



the challenge:

Envisioning a 21st century library that would appeal to all the citizens of Boston, administrators of Boston Public Library (BPL) decided it was time to renovate the 1972 Johnson Building at its Central Branch off Copley Square.

William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc. was hired to transform the landmark building from what has been described as an inward-facing fortress into an inviting, light-filled space for the residents of Boston.

The design team removed floor slabs to double the height of Boylston Hall and replaced the dark-tinted glass and stone walls with crystal-clear floor-to-ceiling glass windows that beckon passers-by into the dynamic, new space.

To create visual interest from Boylston Street, one of Boston's most vibrant retail venues, the design team wanted to include a ceiling element that would be visible from the street while adding warmth to the interior.

the solution:

The design team selected a custom WoodWorks® Grille ceiling system from Armstrong Ceiling Solutions. The flexibility of the wood grille system enabled the team to shape the ceiling in a design that best served the space. "Because of the flexible backers, we could shape it the way we wanted," explains design team leader Sindu Meier. "Ultimately, we designed a series of curves and the slatted wood ceiling was able to execute the design intent."

The curves were created by installing 12" x 109" wood grille panels in a custom-curved suspension system. Each curve consists of five rows of panels made up of 11 panels each. The 11,000-square-foot ceiling is made up of 1,210 wood grille panels backed with two inches of black acoustical felt to help control noise in the busy space below.

The overlapping curves create a scalloped effect and conceal light fixtures that illuminate the maple finish on the panels, making the ceiling visible from outside. Custom metal fascia plates conceal the void above the ceiling from view.

The wood grille ceiling has become a conversation piece at the library where it has created speculation as to what inspired the curved design. "Some of the librarians think it looks like the pages of a book and others say it mimics the design of the barrel vault ceiling in another part of the library," adds Meier. "So, it's really in the eye of the beholder."



Project | *Boston Public Library Johnson Building*
Location | *Boston, MA*
Architect | *William Rawn Associates, Architects, Inc.*
Product | *WoodWorks® Grille Custom Ceiling System*

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