

Passero Associates Use Natural Light to Create Spectacular Library



Project

Henrietta Public Library

Location

Henrietta, New York, USA

Architects

Passero Associates

Products Used

Solera® S

VLT:

32%

Henrietta Public Library is a two story, 36,000 square foot library that was constructed in 2019, located in Henrietta, New York near the City of Rochester. This library is replacing an older one which wasn't feasible for renovation. The public library is a space that has an important place in every community. In fact, Henrietta saw this as so important that this library in particular had public hearings that were intended to allow the public to help shape this library that will be used by them for many years to come.

According to Project Architects Peter Wehner and Emily Connors of Passero Associates, "The Town of Henrietta is home to the Rochester Institute of Technology.

In 2018, while the library was under construction, the Town celebrated its 200th anniversary and Rochester Institute of Technology celebrated its 50th anniversary at its location in Henrietta. To commemorate both events, students from Rochester Institute of Technology's industrial design program participated in a competition to design a play element for the children's library. The winning design was a "treehouse" using wood from an oak tree that had fallen on RIT's campus the previous year. The Town worked with Rochester Institute of Technology to execute the winning design and place it in the children's library." explains Connors.

But in addition to public engagement, the Passero Associates team recognized that one of the most important factors in the design of a library is its lighting. You wouldn't want to read in a library that has poor lighting, as it wouldn't be comfortable. Natural light is recognized as the best quality light available and is ideal for libraries. The design team understood this, and as part of their design process they sought a way to bring natural daylight into the library while also making a connection to the outside world.



The key element of their daylighting strategy was the use of skylighting, but skylighting with clear glass results in bright glare patches deep inside a space which is a worst-case scenario. They solved this by using Solera glass which is a highly effective engineered light diffuser. "We are strong believers in providing natural daylight to spaces but also in making buildings energy efficient," said Connors. "Traditionally natural light is only available on the exterior walls of the building, and in such a large facility as a library, that can leave the center of the building feeling isolated from the outside world. The Solera skylights allowed us to bring daylight into the center of the space, even down to the first floor through a large two-story atrium, while still providing an insulating R-value comparable to a wall assembly."

Having Solera in the skylight allowed for daylight to reach every space inside Henrietta Library. Being able to read a book, or work on a computer in this library will feel more comfortable than the average library because everything will be more color correct and glare will never be an issue due to Solera. "Glare is a key consideration in libraries where your eyes are often doing focused work on a book or computer screen. With the Solera panels, the sunlight is diffused through the space creating a softer and more even distribution of light." Says Connors.

The design team was very pleased with the results, but the best endorsement is from the building's users. Once the new public library opened, library staff told Passero Associates that the first month's circulation was up 20% over the same time the previous year. That was confirmation that Passero Associates' work to create a library filled with daylight had reignited a passion for reading and learning for the local community.

Advanced Glazings Ltd. is proud to have been able to work alongside Passero Associates by providing natural lighting design assistance and Solera glass to help in the creation of this beautiful public library that the citizens of the Town of Henrietta will be able to enjoy for many years to come.