The Computer Sciences and Engineering Building (right) is connected to the Marston Science Library (left). These buildings were designed by the Orlando architectural firm of VOA Associates and opened in 1987.

The space follows the former aesthetic feel, with updated changes to reflect new uses, with this view onto a newer seating area, which replaced the former reference desk area.
In 1987, the University of Florida merged six smaller science libraries into a newly constructed Marston Science Library. The Libraries included the Agriculture Library (1905), the Physics Library (1909), the Botany Library (1909), the Engineering Library (1912), the Chemistry Library (1923) and the Biology-Geology Library (1947). This reflected the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of research, and was a very forward-thinking decision for the time. The different libraries were collection-heavy, which meant collections were relocated to every floor of the new Marston Science Library. The flooring on the first, second and third floors were also reinforced to accommodate the exceptional weight of collections housed in compact shelving. Besides convenience in accessing...
collections across disciplines and improved centralized services, one of the biggest immediate impacts for students was increased space for studying. The various department-based libraries had around 350 seats total, while the new library was designed to provide 1300. The new building would also eventually accommodate the Map Library and Government Documents collection.

At the time of opening, the Library had three service desks that included a circulation desk, a research assistance desk located under the atrium, both on the second floor, and a third floor journal assistance desk. Through the years we have reduced to one service location to make it easier on visitors who weren’t always sure which desk to utilize. Today, librarians conduct more consultations virtually than in-person, using platforms such as videoconferencing, email, and chat reference services. In 1986, the Libraries first introduced public computer terminals for searching the collection and ceased adding paper cards to the card catalog. Marston was the first library to open without a physical card catalog and librarians performed article searches for patrons in databases using the DIALOG Online Search System. Now, Marston has three large computer labs along with standalone computers throughout the building for patron usage.

There are two major changes that happened more recently that have transformed services. First, library collections have increasingly shifted to digital content, particularly with journals. Due to the speed of journal publishing, scientific disciplines have long relied upon journals rather than monographs for disseminating research. A national trend toward digital journals led to the second major change. In 2014, Marston began the first of three renovations. Beginning with the 1st floor renovation, the entire floor was transformed from being a space that held
print journals and government documents in compact shelving and the Maps & Imagery Library to an expansive space with 700 seats, 21 study rooms, and a visualization and conference room with full video-conferencing capability. This conference room is open to all by reservation and contains a 11 foot multi-touch visualization wall to enable researchers to view and analyze large datasets.

At that time, the Smathers Libraries also began a successful partnership with UF Information Technology (UFIT) to strengthen computer and printing resources for students. Previously, UFIT computer labs were in stand-alone spaces with limited hours. The Libraries had developed their own sizeable footprints in public computing, and the two systems were different enough to be a challenge for students. This new Marston Library partnership included UFIT management of three computer labs with PCs and Macs and two printing stations, including a large-format plotter for posters. Scanners that allow for fast scanning of books and documents
were also added. A large classroom on the first floor was also renovated into a creative space called MADE@UF. This new room, in partnership with UFIT, was designated initially as a lab for students to explore and build mobile applications. Funded by a UFIT Technology Fee grant, students could check out bins of mobile devices to test apps and the lab included an Apple Educational License for students to build iOS apps without initially paying the developer fee. MADE@UF eventually evolved into a space for augmented and virtual reality exploration with the installation of Oculus Rift and HTC VIVE equipped workstations. MADE@UF hosted AR/VR student clubs and a large undergraduate class focused on building virtual reality tools to solve social problems. The successful partnership between Marston
and UFIT in providing publicly accessible computers and support soon expanded throughout the Smathers Libraries.

After the first floor renovation, the second and third floor renovations soon followed. These renovations continued to provide enhanced collaborative study spaces offering a variety of seating options. The 2nd floor renovation showcases 3D printing and CT scanning services, and the 3rd floor expanded available study areas by reducing the footprint of less used journals and theses and dissertations. Each of the floors is unique for different reasons, and the 3rd floor is a favored destination for students for its beautiful views of campus and the popular “diner” seating situated around the atrium.
This last decade has been a critical evolutionary period for Marston, transforming from a traditional print collection-heavy library into a technological-heavy library that offers a variety of student-focused spaces and collection formats. Looking forward, we are developing a vision for a renovation of the fourth and fifth floors that prioritizes quiet, individual study space to provide an alternative to the collaboration-centered spaces on the first through the third floors. We are also planning several new changes: a new makerspace that will provide easier access to tools and technology, augmenting the building with more plants, and adding a new 100-gallon aquarium. Together, these will improve functionality as well as the ambiance, to make the library a welcoming place for the entire UF community.