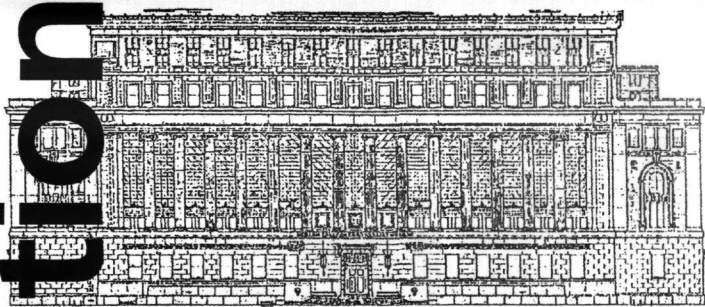


Renovation News



Butler Library Renovation

Columbia University Libraries
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Stack Level 2—A Model

As Phase 1 of the Butler renovation draws to a close, construction on stack level 2 has been completed.

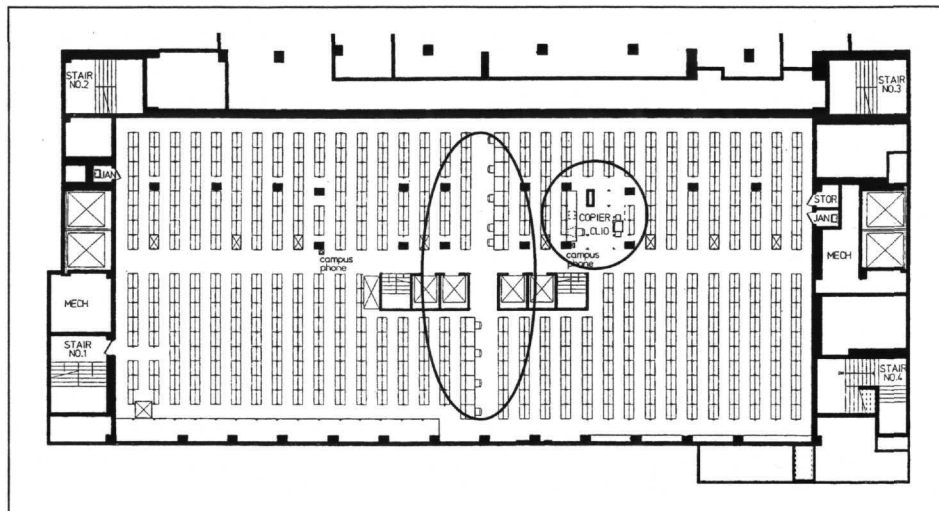
Stack 2 serves as a model of the renovation scheduled for all stack levels. The makeover of each stack includes a complete upgrade of the lighting, with new fixtures that will increase light levels dramatically. Motion sensors control lighting in the main aisles. There are new switches on the ends of each range. Mechanical and safety system improvements include the installation of all new power, smoke detection, fire alarms, emergency lighting, and a specially designed pre-action sprinkler system. The new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system will include humidity controls when completed in a future phase.

Stack level 2 contains over two miles of shelving. In July all the books on these shelves were individually cleaned and reshelved. The entire stack level was repainted, and new study counters equipped with power for laptop computer or calculator use were added to the main aisle. Like stack level 2, each renovated stack level will have a central reader service area. Here library users will find a CLIO terminal, copier, bulletin board, book drop off and sorting areas, and a campus phone. In short, the stack renovation, now completed on level 2, was conceived both to improve comfort and access for people using the collections and to provide a protective environment for the books.

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September/October in Brief

- Preparation for Phase 2, including surveys, probes, and sample finishes on second and third floors
- Staff moves to renovated first floor
- Completion of electrical risers, all stack levels



Stack Level 2 floor plan highlighting new reader service areas

When Butler Library opened in 1934, the fifteen-level bookstack was the largest ever constructed as a single unit. It had a state-of-the-art controlled air system, providing desired indoor temperature and relative humidity during both the summer and winter seasons. The bookstack was designed to hold up to 1.5 million volumes on 36 miles of shelving. Because the stacks were closed except to staff, readers requested books at the circulation desk using a call slip. The library staff sent the request via a pneumatic tube system to the proper bookstack level. A stack assistant would retrieve the book from the shelf and place it on a conveyor lift that went back to the circulation desk. The arrival of the book would be signaled on the electric enunciator board located above the circulation desk. An electric booklift was used to send books back to the stacks for reshelving.

