

Historical
Library

Pharma
Headquarters

Law Office

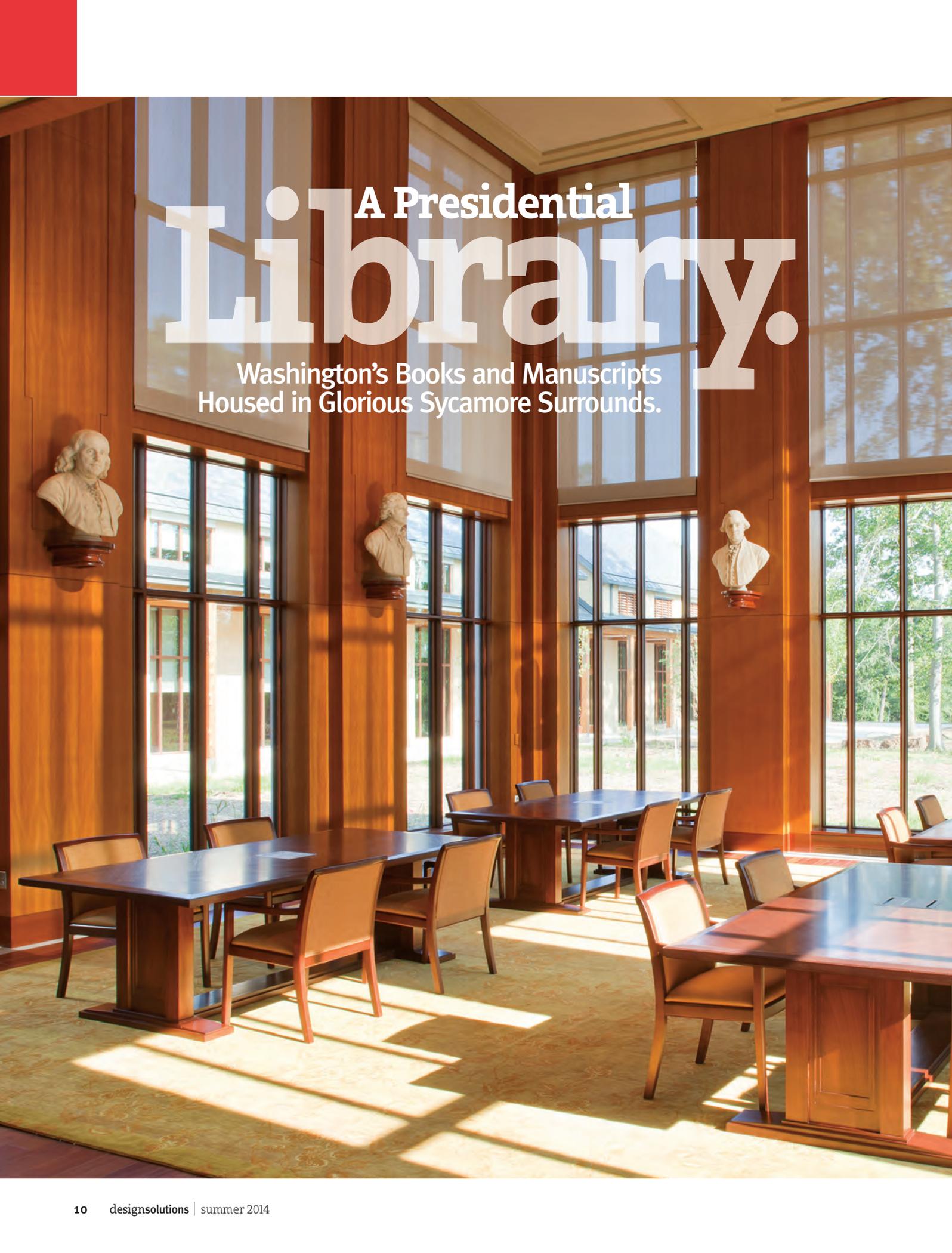
University
Church

 Architectural Woodwork Institute

design solutions

Summer
2014 | \$6.25





A Presidential Library.

Washington's Books and Manuscripts
Housed in Glorious Sycamore Surrounds.



