

# ARCHITECTURE

INCORPORATING ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGY



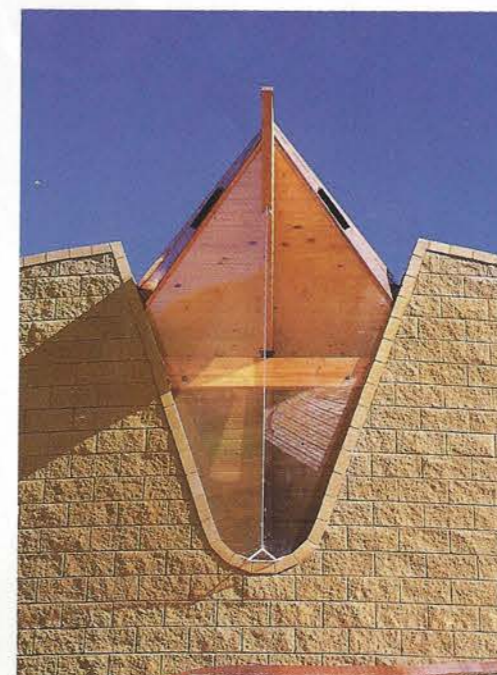
ARCHITECTS OF THE SOUTHWEST

# ARCHITECTURE

AUGUST 1991



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## DESIGN

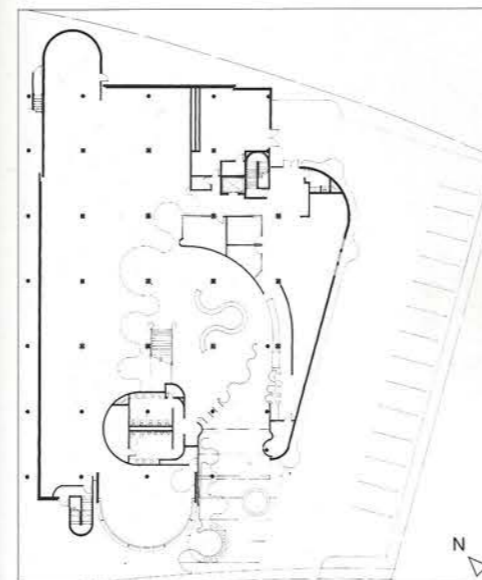
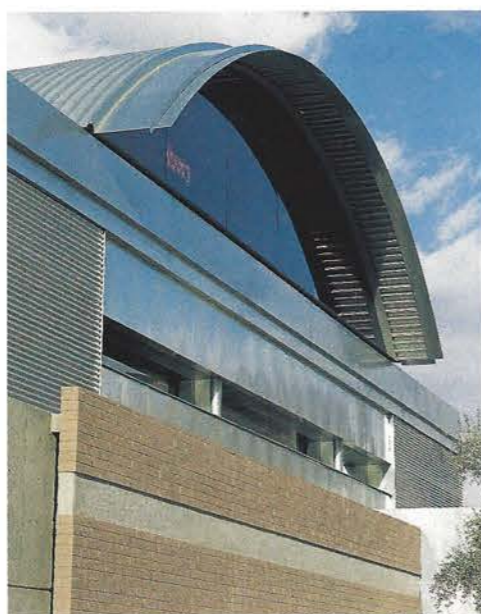
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Cholla Branch Library  
Phoenix, Arizona  
William P. Bruder, Architect

# REVISED EDITION



Bruder enlivened the library's rectangular enclosure with curvilinear spaces (facing page plan) and barrel-vaulted roofs (right). He defined the west elevation with a curved concrete wall (above) punctuated by a bright yellow entrance canopy (far right).



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

FORMALLY TRAINED AS A SCULPTOR RATHER than an architect, William P. Bruder designs buildings that illustrate a sculptural manipulation of mundane materials and deep sensitivity toward structure. The 44-year-old architect apprenticed with Gunnar Birkerts and Paolo Soleri, and worked as a carpenter with the materials he now so deftly incorporates into his designs. In addition, Bruder readily acknowledges the inspiration of Carlo Scarpa, Frank Lloyd Wright, Bruce Goff, former Carnegie-Mellon dean Paul Schwikher, and Australian architect Glenn Murcutt, but he synthesizes these influences into his own idiom, rather than expressing them as direct quotations or allusions.

Bruder's 17-year-old, Phoenix-based practice has recently diversified from houses to commercial and institutional projects. Likewise, the context for his buildings has become increasingly diverse, from the Sonoran Desert to more urban sites. Working within Phoenix's sprawling suburbs, for example, Bruder relishes the challenge of creating appropriate buildings for the less than inspiring commercial strip (ARCHITECTURE, October 1990, pages 56-57).

