

University of Minnesota

Space Program for Pillsbury Hall

Minneapolis, Minnesota



Project Information

Completion Date
December 2015

Services Provided
Space Program

Rickes Associates prepared a space program for renovations to historic Pillsbury Hall, an existing building of just under 60,000 gross square feet, to house the Department of English as well as instructional and collaboration space for the campus as a whole.

The University of Minnesota identified the need for a new, distinct home for the Department of English, which serves 6,000 students, including 600 majors. Built in 1887, Pillsbury Hall is the second oldest building on the Twin Cities Campus and is listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. Pillsbury was chosen because it lies in the Humanities District on campus and its size is well-aligned with the needs of English. In addition, the University determined that Pillsbury would include instructional, collaboration, and assembly spaces for Humanities and the campus community. The Minnesota Engagement Lab, a concept currently in development, will enable Humanities departments to work together with members of the Twin Cities community on special projects.

Rickes Associates (RA) began the study with stakeholder interviews to understand anticipated changes, space needs, and interrelationships between the many distinct groups within the English department. In order to determine the classroom sizes for Pillsbury, RA calculated the classroom demand campus-wide, as well as for Humanities and English. The English department hosts over 100 events each year, ranging from small workshops to readings by renowned authors; an events analysis highlighted the needs for this type of space.

Developed using information gathered throughout the study, a detailed space program specified and quantified room-by-room needs and optimal adjacencies. Given the range of assignable square footage that can be developed within an existing building, a “bracketed” space program was created to capture both ends of the potential spectrum, thereby providing flexibility during the design phase. A program of 23,000 to 30,000 assignable square feet was recommended for Pillsbury Hall.