

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation \_\_\_\_\_ for: Historic Landmark \_\_\_\_\_ Historic District \_\_\_\_\_

Amendment of a previous designation X

Please summarize any amendment(s) Updated description reflecting building's appearance after 2017-2019 rehabilitation as well as a more extensive historical narrative

Property name Central Public Library

*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 801 K Street, NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 403N, Lot 800

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 2C

Date of construction 1899-1903 Date of major alteration(s) 1977-1980, 2001-2003, 2017-2019

Architect(s) Ackerman and Ross Architectural style(s) Beaux-Arts

Original use Library Present use Retail/Historical Society/Exhibition

Property owner District of Columbia Government

Legal address of property owner \_\_\_\_\_

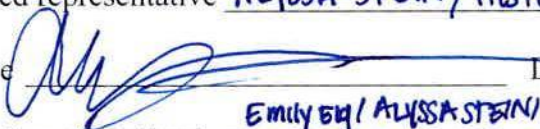
NAME OF APPLICANT(S) EventsDC and Apple, Inc.

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) Events DC: 801 Mount Vernon Place, NW Washington, DC 20001

Apple, Inc.: 1 Infinite Loop, Mail Stop: 306-RTLA Cupertino, CA 95014

Name and title of authorized representative ALYSSA STEIN / HISTORIAN

Signature of representative 

Date 12/18/19

Name and telephone of author of application EMILY BILLY / ALYSSA STEIN / BILL MARZELLA / ANNA DUBANSKY

Date received

H.P.O. staff

20-04

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Central Public Library (Additional Documentation)Other names/site number: Carnegie Library

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 801 K Street, N.W.City or town: Washington State: DC County: \_\_\_\_\_Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_national \_\_\_statewide \_\_\_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D

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Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

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State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐☐

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Site

Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

buildings

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

sites

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

structures

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

objects

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

COMMERCE/TRADE/Specialty Store

COMMERCE/TRADE/Business

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Beaux Arts

### Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Vermont white marble, Milford pink granite, copper, wrought iron, wood, glass

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Carnegie Library (originally referred to as the Central Public Library) was donated to the city of Washington by industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. The cornerstone was laid in 1901, and the building was completed in 1903 to house operations for Washington, D.C.'s burgeoning free public library system. An athenaeum composed of marble and granite, the building is prominently situated in the center of Mount Vernon Square, also known as Reservation 8, one of fifteen major squares identified on L'Enfant's 1791 plan of Washington.<sup>1</sup> The site is located on square 403N, lot 800, and bounded on the east by Seventh Street, on the west by Ninth Street, on the north by Mount Vernon Place, and on the south by K Street, N.W. The classical Beaux-Arts-style building was designed by the New York-based partnership of William Ackerman, a mechanical engineer, and Albert Randolph Ross, an *École des Beaux-Arts*-trained architect who previously worked at the firm of McKim, Mead and White. Their firm, Ackerman & Ross, was formed in 1897, and they secured the commission for the project by winning an architectural competition in 1899.

The free-standing two-story above-grade and two-story below grade structure consists of a central block and two wings that are set back from and projecting to the east and west of the

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<sup>1</sup> Although fifteen public reservations were identified by L'Enfant on his Plan for Washington, Andrew Ellicott's final Plan which was adopted as the city's official plan, did not acknowledge L'Enfant's intentions. Instead, Mount Vernon Square was not recognized as a formal public space worthy of status and maintenance as a park until the 1870s. For more information, see *Mount Vernon Square Cultural Landscape Inventory*, prepared by EHT Tracerics in 2019.

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central block. The monumental and dignified steel-frame building is clad with marble and granite and features elaborately-ornamented detailing including feature classical elements and artwork. Overall, the library building measures 156'-4" across (east to west) by 111'-5" wide (north to south).<sup>2</sup> The principal (south) elevation is defined by the central block, consisting of three bays of broad arched openings and two pedimented end pavilions. A pair of Scamozzi Ionic  $\frac{3}{4}$ -engaged columns flank either side of the central doorway, dividing it from the arched openings to either side. The flanking end pavilions distinguish themselves from the central bays by smaller arches capped by clerestory-type windows set beneath carved pediments. The north elevation of the central block, which features narrow and vertically oriented multi-story windows that reflect the interior arrangement of book stacks, is dramatically distinct from the other elevations. The east and west elevations, and those of the projecting wings, contain a variety of large round-arched and narrow slot-like openings for windows. The interior spaces reflect the changes in use of the building, which has undergone two major renovations, the first in 1977-1980 to accommodate use by the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), and the second in 2001-2003 to accommodate the City Museum, with space for the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. (HSW).<sup>3</sup> A third major renovation effort in 2017-2019 resulted in the building's rehabilitation and adaptive reuse consistent with the terms of a Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement.<sup>4</sup>

Between 2017 and 2019, under the ownership of the District of Columbia Government, and administration of the building by EventsDC, Apple Inc. undertook a rehabilitation of the building for use as a retail store and cultural events space by a commercial tenant and a research library and museum for HSW. The rehabilitation included the removal of non-original infill construction throughout the building, including but not limited to the 1977-1980 clerestory addition above the Delivery Room that infilled the atrium with a metal deck creating an interior mezzanine extended beyond the roofline, and 2001-2003 alterations that included but were also not limited to the addition of a 150-seat theater in the east wing, the raised map exhibit platform in the first floor west wing, two sets of stairs in the second floor hall along with a raised exhibition space within the historic light well. The 2017-2019 work primarily focused on returning the spaces and remaining historic fabric to its original appearance; however, this work did result in the removal of original laylights to create a two-story, skylit atrium in the original Delivery Room. Despite the loss of some historic fabric during the rehabilitation, both the interior and the exterior retain sufficient integrity to identify the building as a library. On the interior, this work returned the

<sup>2</sup> "Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia." Survey # DC-457, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (1988), 16.

<sup>3</sup> The 1977-1980 renovation removed significant components (both original and non-original) associated with the library's functioning including the first floor office partitions, the delivery desk, and the stacks, as well as infilling the atrium with concrete floor slabs to add office space. The work in 2001-2003 focused on inserting the museum functions into the building. This further diminished the building's original interior appearance by inserting a new spaces that altered the original floor plan and spatial experience, as well as relatively insensitive updating of systems and code compliance.

<sup>4</sup> *Memorandum of Agreement among the National Capital Planning Commission, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the Washington Convention and Sports Authority, the Historical Society of Washington, DC, and Apple, Inc. Regarding the Carnegie Library Rehabilitation and Modernization Project in Washington, DC*, October 2017.

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original spatial organization, restored damaged and missing architectural features including the original Guastovino ceiling in the basement level, originally used and denoted as the Bicycle Room, rehabilitated plaster walls and window surrounds in the East and West wings of the first floor, mosaic tile floor in the second floor hall, and stone stairways and metal balustrade on the grand staircase. The exterior was extensively restored and continues to clearly identify the building as a public building open to all. Work done during this rehabilitation is discussed in the “Later History and Building Evolution” section in Section 8 of this amendment.

The building was designated by the Joint Committee of Landmarks and added to the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. This 2019 amendment provides an updated description reflecting the building’s current appearance, as well a more extensive historical narrative than that found in the 1969 National Register Nomination.

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**Narrative Description**

**Site**

The Carnegie Library is located at 801 K Street, N.W., Washington D.C., 20001. The site is located on Mount Vernon Square, also known as Reservation 8, which is owned by the U.S. Government and administered by the District of Columbia. Mount Vernon Square is located at the intersection of several vistas created by L’Enfant’s 1791 plan. The Carnegie Library occupies approximately 17,300 square feet in the center of the approximately 120,000 square-foot (2.5 acre) Mount Vernon Square.<sup>5</sup> Surrounded by sidewalks, curved paths lead from the four corners of the rectangular park to an interior walkway that encircles the entire building several yards from the foundation. Two paths located on the north and south sides, and one each from the center of the east and west sides, lead from the perimeter sidewalks to the interior walkway. Grassy lawns occupy the large panels defined by the interior walkways and are dotted with shade and ornamental trees throughout. Beds planted with low shrubs near the foundation of the building serve as a bioretention area. Metal-frame and wood-slat benches face the walkways, and the site is illuminated by lamps. Entries to underground lavatories and their ventilation systems that are no longer in use remain in the southwest corner of the site. Access to these areas is blocked by metal panels.

The south (main) approach to the building is dominated by a granite exedra and piers immediately in front of the building. The rim of the exedra is composed of two curved granite benches extending to the left and right. The two ends of each bench segment are capped by granite plinths. The back of the benches features the inscription: “A UNIVERSITY FOR THE PEOPLE.” Four sets of granite stairs lead through the exedra to the front entrance. The remainder of the entrance plaza is paved with exposed aggregate concrete, replacing the concrete

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<sup>5</sup> “Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia.” Survey # DC-457, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (1988), 12.

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that likely dated to the 1930s when the National Park Service first undertook administrative jurisdiction of the District's federally owned public reservations. Additional steps were added to the approach from the semi-circular entrance plaza to the southern plaza, which was regraded to meet ADA requirements. Behind the exedra walls, twin curved ramps, newly paved with exposed aggregate concrete to match what was previously there, lead down on either side to the basement entrance, originally intended as a bicycle entrance. Bronze handrails have replaced non-original iron and aluminum handrails located along the ramps and stairs.

The north approach features a monumental stone staircase with wrap around treads on three sides that leads from the public sidewalk to a newly designed entryway located at the building's first floor. During the 1977-1980 renovation, an entry opening to the first floor was introduced and a staircase that provided access to this first level entrance was constructed over the original basement level entrance. That staircase and related retaining walls, granite pavers, marble curb, and stone piers added at the same time to the north approach were subsequently removed during the 2001-2003 renovation and replaced with a different stair configuration: two curved staircases extending east and west. These components have now been replaced by the new stair. The original curved vehicular ramp that began at grade and provided access to the coal vault on the sub-basement level and to the original basement level entrance was also removed during the 2001-2003 renovation.

## **Structure**

The library is a steel frame structure. The steel frame is supported below the first floor by masonry bearing walls and columns, which are spanned by Guastavino tile vaults that are exposed at the basement level. The second floor and roof are supported only by the steel frame. The rectangular steel beams and columns, clad in plaster with classical style capitals and bases, can be seen in the main spaces. Structural steel used for the building was acquired from the Carnegie Steel Company.<sup>6</sup> Basement level foundations were reinforced during the 2017-2019 restoration.

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<sup>6</sup> Richardson & Burgess to Bernard Green, January 26, 1901, Box 32, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC, Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



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Figure 1: Central Public Library South Entrance, 1906. Library of Congress.

**Exterior**

*Massing*

The Carnegie Library is a three-part structure with a central block and two end wings that project from the main block's east and west ends. The end wings are slightly recessed from and lower in height than the central block. The overall building measures 111'-5" wide (north to south) by 156'-4" across (east to west). The five-bay central block measures approximately 111'-5" wide (north to south) and 92'-10" across (east to west), and the east and west wings (containing three bays) measure approximately 54'-10" wide (north to south) and 63'-6" across (east to west), respectively.<sup>7</sup> The structure contains two stories above grade, one story below grade, and one partial below grade sub-basement. The overall form of the building is highly symmetric, following a rectilinear T-shaped form with two wings projecting to the east and west from a central block, from which they are recessed from and lower than. The primary exterior cladding

<sup>7</sup> "Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia." Survey # DC-457, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (1988), 16.

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for the first and second stories is ashlar Vermont "B" grade white marble, and Milford pink granite is the primary cladding for the basement level up to the water line, with bands around the perimeter of the building at grade.

*South (Principal) Elevation*

The principal (south) elevation faces K Street, N.W. The elevation is defined by the five-bay central block and the two end wings. The three middle bays of the central block have large round-arched openings separated by Scamozzi Ionic  $\frac{3}{4}$ -engaged columns, while the two end pavilions have smaller arches with windows and pediments above. The arches themselves spring from the caps of pilasters on either side of the openings and feature ornamental central keystones in the form of an oversized modillion bracket. are defined by pairs of engaged Ionic columns. Within the divisions created by the columns are set three arched openings, each defined by a carved, round arch with an ornamented keystone set atop two engaged Doric columns. In the spandrels of these round-arched openings are swags, garlands, and medallions bearing the letter "W", for "Washington."

The main entrance, located on-center of the central block, is reached by granite stairs extending from the front plaza, and contains the original double-leaf oak door, with each leaf set with a single, large plate glass light. The door is topped by a five-light transom window, also framed in oak with oak muntins. The doorway is set within a carved marble surround with a broken pediment embellished by ornate carving, with motifs including a central coat of arms and two reclining figures on either side. Below the coat of arms is a tablet inscribed "OPEN TO ALL." The space between the pediment and the rounded arch is filled by a window consisting of ten tall, narrow lights set into wood mullions.

A second entrance is located at the basement level below the main entrance and hidden under the stairs. Originally used as a bicycle entrance, it is accessed by two curved ramps behind the front exedra and contains a double wood door with an arched profile.

The second and fourth bays flanking the central doorway each contain one recessed, non-original rectangular, fixed, single pane wood window at the basement level. These windows are fitted with exterior metal bars. At the first story of these bays, the space between the Doric engaged column is filled with marble, with pedimented blank tablets set between two marble bands.<sup>8</sup> Similar to the third, center bay, the spaces between the top of the pediment and the rounded arch are each filled with ten tall, narrow lights set into wood mullions.

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<sup>8</sup> "Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia." Survey # DC-457, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (1988), 17.

