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The E. S. Bird Library Reconfiguration Project

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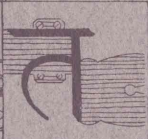
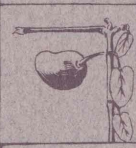


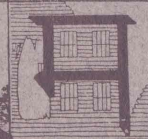
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COURIER

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The E. S. Bird Library Reconfiguration Project

BY CAROL PARKE

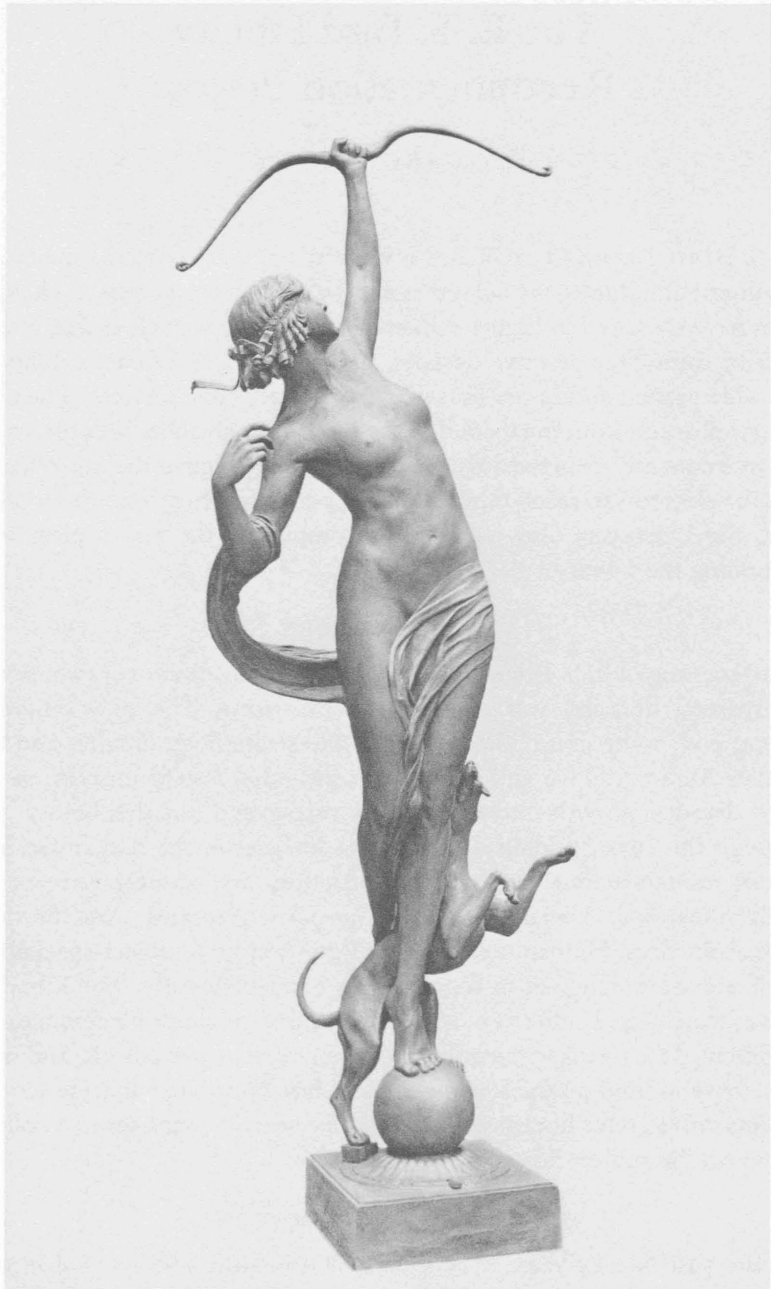
E. S. BIRD LIBRARY, which was built in 1972, completed a major reconfiguration during the fall semester, 1991. The project reflects changes that have occurred in higher education, at the University, and in librarianship during the past two decades, and enhances the Library's ability to provide present and future library users with effective services. The new stairwell access from the second to the fifth floors also alleviates the single most frequently-expressed frustration with the original design: reliance on the elevators to reach the Library's upper floors. In a concurrent project, the University also regraded and improved the entire plaza surrounding the Library.