The Phoenix Public Library system has also become sensitive to the city's recent development patterns. In the early 1970s, the library system began expanding into the suburbs with branch facilities, many located next to major shopping malls. The Cholla Branch Library, completed in 1974 and built on an expansive parking lot adjacent to the massive Metro Center Mall, is one example of this construction program. Bruder's transformation of Cholla's 10,000-square-foot modest brick structure into a state-of-the-art regional branch library is not the local architect's first job for the Phoenix library system, nor his last. In 1979, Bruder designed the Mesquite facility, now poised for a major renovation, and construction will begin early next year on his 280,000-square-foot Central Library (see page 41).

Bruder encompassed the library's existing structure within an envelope of sandblasted concrete, galvanized sheet metal, and glass to create a new 30,000-square-foot facility that meets the needs of the growing library and

creates a strong visual presence next to the mall. Along the north and east elevations, the architect exposed fragments of the original brick wall to remind visitors of the building's more modest predecessor, and announced the main entrance with a boldly undulated marque. Echoing the curves of this canopy, a perforated galvanized steel fence along the southeast corner of the site reinforces the entrance and defines a small cactus garden containing examples of the library's eponymous species.

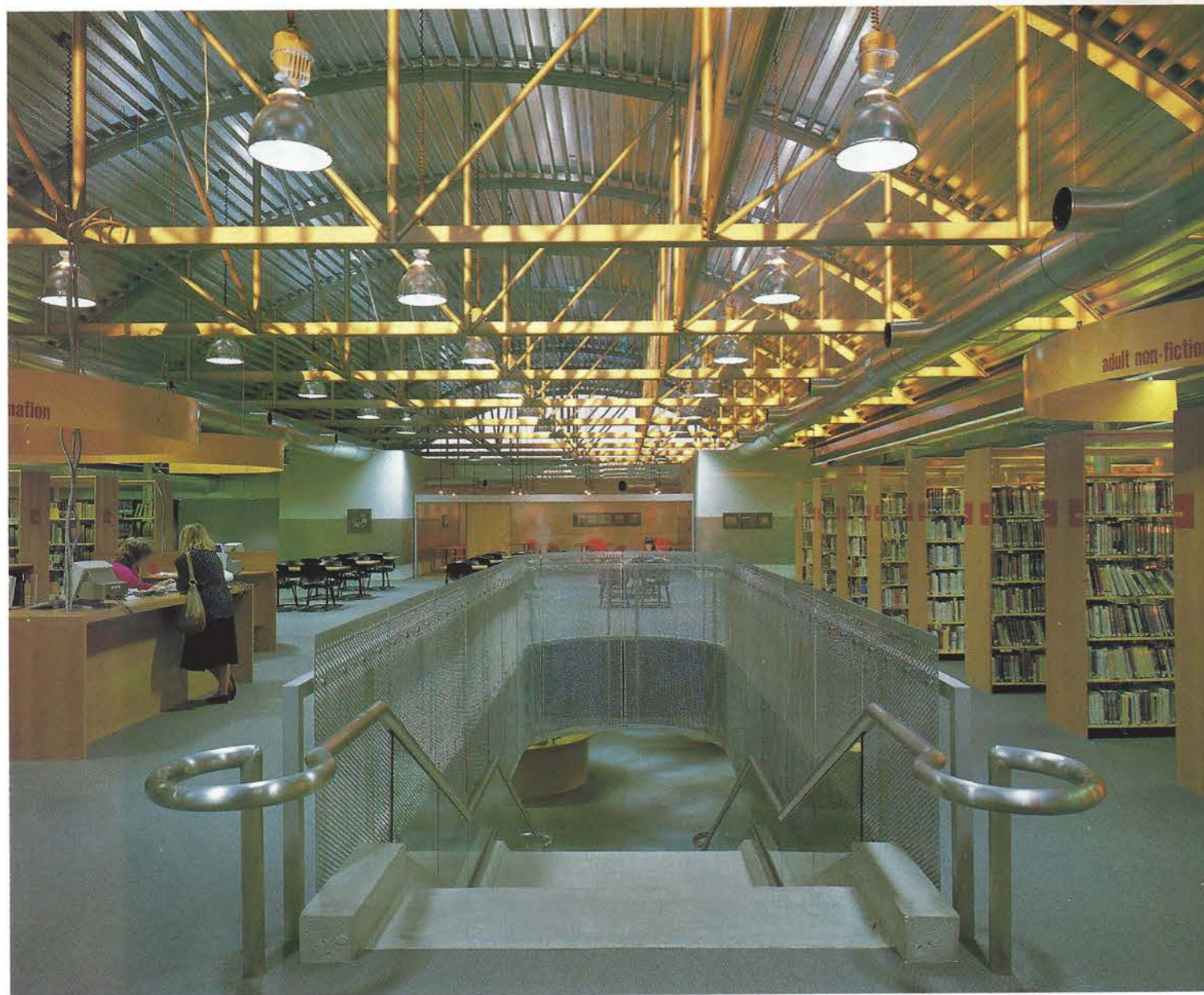
Bruder capitalized on the building's free-standing site to provide a robust composition of interlocking forms. However, the library's exterior appearance as a hermetic, slightly heavy-handed assemblage of utilitarian materials does not prepare the visitor for the drama and sophistication of the interior spaces.

