

**NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION**

November 2012

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT:

Park Slope Library

Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
David J. Burney, FAIA, Commissioner
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Prepared by the DDC Historic Preservation Office,
Architecture + Engineering Unit, Public Buildings Division,
Department of Design and Construction.

INTRODUCTION	4
HISTORY	6
ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION—EXTERIOR	8
Siting and Massing	8
Masonry	10
Windows	12
Doors	12
Roof	13
Site Features	13
EXTERIOR CHANGES	14
Masonry	16
Windows	17
Doors	17
Roof	18
Site Features	19
ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION—INTERIOR	21
Original and Current Layout	21
Main Public Rooms on First, Mezzanine, and Second Floors:	
Vestibule, Adults’ and Children’s Reading Rooms, Delivery (Circulation) Area, Book Stacks, Upper and Lower Reference Alcoves, North and South Study Rooms	27
Ornamental Glass	30
Woodwork	31
Plaster Finishes	35
Fireplaces	36
Floors	37
Lighting	37
Individual Room Descriptions and Significant Features:	
First, Mezzanine, and Second Floors	41
Delivery Room (now Circulation Area)	41
Vestibule	41
Book Stacks	43

Staff Room (now Program Room), First Floor South off the Book Stacks	44
Librarians' Office (now elevator lobby, accessible restrooms, and rear entrance vestibule)	44
First Floor Reference Alcove (now Work Room).	45
Mezzanine Floor Reference Alcove (now Quiet Reading Room) .	45
Second Floor South Study Room (now a staff workroom or storage room)	48
Second floor North Study Room.	49
Individual Room Descriptions and Significant Features: Basement Floor	49
Main Lecture Hall	49
Reception Room.	50
Small Lecture Room.	51
Lower Vestibule	51
Other Basement Spaces	52
MECHANICAL SYSTEM	53
STRUCTURAL SYSTEM	55
TECHNOLOGY	56
THE 1949 RENOVATION	58
THE 1979 RENOVATION	59
Windows	59
Doors	59
Finishes	59
Electric.	59
Plumbing	60
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK	61
Exterior Masonry	61
Windows	62
Sky Lights	62
Secondary Interior Public Spaces.	63
First Floor Reference Alcove	63
Second Floor South Study Room	63
Lecture Hall	64

Lower Vestibule	64
Site	64
Fireplaces	65
Lighting	65

APPENDIXES	66
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1. Illustration Credits	66
2. Original 1906 Raymond F. Almirall drawings from Brooklyn Public Library Capital Project archives	67
3. Completion photographs, September 2012	75

Note: Appendixes 4 through 10 are not included in paper copies of this report. They can be found online at www.nyc.gov/ddc and in the CD attached to the back cover of this document.

4. Detailed scope of work for proposed exterior rehabilitation
5. 1941 Drawing for Stoop Reconstruction
6. Drawings from 1949 renovation (radiator enclosures only)
7. Drawings from 1979 renovation (comprehensive set)
8. Drawings from 1985 window replacement
9. Drawings from 1995 roof replacement and lightning protection
10. Drawings from 2012 phase 3 interior renovation

Introduction

On Friday, October 30, 2009 the Park Slope Branch Library was closed for renovations. The work, referred to in this document as phase 1, was designed by Allanbrook, Benci, Czajka, (ABC) Architects and Planners, LLP¹ and included construction of an exterior ramp and bridge leading to a new entrance on the side of the main entrance vestibule, installation of an elevator, creation of accessible public restrooms, and construction of a ramp at the mezzanine level providing for access between the mezzanine-level book stacks and an adjacent reading room. A subsequent addition to this work, also designed by ABC Architects and referred to as phase 2, included new linoleum floors in the reading rooms and circulation area, new furniture, and related electrical and data cable installation.

Subsequently, during construction of phase 1, the Brooklyn Public Library determined that additional work at both the interior and exterior was required in order for the library to re-open. The design for this additional work has been undertaken by the Architecture and Engineering Unit of the New York City Department of Design and Construction (DDC).² This work, designated as phase 3, is under construction and is expected to conclude in August 2012 for a projected re-opening of the branch in early September. The general contractor for the three phases of work was Mongiove Associates, Staten Island, New York. Additional phases of work, especially exterior restoration, may follow.

Ideally, an historic structure report would have been completed prior to beginning design. Information obtained from such a report, including documentation of the original design and construction, of changes that have been made over time, and of original finishes, could have informed the designs for the renovation. In this case, however, preparation of a historic structure report was not undertaken prior to the design work for phases 1, 2, and 3.

¹ Subsequently changed to Vincent Benic Architect LLC.

² Personnel for DDC: Sueyan Lee Kim, Architect in Charge; Frank Kugler, Daniel Arbelaez, Architecture; Jeremy Woodoff, Historic Preservation; Carl Kirshner, Electrical Engineering; Meagan Hopper, Lighting Design; Ellery Pichardo, Ashwani Bedi, Oliver Osterwind, Structural Engineering; Charles Dinstuhl, James Lum, Eric Wong, Michael Giltenane, Library Unit Project Management.

Nonetheless, much information about the building's original design and subsequent alterations has been gleaned as a result of the design and construction process for phases 1, 2, and 3 as well as preliminary design for future phases. This report has been prepared in order to preserve this information, which might otherwise be lost as files are archived, and exposed historic features are covered over, or, sometimes, removed. Recommendations are also made for possible future work.

Because the report has been prepared while construction work has been underway, the descriptions and illustrations have a work-in-progress character. Photographs documenting the building at completion of the three phases of construction are included as Appendix 3.

History

The Brooklyn Public Library was established by the New York State legislature in 1892, emerging from a series of private, private but open to the public, circulating, reference, specialist, and general-interest libraries that had been founded in Brooklyn beginning in 1809. The new system's first branch opened in Bedford in 1897, and by 1901 there were 16 branches, some of which incorporated existing private libraries.³



Figure 1. Andrew Carnegie's first donated library, Dunfermline, Scotland.

Beginning in 1881, the wealthy industrialist Andrew Carnegie decided to begin donating library buildings as a way of improving the lives of poor Americans and new immigrants. Carnegie himself had been a poor immigrant from Scotland. His first gifts were for towns to which he had a connection, such as Dunfermline in Scotland, where he was born and Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, where he lived after emigrating to the U.S. Carnegie's boyhood experiences spending time in a private library helped shape his outlook on the importance of learning and philanthropy.⁴ He gradually expanded his program, creating a system for administering the library grants. The

locality was to be responsible for acquisition of sites as well as for providing books, staffing, and maintenance. Carnegie began donating to the New York and Brooklyn Public Library systems in 1901, and by 1929 he had donated \$5.2 million for 67 branch libraries in the five boroughs. Brooklyn received \$1.6 million,⁵ which would be the equivalent of between \$20 and \$40 million dollars today.

The Prospect (Park Slope) Branch started in 1900 as a traveling library with works only on natural history. The branch was originally housed in Litchfield Villa in Prospect Park. As its collection grew and diversified, the branch moved in May 1901 into two storefronts at 372 9th Street between 5th and 6th

³ History section is summarized from: Virginia Kurshan, Brooklyn Public Library, Park Slope Branch Designation Report, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, New York, NY, October 13, 1998, pp. 2-6.

⁴ For a more recent example of the effect a library can have on a future writer, see the 1988 essay by Pete Hamill, whose local library was the Park Slope Branch: <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/26/books/d-art->

[agnan-on-ninth-street-a-brooklyn-boy-at-the-library.html?pagewanted=3&src=pm](http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/26/books/d-art-agnan-on-ninth-street-a-brooklyn-boy-at-the-library.html?pagewanted=3&src=pm)

⁵ Kurshan.

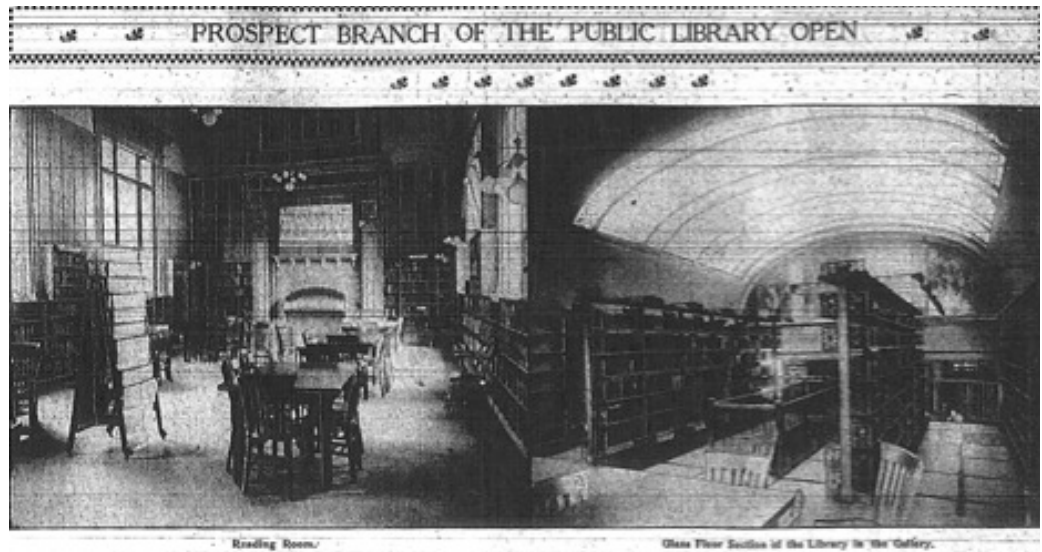


Figure 2. Opening day photographs from the Brooklyn Eagle, Aug. 1, 1906.

Avenues. The nearby site that was selected for the Carnegie-funded branch, aside from being an unusually large, full block-front site, was near to other public facilities, including P.S. 39 across 8th Street and the YMCA on 9th Street. Carnegie wanted his libraries prominently sited, in central locations, and near other public institutions.⁶

Raymond F. Almirall, the architect of the Prospect Branch, was a prominent Brooklynite who studied at the Polytechnic Institute and received a degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1891. He specialized in public buildings, including hospitals (Seaview Hospital on Staten Island is one); churches, including St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church and Church of the Nativity, both in Brooklyn; and bank buildings, including the Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank at 51 Chambers Street in Manhattan. Almirall was one of the five members of the Architects' Advisory Commission for the Carnegie libraries in Brooklyn, and besides the Prospect Branch he designed the Pacific, Bushwick, and Eastern Parkway branches.⁷

The Prospect Branch opened on July 30, 1906. Since then, the building appears to have undergone two major renovations, the first in the late 1940s and the second in 1979,⁸ designed in part by Judith Goldberg, R.A.. The third major renovation, currently underway and discussed in this report, was made necessary in order to conform with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, to remedy exterior masonry problems at the street and basement levels, to address deterioration of interior finishes, and to improve the efficiency of the branch's operation.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. and Mary B. Dierickx, *The Architecture of Literacy: The Carnegie Libraries of New York City, The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and The New York City Department of General Services*, New York, NY, September 1, 1996, p. 87.

Architectural Description-Exterior



Figure 3.



Figure 4. Undated photo, probably taken within a few years of the library's opening.

SITING AND MASSING

The Landmarks Preservation Commission's *Brooklyn Public Library Park Slope Branch Designation Report* notes that "Almirall took full advantage of this

important site when designing the building, placing it on a small rise, set back and surrounded by lawn, trees, and an iron fence. The wide front spreads across most of the block front, with an impressive, centrally located, columned entrance portico....



Figure 5. Original architect's drawing of the front elevation. Note: Full-size files of the architectural drawings, as well as additional drawings and photographs not part of the paper copies, can be found on the compact disc located on the inside rear cover of this report and in the web version at www.nyc.gov/ddc

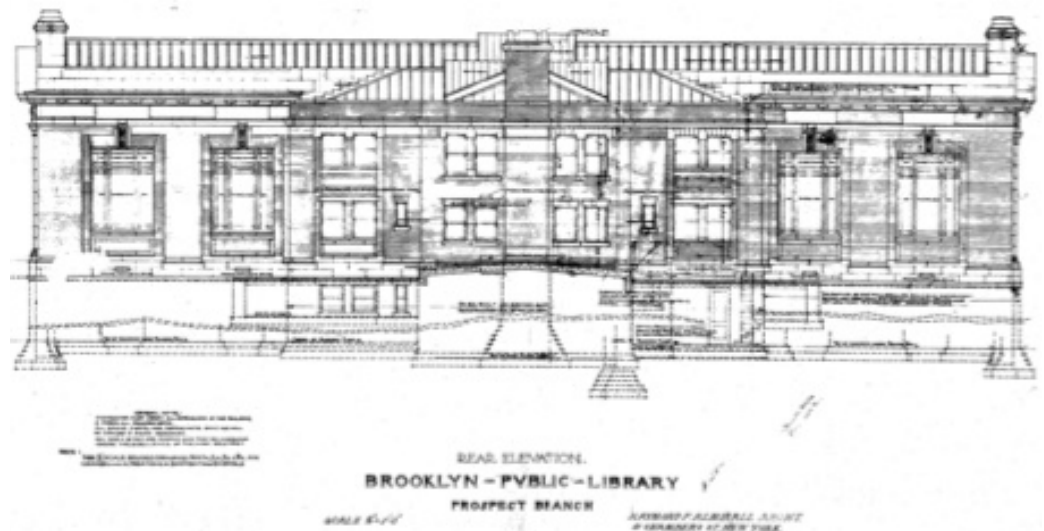


Figure 6. Original architect's drawing of the rear elevation.

“Planning was an important component in these libraries and this one reflects that concern in the wings which extend to each side of the entrance. Each houses one of the two main reading rooms, one for adults and one for children, with large windows to allow light into these spaces and a central circulation desk for easy access and visibility. The book stacks and smaller

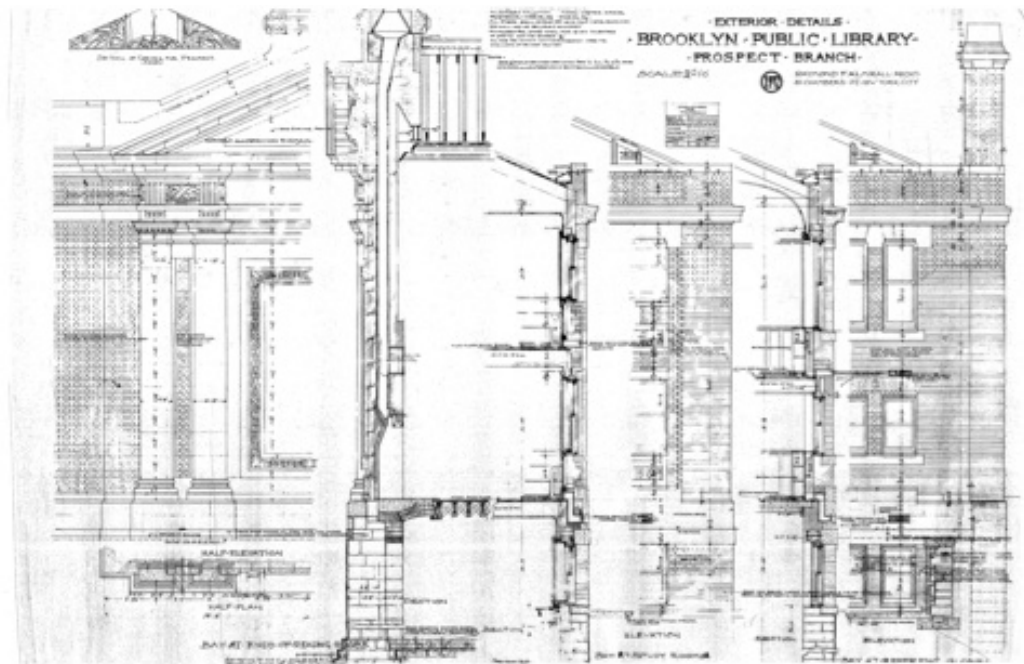


Figure 7. Original architect's drawing of partial side elevations and sections.

workrooms are located in a two-story rear extension, with community meeting rooms available in the basement. The building displays a restrained, yet elegant, design in an open setting which makes it truly stand out in the bustling Park Slope neighborhood.”⁹

MASONRY

The Landmarks Preservation Commission’s designation report notes that “The two-story, [red] brick and limestone, Classical Revival style building was typical of the Carnegie libraries. Ostentation was not desired and so ornament was limited to the columns and carved stone surrounds at the entrance, the end panels which feature open books to illustrate the building’s purpose, the cornice and parapet, and the keystones enhanced by torches representing the light of learning.... The entrance is reached by a flight of stairs and is embellished by stone moldings with the name of the building carved above it...”¹⁰

The building is raised on a basement faced with bluestone, remaining behind stucco parging, and the grand front stair was bluestone as well. Bluestone was used for coping stones around the sunken areaway which extends around most of the building, for the stairs leading down to the areaway on either side of the stoop (where original pipe rails remain, in deteriorated condition), and was also used for the cheek walls of the stoop and their perpendicular extensions along the sidewalk. Except for the main stairs and platforms at the

⁹ Kurshan., pp. 5, 6.

