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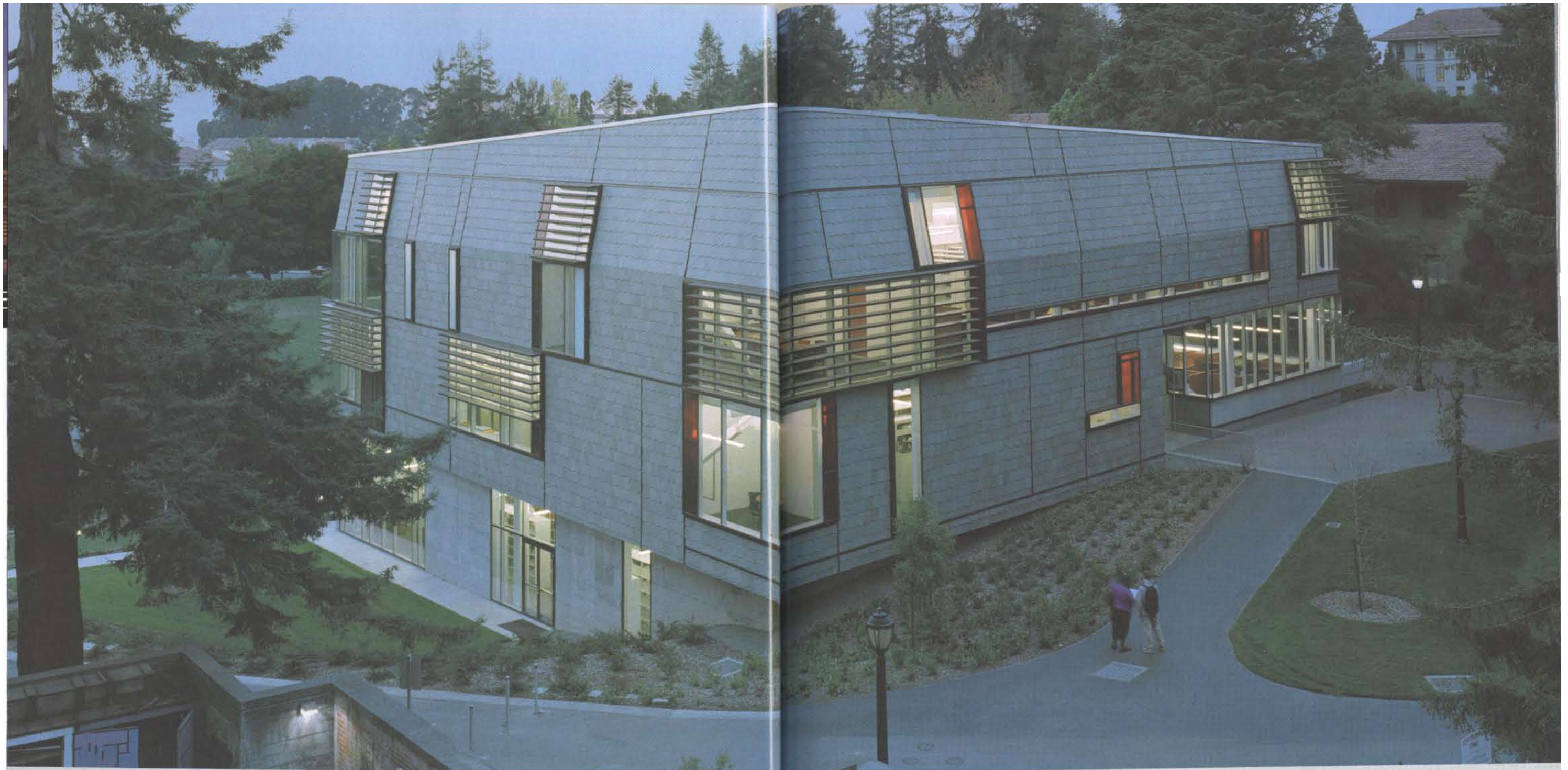
TOWARD A NEW ORNAMENT

New works by Jeanne Gang, John Ronan,
and Mack Scogin and Merrill Elam

Reviews by Sally B. Woodbridge and Cheryl Kent

PLUS

Edward Keegan on Chicago's new playland
Bringing design closer to fabrication
How married partners cope



night and day

A music library at UC Berkeley by Merrill Elam and Mack Scogin in a composition in scale, structure, and light.

