

The Building

To address the different edge conditions of the site, the east and west façade of my building are very different from each other. The eastern façade responds to the large scale apartment building across the street and maximizes the land area for the building. Along this straight edge is the shelving for Braille books. Today, many Braille books are “checked out” through the mail order process. However, a common complaint among the blind community concerning this process is that it eliminates the ability for them to browse and have the chance to find something unexpectedly. This shelving creates an opportunity for them to now browse.

The west side of the site faces Rock Creek Park – the more natural of the edges. The façade on this edge steps forward and backward to playfully expose and conceal the columns. Along this edge, there are tables and chairs for study areas and the Lecture Hall. This side is elevated half a level to create a better visual connection with the park and mitigate the noise of the passing cars below. The western facing windows are operable and highly reflective. As a result, the image of the park reflects upon the façade. When a window is opened, a gap is created in the reflected image.

The building narrows as the east and west façades pinch down toward the southern end of the site. A glass stair tower is located at this “pivot point.” The gap between the apartments on the eastern and western edges increases at consistent intervals and opens up towards the park to the northwest. Here a small lounge is located at each residential level.