¹⁰ Ibid.

stoop, all this bluestone remains. The unreinforced concrete areaway retaining walls, while being capped with bluestone coping stones, were surfaced with stucco scored and pointed to resemble stone blocks. This was a cost-saving change; originally these walls were to be brick faced (see original drawing no. 7). Three other cost-saving revisions included the elimination of limestone consoles and reduction in cornice projection except at the entrance bay and the side pediments, the substitution of white brick for limestone trim at the rear basement level, and the substitution of tin and galvanized iron for copper at the standing seam roof.



Figure 8. Example of an original parged wall, scored and pointed to resemble stone blocks. Also visible are the deteriorated bluestone steps and original pipe handrail.



Figure 9. Basement wall of bluestone, now with deteriorated stucco covering.



Figure 10. Originally substituted for limestone at the rear of the building to save money, the white brick is in deteriorated condition.

The brick and limestone portions of the building are in generally good condition, with some deterioration of the glazed white brick in the rear. Remaining bluestone has not held up as well and is in deteriorated condition and in some places has been cut back and stuccoed over. The original faces of the areaway retaining walls show some deterioration (and the wall along the new ramp [see Exterior Changes, below] has been cut back and a base coat of stucco applied).

The original hierarchy of materials is significant: limestone and brick upper floors; bluestone at the base of the building, the stoop, cheek walls, stairs down to the areaway, and areaway coping stones; scored and pointed stucco at the less visible areaway retaining wall faces; concrete sidewalks, and areaway pavements.

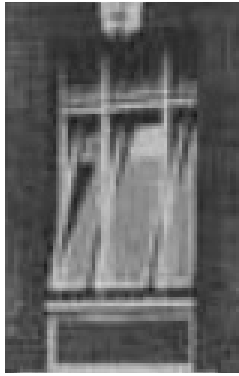


Figure 11

WINDOWS

The original monumental wood windows at the reading rooms were of tripartite configuration, with horizontally pivoting sash below inward-opening hopper transoms.¹¹ They were painted a light color, probably to match the limestone. Windows elsewhere were double-hung, one-over-one wood, though the 10 large window openings in the basement lecture halls are shown on a basement plan (original drawing 9A) as having tripartite sash and as being “pivoted like those on 1st floor,” but no elevation drawings or extant photographs of these windows have been found.



Figure 12. Original wood and glass entrance doors, without ironwork or transom.

DOORS

Almirall's front elevation drawing clearly shows tall, paired entrance doors with long glazed panels above wood paneled bases. There is no transom. The glazed panels have decorative metalwork which is described in a note as “Bronze grilles in main entrance doors will be changed to satisfactory rustless iron grilles.”

No evidence has surfaced, however, that the elaborate ironwork doors were ever installed as designed. In

most photographs the doors are in shadow and not visible. One early photograph shows them clearly, however, and in this view there is no ironwork (fig. 12). The doors are wood framed with a single beveled glass panel in each leaf. There is no transom. (An early photo showing what look like two square glass lights at the top of door leaves is actually showing roller blinds partly rolled down behind the glass.) Other public entrance doors on the building, notably the two sets of double doors to the lower vestibule leading to the lecture hall, were noted as having plate glass panels and transoms.

¹¹ Unless otherwise identified, descriptions of original conditions at the building are based on historic photographs from the Brooklyn Collection at the Brooklyn Public Library and from original drawings by Raymond F. Almirall.

ROOF

The roof was to have been standing seam copper, but the contract drawings indicate that was changed to tin and galvanized iron, doubtless as a cost-saving measure. Tin and iron were to be painted “two coats underside before laying and 4 coats upperside.” Skylights, ventilators, and upper level flashings remained copper. There were three skylights, each over a leaded glass interior lay light. One was over the main vestibule, another over the circulation desk, and the third and largest was above the book stacks. There was also a “star ventilator” connected to the interior ventilation flues.



Figure 13

SITE FEATURES

Other than basic grading and installation of a concrete driveway from 8th Street to the coal chute at the rear of the building, the site was left in raw condition at the completion of construction. The originally proposed “sodding and seeding” on all sides of the building was omitted, probably another cost saving item. The earliest photographs show a simple pipe-rail fence at the perimeter of the site. It was probably intended for basic safety purposes, as access to the lawn around the building would have made it possible to approach and fall into the sunken

areaways, which were not protected by fences.

Areaway pavements, the public sidewalk, rear areaway stair, rear driveway leading to the coal chute, and coping (curb) around the perimeter of the site are noted as being “granolithic” concrete. In the case of the sidewalk (original drawing no. 3) the construction is noted as 2 inches of granolithic above 6 inches of stone concrete above 12 inches of cinder concrete. Granolithic concrete was mixed with special proportions of water to cement and hard, evenly graded aggregate. It provided a more durable wearing surface than standard “stone concrete.”

A portion of the east edge of the site along the rear property line is fenced with an ornamental wrought iron fence with cast-iron posts and finials, all on a bluestone coping (see fig. 13). The first floor plan (original drawing no. 3) shows this fence and refers to drawing no. 22 (unavailable) for the design. Rather fancy for a rear yard fence, it appears to have been designed to be harmonious with the adjacent brownstone houses, whose back yards are separated by the fence from the library site. The center length of the fence is raised up on a low brick wall to increase its height at the library’s central rear projecting bay. This fence is a significant site feature.

Exterior Changes



Figure 14. Main facade, looking from the northwest, ca. 2010. Other than the replacement windows and the picket fence, the building appears unchanged from its original condition.



Figure 15. Main and north end facades, ca. 2010, showing the generous, planted site and picket fence. The deeper cornice and consoles that are seen at the end wall and over the main entrance were to have continued around the entire building, but their use was limited to save money.



Figure 16. Rear facade from the north, ca. 2010. The Quiet Reading Room is at the upper left; the Adult Reading Room is at right. The center block includes the new elevator lobby and restrooms at the 1st floor (former staff room) and program room at the 2nd floor (former study room).



Figure 17. The historic picket fence, installed ca. 1920. The concrete curb and gutter were installed around 1980 and serve to trap leaves and litter.



Figure 18. Main entrance showing the 1979 doors, transom, and light box and the newer picket fence extending across the stoop. Photo is ca. 2010.



Figure 19. Rear facades from the south ca. 2012. The vines, while picturesque, are not good for the masonry and can obscure maintenance needs.



Figure 20.

MASONRY

A 1941 drawing prepared by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) design unit of the city's Department of Public Works details a proposed stoop reconstruction (see Appendix 5). The drawing called for construction of a new reinforced concrete slab, upon which full-depth bluestone steps and platforms were to be set.

Adjacent bluestone posts were to be dressed. Three new bronze handrails were also proposed for the steps. The bluestone steps and platforms leading down to the areaway were not part of the project. The project was filed with the Department of Buildings in 1942 (BN 2661-1942).¹² It is not known whether this project proceeded as designed. The library was closed for major renovations in 1948 and 49, and if work at the stoop had not occurred by then, it is possible the existing grey pigmented concrete was installed instead as part of the 1948-49 project. The bluestone-fronted basement level walls were cut back and parged, possibly at this time.

Stucco patches exist in the limestone beneath all the monumental windows on the main floor (see fig. 20). These were originally openings with bronze grilles that drew fresh air in to the heat convectors (radiators) beneath each window.

As part of the phase 1 construction of a ramp leading from 9th Street to the side of the projecting entrance bay, minor changes were made to the south areaway retaining wall to accommodate the ramp. The upper two-foot portion of this unreinforced concrete wall above a cold joint was removed

¹² Kurshan, pp. 6 and 8.

and replaced with reinforced, poured-in-place concrete, with reinforcing rods doweled into the remaining original wall. All of the bluestone coping stones along the ramp were replaced with new bluestone, and this assembly supports the new access ramp railing. The east face of the areaway wall, which was in deteriorated condition, was cut back and a base coat of stucco applied. A future phase will finish the stucco to match the original condition that simulated stone by scoring and pointing the stucco.

WINDOWS

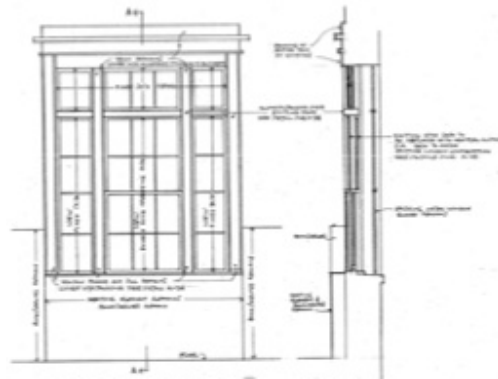


Figure 21. 1985 elevation and section of new monumental aluminum windows, replacing non-original wood windows of similar configuration.

The original wood, pivoting windows and hopper transoms were still in place in 1936. Probably as part of the 1948-49 renovation, and definitely by around 1950-53, they had been replaced with six-over-six, double-hung wood sash with wood sidelights and transoms. These wood windows were still in place in 1977. The existing “statuary bronze” color aluminum sash were installed in 1985 (Alvin D. Knoll, Architect) and maintain the configuration of the six-over-six wood windows they replaced. Re-

placement of the original double-hung wood windows in the smaller openings probably followed a similar timeline. All of the 1985 windows are unusual in that they consist of two sets of single-glazed sash, each in a separate frame. Wood window frames and sills existing at the time of this installation were to remain, with panning on the exterior.

DOORS

Besides the original doors and the new phase 1 doors, at least two other front door sets existed at the library. A photograph from the 1960s shows a reasonably sympathetic design of paired glass and wood doors with a two-light transom. The 1979 renovation replaced these doors with those existing at the start of phase 1, a pair of horizontal-paneled metal doors with narrow lights at the top and a glass transom with projecting metal light box above.

As part of phase 1, a pair of wood and glass doors with transom and decorative ironwork was created based on the (likely unbuilt) Almirall original drawing. A simplified version of the reproduced door was used for the new accessible entrance on the side of the vestibule. Even though the phase 1



Figure 22. Main entry doors from the 1979 renovation.

doors are based on a design that may never have existed on the building, looking to Almirall's originally-proposed design provided a reasonable option for the new door.

Other original exterior doors included two sets of double doors leading to the lower vestibule. These were replaced in 1979 with flush metal doors with tiny glass lights. Other doors leading to the exterior are all modern flush metal doors added in former window openings for egress and/or accessibility reasons.

ROOF

By the time of the 1979 renovation the sloped portions of the roof were apparently asphalt shingles. Some work was done, including installation of new roll roofing at gutters and roof drains, new shingles at roof vents, and through-wall flashing beneath existing coping stones. A roof scuttle and ladder were installed.



Figure 23. Looking towards the front of the building with the vestibule sky light location evident from the raised curb.



Figure 24. Typical roof conditions. The sky light over the book stacks was partly in the flat area of roll roofing and extended into the pitched roof, creating what must have been a complex sky light.

The present standing seam metal panel roof, with roll roofing on the flat sections and gutters, dates from a 1995 project designed by Julius G. Perry, Architect, P.C. (drawing dated 6/8/95). As part of this project, the four fire-place flues were closed with new pre-cast cap stones "matching exactly" the existing cap stones but without flue penetrations. The metal flue caps were removed and not replaced. The capstone and flue for the boiler were replaced

in kind. The project also included installation of a roof-top lightning protection system, consisting of a series of copper cables and grounds.

SITE FEATURES

The original driveway for coal delivery was expanded into a parking area at the northeast corner of the site in 1979. A dry well, now clogged, for storm water is centered 16 feet south of the 8th Street fence and 29 feet west of the property line. Also at that time one of two east-facing windows in the former first floor librarian's room was converted into a door providing staff and grade-level entry to the rear of the building. A concrete bridge was built to cross the areaway to connect this door to a ramp leading to the parking area. Steel pipe rails on concrete curbs line the bridge and ramp. Several years ago, when the HVAC system was modified to a split system, a grade-level compressor unit was placed adjacent to the areaway at the parking lot. (Because of noise violations relating to the adjacent residences, this unit will be relocated as a separate project to the recessed areaway north of the main entrance. This proposed relocation received approval from the Landmarks Preservation Commission on March 30, 2010 (LPC 107034; SRB 10-7484).



Figure 25. Colored photo-postcard ca. 1920-30.



Figure 26. The phase 1 accessible entrance, including a new gate, bluestone walk and curbs, lights, bridge over the areaway, and new limestone-trimmed door into the Vestibule.

The existing perimeter iron picket fence appeared in stages. The earliest picture found that includes the fence, a post card view probably from the late 1920s or 1930s (see fig. 25), shows the fence terminating at the large bluestone walls on either side of the entrance stoop (there is a matching fan guard extending over the areaway wall at this point). There are somewhat more elaborate iron gates, about 4 feet high, at the middle stoop landing protecting the stairs leading down to the areaway. By the 1960s the picket fence had been carried across the top of the bluestone walls beside the stoop. Finally, in the 1970s the fence with gates (originally sliding, now pivoting) has been brought across the stoop itself. Although not original, the existing fence is early and a significant feature of the site, except for the later portions that impinge on the stoop.

In 1979 a new concrete lawn curb with gutter was installed between the lawn and fence.

In 1995 the fence was repaired, scraped, and painted.

Shortly after 2001, a small 9-11 memorial was created in a planted area on the north side of the site.

In phase 1 the fence at 9th Street was modified to incorporate a gate leading to the ramp to the new accessible entrance.

Architectural Description-Interior

ORIGINAL AND CURRENT LAYOUT

The historic layout of the main public spaces in the library has remained largely unchanged. The main floor includes the original children's reading room at the south end and the adults' reading room (also called the "reference room") at the north end. The rooms match except for the height of the shelves and slight differences in the monumental, carved wood and faience fireplaces at either end. Centered between these two rooms, with the entrance vestibule to the west and book stacks to the east, is the circulation area, originally called the "delivery room." These three rooms have 21-foot high ceilings. Behind the main floor book stacks was a "reference alcove," originally open to the stacks and used by the public. It has one of the four original gas fireplaces in the library. The closing of this room from the stacks by a hollow metal and glass wall appears to have occurred in 1979. That wall has been reconstructed in phase 2 by a wallboard wall with a book drop. The room is used by the staff as a workroom.

Flanking the stacks on the ground floor and approached through two tall, open archways with carved scroll consoles were two matching wood stairs leading up to the mezzanine book stacks and second floor study rooms. The walls separating the stairs from the book stacks originally consisted of fixed sash with ground glass lights at both levels. These walls have been replaced with painted wallboard walls. (These ground glass panels in fixed sash were used elsewhere as well, including above the doors leading to the staff and librarians' rooms on the first floor. These panels are no longer extant.) Adjacent to the north stair was a "librarians' room" and to the south stair a "staff room," each with a staff toilet. The south stair, staff room (now "program room") and toilet still exist; at the north, as part of phase 1 the stair was removed and the area reconfigured to include two accessible toilets, the elevator, and a passage to an existing (1979) ground-level exit at the rear of the building. The finishes in this reconfigured area include painted walls with new stained and varnished bead board wainscoting matching original wainscoting in secondary areas of the building; flush doors, some stained oak and some painted metal; light beige linoleum tile flooring (Forbo "Rosato" MCT3120); and modern lighting, elevator fittings, and toilet rooms. At the foot of the two original staircases were a small coat closet on the south side and "slop closet" on the north. These spaces have been enclosed for mechanical system use.

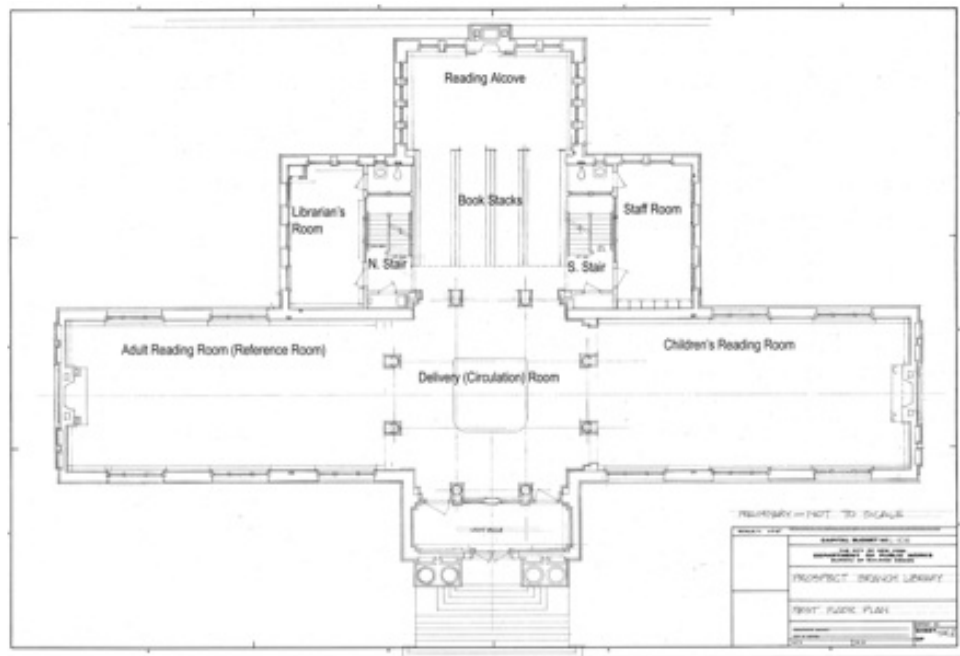


Figure 27. Original First Floor Plan.