The spacious reading room is warm and welcoming with its rich wood walls and windows.

Since 1860, more than 85 million visitors have walked through the rooms and grounds of Mount Vernon, home of George Washington. The most popular historic home in America, Mount Vernon is a privately-owned national treasure, maintained and operated by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. The association preserves, protects and maintains the estate for the American people, relying exclusively on private donations, admission fees and retail proceeds.

With its latest initiative, The Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington, Mount Vernon is affirming its status as the preeminent center of learning about George Washington, his life, character of leadership, and legacy. In addition to safeguarding original books and manuscripts, the library serves as a place where scholars come together to talk about the past as well as the future, inspired by Washington's extraordinary life and achievements.

To handle the renovation and preservation of the library, the association commissioned the design firm of MFM Design, Bethesda, Maryland, and the architectural woodworking firm of Gaithersburg Cabinetry and Millwork, an AWI member firm located in Warrenton, Virginia. This AWI Quality Certified project was completed in September 2013.

Located next to Washington's home, the 45,000 square foot library is composed of distinctive spaces dedicated to Washington's collection of books and papers, a large reading room with nearby open stacks, a lobby, reception area for special events, staff offices and an entire wing for meetings and conferences.

at a glance

AWI MANUFACTURING MEMBER:

Gaithersburg Cabinetry & Millwork

LOCATION:

Warrenton, Virginia

ESTABLISHED:

1981

FACILITY:

75,000 square feet

Wood Rich

"One of the library's greatest assets is the woodwork – designed with great attention to detail to be a timeless tribute to George Washington," points out Richard Molinaroli of the design firm. "Central to the design approach was the wish to use an extensive amount of millwork paneling so that this aspect would become the primary ingredient in defining the library interior."

According to Kirk Vetter of Gaithersburg Cabinetry and Millwork, the firm manufactured and installed paneling, wainscoting, sliding and overhead doors, wall cabinets, reception desk, book shelves, stair treads and handrails, clerestory walls, running trim, specialty ornamental wire mesh and HVAC grilles, glass for doors, and sidelights. Woods used include 27,000 square feet of quarter sawn American Sycamore, quarter sawn figured White Ash, plus quarter sawn non-figured and highly figured Mahogany.

“ Gaithersburg Cabinetry & Millwork is known for quality products and our strengths in how we manage and engineer a project combined with our reliability in achieving the specified quality with on-time delivery. ”

– **Kirk Vetter**
Project Manager



SYCAMORE



ASH



MAHOGANY

Gottschapter

EXIT

EXIT

EXIT

THE
EARLY
WORLD
MUSEUM
1924





Tall book cases handsomely hold a varied collection of books on Washington.

Mount Vernon's Library Task Force, along with MFM Design, were very involved with the choices of wood for the library. American Sycamore was chosen as a

subtle nod to a man who defied convention and because it grows at Mount Vernon and would have been familiar to the first president.

Vetter reports that the

Sycamore came from one large tree that yielded eight flitches (30,000 square feet) plus ten additional trees. "We ended up having to use several logs due to the selection

process for the veneer," he says. The log was harvested from Southern Illinois, along the Mississippi River for the veneering process.



A Special Place

The beauty of the architectural woodwork in the library sets a warm and welcoming feeling for history. “The millwork performs at many

levels,” notes Molinaroli, “enveloping the books with beautiful cabinets and shelves, handsomely dressing every pier, wall and doorway and framing the estate’s

woodlands beyond.”

Special plinths, worked from solid Mahogany, support commissioned portraits of the founding fathers. Washington’s presence is

