PROJECT I: Analysis of the Library Due: 1/20/10

The start of this semester marks the mid-point in a year-long investigation of the conceptual and formative potential of architectural programs. This semester, we will focus on an iconic program, the Library, as a vehicle for investigating design methodologies that generate meaningful architectural ideas from patterns of use, functional relationships, and cultural expectations.

A Short History of the Library

The history of the library can be understood in three distinct phases. These phases parallel the development of written language and the development of reproduction technologies for images and the written word. These changes were, in turn, part of larger cultural shifts in Western European intellectual history, shifts which today are seen as having delineated phases of Western culture: the Classical Age, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment.

The Classical Library

The development of non-symbolic alphabetical writing during the course of the 2nd millennium BCE was essential to the explosion of abstract ideas throughout Mediterranean and Middle Eastern civilizations. For the first time in history, a complex idea could be transferred from an individual to a static, non-perishable, storage device—a scroll—and at a later date shared with another individual. With the creation of this information storage system, it became possible to conceive of a collection containing all the world’s knowledge. The limiting factor in the collection and transfer of ideas, however, was the storage system itself. Until the advent of the printing press, every known text had to be (re)produced by hand. Today one sees multiple copies on any bookstore shelf; then copies of handwritten texts were incredibly rare. Many of the most important texts in history may have existed in only three or four copies. This rarity led to the classical library acting as a guardian of knowledge only available to a select few, rather than as a vehicle for the open dissemination of ideas.

The Late Renaissance Library

Beginning in the 1450's, the Gutenberg printing press freed knowledge from the limitations of manual reproduction. Today, it is hard to imagine how radically this invention changed the world’s relationship to speculative thought and the very nature of civilization in Western Europe. Not only did Gutenberg make it possible for an individual to own a personal collection of books, the invention of the printing press inadvertently liberated writing from the Latin language and led to the rise of colloquial languages such as French, Italian, German and English. In the space of a few decades, the number of books in Europe increased several thousand-fold and, with this increase, the concept of the Library was re-created.

As opposed to being a private institution, the Library for the first time began to be seen as open
to the outside world. Great libraries were established throughout the western hemisphere, often associated with colleges founded by the laity such as Oxford and Cambridge. These new libraries could be typified as collections (of books) reflecting the personality of a Head Librarian and organized by general topic, such as Architecture or Astronomy.

*The Enlightenment Library*

The Enlightenment Library was founded on two significant advances: the mass production of books and the creation of scientific methods of classification that transformed the library from a collection to a *system* of assembling ideas. By the 18th century, advances in the technology of book-making made the book itself sufficiently common to be of little physical value. This allowed libraries to build vast collections for relatively minor investments. These technological advances occurred at the same time that Enlightenment thinkers were proposing the radical notion that all men had the inherent ability to reason and thus to learn if given the opportunity. The two together lead to the premise that a library could be open to the general public or community, in essence democratizing knowledge. All knowledge could now be available to all who could get a basic education.

Even more radical was the Enlightenment concept that a library could be structured by a classification system that would organize knowledge critically, in such a way that simply using the library would lead to the advancement of ideas. No longer was the library a personal reflection of the librarian. New classification systems were developed, systems in which finding a book on the shelves led to *collateral* discoveries on adjacent shelves and thus facilitated the advancement of ideas. This transformation led to the modern library being understood as a research tool that one used; it became, in essence, a platform for the dissemination of information structured by an internally critical system for data retrieval.

**ASSIGNMENT:** You are to research three critical topics as they are found in an architecturally significant library. Your approach to this research effort must be explore the library itself a tool (as opposed to a place or an ancillary to web-based knowledge). Remember that library contains multiple information sources such as slides, journals, specimen collections, and so forth. It will be necessary to understand contextual issues regarding each project such as the locale and climate, the community the library serves, and the type(s) of collection(s) held.

**Topic 1: The relationship between the nature of the collection and the architectural design.**

How is the collection structured? How does this organization influence the form of the library? What is the relationship between reading and the collection? How does one interface with the keepers of the collection? With the actual physical elements of the collection?

