Provo City Library at Academy Square

Self Guided Tour
A Brief History of the BY ACADEMY

Brigham Young, former Utah territorial governor, and second President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints founded the original Brigham Young Academy in 1875. In 1884, after the first BY Academy building (the Lewis Building, located at Center Street and 300 West in Provo) burned to the ground, plans for a new building began. Don Carlos Young, son of Brigham Young, was chosen as architect for the new building. After eight years of construction and many trials, the new BY Academy Building was dedicated as an institution of learning on January 4, 1892.

Through the years, many students attended grammar school, high school, or college in this building before it was closed in the early 1970's, and sold by Brigham Young University to private owners.

After many plans and several owners, Provo City acquired the building. In 1997, a bond was passed by Provo residents, and the transformation into the Provo City Library at Academy Square began. The 1892 Academy Building, along with its accompanying new wing was rededicated on September 8, 2001 for use by the citizens of Provo as a vibrant library and community center.
Stephen R. and Sandra M. Covey
Family Reference Library
Second Floor
WALKING TOUR

Upon entering the conservatory from either the North or the South, library users find the Mary Stuart Rogers New Library Wing to the east, while the west glass curtain frames a view of the Brigham Young Academy Building. In comparison, the entire Academy library space is almost four times the size of the previous Provo City Library on West Center Street.

Above the south stairs, a list of donors is proudly displayed. This recognizes those who generously gave to the Academy Library project while it was under construction. Just outside the glass windows is the Library Legacy Courtyard. Each engraved brick represents a tax-deductible donation to the Library Legacy Endowment, a fund which has been set aside specifically to maintain the Academy building. Ask at the welcome desk for more information if you’d like your own personalized paver.

This wonderful, light-filled glass conservatory links the past with the future and invites all to enter the Provo City Library at Academy Square.

CHILDREN’S LIBRARY

To the east of the conservatory, occupying the ground floor of the historic Academy building is the George and Delores Doré Eccles Children’s Library. Information regarding the Eccles Foundation is located to the left of the Children’s entrance.

“Time Out Boy,” by local sculptor Gary Price, welcomes children into their own special area. Children love to rub “Time Out Boy’s” nose and make a wish. Library legend has it that by patting his head three times, children are sure to find the perfect book!
The Children's Library is 13,000 square feet and encompasses the entire bottom floor of the Academy Building. It houses approximately 78,000 items today, and will accommodate significant expansion in the future.

Walking inside to the north, the Carma Leora Smuin Sandberg Story Circle is a favorite reading area for the smallest of library visitors. During the school year, pre-school storytimes are an almost daily event in the story circle. Across the room to the west, is the George Q. Cannon Story Room, complete with separate entrances for big people and small people alike!

On the other side of the Children’s library, computers are available for children’s use, along with children’s audio visual materials, fiction, nonfiction, intermediate reader, magazine, and biography collections.

ACADEMY 2nd FLOOR

Exit the Children’s Library and take the elevator or stairs to the second floor. A portrait of Abraham O. Smoot welcomes visitors to this area. A.O. Smoot was the first President of the Brigham Young Academy Trustees’ Association established in 1875. He also served as Mayor of Provo City. A.O. Smoot personally funded much of the construction of the original Academy Building in the late 1800's, at great sacrifice to himself and his family.

Cross the bridge to your right and stop to view the large art glass window. This beautiful window, entitled “Passages of Light,” was designed by Mack Magleby, Brigham Young University graphic artist, and rendered in glass by Willy Lettig. Notice the book which rises from the reader’s hands and transforms into a bird suggesting the sense of freedom reading can bring. The window was donated by the Brigham Young Academy Foundation.
Please walk back into the Academy Building. The displays along the walls in the main hallway are on loan to the Library and will rotate periodically. On the north is the 7 Anderson Art Gallery. Please feel free to walk in and enjoy the current exhibit.

In the hallway just outside the Art Gallery is one of the building’s 8 original cast iron pillars. This pillar has been cleaned, repainted, and re-installed in its original position.

