

Princeton University, Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building & Louis A. Simpson International Building



Architect: KPMB Architects
Location: Princeton, New Jersey
Program: Higher Education

Completed: 2017
Size: 197,000 SF
Award: 2018 Ontario Association of Architects
Award of Design Excellence

Princeton University, founded in 1746, is the fourth-oldest institution of higher learning in the United States and one of the nine colonial colleges chartered before the American Revolution. The Julis Romo Rabinowitz Building & Louis A. Simpson International Building re-purposed the 1929 Frick Chemistry Laboratories at 20 Washington Road and brought together academic and administrative areas previously dispersed across campus. The buildings were fully renovated and, with additions, have become the University's new focal point for social sciences learning, research, and international initiatives.

The renovated facility consists of classrooms, offices, conference rooms, and common spaces, highlighted by two new atriums - Weickart International Atrium and Economics Forum. The existing historic envelope of the building was maintained and fully restored. All existing mechanical, plumbing, electrical, fire protection and fire alarm, lighting and lighting control systems were removed and replaced with new systems based on University Standards, NJ Building Codes, and requirements for a minimum of LEED® Silver certification. The atriums, connected in an "H" shape, were separated by doors creating two distinct environments. Each space presented a unique set of challenges further amplified by the "H" layout. Both are served by dedicated smoke control/purge systems including two 65,000 CFM fans. Emergency power was a unique aspect of the electrical design scope as well, as a separate line for emergency power was fed off the main source. Project scope required inventive design to ensure the buildings would be as energy efficient as possible in the context of preserving significant heritage elements. Infrastructure (active chill beams and passive radiant heat panels) were placed in the ceilings above the windows in order to maintain the existing heritage details of the windows and stone window surrounds. Information technology was replaced with the new backbone systems designed to include equipment racks and raceway systems. All infrastructure requirements were closely coordinated with the University.