Possible drawings: Flow charts of the functional structure of the library. Analytic diagrams of the library plan and/or section.
**Topic 2: The uses and functions of light in the library.**

Does natural light enter the library? If so, how? How is light, natural or artificial, used to define spaces within the library? Does light influence the architectural form? If so, how? What types of light are present?

Possible drawings: Sections showing lighting conditions. Lighting zone plans. Sketchup models to illustrate more complex forms.

**Topic 3: The structural and tectonic qualities of the library.**

How is the library constructed? What is the spatial or visual impact of the construction decisions? How does the structure relate to the organization of the library and/or its collection(s)? What materials are used and how do they illustrate the ideas of the library?

Possible drawings: Details, sections, elevations. Diagrams and/or images.

**Presentation Format:**

Using the Dreamweaver software that you learned in AAD 202, create a website which presents text, drawings and images as required to communicate the results of your analysis. You will use the website as the basis of a presentation to the class, after which it will be posted on the course website and available to your classmates for reference.

**Title Screen Standard Format:** Project I: Analysis of the Library

Case Study: Name of Your Library
Location
Designer

AAE 382 Architectural Design II
Sec 1: Kevin Kemner OR Sec. 2: Janet White
Your Name

Remainder of pages as needed; total presentation not to exceed 5 minutes.

**Deliverables:**

Hard Copy: 2 11"X 8.5" (Landscape format) bound printouts of your presentation screens; Title page as cover
Digital: CD with (linked!!) website files, labeled with title page information
**The Libraries**

Viipuri Library (also called Vyborg Library)  
Vyborg, Finland (now Russia); Alvar Aalto

The Wren Library, Trinity College  
Cambridge, ENG; Sir Christopher Wren

Rovaniemi Library  
Rovaniemi, Finland; Alvar Aalto

John Rylands Library, University of Manchester  
Manchester, ENG; Original building Basil Champneys, with 2004-7 extension

Mt Angel Abbey Library  
St. Benedict, OR; Alvar Aalto

Librarie Mazarine in the Collège des Quatre-Nations  
Paris; Louis Le Vau

Staatsbibliothek  
Berlin; Hans Scharoun and Edgar Wisniewski

Broward County Library  
Fort Lauderdale FL; Robert Gatje

The Athenaeum  
Boston, MA; Edward Cabot Clarke

Morgan Library  
New York, NY; original by McKim Mead and White, expansion by Renzo Piano

Seattle Public Library  
Seattle, WA; Rem Koolhaas

Radcliffe Camera/ New Bodleian Library complex  
Oxford, ENG; James Gibbs/ Sir Gilbert Scott

Berlin Free University Library  
Berlin; Foster + Partners

Wells College Library  
Aurora, NY; Walter Netsch/SOM
Burton Barr (Phoenix) Central Library
Phoenix, AZ; Will Bruder

Laurentian Library
Florence, IT; Michelangelo

Phillips Exeter Academy Library
Exeter, NH; Louis Kahn

Bibliotheca Alexandrina
Alexandria, Egypt; Snohetta Architects with Hamza Associates

UC Berkeley Music Library
Berkeley, CA; Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects

New Bibliothèque Nationale de France
Paris; Dominique Perrault

Old Bibliothèque Nationale
Paris; Henri Labrouste

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University’
New Haven, CT; Gordon Bunshaft/SOM

Stockholm Public Library
Stockholm, Sweden; Erik Gunnar Asplund

Tredyffrin Public Library
Stafford, PA; Romaldo Guirgola

Stadhuis en Bibliotheek (City Hall and Central Library)
The Hague (Den Haag), The Netherlands; Richard Meier

Annenberg Library
Chestnut Hill, MA; Shepley and Bulfinch

St Genevieve Library
Paris; Henri Labrouste

Honan-Allston Branch Library
Allston, MA; Machado and Silvetti Associates

Denver Public Library
Dever, CO; Michael Graves

Boston Public Library
    Boston, MA; McKim Mead and White

South Chula Vista Library
    San Diego; Ricardo Legorreta

Anne & Jerome Fisher Fine Arts Library, University of Pennsylvania
    Philadelphia, PA; Frank Furness