The Library Square Project is a combination of a 32,500 s.f. Public Library and a 27,800 s.f. Federal Government Office Tower. The structure of the outer wall is precast concrete shell, and the library inside the shell is a glass box supported by a column and truss structure. There is parking for 700 cars under the library.

One of the driving concepts for the building was to create a face for a city perceived to be devoid of character. The architect also wanted to make the library appear accessible to everyone and integrated many functions to promote this idea. Along with the public functions, the double wall wrapper contains restaurants, small stores, and meeting rooms that may be rented for private affairs. This addition of activities was done to bring in more people and to aid in supporting the facility.
In the project competition description, the city asked for a building that held two separated functions, related by the ground floor site plan, and connected by private retail spaces. There was to be a public plaza to be maintained by the city and to add to the pedestrian flavor of the adjacent streets. Safdie was also concerned with making an icon and a place out of the library complex. The sculptural quality and Roman reference of the outer shell was done to make the building read as an important and public center of the city. This can be seen in the site photograph on page one. In order to make the building easily navigable for the diverse users, the library floor plates are identically planned. The circulation and information desks are placed opposite the elevator banks, and the stacks and restrooms are located in the same place on every floor.
The double wall appearance of the Library Square creates interesting sectional qualities. From both ends of the library complex the curvature of the outer wall encourages a pedestrian flow around the perimeter of the library. This outdoor vestibule is lit up with sunlight and has access to small cafes and stores. The library's reading and study rooms are also provided sufficient lighting through this double wall system. The reading rooms vary in height creating well-lit study rooms and amazing views of the public promenade and downtown Vancouver.
Dialogue of Elements

The main program elements in this complex, though very different in function are attempted to be reconciled in the form. The library is housed in a multi-story slab building, the retail is contained at the lower floors of the double wall element, and the federal government offices are in the high rise on the north corner of the site. It is highly debated as to whether or not the coliseum and tower concept is the best for the site, but after parusing the other propositions on the short list, it seems that Safdie's design is most integrated into the site. Although heavily criticized by the architecture world upon its completion, it proved to be well-loved by the very people it was attempting to integrate. The concrete structure that surrounds the library structure is assembled from prefabricated pieces, and the diagram to the right shows how this process works.
Lighting

Interior Lobby

Lighting Diagram
The Library's curved "ghost wall" allows the facility to be visible from several approaches as a sculptural statement.

The structure is a straightforward grid of unimpeded floor plates for flexibility and continuous structural columns of exposed concrete. The structure reinforces the simplicity of the plan allowing for program elements to be identically located on all floors.
The program distribution diagram shows the personality of the program elements. The public elements are at a smaller scale include commercial/retail and the public library. These elements are anchored by the federal government building that is in a massive scale (22-stories).

The circulation is designed to encourage free public access. A principle Vancouver holds dear.