At the mezzanine floor the book stacks overlook the circulation area to the west and on the east they open onto a second reference alcove, similar to the room below, and also with a gas fireplace. This room is still used by the public and is currently known as the “quiet reading room.” The mezzanine-level book stacks were flanked on both sides by a continuation of the same walls as below, consisting of fixed sash with ground-glass lights. Opening off the top of the staircases and up four more risers were study rooms, presumably open to the public. Those rooms now serve staff functions.

The basement plan still includes the original lecture hall with stage. A wall board partition with flush door was added at the south end of the hall; it appears to have been in place prior to the 1979 renovation. Behind the stage was the “reception room” (still labeled that way with a sign on the door), probably the equivalent of a green room. North of that was the “small lecture room” which has been divided into several spaces and used for mechanical equipment, storage, and offices. Access to the lecture halls was originally and remains through the building interior or directly from the exterior. A lower vestibule opens directly to the lecture hall and is accessed from above by the front north and south areaway steps, each of which led into the vestibule through paired glass and wood doors.

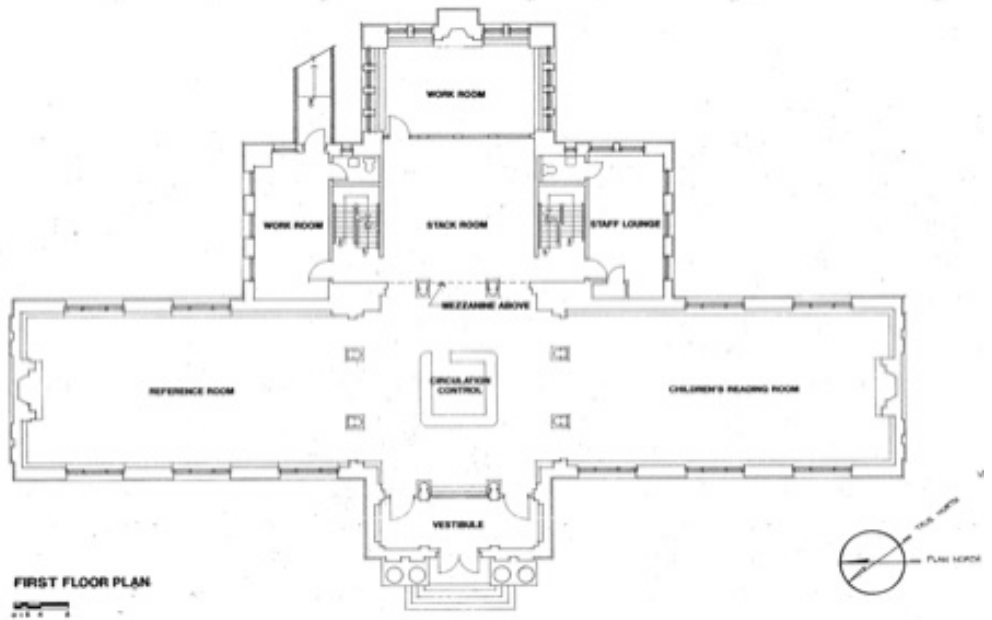


Figure 28. First floor plan prior to Phase 1 construction (plan is ca. 1995). Although some of the room uses have changed, the architectural layout remains the same as in the original design.

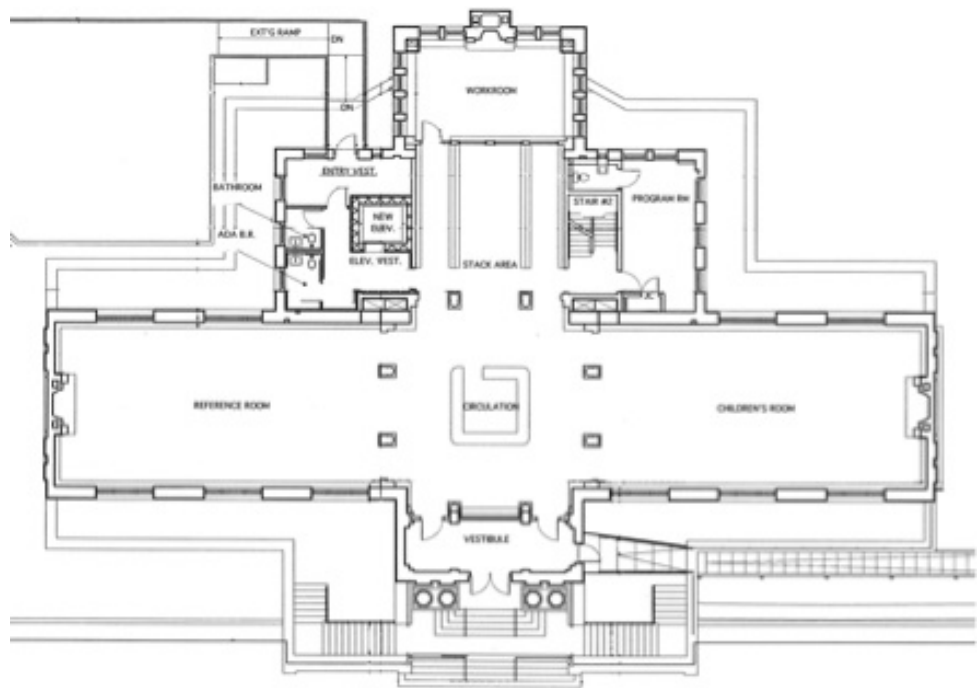


Figure 29. First floor plan ca. 2012, at completion of current work (phase 1).

East of the lecture hall, underneath the book stacks and librarians' and staff rooms on the main floor, were a "work room," "janitor's room," men's and women's public toilets, boiler room, and coal storage. The boiler room and coal storage room remain today. To the south the original men's toilet and janitor's room have become a staff toilet, janitor's closet, and custodian's room. To the north, the former work room and public women's toilet have become the basement elevator lobby, elevator machine room, accessible toilet room, and hall leading to a rear basement exit.

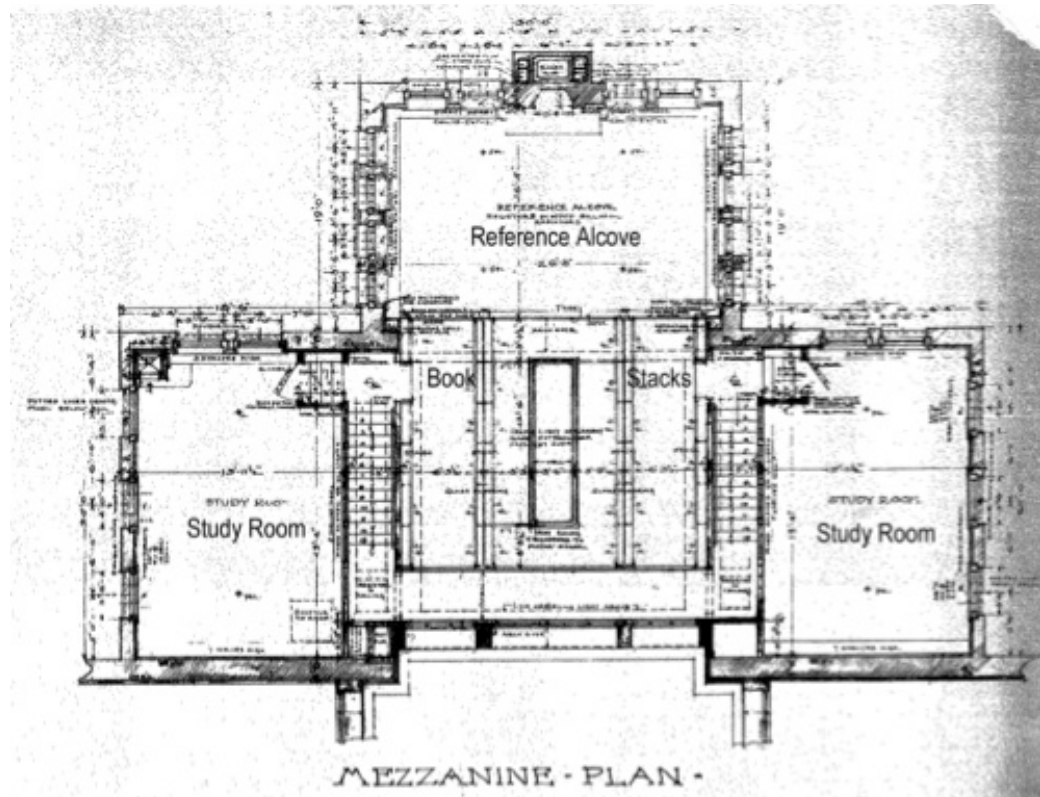


Figure 30. Original mezzanine floor plan. The study rooms are both now staff rooms.

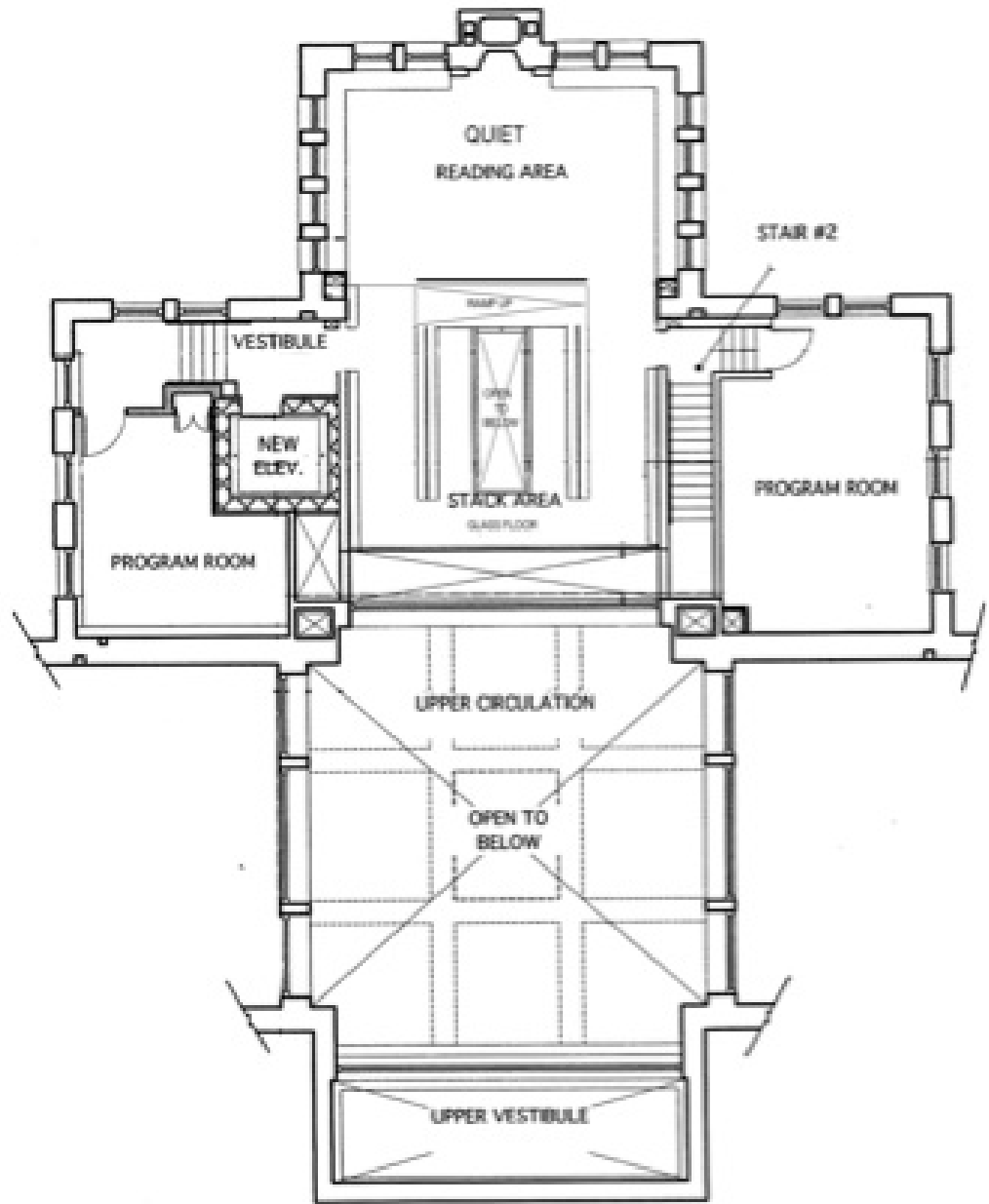


Figure 31. Mezzanine floor plan ca. 2012, at completion of current work (phases 1, 2, and 3).

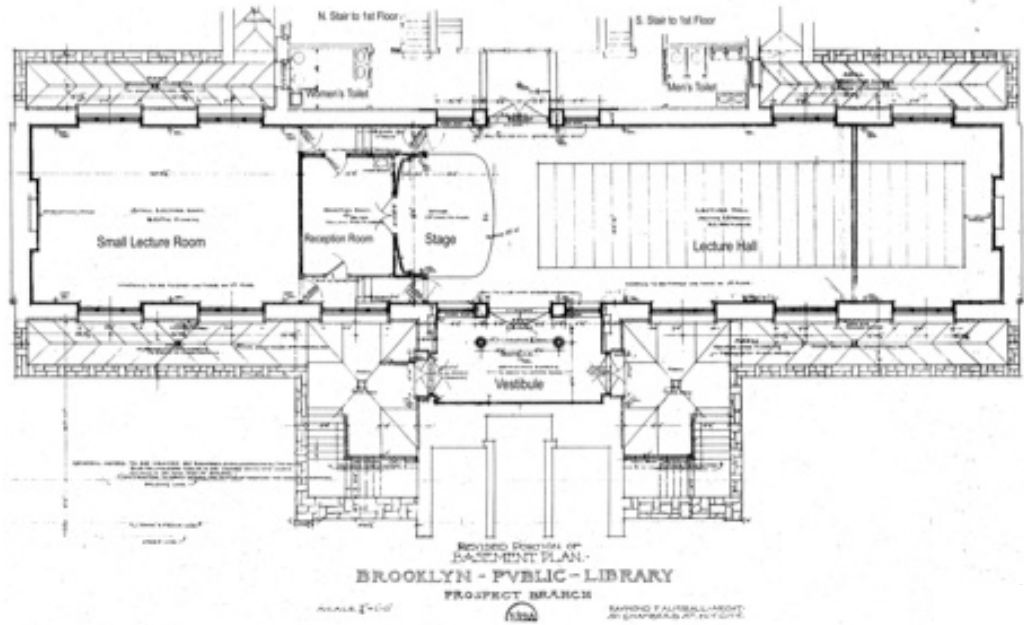


Figure 32 Original basement floor plan, excluding the boiler, coal and maintenance rooms.



Figure 33. Basement floor plan ca. 2012, at completion of current work (phases 1, 2, and 3).

MAIN PUBLIC ROOMS ON FIRST, MEZZANINE, AND SECOND FLOORS:

Vestibule, Adults' and Children's Reading Rooms, Delivery (Circulation) Area, Book Stacks, Upper and Lower Reference Alcoves, North and South Study Rooms.

Several features of the interior are common to the major rooms; these features are discussed next. Additional description of individual rooms follows. Original conditions, changes over time, and significance of features are addressed. Unless otherwise noted, all of the major features discussed in this section are architecturally significant and should be preserved.



Figure 34. The main and mezzanine floors of the library were originally flooded with natural light from the monumental reading room windows and from three opalescent leaded-glass lay lights with sky lights above. Photo is ca. 1906. Many early photographs of the interior, including figs. 34-38, were taken by Frank Pearsall, Photographer, 1227 Bedford Avenue.



Figure 35. Adults' reading room, ca. 1906.



Figure 36. Children's reading room, ca. 1906.



Figure 37. Delivery room showing large desk, card catalog, chandeliers, wall clock, candlestick telephone.



Figure 38. The second floor reference alcove at story time. This space is now a quiet reading room.

Ornamental glass

The main and mezzanine floors of the library were originally flooded with natural light from the monumental reading room windows and from three opalescent leaded-glass lay lights with sky lights above. (See “Exterior” section for a discussion of the windows.) The opalescent glass may have been manufactured by Kokomo Opalescent Glass of Kokomo, Indiana.¹³ Still in business today, Kokomo was founded in 1888 and in its early years, according to its web site, supplied glass to Louis C. Tiffany, J&R Lamb, and LaFarge.¹⁴ Light passed between rooms by means of enormous arched, translucent, leaded-glass transoms separating the delivery space from the reading rooms, mezzanine, and entrance vestibule. It is not known who fabricated the glass into leaded, ornamental panels.



Figure 39.

The three skylights were removed and the areas roofed over at an unknown date, and in addition, the ornamental lay light over the delivery room (circulation) desk was removed entirely and replaced with wall board or plaster. This opalescent leaded glass lay light took up the entire center coffer of the nine ceiling coffers in this room. When portions of the center coffer were removed during recent phase 3 demolition for installation of recessed lighting, there appeared to be no wood lathe supporting the plaster or wallboard, while wood lathe exists in the other coffers.

