SOCAL ASLA 2014 Quality of Life Awards
Category: Design - Institutional

Project Description

Project Identity and Location
Los Angeles Law Library
301 West 1st Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Purpose of Project
The Los Angeles County Law Library takes its place alongside a number of landmark facilities in the downtown Los Angeles Civic Center, including the new Grand Park and Disney Hall which are reviving the historic core of the City. The Landscape Architect worked extensively on the renovations to the Library landscape to enhance the user experience of the facility by preparing a new landscape master plan.

Renovations for the library landscape entailed developing a master plan to address ADA access to the site from Hill Street and Broadway as well as into the building for overall improved exterior security and use of the site.

This also included new hardscape and ADA accessible walkways, stairs, raised planter walls, waterproofing, site furnishings and lighting. Critical to site development was a new surface and sub-surface drainage system to protect the building envelope and public spaces. Also new drought tolerant plantings are irrigated with a water wise irrigation system to bring the landscape up to date with sustainable practices.

Role of Landscape Architect
The Landscape Architect’s design philosophy was highly focused on sustainability - integrating drought tolerant, low maintenance planting that provided color and softened the streetscape. This landscape has created a comfortable environment for all user and stakeholders, while also maintaining security and addressing critical issues to serve the LA Law Library into the 21st Century.

Significance
Taking advantage of the sloping nature of the site, a curved sloping walkway connects the upper edge of the site at Hill Street to Broadway at the lower end. A series of spaces unfold along the walk including an entrance plaza that accommodates library programs and other functions. Repetitive ‘fin’ walls along the walk punctuate smaller garden spaces that provide for informal seating and conversation. The walkway signifies a seamless integration of pedestrian access for all pedestrians regardless of disability.

Special Factors
Extensive renovations were competed to the old infrastructure of the building exterior. This aspect of the project made a unique environment between disciplines for implementation. Thus, the process required multiple coordination efforts, design reviews and construction administration. A special factor was the Landscape Architect’s effort in coordinating refurbished & repainted finishes to the exterior. The original refurbished granite façade original to the building from the 1960’s, needed to match the new stepped granite planter walls along First Street. The Landscape Architect was instrumental in the management of project construction to ensure its conformance with design specifications as well as the ability to provide timely solutions/recommendations relative to unforeseen conditions.