manager Panzica Construction Co., include the use of high efficiency, T-8 fluorescent lamps containing over 70% less mercury than the standard lamp as well as high-efficiency electronic lamp ballasts.

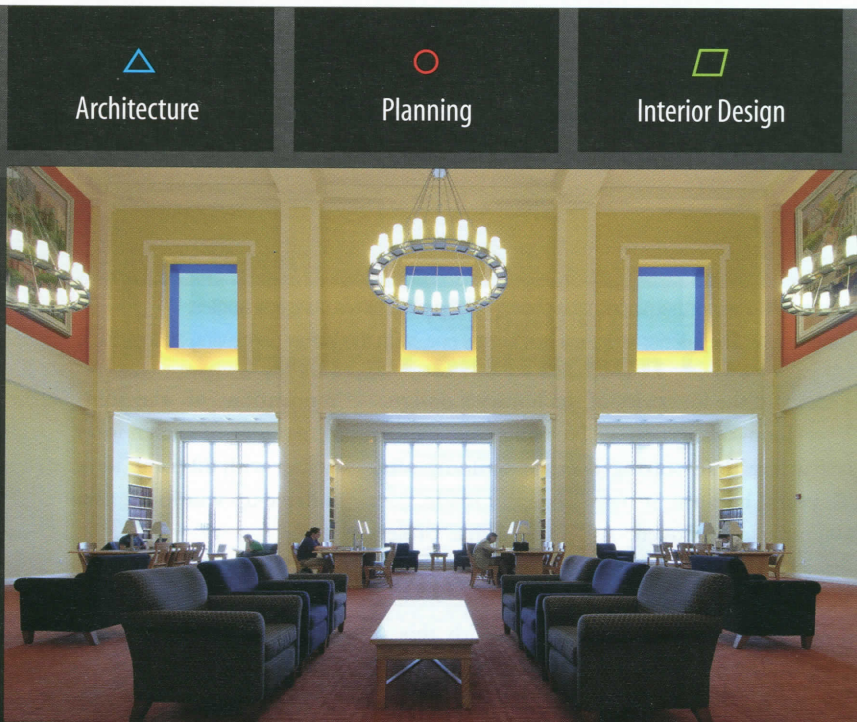
According to William Fredrick, project engineer, other energy-saving equipment includes a demand control ventilation air conditioning system which minimizes energy usage by carefully controlling and limiting the quantity of outside air brought into the building during periods of low occupancy, as well as all motorized equipment as fans, pumps and air conditioning units.

Public realm

But library director Ken Warren says that sustainability in the project is more than the natural lighting and energy efficiency. It also has meaning in the public's relationship with the

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Above left: The northern approach shows off the structure's classical angles.

Above right: The interior entrance is a formal one, with the visitor perceiving all that the building has to offer.



involved in the design and construction."

Lamis billed this space the "living room for the city. We like great reading rooms to be very open, with big windows, skylights, beautiful carpets and great artwork," he says. "This room represents our approach to

"The effect of the colors here is the livening of employee moods as well as the transformational effect on our citizens. It is truly a beautiful environment."

— Ken Warren,
library director

spaces and the longevity of the library's design.

Lamis agrees. "Nothing is more destructive than tearing down a building after 20 years because it was cheaply made, not adaptable or unloved. An institutional project like a library should be conceived to last 100 years with periodic renovation, top mechanical systems and interior furnishing." With this in mind, the owner, the architect and the contractor labored to give the new library a design that mirrored the traditional Carnegie look, yet had all the features of a 21st century public space.

Warren notes the 38,000-sf addition, completed in June 2007, includes reading rooms, a quiet room, a portion of the technologically advanced children's room, a study room, an auditorium and galleries. The 55,000-sf

renovation of the old library includes the remainder of the children's room, a technology center with 60 computers, an audio-visual room, a drive-up window and administrative offices.

Just grand

The director's favorite spaces are the Grand Reading Room, which he terms "one of the nation's great public spaces," the children's room with its unique Lakewood Librainium and the technology center and the new book area.