EARLY HISTORY

The opening of E. S. Bird Library, which drew together over twenty departmental libraries, was a University milestone. The new building, along with some consolidated science and technology libraries and the Belfer Audio Archive and Laboratory, provided a solid foundation for two decades' growth into a nationally recognized research library. Although the 1972 building drew campus libraries in the humanities and social sciences under one roof, its collections and services were never fully integrated. The upper floors—Special Collections, Area Studies, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts—required subject-specialized staff and were designed to function quasi-independently. The Library's most heavily used collections and service points, including reference, interlibrary loan, book circulation, reserves, current periodicals, and media, were located on the lower level and first floor. Staff at these service points would refer library users, when necessary, to services and collections on the subject floors.

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

In the past twenty years economic, technological, and societal factors have caused radical changes in the ways in which teaching and research



This statue of the goddess Diana will reside on the second floor of the reconfigured Bird Library. The statue was created by Anna Hyatt Huntington, who donated this casting to Syracuse University. Before Bird Library was built, the statue was located inside the entrance to the Carnegie Library. Traditionally, students have rubbed the dog's paw for good luck before taking examinations. (Photo courtesy of Syracuse University Library.)

are conducted and in the ways university libraries organize to meet new needs. Today there is more emphasis on interdisciplinary research. Electronic access to information has revolutionized the delivery of information and research materials, and has changed dramatically the ways in which most students and scholars do their work. Escalating costs for library materials, especially journals, are requiring libraries to develop new means (including electronic) of obtaining the research materials needed by faculty and students.

The Bird Library reconfiguration project responded to a number of these broader academic and library issues, as well as to more specific architectural and service concerns. At Bird Library, collections were arranged on each floor by broad subject category. It was necessary to check location charts carefully to find where materials were shelved because there were separate call number sequences on each floor. The book collections are now shelved alphabetically by call number, starting at A (general periodicals) on the second floor, and ending with Z (bibliographies) on the fifth. Lack of stairwell access to upper floors often meant long waits for elevators. Maintaining security at two entrances on separate floors required the use of staff resources that could be more usefully employed. Current periodicals were in an open, unmonitored area. The arrangement of tables and study carrels on upper floors contributed to a noisy study atmosphere. Architectural and wiring configurations sometimes prevented staff from taking advantage of efficiencies made possible by automation.

PLANNING

At the beginning of the fall semester in 1987, as a prelude to reconfiguration, the Library set up a single humanities/social sciences reference desk on the first floor. Staff from reference and most subject floors (with the exception of maps, media, and fine arts) were brought together and more broadly trained to provide traditional and electronic reference services in the humanities and social sciences. At the same time, subject specialists continued to work closely with faculty and students in collection development and discipline-specific instruction in the use of library resources. In 1988 the Library began planning the architectural and collection modifications that would reflect a more unified organizational structure. Many elements incorporated in the final plan came from suggestions by library users, a user survey in 1986, and Library staff meetings and planning retreats.

During 1988–89 the Library's administrative staff and department

heads developed a detailed needs assessment for every Library function and department, and submitted the completed report to the Vice Chancellor's office and to University architects. After the project received University approval and funding—a process that took eighteen months—the Library worked with architect Newton S. Wiley, Jr., of the Syracuse architectural firm Schleicher-Soper, Inc., and the University's Design and Construction Office staff to refine the needs assessment and translate the Library's needs and wishes into formal architectural plans. Metod M. Milač, Associate University Librarian, was named the Library's project manager.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the project began in the spring of 1991, with the first sights and sounds of demolition and construction. Beginning in April, the lower-level floor was reinforced to support the weight of compact shelving. This specialized shelving provides efficient, high density storage that doubles shelving capacity. Transferring over 250,000 older volumes with Dewey classification numbers to the lower level from stack locations at E. S. Bird and the Science and Technology Libraries was an essential element of the project, providing needed growth space for the newer collections in each Library. While compact shelving is less convenient to use than conventional shelving, it permits the Library to retain these materials in the building, and make them readily accessible to users. The alternative to compact shelving is remote storage.