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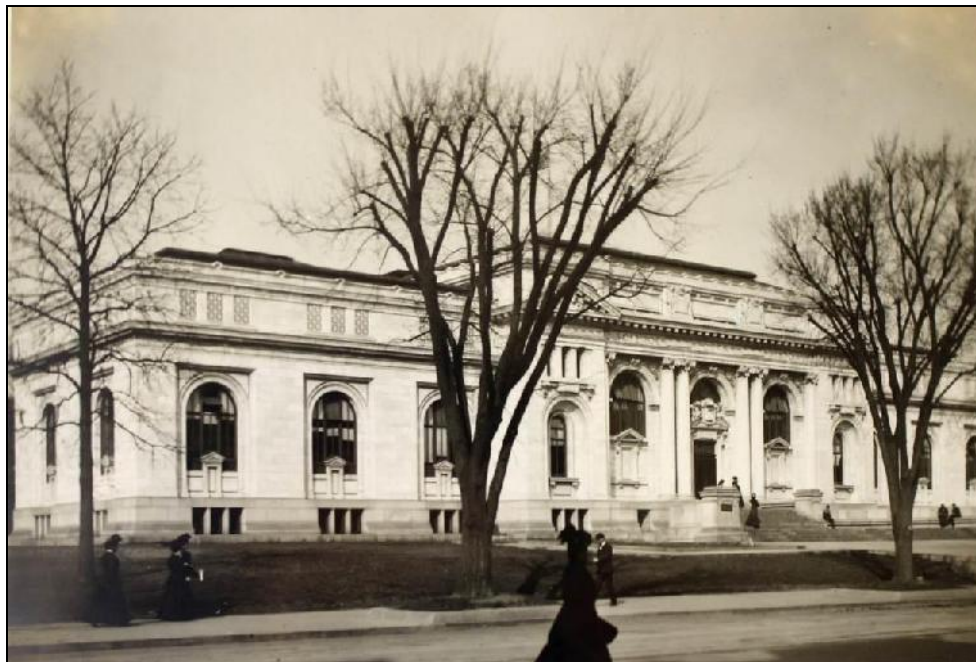


Figure 2: South and partial east elevations shortly after construction, undated. National Photo Company Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress).

Above the three central bays is a frieze engraved with the words “SCIENCE,” “POETRY,” and “HISTORY.” The words are centered above the arched openings below and are separated from each other by simple carved rectangles. Above the frieze are two rows of dentils, one small below one large.

Three-bay wide end pavilions that are slightly recessed project to the east and west of the central block. At the basement level are groups of three rectangular, recessed, fixed, wood windows separated by stone mullions. The non-original glazing was replaced with new insulated glazing. Two of the windows are retrofitted with louvers for mechanical purposes. All windows are fitted with exterior metal bars, adhered to the exterior stone jamb. The first story features arched openings, within which are set smaller arched windows within recessed niches. These windows have carved sills, and below the sills are blank tablets. At the second story, above the larger arch, are groups of three narrow rectangular windows separated by short pilasters. These windows originally had exterior stone screens, which were removed in 1926 as they did not allow sufficient light or air to enter the building.<sup>9</sup> Below the groups of windows are carved, bracketed sills. Below these sills are carved garlands, and at the center are tablets. The tablets are inscribed with the beginning and end dates of construction: the tablet in bay one reads “1899,” while the tablet in bay five reads “1902.”

The end pavilions are topped by pediments. The tympana of the modillions pediments contain sculptures of Minerva heads. Above the top of the pediment is a narrow marble band adjoining

<sup>9</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #69000290, 2.

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the bottom of the cornice. A cornice composed of one narrow band of marble topped by a broader band of marble runs below the roofline across the top of all the bays of the central block. The crenellated roofline has shallow, rounded merlons and wide crenels.



Figure 3: South elevation, facing north. Apple Inc., 2019.

The entire central block – the three central arches and pedimented end pavilions – are capped by an attic story that rises above a continuous frieze and cornice line. The cornice line, above the frieze and its bedmould of dentils, is visually supported by solid mutules that extend into the raking cornice of the pediments in the end pavilions. The attic story consists of alternating rectangular and inscribed tablets and square shields with flanking cherubs. The rectangular tablets are centered above the arches below. Around each rectangular tablet is a frame broken by six dentils, three above and three below. The tablets are engraved, from left to right, “THIS BUILDING A GIFT OF ANDREW CARNEGIE,” “WASHINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY,” and “DEDICATED TO THE DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE.” The square shields project slightly and are located above the first story. The entire attic story is capped by a cornice with acroteria decorating the corners of the end pavilions.

The three bays of the east and west wings are less ornately detailed than the central block. At the basement level, each bay has sets of three recessed windows separated by stone mullions, the same as those found in bays one and five of the central block. Above these windows are large,



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rectangular indentations, into which are set arched openings. At the bottom of the arched openings are marble carvings consisting of two wide rectangles on either side of a taller, pedimented rectangle. The height difference is filled by carved wood screens. The space between the top of the marble and the bottom of the arch is filled by units of fixed, pivot, and casement windows of twelve lights divided by wood muntins. Above the arched windows of the first story, a molded cornice runs across all of the bays of the east and west wings. Above these are the second story windows, which are arranged in groups of three. These windows were also originally covered with exterior stone screens that were removed in 1926.<sup>10</sup> Above these windows is a banded cornice topped by a crenellated roofline. Like the roofline of the central block, this roofline has shallow, rounded merlons; however, the crenels are about twice as wide.

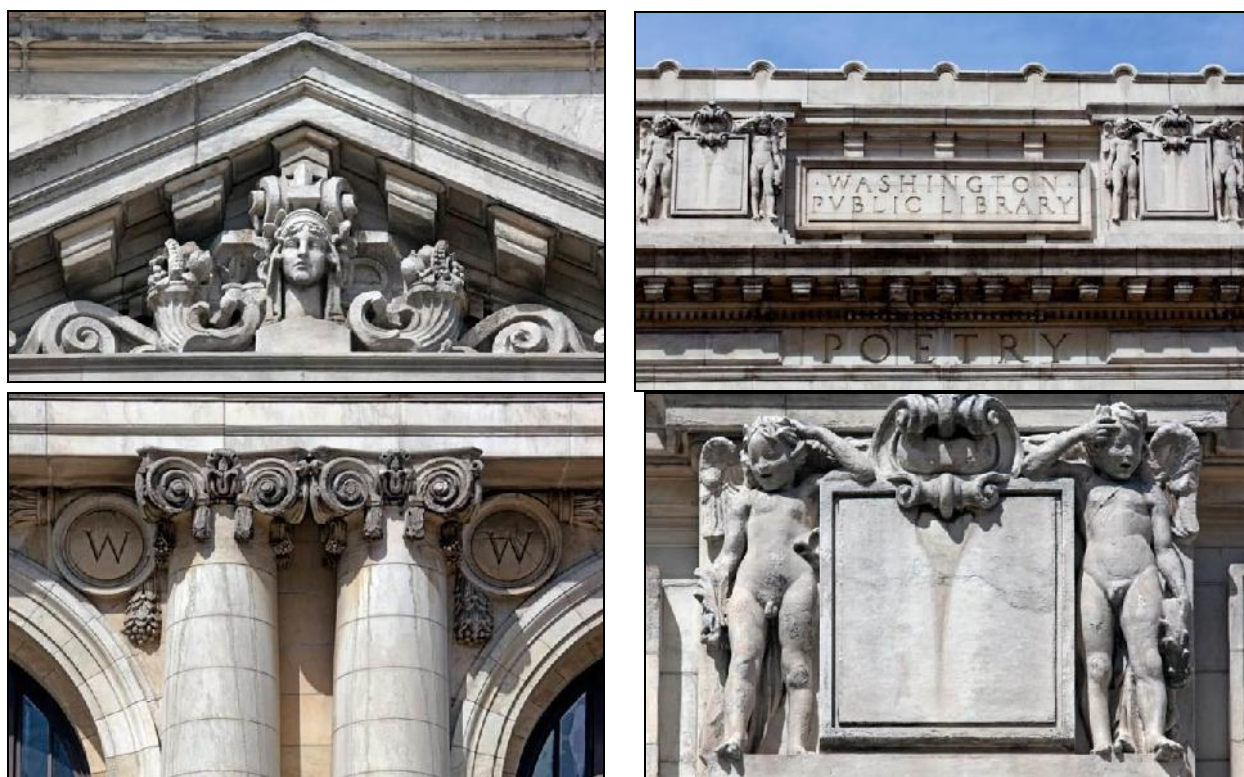


Figure 4: Typical marble and other detailing on the south elevation. Library of Congress.

<sup>10</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #69000290, 2.

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Figure 5: South elevation, entablature above main entrance. EHT Tracerics 2016.



Figure 6: South elevation, broken pediment above main entrance, detail. EHT Tracerics 2016.



Figure 7: South elevation, main entrance door and surround. EHT Tracerics 2016.

*North Elevation*

The north elevation faces Mount Vernon Place. Like the south elevation, the north elevation measures 156'-4" across (east to west) and is comprised of a central block flanked by two wings

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to the east and west. The central block features narrow and vertically oriented multi-story windows that provided light to the rows of interior book stacks located in this portion of the building. This portion of the north elevation measures 92'-10" across. The east and west wings are again each three bays wide and measure 63'-6" across. Details of the east and west wings are identical to the south elevation, except for the non-original basement-level entrances located in the center of the three bays on both east and west wings. These entrances contain metal double doors, topped by a multi-light transom, and are accessed by a set of stairs that begin at grade.

Entrances at both the basement and first floors are centered on the center block. The first floor entrance was added during the 1977-1980 renovation, which also included removal of the first story windows of the central bay for insertion of a recessed entrance, with the marble ashlar that divided the windows becoming posts at the entrance of a newly formed arcade in front of the recessed doorway. The 2001-2003 renovation included the removal of the first-story portion of the center marble ashlar post to create space for the insertion of a metal and glass double door. The two open spaces created by the two remaining marble ashlar posts on the first-floor level were each filled with single pane double-glazed aluminum framed windows, turning the arcade created in the 1977-1980 renovation into a vestibule. A metal and glass overhang that covered the double door and adjacent windows of the vestibule was added during the 2001-2003 renovation. This overhang was removed during the 2017-2019 rehabilitation.

Above the central was a row of four vertically aligned, fixed ribbon windows, consisting of three glazed units separated by wood spandrels. The non-original windows were recessed from the exterior. The associated window openings are capped with decorative keystones, above which a second block of four smaller, single-pane wood casement windows with a banded sill and head are located.

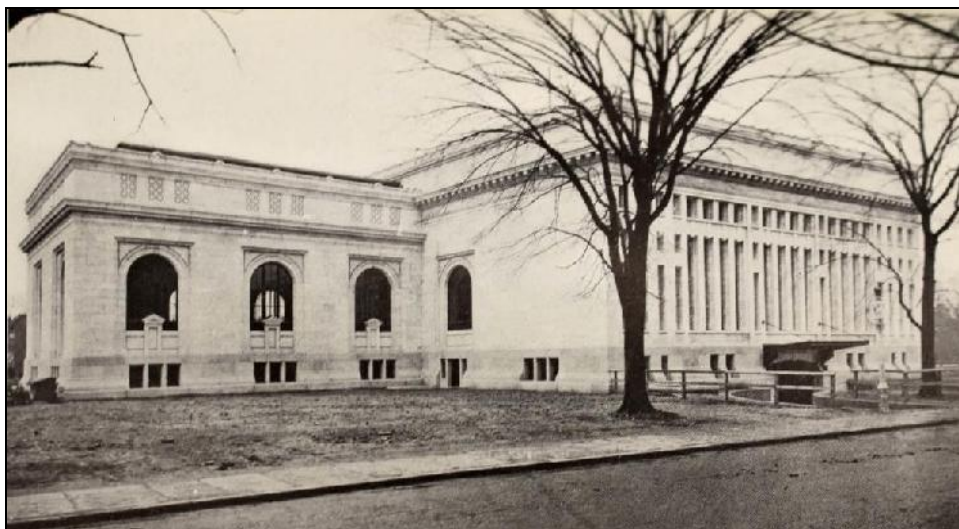


Figure 8: North and partial east elevation shortly after construction, circa 1902. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia, 1902. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.



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The third and fifth bays flanking the central bay are the width of one window. They each have two vertically-stacked windows of one light each, separated by a tall recessed band. There is an additional single pane wood casement window above, capped with a decorative keystone.

At the basement level of the second and sixth bays, there are two rectangular, single-pane, fixed wood windows, with exterior bars attached to the stone window recess. The first and second stories contain vertically aligned, fixed ribbon windows consisting of four glazed units separated by wood spandrels. The original fenestration of the central bay was identical to these windows prior to the insertion of the first floor entrance in the 1977-1980 renovation.

The outermost bays (one and seven) also have two windows at the basement level, though they are narrower than those located in bays two and six. Located above bays one and seven are three rows of four windows each, in the same style found in bays three and five. Above the topmost windows are three molded bands of marble topped by a short expanse of smooth marble ashlar. Above this stretch is a cornice consisting of a course of small dentils, a course of large dentils, and a molded band. The cornice is topped by another section of ashlar leading to a molded cornice and crenellated roofline identical to the roofline on the south elevation of the central block.

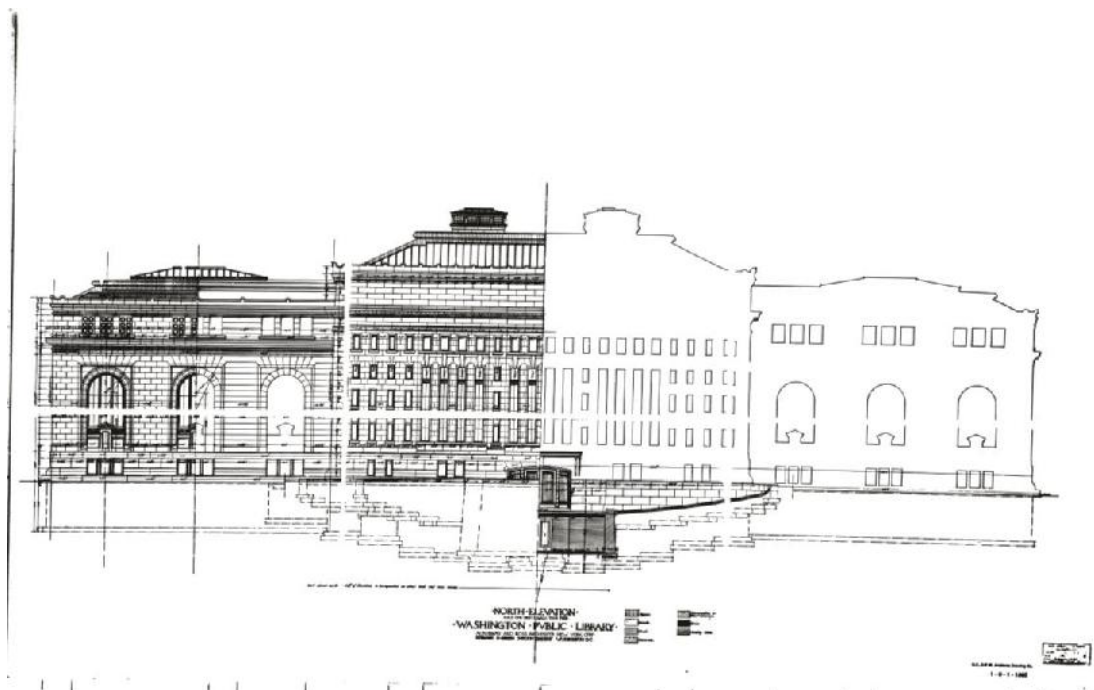


Figure 9: North Elevation, Ackerman & Ross, 1900. D.C. General Services Administration. Washington, D.C.



