



Libraries through the lens

Bibliothèque Monique-Corriveau, Québec City, Canada

THIS issue's image is close to home for photographer, librarian and Québec resident, Thomas Guignard.

The library in question is the former St Denys-du-Plateau Church, designed by Jean Marie Roy following the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965. The Catholic Church looked for a period of renewal, and the churches that were built during that time often reflected this.

Thomas says: "Jean-Marie Roy seems to have been inspired not only to break free of previous sacred architecture norms, but also those of modernism itself. The origami-like structure, with its steeply pitched roof and aerial campanile

couldn't be further from the functionalism of the modern canon. On both ends, unbroken clear windows both flood the space with light and send a strong message of openness and transparency. This was a modern church for a renewed Church. Deeper societal changes were however also at work in Québec during the 1970s. The 'Quiet Revolution' saw the secularisation of many key institutions in Québec, such as education and social services.

"Congregations dwindled and churches closed their doors, opening the question of the reuse of such spaces. In Québec, several have since been converted into libraries. In May of 2012, a colloquium

organised on this topic listed more than a dozen ongoing projects to convert former churches to library spaces. Among those projects was the transformation of the St Denys-du-Plateau Church into Bibliothèque Monique-Corriveau, replacing an aging branch of the Québec City library network. Led by Dan Hanganu & Côté Leahy Cardas Architects, the adaptive reuse of the former church is respectful of its original form. The addition of two glass cubes on either end of the nave pay tribute to the spirit of openness that inspired Roy. As we near the end of the year and return to the colder months, I choose this snowy exterior view of the library on a late winter afternoon."