The architect broke the monotony of the basic rectangular footprint by projecting a series of circular alcoves along the east and west facades and defining the southern wall with a curving concrete wall. Along the front of the building, the largest alcove houses a children's reading room with a horizontal window, placed at child's-eye level. Inspired by local warehouse construction, Bruder set the library's main reading room on the second level beneath a corrugated, galvanized metal, barrel-vaulted roof supported by exposed steel bowstring trusses. An elegantly crafted stairway of poured-in-place concrete and perforated stainless steel provides an appropriate procession to this lofty space.

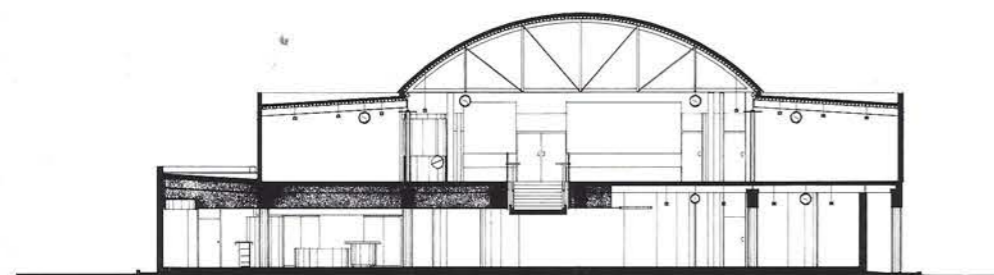
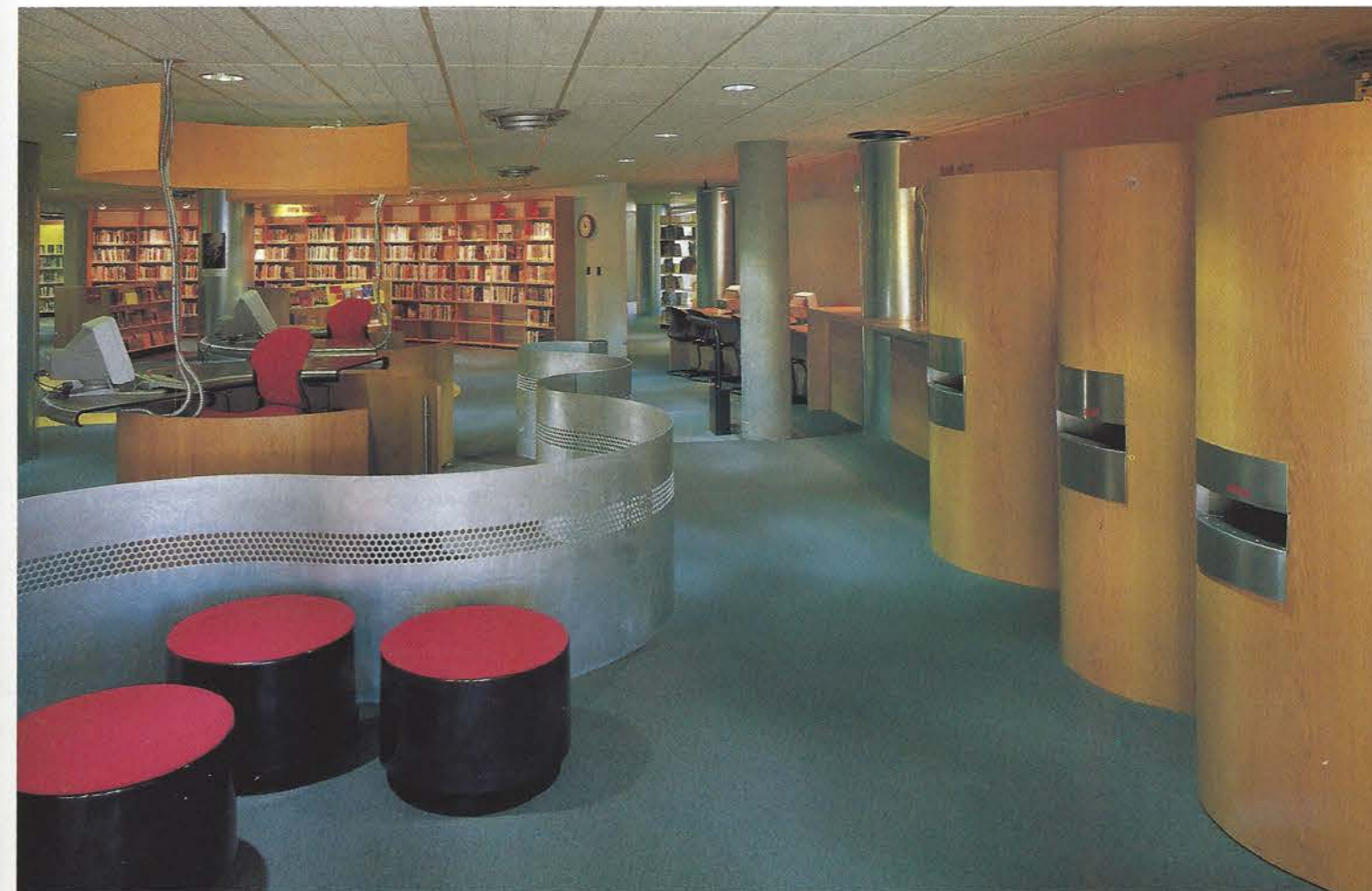
In the library's main reception space, Bruder added curving walls of concrete, a partition of perforated metal, kiosks, and cylindrical, polished oak book drops. Repeating Bruder's penchant for curves, an undulated pattern of bright yellow floor pavers provides a playful indication of where to queue for a pair of circular check-out desks.

