



Case Study

Durham County Main Library

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The Challenge: Durham County Main Library Renovation

Libraries aren't just buildings full of books anymore. They offer full media centers and often serve as community centers. So when Durham County Main Library was in need of a facelift inside and out, they called on Vines Architecture to transform their space. But what started out as a simple renovation became a much grander endeavor and complete overhaul. Vines Architecture met with library leadership to hear their vision of a much more impactful project that had a true focus on being a center for literacy in the broadest sense. Mannington Commercial's wide selection of carpet products crafted to perform and inspire helped transform and reinvigorate the space into an open and vibrant community center piece.

Location:
Durham, NC, USA

Facility Type:
Library

Size:
84,000 sq ft

Products:
Frenemy Collection
Intrinsic Collection

The Design Process

The original thesis behind a library is learning and education, and books were the center point for a long time. When Vines updated the library, the building program still included the books but brought in different tools of education, such as STEAM environments – science, technology, engineering, arts, and math – as well as different maker-spaces, computer labs, history rooms, business resources, and other program spaces. From a general building standpoint, the library leadership and Vines worked together to reimagine and rethink how a library needs to function and how to best serve the diverse community.



Erenemy: Block - S&P; Intrinisc: Magnify - Justify

Vines consolidated and relocated the entry and opened up the front as a welcoming beacon to engage the community – not just the surrounding community, but the whole county, since it is their central library because it will have vast use among community members. The idea was to avoid a contained space where all the computers are, or where all the STEAM type of activity happens in the building. Traditionally, libraries are thought of as places where everybody is quiet, and everything that is loud happens in an enclosed space. Vines worked with the team and the staff to rethink that idea and truly activate the library space, from the basement to the fourth floor. There is a teen maker-space and gaming on the first floor, and then the children’s area literally just spills out across the whole main entry floor. On the third floor, there are computer labs and another maker-space with 3D printing and activity. There is also a large monumental staircase where you can see activity happening from floor to floor, ending in a business literacy center. By spreading all the new program typologies throughout the building, there is a sense of activation and cross-disciplinary collaboration happening within a public environment that is typically considered stagnant.



Frenemy: Block - S&P; Intrinisc: Magnify - Security

Why the Flooring Mattered

Vines also considered flooring a key design element of their renovation project. Always wanting to pull in some interesting element that relates to the exterior in some way, Vines Architecture chose Frenemy Collection, Block to replicate the exterior façade of the building. Not only was it a cost-effective choice, but it was also neutral. Vines decided to use Magnify Collection to pull in color and give a little bit of organization to the chaos.

“Visually speaking, there are circular moments in the building that break away from the typical rectilinear 90-degree experience of a library. Those are kind of isolated moments of energy or experience or activation, like the children’s program, for instance,” says Senior Interior Designer Kaitlan Phelps. Vines used color to organize the floors, but more importantly, to organize and energize the building itself, with key moments. The theory is to create control and context over how people experience the building when you go through the design process. The space has its highs and lows, its quiet moments, but also its loud, boisterous moments.

In addition to just color, the texture of the products in conjunction with the other elements all work together to create a space that is cool and gritty, and it’s textural. “It has a really cool vibe to it, if you will. Reflecting that in the design was really important too. We didn’t want to put a precious museum in the middle of downtown Durham, you know? Product played a big role in getting that story across,” Phelps says.

“To be able to accomplish design in a higher form while also creating an environment that’s durable in the long run is key to it being successful for the public.”

Kaitlan Phelps

Senior Interior Designer, Vines Architecture

Performance Is Key

But there is more to flooring than just color and texture. For a space to really maximize its use, maintenance and product performance have to be top of mind. Phelps states, "If you push aside those needs, you're also pushing aside the access and who you're designing for. You can design a beautiful building that also fits in the private sector. To be able to accomplish design in a higher form while also creating an environment that's durable in the long run is key to it being successful for the public."