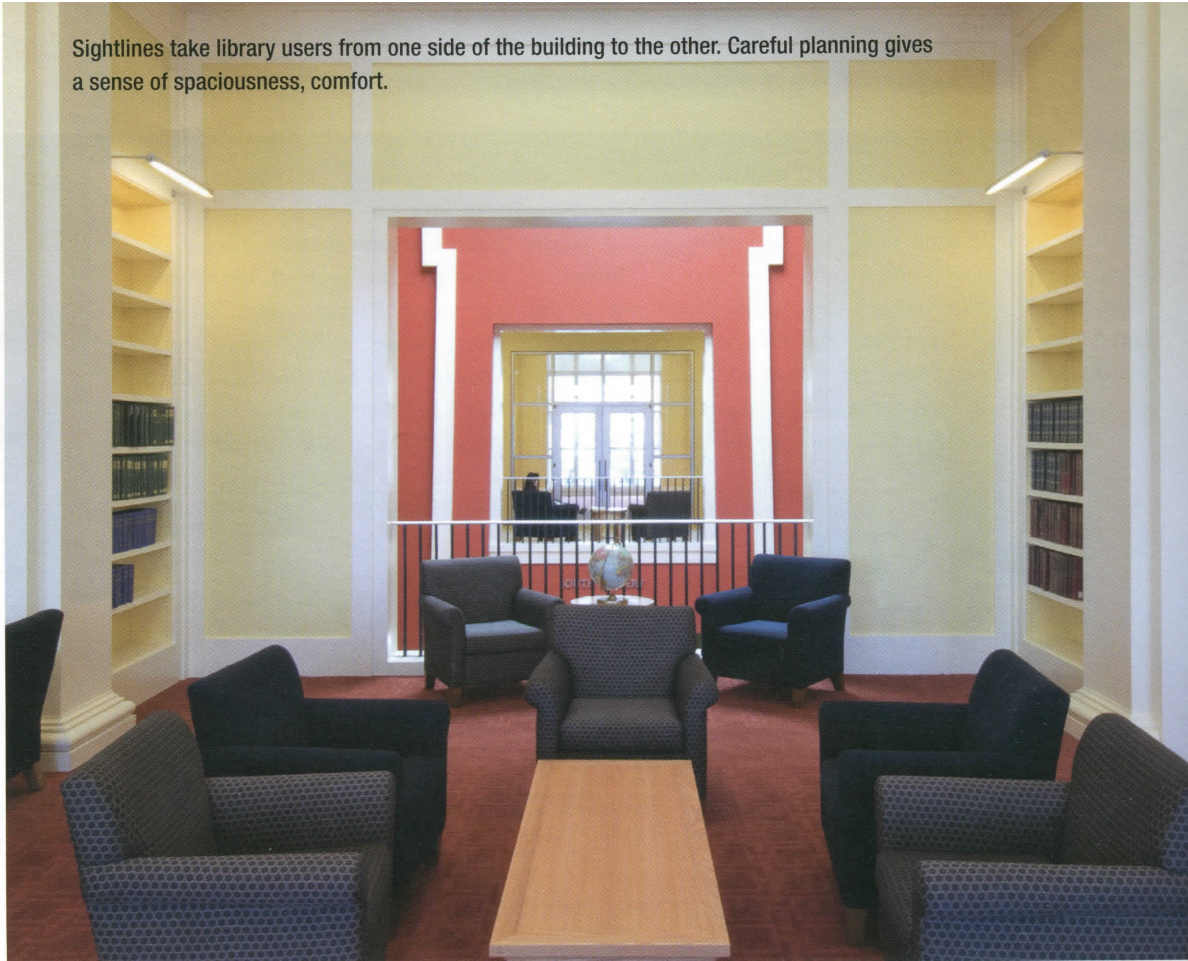
Panzica is also very complimentary of the grand reading room. "This is a great room in a signature project," he says. "It was a challenge to build, for sure. The elements of the room, including wall layouts, painting, skylights and millwork, all had to work. It is a tribute to those

library architecture." The grand reading room is 50 by 52 ft with a 32 ft ceiling height.

In addition to books, it features two expansive paintings by noted New York City muralist Richard Haas, whose work appears in many public spaces such as the National Public Library. The first mural, entitled "City of Schools, Commerce, Industry and Transportation," graces the east wall of the floor, while the mural entitled "City of Homes, Apartments, and Houses of Worship" adorns the west wall.

As vivid as the Haas murals are, they have competition from the colorful walls and woodwork. In fact, a palette of 26 colors covers the walls and ceilings of the library. Some are extremely bold, and others more subtle. All work very well with the natural light streaming

Sightlines take library users from one side of the building to the other. Careful planning gives a sense of spaciousness, comfort.



in from skylights and windows.

According to Warren, the library's interior designers drew inspiration from the Thorvaldsens Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark. This Neoclassical construction was built in the mid-nineteenth century by an architect inspired by ancient architectural forms that had been covered with sculptures and bright paint. "The effect of the colors here is the livening of employee moods as well as the transformational effect on our citizens. This library is truly a beautiful environment," Warren comments about the work.

