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Architectural Design Narrative- Hauppauge Public Library



Integration of Building and Landscape

The proposed design for the permanent home for the Hauppauge Public Library directly reflects the community's desire for a modest, economical structure which is closely connected to nature. The design integrates the building massing with the surrounding landscaping by keeping all functions on one floor, in a long, low mass sitting below the existing canopy of trees that will seem to have grown up from within the wooded site.-

The s-shaped floor plan encloses two outdoor courtyards that will permit daylight to enter the building from the north and south and establish a focus for the interior spaces. The north courtyard serves as the entrance from the west parking area. A bridge-like path will cross a water garden, immediately indicating that one is entering a special place. The water will be a link to its life-giving, restorative associations, to the site's location at the source of two north-south rivers and to the name Hauppauge -"Land of Sweet Water". The water garden will also function as a teaching tool to demonstrate an environmentally sensitive approach to retaining rainwater and returning wastewater to the ground. The south courtyard is contiguous with the virginal wooded, eastern portion of the site. From the interior, library visitors will use the south courtyard for reading and other passive activities and as a route to garden paths through the trees.

The entrance leads to an open lobby/display area with adjacent circulation, public computers, and periodical seating areas. This will be part of a continuous zone of open public space which will be the connective thread through the library. A series of spaces will unfold as patrons meander through the building. From any space in the library, patrons will be able to see directly into the courtyards and to the north and south gardens, and be able to take note of the weather, time of day and colors of the seasons—giving them a direct connection to the natural world.

Plan Layout

Three primary user groups will be identified with the three wings of the structure. The quiet adult reading area will be located in a rectangular zone to the North. The central bay will house the young adult reading area and the children's area will occupy a more free-form volume to the South. Each of the three major user spaces will have a unique quality. The adult area will have a long-span roof structure that will permit column-free flexibility for future changes of use. The young adult area will have open table seating area and a semi-enclosed living-room like space with lounge seating and flat panel screens. The children's room will be the most colorful and dynamic space, with curving walls enclosing a large program area, columns partitioning space for older children, and a ramp down to a sunken play and story time area for the youngest children.

Support spaces, including a large community meeting room and staff areas will border the public user areas. Bathrooms, mechanical rooms, music/video rooms and other support spaces will occupy a compact, linear volume along the East edge of the site. The staff will occupy a bar of space stretching North-South along the west façade with open-view corridors to the children's and young adult areas. The multi-use meeting room will be located near the entrance and have access to the South courtyard.

A palette of natural materials is proposed for the interiors. Mahogany window frames and natural wood wall panels will add warmth and color. A living wall, proposed at the building entrance will bring a field of plant materials into the building adding color and texture as well as increasing the interior air quality. Architectural concrete will serve as the building's

structure as well as a robust finish material. Most of the raised-flooring will be covered with carpet tiles.

The Library's Exterior

The horizontal, moss-green glazed brick walls of the exterior volume will blend in with the existing tree canopy on the site. The East and West elevations have few windows so that the interior is protected from the glare from low sun angles. Low planters will breakdown the scale of the wall surface and introduce planting above grade level. The planters will continue beyond the edges of the library and enclose gardens on the north and south of the building. The garden walls will be another way to tie the building to the landscape while separating it from the adjacent roadway and parking lots.

The north and south elevations will have low planter walls and be fully-glazed above, allowing transparent connections between the interior and exterior. The garden walls enclose outdoor rooms which will be experienced as extensions of the interior. The concrete roof parapet on the north and south walls will have scuppers sculpted into them to highlight the path of rain water collected on the roof as it flows down and moves to basins where it will be collected for irrigation or returned to the soil.

Scuppers with rain chains will also be introduced in the courtyards. They will be smaller in size and be coordinated with recessed text in the concrete parapet which will wrap the two courtyards. The text will be another opportunity to accentuate the uniqueness of this place in Hauppauge. Text proposals to be considered might include the following quote from Simeon Wood's A History of Hauppauge, Long Island, New York (1920):

"Humanity, like water, is ever in motion. The babbling brooks of Hauppauge still wind their way to the silent Nissequogue, whose waters ceaselessly flow to mingle with the vast and mighty ocean".

The design team's intent is to make the project as uniquely Hauppaugian as possible and to reflect the Library Board and the community's goal that the new building support the Library's mission to serve locally yet reach globally.

