

RHBL 7325 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

By: Whitney Musick



UALR's Ottenheimer Library

Photo Credit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/30091470@N08/4565851613/>

Background Description

- Ottenheimer Library is centrally located on the campus of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. The facility has five floors. The exterior is comprised of cement and brick, with large picture windows throughout. A brick paved plaza surrounds the base of the structure on the south and west sides with parking lots flanking the north and east sides.



Signage outside south entrance



Orientation

Campus Maps

Interior Floor Layouts

Campus Map

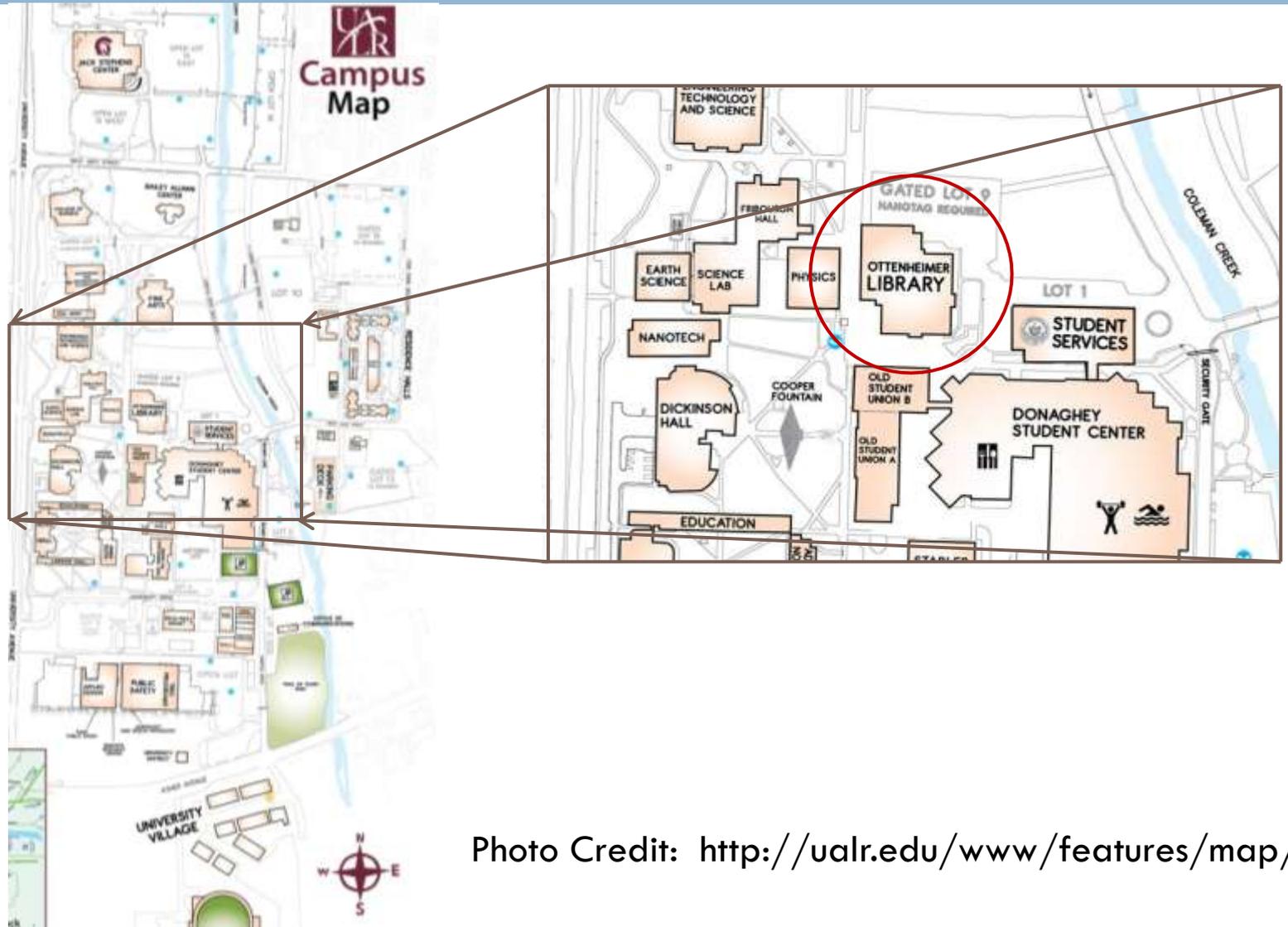
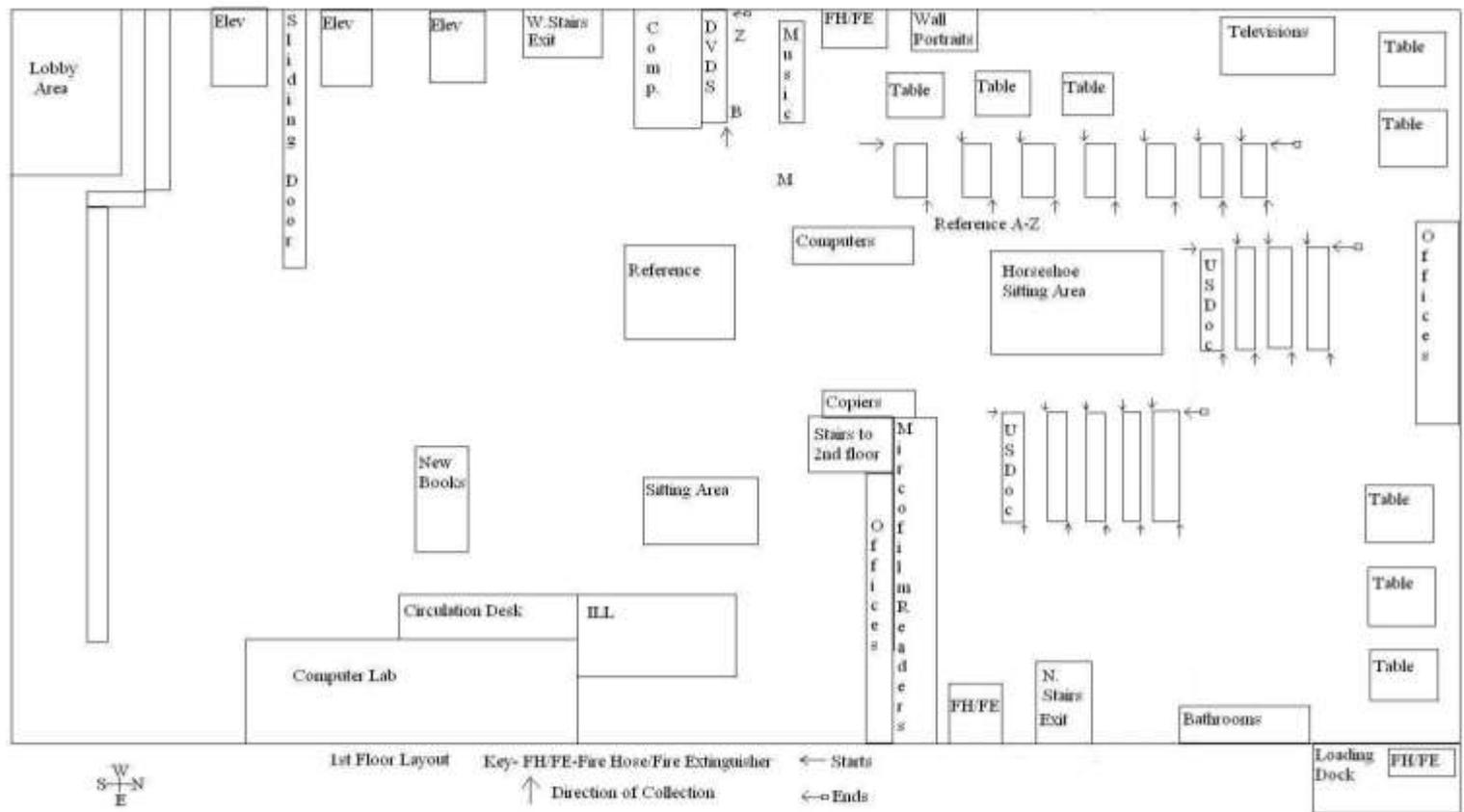