BY SALLY B. WOODBRIDGE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIMOTHY HURSLEY

It may take a while for the new music library on the University of California's Berkeley campus to be perceived by passersby as a familiar background building. So far, many viewers see it as an alien implant. This is not because there's a fixed canon for the campus' architecture, but because the library's design, while neither unruly nor brash, is so unfamiliar in respect to form and materials that, as is usual with inno-

vative approaches, it seems unacceptable. Yet the library is a captivating structure. Its slate-shingled walls invite touch, and, in the evening, interior illumination turns the building into a magical 3-D version of a de Stijl painting.

Designed by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects (MSME) of Atlanta, the Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library was intended to complete the arts quadrangle in the southeast part of the cam-

pus by closing the quadrangle's western edge. The quad is loosely defined by three other buildings that vary in style, materials, and height, ranging from two stories to ten in the case of Wurster Hall, a massive concrete structure that dominates the area. The other two music department buildings, which are connected to each other by a covered walkway, form the north side of the quad. Built in the 1950s, they are a bland modernized evocation of California's Hispanic colonial past.

The design guidelines for the new library, which houses a prestigious collection—including 180,000 volumes of books and printed music and 50,000 sound and video recordings—emphasized contextualism through the use of color, materials, and wall composition. They also stated that rather than imitate or match the older music department buildings, the

new one should work to reinforce the concept of a harmonious and coherent complex serving one academic program.

The library's orientation responds to two conflicting axes. While the ground floor is aligned with the city grid, the two upper floors follow the campus axis. The resulting mismatch between the building corners on the ground floor—which is partly built into a hillside—and those of the floors above puzzles many viewers who see the building as slightly off its mark. The benefit of this subtle shift is that it extends the configuration of the stacks on the ground floor through the upper floors, increasing the spaces in the corners for social and other uses.

This strategy for gaining space on the building's periphery while fulfilling the core programmatic requirements is complemented by the boldness of the building's form and mate-



rials. The form suggests a tailored box with a tapering lid. The lid rises on the southeast corner as if the building were saluting its taller neighbor, Wurster Hall. The box is neatly wrapped with green-gray slate shingles and punctured with glazed openings of different sizes and shapes. If from the outside the fenestration, so different from that of conventional buildings, puzzles passersby, on the inside the logic of the windows' placement is clear. Large glazed openings occur in places where daylighting benefits people—as in the corner offices and study areas—and where it will not impact the library's valuable books and manuscripts. Slit windows light the carrels along the east wall outside the stacks. Intermediate-sized windows, some of them filled with amber-colored glass, are part of a fenestration pattern that appears

painterly. Rust-colored louvers set mainly above the large glazed openings on the corners of the south side both filter entering daylight and, like eyelashes, accent their locations.

On the main floor, indirect daylighting from the reading rooms enters the lobby through the glazed upper sections of its warm cherry-wood walls, making this modest space seem generous. The unobstructed passage from the glazed east entrance to a glass wall on the west side that overlooks an adjacent playing field also expands the feeling of space. The architects have seized every opportunity to create view corridors through the floors that bring the outside inside.

Over their 30 years of practice, Mack Scogin and Merrill Elam have made the most of limited budgets by altering inexpensive, off-the-shelf products to give them a custom-made

look. For the music library, the rhythm of a standard glazing system with a duranodic coating was modulated by the omission of the caps on some of the muntins. This simple move affected the proportion of the glazed areas by making the uncapped muntins read as more costly butt-joined glass. The library's shingled walls are made of standard slate floor tiles with one corner clipped. The tiles are individually attached to the plywood wall sheathing with ringed-shank nails.

The white-painted brace frame, which will ensure the library's stability during an earthquake, stands within the exterior curtain walls. The walls have been designed to move independently in a seismic event and thus curtail damage to the building. Dramatically apparent throughout the building, the frame doubles as a piece of interior sculpture. Because

the diagonal braces were placed symmetrically around the building perimeter, one occurs at the main entrance where it functions aesthetically as an archway.

Given its tight site and limited budget, the library's challenge to define the western edge of the quad was to avoid appearing small, low, and overwhelmed by its larger neighbors. By designing the building to stand out in bold and subtle ways rather than blend in, the architects have invigorated the quad by creating a building refreshingly unlike its neighbors. Perhaps the greatest achievement of the library will be redirecting campus architecture toward the exploration of new technology and materials.