This fact supports the conclusion that the lay light was originally installed and subsequently removed. There is also a note to that effect on the 1995 roofing drawing. The vaulted, opalescent glass lay lights at the vestibule and above the book stacks remain and are being cleaned and restored in phase 3, as are all the leaded glass transoms. The narrow sections of glass in the lay light above the stacks have been removed and restored off site; the remainder of this lay light, the vestibule lay light, and the leaded glass transoms will be restored in place. Four access panels have been created at the lay light over the book stacks. Each panel is about 18 by 28 inches and is opened by pushing up and back on the panel. Restoration of the glass was undertaken by Somers Stained Glass Corp., Deer Park, New York.

The original transverse building section drawing shows a large, leaded glass window between the two interior doors leading from the vestibule to the circulation area. The design of the window matches that of the transoms de-

¹³ Personal communication with Excalibur Glass Studio.

¹⁴ <http://www.kog.com>

scribed above, but at the lower center of this window was the original bronze branch identification plaque. However, the architect's drawing no. 3, which is a first floor plan, has a note at this location that appears to read "Pl Gl Lt (plate glass light?) Double Fixed Sash." The two sash are separated by the bronze plaque in this view. On the inside of this glass, facing the circulation area between the two columns, was to be a leather-covered bench. It is not known whether either of these designs was installed or whether the existing huge sheet of plain glass was originally substituted. At the start of the phase 1 project, the plaque was located on the south wall of the entrance vestibule, where the new accessible entrance door is now. The existing glass between the vestibule doors will remain in place.

The remains of a sun shade system exist above the two extant lay lights. Using ropes and pulleys accessible from the vestibule and delivery room, staff could extend or retract the fabric shades across the attic space above the lay lights. No doubt these shades were used to reduce the heat gain that would have developed on hot, sunny days. Most of this system is intact in the vestibule, with the fabric shade in its retracted position. Less of the system remains above the book stacks, but the system had clearly been installed there as well.

Original light fixtures also remain above the vestibule lay light. See the lighting section below.

Woodwork

The available original drawings do not describe the extensive woodwork in the building. A comparison of early photographs with existing conditions, however, confirms that most of the original woodwork remains today. It consists of extensive board and batten paneling extending about 9 feet above the reading room shelves; monumental columns and pilasters separating the circulation area from the surrounding spaces; four fireplaces; wainscoting, including bead board and "batten wainscoting" at various locations; the ribs of the vaulted lay lights in the vestibule and above the book stacks; and miscellaneous woodwork, especially window casings, throughout the building.

Phase 3 included replacement of some missing trim as well as stripping and refinishing much of the woodwork. In order to match the historic woodwork an effort was made to determine what the species of wood is as well as its original finish color and coating. There are three candidates for the wood species—oak, ash, and chestnut. All three were in common use at the time of construction and were typically favored for this sort of Arts and Crafts-inspired interior. It seems least likely the wood is chestnut. The most likely wood for the paneling, columns, and fireplaces is ash. It is possible that some or all of the window and door casings are oak.



Figure 40. Likely original finish of the bead board wainscot at the south stairway, beneath later coats of paint.

It has been difficult to determine the original color of the finished woodwork. Most if not all of the woodwork has been subject to changes over time, including stripping and refinishing and recoating with various clear and colored stains and finishes. Some of the paneling has been replaced, and different parts of the wood have been treated differently. Based on early black and white photos, the original finish appears to have been much lighter than the finish as found just prior to phase 3 stripping. In small areas it was possible to remove recent layers of finish (believed to be polyurethane), leaving older finishes exposed. In one area of the delivery room the removal of an old bulletin board revealed two sections of wall

paneling that may have retained their original shellac finish. Finally, the two smaller mantels in the reference alcoves may have retained their original shellac finishes. These possibly original finishes can be described as light to medium yellowish brown, with a fairly glossy surface. The grain was probably filled with paste wood grain filler, and there was probably a fairly light stain applied prior to the final coats of shellac.

The replaced sections of paneling are mostly in the north reading room and include, on the east wall, the first long section off the circulation room and the section in between the first two window openings. Less replacement occurred on the west wall. The material used for the replacements is a good match to the original. However, the horizontal batten two-thirds of the way up the panels does not run through as on the originals, but is interrupted by the vertical battens. Also, the cutouts for the electrical boxes for the wall sconces were less carefully made for the replacement panels. In the south reading room, the several more recent veneer-on-chipboard replacement panels were on the east wall just off of the circulation room.

Phase 3 woodwork restoration is limited to the reading rooms, circulation area, vestibule, south stair to the mezzanine, the fireplaces in the mezzanine reference alcove (now quiet reading room) and in the first floor reference alcove (now work room), and wood handrails in the mezzanine-level book stacks. In these areas, all of the old finishes will have been chemically stripped from the woodwork and the wood sanded. Missing trim pieces, notably the bases at

the bottom of the window casings, are being replaced. The more recent mismatched chipboard panel replacements in the south reading room are being replaced with a correct match. Straight-grained white oak is being used for replacement trim, as well as for the new bookshelves.



Figure 41. Typical condition of reading room paneling at the start of construction. Note also the blanked off wall sconce location and the infill board between the 1979 shelves and bottom of the panels.



Figure 42. Mismatched wood at the air duct and badly-designed accretions mar the original design.



Figure 43. South staircase prior to stripping. The mirror-image stair on the opposite side of the stack area was removed in phase 1 for an elevator.



Figure 44. South staircase after stripping and before refinishing.

The finish that is being applied as part of phase 3 is darker and redder than what is believed to be the original. One reason a darker color was selected is

that the condition of the old woodwork, including the presence of replacement pieces and staining that could not be removed even with sanding, would make it difficult to provide a satisfactory light-colored finish. Following stripping and sanding, a pigmented stain was applied, followed by a sealer, followed by a tinted glaze to further even out the color, and followed by a protective low-gloss spray lacquer coating. Lacquer was selected as being more practical to apply and more durable than shellac. Treatment of the remaining historic stair is based on scrape tests and includes a stripped, stained, and lacquered handrail, newel post, wainscoting, and treads and risers. The balusters will be painted white.¹⁵ Stripping and refinishing were done under the supervision of Nix Refinishing.



Figure 45. Original wood shelving in the Children's Room, showing the beadboard backing.

Photographs reveal that the original perimeter and case shelving (as well as desks and miscellaneous furniture) were of the same wood type as the architectural woodwork. The perimeter shelves were built in to the spaces around and under the windows. They were backed with stained bead board attached to the walls, much of which was extant when the modern shelves were removed. This bead board will remain in place but will be covered by the new phase 3 shelving units. Unlike the previous, light-colored wood shelves that were probably installed in the 1979 renovation, the new shelves will respect the original shelf height, and will extend up to the wall paneling, higher in the original adult reading room and lower in the children's room. The most recent shelving was the same in each room,

splitting the height difference. The result was the need for a filler board above the shelves in the adult room and the covering over (though fortunately not removal of) the lower portion of the paneling in the children's room. The phase 3 shelf units, while they are designed to be harmonious with the adjacent (refinished) historic wood, do not match the original shelves. Current standards require deeper shelves, and the units will be constructed to accept standard, black-finished metal shelf inserts.

¹⁵ Stripper: Rock Miracle methylene chloride base and lacquer thinner. Finish: Industrial Finishing Products japan colors, pre-coat sealer, and flat pre-catalized clear nitrocellulose lacquer. Baluster paint: Benjamin Moore "Linen White" semi-gloss alkyd.



Figure 46. Possible original paint finish at the Reference Alcoves.

Plaster finishes

It was not possible to undertake paint analysis for the plaster walls and ceilings. (The colors at the start of phase 3 construction were, in the reading and circulation rooms, neutral beige on the walls and ceilings and white crown moldings and coffer beams; and off-white in most other rooms.) Early photographs show that the walls and ceilings in the reading and circulation rooms were a light tone and probably the same color, or very similar. The phase 3 colors for the circulation and reading rooms—white ceiling and trim and soft yellow walls¹⁶—while not based on historic evidence, are not atypical of colors used at the time of original construction.

At the reference alcoves during phase 3 construction, a terra-cotta color paint coating was exposed on a rough (sanded) plaster finish. This same color and finish are evident on the west wall of the basement vestibule, and it appears to be an early, if not original, paint (see fig. 46, 65 and 69). Certain elements of the basement were painted to match this color in renovations prior to phase 1. It has not been determined how much of the interior may have had this finish originally, if, indeed, it was original. (Basement walls and ceilings not part of phase 1, 2, or 3 work have been painted and re-varnished by Brooklyn Public Library prior to re-opening of the branch. The terra-cotta color paint is no longer in evidence.)

The last documentation for interior painting of the reading rooms and circulation area is a drawing dated June 8, 1995, colors to be selected by the (New York City) Department of General Services.

¹⁶ Benjamin Moore no. CC-20 “Decorator’s White” and no. 2021-60 “Provence Crème.”



Figure 47. Fireplace in the first floor Reference Alcove, now a work room, during refinishing. The tile is by Grueby Faience and the plaster relief is "Homer" by British sculptor Harry Bates.

Fireplaces

The original drawings call out the fireplaces in the reading rooms to be made by Grueby Faience Co. Their appearance supports this attribution. The simpler tile work on the reference alcove fireplaces is probably also by Grueby; in fact, the tiles on the fireplace in the first floor reference alcove are Grueby's signature matte cucumber green.

The Grueby Faience Company was founded in Revere, Massachusetts in 1894 by William Henry Grueby. The company made glazed earthenware

tiles, vases, and lamps in the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau styles until ceasing operations in 1920. The company's products won awards at several early 20th-century exhibitions. Tiffany Studios and Gustav Stickley were among those who incorporated Grueby faience into their products. Station plaques on the original IRT subway platforms are also by Grueby.

The locations on the reading room fireplaces currently occupied by plaster friezes were identified in the original drawings for "bronze metal register & louvers." It is assumed that the friezes, which appear to be intended to simulate archaeological fragments from ancient buildings, were a change made during the original construction, as they are visible in the earliest photographs of the interior. The fireplace hoods are called out as copper, but they and their supporting scrolls appear to be brass, as are the andirons, which remain in the two reading room fireplaces. Two sets of gas logs remain, in the first- and mezzanine-level reference alcoves. Early photos show the hoods and andirons as dark, so they were probably chemically patinated. The hoods have subsequently been painted black and will be repainted black in phase 3. The andirons appear to retain their original dark patina, with brass visible on top where handling has worn away the patina. They will not be refinshed. All four fireplaces were piped for gas logs, with soot stains indicating that they were well used. Early photos show children sitting at the hearth near a roaring fire.

The terra-cotta work and plaster friezes in the reading rooms and both former reference alcoves are to be cleaned as part of phase 3 work by Restoration Fine Arts.¹⁷ According to a record drawing for the 1979 renovation, the mantels and hearths in the "Reference Room" (adult reading room) and the "Work-room" (former first floor reference alcove) were to have been cleaned. Information on the method and whether this work was actually carried out has not been located.

¹⁷ Friezes were cleaned with Vulpex alkaline liquid soap and, as necessary, with citrus-based cleaner and solvents (water, alcohol, mineral spirits, acetone). Minor toning with acrylic paint was applied to cover stubborn dark spots. Finally, microcrystalline wax was applied to the friezes. Tiles were cleaned with Vulpex and citrus cleaner and, on the south side only, pumice stone. Toning with acrylic paint was needed on the south side to cover non-removable dark stains. A thin layer of DuPont high gloss sealer and finish was applied to the tiles.



Figure 48. The two strips at the bottom are remnants of the original flooring in the public rooms; on top, the modern linoleum ("Donkey Island" by Forbo) is the closest available match.

Floors

Original drawings specify "N.C. (North Carolina?) pine flooring" in the basement lecture hall and small lecture room and "yellow pine" flooring in the service areas of the basement, with "Crown sanitary flooring and wainscoting"¹⁸ in the toilet rooms. The pine flooring has been possibly removed but probably just covered with vinyl tile. There are no notations for flooring at other locations. Removal of the vinyl tile and underlayment in phase 2 revealed strip pine flooring in the

public rooms. While it was at first assumed that this was the original exposed floor, subsequent investigation found that the original finish flooring in the reading rooms, and probably all other rooms except for the basement, was linoleum. Pieces of the original linoleum were found under the wood strips bordering the fireplace hearth tiles, and early photographs show no evidence of visible floorboards. The original sheet linoleum was marbled, primarily a medium brown color with swirls of dark blue-grey, medium grey, neutral tan, pinkish tan, and deep red. It would have been eminently practical for obscuring dirt. Samples of this floor have been preserved in the DDC Historic Preservation Office files.

Flooring for phase 1 is new linoleum tile (Marmoleum MCT-3120 "Rosato") that is lighter than the original. Phase 2 flooring, including the reading rooms, circulation area, and mezzanine-level quiet reading room will be Marmoleum tile MCT-3075 "Shell," a marbled pattern that is closer in tone to the historic though it is more subdued and does not include the many colors of the original. A closer match is available (Marmoleum "Donkey Island"), but at the time of construction was available only in sheet form, not in the required tile format (see fig. 48).

Lighting

Much of the original artificial lighting is clearly visible in historic photographs. Light sources were mostly electric, though some of the fixtures incorporated a gas jet, probably as emergency lighting, as electric service would remain somewhat unreliable until after World War I. In 1906 tungsten filaments were not yet in use; carbon filaments did not provide much light, thus requiring a large number of lamps per fixture. The reading rooms were each lit with three Colonial Revival-style brass chandeliers hanging along the centerline of the room. Each had seven electric down lights, including a central round frosted

¹⁸ "The adoption of sanitary floorings in the home, as well as in public buildings, especially for kitchens, bath-rooms, pantries and lavatories, is one of the marked and growing features in house building. Non-absorbent, fire-proof, durable, elastic to the tread, smooth but not slippery, are some of the practical features of the combination known as Crown Sanitary Flooring, and in addition to its utility special attention has been paid to the artistic needs by securing a variety of colors to permit the flooring to harmonize with its surroundings.... The use of Crown Sanitary base eliminates all joints and cracks between the

floor and wall, preventing all accumulations and permitting thorough cleansing. Its flexibility makes it easy of adjustment to corners and the material can be applied over wood, iron, granolithic cement, or good concrete foundations." (from *The Craftsman* magazine, Gustav Stickley, editor, January 1906, p. 589) It has not been determined precisely what Crown Sanitary Flooring was, but the supplier and installer, the Robert Keasbey Company of New York, founded in 1902, was described in litigation as an insulation contractor and was dissolved around 2001 amidst extensive asbestos-related litigation. (<http://www.zelle.com/f-46.html>)



Figure 49 Original 9-light chandelier in the delivery room. Fixtures in the reading rooms were similar, but with 7 lights.



Figure 50. Original wall sconces in the adult reading room.



Figure 51. Photo from the New York Herald-Tribune dated approx. 1950, showing the schoolhouse-type pendant fixtures installed in the 1930's. A small pilot flame visible to the left of the speaker indicates the fireplaces were still in use at this time.



Figure 52. View above the vestibule lay light, showing original reflector light fixtures and ropes for extending and retracting the fabric shades. Unpainted wood elements infill the original skylight locations.

glass globe with a cut glass star at the bottom and six curved arms with open, frosted glass shades. Each room also had six coordinating wall sconces, each with four electric lights (one central round globe and three arms pointing down). The sconces in the adult reading room had their arms extended in order to clear the top of the bookshelves, which ended just below the wall-mounted back plate. The six columns separating the delivery desk from the reading rooms and book stacks each had a sconce. The four sconces facing the reading rooms each had four electric lights and one gas light; the two sconces facing the stacks each had three electric lights. Finally, hanging from the four beam crossings above the delivery desk were chandeliers matching those in the reading rooms except with nine electric lights—one central globe and eight curved arms. The stubs of their hanging pipes are still visible.

It appears that the original lighting, at least in the reading rooms, was removed during a WPA-era renovation in the 1930s. At the same time, the wall sconces were removed and the junction boxes capped with round brass caps. Six schoolhouse-type ceiling fixtures in each reading room were installed in two parallel rows (see fig. 51). The lighting was changed at least two more times prior to the current project. As designed by the city's Department of General Services, Bureau of Building Design, the 1979 renovation removed fluorescent strip fixtures from the reading rooms, circulation area, and other locations and, in the reading rooms and circulation area, replaced them with twin hanging fixtures with high-intensity discharge lamps. These fixtures were located approximately as the two rows of schoolhouse lights had been located in the 1930s. The light quality was harsh and the fixtures were unsympathetic in design to the character of the library, though perhaps better than the immediately preceding fluorescent strip lights.



Figure 53. One of 6 original 4-bulb mirror reflector fixtures above the book stack lay light.

Original lighting in other areas is less clearly illustrated. The low-ceilinged first floor reference alcove appeared to have had four, five-light flush-mount ceiling fixtures. The lighting at the metal stacks incorporated fixtures built in to the shelf units. At the mezzanine level, lights with arms extended out and down from the top shelves. At the lower level, fixtures were mounted to the framework between the rows of shelves.

Above the lay lights, mirrored shades with clusters of 3 or 4 bulbs were installed and are still extant¹⁹ In its early years the library was open 365 days a year until 9:00 PM.²⁰ It therefore would have been desirable to provide some artificial illumination to the lay lights. The clustered sockets and mirrored shades represent the best available lighting technology of the time.. Some of the fixtures still have old, possibly carbon-filament bulbs in them, so these fixtures must have gone out of use very early in the library's history. It is a mystery as to how the bulbs were supposed to be changed, as they are not easily accessible from below and it is not clear that they could have been accessed from the skylights above, either. Even though they are not typically visible, the fixtures are significant as examples of early electric lighting design and technology.

