

Altieri

FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

ARCHITECT

KieranTimberlake

LOCATION

Washington D.C.

SIZE

44,919 SF renovation and below-grade expansion

COMPLETED

2024



AWARDS

2024 AIA Philadelphia Honor Award

2024 Archello Renovation of the Year Jury Winner

2024 Architect's Newspaper Best of Design Editors' Pick

2024 Architecture MasterPrize Best of the Best, Restoration & Renovation

Folger Shakespeare Library, founded in 1932, is home to the world's largest Shakespeare collection. The building transformation was designed to draw more visitors to its renowned collection by making it more accessible to the public. A new 6,000 SF below-grade space improves accessibility and circulation and features a lobby, vault for the 82 Shakespeare first folios, exhibition halls, collaborative spaces, learning lab and classrooms for research and education, gift shop, and offices. The expansion enables the Great Hall to return to its original use as a gathering space for visitors and Folger Theatre audiences. The exterior of the original building remains untouched, but a new entrance sequence is enhanced by new gardens and landscape by OLIN.

Altieri's work began with a feasibility study and continued throughout the 7-year design and construction phases. Altieri designed new and upgraded existing air and hydronic systems. The 18 different air systems utilize multiple dehumidification strategies such as passive desiccant wheels, active desiccant wheels, and cool-to-dewpoint chilled water coils. The below-grade systems utilize an existing low temperature glycol chilled-water loop which was modified to maintain very low temperature and relative humidity requirements. Fire protection coverage in collection spaces was upgraded providing dual systems – a gaseous clean agent system and a pre-action system. Air systems serving the renowned Folger Theatre provide a displacement air system through below-seat distribution.

“What we're doing with this work is to make it anew for a new time and a new age, so that it can go forward.”
Stephen Kieran, Partner, KieranTimberlake