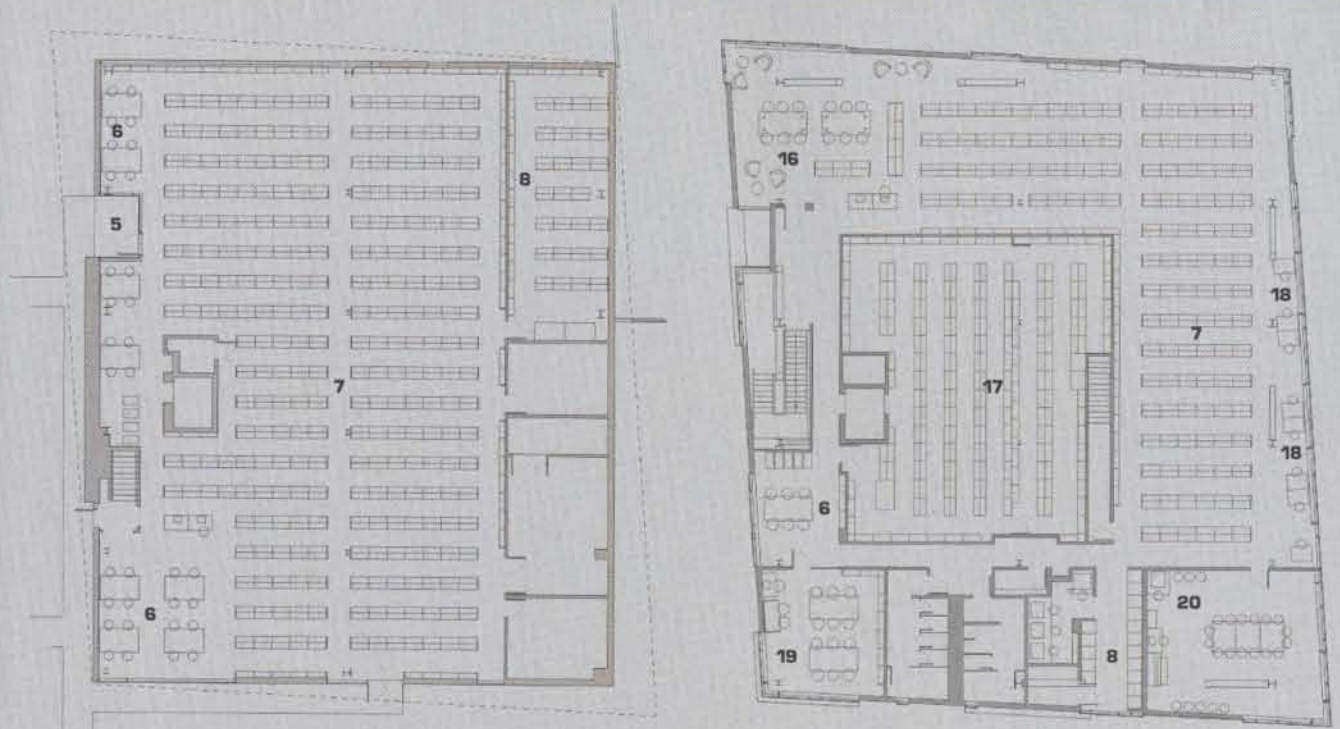
Sally B. Woodbridge, an architectural writer for 40 years, is author of *Architecture San Francisco* (Ten Speed Press, January 2005).





From the reference and special collections reading room (above) and the listening and computer room (below), students can access materials from the library's collection of recordings and other music-related media. Brace frames (facing page) and exterior curtain walls are designed to perform independently during a seismic event.