No photographs of fixtures in other rooms have been located, but some locations of former wall sconces are evident by the metal caps placed over the junction boxes. These include several locations in the main basement lecture hall, and a single location adjacent to the door to the former staff room on

¹⁹ Three fixtures above the Vestibule lay light remain in place. The six fixtures above the book stacks lay light were removed and are stored in the library. It is possible that two or more of these fixtures will be displayed in a public area of the library.

²⁰ Kurshan, p. 6.



Figure 54. Former gas/electric sconce location near 1st floor Staff Room.

the first floor. The original architect's drawings show the locations of all pendant and sconce fixtures, including how many lamp sockets and gas jets each had.

Unfortunately, there was neither time nor funds available to attempt a historic recreation of the original lighting in phase 3. While it would be possible to recreate the historic fixtures, their design requires that relatively dim

and probably incandescent light sources be used. Aside from energy considerations, additional lighting would then have been necessary to meet current high standards for light levels. This might have been accomplished by modifying the fixtures to include hidden up lights and/or by mounting modern light sources discretely above window casings. Additional down-lights recessed in the ceiling could also be used and are in fact being installed as part of the phase 3 lighting system.

Phase 3 lighting for the reading rooms incorporates three types of fixtures. Six large, metal-trimmed bowl-shaped pendants will hang from the locations of the previous fixtures. While not historically detailed, these fixtures recall bowl-shaped pendants popular starting in the 1910s when brighter tungsten lamps became available. All of the original wall sconce locations are being restored for multi-light brass and glass wall sconces. These sconces do not match the historic fixtures but are typical of period Colonial-Revival style sconces. Finally, additional light in the reading rooms as well as the circulation area will be provided by recessed down lights. Lighting in the book stacks, vestibule, mezzanine reading room, and other spaces being renovated under phases 1, 2, and 3 will generally be done with discrete, modern fixtures.

Theatrical LED PAR spotlights were installed in phase 3 in the attic spaces above the lay lights so that the opalescent glass could be illuminated for the first time in decades. Eight lights ²¹ are mounted to the plaster side walls above the book stacks lay light and four are above the vestibule lay light. These lights are accessible through four new access hatches in the mezzanine lay light and an original access hatch in the glass transom adjacent to the vestibule lay light.

²¹ Altman Lighting Spectra Series LED Portable Par Light, Model No. SSW-SPP-100-3

INDIVIDUAL ROOM DESCRIPTIONS AND SIGNIFICANT FEATURES: FIRST, MEZZANINE, AND SECOND FLOORS

The original design of the reading rooms, along with changes and significant features, have been addressed in the above discussion.

Delivery Room (now Circulation Area)

Many of the main features of the circulation area have been discussed above. This room was originally dominated by a large, central desk. Ornamental “rust-less” (painted) iron railings with polished brass handrails led to the desk from vestibule doors. (The drawing notes that an iron railing was substituted for the originally proposed bronze railing, one of several cost-saving changes noted on the drawings.) Wood entrance and exit turnstiles were located between the railings. This set-up fully controlled entry to and exit from the library. It is not known when these features were removed, but the original interior entry and exit wood and glass doors remain, complete with “IN” and “OVT” labels in bronze letters.

The circulation desk installed with the 1979 renovation, intentionally or not, was similar in size and design to the original desk. Recent changes in staff functioning and book check-out procedures made a large circulation desk obsolete, and it has been removed in phase 3, to be replaced by smaller pieces of furniture.

The circulation area retains the built-in, paneled-base, wood bench called out on the original drawings, located between the doors to the vestibule. There is no sign of the leather seat and back.

Vestibule

As a transition from outdoors to in, the vestibule has a combination of masonry, wood, and glass finishes. The walls are buff brick, with a sandstone base, cornice, and trim. The floor is ornamental mosaic tile and the entire ceiling

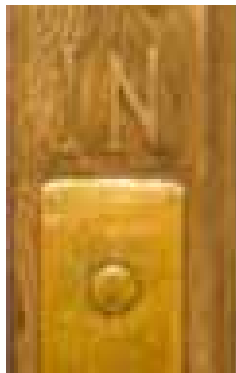


Figure 55.



Figure 56. The original mosaic tile vestibule floor is in very good condition.

is a barrel-vaulted opalescent glass lay light. Window and door casings and trim are varnished wood, probably oak. At the start of phase 1, a plaque was located on each of the narrow walls. The original building plaque (designated on dwg no. 3 to be located between two fixed sash separating the vestibule from the circulation area) was on the south wall, with a later plaque recognizing Andrew Carnegie on the opposite north wall. The original plaque is to be relocated to the adjacent west wall, as the south wall is now interrupted by the new accessible entrance door. The brick and stone received a mild cleaning as part of phase 1, though a considerable amount of staining is still present.



Figure 57. The main vestibule looking south towards the location of the new accessible door. The original plaque will be relocated to the opposite wall.



Figure 58. Vestibule lights, ca. 1979, to be removed.

The modern radiators that were on the two narrow walls have been removed in phase 1. Two old-style cast-iron radiators have been placed to either side of the main doors. It does

not appear that artificial lighting was originally provided in the vestibule except for the fixtures above the lay light. During the day, the room would have been very brightly lighted from the glass entrance doors and the sky light. At night, in addition to the artificially illuminated lay light, light from the interior of the library would reach

the vestibule through the glazed entrance and exit doors and the large central glass panel. The 1979 design called for removal of a strip fluorescent fixture supported by two angle irons running east-west across the vestibule. The new fixtures were to be simple pendant globes, mounted to the same angle irons. The fixtures at the start of Phase 3 are not the globes, but a pair of square fluorescent fixtures attached to the angle irons. Aside from being unsightly, the glare they produce has the effect of almost completely obscuring the existence of the ornamental lay light above. These fixtures are to be removed in phase 3. In addition to the installation of artificial lights above the lay light, small, discrete spotlights are to be installed below the lay light ceiling.

Book Stacks

The two-level book stacks and associated floors and trim were likely provided by the Library Bureau, a company founded in Boston in 1876 by Melvil Dewey (of the Dewey Decimal System) that provided library furnishings “for the definite purpose of furnishing libraries with equipment and supplies of unvarying correctness and reliability.”²² The company, now in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, is still in the same business. The steel and cast-iron stack fittings were provided as a kit of parts, with the book shelves being self-supporting and capable of being fit together into whatever space was available. The system, including glass flooring, was designed to allow light to travel between floors. The transmitted light helped illuminate what, especially in larger installations, might otherwise have been dark and enclosed-feeling stacks. Also included were electrical raceways in the vertical supports and built-in light fixtures. The system could also include metal stairs between stack levels, a feature not used in this library.



Figure 59. Pre-phase 3 construction showing second level of original Library Bureau stack system, including railings, vertical standards (originally bronze plated), shelves and bookend brackets (originally painted black). Glass floor remains under vinyl tile and plywood. Lights probably date from the 1950s.

The entire book stack ensemble at this branch was largely intact at the start of construction. The glass floors remained, though covered with tile on top and painted from below, thus completely obscuring them. The underside of the glass and all metalwork had been painted battleship grey. The original glass will be removed in phase 3 and replaced with new, laminated safety glass, retaining the historic appearance of the floor. Minor changes will be made to accommodate a ramp for accessibility.

²² <http://www.librarybureau.com/pdf/broch.aboutlegacy.pdf>



Figure 60. Test stripping of an end pilaster revealed the original bronze plating.

Scrape tests revealed that the shelves, end brackets, and horizontal supports and fascias were originally painted black. The vertical elements, including the decorative pilasters at the ends of the shelves and the intermediate vertical shelf supports, were finished with heavy bronze plating, still apparently in good condition beneath the paint. The Library Bureau catalog indicates that bronze plating was an optional finish. In phase 3 all metalwork will be painted black except for the decorative pilasters, which will be stripped, cleaned, and lacquered, exposing their original bronze finish. The original, simple iron railings and wood handrails are to remain, with the wood stripped and refinished and the metalwork painted black.

Staff Room (now Program Room), first floor south off the book stacks

This room retains its original wood window casings, now painted. The modern toilet room is in the same location as the original. Floors are vinyl tile. The flush metal door and frame are modern.

Librarians' Office (now elevator lobby, accessible restrooms, and rear entrance vestibule)

This space was completely altered as part of phase 1. The original wood stair to the second floor was removed, and a modern elevator installed. Toilet room finishes are modern, but an original window casing survives in each room and two survive in the rear entrance vestibule. The toilet room doors are flush stained oak. A flush metal "convenience door for service and handicapped" had previously (1979) replaced a window and opens to a concrete bridge over the areaway and thence to a ramp to the parking area in the rear. The original book lift and its shaft, which were in the northeast corner of this room and extended to both the basement and 2nd floor study room, were removed in phase 1. A section of original bead board wainscot (now painted) survives under the east window of the vestibule, and a section of original batten wainscot (now painted) survives under the north window, above the modern radiator grille.

First Floor Reference Alcove (now Work Room)

This room originally was open to the stacks. It had been separated with a metal and glass wall prior to the current project, probably in 1979 but possibly earlier. This separating wall has been rebuilt with wallboard and a single flush door as part of phase 3. The wall includes a book drop slot, and there is significant electrical wiring within it. The original plaster ceiling has been covered with surface-mounted acoustic tiles, lowering the already low headroom by an inch. Surface-mounted fluorescent light fixtures further reduce the height. The walls have been refaced with wall board, but retain the original condition at the deeply-recessed windows, which have a wood sill, probably original, and no window casings. HVAC ducts rise fairly unobtrusively in the corners of the room. The original wood and tile gas fireplace remains on the east wall and includes a plaster copy of an 1886 relief by British sculptor Harry Bates titled "Homer."²³ The floor, probably originally sheet linoleum, is modern vinyl tile, which will be replaced with new vinyl tile in phase 3. Modern perimeter shelving is being removed in phase 3, to be replaced with painted wallboard.



Figure 61. "Homer," a plaster copy of a carved relief sculpture by Harry Bates, decorates the fireplace in the former 1st floor reference alcove.

Mezzanine Floor Reference Alcove (now Quiet Reading Room)

In the original design, this room was essentially identical to the first floor reference alcove below, except for the ceiling, which in the mezzanine rises in a gentle curve from the walls and meets the ceiling level of the book stacks with a shallow arch. It thus has a more spacious feeling than the room below, a feeling accentuated by the view of the leaded glass lay light over the stacks. This room remains open to the stacks. In this room, the plaster is intact except below the sills, where it has been replaced with wallboard. As in the room below,

²³ Harry Bates (26 April 1850 – 30 January 1899), was born in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, England. Bates was elected to the Royal Academy in 1892 and was an active, if intermittent, member of the Art Workers Guild. He was a central figure in the British movement known as the New Sculpture, which explored a greater degree of naturalism and wider range of subject matter than the prevailing neo-Classicism. He began his career as a carver's assistant, and before beginning the regular study of plastic art he passed through a long apprenticeship in architectural decoration. In 1879

he came to London, where in 1883 he won the gold medal and the travelling scholarship with his relief of Socrates teaching the People in the Agora, which showed grace of line and harmony of composition. His Aeneas (1885), Homer (1886), three Psyche panels and Rhodope (1887), all showed marked advance in form and dignity. Bates's primary skill lay in the composition and sculpting of relief sculpture, and it is in this medium that he achieved his most technically and aesthetically refined work (from Wikipedia, "Harry Bates" and "New Sculpture").



Figure 62. Original 1st floor reference alcove, now a staff workroom.



Figure 63. At the mezzanine reference alcove (now Quiet Reading Room), the 1979 shelving has been removed and the fireplace restored. Phase 3 shelving is to be similar to that installed in the main reading rooms.

there are no window casings, the plaster walls returning to the windows with radiused corners. The wood sills, flush with the plaster, are probably original. The original wood and tile gas fireplace remains on the east wall and retains its original ceramic gas logs. Shelving matching that in the reading rooms origi-



Figure 64. On Oct. 14, 1938 the mezzanine reference alcove became the “Young Peoples’ Reading Room” The deep shelves and cabinet from the original construction were still in place when the photograph was taken.

nally lined the perimeter walls below the window sills. Built-in shelving similar to that in the main reading rooms is to be installed as part of phase 3.



Beneath window sills and also where this room joins the stack room, recent construction-related demolition has revealed, under layers of paint and possible plaster skim coats,



what appears to be the original “rough (sand) plaster” with a pinkish-orange, terra-cotta color paint. The effect is something like painted stucco.

Figure 65. Detail and location views of possible original terra-cotta-color paint finish at mezzanine reference alcove adjacent to edge of metal book stacks. The 1979 air conditioning duct is visible. It will be enclosed in casework to match the new shelving.

Second Floor South Study Room (now a staff workroom or storage room)

This room, believed to be originally intended for public use, is one of the more interesting secondary rooms in the library, as it contains much of its significant original features, including shelving, casework, and other woodwork. The west and north walls both include shelves with bead board backs, matching the original reading room shelving. There is also a glass-fronted cabinet. Original window casings are present, as is the batten wainscot on the south wall and adjacent to the door and sections of bead board wainscot on the east and west walls. The original picture rail is also present. All of the woodwork, which was probably originally varnished, is painted. The color appears to be a match for the early or original terra-cotta-color paint (see figs. 65 and 69). The walls and ceiling retain their original plaster. The air conditioning duct is neatly built into the north wall.



Figure 66. The construction-related storage partially obscures the south study room, which retains all of its historic woodwork, including original bookshelves.



Figure 67. All that's left of the north study room's original features are the window casings and part of the batten wainscot.

Second floor North Study Room

This room has been significantly altered, and retains only two window casings and a portion of its original batten wainscot above the baseboard convectors. All other fittings and finishes are modern. The room also contains, as it did originally, the retractable stair to the attic.

INDIVIDUAL ROOM DESCRIPTIONS AND SIGNIFICANT FEATURES: BASEMENT FLOOR

Main Lecture Hall

The main lecture hall retains a significant amount of its original fabric. The wood stage floor, apron and double stage doors are original, with a stained and varnished finish. To the left of the stage is one of only two original wood and glass interior doors remaining in the building. It is probably typical of original interior doors throughout the library. This door originally led to a passage to the reception room and small lecture room, but now opens to a closet. Two sets of double doors lead to the lecture room, one from the lower vestibule and one from the library interior, near where the stairs from the main level descend. The original doors in these openings were wood with glass panels and transoms. They have been replaced with modern, flush metal doors. Each set of doors originally was flanked by a fixed sash. The sash flanking the doors to the vestibule remain, with obscure glass, some of which may be original. The sash to the north of the opposite pair of doors has been removed and the wall continued across. The sash on the south side of these doors has also been removed and the opening converted into back-to-back display cabinets, one opening onto the lecture hall and the other onto the basement stair hall. These cabinets are of fairly recent date.



Figure 68. Original stage, apron, and double doors to the reception room. The single wood and glass door is probably typical of the original doors in the building. At the far left is the modern door leading to the lower vestibule.

Four of the original five tripartite window openings remain (including two in the portion of the hall that was made a separate room—see below). The current windows date from 1985 and are double-hung, multi-light aluminum sash similar to those in the reading rooms. Original drawings indicate that these windows were originally pivoted wood as were those upstairs. One of the original window openings has been converted into a

doorway with a single flush metal door opening onto the south areaway beside the main stoop.

Floors in the lecture hall were originally exposed pine and are now vinyl tile, except for the stage, which retains its original wood floor. Walls are a combination of original plaster and wall board. Windows are recessed without casings. The original bead board wainscot with dark stain and varnish remains throughout. It was recently over-coated by Brooklyn Public Library staff with a dark varnish-stain, as part of a spruce-up of portions of the building not affected by phase 1, 2, and 3 construction.

Original lighting in this room, according to the drawings, was entirely done with electric and combination gas-electric wall sconces. Most of the sconce locations are still evident from the extant capped pipes and brass back plates. Current lighting is provided by surface-mounted ceiling fluorescent strip lights and recessed strip lights built into the air conditioning ducts. A track lighting system provides stage lighting.

Air conditioning has been accomplished by running two ducts along the east and west ceiling edges. The ducts incorporate recessed fluorescent down lights. The ducts are fairly large and extend below the tops of the windows; however, they maintain the symmetry of the room and do not obscure the view towards the stage.

The south portion of the main lecture hall is now a separate staff room, divided from the main lecture hall by a wallboard wall and modern door. Finishes within this room match those of the lecture hall, although the bead-board wainscot has been stripped and refinished.



Figure 69. As in the mezzanine reference alcove (fig. 65) and lower vestibule (fig. 71) this terra-cotta paint in the reception room appears to be the first layer on a sanded plaster base.

Reception Room

The reception room is located behind the stage and connected to it by the original, double, pine stage doors, complete with their casings and original finish. The room is still quaintly identified by a sign on the original glass and wood door to the east passage leading between the main lecture hall and the original small lecture room. This door is flanked by original, fixed transom sash. On the interior side, all of this woodwork retains its dark stain and varnish; it has

been painted on the passage side. The opposite, stage right, side of the reception room was originally separated from the west passage to the small lecture

room by a wood rail and gate. This feature has been removed, and the room now extends through the former passage to the exterior wall of the building, which includes one of the large, tripartite window openings with modern double-hung sash.