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Figure 10: North entrance following the 1977-1980 UDC renovation, 1980. Historic American Buildings Survey, Library of Congress.



Figure 11: North elevation of central block with portion of east wing following 2001-2003 renovation. EHT Tracerics, 2016.

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Figure 12: North elevation of central block with portion of east wing. EHT Tracerics, 2019.

The 2017-2019 rehabilitation removed the doors and overhang from 2001-2003, as well as the column that had been cut to allow the installation of the double door in 1977-1980. The resulting opening is infilled with fixed glazing set above glass entry doors. The tenant's logo is placed centrally above the doors. The flanking vertically aligned narrow one/over-one wood windows were in poor condition and were replaced in kind.

The north elevations of the east and west wings are identical to those of the south elevation, with the exception of two non-original basement entrances in the middle of the three bays of each of the wings.

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Figure 13: Northwest corner, looking east, 1993. DDOT Back in Time.

### *East and West Elevations*

The east and west elevations each measure 111'-5" in width. They were designed as near mirror images of each other. Each elevation has four bays. Two of the bays are part of the east or west wing, (bays one and two on the east elevation and bays three and four on the west elevation), and the remaining two bays are located on the central block (bays three and four on the east elevation and bays one and two on the west elevation). The bays located on the east and west wings (bays one and two on the east elevation and bays three and four on the west elevation) were identical to the bays found on those elevations in the south and north elevations.

In bay three of the east elevation, the basement level has an original entrance reached by a set of non-original stairs beginning at grade. The entrance is located where the groups of three recessed windows separated by stone mullions are located at the basement level below the large arched openings throughout the south, east, and west elevations. The existing metal double door in this opening is not original.

Beginning at the first story on the east and west elevations of the central block (bay two of the west elevation and bay three of the east elevation) are large, rectangular indentations, into which are set arched openings. At the bottom of each arched opening are three carved rectangles. The remainder of each arched opening is filled by a window of twelve lights. The bottoms of the windows are covered by a carved wood screens. Bay two on the west elevation of the central

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block contains an additional one-over-one pane wood pivot window located to the right of the large, arched opening. The remaining bays, bay four on the east elevation and bay one on the west elevation, also have the same group of three recessed windows separated by stone mullions with exterior metal bars at the basement level. The first and second levels of the two bays are filled by marble ashlar.

Above the height of the second story windows is a banded cornice topped by a crenellated roofline. As seen on the other elevations, this roofline has shallow, rounded merlons with wide crenels, and the crenels are about twice as wide on the east and west wings as on the central block.

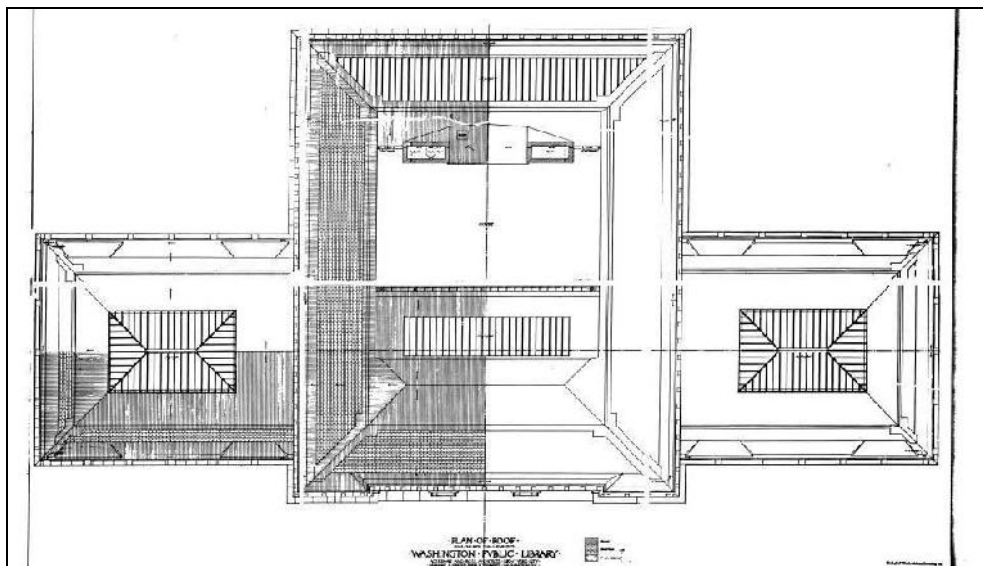


Figure 14: Roof Plan, Ackerman & Ross, 1900. D.C. General Services Administration. Washington, D.C.

## Roof

The low, hipped roofs covering the central block and wings are currently clad in copper. The roof was originally clad in green slate and had five skylights composed of plate glass framed in steel.<sup>11</sup> Three were located above the central block. Two original skylights located in the wings of the central block are extant and are located to the north and south of the former central skylight. The north skylight's sloped glazing forms the majority of the north-facing slope of roof. The glazing on the south skylight is also sloped.

A skylight at the center of the building, situated at the first floor ceiling/second floor level, was removed during the 2001-2003 renovation, and a metal deck slab was installed in its place. The renovations in this space also included the addition of a clerestory within the atrium, which was visible from the surrounding streetscape, and allowed for the insertion of interior mezzanine

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, October 29, 1900, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



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levels that were otherwise not visible from the exterior. During the 2017-2019 rehabilitation, the clerestory addition and interior mezzanine levels were removed and a new glass and steel skylight was constructed and installed at the historic roofline, thereby enclosing the entire atrium, including the former exterior brick light well, within the building envelope.

The remaining two original pyramidal skylights are located above the east and west wings. These skylights, which provide light to the second floor, have been restored.



Figure 15: Aerial view of original roof and skylight configuration, facing northeast, circa 1950. Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

## **Interior**

Prior to the 2017-2019 rehabilitation, interior floor plans and original finishes had been significantly altered and removed, with physical remnants of prior uses visible throughout the building. Renovations to the interior rooms began shortly after the library opened to the public in 1903, as the needs and uses of the free library quickly evolved beyond the closed-stack system with which the building was originally constructed. The following descriptions of interior spaces include discussion of certain major alterations made during previous renovations, as well as changes made during the 2017-2019 rehabilitation.

### *Main Staircase*

The south portion of the building contains the main double staircase, which begins at the basement level and continues to the second floor, with landings located between each floor. The stair opening has a vaulted ceiling at the height of the second-floor ceiling. The stairs and base are white marble, with decorative wrought iron balustrade painted black. The lowest run of the stairs at the basement level was reoriented and a simple wooden dowel hand rail was added along the wall side of the stairs from the basement level to the second floor to conform with safety

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requirements during the 1977-1980 renovation. The stair balustrade was modified in 2001-2003 to meet building code requirements by the introduction of a solid iron panel placed vertically beneath the entire run of the original balustrade, essentially lifting the original in place to meet the required guardrail height. Despite those alterations, the stairway remained a character-defining feature of the building. The 2017-2019 rehabilitation returned the staircases to their original appearance by restoring the orientation of the basement run back to its original configuration and removing the non-original had rail along the wall. The 2001-2003 modification of the balustrade height was retained, and a new bronze handrail was added along the interior balustrade from the basement up to the second floor.

The stairs are separated from the second floor lobby by a run of the same stone stairs and decorative iron balustrade. At the Main Hall, the entrance to the stairway is punctuated by two sets of square Doric columns; at the second floor lobby two sets of square Ionic columns are employed. The soffit at this location features decorative plaster molding and a dentil course. At a central landing, located a short run of stairs down from the second floor lobby, there are three large arched windows of twelve lights. The windows are separated by Ionic pilasters, above which are rectangular molded panels. Into the back of the marble pediment, visible through the center window, the following words are carved:

DONOR

ANDREW CARNEGIE

BUILDING COMMISSION

JOHN W. ROSS HENRY B. MCFARLAND

JOHN BIDDLE THEODORE A. BINGHAM

THEODORE W. NOYES

ACKERMAN AND ROSS

ARCHITECTS

BERNARD R. GREEN

SUPERINTENDENT OF CONSTRUCTION

RICHARDSON AND BURGESS

CONTRACTORS

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Figure 16: Main staircase, looking east from landing located between first and second floors, 1980. Historic American Building Survey, Library of Congress.



Figure 18: Main staircase, looking east from the landing between the first and second floors. EHT Traceries, 2019.

*Elevators and Egress Stairs*

In addition to the main stair, one other original stair located in the center north of the former stack area, east of the current entrance hall, provided access to the sub-basement level and through the second level. That stair was demolished and replaced with an elevator shaft during the 2001-2003 renovation. The original elevator shaft was located in the center north of the former stack area, west of the current entrance hall, and ran from the basement through the second floors. The shaft was filled prior to 1977. Adjacent to the original elevator shaft, an additional shaft was installed in 1903 to house a book dumbwaiter.<sup>12</sup> During the 2001-2003 renovation, the egress stair that currently provides access to the sub-basement was installed in the center north portion of the former stack area, the elevator shaft located in the southwest portion of the central block was installed, and the stair opening in the east portion of the central block was created. During the 2017-2019 rehabilitation, the existing elevator in the southwest portion of the central block was upgraded, and a new egress stair was added on the West side of the main hall. Additionally, a new stock/employee elevator was added on the East side of the

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, September 12, 1904, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

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main hall, adjacent to the egress stair installed in the 2001-2003 renovation. The new stock/employee elevator runs from the basement up to the second floor mezzanine level.

*Laylights*

Of the building's seven original laylights, three remain with the completion of the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. On the second floor, there is a large, rectangular laylight situated at the center of the lobby located at the top of the main staircase. It is comprised of three rows of ten recessed square lights, ornamented by medallions. In the west wing, the rectangular laylight is situated at the center of the Kiplinger Research Library. This laylight is comprised of five rows of eight recessed square lights. The corresponding laylight is located in the second floor of the east wing. These three laylights were restored in the 2017-2019 rehabilitation.

**Sub-Basement**

The utilitarian, unfinished rooms located in the sub-basement originally housed the coal vault, fan room, storeroom, and boiler room, and currently house the building's mechanical systems. The coal vault was accessed behind a retaining wall located at the north elevation. The height of the equipment for the original boilers exceeded the height of the sub-basement, and they were accommodated by an opening in the floor in the basement level, which has since been closed.

**Basement**

The configuration of many of the rooms located in the basement level has changed over time, with the removal and insertion of partition walls. The uses of the rooms have evolved as well, originally occupied by private spaces such as the library's bindery, a children's reading room, and some secondary public spaces such as the bicycle storage room and restrooms. The rooms in the basement level currently house various uses including storage, restrooms, a staff room and office for use by the retail tenant's employees, a board room, a hall, a server room, and a public gallery. Many original interior partitions, decorative finishes and light fixtures were removed and replaced throughout this level prior to 2017-2019 rehabilitation. Interior doorways and openings have been altered and reconfigured to accommodate changes in use of the rooms. Extant original features on the basement level include window openings and frames. The historic plaster ceilings within the west side of the basement remain visible, with exposed ductwork and conduits below. Within the new Gallery space that is located in the large room at the base of the stairs, the original Guastivino ceiling has been restored. The remaining ceilings in the basement have been covered by dropped gypsum board ceilings in order to conceal the mechanical piping and systems installed above.



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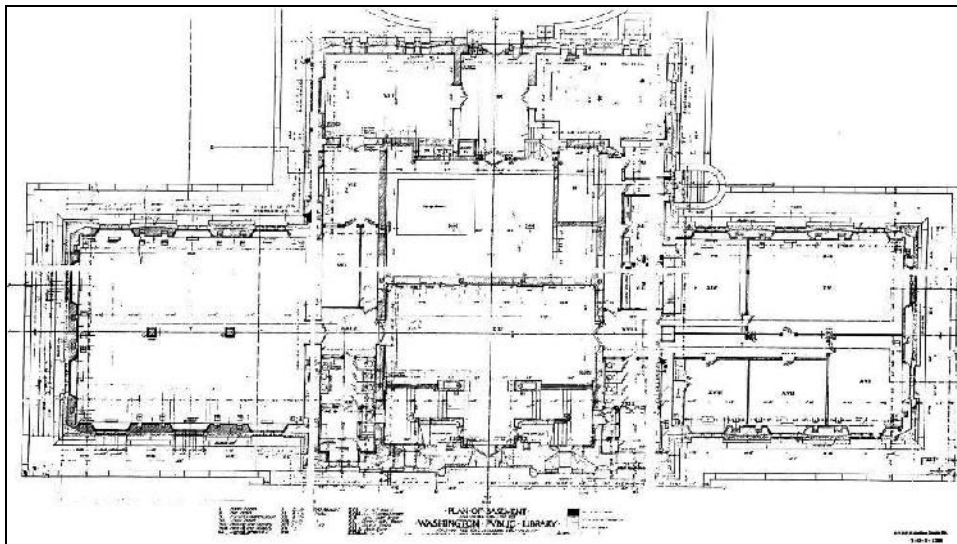


Figure 17: Basement Floor Plan, 1900. Ackerman & Ross. D.C. General Services Administration.

