



2008 Library Renovations

Library Journal, a publication of the American Library Association, included the renovated library and color photographs in its annual architectural issue in December, 2008.

Komatsu Architecture received the Texas Historical Commission's 2007 Preservation of Excellence Award for restoring the character and original ambiance to the Library.

The North East Texas Library System gave Mayor William D. White, Jr. and Council Member Gail Madden the "Government Officials of the Year Award" to recognize their outstanding fundraising efforts, including raising \$1 million dollars over their \$2.4 million goal. It also gave the renovation itself the "Library Project of the Year Award." No other library has received two of the major awards presented by the System in its history.

Thanks to the generosity of Governor William P. Clements, who donated the first gift to it, the William P. Clements Permanent Library Fund was established to provide ongoing support for enhancements for the Library beyond the Town's annual budget funding for all basic services. Contributions help the Library meet evolving needs and provide updates as technology advances. The fund is administered by the Highland Park Quality of Life Foundation, a registered 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

The Highland Park Quality of Life Foundation, the Mayor and Town Council, and the Capital Campaign Committee are honored to announce major donors to the Library Renovation Project.

The Mitch Gray and Kay Harrington Gilbert Children's Room. Mrs. Gilbert's father inspired her life-long love of books and reading when he bought books by the carload at garage sales and read them all. Her father's enthusiasm opened the world of reading to Mrs. Gilbert, as will the Children's Room for the generations to come. Renovations in the Children's Room include a mural around all four walls showing familiar Highland Park scenes including the gazebo in

Versailles Park, the famous Pecan Tree, and the parks and stone bridges. Readers inhabit each scene, and a variety of azaleas provide continuity and framing. A puppet theater resembling the 1924 Lang and Witchell Town Hall including the tower and red clay tile roof, will charm adults and children alike. Cherry wood bookshelves, tables and chairs, and a renovated fireplace with Spanish Moorish tiles, gas logs and wingback chairs facing it to create a cozy reading area, once more show there are treasures to be found in garage sales and pleasure to be found in reading.

The Harvey R. "Bum" Bright Library. The children of Mr. Bright named the library to honor their father. Carol Bright Reeder, Margaret Vonder Hoya, Chris Bright and Clay Bright made this generous donation in memory of their father, who believed that reading was one of the most important factors in creating citizens who would improve the world, said his son, Chris. This generous gift allowed the library to be totally renovated with all cherry book shelves, much improved lighting and signage, restored wood double-hung windows, and handsome Spanish-Moorish tiles on the floors, stair risers and all three fireplaces.

The Pierce and Allie Beth Allman Fireside Room. New cherry shelves and paneling remind us of a gentleman's library and complement the handsome renovated fireplace with a surround of Spanish-Moorish tiles, a new medallion on the overmantle that looks as if it were part of the 1930 original library, and gas logs for a cozy place to enjoy reading a good book. The wall between this room and the hall was partially removed to create a greater sense of space and allow additional shelves to house the non-fiction material and biographies. Improved lighting, custom-designed computer carrels, tables and chairs, comfortable stuffed chairs in a seating area adjoining the fireplace, a beautiful raised ceiling with a Spanish-Moorish motif by one of only 2-3 artists in the United States who can create such a work of art, and cherry-framed arched windows overlooking landscaped grounds invite all to sit and read a while.

The Jane and Ron Beneke Family Circulation Room. This is the first and last room patrons see when they come to the library, as the Benekes know from frequent visits. The Circulation desk was custom-designed for this space, is constructed of the same cherry wood that is used for the bookshelves and all furniture; it has a granite countertop. A hand-painted a stencil design in the Moorish style decorates the three arches. Carved twisting columns at the desk corners were inspired by the stone columns at the Town Hall entrance and the Library entrance. Improved lighting both direct and indirect, a coved ceiling, custom-designed computer stands and display cases with storage below combine to give patrons a welcoming first and last impression.

The William P. Clements, Jr. Reference Room. Seven restored windows add natural light and a feeling of spaciousness to a room that is a favorite for everyone who wants a quiet place to spend time, whether reading, doing research, studying, using the Internet or recalling long ago afternoons with a favorite novel. A new fireplace with gas logs surrounded by three designs of Spanish-Moorish tiles with an inviting seating group in front, recent newspapers and magazines, custom-designed cherry study carrels and shelves, computer stands and bookshelves, and a gorgeous coffered ceiling with pressed tin squares all combine to add warmth and elegance.

