



View to North from the Founder's Garden

## Press Release: Snøhetta Designs New Library for Temple University in Philadelphia

In Fall 2018, North Philadelphia will be the home of Snøhetta's newest library, designed in collaboration with Stantec. The Temple University Library will provide a new social and academic heart for the campus of 37,800 students. A variety of study spaces, resource centers, sophisticated information technology, public spaces and event hall will be housed under one roof, establishing a vibrant center for both students and the surrounding community. The design received unanimous support from the city of Philadelphia's Civic Design Review in the fall of 2015 and will soon begin construction.

The design is inspired by the historic academies of Greek antiquity, where social spaces for exchanging ideas were primary and storage of written content took a secondary role. Snøhetta's design challenges the traditional typology of the research library solely as a repository for books and archives, and instead provides a diversity of spaces that will spark chance encounters, enable collaboration, and encourage knowledge-sharing amongst its users. Notably, the new library uses an automated book retrieval system to store the majority of the University's more than 2 million volumes. The ASRS significantly reduces the amount of space needed to store books and allows the building to provide more collaborative learning space and student resources.

Located at the intersection of two major pedestrian pathways and adjacent to a future campus quadrangle, the library will anchor a new academic and social core for Temple University. The surrounding landscape of terraced plazas step up to the library entrances, providing outdoor classrooms and opportunities for informal gatherings. The new library's architecture is defined by a solid base clad in vertical sections of

rough stone that references the materials of the surrounding campus context. The grand wooden arched entrances cut into the stone volume and announce a welcoming point of entry. Expanses of pleated frameless glass supported on steel mullions create maximum transparency at the major entrances. The arches continue into the building, forming a 3-story domed atrium lobby with white terrazzo floors. The lobby, café, central atrium and 24/7 zone, which is unimpeded by security checkpoints, will welcome in the surrounding community as well as Temple students.

An oculus carved into the lobby's domed atrium opens up views to each corner of the building, serving as a wayfinding anchor and placing the user at the center of the library's activity. As users circulate the building, this visual and physical connectivity allows the individual to take stock of their bearings and encourages students to use all of the building's resources. In addition to interactive and generative learning spaces, the library also provides moments for introspective study. Arriving at the top floor, the visitor reaches a sun-filled reading room with traditional browsing stacks. Its light and airy character rises from the more opaque base, and opens up to the library's green-roof via a terrace with stepped seating, providing a unique outdoor space for students.

This new library will put Temple University at the forefront of progressive research institutions. Acting as a new social, cultural, and intellectual hub for the university and surrounding community, the design serves the contemporary needs of a world-class research facility and its students.

Please contact [press@snohetta.com](mailto:press@snohetta.com) for high resolution images.



Main entrance along the eastern façade



View from East across future Quad



View to East down Polett Walk



Atrium from Main Stair



View from Southeast

## About Snøhetta

For over 25 years, Snøhetta has designed some of the world's most notable public and cultural projects. Snøhetta kick-started its career in 1989 with the competition-winning entry for the new library of Alexandria, Egypt. This was later followed by the commission for the Norwegian National Opera in Oslo and the National September 11 Memorial Museum Pavilion at the World Trade Center in New York City, among many others. Since its inception, the practice has maintained its original trans-disciplinary approach, integrating architectural, landscape and interior design in all of its projects.

Snøhetta is currently working on a number of educational, civic and cultural projects including Calgary's New Central Library in Alberta, Canada, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Expansion in California, the Far Rockaway Public Library in Queens, New York, the Westchester Branch Library in the Bronx, and the Redesign of Times Square in New York City. Snøhetta's most recently completed libraries include the James B. Hunt Jr. Library at NCSU and the Ryerson University Student Learning Centre in Toronto. The studio was recently shortlisted as one of seven firms in consideration to design the Obama Presidential Center in the South Side of Chicago.

Among its many recognitions, Snøhetta received the World Architecture Award for the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet, and the Aga Kahn Prize for Architecture for Alexandria Library. In 2013, Snøhetta's design for the James B. Hunt Jr. Library at North Carolina State University was awarded the American Institute of Architects and American Library Association's Library Building Award, among many other recognitions. Since its completion in 2008, the Norwegian National Opera and Ballet has also garnered the Mies van der Rohe European Union Prize for Architecture and the EDRA (Environmental Design Research Association) Great Places Award, as well as the European Prize for Urban Public Space, The International Architecture Award and The Global Award for Sustainable Architecture in 2010.

### Temple University Library Project Facts

**Location:** Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

**Design Architect:** Snøhetta

**Executive Architect:** Stantec

**Scope:** Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interiors

**Size:** 225,000 SF

**Expected Completion:** 2018

**Program:** Library, Event Hall, Exhibit Space, Special Collections Center, Digital Scholar's Center, Innovation Lab, Immersive Visualization Studio, Makerspace, Graduate Scholar's Studio, Classrooms, Reading Rooms, Group Study Rooms, Writing Center, Math and Science Resource Center, Café, 24-7 Zone, Staff, and Administration.

**Client:** Temple University