Intense activity continued all summer, despite summer school classes, and continued for the first two months of the fall term. Every E. S. Bird Library shelf, section, and range, from the lower level to the fifth floor, was shifted. Media collections, the Electronic Information Resources Laboratory, large-group instruction rooms, and rooms with equipment for students with disabilities remain on the lower level. Several small-group viewing rooms have been added. The Copy Services unit is more conveniently located opposite the elevators on the lower level, and self-service copiers are in more central locations on the lower level, and on the first, second, and fourth floors. The Library's Systems and Preservation Departments are also on the lower level. The first floor houses information and reference services, interlibrary loan, the reference collection, and the circulation desk, which is centrally located between new entrance and exit corridors to the Library proper. Also on the first floor, located outside the entrance to Library collections and services are: the relocated 1916 Room, a large extended-hours study area, Library Secu-

rity offices, a small lounge with telephones and rest rooms, and a new University Place entrance. The second floor bridge and entrance have been removed. The University Place entrance has new sidewalks and stairs, wheelchair access ramps, lighting, and landscaping.

Library administrative offices, formerly on the first floor, are now located on the second floor, overlooking University Place. On the second floor a combined reserves, current periodicals, and newspaper area provides a more protected environment for these materials. It includes seating for users. On the third floor a new Maps and Government Information Department brings together services and collections for maps, state and federal government publications, and the publications of international agencies. A new Fine Arts reference desk located on the fourth floor near the music and art collections serves library users interested in architecture, art, and music. The slide room and a music listening area (sound recordings) are a part of this unit. In addition to book collections, the fifth floor houses the Library's acquisitions, cataloging and processing units, formerly located on the lower level, and an automation training room for staff.

Faculty carrels remain much as they were, as do the fourteen seminar rooms on the perimeter of floors two through five. Several group study rooms used for other purposes in recent years have been returned to their original use, and a larger group study room has been added on the fourth floor. Tables and carrels in smaller groupings than before provide seating that is more conducive to reflection and study. The handsome interior stairwells, enclosed in glass, provide good sight lines and quiet entrance and egress. Students, some of whom preferred to study elsewhere in the past, are already finding the quieter environment and new arrangement to their liking.

CHANGES TO SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

On the sixth floor, the George Arents Research Library for Special Collections continues to be accessible only by elevator, for reasons of security. Although the Arents Library experienced less dramatic change than the rest of the library, modifications to the Reading Room and consolidation of staff processing areas have improved the quality of reading room space for readers and security for collections. Staff processing areas have also been consolidated and improved. The Feinstone and Hillyer Rooms now include exhibit space where parts of these important collections can be more attractively displayed. While the Spector Room required no alterations, the 1916 Room, site of Library Associates and

many other lectures and meetings of interest, has a new and convenient location on the first floor near the University Place entrance.

COLLECTIONS

Stack aisles on the upper floors are six inches wider, complying with current building code requirements and improving access, especially for the handicapped. This change benefits everyone who must locate or re-shelve a book. The general stack collections cataloged according to the Library of Congress classification are shelved on floors two through five in a single alphanumeric sequence by LC call number.

COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT

Most people who visited Bird Library during the weeks between the end of summer sessions and the opening of the fall semester found it hard to believe that collections and services would be in place by the time classes began. Nevertheless, that is what happened. Subcontractors glazed windows on the second floor, installed sheetrock on every floor, removed walls, re-built walls, laid rugs, removed tile, removed rugs and laid new tile, drilled holes for telecommunication lines, poured and polished terrazzo on the first floor, rewired every floor to improve electronic access, installed staircases, and, above all, moved collections. At times of peak activity seventy to ninety workers were active on the project, with work scheduled up to sixteen hours per day. During the entire period the Library remained open with full (but by no means quiet or convenient) access to services and collections, with the exception of three days at the end of summer sessions when the Library closed for intensive construction activity. Syracuse University students, faculty, and other library users deserve special thanks for their understanding and forbearance during the seven months of noise, dust, confusion, and disruption caused by the renovation.