Imposing exterior

As compelling as are the interior surfaces, the exterior is just as striking. The building is entered from Detroit Avenue beneath a new civic-scaled entry porch reminiscent of classical Greek and Roman designs, complete with

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columns. In the rear of the building is a second new entry from the expanded parking lot. Gallery spaces lead from both entrances to the checkout area. Warren notes that the classical grand entrance is inspiring to the library's users, of whom half walk or take public transportation and enter through the front. "Big columns and grand stairs are part of our general approach for libraries. These features represent the aspiration of a community and reflect pride in the city,"

Lamis says.

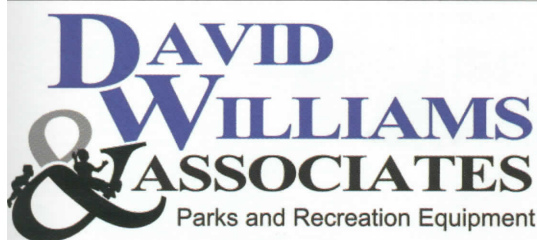
While the front of the building facing the commercial area of Detroit Avenue is clad in precast stone matched in the existing 1923 limestone structure, the rear of the building is a different story. Panzica notes the back of the building, facing a residential area, is covered in brick to soften the look of the structure. "This has been a signature project for us," he says. "The quality of design and



Classic Carnegie outside, 21st century inside.

material is at the upper end of the space. It is not a square office building, that's for sure."

Adds CBLH's Bittinger, "It was a pleasure to be part of this exceptional project. This was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity to work for a sensitive client and a world renowned architect. This is a great building."



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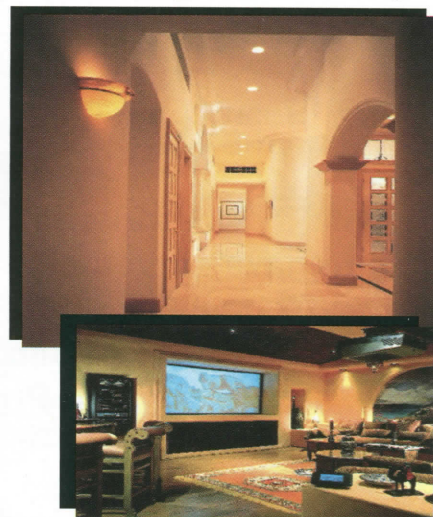
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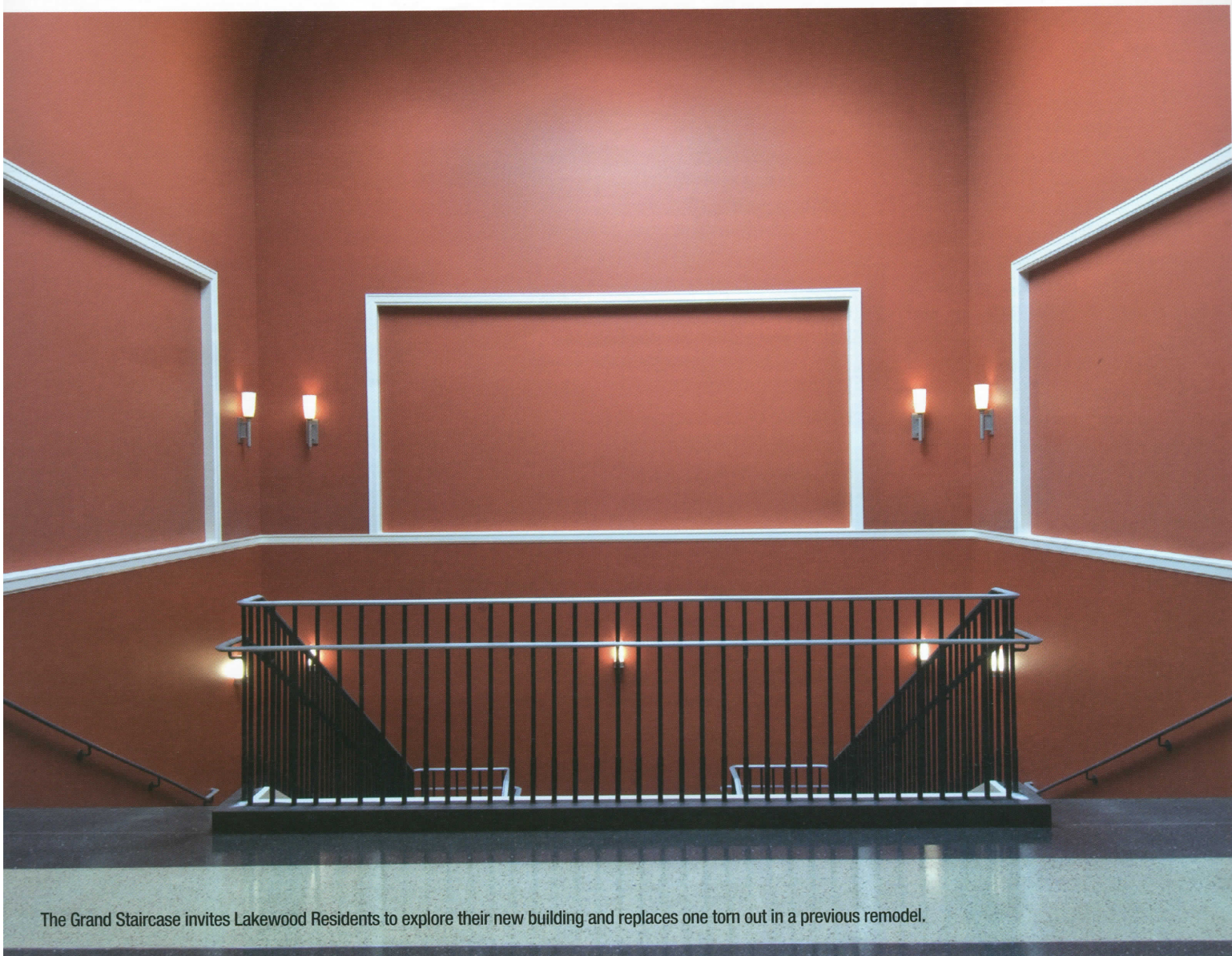


