



Art and Architecture | Introduction

The physical structure of the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library is impressive in both its size and design. The two architectural styles of the North and South buildings combine to make Hatcher one of the premier landmarks of the central campus area. The Library's physical merit extends to the historic and artistic artifacts within and just outside of its walls.

Art and Architecture | Exterior

The North Facade Library Stone

The stone bearing the word "Library," directly over the main entrance of the Graduate Library, is surrounded by the 12 signs of the zodiac, symbolizing universality.

The zodiac signs are, from the top left clockwise: Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius.

Both this piece and the north facade medallions were sculpted by Ulysses Ricci, who is known for his Boweryesque corbels.^[16]

The North Facade Seal

Ulysses A. Ricci, a New York born sculptor, inscribed the university seal found on in the north entry to the library. The seal contains the words "University of Michigan 1817" on its outer border and "Artes, Scientis, Veritas" inside the seal, which is Latin for "Art, Science, Truth". The symbol in the center is the "Lamp of Wisdom."^[4]

Some of Ricci's major works include the fountain in the McLean Conservatory (1915), the sculpture and bronze doors for the Constitution Building (1928), and the Department of Commerce building, Washington, D.C. (1931).

The Bentley Historical Library maintains a very informative website concerning the history of the University Seal.

The Professor's Monument

The Professor's Monument, which sits on the southeast corner of the Graduate Library, was created by William Peters and acquired by the University in 1846. It was erected in honor of Professor Joseph Whiting (1845); with panels added after the deaths of Professors Douglass Houghton (1845), Charles Fox (1854), and Samuel Denton (1860). It was originally placed in the designated "University Burying Ground" on the east side of campus but the burying ground was never occupied. The monument was moved several times but has been in its present location since 1918. The broken column signifies a life cut short. It is often referred to as a cenotaph, which is a monument to someone whose body is buried elsewhere. Plaques have been placed at the base of the monument that provide translations of the Latin inscriptions on the monument.^[17]

The Professor's Monument is the second oldest structure on campus - the President's house is the only structure older.

For more information about sculptures on campus, visit the University Planner's Office website.

North Facade Stone Medallions

The north facade of the Library contains 10 medallions that were sculpted by Ulysses Ricci in 1920. Each medallion represents an academic discipline: medicine, drama, earth sciences, fine arts, history, law, mathematics, poetry and music, religion and philosophy, and physical sciences.

Development of the Library Buildings

The evolution of the Graduate Library has lasted over a century.

The north building of the current Graduate Library was built in 1920 by Albert Kahn. The building was constructed around the metal stacks of the previous library building that was built in 1883, known as the General Library. Kahn was praised for his ability to construct a large building at a low cost, thanks to his experience in factory construction. (Kahn & Associates also built Hill Auditorium and the Natural Sciences Building). The north building was built primarily using reinforced concrete - an innovation of the time - and was therefore safe from fire while allowing plentiful natural light. [20]

The construction of the South Building in 1970 was accomplished according to three specific principles. First, the new addition had to be flexible to allow the possibility of using any area in the building interchangeably for book storage, readers, carrels, or staff work space. Second, the addition could not detract from the buildings surrounding the addition (especially the president's house and Clements Library). And third, the new building could not interrupt the flow of east-west pedestrian traffic (especially from the Union to the Undergraduate Library). [9]

The development of the library continues today in a variety of ways. The Friends of the Library funded a project that improved the aesthetic appeal of the Information Center on the second floor of the library through the addition of artwork and library-specific, inspiring quotations. Currently, the building is undergoing extensive rewiring to meet the demands of the digital age.



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[18] Untitled, 1. University of Michigan.
Available: Hatcher Graduate Library Room 209 hanging files

[19] Untitled, 2. University of Michigan.
Available: Hatcher Graduate Library Room 209 hanging files

[20] *see Bishop above*