

The Shapell Center: Honoring the past and inspiring change



The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum opened in 1993 and was initially intended as a permanent, four-story exhibition space located near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It was not intended to be a collecting museum, but the institution soon became perceived as a repository for photographs, mementos, and other artifacts of the Holocaust. Survivors and the descendants of survivors began sending artifacts to the museum for safekeeping.

Although museum staff were pleased to receive the objects, they faced two major challenges: First, the artifacts were often fragile because they were only intended for short-term use and were not made to last. Second, staff lacked space to conserve the artifacts as well as space to store them.

Space in the downtown building was primarily devoted to the permanent exhibition, so the museum leased part of a warehouse to stage exhibits and store the artifacts that people were sending in. The museum kept expanding its warehouse space, but by 2008 staff realized that a purpose-built, permanent home was needed to house the ever-growing collections.

The museum's in-house architect worked with staff to understand what needed to be stored and how the collections were projected to grow. After years of planning and construction, the David and Fela Shapell Family Collections, Conservation and Research Center opened in the spring of 2017.



Spacesaver compactors and art racks store a variety of artifacts in collections areas.

Spacesaver provided solutions throughout the facility:

COLD STORAGE

The museum serves as a repository for photographs, motion pictures, film negatives, and other chemically active materials that require cold storage. The spaces in walk-in coolers and freezers are expensive to maintain, so the project designers wanted to store as many materials as possible in the smallest amount of space. Spacesaver compact storage systems help keep collections organized and accessible while also eliminating wasted aisle space to improve energy efficiency.

HANGING ART

The museum holds an extensive collection of hanging art created during and after the Holocaust. Storing paintings and other art on compact art racks allows for efficient use of storage space and also provides convenient access.

REGISTRAR'S AREA

Caring for artifacts is central to the museum's mission and the facility designers wanted to provide a pleasant working environment. Providing convenient storage for conservation supplies promotes best practices in collections care.

Enduring solutions for museums of all sizes

At Spacesaver, we know that planning for new construction or renovation can be a daunting experience. Our Wisconsin-based teams of in-house engineers, project managers, and manufacturing experts are ready to work with your local Spacesaver consultant to design, build, and install effective storage solutions that will stand the test of time.

As you begin designing a new or renovated collections space, contact your local Spacesaver consultant to request a free, no-obligation space assessment.

To learn more about Spacesaver Storage Solutions and how a Spacesaver Specialist can help design effective solutions for collections care, please visit www.spacesaver.com or call 1-800-492-3434.



Spacesaver Corporation
1450 Janesville Avenue
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538-2798
1-800-492-3434
www.spacesaver.com



KI
1330 Bellevue Street
P.O. Box 8100
Green Bay, WI 54302-8100
1-800-424-2432
www.ki.com

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