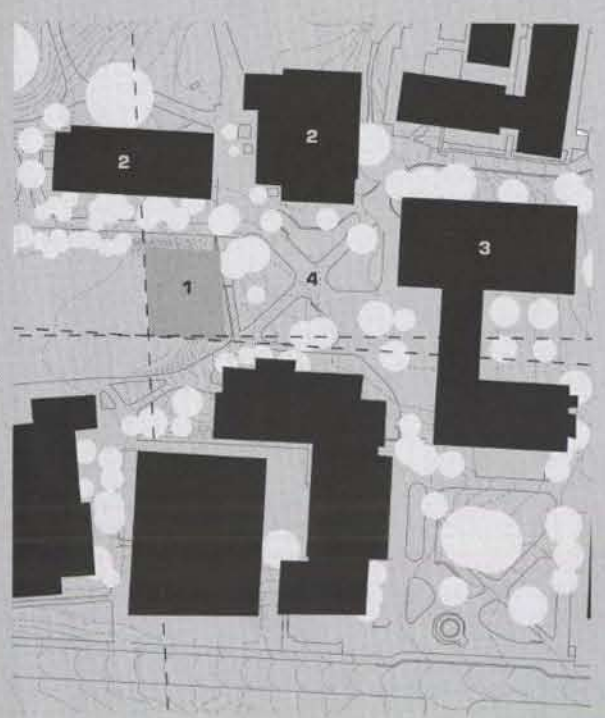




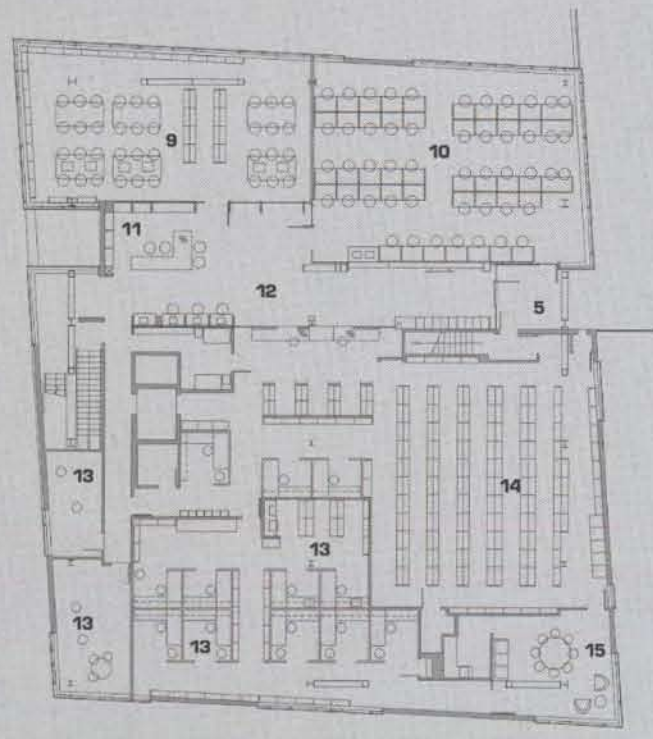
field-level plan

upper-level plan

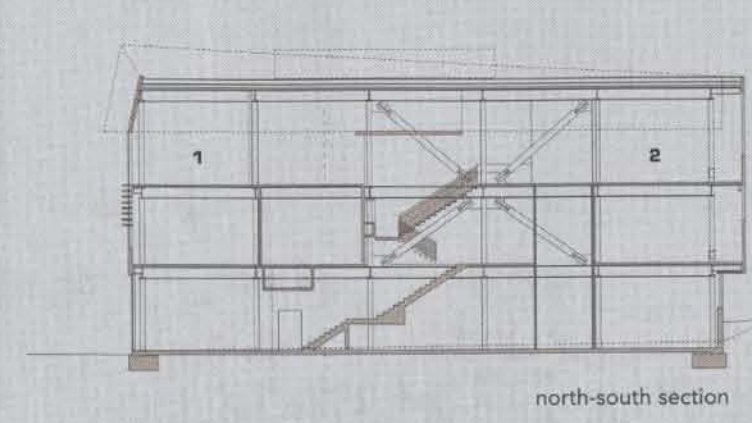
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|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 music library | 8 storage | 14 closed stacks |
| 2 existing music school | 9 special collections reading room | 15 staff lounge |
| 3 Wurster Hall | 10 listening/computer room | 16 periodicals |
| 4 arts quadrangle | 11 reference desk | 17 special collections |
| 5 entrance | 12 lobby | 18 study carrel |
| 6 study table | 13 office | 19 graduate study room |
| 7 open stacks | | 20 seminar room |



