



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

JOHN A. DELANEY
MAYOR

CITY HALL SUITE 400
117 W. DUVAL STREET
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

December 20, 2001
NEWS RELEASE

Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney today announced the winning design firm in the Main Library Architectural Design Competition. The Mayor said the City of Jacksonville would enter into negotiations with the firm ranked number one by the Professional Services Evaluation Committee: Robert A.M. Stern Architects of New York. As part of The Better Jacksonville Plan, the city is building a new, \$95 million, 300,000 square foot Main Library just east of Hemming Plaza.

"I believe Stern has designed a classic building that is reflective of Jacksonville's timeless beauty," said Mayor Delaney. "Robert A.M. Stern Architects will provide us with an outstanding library and I am thrilled that Jacksonville will have such a high-caliber facility for everyone to enjoy."

"Jacksonville deserves a great library," said Robert Stern. "I am honored to have our firm selected from among a field of distinguished competitors, and am optimistic about the contribution it can make to The Better Jacksonville Plan. I look forward to the collaboration with the Mayor, the city, the Library Board, and the Library staff to shape a state-of-the-art resource for all the community and a great public place to which all residents will return again and again for education, inspiration, and the pleasure of a beautiful environment."

During today's announcement, the Mayor read an edited version of Stern's description of his vision for a new Main Library:

-MORE-

The Jacksonville Main Library will be a highly efficient, state-of-the-art facility that is a great public place with intimate and grand rooms, garden courtyards, conference areas and cafes. It is designed to attract the community in all its diversity, and by virtue of its exterior forms and interior spaces, to become a destination without peer in the city. A place to which people will return again and again for education, inspiration and the pleasure of a beautiful environment.

The Main Library continues the city's rich tradition of civic buildings that speak in a version of the classical language adapted to the particulars of local climate and culture. Seen from Hemming Plaza and Main Street, it presents a distinctive, iconic civic appearance that renders the Library readily identifiable with a welcoming environment. Facing Hemming Plaza, a generously proportioned main entrance leads past a Café and Popular Library, each with large windows facing the street, to the Entry Hall and Circulation Desk, where a monumental staircase begins its rise through the building, connecting the various departments. The staircase culminates at the Grand Reading Room, a place of grand proportions with 100 feet square of space and rising to a 46 foot handkerchief-vaulted ceiling. The room is bathed in natural light from above as well, as well as windows with balconies overlooking Hemming Plaza.

On the second floor, a courtyard provides a fountain and planted oasis shared by readers and staff, surrounded by intimate reading areas for the various departments, many of which open onto it directly. Windows facing the courtyard bring light deep into the book stacks, reading areas and staff offices. The second floor also accommodates the Florida Genealogy Collections, Children's Department and Theater and Teen Services. The majority of the collections, both fiction and nonfiction, are centrally located on the third floor. The fourth floor houses the Grand Reading Room and Government Documents Collection. The Current Periodicals area and the African-American Collection Reading Room, also located on the fourth floor, overlook the second floor courtyard. The building also opens to Main Street with an entrance to the conference center, allowing the center to operate independently from the rest of the Library.

The library offers an opportunity to reinvigorate the once and future center of Jacksonville culture. The Library builds on the strengths of Jacksonville's architectural legacy and looks toward the future of a vibrant downtown with the Library as its centerpiece.

For more information, call Sharon Ashton at 630-7377.