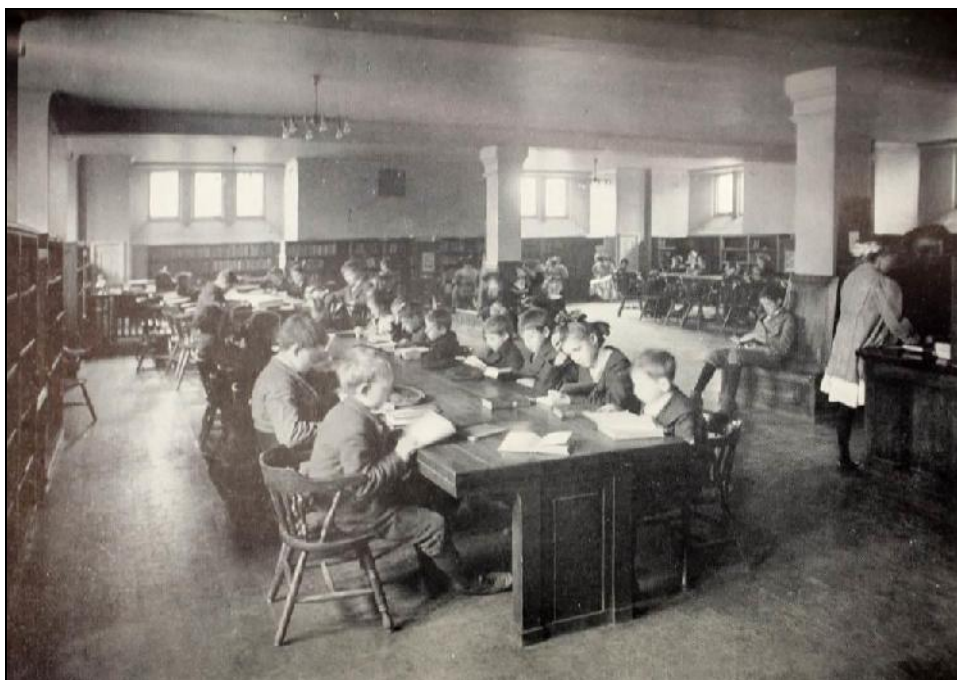


Figure 20: Reading room in west wing of basement, 1907. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

The Gallery space, which is the large room located at the basement level stair entrance on the south elevation, was historically used as the bicycle storage room. Now a public exhibition and gathering space, it features original structural Guastavino tile vaults on the ceiling, and original crown molding throughout. The Guastavino tile vaults had been overpainted and damaged as a result of previous renovations. The ceiling was restored during 2017-2019 rehabilitation and now, with all damage repaired and stripped of paint, the tiles appear in their original condition.

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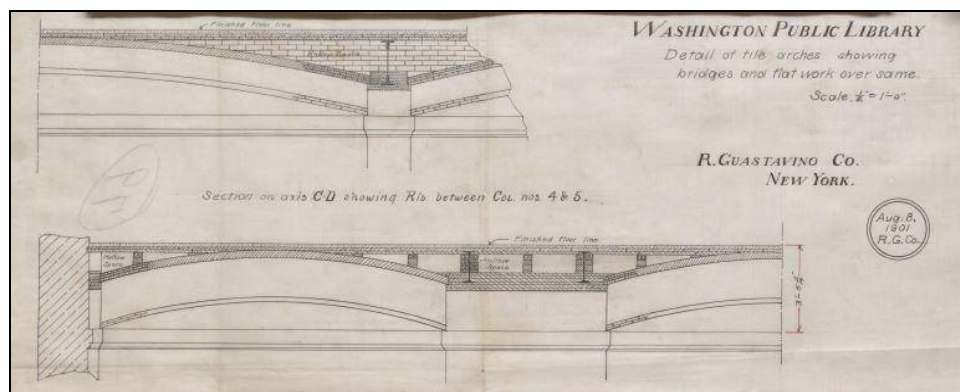


Figure 21: Section of Guastavino Tile at the Washington Public Library. Columbia University Libraries.



Figure 18: Guastavino tile ceiling, basement gallery, looking south. EHT Traceries, 2019.

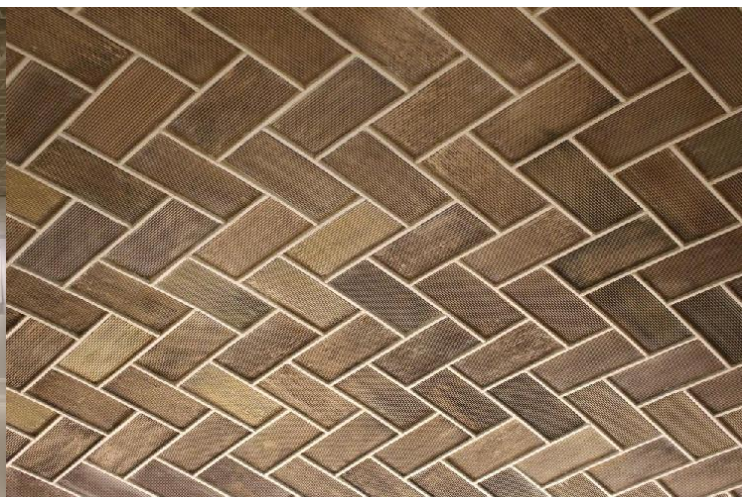


Figure 19: Detail of Guastavino tile conditions. EHT Traceries, 2019.

## First Floor

The first floor was built to house the principal public spaces of the library, including the Delivery Room (where patrons requested and received books at a front desk that the librarians had retrieved from the closed stacks), private spaces including offices and conference rooms, as well as the three main reading rooms (two in the west wing and one in the east wing). Currently, this floor is occupied in its entirety by the retail tenant. The former Delivery Room is used as an event and circulation space (currently referred to as the Great Hall). The large reading room to the east has been restored from the 2001-2003 alterations that had raised the ceiling height of the first floor to create a theatre space and had taken the eastern-most third of each floor (basement through second floor) to house a hoistway for stage sets. The 2017-2019 rehabilitation restored the general restrained appearance and spatial character of the original reading room, as well as the original ceiling height, room dimensions and plaster pilasters and window surrounds. The

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non-original floor has been replaced with epoxy-based terrazzo in an off-white color. The 2001-2003 renovation also adversely affected the west wing. Either in at that time or earlier, the two west reading rooms were combined into a single large space. The museum installed a new two-level floor system over the extant floor structure to accommodate a large floor exhibit installation of a map of Washington, DC. Although retaining the single room, the 2017-2019 rehabilitation removed the map and floor system returning the room to the proportions and restrained character of the reading rooms.

*Stack Room*

The northern portion of the central block originally housed the stack room, which extended the full height of the building above the basement floor. It was filled with cast-iron book stacks located on multiple levels of decks. The stacks and decks were removed in 1977-1980, and several levels of floors were inserted in the space to accommodate offices and storage areas. The window openings in the former stack area and doorways to east and west side rooms of the Delivery Room are original. The 2017-2019 rehabilitation removed all non-original structure and materials and installed a new ceiling at the elevation of the historic second floor level. On the north wall, where the north entry door is located, Vermont marble was introduced inside to match the historic North façade (interior side of columns was formerly plaster), but in a different finish that uses besier curved edges to communicate an adaptive re-use/new material. The south, east, and west walls were finished with painted gypsum board, with modern baseboard and reveals to communicate an adaptive re-use/new material. The ceiling was finished with a central “cloud” of acoustic plaster, containing recessed lighting, sprinklers, and other mechanical systems. The historic (pillow-slab) floor was found to be unsound and was replaced. A new poured-in place epoxy-based terrazzo was added in an off-white color.

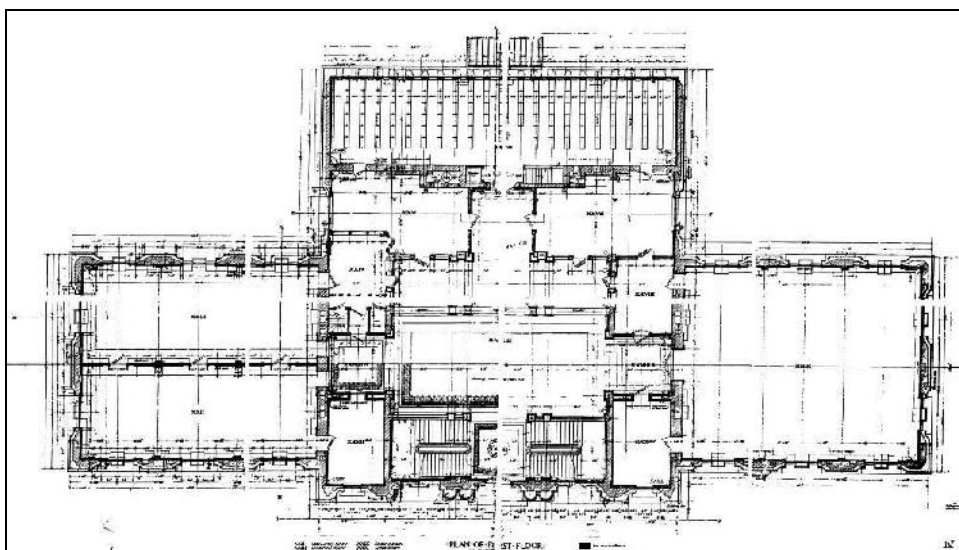


Figure 20: First Floor Plan, 1900. Ackerman & Ross. D.C. General Services Administration.

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*Delivery Room/Great Hall/Atrium*

The 2017-2019 alterations for the central space included retaining the delivery room and small spaces adjacent to the north, east and west as a principal lobby and circulation area for the building, which is compatible with the public nature of the space. Portions of the original ceiling, the original laylight frames, and non-original infill have been removed to create a two-story atrium with a contemporary skylight, measuring approximately the same dimensions as the original atrium.

The original floor plan of the central area of the first floor was divided into the delivery room, situated to the south, and several small rooms arranged around its perimeter to serve as librarian offices. The delivery room stationery desk, perimeter offices, and original terrazzo flooring was removed as part of the 1977-1980 renovation. In 2001-2003, partition walls and glazed storefronts were installed to create two separate spaces at the northwest and northeast corners of the room, simulating the original configuration. The original flooring was replaced at that time with a marble squares forming a pattern of alternating light and dark tiles. These non-original components were removed as part of the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. The original composition continues to be articulated by paired square Doric columns that hold supporting beams on which the names Bacon, Shakespeare, Newton, Pluto, Homer, and Galileo have been inscribed. The original white Vermont marble baseboard was removed along with the non-historic tile floor. These were replaced by a new poured in place epoxy-based terrazzo in an off-white color, as well as new Vermont marble baseboards. Above the marble baseboards are original plaster wainscot bases consisting of torus, scotia with a fillet above and below, and a larger torus which rests directly on the marble baseboard. Portions of the walls retain original decorative elements including large plaster wainscot panels and borders, large plaster upper panels and borders, and plaster chair rail. The square columns and most of the original pilasters remain extant. The original decorative plasterwork has been coated with at least one layer of additional plaster.<sup>13</sup> The central skylight was removed as part of the 1977-1980 renovation; the original laylight remained (artificially illuminated from the interior) until the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. Portions of the original ceiling and original plaster entablatures that remain were restored in 2017-2019. Like the stack room, the non-original floor was replaced with a poured-in place epoxy-based terrazzo in an off-white color.

As part of the 2017-2019 renovations, the interior north wall of the delivery room was reconfigured with two large openings (one to the east and one to the west) to facilitate circulation between the north (stack room) and south (delivery room) halves of the building. As a result, the original door opening and wood frame (the door was a replacement) were eliminated and the ornate plaster clock surround sculpted by Philip Martiny in 1901 was removed and placed in storage under the auspices of HSW. It will be exhibited in the building as an artifact no later than 2020.

*Anterooms*

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<sup>13</sup> Sara Chase, "Washington Public Library PRELIMINARY Historic Paint Study" Draft Manuscript, 2000, 2.



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Anterooms are located to the east and west of the stair hall. Original flat and molded plaster work remain extant in these rooms. A reception room (formerly known as the *Evening Star* Boardroom) is located on the south side of the west side hall, and another small room (formerly known as the Theodore Noyes Boardroom) is located on the south side of the east side hall. Both of these rooms are accessed from their respective side halls, and have doorways leading to the reading room. The window openings and surrounds, door openings, doors, and surrounds in these rooms are original and were restored as part of the 2017-2019 work. Areas located on the north sides of the side halls contain a non-original elevator shaft (west) and a restroom and non-original egress stair (east). These spaces have been updated.



Figure 21: Delivery Room, 1902. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

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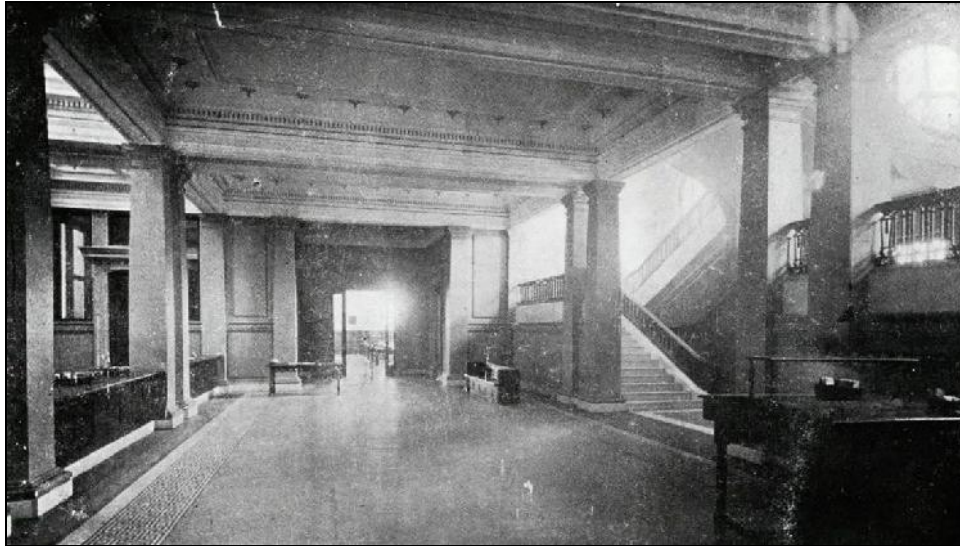


Figure 22: Delivery Room, 1905-1906. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr., Library, Washington, D.C.