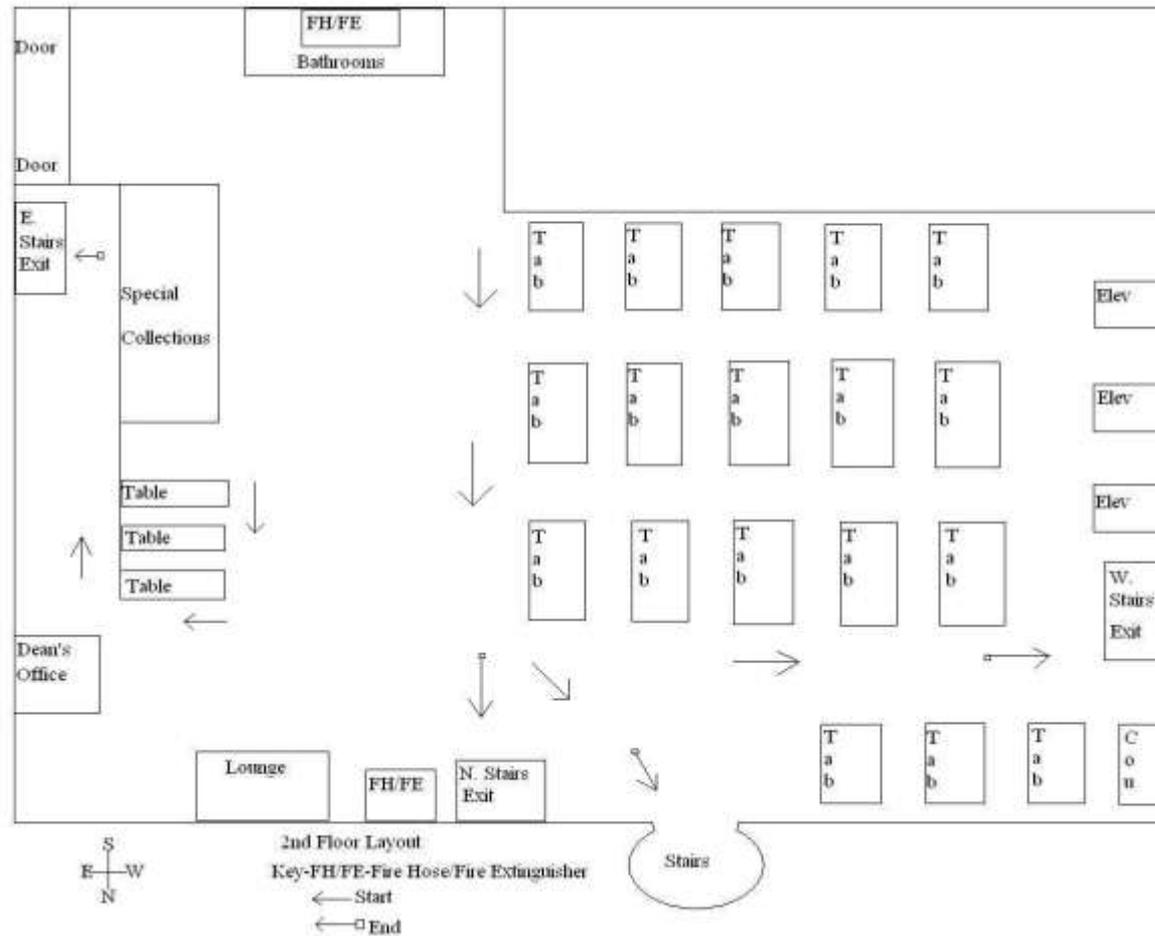
Photo Credit: <http://ualr.edu/www/features/map/>



