

## Roof Garden at Vancouver Public Library Opens to the Public 23 Years After First Proposed



*Rooftop Garden Aerial View, Courtesy Safdie Architects*

**(28 September 2018, Somerville, MA)** When the Vancouver Public Library opened in 1995, its “urban room” set libraries on a trajectory of incorporating grand public spaces, however it was an incomplete vision. On Saturday, 29 September, the public will at last have the chance to access the roof garden at the 10<sup>th</sup> level of the library.

Working with the Vancouver Public Library, Moshe Safdie, the internationally renowned architect of the original 1995 building, conceived of a sky-lit double-height atrium with a grand stair leading the public from level 8 to level 9 to the roof garden.

“We are delighted that after 23 years, the original concept of an accessible rooftop garden is being delivered to the public,” said Moshe Safdie, from his office in Somerville, Massachusetts. “We compliment the Library Board and the City of Vancouver for their perseverance and gathering the resources together to make this long-awaited vision a reality.”

“The public has embraced the library as one of the most important civic spaces in the city,” Safdie added. Now, this expansion of the library adds an important, public amenity for Vancouver. It is truly a place for people to come together.”

The library turned to the original design team for the library to realize the project—Safdie Architects of Somerville, Massachusetts as Design Architects and Interior Designers, with DA Architects of Vancouver, the original Associate Architects and current Architect of Record, together with acclaimed landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander.

The Vancouver Library Square building occupies an entire city block of downtown Vancouver. The upper two floors were leased to the provincial government for 20 years as part of the financing for the building. When this lease expired, the upper two-stories were able to be reclaimed to expand library functions—a grand stair and seating feature which can be used for lectures, receptions, and other gatherings, as well as a new reading room, staff offices, and a board room. Multi-purpose rooms, an auditorium and a series of display areas afford those visiting the library the opportunity to study and explore Vancouver’s rich history.

At Level 9, nearly one third of the existing building enclosure was removed to make way for a thoroughly landscaped garden terrace with panoramic views of the city skyline. This garden is open to the public for daily use and can be reserved for special events. The noted Canadian landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander conceived of both the original roof garden and the expanded public roof garden. She has designed such iconic public spaces such as Robson Square in Vancouver and the gardens of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.

The remaining interior spaces at Level 9 feature general meeting and event rooms for public use that benefit from the visual transparency between indoors and outdoors.

During the day, when the library is open, the new floors are seamlessly integrated with the rest of the library by extending the existing elevators and escalators up to the upper floors. In the evening or when the library is closed, the upper two floors can be accessed by way of the private elevator bank at the ground level plaza, which connects directly up to these floors.

***Design Architects and Interior Designers: Safdie Architects***

Design Team: Moshe Safdie (Principal Designer), Matt Longo (Project Manager), Elizabeth Mudie Casella, Tunch Gungor, Eleanor Kebabian, Xing Jian Liao, Nicholas Stoutt (Project Team).

***Architects of Record and Original Associate Architects: DA Architects***

***Landscape Architect: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander***

**About Safdie Architects**

Safdie Architects is an architecture and urban design studio imbued with a spirit of idealism and innovation. With intense personal involvement of Moshe Safdie and the core group of principals, the practice operates in the model of a design studio environment—research-oriented and forward-thinking, drawing upon a depth of experience to solve contemporary building challenges in imaginative and unexpected ways.

Moshe Safdie is a citizen of Canada, Israel, and the U.S. His honors include the Companion of the Order of Canada, and the Gold Medal from both the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the American Institute of Architects, among others. Moshe and his firm have been responsible for designing and realizing a wide range of projects worldwide, including cultural, civic, and educational institutions; mixed-use urban centers and airports; and masterplans for existing neighborhoods and entirely new cities. Recent library and civic projects include the Salt Lake City Public Library; the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; and the National Medal of Honor Museum in Patriots Point, South Carolina; among others. The practice has its design headquarters in Boston with offices in Jerusalem, Toronto, Shanghai, and Singapore.

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For further information, please contact:

May Wijaya, Account Supervisor  
Resnicow and Associates  
[mwijaya@resnicow.com](mailto:mwijaya@resnicow.com)  
212-671-5167

Christa Mahar, Director of Communications  
Safdie Architects  
[cmahar@safdiearchitects.com](mailto:cmahar@safdiearchitects.com)  
617-629-7264