Indianapolis Central Library
Project Type
Public Library

Project Address
40 East St. Clair Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Date of Substantial Completion
October 7, 1917

Owner’s and Architect’s Statement
On October 7, 2017, Indianapolis’ Central Library celebrates its 100th Anniversary. The original building, designed in the Greek Revival Doric style by renowned architect Paul Cret, is in the National Register of Historic Places and is still in active use as a public library. The building design is centered around a main room with access to the large East and West Reading Rooms via grand marble staircases. The building will be the focal point of the celebrations held throughout October.

In addition, the Library will recognize the important work done by Indianapolis architecture firm Woollen Molzan and Partners in the careful restoration of the 1917 building and the design of the extraordinary addition in 2007. The design utilizes a central atrium to connect the six-story addition to the 1917 building. The resulting work ensured the original building would continue to be highly functional and a thing of beauty in our downtown.
The contrast between the 1917 building constructed of Indiana limestone and the 2007 glass addition provides a stunning example of how a city can combine its past and future through architecture.

Central Library was originally constructed on a site convenient to residents one-mile north of the downtown and before the American Legion Mall was implemented. Today it serves as a bookend for the American Legion Mall and an anchor for strong economic development on the near north side.
The building continues to adapt to the changing needs of the Library. From the days of closed stacks and card catalogs to those of open browsing and computers, Central Library continues to offer services and popular materials for the public in a beautiful and efficient building.

The West Reading Room is currently being updated for the development of a Center for Black Literature and Culture which will also open in October 2017.

The vibrancy of the building and the years of service by the original 1917 building are something the entire community values and celebrates.