First Floor Layout

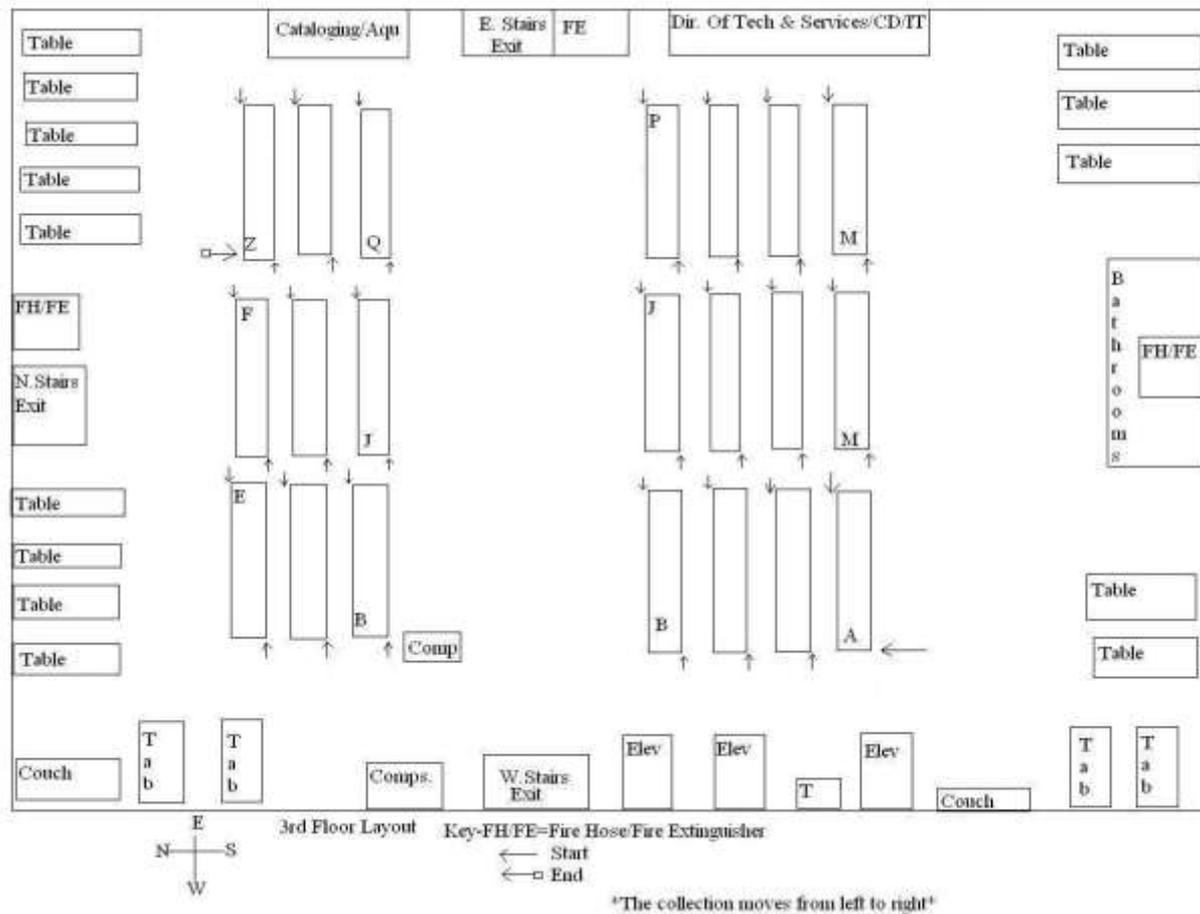
Floor plan courtesy of J. B. Hill

Note: The facility is very well laid out in straight rows. Clear pathways are prevalent throughout with few obstructions. Chairs and doors are kept neatly tucked away and closed, respectively.