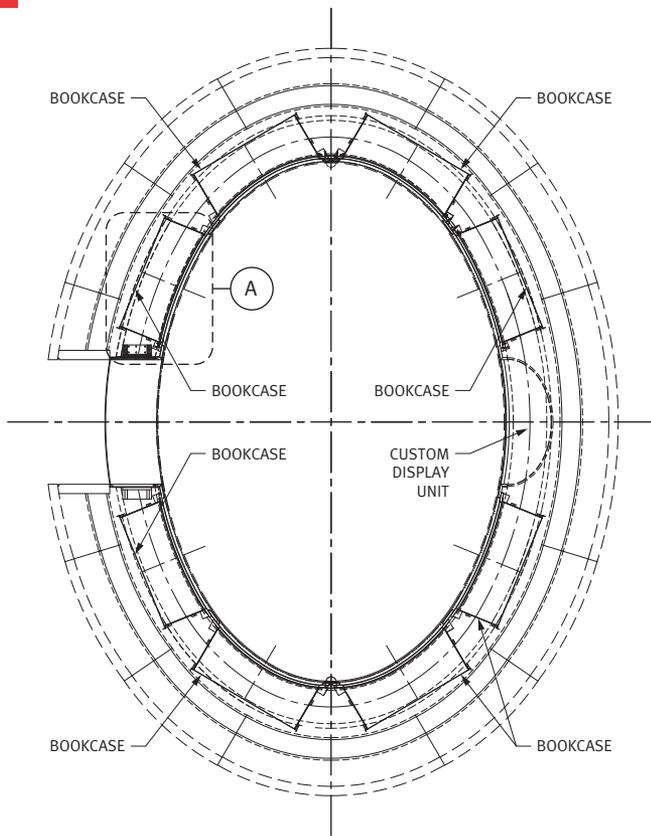
especially felt in the heart of the library, three connected chambers that house his original volumes and manuscripts. The tall book cabinets, drawers for rare objects, “secret” woodwork panels which actually are fire-rated doors that lead to curved oval woodwork in a room beyond, all blend seamlessly into the feeling of being inside a unique place filled with priceless objects.

The Rare Books Suite is made of African Mahogany, chosen for its stability, where off-gassing is concerned, as well as its beauty, reports Molinaroli. “Every aspect of the inner rooms adheres to an archival, museum standard governing the veneers and hardwoods, substrates, glues and finishes – all required by Mount Vernon to safeguard the books and objects collections.”

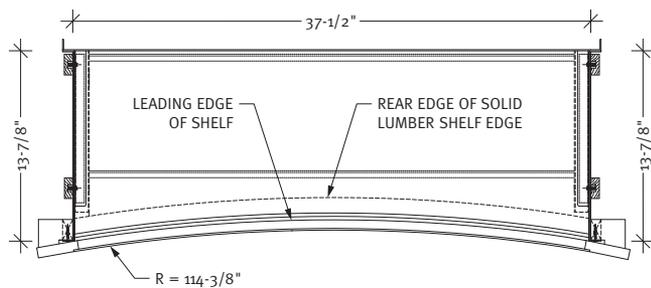
A Special Look

“The design was drawn requiring Gaithersburg Cabinetry and Millwork to provide critical alignments over large expanses, demanding extraordinary precision that could only be achieved with experience, forethought, careful shop drawings, project management and quality control,” continues Molinaroli.

“The result is extremely handsome. The ‘secret’ panel doors are exceptionally well blended with the surrounding millwork. The large 24-foot-high piers perfectly align with each other as well as with the rows of windows between them. The wood wraps around corners and recessed planes which jog in and out repeatedly throughout the perimeter of the building.”



HORIZONTAL SECTION
@ Washington Collection Room



A HORIZONTAL SECTION
@ Bookcase

The 12-foot flitches are blueprint matched top to bottom to achieve the necessary 24-foot height. The result is long straight vistas that are rich in detail and depth. The finish of the wood was also custom formulated by the woodworking firm to coax out of the veneers every nuance of figure and movement.

A Special Team

“We had a close working relationship with both the architect and interior designer helping them make material selections, detail refinement and solutions, even several on site changes, while keeping the architectural woodwork at everyone’s high standards,” adds Vetter. “Throughout



The rarest of books and manuscripts are housed in beautiful built-in curved bookcases.



the project we mobilized additional forces and incorporated engineering solutions to ensure that the project was completed on time and with strict quality control.”