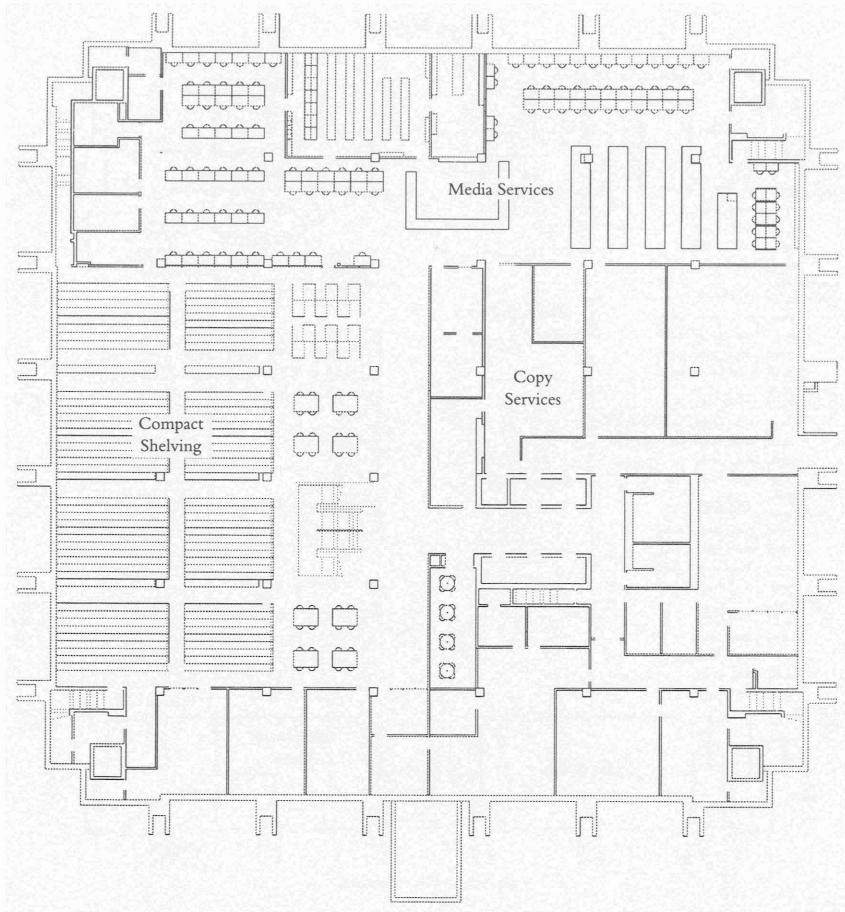
We are grateful for the support given by former Chancellor Melvin A. Eggers and other University administrators, and for the expertise, leadership and interest provided by Virginia R. Denton, Director of the University's Design and Construction Office, who worked closely with University Librarian David Stam and Library staff, especially in the initial planning stages. Metod Milač, the Library's project manager, credits the successful completion of the project to an outstanding collaborative effort involving Library staff; the University's Design and Construction Office; Newton S. Wiley, Jr., architect; Murnane Associates, the general contractor; and Charette Brothers, the company responsible for moving

all collections and offices. Library staff, who maintained services throughout the summer and fall terms under adverse circumstances, also deserve great credit. By the end of November, with all work completed, Library users and staff were able to enjoy the many advantages of E. S. Bird Library's reorganized collections and services.