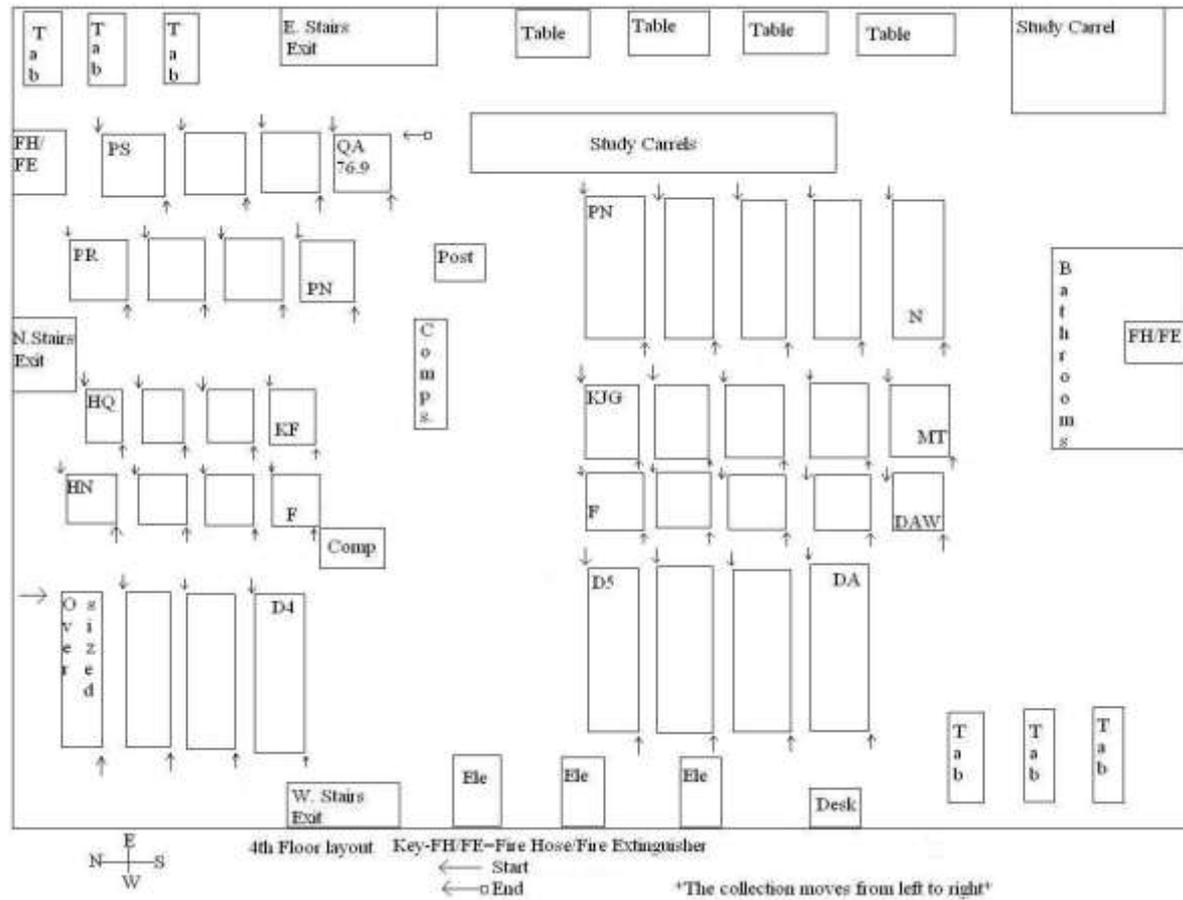
Second Floor Layout

Floor plan courtesy of J. B. Hill



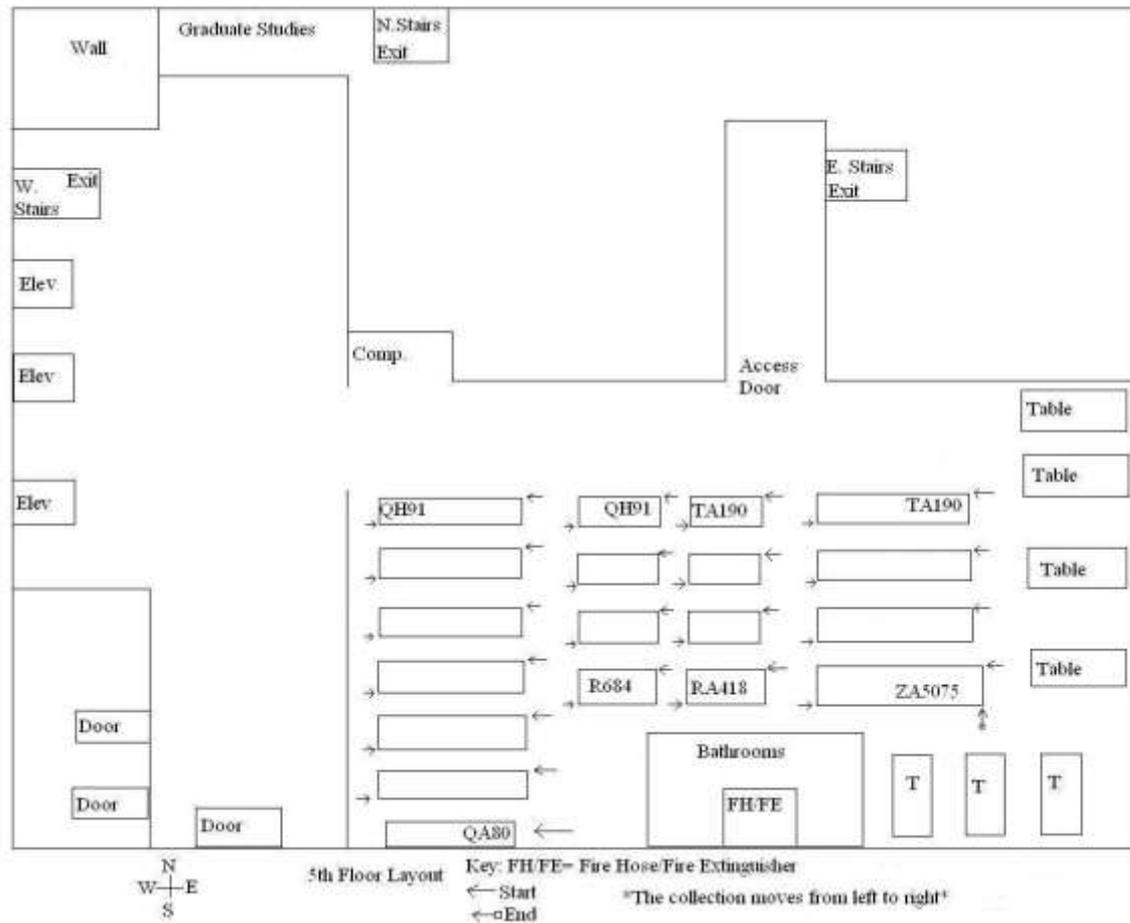
Third Floor Layout

Floor plan courtesy of J. B. Hill



Fourth Floor Layout

Floor plan courtesy of J. B. Hill



Fifth Floor Layout

Floor plan courtesy of J. B. Hill



Exterior



Exterior

Signage outside south entry

East Side Obstacles



1. Uneven pavement leading to stairs without handrails

2. Close-up of uneven pavement located in front of stairs

3. Concrete cracking at stairs

4. Fading safety stripe

5. Sidewalk with no side barrier

6. Uneven convergence of different textured sidewalks at the southeast corner of the library



Recommendations

- Repair and smooth out imperfections in walkway.
- Add high-contrast non-skid tape to the edge of all steps.
- Repaint and add yellow striping at the beginning and end of stairways.
- Place handrails at each set of exterior stairs that do not have them in place in order to prevent individuals from falling off the side of the steps.
- Build up elevation of ground beside sidewalk with dirt to eliminate drop-off.