Across from the Art Gallery is the 9 LeGrand (Grit) Young Special Events Room. This room was made possible by a donation from Steve Young, son of LeGrand Young. Several meeting rooms and the Academy Ballroom are on the third floor. All of these rooms are available for use by members of the community at a reasonable cost.

Please check the signs which post the day’s meeting room schedule, located at the bottom of the stairs by the pillar. If activities are in progress, please plan to visit these rooms at another time.

Entering the front vestibule at the west entrance to the Academy, the construction plaque mounted on the wall in the foyer of the entrance lists many of the people who contributed to the reconstruction of this building and the New Library Wing.

**LIBRARY EXTERIOR**

10 From the front porch, the large bronze statue of Brigham Young is visible. This heroic sized statue was sculpted by artist D.J. Bawden and donated by the Brigham Young Academy Foundation. The plaque at the base of this statue recounts the history of the Academy Block.
The Beehive Fountain directly in front of the building is a replica of the 1914 original. The granite beehive at the top is from the original fountain.

Outside looking back at the building, the bell tower can be seen. The bronze bell in the tower is the same size and tone as the original bell, now hanging on the BYU Marriott Center grounds, often known as the “Victory Bell.” The Academy bell rings twelve times at noon every day. The bell was donated by the Brigham Young Academy Foundation.

When approached from University Avenue, the exterior of the Academy Building is historically accurate and looks as it did in 1892.

Today’s exterior bricks are original to the Academy site. The occasional blackened bricks scattered throughout the walls were salvaged from the first Academy Block building, the Lewis building, which burned in 1884.

Amazingly, the Texas supplier of the 1892 red metal shingles is still in operation today, and provided an almost exact replica of the original shingle for today’s Academy roof.

The pointed finials and block-shaped cresting on the ridge of the roof are replicas, and indicative of the building’s architectural flavor, which is identified as “Eclectic Victorian.”

Returning inside the building, turn left and proceed toward the large window at the end of the hall. The first door on your left opens into the Scheduling Office for library meeting rooms. For information about the availability of these rooms, please stop in, or call 801-852-6657.
The meeting room directly next to this office is the **Karl G. Maeser Meeting Room**. Karl G. Maeser was sent by Brigham Young to Provo on assignment by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to organize a school. Maeser arrived in Provo in 1876 and was appointed as first principal of the Brigham Young Academy. Maeser served in that position until 1892.

Beyond the Maeser Room is the office of **Project Read**. This is an independent literacy program housed within the library. Project Read’s mission is to help teens and adults learn to read or improve poor reading skills.

Across from Project Read are the second floor restrooms and drinking fountain.

Back toward the entrance, tucked under the stairway, are **portraits of the first three principals of the Brigham Young Academy**. These portraits were commissioned by the Brigham Young Academy Foundation and painted by artist Ben Sowards.

At the far end of this hall are the **Administration Offices for the Library**, home to the Director of the library, and Administration Staff.

Now, take a moment and look at the **Grand Staircases**, tile floors, oak doors, and the oak wainscoting on the walls. As the building was restored, great care was taken to keep the architectural flavor of the 1890's.

Although the flooring and woodwork are not exact replicas of those in the original building, the design, colors, and style are reminiscent of that time period. Please note that the floor plan of the original 1892 building was adjusted to accommodate Library needs and allow for modern amenities such as elevators and electrical equipment.
Please go up the north Grand Staircase next to the Art Gallery, or use the elevator next to the main entrance to the 3rd Floor.

**ACADEMY 3rd FLOOR**

At the top of the north stairs is the **Zina Young Williams Card and Susa Young Gates Conference Room**. This room is named after two of Brigham Young’s daughters who made significant contributions to church and community, and were teachers of homemaking skills during the early years of the Academy. The two chandeliers in this room are original to the Academy.

Now turn around and walk toward the **Academy Ballroom**. This spectacular 4,000 square foot ballroom (formerly known as “Room D”) now features a catering-friendly full serving kitchen, portable stage, and complete audio and video capabilities.

The large windows in this room feature a breathtaking view of the Wasatch Front. The four cast iron pillars in the center of the room are the originals. Replicas of the original ceiling medallions decorate the tops of the chandeliers. This room comfortably hosts conventions, weddings, dances, and much more.