“Gaithersburg Cabinetry and Millwork has the ability to plan ahead and an impressive team of skilled craftsmen

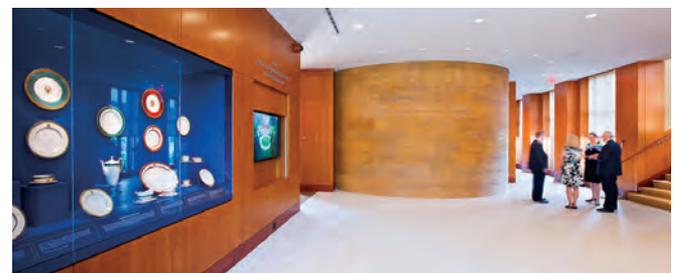


A view from the second floor shows the beautiful Sycamore paneling and estate vistas.

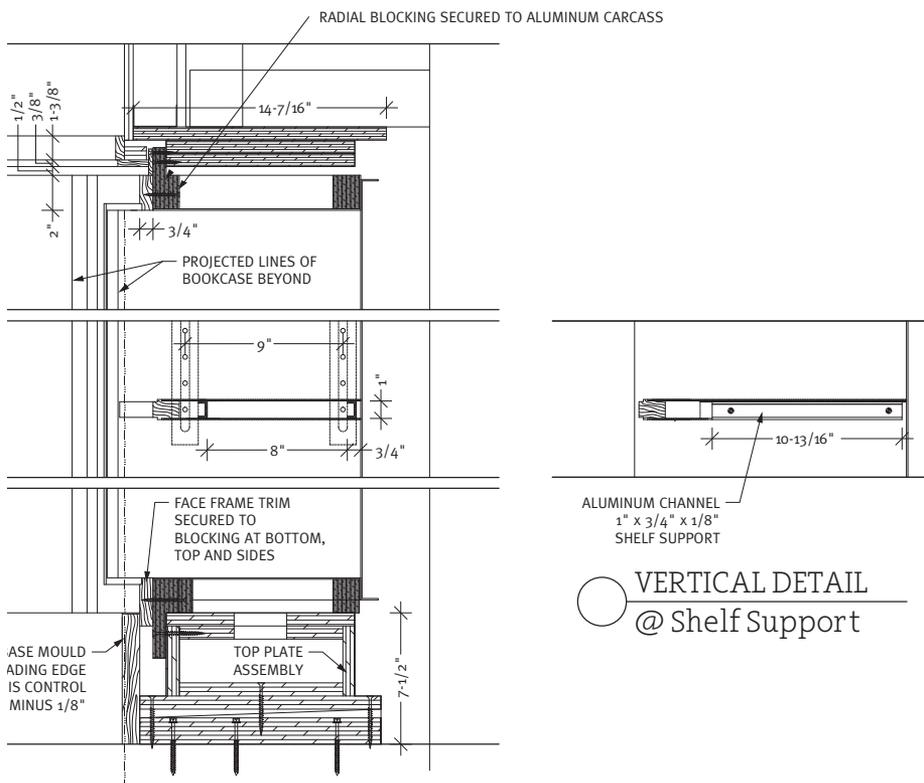
who worked well with the other teams of subcontractors,” notes Molinaroli “Each craftsman took an obvious pride in their own work and the overall effect was harmonious in every respect.”

The library’s design and finishes “are a balance between elegance and utility, grandeur and accessibility, working always in harmony with the beautiful natural setting – principles Washington employed when designing his Mount Vernon estate,” sums up Curtis Viebranz, president and CEO of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association.

This project was recognized at the Washington Building Congress Annual Awards, receiving the Craftsmanship Award and the Star Award for Visual Excellence. 



Warm, elegant paneling surrounds a built-in display case of Washington’s personal items in the lobby.



VERTICAL DETAIL
@ Washington Collection
Room Casework

PROJECT:
**Fred W. Smith National
Library for the Study Of
George Washington**
Mount Vernon, VA

PROJECT OWNER:
**Mount Vernon Ladies
Association**
Mount Vernon, VA

WOODWORKER:
**Gaithersburg Cabinetry &
Millwork**
Warrenton, VA

DESIGNER:
MFM Design
Bethesda, MD

VENEER SUPPLIER:
SJ Morse
Capon Bridge, WV

GENERAL CONTRACTOR:
**Whiting-Turner
Construction Company**
Greenbelt, MD

PHOTOGRAPHER:
Melissa Wood
Mount Vernon, VA