



SCHLESINGER LIBRARY RENOVATION, RADCLIFFE INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Architects: Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates, Inc.

Location: Cambridge, MA

Client: The President and Fellows of Harvard College (The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study)

Construction Cost: \$5,000,000

Area: 26,000 sf

Completion: 2004

Distinctions: LEED Certified

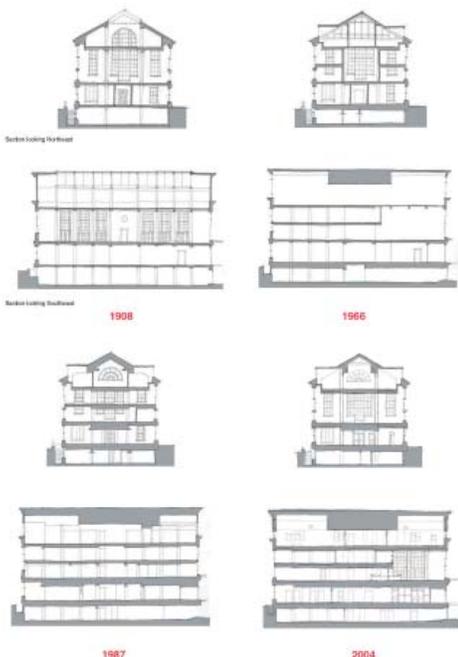
VSBA programmed and designed a renovation of the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library for the History of Women in America, one of a group of buildings at the head of historic Radcliffe Yard. Built in 1907 and originally home to the Radcliffe College Library, the building became a research library in 1967. It's now an important component of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Over time, the building became more intensely and densely used to meet the needs of a modern special collections library. In the process, most of the character, grace, and generosity of the original building interior was obliterated. Our challenge was to help the Library recover some of its character while meeting the 21st century needs of an important collection and contemporary caretakers and users. We:

- improved building systems to ensure security and long-term preservation of collections
- facilitated library staffing and function by consolidating service points and public access
- improved building entry sequence and enable connectivity between public spaces in Radcliffe Yard buildings
- reclaimed some of the building's historic significance and ethos.

This project was the first increment of the Radcliffe Institute's campus plan, completed by VSBA in 2002. Our renovation supports the goals of the overall plan, with exhibition and meeting space on the first floor and a newly accessible entrance from Radcliffe Yard. An area of the second floor was returned to double-height reading room space, and existing original building elements -- such as the ornamental stair and the Sarah Wyman Whitman Room -- were refurbished and maintained in public view.

The renovated Schlesinger Library has been LEED Certified for its efficiency, environmental sensitivity, and sustainable approach to interior environments.



Evolution of the Library



Reading Room



Reading Room