LIBRARY COLLECTION AND SERVICE LOCATION CHART

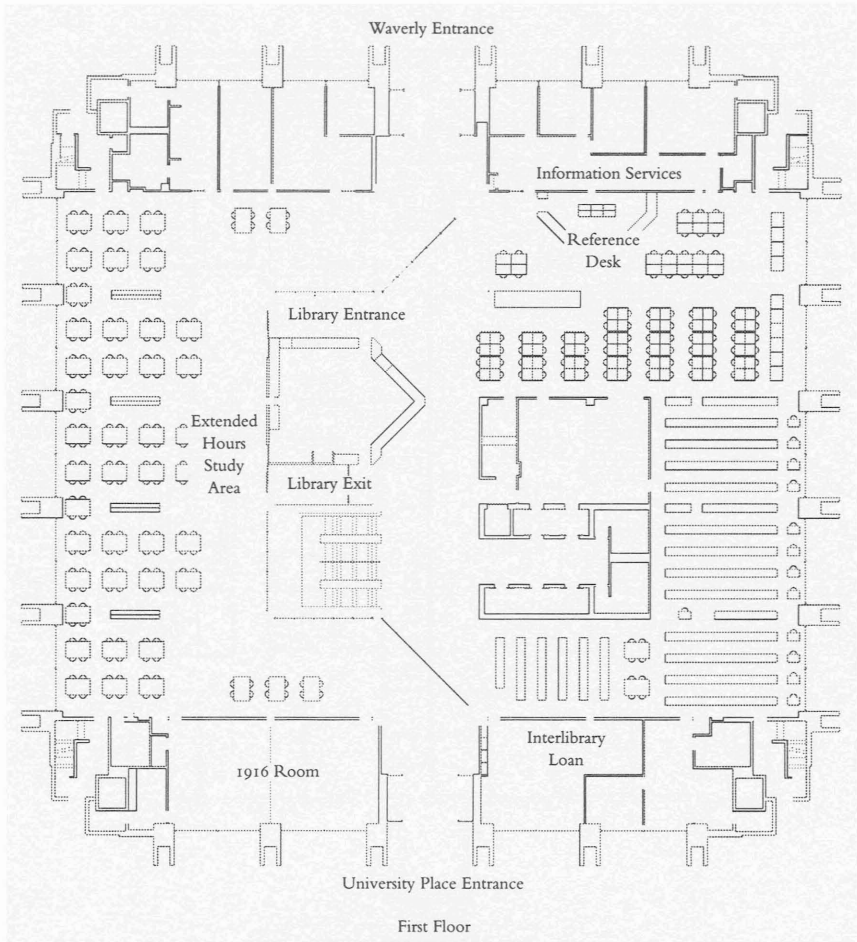
Lower Level	Dewey-classed materials, 000–999 Media desk Microforms Electronic Information Resources Lab Media small-group viewing rooms Equipment for students with disabilities Copy Services Group instruction room
First Floor (outside entrance to Library)	1916 Room Extended hours study area Student lounge and rest rooms Library security, lost and found Book return
First Floor (inside Library)	Circulation desk, including book return Library registration desk Reference desk Online search and bibliographic instruction offices Reference collections (print, electronic) Interlibrary loan office
Second Floor	Administrative offices Reserves desk, current periodicals and newspapers Subject specialist offices Stack collections: LC classes A–D
Third Floor	Maps and Government Information desk Map collection State, federal, and international agency publications

	Stack collections: LC classes E–HJ
Fourth Floor	Fine Arts desk Music listening area (recordings) Slide Room Stack collections: LC classes HM–N
Fifth Floor	Stack collections: LC classes P–Z
Sixth Floor	George Arents Research Library for Special Col- lections Hillyer, Feinstone, Spector, Tolley Rooms University Archives and Records Management

