MILLS MEMORIAL LIBRARY: PERSPECTIVE

Above: sketch section taken through the entrance to Mills library, showing the proposed interconnected floorspace and resulting visual connectivity.

Right, top to bottom: A similar interconnected floorspace at the Ohio State University’s Thompson Library; sharing light through the use of interior glazed partitions; an expanded Archives and Research Collections gallery.
Proposed plans for Mills Memorial Library reflect the planning principles and strategies described on page 59. A clear and consistent approach to circulation makes wayfinding intuitive, and provides a strong framework for the accommodation of new program elements. Granular spaces like study rooms, building services, and other functions are clustered together to define these routes and to give structure to the open spaces on each floor. Planning and zoning reflect the existing structure of the building; each block accommodates different types of program.

Connecting each floor is a new multi-storey opening, which transforms the library’s entrance and primary circulation route and provides visual access to the library’s many unique programs. This is envisioned as a glazed opening that would stretch from the ceiling of the basement level to the ceiling of Level 5, for maximum connectivity, but its precise size, shape, and design would be refined and developed as part of a detailed design process.

In the basement, Archives and Research Collections are expanded, with additional collection space, a new classroom, and an enhanced gallery and reading room. The new interconnected floorspace provides a direct view from the Library entrance to the reading room and gallery, giving these spaces a renewed prominence within Mills Library.
Level 1

Given the density of recently renovated specialized learning spaces on Level 1, much of its planning remains as is. The digitization lab is relocated for better proximity with the Sherman Centre, and the library services area is made more efficient, but the major change is the introduction of the new interconnection at the entrance, which gives visual access to the floors.

Level 2

With the existing learning commons, new bookable rooms, and a new event space, Level 2 is an extremely active floor. In the event space, new rotating partitions create a direct connection between the library and the galleries, allowing the space to be used either by the Library or the Museum as required. The Museum’s administrative offices are also relocated to this level, making them universally accessible. In the north block, collections and specialized learning spaces are clustered to define circulation and open space. This approach is maintained throughout the floors above.
Level 3 maintains the planning approach established on Level 2, with an increasing density of collections reflecting an increasing level of focus implied for the floor’s general learning spaces. A new co-located staff zone occupies the west block of the building, including the area previously occupied by Museum administration. This space offers staff many benefits: it occupies a discrete area within the library while enjoying a prominent ‘front door’, it enjoys a large, contiguous floor plate with good access to natural light, and it is well-connected to the staff space on Level 4.

Level 4 clearly reflects the planning logic established previously, with a further increase in collection density and, by extension, focused study. The contiguous staff zone on Level 3 is maintained on Level 4, with new skylights proposed to maximise daylight in this area. The Lyons Centre, Health Forum, and upper galleries of the Art Museum remain unchanged.
On Level 5, the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (MIIETL) is unchanged, with the exception of a new sound studio that would be a shared Library/MIIETL resource. Collections and study spaces follow the planning approach established below.

On Level 6, the existing silent study room is maintained.