To the north of the Ballroom is the **Benjamin Kimball Bullock Meeting Room**. The plaque located at the entrance provides information about Benjamin Kimball Bullock.

This beautiful room features the original stained-glass transom. This window was the only piece of stained glass installed in the original Academy Building. Years ago, when the building was vacant and falling into disrepair, two Brigham Young University students secretly removed the stained glass window. They crated it up and moved it to California for
safekeeping, hoping the day might come when the building would be restored to its original splendor. Upon hearing of the renovation plans, they returned the window, which needed only minor repair work before being replaced in its original setting.

Across from the Bullock Meeting Room are the third floor restrooms and drinking fountain.

Please proceed to the **Virginia Sorenson Writer’s Alcove**, the open space just before the elevator. This area was made possible by donations from local authors. It commemorates Virginia Eggertsen Sorenson, author of the Newbery Award-winning book, Miracles on Maple Hill.

At the end of the hall is the **George H. Brimhall Meeting Room**. This room is named after the third principal of the Brigham Young Academy, who was also the first president of Brigham Young University.

**NEW LIBRARY WING**

Now, please return to the **Welcome Desk** located in the glass Conservatory. With your back to the desk you will see two metal slots in the opposite wall. These are our indoor book return slots. Thanks to our new RFID checkout system, items dropped into these slots are immediately checked in and removed from your account.

Please walk into the **Mary Stuart Rogers New Library Wing**. For information on the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation, please refer to the plaque located inside the entrance to the New Library Wing.

On the left is the **Circulation Desk** and surrounding the area you will see 8 self-check stations. These stations allow patrons to check out items and pay fines quickly without having to wait in long lines. The Provo City Library checks out more than one and a half million items annually to Provo City Library Card holders. Past the
circulation area and to the left are our self service hold shelves. If an item is unavailable, patrons may request the item to be held when it is returned to the library. Once the item returns it is arranged on these shelves by the first 4 letters of the patron’s last name and last 4 digits of their library card number. Items on hold can only be checked out to the patron who placed the request.

This floor of the New Library Wing is called the “Browsing Library.” The majority of this floor contains adult fiction, adult audio/visual, the teen collection, the Spanish collection, and a large print collection. Computers are available on this floor for public use and the entire building has access to a wireless connection. Access is available to the Library’s online catalog, the Internet, and certain research resources. The librarians at the Reference Desk in the center of the room are happy to help find an item or answer reference questions.

Toward the Southwest corner of the floor you will find a copy room where patrons can make photocopies. This room also houses free tax forms for most of the year. South of the copy room are three group study rooms that can be reserved by Library Card Holders for 2 hours each day.

Use the elevator just behind the welcome desk or the stairs along the north and south walls to go to the building’s second floor, the Stephen R. and Sandra M. Covey Family Reference Library, and walk towards the art glass window.

As you walk onto this floor, you will immediately notice that it is significantly quieter than the lower floor. This floor is considered our quiet study floor and patrons are encouraged to limit as much noise as possible and always silence their cell phones.

This floor houses our periodical collections including newspapers and magazines, our reference collection containing current research resources, and our nonfiction collection including biographies and oversized items. At the center of the floor you will find another Reference Desk with librarians trained to assist patrons with all types of questions.
The John E. Booth Special Collections Room is found next to the art glass window. The materials in this room focus primarily on Provo history, but the collection also includes information about neighboring communities. Many of these materials are out of print or hard to find. If you want to use any of these materials, please ask a librarian.

As you leave Special Collections, you will notice the Dan K. and Paula L. Shaw Computer Training Room also known as the Gates Computer Training Lab off the Northwest corner of the Reference Desk. This room allows the library to offer computer classes at a variety of levels. When not being used for training purposes, these computers are available to the public though they do not have internet access. South of the Reference Desk another bank of internet computers are available for public use.

Return to the Welcome Desk

This concludes your walking tour.

If you do not have a Provo City Library card, applications are located at the east end of the Circulation Desk. We would love to have you as part of our family! Thanks for visiting today!