Figure 23: Great Hall looking southeast. Apple, Inc., 2019

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Figure 24: Great Hall looking north. EHT Traceries, 2019.

*West Reading Room*

The first floor of the west wing originally housed reading rooms and was divided in half (into equally size rooms at the north and south) by a “removable” partition wall, which was removed sometime prior to 2001. The ceiling was lowered to accommodate mechanical equipment, lighting fixtures were replaced, and the floors throughout were replaced, raised, and modified to include ramps and the former City Museum’s map exhibit in the center of the room. Eight large windows with arched openings ring the perimeter of the room: three on the south wall, two on the west, and three on the north. Each window has twelve lights set in arched surrounds and framed in oak. The windows contain oak pediments that correspond in shape and size to the marble tablets on the exterior. Existing windows openings and frames, as well as door openings, doors and surrounds are original, and were restored during the 2017-2019 renovations. The alterations from the 2001-2003 renovation were removed as part of the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. Although the single room was retained rather than returning to the original two-room albeit “removable”) configuration, the general restrained appearance and spatial character of the original reading rooms has been restored, as have the original ceiling height, room dimensions, plaster surrounds at windows, plaster pilasters and beam decorations. Within each of the three ceiling sections, a dropped “cloud” of acoustic plaster was added to enclose recessed lighting, sprinklers and other mechanical systems. The floor is now finished with epoxy-based terrazzo in an off-white color. Lighting is handled with minimal fixtures in keeping with the original scheme that was designed to depend on the natural light from the large arched windows surround three walls of the room. Original low pedimented wood bookcases that once lined the walls are the inspiration for new wood wall units that impart a sense of both the simplicity and elegance of the original design. All walls, the ceiling, and window/door trim have been restored to their original forms.

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*Main/East Reading Room*

The first floor of the east wing was originally the Main Reading Room, and resembled the reading room in the west wing, except without the removable partition wall. The wing is accessed by an original wood and glass entrance door, set in an original wood surround. Renovations in 2001-2003 included removal of original floor/ceiling slabs from the basement/first floor level of the wing, and the installation of infill in the form of a theater, which obscured and/or removed features associated with the original use of the space. Upon removal of the theater as part of the 2017-2019 rehabilitation, some original elements, primarily plastered beams within the ceilings, and original wood and door trim were identified. The general restrained appearance and spatial character of the original reading rooms has been restored, as have the original ceiling height, room dimensions, plaster surrounds at windows, and plaster pilasters and beam decorations. Within each of the three ceiling sections, a dropped "cloud" of acoustic plaster was added to enclose recessed lighting, sprinklers and other mechanical systems. The floor is now finished with epoxy-based terrazzo in an off-white color. Like the east wing, lighting is handled with minimal fixtures in keeping with the original scheme that was designed to depend on the natural light from the large arched windows surround three walls of the room. Like the west wing, original low pedimented wood bookcases that once lined the walls are the inspiration for new wood wall units.



Figure 25: Reading room in west wing, looking southwest, post-1902. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.



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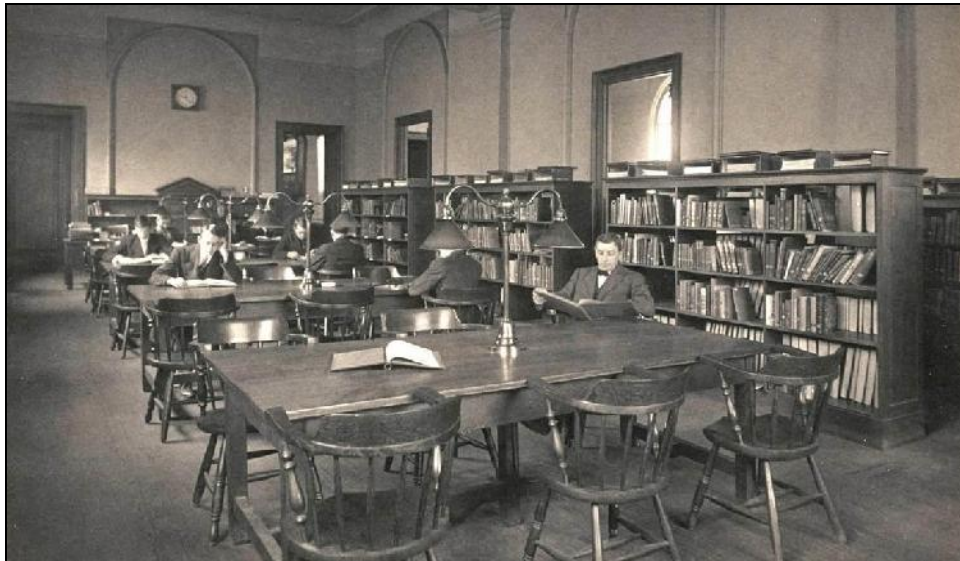


Figure 26: Reading room in west wing, looking southeast, 1907. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.



Figure 27: Main reading room, east wing, 1908. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

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Figure 28: Main reading room, east wing, 1939. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

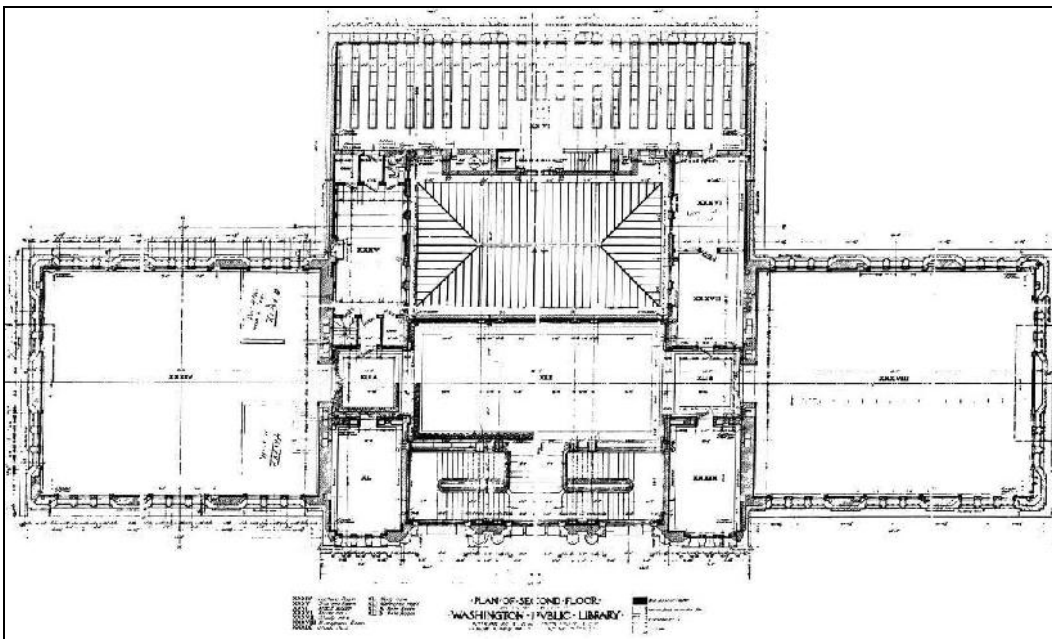


Figure 29: Second Floor Plan, 1900. Ackerman & Ross. D.C. General Services Administration.

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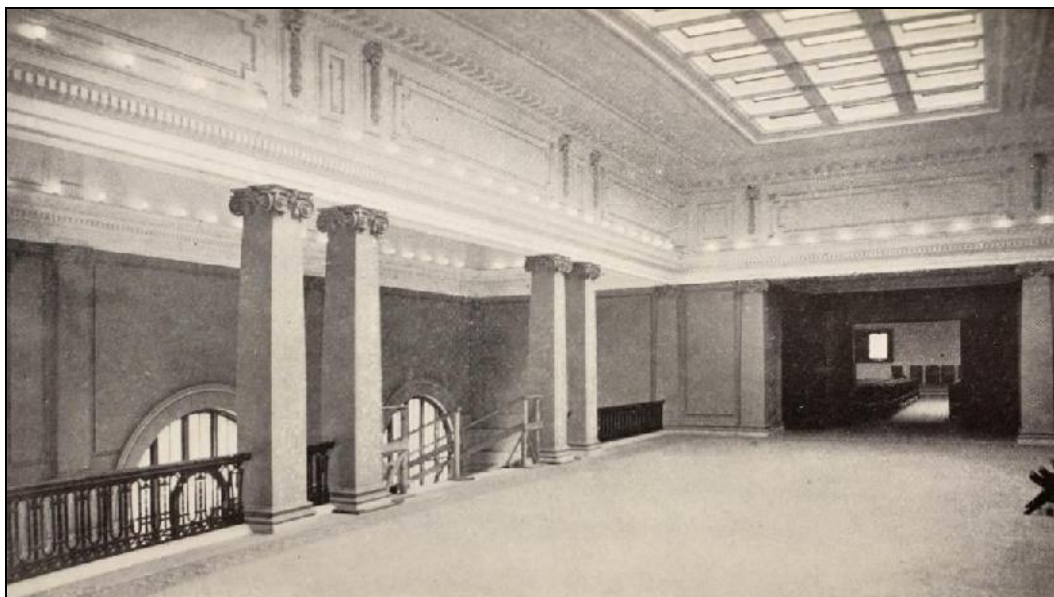


Figure 30: Second Floor Hall, 1902. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

**Second Floor**

*Hall*

The second floor hall is located at the top of the main staircase, from which it is separated by two pairs of square, Ionic columns on either side of the top stair. The perimeter of the rectangular hall is delineated with Ionic pilasters interspersed with molded panels. They are topped by a paneled architrave that includes a dentil course. Above the architrave is a frieze incorporating a motif of garlands and lions' heads alternating with panels. The hall's ceiling contains the original laylight feature. Although the glazing and wood frames of the laylight were replaced in a previous renovation, the laylight was again restored in the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. New small-scale round recessed lighting fixtures were installed along the perimeter of the ceiling.

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Figure 31: Original terrazzo flooring with mosaic border, second floor lobby. EHT Tracerics, 2019.

The hall retains its original white terrazzo floor that features a botanical mosaic border in black and white with white marble baseboards and continues throughout the two vestibules that are used as side halls to access the east and west wings of the second floor. This floor was restored as part of the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. The vestibules contain doorways in the north and south walls to provide access to a coat check room and non-original elevator in the west vestibule, and a non-original bathroom hallway and north-south oriented hallway in the east vestibule. The wings are accessed from the vestibules through original wood and glass double doors set in wood frames and plaster surrounds.

The north wall of this room was originally solid. Prior to 1977, two window openings were created in the two outer bays of the wall. During the 2001-2003 renovation these window openings were enlarged to create doorways to a new infill gallery that spanned the formerly open space above the skylight in the center of the building. During this renovation, stair platforms and a lift were installed at the doorways to access the infill gallery, as the floor level of that space was slightly above the height of the second floor. As part of the 2017-2019 rehabilitation, three large openings were cut into the three bays of this wall to provide a view and access to the new two-story atrium. These openings also allow the natural light from the atrium's skylight to illuminate the hall, as well as allow for a physical connection between the hall and the upper level of the stack room. The four original pilasters currently set into the wall were retained as columns. The non-original stairs and elevator lift were removed.



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Figure 32: Second Floor Hall, looking east. EHT Traceries, 2019.



Figure 33: Detail of entablature in Second Floor Hall, looking southwest. EHT Traceries, 2019.

*Second Floor West Wing/Lecture Hall*

Originally the Lecture Hall, the west gallery occupies the second floor of the west wing. The space housed HSW's Kiplinger Research Library, but was subsequently converted into a gallery

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space for HSW following the 2017-2019 rehabilitation. All original features other than portions of the original plaster ceiling, window openings, and the laylight feature were lost in the 2001-2003 renovation. The laylight frames and glazing are non-original and the window surrounds were replaced in 2001-2003, however, these features were rehabilitated in 2017-2019. The non-original flooring is covered in carpet. The room has been fitted out for use as a temporary gallery space for HSW exhibitions. This includes the installation of temporary partitions and new ceiling light fixtures.

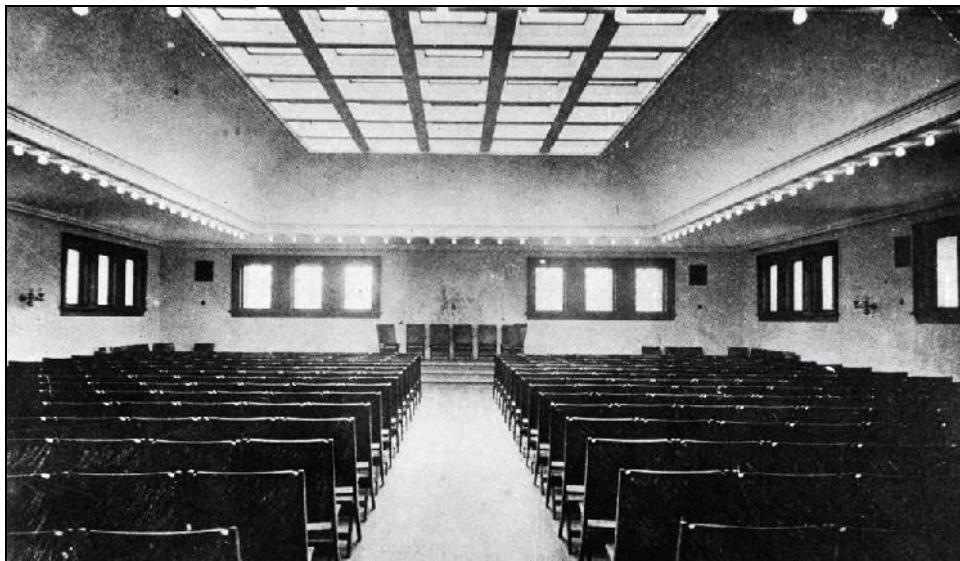


Figure 34: Second Floor Lecture Hall, 1905-1906. Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

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Figure 35: West Gallery, looking west. EHT Traceries, 2019.

