

Kilton Public Library

By Jeffrey M. Hoover

The new Kilton Public Library opened in August 2010 and is the second facility in the two-library system in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Positioned at the edge of the commercial district of West Lebanon, the library site was formerly an abandoned used car lot and as such was a “missing tooth” in the development of the street. The completion of the library at this location acts as a magnet for the community and supports the revitalization of local businesses. Sited close to the street, the building emphasizes its presence in the community and serves as an edge between the more urban activity of Main Street and the residential area directly behind the property. A bus transfer station, located directly in front of the Library, enhances patronage from citizens of several communities served by the free transportation services. The addition of bicycle racks and new pedestrian encourages non-vehicular means of transportation to this public building.

While having a “front door” to accept patrons arriving off Main Street, the building also has a “back garden door” to serve residents. By placing the building forward on the site, what was once an asphalt lot became a landscaped portion behind the building. Future functions including community farmers’ markets and book fairs are planned for this space. The library itself is a one-story building arranged in three simple masses - an Adult wing, a Children’s wing, and a Meeting Room/Staff wing. Shed roofs serve to identify each programmatic piece and recall the regional aesthetic of clustered New Hampshire farm buildings. Furthermore, the three masses of the library create two gardens - an Adult Reading Garden and a Children’s Story Garden - which bleed into the larger landscape behind the building. Views from one portion of the building into another is achieved through the central Adult Garden, including deeper views into the Meeting Room which is often used for local artist installations and other community events. The garden space also acts as an outdoor reception area for after hours use including lectures and musical performances. The use of wood detailed in varying ways brings the familiar to this library for the 21st century.

The Kilton Library was crafted in careful response to the Library Program which articulated the functional requirements and goals. The planning and design process was directed through the Library Board of Trustees while the Town was the contractual client. The Library Director and design team recognized the transitory nature of the Program and acknowledged that new and unanticipated collections and services will be part of the not too distant future. To accommodate these emerging functional requirements, the spaces in the library are relatively unencumbered by walls. Despite this flexible plan approach, a variety of spatial types and patron experiences occur which prevent the library from having an “anonymous” character. For instance, bookstacks (with integral lighting) can expand or contract to address changing demands for

patron seating areas. Similarly, mobile bookstacks in Children's can be rearranged or pushed aside for occasional events.

Targeted to be the 1st LEED Gold new library in New Hampshire, the Kilton Public Library is a demonstration of sustainable strategies – both sustainable energy solutions and sustainable library planning principles. A unique combination of building technologies in the local area, include:

- ground source heat pumps
- a Biomass boiler with featured wood pellet silo,
- radiant floor slabs throughout,
- automated daylighting controls
- occupancy sensor lighting in bookstacks
- low flow plumbing

Other design features include lofty, light filled spaces, intimate patron areas with a garden focus, and quiet alcoves for focused concentration. All areas of this fully accessible building were purposefully designed to maximize patron appeal so that a new generation of library users will be drawn to the library and engaged by the spaces and ultimately, the resources, they find there.

Construction Budget: \$4,200,000, Cost:\$4,061,055

Total square footage: 15,400 GSf