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AIA ILLINOIS INNOVATION AWARD TO HONOR EXPANSION AND RENOVATION OF DEKALB PUBLIC LIBRARY

Revitalized building exemplifies the importance of both historic preservation and the very idea of what it means to be a livable community.

CONTENT EMBARGOED UNTIL OCTOBER 18, 2017

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Springfield – The American Institute of Architects, Illinois Council will present its Meis van der Rohe Design Honor Award for Innovation to DeKalb's Haish Memorial Public Library, on October 18th, 5:30 – 6:30 pm at the Library, 309 Oak Street, in DeKalb.

Media and Public Welcome

Tripling the size of the building without compromising the integrity of the original structure was the primary challenge for Don McKey, AIA, Design Principal, of Nagle Hartray Architecture. A variety of site and architectural design choices that allowed for horizontal expansion so that the height of the addition matches the original structure, achieved the goal. An innovative strategy was fundamental to keeping the Haish Library as the community's public library. Without space to adapt and repurpose the existing 18,000 square feet building to 46,000 square feet, the building would have been abandoned in favor of another, larger location.

The design for the expansion and renovation of the DeKalb Public Library addresses challenges to the relevance of public library design, by bridging past and future. Nagle Hartray's new design honors the American Institute of Architects principles for livable communities, through human scaled dimensions, preservation of the urban core, vibrant public spaces and neighborhood identity. The project also restores the lost beauty of the original building, while allowing for uncluttering and re-appreciating its spaces, revitalizing original library finishes together with new lighting, to renew the building interiors.

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The original Haish Memorial Library, is a gem of a 1930 Indiana Limestone building that is on the National Register of Historic Places. Until this project, it had received only one modest expansion and had long ago outgrown its limited space. A new centrally-located entry courtyard makes the building ADA accessible, giving it a new vitality in daily library activities. This room has quickly become a popular community living room.

The historic building design also informed several other elements of the expansion. The twisting lobby columns abstract a carved stone detail at the original entry, and also reference the barbed wire magnate, Jacob Haish, who financed the original construction of the library with a gift in 1928. The shallow figural detailing of exterior wall panels recall the elegant Deco-Moderne detailing of the original architecture. The planning module of the original building is the basis for generating the floor plan of the expansion.

The design program for the library echoes several trends in public library design. The Children's area features age-appropriate space for toddlers, pre-schoolers and elementary school children. A wing of the original building is adapted to a prominent teen space. The original building's multi-story library shelving room has been adapted to new computer center. An adjacent room provides library users access to current digital technologies including 3D printing and collaborative meeting systems. A variety of study and meeting rooms address another popular demand for library services.

Other participants in the project include: Eric Penney, AIA Technical Principal and Hannah Prevedel, Project Manager, Nagel Hartray; Paul Gorski, SE, GRAEF; Brandon Fortier, PE, KJWW Engineering; Josephine Bellalta, Altamanu; Lance Tritsch, Pepper Construction; Glen Eriksson, PE, Eriksson Engineering; Graham Harwood, CCS International, Inc.; Fred Moritz, Shiner + Associates; Gwen Grossman, Gwen Grossman Lighting; Charlie Saville, WMA Consulting Engineers.

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