### *Second Floor East Wing/East Gallery - Kiplinger Research Library*

The second floor of the east wing is accessed from the east vestibule through the original wood and glass entrance door and wood surround. The east portion of the floor slab was demolished during the 2001-2003 renovation to create the theater catwalk. Modifications to this room dating to the 2001-2003 renovations also included: the installation of partition walls around the perimeter of the room that blocked the original window openings; raising of the floor level; installation of ramps; and the installation of a suspended gypsum board ceiling, blocking the original laylight feature. In 2019, following the rehabilitation of the building, the Kiplinger Research Library was relocated to the east wing. As part of the overall rehabilitation, the alterations dated from 2001-2003 were reversed, and the original window openings, laylight, and original floor level restored. The new floor was covered in carpeting.



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Figure 36: East wing, second floor, 1920. National Photo Company Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

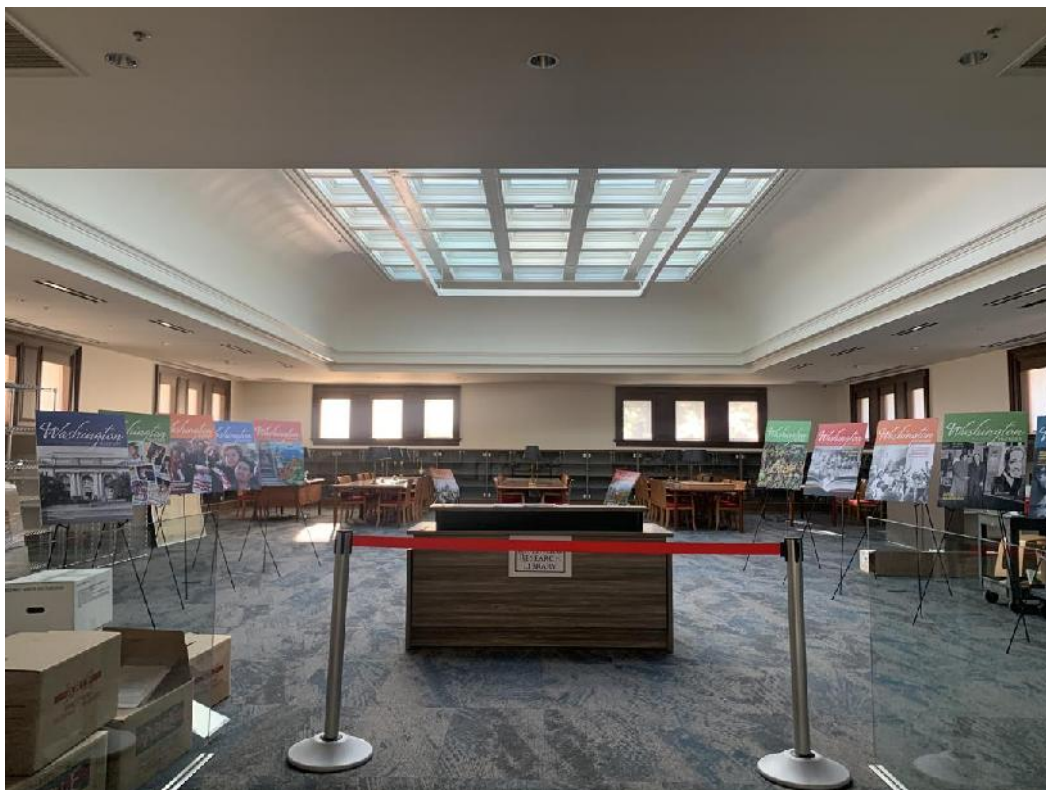


Figure 37: Kiplinger Research Library, second floor, east wing, looking east. EHT Tracerics, 2019.



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*Central Block and Perimeter Rooms*

The original central skylight and roof structure were demolished and infilled during the 2001-2003 renovation to enable the atrium space to serve as gallery space on the second floor and offices within a third floor cupola. The rooms located north of the Hall, along the east and west sides of the original atrium, contained spaces used as storage for HSW, a non-original egress stair, and an elevator shaft. The north section of the central block, formerly the stack area, contained concrete mezzanine floors and an egress stair. The elevator shaft and egress stairs in this area were enlarged in 2001-2003. The window openings along the north wall are original.

During the 2017-2019 renovation, the concrete slabs were removed to reopen the historic light well. A contemporary skylight was installed at the roof of the second floor to allow light into the two-story atrium. The original window openings from the perimeter rooms into the original light well had been concealed in the 2001-2003 renovations were exposed, and new infill glazed sashes consistent with the historic windows were installed, although they remain fixed. New steel and glass bridges on the east and west sides of the atrium at the level of the second floor provide access to HSW's north gallery located north of the atrium and viewing to the open atrium below. The original (exterior) brick cladding has been exposed and painted white. The two copper clad chimneys on the north side of the atrium have been restored to their original configuration with new decorative copper skirting installed consistent with the historic detailing (skirting was removed as part of the 2001-2003 renovations).

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

**Period of Significance**

1903-1905

**Significant Dates**

1903

1905

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Ackerman & Ross, architects

Bernard Green, superintendent of construction

Richardson & Burgess, general contractor

Philip Martiny, sculptor

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Upon its dedication in 1903, the Central Public Library (Carnegie Library) became the first permanent library building for the District of Columbia Municipal Free Public Library system. Designed by noted library architects Ackerman & Ross and constructed under the direction of superintendent Bernard Green, the library was made possible through the generosity of industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie and is an important example of the many buildings given by Carnegie to American cities to promote free library systems. The building's Neoclassical design marked the first wave of Beaux Arts Classicism to break upon the public edifices of Washington. Its exterior composition reflected a clarity of interior program and primacy of providing access to natural light and ventilation. Further emphasizing the visibility of the building's ornate marble and granite façade was its placement on Mount Vernon Square, a prominent site that underscored the importance of the public library as a civic and democratic institution dedicated to the free dissemination of knowledge.

In acknowledgement of the building's outstanding contributions to the civic and architectural character of Washington, D.C., at the turn of the twentieth century, the Central Public Library is

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found to exhibit national significance under National Register Criterion A in the area of *Education* and National Register Criterion C in the area of *Architecture*. It is also locally significant under the corresponding D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites Criteria B, D, and E. The building's period of significance extends between 1903 and 1905, which coincides with its dedication ceremony (1903), and early design changes that contributed significantly to its physical character (1903-1905).<sup>14</sup>

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### Statement of Significance

The Central Public Library is significant in the area of *Architecture* (National Register Criterion C). Designed in 1899 by New York-based architecture firm Ackerman & Ross—whose design was selected following a national competition—the building ranks among the earliest examples of the Beaux Arts architectural style in the District of Columbia. Characterized by a symmetrical façade composed of ashlar stone walls; monumental, arched windows; columns; and a profusion of marble ornament, the Central Library survives as an exemplar of the style. Beyond its evident grandeur, the building's design displayed a keen sensitivity to the operations of a central library, with emphasis placed on access to natural light and ventilation and a clear delineation of programmatic functions, including the division of public and private space. The library's placement on Mount Vernon Square, earlier the site of a dilapidated market building, exemplifies the City Beautiful ideology of utilizing architecture as a means to enhance and reinforce the axial and hierarchical compositions of planned urban environments such as Washington. As such, the building served as a precursor to the McMillan Commission's 1902 vision of utilizing monumental classical architecture to realize civic improvement and beautification projects.

The Central Public Library is also significant in the area of *Education* (National Register Criterion A). Born of Andrew Carnegie's vision of utilizing public libraries as a means of self-education and social mobility, the Central Public Library was one of twenty-six projects to receive grant funding from Carnegie in 1899. Upon completion, it became the first permanent home of the Municipal Free Public Library, created by Act of Congress in 1896. In addition to providing free literary access to the citizens of Washington, D.C., the municipal library system was specifically designed to supplement the library programs of the district's public school

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<sup>14</sup> The significance of the Central Public Library was previously recognized with the successful listing of the building in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. The original designation form included only minimal information on the library's appearance and historical development. This amendment expands the information presented in that document; additionally, it recommends an expansion of the original period of significance to 1905 to incorporate a series of significant changes completed after the building began operation in 1903. This amendment is limited to the building itself but recognizes the importance of Mount Vernon Square to the library's history and character. Mount Vernon Square (also designated as Reservation 8) separately contributes to The Plan of the City of Washington, a historic district listed in the D.C. Inventory in 1964 (expanded in 1971 and 1997) and the National Register in 1997.



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program. As the system grew through the introduction of branch libraries (including three branch library buildings funded by Carnegie between 1911 and 1925), the site remained the nucleus of its administrative and logistic operations. By the time the central library operations vacated the Carnegie Library in 1972, the building strained under the weight of the system's remarkable growth, represented by more than twenty branch libraries in addition to active school and bookmobile programs. Although no longer the home of the Washington library system after 1972, the building continued to serve the educational needs of Washington residents, housing for periods a satellite campus of the University of the District of Columbia, the City Museum, and the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.<sup>15</sup>

### **Period of Significance**

The building's period of significance extends from 1903 to 1905. The building's dedication in January 1903 was a significant cultural event in Washington, attended both by President Theodore Roosevelt as well as Andrew Carnegie himself, who usually eschewed such public ceremonies. The period of significance extends to 1905, by which time an additional gift from Carnegie allowed several decorative and functional elements to be realized.

### **Evaluation of Integrity**

The Central Public Library displays a high level of historic integrity, despite changes in use and ownership over time, which primarily impacted interior spaces but preserved significant exterior architectural features. The building retains its integrity of *location* and *setting*, preserved in its original location in the parklike context of Mount Vernon Square. The Beaux Arts influence continues to be exerted through the building's granite and marble façade and its monumental arched windows, allowing it to convey its integrity of *design*, *materials*, and *workmanship*—the latter in particular conveyed through the richness of the south façade's ornamental sculpture. Furthermore, despite changes in use, the building's monumental civic character continues to convey its integrity of *feeling* and *association*, with its original use as a library further reinforced by the text inscribed across the stone façade.

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<sup>15</sup> Some secondary sources and newspaper articles have cited the Central Public Library was Washington's first integrated building. Although it is true that public libraries ranked among Washington's many integrated public facilities and private establishments at the turn of the twentieth century (the notable exceptions being recreational facilities and schools), categorizing the building as "Washington's first" ignores the complexity of race relations in the Nation's Capital, which did not follow a linear path toward equality. During Reconstruction, African Americans living in Washington—although they undoubtedly faced social and economic discrimination—experienced a relatively high degree of access to public facilities and private businesses, regulated by several local and federal civil rights laws enacted in the 1870s. By the early twentieth century, a lack of enforcement of these laws, paired with the growing specter of Jim Crow and a rise in institutionalized racism—such as the Supreme Court's 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and the segregation of federal workplaces under President Wilson's Administration in 1913—reversed this trend and remained the de facto condition until the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

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## HISTORIC CONTEXT<sup>16</sup>

### L'Enfant Plan and the Design of Washington, D.C.

Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant (1755-1825), a French artist and engineer who had formed a friendship with George Washington while serving in the Revolutionary War, was appointed in 1791 to design a ten-square-mile tract of land located on the Potomac River to serve as the new federal capital city for the United States. After surveying the site, L'Enfant developed a plan that exhibited the influences of the formalism of Paris and Versailles. The plan featured ceremonial spaces and grand radial avenues, while respecting the natural contours of the land in the manner of picturesque English garden design. The result was a system of orthogonal streets with intersecting diagonal avenues radiating from what were to be the two most significant building sites: the President's House and the U.S. Capitol Building. L'Enfant specified in notes accompanying the plan that these avenues were to be wide, grand, lined with trees, and situated in a manner that would visually connect ideal topographical sites throughout the city, which would be named the City of Washington, and later, the District of Columbia.

For L'Enfant, open spaces were as integral to the capital as the buildings to be erected around them. Along with streets and avenues, he delineated circles, squares, and triangles that were defined by blocks that were to be subdivided, sold, and developed. Of equal distribution throughout the city, L'Enfant shaded and numbered fifteen large open spaces that were to be divided among the states of the Union. Of these squares, L'Enfant posited: "the center of each Square will admit of Statues, Columns, Obelisks, or any other ornaments such as the different States may choose to erect..."<sup>17</sup> The squares, named for the states, would be separate unto themselves, yet "most advantageously and reciprocally seen from each other...connected by spacious Avenues round the grand Federal Improvements..." much like the United States themselves bound together by the Constitution. L'Enfant specified that each reservation would feature statues and memorials to honor citizens. L'Enfant's scheme also displayed five grand fountains supplied by several of the area's more than twenty natural springs.<sup>18</sup>

Concurrent with the planning and designing of the federal city, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson oversaw the real estate transactions necessary to finance the city's physical development. Believing that the premature sale of land would hinder the city's development,

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<sup>16</sup> This section was substantially excerpted from: EHT Tracerics, Inc., *Central Public Library Historic Structure Report*, Final Submission, November 2017, pp. 18-56.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Charles L'Enfant, *Plan of the City intended for the Permanent Seat of the Government of t[he] United States: Projected agreeable to the direction of the President of the United States, in pursuance of an Act of Congress, passed on the sixteenth day of July, MDCCXC*, "establishing the permanent seat on the bank of the Potowmac," Map (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1991), Map Collections, Library of Congress.

<sup>18</sup> National Register of Historic Places, L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington., Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #97000332, section 8, page 8.

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L'Enfant refused to finish his map in time for the first sale in October 1791. Because of L'Enfant's insubordination, Washington was forced to dismiss the talented planner.