The walls in this room are a combination of original plaster (on the east and west) and wallboard (north and south). The ceiling is entirely wall board and is interrupted by boxed-in, modern air conditioning ducts. The room originally had a wash basin in the southeast corner; a more modern basin remains in this location. Lighting in this room was from a central chandelier with three electric lamps and one gas burner. Original yellow pine floors are now covered with vinyl tile.



Figure 70. Another original oak door, flanked by transom windows. This view looks out from the reception room to the corridor.

stoop. The flush metal doors with tiny glass lights, which give a service room character to the space, date from 1979. The original wood doors had glazed panels and transoms, as did the original double doors on the east wall opening to the lecture hall. These doors have also been replaced with flush metal doors. The original fixed sash with obscure glass flank this set of doors. The two exposed cast-iron columns remain, as do the plaster walls and coved ceiling. Original lighting was by a central three-light chandelier, which has been

Small Lecture Room

Other than the four original tripartite window openings, now with the same modern sash as in the rest of the building, this room has been completely altered. It has been divided into several spaces, with a mechanical room on the west side and offices and storage space elsewhere. Some of the walls retain their plaster finish. There are suspended tile ceilings throughout.

Lower Vestibule

The lower level vestibule allows direct entrance to the lecture hall from the exterior of the library, although at present it appears to be used only as an emergency exit and a service entrance. At the north and south of the vestibule, sets of double doors open onto the areaways at the base of the exterior stairs leading down from the

replaced with modern ceiling lights. The granolithic floor was covered with vinyl tiles in 1979.



Figure 71. Lower vestibule with possible original paint finishes. At the left is one of the double leaves of the modern doors (casing is original) leading to the outside areaway. The room has since been painted white by Brooklyn Public Library.

The west wall of this room may retain its original paint finish over sanded plaster. The paint is the same terracotta color as that found at the mezzanine stack level. This color extends from an off-white painted wainscot up to the coved ceiling. Other walls appear more likely to have been repainted, in a color to match. These walls, as well as others in portions of the basement not affected by phase 1, 2, or 3 work, are being painted white by the Brooklyn Public Library in preparation for the re-opening on Sept. 13, 2012.

Other Basement Spaces

The eastern part of the basement, towards the rear of the building, was originally designated for utility functions, including the coal and boiler rooms, a work room, janitor's room, and men's and women's public toilets. To the north of the central boiler room, the stair and former workroom space have been reconfigured as the basement elevator lobby incorporating ADA access to the lecture hall. Original wood window casings have been retained (now painted), and reproduction stained and varnished bead board wainscoting installed. All doors are modern, either oak or painted metal. The floor is vinyl tile.

To the south of the boiler room, the former janitor's room and public men's toilet have been divided into three rooms, including a custodian's office, janitor's closet, and staff toilet room. Original window casings, now painted, remain, but all other exposed materials and finishes are replaced. The original wood south stair to the main floor was replaced in 1979 with a steel and concrete stair.

The coal storage and boiler room remain essentially as constructed, though concrete block walls have been constructed to enclose the boiler room. The vitrified, herringbone-pattern brick floor set in cement mortar on a concrete base remains in the boiler room. The pitched concrete floor in the coal storage room also remains, as does the original coal chute, now sealed with sheet metal.

Mechanical System

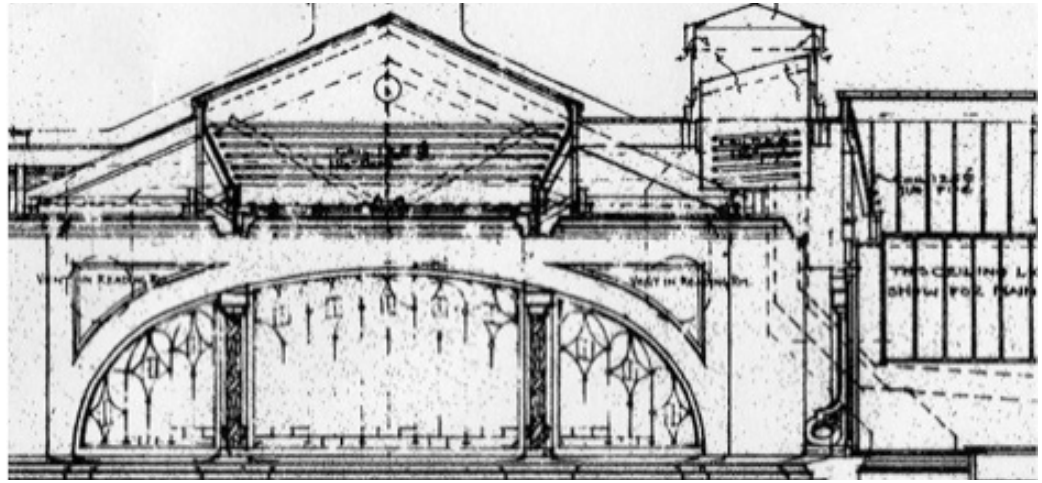


Figure 72. Detail of the original architect's drawing showing part of the elaborate ventilation system. Note the "Vents in Reading Room" (no longer extant) leading to a "Star Ventilator" on the roof with heating coils to ensure good upward air flow.

The original heating and ventilation system, as described on the architect's drawings, consisted of a coal-fired boiler; steam heating coils and radiators below most window openings (noted as being divided into "direct" and "indirect" coils at each window) with bronze grilles built in to the bookshelves in rooms that had shelving; bronze vent grilles opening to the outside of the building opposite the heating coils, below the windows; a series of venting ducts leading to a "Star Ventilator" with "aspirator coil" in the attic which exhausted to the exterior; additional ventilating flues with aspirating coils paralleling the smoke flues at the fireplaces; heating coils in the attic spaces above the lay lights and below the sky lights; and separate "dust flues" (toilet room flues) with electrical exhaust fans. The adjustable venting system assured that fresh air would be available even when the windows were closed. The source of fresh air was the outside vents at each window radiator. This air flowed through ducts within the walls up to the radiator by convection and was heated, entering the room through the face grilles built into the bookshelves below each window sill, and then through the building to the various exhaust flues.²⁴ By heating the air at the top of the flues and in the attic spaces above the lay lights the aspirator coils ensured a good flow of air and prevented downdrafts. Some of the early photos show the library filled with patrons wearing coats; apparently ventilation was valued over warmth.

²⁴ Although the original drawings show that fireplace chimneys incorporated ventilating flues with aspirating coils adjacent to the smoke flues, the fact that the bronze grilles in the fireplaces were apparently never installed in favor of plaster friezes leads to the conclusion that these fireplace ventilating flues were not built.

In 1949 Bonwit Construction Co. installed new enclosures for finned convector radiators in the adults' and children's rooms (record drawing no. 1 dated 7-19-49). The enclosures were wood to match existing with stamped steel grilles with oak grained finish. Design was by the city's Department of Public Works, Division of Engineering and Architecture. By that time, the original steam heating coils had been replaced with hot water fin-tube convectors, also built in to the shelves below windows, and this work was probably part of the major 1948-49 renovation. No documentation has been found for other work undertaken at that time (see "The 1949 Renovation" below). The fin tubes as well as risers and mains were replaced as part of the 1979 renovation. A new oil burner and boiler were called for on the 1979 drawings. However, by the time a record drawing was created in 1986 the fuel was changed to natural gas. The Weil McLain gas boiler probably dates from this time.

The convector valves in the reading rooms have been replaced during phase 3 work, prior to installation of the new bookshelf surrounds.

The exterior air vents below the windows, part of the original heating and ventilating system, have been closed and the exterior bronze grilles removed and the openings stuccoed. No record of when this work was done has been located. It is not believed that any of the interior ventilators or flues is functioning, though it is possible some of the original ductwork is being used by the modern cooling system.

As part of the 1979 renovation, a cooling system was installed throughout the library, with generally sensitively-located ductwork and grilles. For many years all the cooling equipment was located in the basement, in the former basement work room and coal storage area. In 2007 new compressors were located at grade outdoors at the edge of the parking area at the rear of the building. Because of noise issues with the unit in its current location, it is being relocated to the north front areaway of the building.

Structural System

The structure of the library consists primarily of wood joists and masonry bearing walls, with some use of concrete, cast iron, and steel. The original drawings indicate stone footings with a 7" concrete basement floor consisting of 6" of "cinder concrete" and a 1" surface. Basement walls at the end bays are shown as solid stone (granite) and elsewhere as solid brick or stone (limestone and bluestone) with brick backing. Floor joists at the first floor reading rooms are 3" by 12" yellow pine on 12" centers.²⁵ At the circulation area and former librarians' office and staff room (now program room and elevator lobby), they are 3" by 10" spruce on 16" centers. At the second floor (former study rooms) the floor joists are 3" by 10" spruce on 16" centers. At the mezzanine floor reference alcove (now quiet reading room) they are 3" by 10" spruce on 12" centers.

The sub-floors at the first floor reference alcove (now a work room), book stack area, and vestibule are shown as concrete. Steel beams on cast-iron columns support these concrete floors, which serve to support the book stacks and provide fire resistance above the boiler and coal storage rooms. Additional steel beams supported by masonry basement walls and piers encircle the circulation area and vestibule. It does not appear that the steel beams align with the metal book stack supports. The book stacks, including the mezzanine-level glass floor and metal shelving, are the original, self-supporting, steel structure probably supplied by the Library Bureau.

Roof rafters are of 3" by 10" spruce and are spaced at 16" on center over the reading rooms and at 20" on center over the circulation area and at the rear of the building. The main roof ridge is 3" by 12" spruce, and the ridges over the rear roofs vary from 3" by 10" to 4" by 12" and are yellow pine. The three original skylights were framed by wood trusses, which remain. When the skylights were removed, wood joists were added to the openings within the truss framing.

The original drawings show that window openings have fully-embedded cast-iron lintels. They are noted as being "arched" above the monumental windows.

²⁵ The dimensions for all joists and roof rafters are taken from the original drawings. They have not been verified in the field.

Technology

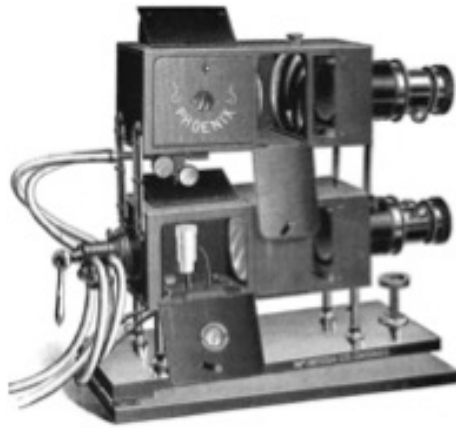


Figure 73. A stereopticon from ca. 1900. Illumination is by gas light.

Several examples of contemporary technology appear in the original drawings and early photographs, and while these features tend to be ephemeral, they are of some interest in understanding how the library originally functioned. At the outer end of both basement lecture halls was a “Stereopticon Outlet.” “A stereopticon is a slide projector or ‘magic lantern,’ which has two lenses, usually one above the other. These devices date back to the mid-19th century, and were a popular form of entertainment and education before

the advent of moving pictures. Americans William and Frederick Langenheim introduced stereopticon slide technology—slide shows of projected photographs on glass—in 1850.... At first, the shows used random images, but over time, lanternists began to place the slides in logical order, creating a narrative. This ‘visual storytelling’ directly preceded the development of the first moving pictures.” Unlike a stereoscope, “a stereopticon will not project or display stereoscopic, three-dimensional images. The two lenses are used to dissolve between images when projected.”²⁶ Some stereopticons were designed to project a background image from one lens, with the second lens projecting overlaid changing images from a rotating wheel of slides, thus producing an early type of animation. Newspaper postings from the first half of the 20th century show that branch libraries, including the Prospect, were frequent venues for lectures, often with stereopticon shows advertised.

Early photographs show a candlestick telephone on the delivery desk. Unlike most domestic candlestick telephones, this one has a somewhat larger base, which appears to incorporate buttons. It was probably used as an intercom between rooms. “A bell annunciator”²⁷ was located in the janitor’s room, and “inter(com) telephones” were located in most or all of the staff and maintenance rooms. The Librarians’ Room and Staff Room on the main floor each had a “long distance telephone branch.” (original drawing no. 3)

²⁶ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereopticon>

²⁷ The annunciator would have displayed, by a card flipping into view or a light turning on, from which room a signal had been sent calling for the janitor. The bell alerted the janitor to check the annunciator for the location he was needed.



Figure 74. Seth Thomas "World" model clock, brought from the temporary 9th Street storefront branch, and candlestick telephone on delivery desk.

Finally, a clock was located on the paneled wall to the southeast of the delivery desk. The clock was a Seth Thomas "World" model, made by the Seth Thomas Clock Co. in Thomaston, Connecticut. These clocks were mainspring-powered, pendulum controlled, and would run for two weeks on a winding. They typically did not strike the hour. With a subsidiary seconds dial and a high-quality movement, this model was better than the standard "schoolhouse" clock of the time but not as good as a weight-driven regulator. The clock is visible in the branch's first location, at Litchfield Villa and/or the Ninth Street storefront; it apparently made the move to the new building with the books.

The 1949 Renovation

Drawings for the extensive renovation undertaken in 1948 and 1949 have not been located, except for the 1949 radiator enclosure drawing noted above. However, a Brooklyn Eagle story on the anticipated July 1, 1949 reopening states that work included a “new roof, new window frames, the installation of an oil burner, and an extensive paint job...”²⁸ The article indicates the branch had been closed since February 1948 “after being condemned by the city as unsafe.”²⁹

One might speculate on further aspects of this work, given the 42 year age of the library in 1948 and the length and apparent extensive nature of the work done at this time. The original roof and skylights had probably failed, leading to extensive water damage. The resulting work might have included, besides replacement of the roof, removal of the three skylights and circulation area lay light, replacement of damaged paneling, especially in the north reading room, and replacement of the original single-pane, wood, pivoting windows with multi-light wood replacements.

²⁸ Brooklyn Eagle, Wednesday, June 29, 1949.

²⁹ Ibid.

The 1979 Renovation

The library was closed for renovation from 1979-80, and was housed temporarily in the Knights of Columbus building at 303 8th Avenue. The Daily News reported on Dec. 30, 1980 that the library had suffered from a leaking roof, squeaking floors, water damaged walls, bad lighting, and was generally in a state of disrepair. A photo in the Brooklyn Phoenix of May 17, 1979 shows buckets to catch dripping water and notes that books had been placed on rolling carts so they could be moved away from leaks during rains. The News reported that \$735,000 (about \$2,178,000 in today's dollars) had been spent to install central air conditioning; fix the roof and water damaged walls; "re-furbish the front"; install new flooring, fireproof doors, and a new boiler; and construct a rear ramp for wheelchair access. Drawings dated April 30, 1979 prepared by Judith Goldberg, R.A. and others indicate the extensive work undertaken during this renovation. Some of this work has been included in the room-by-room descriptions above. Other changes not described above are noted here:

WINDOWS

Galvanized metal window guards were installed (and since removed), and at the same time, "hard-wood sills at all windows shall be removed & replaced with new sills. Profile to match existing."

DOORS

Many interior doors, possibly the original doors, were removed and hollow metal doors and metal jambs were installed.

FINISHES

There was extensive plastering and painting throughout, and some replacement of plaster with gypsum board. Linoleum was removed and replaced with vinyl tile in several rooms, including the reference room (the adults' reading room), circulation room, children's reading room, and first floor work room, and both levels of the book stacks. It is not known if the removed linoleum was the original.

ELECTRIC

Some new security lighting was installed at the rear of the building. New reading room and circulation area lighting was also installed (see above). New wiring and fixtures were installed throughout the building as part of the 1979

work, except possibly for the fluorescent book stack lighting, which seems not to have been replaced at this time.

PLUMBING

The drawings note that the project's intent was to replace all above ground piping and install new fixtures throughout. This work apparently included the basement as well as the other floors.

Recommendations for Future Work

The current phase 1, 2, and 3 work will go far towards restoring the historic architectural features and character of the Park Slope Branch, while at the same time making the library universally accessible and more efficient in operation. Nevertheless, much additional work needs to be done to return the building to first-class condition and continue the restoration of its architecturally significant features. A detailed scope of work has been developed for restoration of masonry, windows, and skylights as part of a possible phase 4 project. This scope is included as Appendix 4. In brief, this work includes:

EXTERIOR MASONRY

Apart from the need for vine removal and limestone cleaning and spot pointing, the brick and limestone masonry is in good condition. The bluestone and stucco base of the building, however, needs considerable work. Remaining bluestone at the copings, basement walls, stairs, and platforms should be retained. Re-tooling this stone to create a sound, uniform surface should be considered, as should application of a stone consolidant to prevent or slow future deterioration. Unsalvageable stones should be replaced with matching bluestone.

The failing stucco at the basement walls will have to be removed. It is unlikely the bluestone beneath can be re-tooled, as its condition seems very poor and it had in the past been cut back. The options for these walls, in order of preference, are

1. Cut back the bluestone to a sound base and standard depth and install new bluestone veneer matching the original block pattern, mechanically anchored into the wall. Minimum thickness of the stone should be approximately 2 inches.
2. Cut back the bluestone to a sound base and standard depth and install new cast-stone panels matching the original block pattern, mechanically anchored to the wall.
3. Cut back the bluestone to a sound base and apply bluestone stucco, scored to simulate the original joint pattern.