site plan — 100' ↗

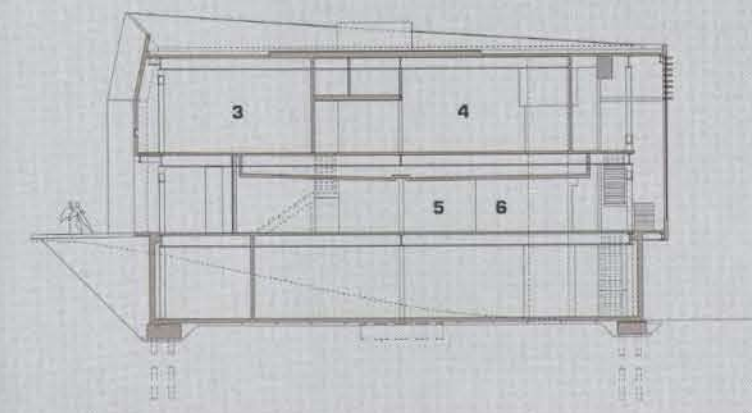


quad-level plan — 12' ↗



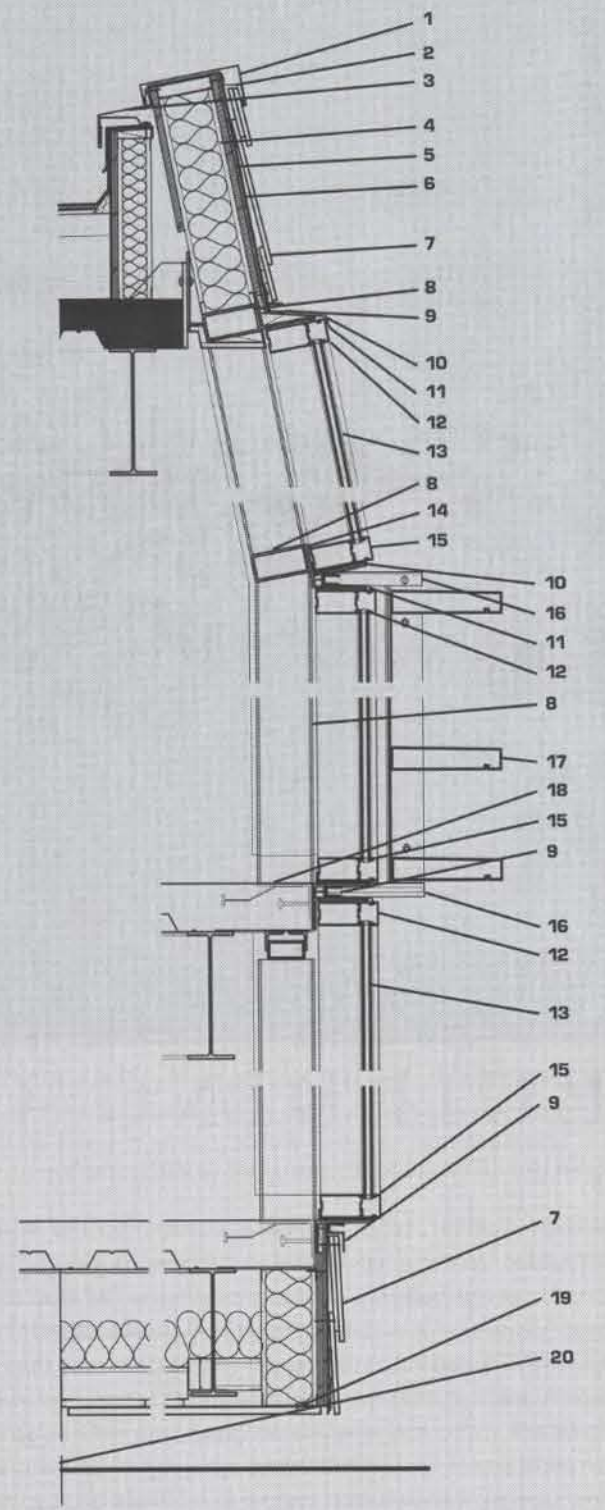
north-south section — 14'

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 graduate study room | 4 special collections |
| 2 periodicals | 5 lobby |
| 3 open stacks | 6 reference desk |



east-west section — 14'

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 stainless steel parapet cap | 10 metal flashing |
| 2 stainless-steel Z clip | 11 backer rod and sealant |
| 3 metal flashing over clip | 12 aluminum glazing head |
| 4 metal framing | 13 1-inch insulated glass |
| 5 plywood sheathing | 14 steel support |
| 6 waterproofing membrane | 15 aluminum glazing sill |
| 7 slate tile fastened with copper nails | 16 projecting steel channel |
| 8 3-by-6-inch steel-tube girt | 17 aluminum louver |
| 9 metal trim | 18 steel embedded at girt |
| | 19 stucco over metal lath |
| | 20 shotcrete retaining wall |



wall section — 8"

Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library, Berkeley, California

client: University of California, Berkeley **architect:** Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects, Atlanta—Merrill Elam (principal in charge); Mack Scogin (collaborating principal); Lloyd Bray (collaborating principal); Brian Bell, Tim Harrison (project architects); John Trefry, Penn Ruderman, Kevin Gotsch, Juan Du, Ted Paxton, Barnum Tiller, Charlotte Henderson, David Yocum, Jennifer King, Margaret Fletcher (project team) **associate architect:** Heery International **engineers:** Arup (M/E/P, façade, lighting); Brian Kangas Foulk (civil) **landscape architect:** PGAdesign **landscape designer:** Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates **consultants:** CF Slating (slate); Ross McDonald Company (shelving); TeeCom Design Group (security and telecommunications); Marc Chavez (specifications) **general contractor:** DPR Construction **area:** 28,775 square feet **cost:** \$9.8 million

specifications at www.architecturemag.com