

Lorenzo de Zavala Archives and Library Building

Historic landmark gets overdue makeover

BY ANGELLE BERGERON



An interior view of the Texas State Library Archives building, which recently underwent a renovation, the first major upgrade to the half-century-old building since its original construction. Photo: Bailey Architects.

The recently completed \$15.5-million renovation of the Lorenzo de Zavala Archives and Library Building in Austin means documents and artifacts that illustrate Texas' rich history are now better protected and more accessible to the public.

"The Zavala building was the first central repository to house and protect Texas' priceless historical treasures and to support and improve library services in the state," said Laura W. Bush, former U.S. and Texas First Lady, during a December 3 ceremony to dedicate the building as a National Literary Landmark. "Visitors from around the world can appreciate the treasures at the Texas State Library and Archives that have been made available here," said Mrs. Bush. "From the papers

of Stephen F. Austin, the father of Texas, to Travis' letter from the Alamo, to Matamoros Battalion flag captured at the battle of San Jacinto, the archives provide a window into Texas history."

The 1930s-style, "stripped down classicism" government building, constructed in 1959 and dedicated as the Texas State Library and Archives Commission in 1961, is clad in the same sunset red granite as the Capitol, says Gerald Moorhead, historian and architect with Bailey Architects, Inc., Austin.

The building has received few updates over the years. Bailey was tasked with designing a renovation of 111,000 sq ft of the building's public areas and archival stacks that would improve security and accessi-

bility; upgrade all HVAC and electrical systems; increase archival capacity by 30%, render the library more welcome and navigable for the public and researchers; and maintain some key historic features, all while keeping the building occupied and operational.

The 130 full-time archive and library staff members "went above and beyond" in their efforts to accommodate the contractor during renovation, says Mark Boone, associate principal with Bailey. "We asked them if they could vacate two floors and the library director asked, 'How about three?'"

Maintaining library operations while moving materials and staff in advance of construction work was a challenge, says Paulinda Mackie, senior project manager, Texas Facilities Commission, but it would have been "expensive to relocate everyone out of that building." TFC did rent some offsite space for temporary offices and storage, but mostly invested in creative planning, communication and scheduling.

"We came up with a phasing plan that worked, but when we met with Harvey-Cleary [Builders of Austin, contractor], that's when the plan really improved."

Harvey-Cleary's \$12.2-million construction-manager-at-risk contract allowed the contractor to begin early coordination with TFC, Bailey, library staff and various other agencies to develop "a pretty intricate phasing plan with the team," says Carm Tassone, Harvey-Cleary's director of interiors and project manager. "The state had a move coordinator, who would move different departments to different floors and the offsite space."

The front of the building is five stories, while the rear of the building, while the same height, as the front, is divided into seven, shorter stories where the archival stacks are located. Throughout the facility, the contractor removed old plaster walls and ceilings, stripping the building to its poured-in-place concrete core. "We tore >>



Harvey-Cleary's CM-at-risk contract for the renovation of the archives and library building (shown, exterior) allowed the firm to coordinate early with the Texas Facilities Commission. Photo: Bailey Architects.

it back to the structure and put in new finishes to create a modernized look and add more space," says Adam Johnson, project manager for Harvey-Cleary.

On the first two stack floors, the supporting steel columns were "beefed up" by the contractor with additional steel to support new, high-density shelving on moveable tracks. "That required a lot of interior welding and containment," Johnson says. "We had to put in temporary duct work and fans to exhaust all fumes."

The primary reason for the renovation was "to provide the proper environmental situation for archival materials and precious documents," Boone says. "When the building first began housing the archives and library, today's technology wasn't available."

Strict monitoring of temperature, humidity and dust were required throughout construction to protect the historic materials. "We had to maintain between 65 and 78 degrees and 40-60% humidity at



Construction filters were placed on all HVAC ductwork so the building's occupants wouldn't be exposed to dust from the construction. Photo: Bailey Architects.

all times," Johnson says. The contractor installed additional monitoring systems, including digital thermostats and humidistats, so all parties could monitor conditions in the archives. "We also installed high-efficiency particulate air filters that remove 99.8% of anything floating through the air," Johnson says. "These are particles invisible to the micron to take away any danger from the documents." That was in addition to construction filters on all HVAC ductwork so building occupants wouldn't be exposed to construction dust.

As another protective measure for historic documents, low volatile organic compound requirements were strictly adhered to when installing new finishes like carpet and paint. The contractor also installed windows with ultra violet film and special, 99.9% UV-free light bulbs.

Upgrading the electrical, information technology and HVAC systems "while people are in the building trying to operate normal, day-to-day office life and get work done" was a challenge, Johnson says. "We had many after hours outages where we had to have systems down to replace main panels, so lots of night and weekend work," Tassone adds.

The contractor replaced ductwork in segments, working from the ground up. Before switching over to the new HVAC system, the contractor installed temporary air handlers on the roof to condition the building, and then made the switch from the old to new system in one weekend, what would normally be a three-month job, Tassone says.

By the December dedication, the contractor had already completed renovations on the ground, first and second floors and was continuing work on the third and fourth floor and upper stacks and installing a new, Energy Star roof to replace the old, modified bitumen roof. Although the TFC did not seek any third-party green certification for the project, the renovation "met state energy conservation codes," Boone says. <<