South Side Obstacles

1. Brick pavement leading up to brick building
2. Bench, tree, and bike rack near front entry
3. Alcove at southwest edge of building

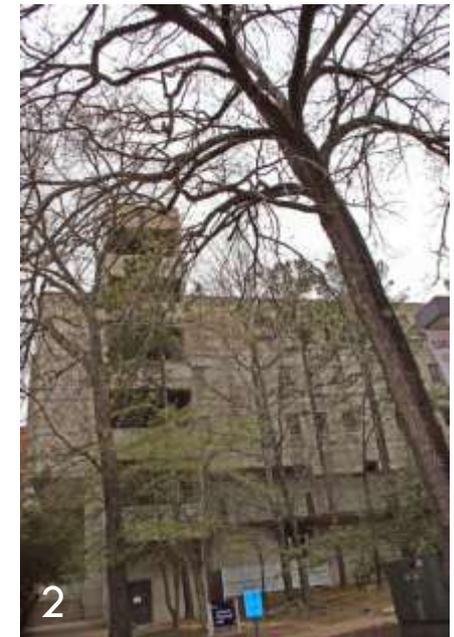


Recommendations

- Create striping at the bottom of the building so that the paving and building can be easily differentiated. This would also help identify bends in the structure that create alcoves.
- Add high-contrast markings around trees to denote their location.
- Paint bike rack a contrasting color from the red brickwork.

West Side Obstacles

1. Light posts with banners located in the middle of walkway
2. Tree located in walkway on west side of library
3. Uneven brick pavers
4. Flood lamp sticking up from walkway
5. Manhole cover not flush with walkway



Recommendations

- Raise banners on light posts so that an individual does not run the risk of colliding with the horizontal arm sticking out with the banner.
- Place a horizontal stripe of high-contrast tape at approximately eye level on light posts for easy detection.
- Maintain routine trimming service on trees near walking path to ensure trees do not produce heavy shading over walkway.
- Sand protruding bricks to create a level walking surface.
- Paint manhole and flood light covers with high-contrast paint to make obstacles more visible.

North Side Obstacles

1. Uneven transition from brick to concrete path
2. Concrete sidewalk coming to a dead end at parking lot
3. Immediate surroundings of the north side of the library and parking area
4. Uneven asphalt in parking lot



Recommendations

- Create a distinct walk path for individuals traveling on the north side of the library for avoidance of obstacles.
- Repair existing concrete sidewalk and asphalt to ensure a level, safe surface.

North Side Obstacles Cont.

1. Trash dumpsters sitting away from building
2. Concrete slabs flanking loading zone
3. Rock protruding into walkway



Recommendations

- Create a distinct walk path for individuals traveling on the north side of the library that avoids major obstacles like trash dumpsters that are placed away from the buildings' exterior walls.
- Paint concrete slabs around loading dock a high-contrasting color.
- Move boulders further into flowerbeds so they are not protruding past curbing.

Front Entry

Glass Door Glare

Door Pathways

Travel Path



Front Entry

Front entry of UALR's Ottenheimer Library

Glass Door Glare

Glare is strong on front entry doors as shown in image right on the library's south side.



Door Pathways

Door pathways are not marked and glare makes it difficult to detect a second set of doors at the south entry.



Travel Path

Once through the two sets of doors, you arrive at a large wide open lobby area. To enter the library, you must travel through a narrow portal between the detectors. The layout makes it difficult to determine where to go. Neutral colored detectors are difficult to detect.



Recommendations

- A horizontal stripe should be added to the first and second set of front entry glass doors so that individuals with limited vision can easily detect the presence of glass doors.
- Mats should be placed in front of the doors so that the pathway the door travels can be readily determined.
- Large rugs should be placed from front entry doors to detectors to show the proper travel path one should follow.
- Detector opening should be wider to allow for increased room for navigation.
- High-contrast tape should be placed along the edges of the detectors to allow for clear detection.



