



## CASE STUDY

**Project:**

William H. Jervy, Jr.  
Venice Public Library

**Location:**

Venice, Florida

**Architect:**

John Bryant, AIA, LEED AP  
Sweet Sparkman  
Architecture and Interiors

**Builder:**

Tandem Construction

**Project Size:**

24,000 sq. ft.

## RESTORING THE HEART OF A COMMUNITY: THE WILLIAM H. JERVEY, JR. VENICE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Among public buildings, a library is perhaps the exceptional, often anchoring a community and serving local residents throughout their lives. This was certainly the case with the Venice Public Library, one of the most used libraries in Sarasota County.

When the time came to replace the existing library due to environmental issues, representatives of Sweet Sparkman Architecture and Interiors began the creative process with more than 25 neighborhood programming and public input meetings to listen to concerns, assess needs, and attain consensus. The beginning set the stage for what would be a facility with patron visits and engagement that far exceeded expectations and received consistently positive feedback.

William H. Jervy, Jr. Venice Public Library was completed in 2018. The approximately 24,000- sq. ft. structure, accommodates adult, young adult, and children's programming. The library provides PC workstations and charging stations, a multi-purpose meeting room, a conference room, a makerspace, group study rooms, and tutoring rooms.

In creating the design, said architect and project manager John Bryant, AIA, LEED AP, "efficiency and flexibility were key." This necessitated understanding the technology now available for modern libraries for its operations, as well as "anticipating how things will change in the foreseeable future." Looking ahead, the building, which achieved LEED Silver certification by the US Green Building Council, also is solar-ready.



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The design for the library was subject to strict guidelines requiring adherence to a “Northern Italian Renaissance” style. In compliance, Sweet Sparkman focused on authentic, traditional detailing and materials for the building exterior, treating the interior as a “modern insertion” inside a historic exterior and “ultimately creating a historic style in a fresh way,” Bryant explained. The firm took inspiration from both by traditional Italian architectural precedents, as well as the modern work of Italian architect Carlo Scarpa – particularly his modern renovation of the historic Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona, Italy.

Exterior materials were selected for simplicity as well as durability: cementitious stucco on masonry, cast stone with exposed local shell aggregate that reflected the city’s coastal location, and clay barrel tile roofing. The insertion of modern elements includes the use of a frameless, butt glazed window system set deeply behind uniquely shaped, stone-trimmed arches.

The interior of the building receives ample natural light from a large expanse of north-facing frameless windows, and a large central skylight with ceramic fritting for sun control that shines down on a tile mosaic compass rose. A natural finish ash wood-slat ceiling is used throughout the main public areas to add warmth. Rift-cut white oak wood trim is used extensively for both durability and to lend a warm, modern feel to the space. Color was used carefully throughout the space to introduce whimsy and to define different functional areas within the library.

Based on community input, the library also incorporates outdoor spaces, including a covered area in the Children’s Section and a reading garden with a custom fountain.

“This whole project involved great attention to detail” Bryant concluded. Those details, he added, “guided us as we created a beautiful, yet highly functional, facility that fit into the community while standing out as the special place it is in the hearts of its residents.”

## About Sweet Sparkman

Sweet Sparkman Architecture and Interiors is a multi-disciplinary architecture and planning firm specializing in community-oriented projects and high-end residential, as well as interior design.

**For more information, visit [sweetsparkman.com](https://sweetsparkman.com) or call 941.952.0084.**