

Harvard University

Werner Otto Hall
Busch-Reisinger Museum and Fine Arts Library
Addition to the Fogg Museum
Cambridge, Massachusetts



This 15,000-square-foot addition houses the permanent exhibition galleries of the Busch-Reisinger Museum and its collection of German twentieth century paintings and decorative arts, as well as portions of the Fogg Museum's Fine Arts Library.

The major public spaces consist of the library reading room on the ground floor and the permanent collection galleries on the second floor. To the south are smaller scale spaces: on the ground floor, staff offices for the library; on the second floor a temporary exhibition gallery; and on the third floor, the archival study area.

Its design responds to a number of unique site conditions, including the adjacent Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, designed by Le Corbusier, an existing subterranean library by Jose Luis Sert and a required three level connection to the Fogg Museum.

The building establishes a primary two-story facade facing the street and integrates a new exterior stair, plaza and ramp at the library entry. Behind it, the building rises to three stories, complementing

the Carpenter Center as a distinct yet related object perceived from all angles.

The fine-arts library has a separate entrance from the gallery, thus resolving a security problem when the library and museum hours are different. With its high ceilings, tall windows, and visible reference stacks, the reading room conveys the stature associated with such spaces.

Existing streetscape and scale relationships had to be addressed, and constraints imposed by building above an existing underground library structure with limited load bearing capacity had to be accommodated.

The solution also resolves Le Corbusier's compelling site circulation idea. The Carpenter Center ramp, which was intended to provide a public mid-block walkway from Quincy Street to Prescott Street through the building, ended in the Fogg's rear yard without a connection to the sidewalk. The design extends the ramp onto a new plaza from which one can either enter the library or descend a new exterior stair to the street.

1 South facade from Carpenter Center

2 South louvered window from gallery



East entry plaza from Prescott Street



Reading room in archives



Main reading room of Fine Arts Library

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Entry gallery to Busch-Reisinger Museum



Permanent collection galleries



Entry gallery

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Key Project Information

- Expanded university art library with new reading room
- Expanded reference stacks
- New study-storage room for archival collections
- 6 new exhibition galleries for the permanent collection
- New 1,000 square foot temporary exhibition gallery
- New climate control system
- New staff and curatorial offices
- Creates a link between the original Fogg and Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center
- completion 1991
- gsf 15,000

"Its design had to fit between the Shepley, Bulfinch, and Coolidge neo-Georgian Fogg and Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center. Charlie accomplished this with great intelligence and sensitivity. In fact, his design completed the Carpenter Center's ramp and thus, for the first time, Le Corbusier's building works within its context, bringing students up and over its ramp, through the building, and onto the terrace of Otto Hall."

James Cuno, Director

"Modestly sculpted, Harvard's newly housed [Werner Otto Hall] offers an appropriate counterpoint to the abstraction of Le Corbusier's Carpenter Center and the dry revivalism of the Fogg Museum. Gwathmey Siegel has designed a distinctive identity for the addition with restraint and rigor. [...] Like its neighbors and the art within its galleries, Werner Otto Hall speaks of its time with strong convictions."

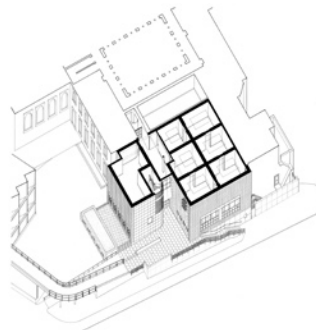
Architecture Magazine, November 1991

"The addition to the Fogg Museum is a most excellent project"

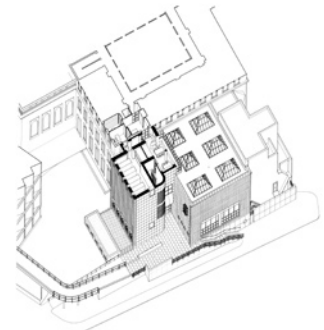
Laurie Beckelman, Chair, New York Landmarks Preservation Commission



Ground level axonometric



Second level axonometric



Third level axonometric



Aerial view from Prescott Street