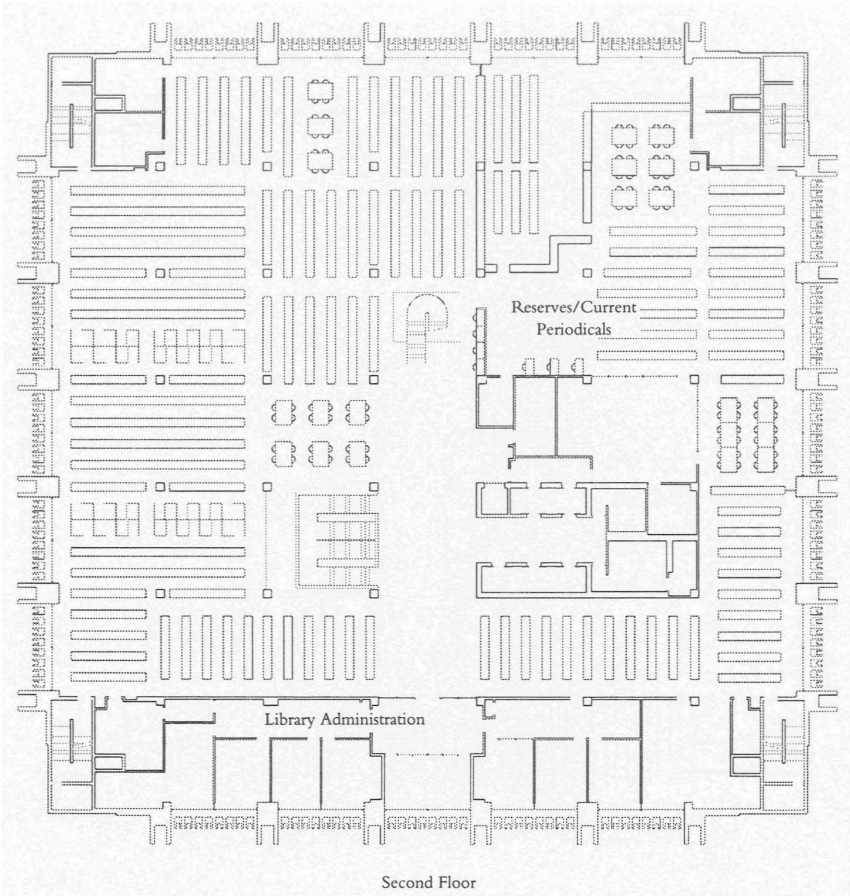


Lowest Floor

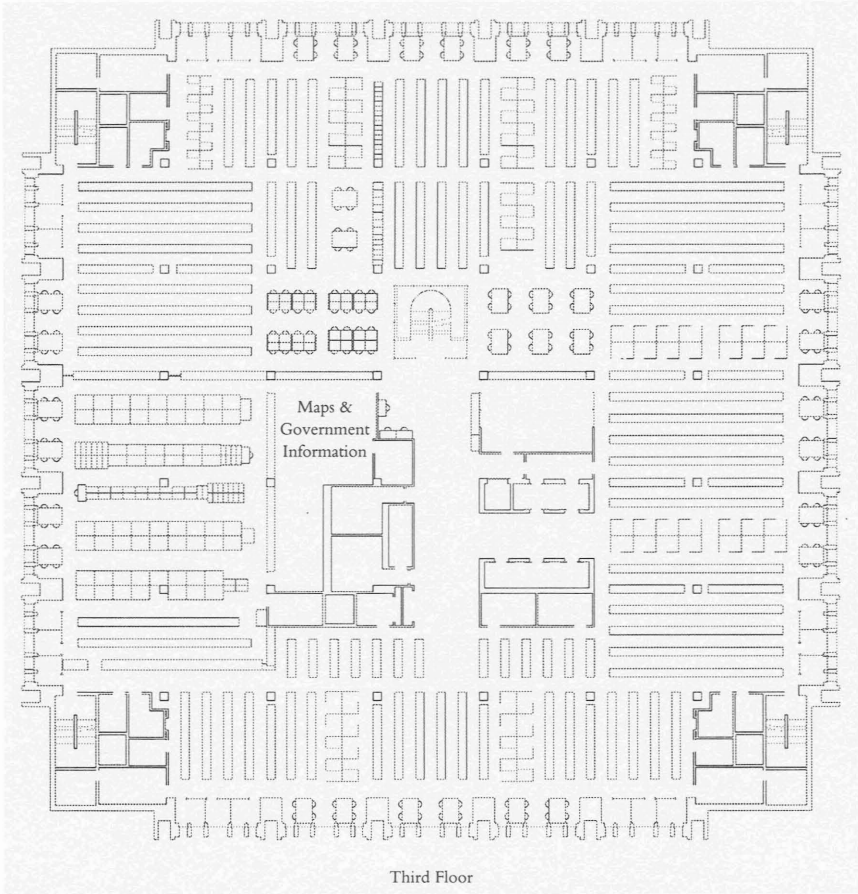
Floor plan of the reconfigured Bird Library.
(All floor plans are courtesy of Schleicher-Soper, Inc.)