Sixty years later, the bookstack, along with the rest of Butler Library, is finally benefiting from a much needed renovation. Many of the innovations of the 1930s, such as the pneumatic tube system and the electric booklift, are now obsolete, along with the idea of a closed bookstack for the collection. The mechanical and electrical sys-

tems including the original controlled air system are also out-of-date and need replacement. Today, the enunciator board is the only part of the book retrieval system still in use. It now tells a waiting user that the result of a Quick Search for a missing book is ready at the Circulation Desk. The air conditioning in the stacks has already improved, thanks to the recent connection to the campus-wide chilled water system and the installation of new airflow machinery in the basement. Phase 1 of Butler Renovation (July 1995–December 1997) includes the construction of the backbone and the infrastructure required to modernize all mechanical and electrical systems. The stacks contain new risers that will bring increased electrical power to each floor of the building as it is renovated.

Stack renovation in Phase 2 of the Butler project (January 1998–June 2000) will continue on stack levels 3 through 6, with the eventual renovation of all stack levels in future phases of construction. This work will include the continued demolition of the old pneumatic tube system, conveyor lift, and electric booklift to make way for the new reader service area on each renovated stack level. As more bookstacks are renovated, direct access from several floors of the library

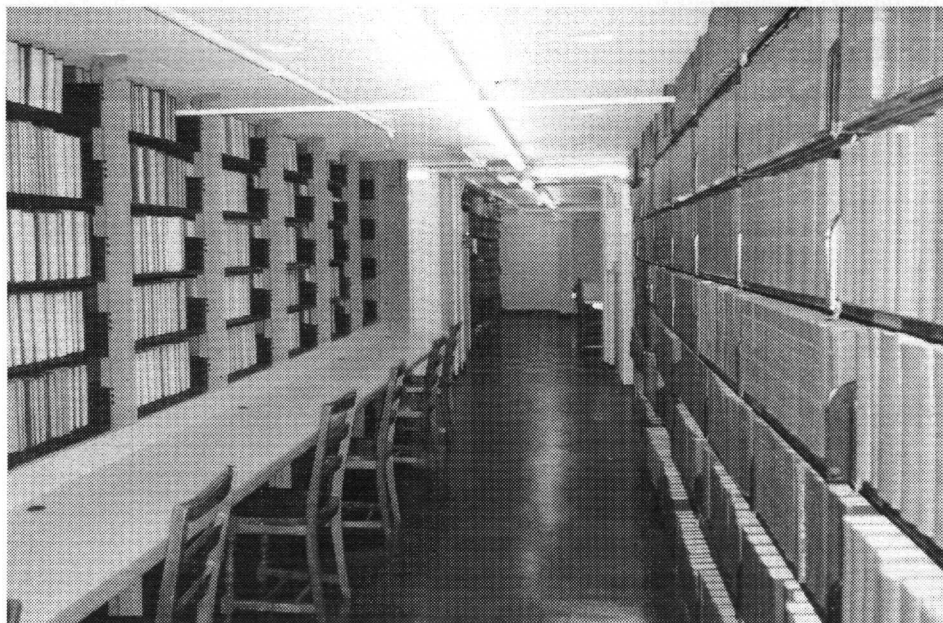
will supplement the Main Stack entrance behind the Circulation Desk and complete the realization of an open-stack library. Stack elevators will be upgraded to provide more reliable service.

Every effort will be made to minimize disruption caused by construction. When possible, especially disruptive work will be scheduled during intersessions and the summer. The stacks will remain open and the collection continuously accessible during renovation except, for example, during brief periods when an area must be painted or cleaned. When an area of the stack is closed, materials will be retrieved for users by the Circulation Department.

We hope you will appreciate and enjoy the new stack level 2 and look forward with us to the renovation of the remaining stack levels.

Stay in touch

Read about "This Week's Work" in the main lobby and second floor elevator waiting areas. Watch for signs indicating scheduled work in specific areas.



New stack level 2 study space

Feel free to send your renovation comments or questions to:

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Every effort will be made to keep interruptions to a minimum. We all look forward to the successful completion of this project and appreciate your patience with the construction.