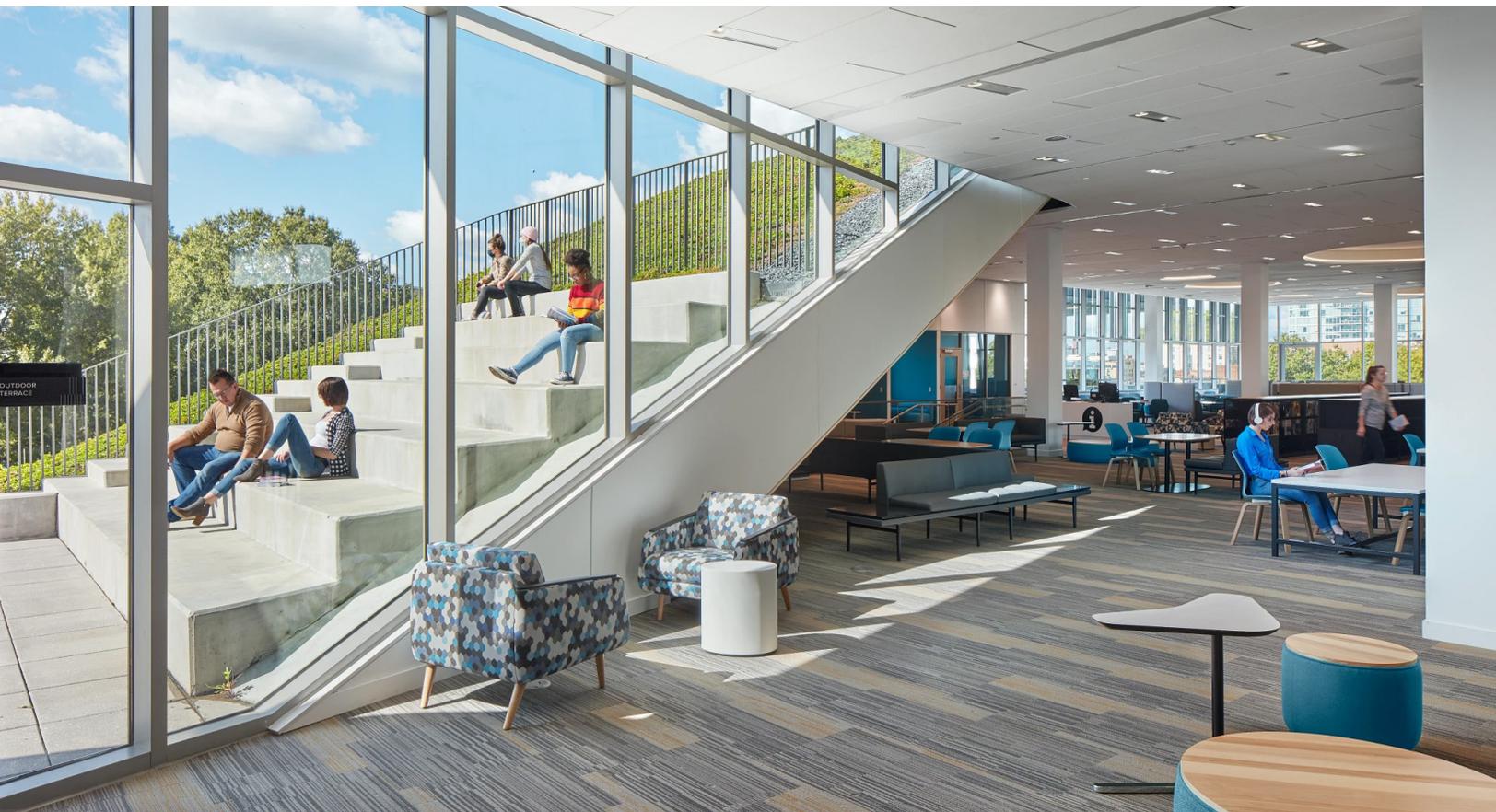
Phelps continues, "As a designer, you want to create a space that looks just as good three years later. And I think when you create public spaces that are more accessible and more open, it's great to keep that in the forefront of your mind."

As institutions such as libraries and other educational and public buildings evolve to better fit how people really use them, it becomes more critical for designers, architects and suppliers to work together. By taking into consideration factors beyond just product performance and thinking about creating an inspiring environment, everyone benefits from a space that's beautiful for the long run.

Mannington Commercial Carpets: Easier to Maintain

- Antron® nylon features a unique, hollow filament shape for exceptional soil hiding and cleanability.
- XGUARD® Stain Resistant Technology provides long-term stain resistance for our space dye products.
- ColorSafe® Bleach Resistant Technology resists color fade-out from bleach spills for our space dye products.
- Moisture-barrier backings are built to withstand aggressive wet cleanings.
- Frenemy and Intrinsic carpets were specifically designed with a 3.5 TARR for use in severe environments with rigorous foot traffic situations such as public areas, lobbies and dining facilities as well as transportation service areas such as airports. The TARR on our carpets is tested and verified by an independent lab.

Frenemy: Block - Custom; Intrinsic: Magnify - Security





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