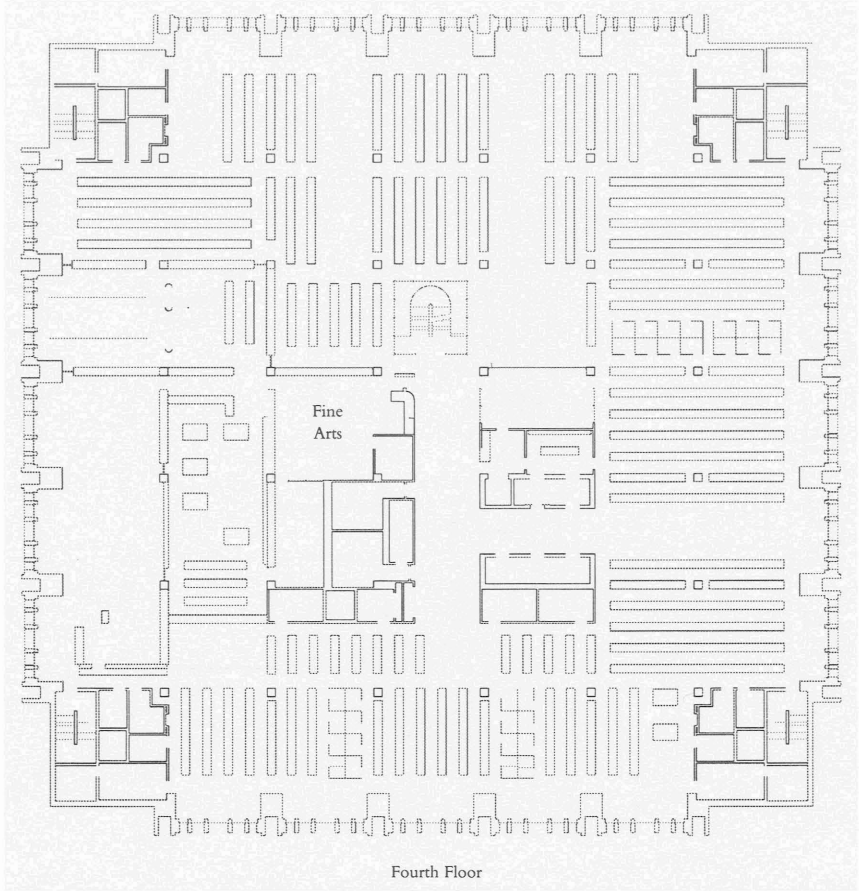
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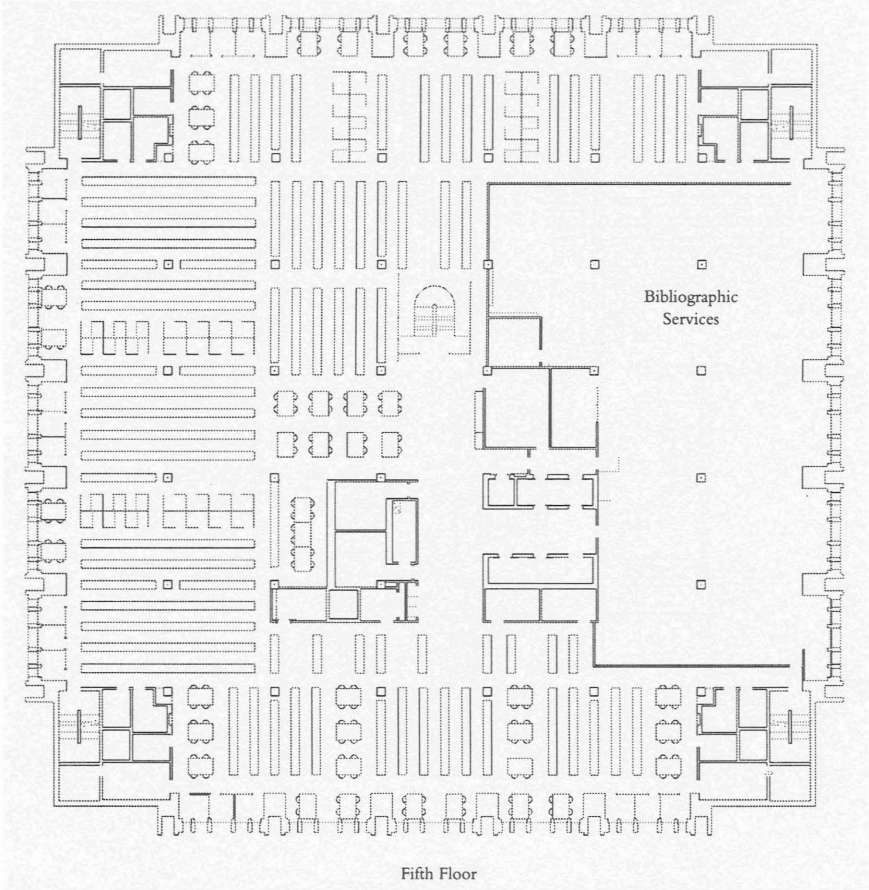
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