

public library

copely square, boston

Copely Square is located in the heart of Boston's historic Back Bay. It is surrounded by the iconic triumvirate of Boston: Trinity Church by H.H. Richardson, the Boston Public Library by McKim, Mead and White, and the Hancock Tower by Pei, Cobb and Freed. The site demanded a dense openness.

Information is the foundation of democracy. The ability for individual access is an inalienable right. The public library is a container of information. New technologies have reinvented methods of conveying information. The systems meet at the interface between man and idea.

A transparent bar defines the edge of the plaza, restoring the urban boundary and mimicking the face of the existing library. The tendrils occupy the space of the Square, but simultaneously leave it open. The organic forms embrace the site by juxtaposing it with its uniqueness. Transparency and opacity open and close the site. The geometric bleeds into the organic smearing the urban edge into the vacuity of the site.

The stack system becomes the structure and form of the building, defined by efficiency of storage and the proportion of man. The building provides interlocking fingers of digital and manual reading rooms.

The tendrils penetrate and attach to the cage. The cage bulges to enter the tendrils. The assisted interface reacts to accessed information. Breathing with time and knowledge, the assisted interface physically adjusts to the viewer and his perception. The reading room is the access wall between the tangible stacks and the digital tendrils.

The building, formed of information, breaks free from the rigidity of the urban plan by corrupting it from within. The stack cage holds the urban face of the street linking to the traditional urbanism of Boston. The back side of the cage, opening onto the plaza, explodes with the vibrance of the tendrils' organic form. The space of the plaza is openly filled.