Some combination of these three methods can be used.

The inside faces of the concrete areaway walls were originally stuccoed, scored, and pointed to resemble stone blocks. Where the surface is in deteriorated condition, it should be removed and re-stuccoed in the same manner.

Additional needed work includes spot pointing limestone, especially at parapets and cornices. At east, southeast, and northeast (rear) facades, the white brick needs pointing. Spalled and cracked white brick should be replaced with matching brick. All areaway coping stones should be pointed.

Not necessary for protection of the building envelope but recommended nonetheless, the stucco infill at the former vents beneath the six monumental windows on the west façade should be removed and replaced with replicas of original bronze ventilation grilles. This work would remove the unsightly stucco patches and provide physical evidence of the original heating and ventilating systems.

WINDOWS

The existing aluminum windows are approaching 30 years of age and are likely to begin failing at an increasing rate. They should be replaced with windows matching the original configuration, operation, materials, and finish, as will be required by the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The ten monumental windows at the main floor are a priority and should be fitted with the highest quality wood pivoting and hinged double-glazed sash, revealing and restoring as necessary the jambs, mullions, and transom bars that probably remain under the aluminum panning. Other windows, originally double-hung, should be restored as such.

SKYLIGHTS

Restoration of the missing sky lights over the leaded glass lay lights in the vestibule and over the book stacks would provide a dramatic re-creation of the original character of these interior spaces. Because the sky lights are not visible from public areas, they could probably be recreated using new materials and construction details that would present fewer maintenance issues than the original, large metal and glass sky lights. Installation of smaller, dome sky lights or sun tubes should be explored.

The recreation of the third skylight, over the circulation area, would be more difficult because of the need to also construct the decorative interior lay light. Such a project might be pursued as a private donation.

SECONDARY INTERIOR PUBLIC SPACES

If the library's operations would allow for it, there are two formerly public rooms whose return to public use would be desirable.



Figure 75. The Grueby tile fireplace, shown in the process of being stripped and refinished, would be the centerpiece of a restored first floor reference alcove.

First Floor Reference Alcove

The first floor reference alcove was originally open to the book stacks, and could thus be seen from the circulation area. Its focal point was the fireplace and mantel with its Grueby tiles and plaster relief of "Homer."

Removing the wall separating this room from the stacks would restore this portion of the original circulation system and provide additional public space easily monitored from the cir-

ulation area. Aside from removing the wall, it would be necessary to relocate electrical service within the wall. To increase the low ceiling height, the existing surface-mounted lights and acoustic tiles should be removed.



Figure 76. A bit of original "batten wainscot" is visible near the study room door. Extensive original woodwork remains in this room (see also fig. 66).

Second Floor South Study Room

The second room is the original south study room on the second floor. This room retains most if not all of its original woodwork, including wainscot, bookshelves, glass-front cabinet, picture molding, etc. (see fig. 66). With woodwork restored to its original finish, this room would provide a lovely picture of how the library looked in its earliest days. Because the room is not as easily monitored, it might be best suited to use by appointment. It's possible the library's original natural history collection was housed here, and the room would be a good location for any special collections the library might have or acquire. A potential problem is that the room is not universally accessible, as it currently can only be reached by climbing a short flight of stairs from the mezzanine.

Lecture Hall

The Lecture Hall, although it appears to function adequately for its purpose, has a dual character as the result of uncoordinated renovations made over the years. It retains enough of its historic fabric to serve as the basis for a redesign that would enhance its historic architectural integrity. Improvements might include:

- New wood and glass double doors at the interior and exterior entrances.
- Stripping and restoration of historic woodwork.
- Re-design of the rear wall to introduce symmetry with coordinated woodwork and doors.
- Replacement of lighting with historically sympathetic fixtures, including re-use of the original wall sconce locations.
- If video or multi-media equipment is incorporated into this room, care should be taken to retain and minimally obscure historic features.

Lower Vestibule

The lower vestibule could serve a useful auxiliary function for events in the lecture hall. Entrance doors modeled on the originals, better lighting, and restoration of original wall and floor finishes would transform the space from its current utilitarian service character.

SITE

The extensive, well-maintained plantings on the site enhance the building and its immediate environment. The historic perimeter fence is in relatively good condition but needs painting, including especially the original section of decorative fence at the east property line. It is recommended that the added portions of the fence, including its extensions on top of the front bluestone walls and across the stoop, be removed to present a less forbidding aspect to the neighborhood. New street trees should be requested at the intersection of 9th Street and 6th Avenue, where two or three large trees have recently been removed. This planting would enhance the green oasis character of the library's site.



Figure 77.

Modern safety devices would ensure that the fireplaces could function only under necessary supervision.

FIREPLACES

The woodwork, tiles, and faience of the four fireplaces are being restored in phase 3. While it might seem counter-intuitive to think of re-opening the flues and restoring at least the reading room fireplaces for functioning gas fires, these rooms are so spectacular that they could well be used for special events, even fundraising events. Functioning fireplaces would enhance this possibility. Modern safety devices would ensure that the fireplaces could function only under necessary supervision.

LIGHTING

The removal of the historic reflector pendant lights from the attic above the mezzanine-level lay light provides an opportunity to reuse these lights somewhere within the public space of the library. Although these particular fixtures were never visible, similar lights may have been used at the ceiling of the first floor reference alcove and at the first floor book stacks. Two or three of these fixtures could be hung from the ceiling of the quiet reading room at the mezzanine, where there is already electrical service, or perhaps over the long, low book shelf separating the circulation area from the stacks.

Appendixes

APPENDIX 1. ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Figure 1:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dunfermline_Carnegie_Library.jpg

Figure 2:

Brooklyn Daily Eagle via www.Fultonhistory.com

Figure 3:

New York City Department of Information Technology
and Telecommunications

Figure 4, 11, 12, 34-38, 45, 49-51, 64, 74, 77:

Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Collection

Figure 5-7, 21, 27, 28, 30, 32, 72:

Brooklyn Public Library, Capital Planning and Facilities Management

Figure 8-10, 13-20, 22-25, 39-44, 46-48, 52-63, 65-71, 75, 76:

New York City Department of Design and Construction, Library
Program Unit and Division of Architecture and Engineering

Figure 29, 31, 33:

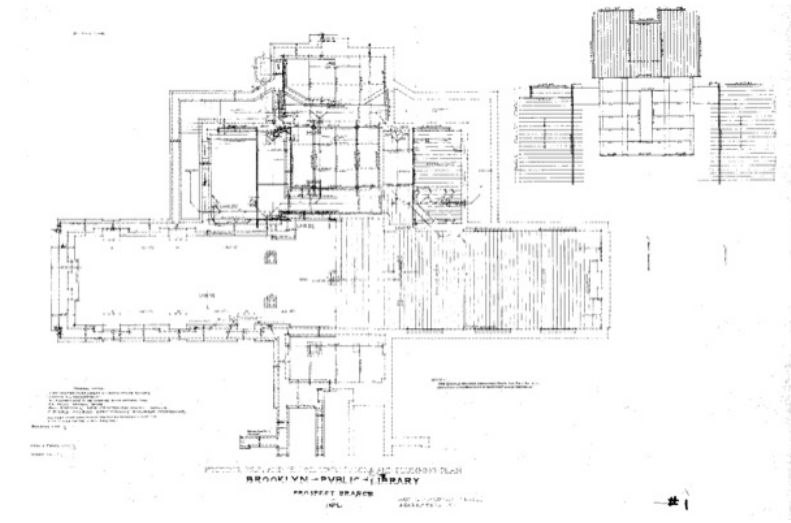
Allanbrook, Benic, Czajka Architects and Planners LLP

Figure 73:

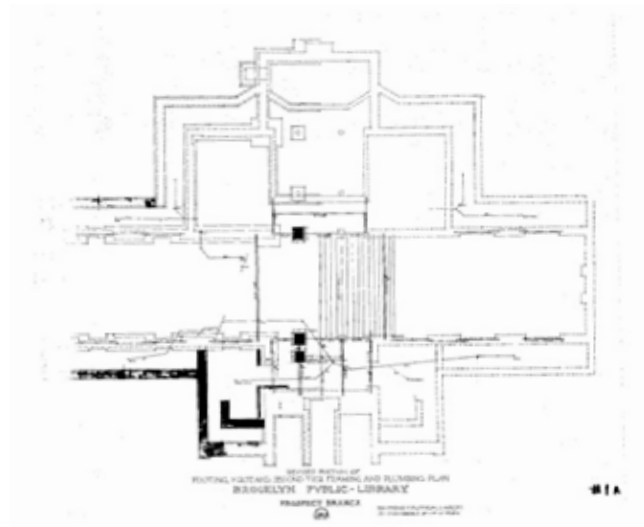
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereopticon>

APPENDIX 2. ORIGINAL 1906 RAYMOND F. ALMIRALL DRAWINGS FROM BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY CAPITAL PROJECT ARCHIVES

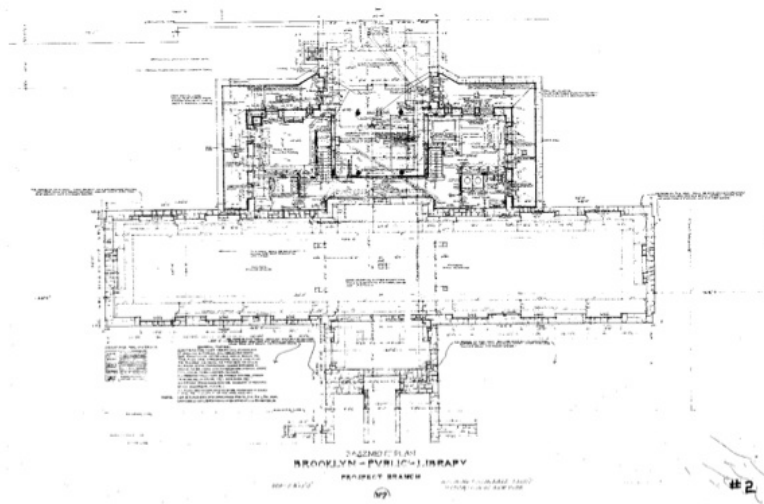
(Note: If you are reading a paper copy of this report, the web-based version of the report will allow these and other drawings and photographs to be enlarged for clarity.)



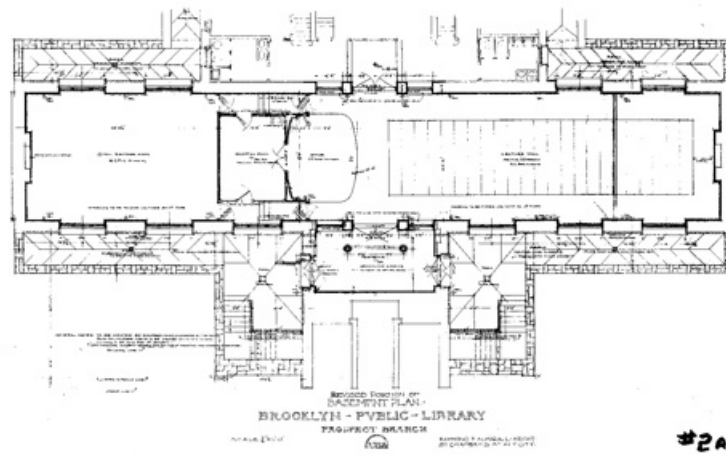
A-1. Original architect's drawing No. 1. Footing and plumbing plan.



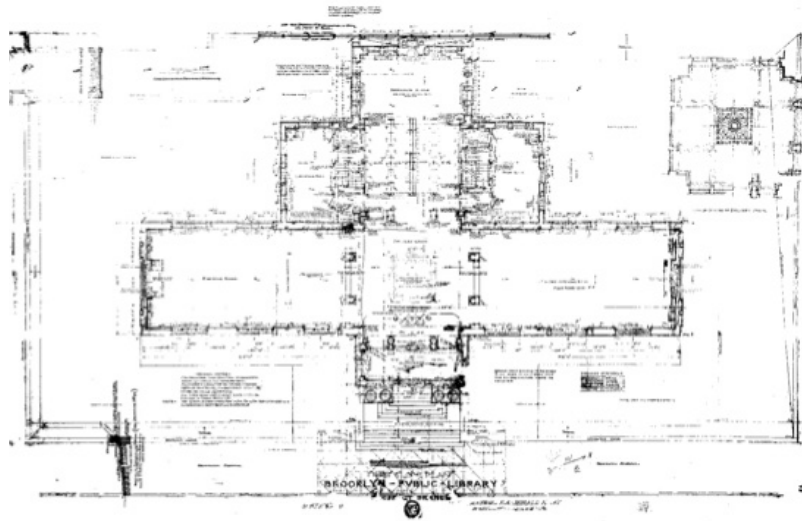
A-2. Original architect's drawing No. 1A. Footing, framing, and plumbing plan.



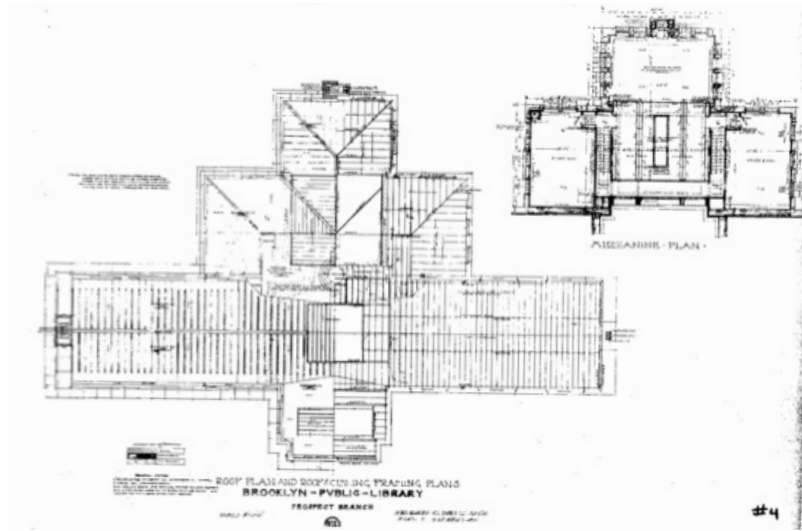
A-3. Original architect's drawing No. 2. Basement plan.



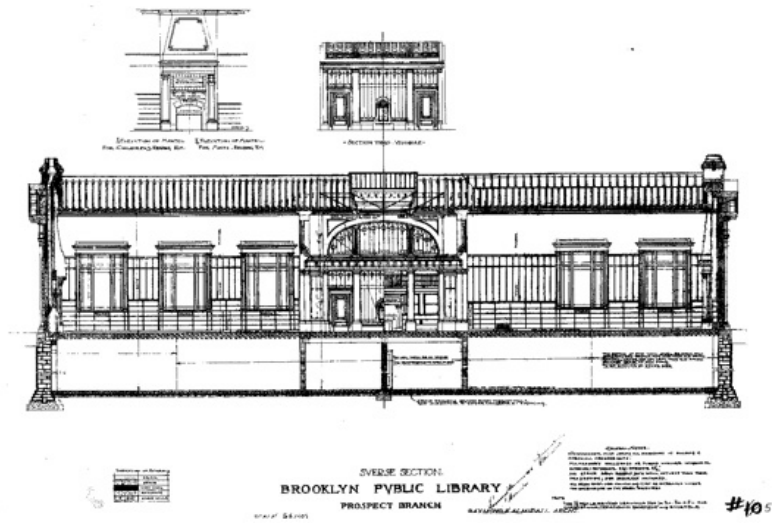
A-4. Original architect's drawing No. 2A. Partial basement plan.



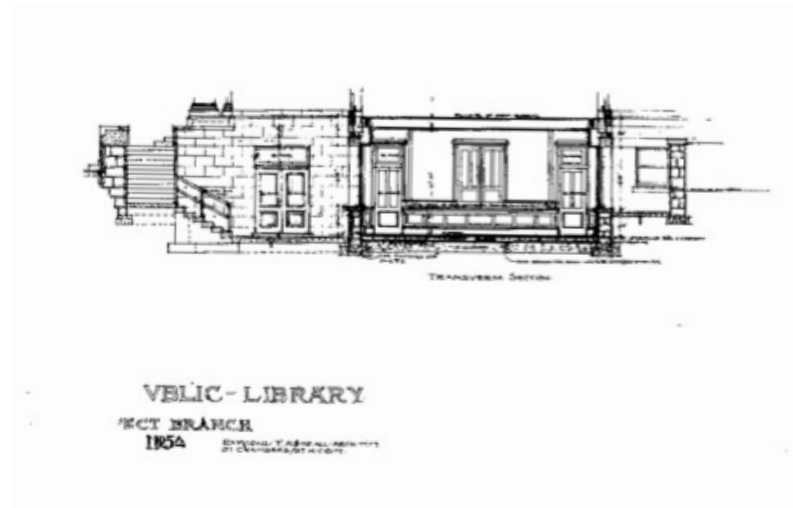
A-5. Original architect's drawing No. 3. First floor plan.