The Albert D. Huddleston Family Landing. A gift of Albert and Mary Huddleston, this is the most sunny spot in the library because of the impressive 10-foot-tall arched window. With its embossed leather upholstered bench it is a treasured place to rest and enjoy the view into the trees above and on the landscaped entrance below. The restored original stair railing and balustrade provide a beautiful context for the richly patterned Spanish Moorish tiles on the stair

risers, which handsomely complement the 1924 Town Hall's architectural style. The wrought iron balcony railing was made here in Dallas by Potter Art Metal Studios (the same company that made the wrought iron decorative doors between the Circulation Room and the Fireside Room, and also at the Library entry, in 1930).

The Elizabeth S. Hammack Garden. Beautifully landscaped with annual and year-round seasonal color by the Park Department, the Garden provides a gracious entry to the Town Hall and Library. A teak bench invites visitors to rest and contemplate the Garden's azaleas and seasonal color against the backdrop of the 1930 Spanish Colonial Revival Library addition to the Town Hall by Lang and Witchell.

The Elaine Dewey Sammons Fiction Room. Here novels and literature abound: your favorite mysteries, historical fiction, sci fi, romances, westerns, espionage and classics, all demonstrating the power of the written word and man's imagination, on handsome custom-designed cherry shelves with much-improved lighting and carpet. Display shelves at the ends of book ranges allow titles to stand face-out for easy viewing and selecting. One of the busiest areas in the library is now also ADA-compliant, light and inviting.

Why did the Town Council decide to renovate the Library?

Nothing is better than visiting the library as a child and checking out your first book. Or going to the library for Story Time and discovering how books come to life and take you to different worlds, teach you, make you laugh, and make you cry.

For five generations, the Highland Park Library has given residents young and old a place to check out books, gather, read, research, and learn. In 2006, Town residents checked out over 76,000 books, audio books and movies. In addition, the library hosted 2,448 children and parents for Story Time.

The Highland Park Library first opened in 1930 when 1,937 patrons checked out 24,002 books in the first year. Today, 3,120 children and families are members. It was designed to house 22,000 volumes and now houses 38,000 volumes.

Since the last renovation the Library has added Large Print books, audiocassettes, followed by videocassettes, music on CD, then books on CD and now movies on DVD. It has also automated, adding 10 computers for the public to use and 7 computers for staff.

The collection includes fee-based databases available 24/7 through the website at www.hplibrary.info, 36,000 adult and children's books, 2,600 audiobooks, 2,150 movies, 1,700 ebooks, and subscriptions to 91 periodicals and newspapers.

Children's Story Times are offered 4 times each week with approximately 1,750 children and 1,300 adults attending annually.

Automating and the addition of computers for use by the public as well as staff have significantly changed the way the building is used.

The library was last renovated in 1974. As we looked to the future, we took the opportunity to renovate the Crown Jewel of our Town Hall. The renovation benefited both current patrons and future patrons for generations to come.

The renovation primarily consisted of physical updates that preserve the most appealing aspects of the library: the warm atmosphere and the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. While the library was necessarily renovated within the confines of Town Hall, the available space was maximized. Here are some of the updates:

- Restored seven windows upstairs to increase natural lighting.
- Raised the dropped ceiling upstairs by creating a new pressed tin ceiling.
- Installed coved and coffered ceilings downstairs, removing the dropped ceilings to reveal the tops of arched windows and create a greater sense of space.
- Added a fireplace upstairs and gas logs to it and the fireplace in the Children's Room and the Fireside Room.
- Removed portions of two walls to create more usable space from what were hallways.
- Installed new energy-efficient light fixtures and double-hung windows throughout the library.
- Replaced the green metal book shelves from the 1930's with new wood shelves.
- Installed new carpet, cabinets, reading tables, chairs and other furniture.
- Replaced the circulation desk with a new desk that meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.
- Added handsome signage.

The cost for the library renovation project was \$2,440,000. Library supporters raised the entire amount from the community through donations rather than using tax dollars.