Andrew Ellicott (1755-1825), one of the original surveyors of the tract that was to become the District of Columbia, was tasked with finishing what L'Enfant had started. Working with his survey notes, his memory, and L'Enfant's notes, Ellicott transformed L'Enfant's manuscript into the "official city plan" for the City of Washington. While Ellicott did not alter the major physical features of the L'Enfant's plan – sites for major buildings, most of the radial avenues, gridiron streets, open spaces, environmental features – he did straighten several of the radial avenues and eliminate others. He also consecutively numbered the city blocks to aid with public lot sales. Additionally, the names of the streets first appear on Ellicott's map, though they were probably conceived by L'Enfant.<sup>19</sup> Ellicott also eliminated the designation of L'Enfant's public squares. The federal land left open as a result of the street patterns, combined with the purchased 541 acres, were divided into seventeen parcels, and were to be used for federal buildings.<sup>20</sup>

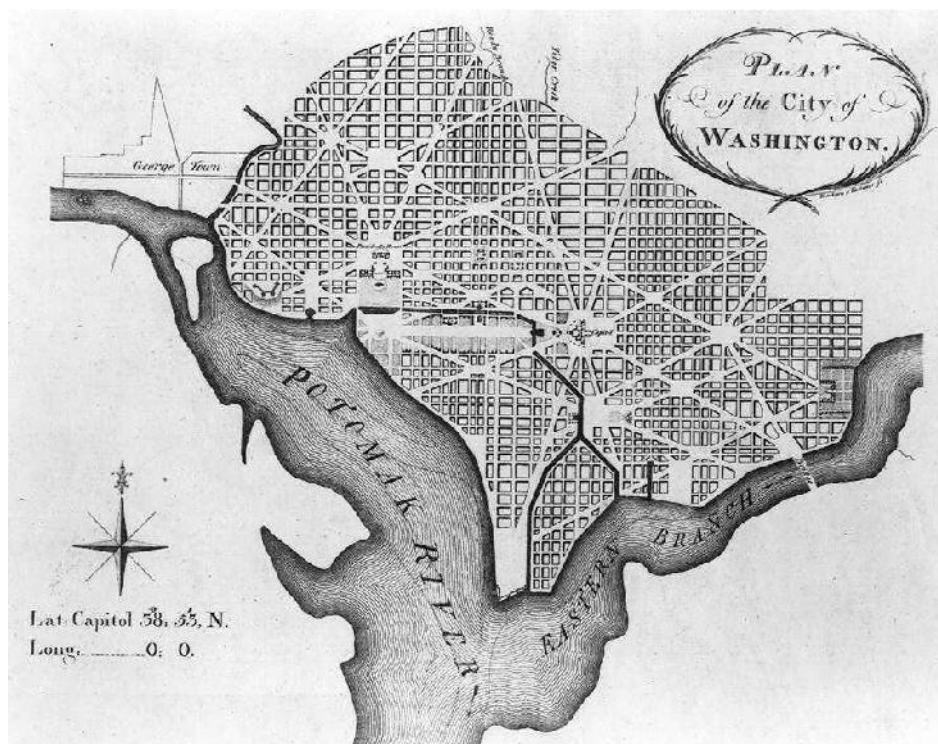


Figure 38: L'Enfant Plan of Washington, D.C as modified by Andrew Ellicott, 1792. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>19</sup> National Register of Historic Places, L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, Washington, District of Columbia. National Register #97000332, section 8, page 10.

<sup>20</sup> Although appropriations were described by location and function in a note accompanying Ellicott's plan, they were not delineated graphically until surveyor James R. Dermott included them on his 1795-97 "Appropriations" map. (National Register of Historic Places, L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, Washington, District of Columbia. National Register #97000332, section 8, page 11).

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## Mount Vernon Square

Before the Residence Act of 1790, which established the city of Washington, the territory that would later become the federal city was divided into thirty tracts of land. Since 1715 these tracts had been collectively referred to as the Rock Creek Hundred.<sup>21</sup> The tract that included the area that was to become Mount Vernon Square, originally known as *Port Royal*, was a five-hundred-acre tract of land patented by John Peerce in 1687. By 1791, the land had been subdivided, and Joseph Coombs, Jr. owned the eastern third. In October 1795, following some difficulties with the title to the land, Coombs conveyed the property to William Bayly, who in turn sold it to Dominick Lynch and Comfort Sands of New York City in January 1796.<sup>22</sup>

Pierre Charles L'Enfant's 1791 plan for the new federal city of Washington included the area that would become the Mount Vernon neighborhood, with Reservation 8 (later to be Mount Vernon Square) as the focal point. Reservation 8 was located between Seventh and Ninth Streets where Massachusetts and New York Avenues intersected K Street. Andrew Ellicott's final Plan, which was adopted as the city's official plan, did not acknowledge L'Enfant's intentions for Mount Vernon Square as a public greenspace.<sup>23</sup>

In 1809, as part of the Laws of the Corporation of the City of Washington, the First Council passed "An Act to Prevent Swine from Going At Large, and Other Purposes," which established that swine were allowed to roam freely only north of Massachusetts Avenue.<sup>24</sup> This act made Massachusetts Avenue the de facto northern border of the developing city, separating it from the agricultural land beyond. By the 1830s, Reservation 8 and its surrounding neighborhood were known as the "Northern Liberties." In October 1840, the Northern Liberties Fire Company constructed a firehouse on the western portion of the undeveloped site that would become known as Mount Vernon Square. In March 1846, the Northern Liberty Market was constructed on the eastern portion of the square. The market became the focal point of the burgeoning residential and commercial development along Massachusetts Avenue.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Priscilla W. McNeil, "Rock Creek Hundred: Land Conveyed for the Federal City," *Washington History* 3, No. 1, (Spring/Summer 1991): 35, 39.

<sup>22</sup> Priscilla W. McNeil, "Rock Creek Hundred: Land Conveyed for the Federal City," *Washington History* 3, No. 1, (Spring/Summer 1991): 50.

<sup>23</sup> Mount Vernon Square was not recognized as a formal public space worthy of status and maintenance as a park until the 1870s.

<sup>24</sup> "An Act to Prevent Swine from Going At Large, and Other Purposes," Acts of the Corporation of the City of Washington Passed by the First Council To Which is Prefixed the Act of Incorporation (Washington, D.C.: A and G Way, 1803), 6.

<sup>25</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Mount Vernon Square Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register # 99001071, section 8, page 5-7.



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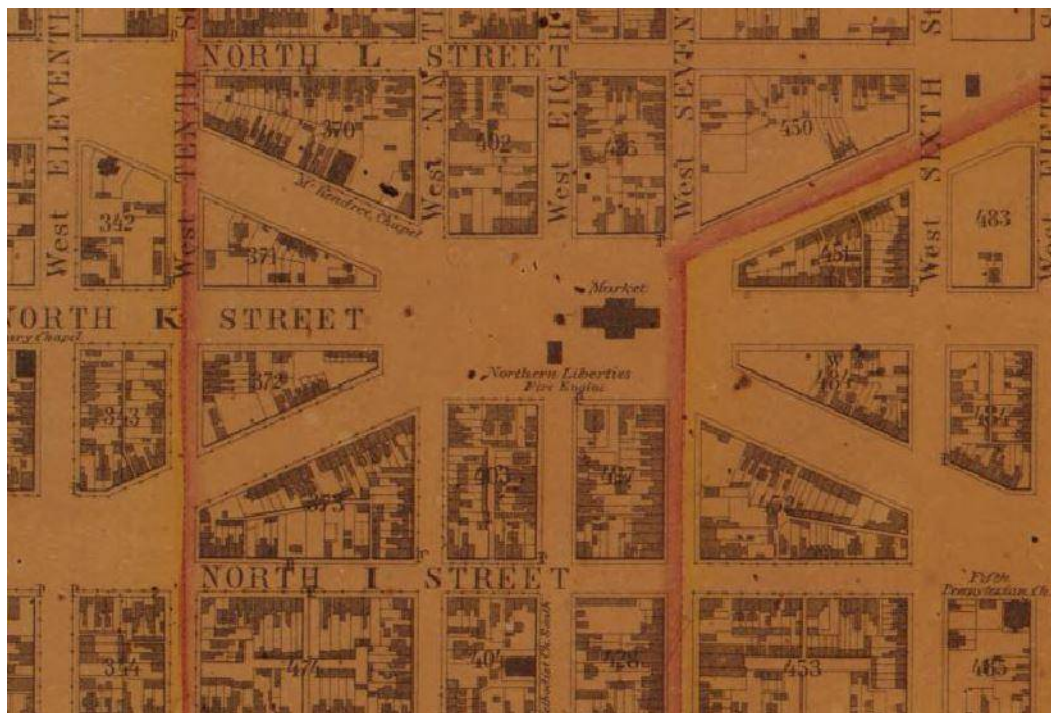


Figure 39: Detail of “Map of Washington City, District of Columbia” by A. Boschke, 1857. Mount Vernon Square and the Northern Liberty Market are visible at the center. Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

By the 1860s, however, the Northern Liberty Market had become an “intolerable nuisance,” owing to the lack of sewage infrastructure in the city.<sup>26</sup> An 1867 Report of Brevet Brigadier General Nathaniel Michler of the Office of Public Buildings, Grounds and Works proposed recommendations to the site, which was referred to for the first time as “Mount Vernon Place”:

In planning the city, a large reservation, known as *Mount Vernon Place*, was laid out at the intersections of K street north with New York and Massachusetts Avenues. Most unfortunately for the ornament and health of that part of the city, the original design has not been perfected. Eighth street has not only been opened through it, separating it into two parts, but on one of these divisions has been erected a most unsightly building for a market house. The latter, with its attending annoyances, forms an intolerable nuisance, which should be abated at once.... By what authority the market is located on this public reservation cannot be ascertained. It [the market] should be removed, and arrangements similar to those in all our large cities be adopted to supply wants of the community. The grounds could then be improved and become what they were originally intended to be.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Mount Vernon Square Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register # 99001071, section 8, page 11.

<sup>27</sup> Nathaniel Michler, “Appendix T,” *Report of the Secretary of War*, 524; cited in National Register of Historic Places, Mount Vernon Square Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #99001071, section 8, page 13.

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By 1872, Alexander R. “Boss” Shepard, the commissioner of the Board of Public Works, began an ambitious program to modernize the city and improve road conditions. As part of this effort, Shepard notified vendors of the Northern Liberty Market that the market was to be closed. When vendors refused to vacate the premises, Shepard had the structure razed during the night.<sup>28</sup>

In an effort to provide a more direct route through the area, Massachusetts and New York Avenues were subsequently extended through Mount Vernon Square, dividing the square into several smaller triangles. In 1877, the District Board of Public Works installed concrete roadways, lawns and shrubbery, sidewalks, curbing, and an ornamental iron fountain on a mound at the center of the square. Despite these improvements, residents complained of the dangerous conditions for pedestrians owing to the crossing traffic. Consequently, in 1882, the carriage roadways were closed and removed, and were replaced by footpaths surfaced with gravel. Drinking fountains and lampposts were installed, flower beds were planted, and the ornamental fountain was repainted. Benches were also installed in 1884. By the end of the nineteenth century, Mount Vernon Square had fulfilled L’Enfant’s vision as a successful public space.<sup>29</sup>

## **District of Columbia Public Library System**

### *Creation of a Free Library*

The D.C. Public Library System was officially established by Act of Congress on June 3, 1896.<sup>30</sup> From 1792 until the public library system was created, a number of small, private libraries as well as public subscription libraries were in operation throughout the District. One of the largest of these early libraries was the Washington Library Company, which began operation in 1811.<sup>31</sup>

After the Civil War, motivated by nationwide reconstruction efforts, Washingtonians began to insist on the establishment of a “free public library that was not devoted entirely to the government employees, was not closed in the evenings, and contained an array of volumes for all classes.”<sup>32</sup> Subsequent to this call for action, a number of attempts were made to inaugurate a

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<sup>28</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Mount Vernon Square Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register # 99001071, section 8, page 11.

<sup>29</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Mount Vernon Square Historic District, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register # 99001071, section 8, page 13-14.

<sup>30</sup> *An Act To establish and provide for the maintenance of a free public library and reading room in the District of Columbia*. Chapter 315. U.S. Statutes at Large 54, 1896.

<sup>31</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, prepared for the DC Preservation League and the DC Historic Preservation Division, 1997, 12-13; William A., De Cindry, “The Washington City Free Library,” in *Records of the Columbia Historical Society Washington, D.C.*, Volume 16, compiled by The Committee on Publication and the Recording Secretary (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Historical Society, 1913), 64.

<sup>32</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 13.

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free public library within the District, including a proposal to purchase and rehabilitate Ford's Theater after Lincoln's assassination in 1865.<sup>33</sup>

In 1894, Brigadier General A.W. Greely, Chief Signal Officer of the Army assigned to the library of the War Department in Washington, D.C., began a campaign seeking funding for a free public library. Undeterred by Congress' inactivity, Greely collected subscriptions from prominent citizens of the District for this purpose. Greely also encouraged members of the Washington Librarians' Association to recruit subscribers and donations. By 1895, an annual sum of \$1,800 per year for five years had been committed by these patrons to cover library operations. By July that year, a code of by-laws and regulations for management of the Washington Free Public Library were adopted by the newly created Board of Trustees and in October the Board rented space at the McLean Building, 1517 H Street, N.W., to serve as the Library's first location.<sup>34</sup>

Although in July 1895 the Library had been established successfully without legislative assistance, it was solely dependent on subscriptions and contributions from local philanthropists to support its operations.<sup>35</sup> In December 1895, legislation to support the establishment of a free public library and reading room for the District of Columbia was introduced to Congress. General Greely appealed to the Committee on the District of Columbia in January 1896, who forwarded the library request on to the House of Representatives. The March 1896 Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia supported the establishment of such a library within the District and noted the existing Washington City Free Library's willingness to merge with the proposed Municipal Free Public Library.<sup>36</sup> After prolonged discussions, the 1896 bill was passed with virtually no opposition.<sup>37</sup>

As originally passed, the act did not provide funding for the newly established Municipal Library. It did, however, direct the Commissioners of the District of Columbia to appoint nine unpaid trustees to serve on the Municipal Free Public Library's newly created Board of Trustees for a term of six years each. In addition to being granted some ordinance-making power, the Board was also charged with the selection of a head Librarian. On July 2, 1896, the

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<sup>33</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 13-14.

<sup>34</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 14-17.

<sup>35</sup> At the third monthly meeting of the Washington Library Association in 1894, General Greely reported that "since the last meeting of the association he had seen as many persons as he conveniently could in relation to the library and had secured pledges amounting to a little more than \$1,000." He went on to say that he believed that \$2,000 per year would be necessary to start the library, but that \$4,000 per year would be necessary to maintain it ("Library Association: An Interesting Meeting And Discussion Last Night," *The Evening Star*, December 20, 1894).