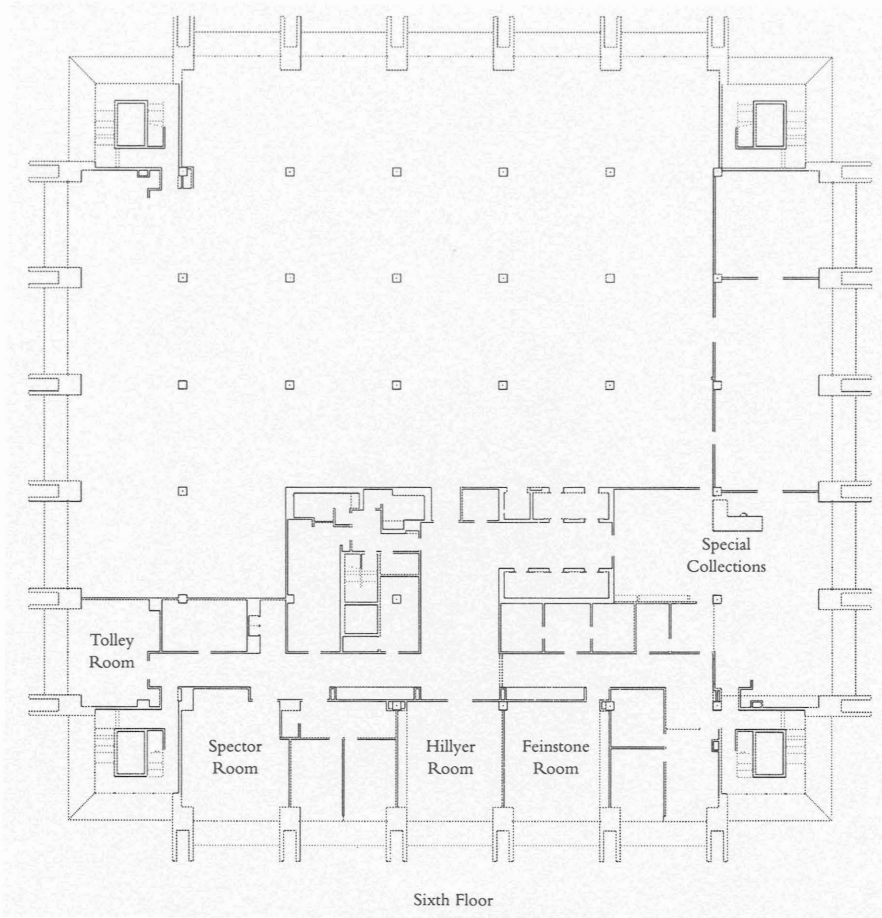
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Floor plan of the reconfigured Bird Library.



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