

WEST HOLLYWOOD LIBRARY

Photography by Jonathan Moore

Los Angeles just lost another parking lot. The formerly asphalt-covered corner of San Vicente Boulevard and Melrose Avenue is now home to the new West Hollywood Library—a 32,000-square-foot, Silver LEED-certified building designed by Johnson Favaro that is filled with far more than just books.

The roomy new digs (the former 5,000-square-foot location a hundred yards away is slated for demolition in November) offer plenty of room for extras among the stacks, such as a career development center and a children's theater modeled after Michelangelo's Laurentian Library in Florence.

The new library's design—which includes an elaborate flower-shaped, carved-bamboo coffered ceiling that spans the entire collections floor—is timeless and, according to the architect, hard to categorize. "The building is neither modern nor traditional; it neither waxes nostalgic about yesterday nor pretends to determine a future over which we have no control," says principal Jim Favaro. In addition to providing visual impact, the three-foot-deep coffers serve the practical purpose of screening the not-so-inspired sprinkler, audio and lighting systems.

But the artistic undoubtedly outweighs the functional: A work by L.A. artist Shepard Fairey has been commissioned, and a whimsical sculpture by designer David Wiseman will be suspended above the main stairwell, making this a charmed place for bibliophiles to park themselves with a good book. —Kerry Cavanaugh

