

## Cadillac-Wexford County Public Library

May 19, 2008

<http://www.cadillaclibrary.org>

Mary Ryan is out of town this week and unable to make this visit. Library Assistant Eileen Powell joined us and also provided a summary.

### **Dale Hobart:**

This is a good example of what a good library interior designer can do with a good building. Cadillac had a 19,500 square foot building that was free of interior walls that provided them with a great deal of flexibility. However, they had some problems. The building was not created with today's technology in mind and using technology in the building was causing problems. There were limited locations where power for technology was available. This severely restricted where computers could be placed in the building. They also had other layout problems that arose over the years as the way people used libraries changed.

They hired a library interior designer to help them to change the interior layout of the building. Fortunately the building is built on a slab directly on the ground so they were able to solve the power location problems by cutting into the concrete slab and installing a power grid in the floor. This was the major "structural" change to the building. The other "structural" change to the building was closing the "main" entrance (which was seldom used by the patrons) and turning the entranceway into a reading/informal meeting room with comfortable seating and a fireplace. The rest of the changes consisted of changing how the interior space was arranged. Both the children's and teen's spaces were moved near the circulation desk and comfortable seating was added in multiple spaces in the building. The circulation desk was redesigned to make it more approachable.

The staff liked the new circulation desk and how it worked. The information desk which was across a wide aisle from the circulation desk was staffed by their most technologically savvy people since most of the questions that came there were about the use of the nearby computers which could be controlled from that desk. They liked the software that they used to control computer and printing services in the library. They were also very happy with the flooring decisions that they had made. One was to put a rubberized floor through the entranceway to the circulation desk and extending it into the public computer space. The other was using carpet tiles for the rest of the space.

There are some things that they wished that they had enough money to change the lighting to make the interior brighter. They had several other small things that they hoped to improve over time.

During the remodeling process they were able to stay open for all but about a week because they had a large meeting room available in the building. They moved the contents of one space in the library into that area and remodeled that space and moved the materials that were being relocated into that space in and cascaded their way through the building until it was completed.

That building would work very well for our library. We might not arrange the spaces in the same way but the open floor plan of the building is inherently flexible.

## **Marlies Manning:**

### Summary of general information:

- Library was remodeled in 2006. Building was not expanded because the additional space wasn't needed. Existing space was better utilized.

### Building renovation experience:

- Used a library designer (not a licensed architect) and interior designer.
- They were very happy with Library Design, consultant.
- Had a staff member with experience in project management.
- Were able to stay in building during renovation. Used the meeting room to move a collection into, then renovated one area at a time.
- Had to close one week when concrete floor was cut for electrical lines.
- \$300,000 construction cost. Used money in their Fund Balance.

### Great features:

- Lots of natural light from all directions, including skylights.
- Beautiful view of Lake Cadillac and landscaping.
- A lot of soft seating areas near windows.
- Rededicated the original foyer into a "quiet room" with a fireplace. Full windows to outdoors (original door turned into emergency exit) with view to the lake. Fireplace takes the chill off the room in the winter. Almost a sound proof room.
- Allow drinks in the library.
- Used carpet squares throughout library. Allows for easy repairs.
- Used roll rubber flooring in front of circulation desk. Quiet and wears well.
- "Z" shaped circulation desk allows for lots of staff work space and is very approachable. Librarians are not far from the desk.
- Snowmelt system in front walkway and entry.
- Direct path to children's area from the front door.
- "Sunblocker" shades filter direct light, yet allow view to outdoors.
- Large Parent/Child upholstered chair in children's area. Large enough for an adult and child to sit together.
- D.E.Q. is going to build a rain garden off the parking lot to filter stormwater before it runs into Lake Cadillac.

### Recommendations:

- Put lots of electrical outlets into the walls and floors.
- Stay in close contact with the Fire Marshall and building code enforcement officers while building.
- Put restrooms in line of sight of circulation desk. They vandalism issues occasionally. Circulation desk can't see who is entering building.
- Stay on one floor. It's difficult to staff a multi-level library.
- Put in a snowmelt system for a drive-up book drop (exterior to the building).

## **Eileen Powell:**

The Cadillac-Wexford County Public Library was able to re-organize everything inside their building. The function of the library had changed since it was built and now, they have been able to meet their patrons' needs. For example, they move the children's area and enlarged it.

They moved the adult fiction and non-fiction, the information desk, moved the computers and tripled the quantity. They were even able to create a special niche for teen books.

I was impressed with the fact that it was all on one floor. Everything seemed to fan out from the entrance, with each section was clearly marked and clearly visible.

It is impossible for me to see how our Big Rapids Library could reorganize in a similar manner to accommodate our requirements. Walls would need to be removed, not just moved. When I try to imagine it, all I can see are stairs to enter, and more stairs to move from one area to another. To look at it another way, our patrons, both young and old, would be a lot happier with a building where they could move around easily, never far from the circulation desk.

### **Gaylynn Rorabaugh:**

As Library Director, I have been attending meetings at the Cadillac Library since 1994. Our Library Cooperative used to be housed in that same building. About 3 years ago, the Library needed more space and the Cooperative re-located into downtown Cadillac. This allowed the Library to expand fully into the 19,500 sq foot space. I attended a workshop there about three weeks ago and was amazed at the changes. The beautiful windows looking out over the lake are now featured instead of being hidden behind stacks. This provides a generous amount of natural light throughout the space.

They hired Library Design Associates to help design a new layout for the space. While they were extremely pleased with Library Design's work, they did hold firm to some of their own ideas. This included the trees that define the children's area. There is no need to have a sign that indicates this space – they just direct people to go through the trees.

There is an information desk located close to the public access computers. Between that desk and the circulation desk, the staff has almost complete line of sight throughout the building. It also functions well; people do not have to look too hard for someone to help them. The information desk also provides support for the public access computers. The building functions extremely well. It is easy to imagine what it would be like to work out of a wide open space like that.

#### Special features:

- Children's program space with the children's area
- Former entry changed into a lovely, quiet seating area overlooking the lake. This space includes a small, gas fireplace that takes the chill off during winter months. There is an additional fireplace in the fiction room that is also gas operated.
- Rolled rubber flooring in the circulation and high traffic areas around the computers
- Large carpet squares that can be easily replaced if damaged or worn
- Soft arm chairs with an attached swing-arm table for laptop computers
- Electrical outlets everywhere for laptop computer users
- Great staff work spaces away from the circulation desk
- Offer computer classes every Wednesday morning and have 16 laptops for the public to use

#### Challenges:

- Restrooms in the entryway of the Library – out of site by Library Staff but with visibility by users entering and exiting the library
- Meeting room is fairly small. It holds about 40 people seated at tables.
- Not much space to expand for future growth if needed, however, as the building is on a concrete slab, compact shelving is an option

#### Funding:

The Library is a county library with a millage of .75 and levied .6805. This was just renewed for an additional 7 years. The millage is 75% of their funding. The County provides all of their needs from accounting to public works. The City used to provide those services but finally told them they needed to find them elsewhere.

The project was financed by their accumulated fund balance. The cost was approximately \$300,000.00. They solicited and received some large donations. The teen space is named the 'Meijer Teen Area' and is visible from the entrance and the circulation desk but private enough that teens do not think they are being watched every minute.

The staff was very good at sharing and providing us with many insights to their project.