

Projects of Note

PROJECT OF THE WEEK

Schwarz/Silver Joins Modern to Classic in Boston Library Addition

Shared materials vocabulary fosters harmony between the old and the new

Denizens of the Hyde Park section of Boston got the best of both architectural worlds when Schwarz/Silver Architects recently restored their century-old Classical Revival library and created a Classic Modern addition. Working for the City of Boston Department of Neighborhood Development, the architect added 30,700 square feet to the existing structure's 13,000 square feet and orchestrated a harmonious duet of style.

Typical of urban libraries built at the turn of the 20th century, the original library was designed to look like an imposing "temple of knowledge," aloofly sitting on its pedestal of a hill. This sloped site allowed excavation and expansion underneath the existing building, as well as accommodation of a large addition that does not overpower its Classical forerun-

ner, because most of the new library is placed underground.

The architects were true to the original design intent of the library in other ways: for instance, they restored its symmetry, which had been thrown out of balance soon after it opened when the city added a small, one-story addition on its north side. Schwarz/Silver took the opportunity to make the addition two stories tall and match its mass on the south side with



a new masonry addition.

Although both parts of the building have very distinct architectural personalities, the addition and the restored portion of the library share a materials vocabulary of tan Roman brick, dark oak paneling, and black fenestration.

The addition, although always respectful of its pointy-roofed elder, expresses its own place in time by engaging the community in a more informal way—through welcoming expanses of glass and a children's reading garden, which "emphasizes the role of the library as a community oasis within the dense activity of the city," the architects say.


The happy marriage of old and new has earned the Hyde Park library and Schwarz/Silver Architects a 2001 AIA Honor Award for Architecture. They will receive the award at the AIA convention in Denver this May. 



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