The Cholla Library stands in contrast with its retail neighbors, and Bruder is aware that some may find his building too eccentric. "I like to take things to the edge," he insists. "Intellectual challenge is important to a community, and nowhere is that more appropriate than at the public library."

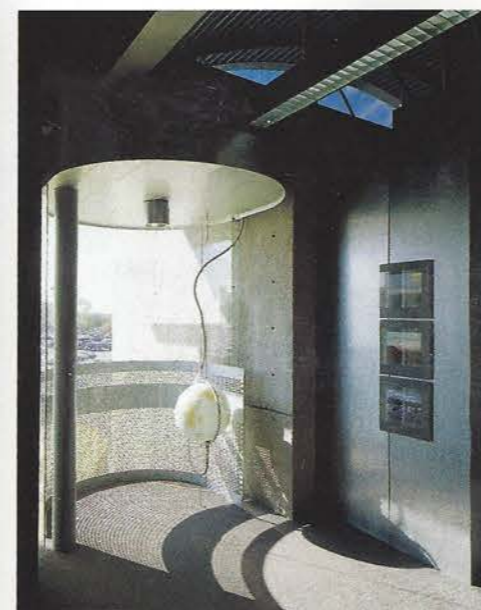
—LYNN NESMITH



Partitions in the foyer lead patrons past cylindrical book drops (below). A grand concrete and steel stairway (facing page, bottom) draws visitors to the vaulted second-level main reading room (facing page, top) and staff lounge (bottom right). A second-floor oriel (bottom left) overlooks the entrance.



SECTION THROUGH LOBBY AND VAULTED READING ROOM



**CHOLLA BRANCH LIBRARY  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA**

**ARCHITECTS:** William P. Bruder, Architect, New River, Arizona—William P. Bruder (project designer); Wendell Burnette (project architect); Tyler S. Green (field architect); Robert Adams, Laurie Clark, Karen King, Peter Rott (design team)

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS:** Steve Martino & Associates

**ENGINEERS:** Robin E. Parke & Associates (structural); Raymond McNulty & Associates (mechanical); CA Energy Design (electrical); William J. Norman (civil)

**GENERAL CONTRACTOR:** Layton Southwest

**COST:** \$1.8 million—\$63/square foot

**PHOTOGRAPHER:** Timothy Hursley/The Arkansas Office