Harvard Chemistry Library

Ghosts Aboard the Starship
The More Things Change...

- If it ain’t broke…
- Tip of the spear...
- 1700 sq. ft.!
- Evocation of Woodward’s ghost
- Rentacrate
- The winter of our discontent…
- Class Act
- Never mind…
If it ain’t broke...
Harvard Chemistry & Chemical Biology Library

- Library reading room built in 1927 as part of the Converse Memorial Laboratory – two balconies
- Addition built in 1962 – journal room with mezzanine
- Library is 6,000 sq. ft. in size
- ~25,000 journal volumes housed within the Library
- ~10,000 monographs housed within the Library
- ~25,000 volumes in the Harvard Depository
Seating and Study Space

- Study Carrels for 25 students in Journal Room
- 3 Reference/work tables in Journal Room
- 24 seats at three long tables in Reading Room
- Two couches; two soft seats in Reading Room
Staff and Context

- 1 Professional FTE; 1 Paraprofessional/staff FTE; .5 Student FTE (from Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information science).
- Librarian reports to Chemistry & Chemical Biology (CCB) Department Laboratory Director
- Library is funded by the Chemistry & Chemical Biology Department
- Library is responsible for purchasing graduate chemistry material for Harvard University
- Cost-sharing of some resources based upon use (e.g. Scifinder Scholar)
Tip of the spear...
Library space targeted as Laboratory space

- August 2004 Department Faculty Space Committee began to look to the Library as a location for future laboratory space
- “We are recruiting a senior faculty member and the Library space is the only quality space available for their laboratory”
- “It’s not really about the Library just now, we need to have this space… we’ll come up with a space for the Library later”
- “You are ‘tip of the spear’ in this project and your mission is to give us metrics and a design plan for a potential new library space”
- …in two weeks so we can present it at the CCB faculty retreat
CCB Library Committee meets

- Members somewhat conflicted, however, bow to the urgency of recruiting the senior faculty member.
- Department can plan a new modern library space with a contemporary feel and incorporate the latest technology.
- Perhaps some part of the old library can be re-used.
- We’ll house only that material which is not online.
New Library Options

- Library housing CCB Library journal content not online from 1980 onward and containing all other services and collections would require approximately 3138 sq. ft. without any seating/study space. With modest seating (12-16 people) would require 3583 sq. ft.

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1700 sq. ft.
Space in the Naito Laboratory
Designated for the CCB Library

- 1700 sq. ft. of laboratory space near current location
- Prominent windows with low-e coatings
- Nicely designed entry near main elevator
- Unfortunately, an experiment is currently taking up ~300 sq. ft of space within designated space for Library, using tanks of nitrogen, magnetic fields, and sensitive to other environmental parameters
- “Just design around that experiment, we’ll work something out, it’s going to move…at some point”
Revised Library Plan

- All journal volumes must be removed to the Harvard Depository
- New print journal issues will be kept in the Library until bound, then sent immediately to the Harvard Depository
- Housing the Department dissertations becomes problematic, perhaps hallway cabinets
- Monographs will be heavily weeded and priority given to highly circulating and newer material
- Retrieval of volumes from the Harvard Depository must be made user-friendly and a volume receiving area needs to be designed into the new space
Harvard Depository (HD)

- Secure, climate-controlled storage located in Southborough MA; ~30 miles from Cambridge.
- Placing all journal volumes into the HD with patron recall would cost an additional $30K per year for recall and return.
- Processing journal volumes individually for accession to HD would cost ~$22,600.
“We will have a couch!” Priorities for a very small space

- Small couch in current journal reading area
- Study and reference carrels
- Small reference stack area
- Interior stacks for monographs
- Current journal display compacted to see only journal issue spines – faculty suggestion
- Large flat panel display for database instruction
- Catalog search computers mounted on pillars
- Custom wood floor and shelving
- Contemporary art lighting over carrels
- Harvard Depository receiving area next to entrance
Graduate Students begin to formally weigh in...

- Graduate students create a survey to express displeasure with the Library downsizing and the potential stockroom closure
- Copies are sent to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and to the Head of Harvard College Libraries as well as the Department chair and others
Student Survey cont’d

- 83% of student responding said downsizing the Library was not the best long-term solution to the Department’s laboratory space problem
- 91% did not support moving and downsizing the Library
Woodward’s Ghost Evoked

- R. B. Woodward spent many hours in the Chemistry Library and designed the unique classification system and journal arrangement.
- Students became mindful of the history that would be lost with the downsizing of the Library and subsequent loss of the reading room. All allies were summoned for input.
Removal of Material to the Harvard Depository

- A potential schedule for construction of the new laboratory space envisioned a June starting date.
- Processing of materials began January 2\textsuperscript{nd}.
- Two experienced workers were ‘borrowed’ from Harvard College Libraries to work for three weeks until which time workers would be hired by the CCB Library and trained to continue processing materials throughout the Spring semester.
- Hundreds of crates of material a week began to move to the Harvard Depository
Material was being processed and crated at such a rapid rate that the Harvard Depository asked us to temporarily secure transfer crates from ‘Rentacrate’
New Service Model for Depository Materials

- Changes were made to the profile of the CCB library in the Aleph 500 library software to allow patron recall of items in the Harvard Depository.
- Items recalled via the HOLLIS catalog up through 5 pm each day would be delivered to the CCB Library the next day.
- The process was similar to recalling a book which users were already familiar with.
- There would be a period of time during which material would be unavailable in order for items to be processed at the Harvard Depository.
The Winter of our Discontent: Student Frustration Increases as shelves empty
The faculty member the Department recruited declined to come.

No new faculty was going to be hired in the immediate future.

More time was needed to modify the space plans.
Class Act: reclassifying the monograph collection

- Repurposed two temporary workers to finish reclassification of CCB Library monographs from Woodward scheme to Library of Congress classification scheme. All staff pitched in.
- Project started three years ago when most LC call numbers were written on title page of existing monograph collection.
- Swing space now existed to move and re-shelve books while project is underway.
- New call numbers now must be entered in online catalog and books tagged and re-shelved.
Faculty Space Committee considering plan A, B, or C

- Plan A was the original move and creation of a new Library in the small space in the Naito Research Building.
- Plan B was renovation of one half the current Library space, leaving the reading room untouched – architect to be consulted later.
- Plan C was no renovation.
On August 12, 2005 this email was sent to Department member from the current Chair:

“As you may know, there have been discussions about possible renovations related to the CCB library over the last year. I know many members of our community were concerned about this important resource and space. In the spirit of keeping our community informed, I am writing to let you know that there will be no renovation of the library—the CCB library will remain in its current space and configuration for the foreseeable future.”