Cesar Chavez Library

Phoenix, Arizona

Photo © Bill Timmerman

Line and Space, LLC

Line and Space creates a simple yet striking building that gracefully responds to its context.

By Jenna M. McKnight_This is an excerpt of an article from the January 2008 edition of Architectural Record.

With its vast desert valleys and raw, jagged mountains set against a turquoise sky, central Arizona is the ideal canvas for environmentally reverent architecture. The region has long attracted accomplished architects—Frank Lloyd Wright, Paolo Soleri, Will Bruder, Rick Joy, among others—whose buildings respond to the landscape and climate. The public has come to appreciate, if not expect, building design that takes its cue from the environment.

It's in this context that Line and Space, a 13-member firm in Tucson, was charged with creating a 25,000-square-foot library in Laveen, a farming village turned bedroom community in southwest Phoenix. As a tribute to the area's agricultural history, the new library carries the name of the late farm worker and labor activist, Cesar Chavez.

Laveen, like most suburbs, lacks a nucleus. The design team wanted to create a "living room" for a rapidly growing population of 45,000 residents. The library needed to appeal to people of all ages, particularly children and teens, given the site's proximity to a high school. "Encouraging family interaction was one of our goals," explains Les Wallach, the founder and principal of Line and Space.

The facility was to house 140,000 media materials and include a computer lab and multipurpose room.

Formal name of building: _Cesar Chavez Library

Location: _3635 West Baseline Road _Phoenix, Arizona 85339

Completion Date: January 2007

Gross square footage: 25,000 sq.ft.

Total project cost: $5 million

Owner: _City of Phoenix_Toni Garvey (City of Phoenix Librarian)_Jon Kolstad, AIA, LEED (City of Phoenix Project Manager)

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