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proud of the Lakewood Public Library and has had plenty of feedback from the community.

"In the beginning, we had a citizens committee that helped identify our needs and goals and helped us plan for the project. The input was invaluable," he says. In this way, citizens realize the services from their library that meet community needs.

And now that the project is complete and the library is up and running, Warren says that "the citizens are absolutely delighted with their new library. It is about time that an Ohio library achieves through its art and architecture, such a distinction and such a level of excellence." **BXM**

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Todd Williams writes about commercial design architecture and is a professional photographer of the topic. He contributed both words and images to this story.

Project specs:

Lakewood Public Library

Owner: Lakewood Public Library

Architects: Robert A. M. Stern Architects, CBLH Design

Construction manager: Panzica Construction

Cost: \$17.5 million

Size: 93,000-sf, 55,000 sf new, 38,000-sf renovated

Timetable: Design approved January 2005, construction began April 2006, new construction completed spring 2007, entire building opened June 2008.

Primes

General trades: Infinity Construction

Plumbing: Commerce Plumbing Co.

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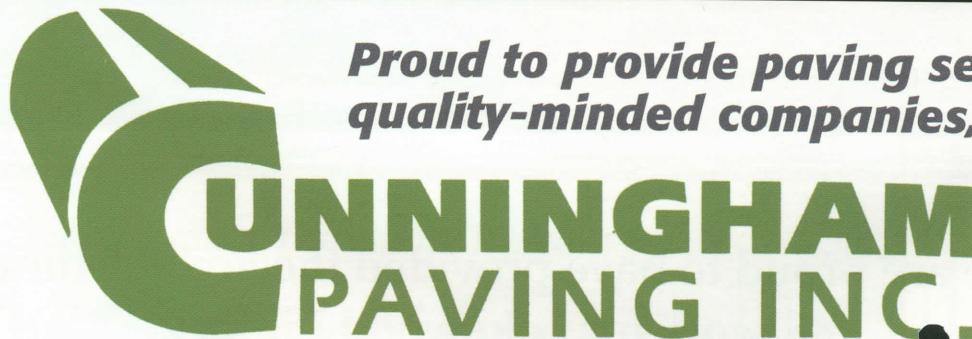
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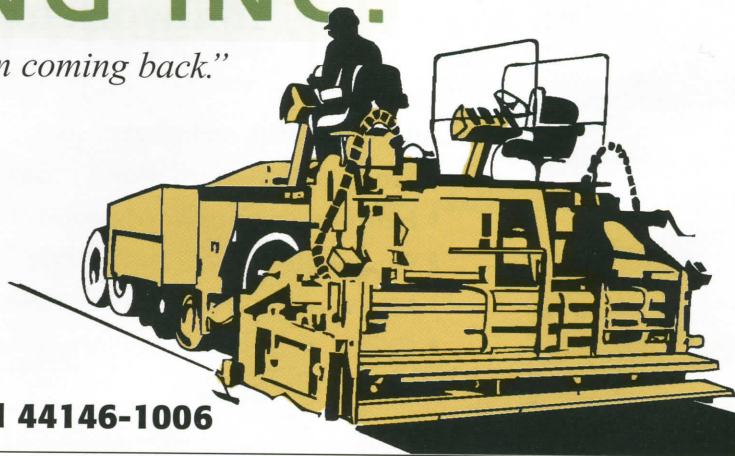
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