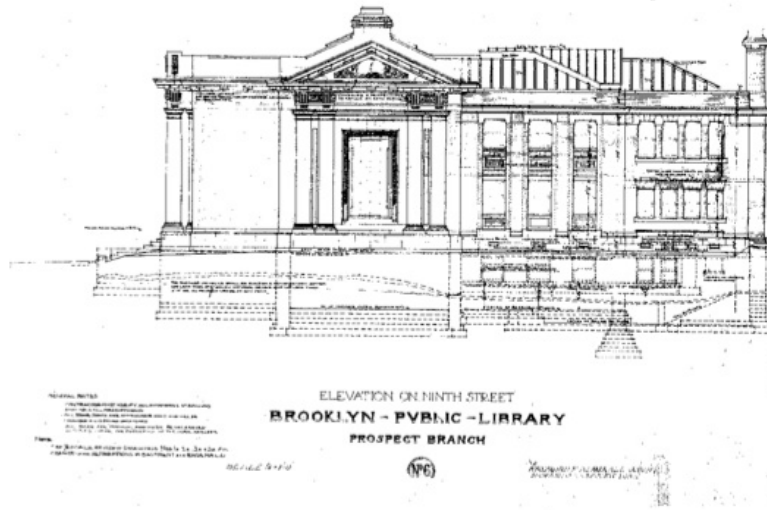
A-6. Original architect's drawing No. 5. Roof plan and roof and ceiling framing plans.



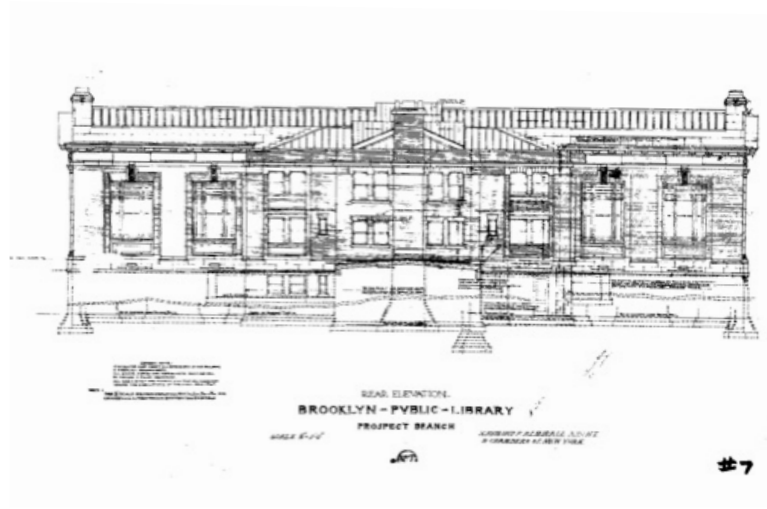
A-7. Original architect's drawing No. 5. North-south transverse section and fireplace detail.



A-8. Original architect's drawing No. 5A. East-west transverse basement section.



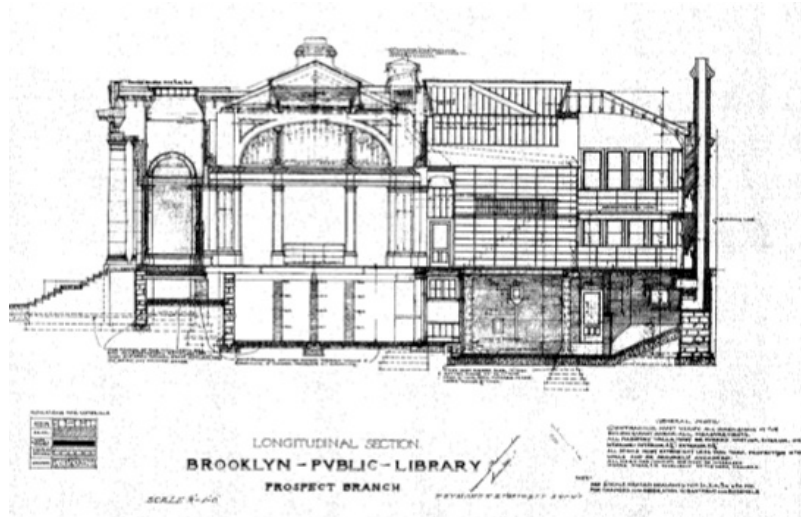
A-9. Original architect's drawing No. 6. Ninth Street elevation.



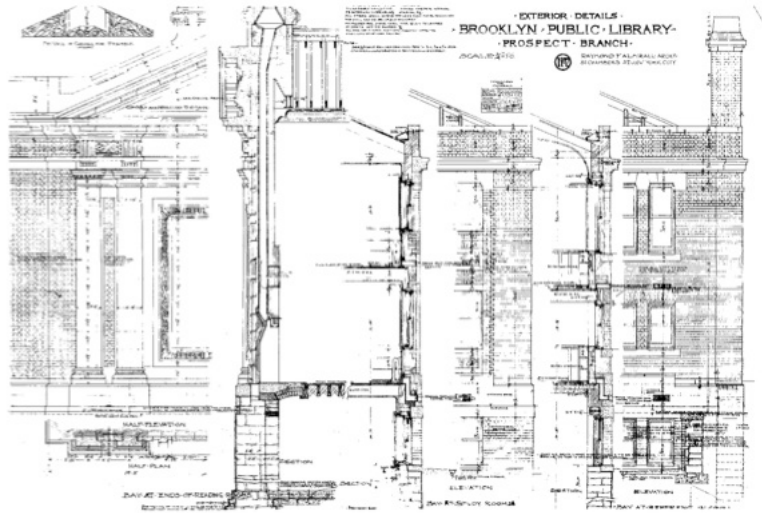
A-10. Original architect's drawing No. 7. Rear elevation.



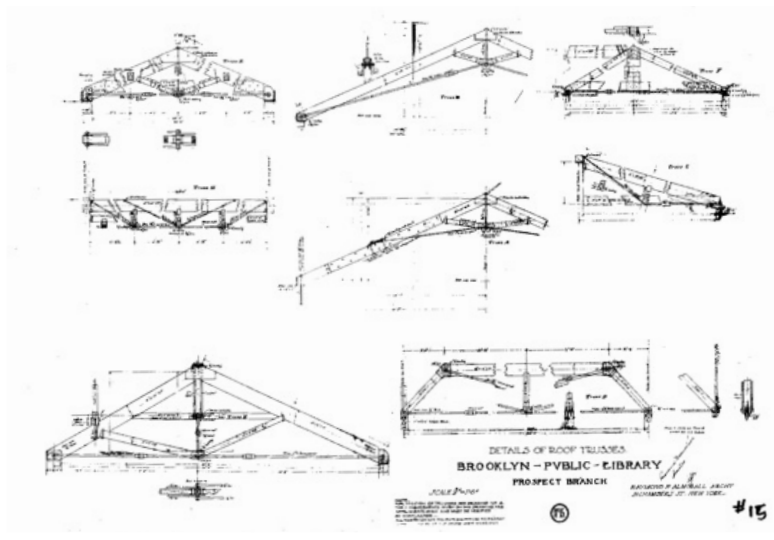
A-11. Original architect's drawing No. 8. Front elevation.



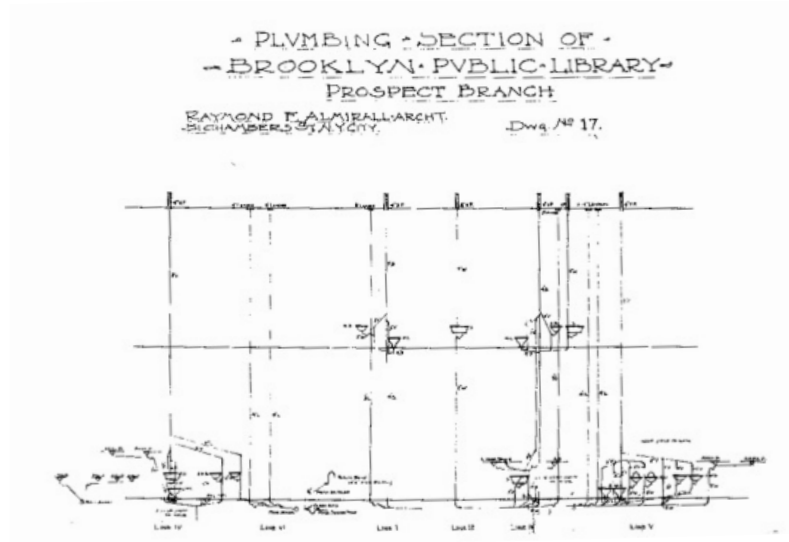
A-12. Original architect's drawing No. 9. Longitudinal (east-west) section.



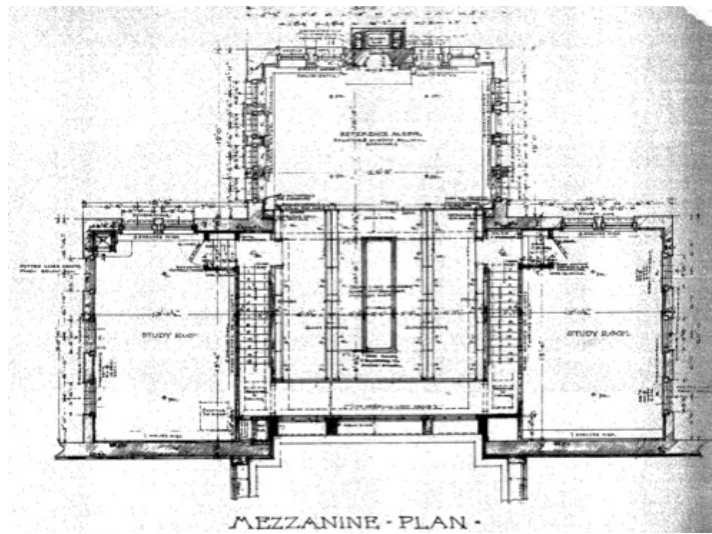
A-13. Original architect's drawing No. 12. Side elevation, wall sections, and exterior details.



A-14. Original architect's drawing No. 15. Roof truss details.



A-15. Original architect's drawing No. 17. Plumbing section.



A-16. Original architect's drawing (not numbered). Mezzanine plan.

APPENDIX 3. COMPLETION PHOTOGRAPHS

All photographs are dated September 13, 2012 unless otherwise indicated.

These photographs and others are included in the version of this report posted on the website of the Department of Design and Construction: www.nyc.gov/html/ddc/html/home/home.shtml



A-17. Children's reading room



A-18. Adults' reading room



A-19. Circulation room looking towards adults' reading room



A-20. Circulation room looking towards children's reading room



A-21. Bookshelves in children's reading room



A-22. Staircase to mezzanine



A-23. First floor elevator lobby



A-24. Vestibule looking north



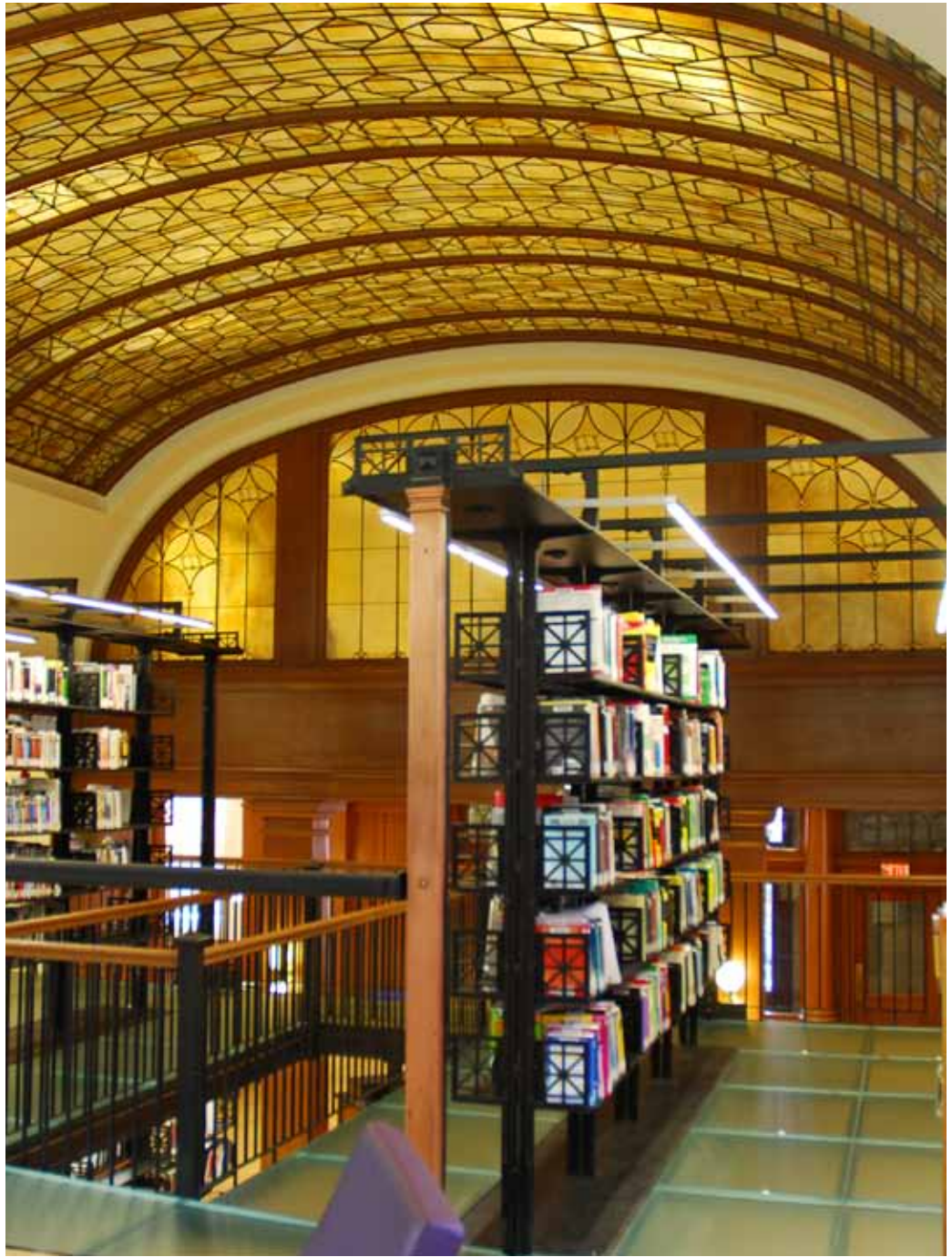
A-25. Vestibule looking south to new accessible door



A-26. Vestibule lay light and transom



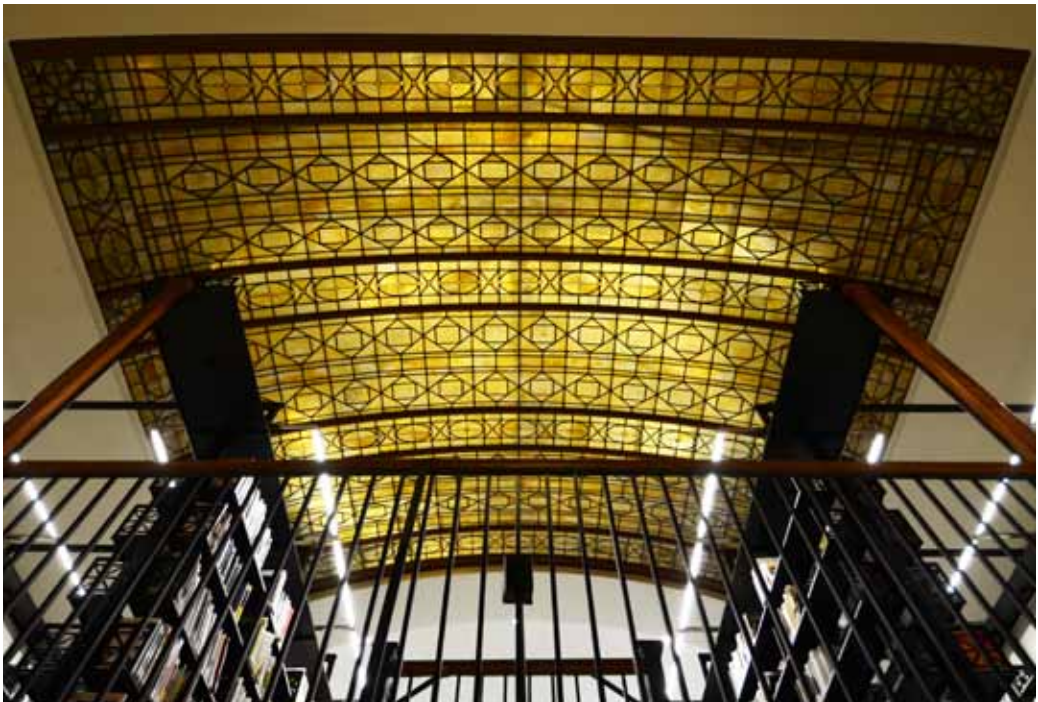
A-27. Mezzanine book stacks



A-28. Book stacks and lay light



A-29. Glass and steel mezzanine floor from below



A-30. Lay light over book stacks.



A-31. Second floor south study (now staff) room



A-32. Lower vestibule looking north



A-33. Lecture Hall looking toward stage



A-34. Basement elevator lobby, looking north



A-35. Basement elevator lobby, looking south