Lighting

Lighting Fixtures

Natural Sunlight



Lighting

Picture showing main floor lighting arrangement on the north side of the library

Lighting Fixtures

Lighting through the library is fluorescent overhead fixtures. The north end of the main level's lighting is at the same height as the second level. See image 1 for clarity. Throughout the remainder of the building, the fixtures are set at a better height for increased illumination. However, despite the number of fixtures, the facility remained fairly dim.



1. Main floor lighting
2. Second floor lighting



Natural Sunlight

Numerous windows surround the building producing a large amount of natural sunlight; however, it also produces a lot of glare. A large amount of seating is located around these windows casting a lot of glare.



1. Light streaming through front lobby windows
2. Windows surrounding the outer walls of the fourth floor

Recommendations

- Update lighting fixtures to accommodate more natural lighting.
- Lower overhead lighting on north end of main level to increase illumination.
- Provide desk/task lighting at study tables.
- Place blinds or shades on all windows (except on the fifth floor that already has blinds) that can be pulled down to reduce glare.



Picture shows blinds located on fifth floor windows. All other windows throughout facility lack window coverings.



Overhead Signage

First Floor Overhead Signage

As shown in the images above, the library's lower level has high-contrast, matte finished, large print overhead signage to designate various sections of the floor; however, this is not continued through the remaining floors.



Recommendations

- Add high-contrast, matte finished, large print overhead signage, consistent with the first floor, throughout the entire facility to designate its various sections.
- Provide overhead signage outside elevator doors indicating what you will find on each level.

Office Signage and Doorways

Room Numbers

Signage Inconsistencies

Signage Glare

Door Glare

Door Operation Differences

Door Pathways



Office Signage and Doorways

1. First floor offices
2. First floor offices
3. Fourth floor study rooms
4. Second floor dean's office
5. First floor reference librarian's office

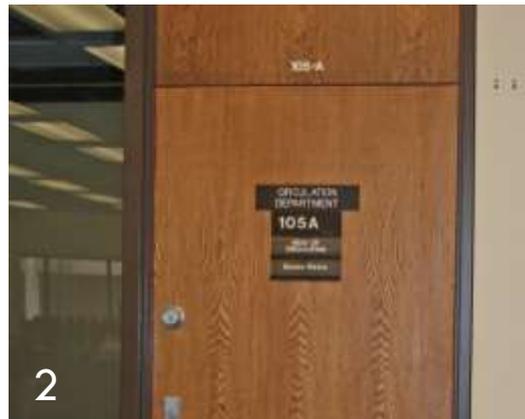
Room Numbers

Small white room numbers above doorways are small, making them difficult to read. Picture depicts room numbers above study rooms located on the fourth floor.



Signage Inconsistencies

Some doors have signs and others do not. Some signs are placed on the wall while others are placed on the door itself. Pictures 1 and 2 depict offices located on the first floor. Picture 3 represents the dean's office on the second floor.



Signage Glare

Overhead lighting reflects in the sign placed on this first floor office door making it difficult to read.



Door Glare

Glare on this second floor office door makes detecting the door and reading its writing very difficult. In contrast, the sign to the left of the door has a matte finish and is easy to read with high-contrast block lettering.



Door Operation Differences

Throughout the facility, interior doors vary in operation. Doors range from having handles, knobs, bars, and push plates. Pictures depict inconsistencies found in first floor offices (pictures 1-3) and emergency exit doors (picture 4).



Door Pathway

Doorways throughout the library do not have any markers for the path the door travels when opening and closing. Most doors, however, do open into the offices and not out into the public walkway. Image depicts offices on level one.



Recommendations

- Repaint larger room numbers above doorways.
- Add consistently styled signage throughout facility.
- Ensure signage is located at the same height on doors and walls throughout facility.
- Replace highly reflective signage with matte finished signs to aid in increasing readability by decreasing glare.
- Add frosting to glass in door inserts to eliminate glare.
- Modify doors so that their operation is uniform throughout the library limiting confusion on how to open doors for individuals, especially those with low vision.
- Place mats or markings in front of doors to denote the doors' travel paths.

Restroom Signage

Restroom Signage Inconsistencies

Restroom Signage Glare



Restroom Signage

1. First floor women's restroom door with signage on door
2. Second floor women's and men's restroom door with signage on wall
3. Second floor men's restroom signage on wall
4. Third floor women's restroom door with signage on door
5. Fifth floor men's restroom door with signage on door and wall

Restroom Signage Inconsistencies

- Some restroom signage is located on the door. On other floors, restroom signage appears only on the wall next to the door. Yet, at other locations, there is signage on the door and wall.
- Different styles of signs are used throughout the facility.

