

Custom Book Storage Solutions

Spacesaver provides custom book storage solutions for Seattle's new landmark public library



A Seattle's new central library, principally designed by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and Joshua Ramus from OMA in a joint venture with LMN Architects of Seattle, has been the focus of national attention. The 362,987-square-foot, state-of-the-art 11-story facility houses 1.4 million volumes of books.

"As in any library, the central focus is the books and the shelving that they sit on," said Pragnesh Parikh of LMN Architects, the local managing architect. "We wanted to create a unique experience for the visitor with the foremost feature of the building being the public spiral book stack, which is one continuous ramp."

Library administrators and the design team chose Spacesaver to provide the mobile systems, as well as the unique stationary spiral stacks that wind their way up six floors of the library.

The use of light was a critical factor in every aspect of the library's design. From the exterior maze of windows that wraps the entire building, to the interior 11-floor atrium and polycarbonate ceiling that help to distribute light, to the glass walls that divide the sides of the spiral stacks, every detail was considered in maximizing the natural light.

"Light is very important in Seattle," said Parikh. "We wanted to create as much ambient light as possible, as well as one unending visual space stretched across 11 stories."

In keeping with this principal design concept, the design team didn't want the book stacks to create a visual barrier, so they chose a translucent acrylic material for the top and end panels of the shelving. Engineers at Spacesaver tested different acrylic materials for scratch resistance, durability and strength. The company also sourced unique stainless steel pins that were used to off-set the panels from the shelving frames and designed special lighting brackets for a custom overhead lighting solution.

"Developing the acrylic panels was a challenge," said Parikh. "Spacesaver stood behind us with engineering support to





NOTES:

- Integrated aisle lights
- Custom acrylic end stops
- Customer silver metallic paint
- Units coordinate with curbs to accommodate spiral book stack



Five powered mobile systems were chosen to maximize capacity, while providing ease of use and safety. A sixth custom-designed system allows space flexibility for a gift shop on the main floor.

achieve our goals.” All shelving units were also seismically reinforced with gussets and additional welded spreaders to assure code compliance and safety. Specially designed drawers accommodate the library’s existing card catalog.

Daryl Gardner of Spacesaver Northwest, Seattle, WA worked with the architectural team as a consultant to help develop the technical spec for fixed and mobile shelving. He even took designers to a local job site to educate them on the benefits of mobile storage.

“Daryl and the Spacesaver team were open to new ideas throughout the project,” said Parikh. “When working with designers, it is important to be flexible. Standard solutions are easy to find, but a modified design approach is critical to achieving a unique outcome. If everything we did was readily available in the marketplace, we wouldn’t be designers.”

“Spacesaver did an excellent job at delivering custom solutions. They were efficient and knowledgeable and able to provide quick delivery and installation.” Daryl and the Spacesaver team were open to new ideas throughout the project.”

Pragnesh Parikh, LMN Architects

Spacesaver also provided five high-density mobile systems for book storage in non-public areas for infrequently accessed material. A sixth system is used on the main floor for a gift shop. The store literally unfolds in the middle of the library as mobile carriages are spread apart and locked down. Special retail shelving and carriage rail covers were designed to provide a convenient, safe public space.

“Spacesaver did an excellent job at engineering custom solutions,” concluded Parikh. “They were efficient and knowledgeable and able to provide quick delivery and installation.”

