

Ferris State University

FSU Library for Information, Technology and Education (FLITE)
Big Rapids, Michigan



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FLITE is a 185,000-square-foot facility that combines a traditional print library and state-of-the-art digital information library with a technological learning center. The building has been designed to provide an architectural and symbolic presence to a campus of undistinguished post-war buildings.

The siting of the new facility became the impetus for a complete reconsideration of campus circulation systems, the organization of public arrival, and the spatial relationships among the University's component parts. Also part of this rethinking was the conversion of the centrally located parking lot to a campus green as part of the new "heart" of the University. As the central focus of the campus, it acts as a social and intellectual commons, a cultural space for Ferris State University and the larger community.

In addition to the library, the building houses an Educational Technology Center that includes an Instructional Technology Unit, a Center for Teaching, Learning and Faculty Development, and a Center for Distributed Learning. The design facilitates personal assistance with information needs and help with finding, assessing,

creating and using expanded resources.

The 440,000-volume print collection of monographs, periodicals and documents is housed in standard open shelving and compact shelving. It is interspersed with computer facilities and electronically equipped study, teaching and meeting rooms, allowing electronic access from homes, laboratories, residence halls and offices. Electronic flexibility was a major design requirement.

The three main two-story-high 'reading rooms,' each programatically and architecturally unique, occur at the ground, second, and third levels, affording optimal research and study environments, as well as establishing a varied architectural and volumetric presence within the design.

The massing articulation and different facade scales address both orientation and specific site/campus contexts, allowing the building to be experienced as a multi-faceted object as well as a primary referential frame that combines and reverses the typical object/frame strategy of other projects.

1 View from northwest from campus entrance

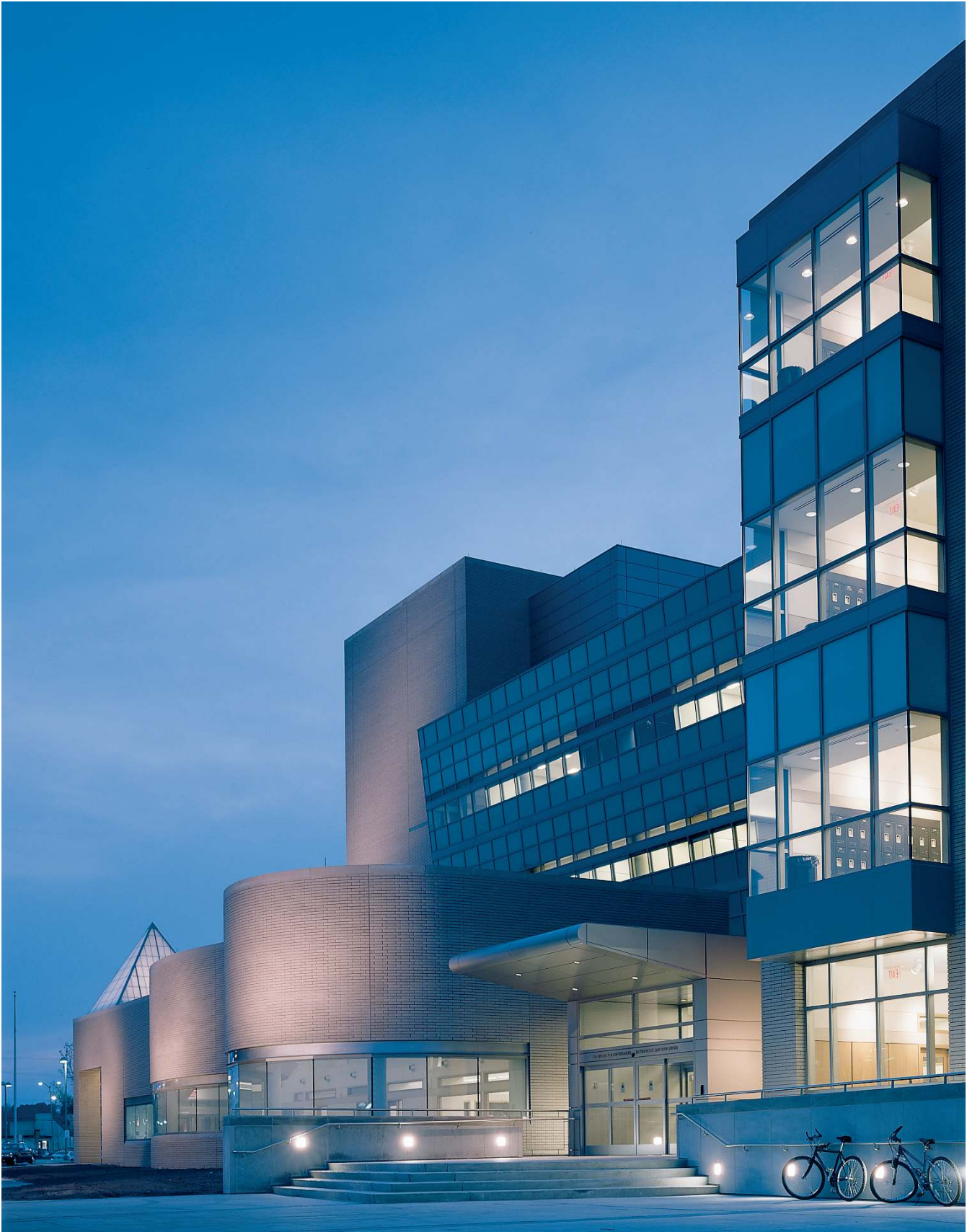
2 West entry



View from northwest from campus entrance

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Quad entry



Information commons



Upper reading room atrium



Silent reading room

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Twenty-four hour study court



Reference reading room

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Key Project Information

- double-height atrium
- general collection reading room
- sunken court garden
- extended hours library
- reference reading room
- reference collection
- microform reading room
- multimedia and computer labs
- electronic reading room
- food court
- informal study court
- loading dock/holding and receiving area
- equipped for remote electronic access

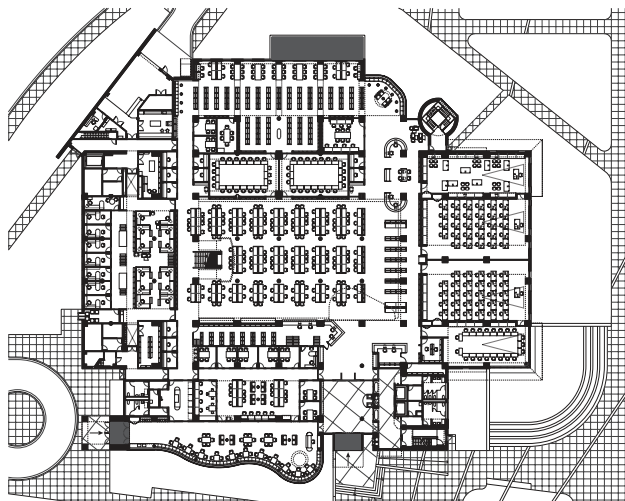
- completion 2001
- gsf 185,000

Associate Architect

Neumann/Smith & Associates

Since it opened, the library has attracted the largest number of students of any public structure on campus. Use of the building increases every year, attesting to the thoughtful, dynamic design of the structure. It is our university's showpiece.

Dr. Richard Cochran, Library Director



Ground level plan



Site plan before



Site plan after



Aerial view from West