Restroom Signage Glare

While some levels' restroom signs have a matte finish, glare was especially noticeable on the third floor's signs. Photo depicts glare from overhead fluorescent lighting on third floor restroom signage.



Recommendations



The fifth floor men's restroom is a good example of appropriate, clear signage. The signs have a matte finish and are placed both on the door and wall.

- Add consistently styled signage throughout facility.
- Ensure signage is located at the same height on doors and walls throughout facility.
- Eliminate highly reflective signage that produces glare making it difficult to read.



Water Fountains

Water Fountains

Water fountains throughout the library, including the fifth floor fountain pictured to the right, blend in with surrounding walls.



Recommendations

- Paint water fountains a high-contrast color. A dark color would stand out against the light colored walls.



Furnishings

Low Contrast

Desktop Glare



Furnishings

1. Couch located in front lobby on ground level
2. Desk located on the third floor
3. Side table located in front lobby on ground level

Low Contrast

Upholstered sofa seating located in lobby has similar characteristics as the carpeting. The lack of contrast makes it difficult to localize the lounge seating.



Desktop Glare

Depicted are tabletops located on the lower level of Ottenheimer Library. Throughout the facility, study tables and desktops produce a great amount of glare due to lighting conditions.



Recommendations

- Change upholstery on furnishings or add contrasting pillows to seating when color is too similar to flooring.
- Add blinds or shades to windows to reduce glare from sunlight reflecting off tables.



Study tables located on third floor

Stairways

Step Markings

Stairwell Lighting

Stairwell Glare

Stair Condition



Stairways

Main floor staircase leading to second floor study area

Step Markings

As depicted in the photo, there are no markings indicating the end of each step on the first floor main staircase. The hand rail and high-contrast between the stairs and the wall color, however, are beneficial features.



Stairwell Lighting

Lighting throughout the stairwell was poor. The fluorescent fixtures produced dim, flickering light. Image depicts light fixture in the stairwell between the second and third floors.



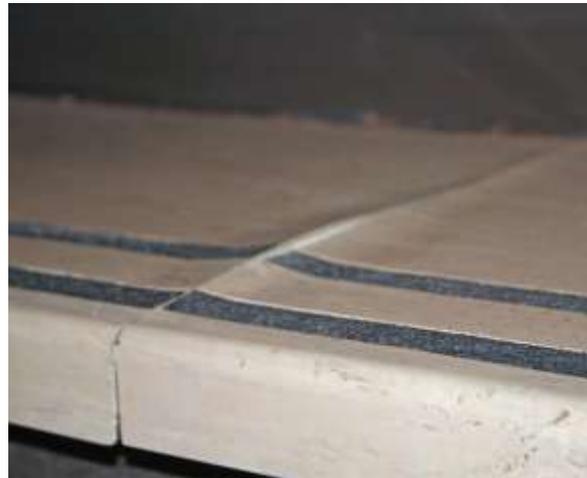
Stairwell Glare

At the end of this third level staircase, you can clearly see the strong glare from the fluorescent lighting on the tile floor.



Stair Condition

Places in the stairway are in poor condition creating a tripping hazard if someone is not carefully watching his step. The high-contrast, non-skid tape was a nice safety addition though. Depicted are the stairs between the second and third floors.



Recommendations

- Place high-contrast tape at the beginning and end of main first floor stairway.
- Replace flooring in stairwell to a material with less sheen.
- Increase the number of light fixtures in the stairwell to increase illumination.
- Repair or replace fluorescent fixtures that produce flickering light.

Elevators

Elevator Signage

Transition

Elevator Buttons



Elevators

Picture of first floor elevators

Elevator Signage

Elevators lack signage dictating their location. Depicted are the elevators located on the second level.



Transition

Pictured first floor elevator door, as with other locations in the facility, do not have any safety markings to indicate the transition from the stationary floor to the elevator.



Elevator Buttons

Buttons for elevators are made of a stainless steel like material which produces a lot of shine and glare. Locating the small button on the panel is difficult. Picture is taken of fifth floor control panel.



Recommendations



Image depicts fourth floor elevators. Mat was placed between the two elevator doors. Placing mats in front of the doors would help indicate the location of the elevator opening.

- Secure overhead signage near location of elevators.
- Place mats in front of doors as to denote where entry to elevator is located.
- Paint or place yellow non-skid tape to denote transition at elevator door.
- Paint elevator buttons red for easier detection.



Emergency Tools

Emergency Tools

Image depicts first floor fire hose and fire extinguisher. The unit blends into the wall and is difficult to spot.



Recommendations

- Paint the trim of the unit in a high-contrast color to ensure good visibility in case of an emergency.



The End