<sup>36</sup> Though funds were unavailable to create a separate library building, the Free Public Library thrived, with nearly 4,000 residents registered as borrowers within its first six months of operation ("Washington City Free Library," *The Washington Post*, June 7, 1896).

<sup>37</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 17-18. Those who initially opposed were persuaded due to the conviction that the library would be a valuable accessory to Washington's public school system and would benefit all residents ("Free Public Library a Little Nearer," *The Evening Times*, March 3, 1896).

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Commissioners engaged nine trustees including Theodore W. Noyes, editor-in-chief of *The Evening Star* (the District's most influential newspaper at that time), who was promptly appointed as the Board's first president.<sup>38</sup>

On July 15, 1898, the Washington Free Public Library officially merged with the Congressionally-established Municipal Free Public Library. With this union came the introduction of 12,412 volumes into the Municipal Library's collection, as well as the McLean Building's reading room.<sup>39</sup>

*The Creation of a Central Library for Washington*

In December 1898, the newly established Municipal Free Public Library opened from their rented quarters at 1326 New York Avenue, NW. Immediately popular with the public, over five thousand volumes were circulated within the Library's first twenty days of operation. As a result, the institution promptly began to search for larger and permanent accommodations in which to house their growing collection and staff.<sup>40</sup>

On January 2, 1899, a serendipitous meeting at the White House between Brainard A. Warner, the vice president of the Library's Board of Trustees and prominent developer, lawyer, financier, and city advocate, and industrialist Andrew Carnegie resulted in Carnegie's offer to donate \$250,000 for the construction of a new library building, with the stipulation that Congress provide a building site and operational funds of no less than \$10,000 per year.<sup>41</sup> The meeting was described in *The Evening Star*: "He was at the White House to-day, [Mr. Carnegie] said, waiting to see the President, when he met Mr. Warner, and Mr. Warner told him of the need of a library building in Washington. Mr. Carnegie offered at once to erect the building at the cost of at least \$250,000 if Congress would provide the site."<sup>42</sup>

Without delay, Warner began to pursue passage of the necessary legislation and the selection of a building site. District Commissioner John B. Wight put forth a congressional bill proposing a site located on Pennsylvania Avenue and Seventh Street, adjacent to Center Market. Although selection of the site received support because of its accessibility and its potential to beautify Pennsylvania Avenue, the location was also swiftly opposed, sentiments that were shared by Senator James McMillan of Michigan (chairman of the Senate's Committee on the District of Columbia). This opposition included concerns focused on the area's low elevation, which made it prone to flooding.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 18.

<sup>39</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 25.

<sup>42</sup> "For Public Library: Mr. Andrew Carnegie Offers \$250,000 for Local Institution," *Evening Star*, 12 January 1899.

<sup>43</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 25-26.



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*The Washington Post* suggested Mount Vernon Square as an alternative site. In contrast to the site proposed on Pennsylvania Avenue, it was not one of the original seventeen reservations within the capital city. Mount Vernon Square was, however, one of the fifteen public spaces formed by the confluence of streets and avenues that L'Enfant had identified in his 1791 plan of Washington.<sup>44</sup>

After consideration, Congress, city officials, and the public embraced the Mount Vernon Square location as it would not set a dangerous precedent for the use of the District's original seventeen reservations. Also in support of the site, McMillan's committee report showed a sensitivity to the vistas created by the L'Enfant plan: "Situated in the center of the Mount Vernon Square, the view of the building would be obtained from Massachusetts Avenue, K Street and New York Avenue, and would add dignity and beauty to a portion of the city where ornamentation is somewhat lacking."<sup>45</sup> Congress passed the bill, which was signed by President McKinley on March 3, 1899. The bill provided for the construction of the library building on Mount Vernon Square with funds contributed by Andrew Carnegie.<sup>46</sup>

### **Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie Libraries**

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) was one of the most influential and prominent philanthropists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A Scottish immigrant turned millionaire, Carnegie turned to philanthropy once he attained his fortune. Carnegie began his career as a bobbin boy working in a textile mill. As he rose through the ranks of the Pennsylvania Railroad, he became involved in the iron-forging industry in Pittsburgh. This led way to the creation of the Carnegie Steel Company. Carnegie retained ownership of the Carnegie Steel Company until 1901, when he sold the company to J.P. Morgan for 480 million dollars. The sale made Carnegie the "richest man in the world."<sup>47</sup>

As a young immigrant worker in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, Carnegie, like all working boys in his neighborhood, was given access to Colonel James Anderson's private library one day per week. He often credited this experience, and the lifelong appreciation of literature that it gave him, as the reason why he chose to fund the construction of public libraries. Though Carnegie was driven by benevolence, he was cautious of donating to those who would not benefit from his gift. In two 1889 articles published in the *North American Review*, Carnegie outlined lessons that he hoped his fellow millionaires would follow:

The main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to

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<sup>44</sup> Hoagland, 79.

<sup>45</sup> As cited in Hoagland, 81.

<sup>46</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate, *Site for Washington Free Library: Report No. 1509*, 3 March 1899, 55<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3d Sess., 1899. CHS. 453-455, 1372.

<sup>47</sup> Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All Carnegie Libraries & American Culture 1890 - 1920* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 9.

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give those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all.<sup>48</sup>

As with other burgeoning philanthropists of the late nineteenth century, Carnegie began his philanthropic ventures by extending gifts to towns with which he had some sort of connection. In 1888, Allegheny City, Carnegie's hometown, was the first city to receive a Carnegie Library Grant. Pittsburgh, the headquarters of Carnegie Steel Company, was the second. By the turn of the century, Carnegie's donations had increased, with twenty-six libraries promised in 1899 alone. By 1917, Carnegie and the later Carnegie Corporation had promised funding for the construction of 1,679 libraries in 1,412 towns within the United States, amounting to a cost of over 41 million dollars.<sup>49</sup> By this time, he had also aided with constructing libraries in several other English-speaking countries at a total cost of about 16 million dollars. With each donation, Carnegie required the municipality to provide a site and an annual appropriation equal to one-tenth of the cost of construction. Additionally, the cost of books, librarians' salaries, and maintenance were the responsibility of the municipality and could not come from the funds provided by Carnegie, ensuring the public investment that Carnegie felt necessary to maintain a successful library.<sup>50</sup>

### **Growth of the Branch Library System**

The new Central Library was an immediate success. As a result, the Library Board quickly recognized the need for additional reading rooms, reference space, and suburban branches to reach the District's expanding population. The situation was exacerbated by the transfer of 53,000 surplus volumes from the Library of Congress and other government libraries by June 1903. During his address at the Central Library's January dedication, Carnegie had pledged to fund future branches within the District's library system. Congress, concerned with the cost of maintaining a large library system, had not yet accepted his offer. Limited by Congress' inactivity, the Library created a number of off-site programs to allow for expansion of the library system between 1903 and 1911. Many, if not all, of these programs were spearheaded by George F. Bowerman, the second head librarian to be appointed to the post.<sup>51</sup>

By the end of 1903, the Library began to establish small, experimental "station" libraries. Neighborhood House, located at 456 N Street, S.W., was the first such deposit station. Under the direction of Emily A. Spilman, a trained librarian, the small facility housed 300 books and was accessible to the public for only a few hours per week. Between 1905 and 1906, six additional stations were opened including Noel House Station at 1245 H Street, N.W., Rochefort House Station at 324 Virginia Avenue, S.E., Georgetown Station at 2726 M Street, N.W., the Colored Social Settlement Station at 118 M Street, S.W., the Rosedale Station at 1627 H Street, N.W., and the Recreation Center No. 1 at Western High School, later known as Duke Ellington School.

<sup>48</sup> Carnegie, "Wealth," (1889), 663; cited in Van Slyck, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Van Slyck, 22.

<sup>50</sup> Hoagland, 78.

<sup>51</sup> Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 34-35.

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Typically, 300 to 600 books would be supplied to each location. Unlike the earlier Neighborhood House, the local community association was responsible for providing volunteers and reports on library activities.<sup>52</sup>

The Library also established a book service to local schools. Cooperation with the schools was encouraged by the creation of a special reference library and study room for teachers. Initially, small volumes of books were sent to local high schools, a classroom deposit service program that slowly expanded. A standing ate limitation on children's library cards was eradicated, making volumes accessible to children of all ages.

Three separate bills were introduced to Congress in 1904, 1907, and 1910, proposing permanent expansions of the library system. The earliest bill, asking Congress to allow the District's Commissioners to accept donations for the gradual construction of a number of branch libraries with maintenance being provided by the District was not approved; nor was a slimmed down version of the bill asking for the authority to establish one branch library at a time, beginning with the proposed Takoma Park Branch. The 1910 bill, authorizing only the construction of the Takoma Park Branch was passed. The bill also allowed for the acceptance of Andrew Carnegie's donation, the use of the donated site, the establishment of the Takoma Park Branch on that site, establishment of a commission to supervise the building's erection, and provision for maintenance of the facility, which opened as the Library's first permanent branch on November 17, 1911.<sup>53</sup>

After construction of the Takoma Park Branch Library was completed, the Library continued to expand its operations. By 1914, the library system consisted of the Central Library, the Takoma Park Branch Library, and over 150 other book deposits. Deposit locations included seven deposit stations, school stations, institutional deposits including the YMCA and the Woodward & Lothrop Department Store, the libraries at Gallaudet and Howard Universities, and 24 charitable and correctional institutions.<sup>54</sup> However, inadequate funding, as well as a lack of Congressional approval, stalled the expansion of the libraries successful school library stations program and construction of additional permanent branch libraries, in addition to inadequately financing existing library operations, including staff.<sup>55</sup>

Congress did not approve construction of the Library's second branch, the Southeast Branch Library, until 1921, and the third branch, the Mount Pleasant Branch, until 1922. These branches, which opened in 1922 and 1925, respectively, were also funded by Andrew Carnegie.<sup>56</sup> Over the course of 26 years, Carnegie provided the District with \$682,000 to construct these four buildings, the seventh highest sum granted by Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation to a single municipality within the United States.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> EHT Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 34-35.

<sup>53</sup> EHT Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 36-38.

<sup>54</sup> EHT Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 39.

<sup>55</sup> EHT Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 39.

<sup>56</sup> EHT Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 32.

<sup>57</sup> EHT Traceries, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 32.

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Soon after the last Carnegie branch library was constructed in the District, Congress amended the Organic Act in 1926, which specified support of branch development. In addition to enabling library branch funding, the act called for the Library's Board of Trustees and the Board of Education to work together for the "establishment and maintenance of branch libraries in suitable rooms in such public-school buildings of the said District as will supplement the central library and branch libraries in separate buildings. The Board of Trustees, hereinafter provided, is authorized within the limits of appropriations first made therefor, to rent suitable buildings or parts of buildings for use as branch libraries and distributing stations."<sup>58</sup> This legislation allowed for the establishment of numerous sub-branches and branches within the District of Columbia through the late-1960s. In 1972, central library and administrative operations of the system were relocated to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial (MLK) Library, located at 901 G Street, N.W.

### Neoclassical Architecture in the United States

The allure of Classical architecture has exerted a powerful influence on American architecture since the Colonial period. During the eighteenth century, both public institutions and private citizens adapted European architectural precedents as a means to convey good taste, education, and wealth. The most common of these was the Neoclassical style, which proliferated among the populous cities of the Eastern Seaboard for much of the eighteenth century. The American Revolution and founding of the Republic infused new meaning into Classical art and architecture, with the newly formed United States trumpeted as the inheritor of the democracy of Ancient Greece and the ingenuity of Imperial Rome. The column-fronted temple prototype became a popular receptacle for houses, banks, libraries, public buildings, and churches. Notable examples included the Redwood Library in Rhode Island, designed by Peter Harrison and completed circa 1750, and the Virginia State Capitol, designed by Thomas Jefferson and completed in 1788. The Federal style, which incorporated such diverse decorative elements as Palladian windows and Adamesque detailing, was also popular during this period. Of course, the United States was not unique in its reinterpretation of the Classical style to suit its own ideology, means, and taste, but rather was part of a lineage that extended back millennia.<sup>59</sup>

The civic architecture of Washington was strongly influenced by these trends, benefitting both from a sustained investment of federal funds and the expertise of English-trained architects such as Benjamin Henry Latrobe and George Hadfield, both of whom supervised the construction of the U.S. Capitol Building for a period. Later additions to the cityscape—including City Hall, the Treasury Department Building, the Patent Office, City Hall, and the General Post Office—further cemented the relationship between Classical Revival architecture and the American national identity.

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<sup>58</sup> *Statutes at Large*, 69th Congress, Session 1, Chapter 98 (1926). Volume 44, p. 229; EHT Tracerics, *DC Public Library Survey* (1997), 46.

<sup>59</sup> William H. Pierson, Jr., *American Buildings and Their Architects, The Colonial and Neo-Classical Styles* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1976), 207-239.

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During the second half of the nineteenth century, the popularity of the Classical aesthetic waned as a diverse crop of revivalist styles—the Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, Italianate, and others—were popularized by architectural publications and pattern books. Advances in building technology and materials production—notably the balloon frame method of construction—invited plasticity and irregularity in building forms. The French Second Empire, a derivation of the Italianate style that prominently featured mansard roofs, became a popular style, offering a flexibility that suited both rural and urban building criteria.<sup>60</sup> Facing each other across Pennsylvania Avenue, the Old Corcoran Gallery (now the Renwick Gallery, 1859-1874) and the State, War, and Navy Building (now the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, 1871-1888) encapsulate the evolution of the style across a generation.

A resurgence in the popularity of Classically-influenced styles can be dated to several major expositions held in the United States in the late nineteenth century. The 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition romanticized the simplicity and domesticity of the Colonial period, which led to popularization of the Colonial Revival style for residential architecture. The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago—a vision of Beaux-Arts splendor—inspired the City Beautiful movement in the United States. Integral to this style of architecture was the sculptural ornamentation that led to monumental designs. In line with these principles, the 1899 Commission would call for the Central Library to be a monumental building on a significant site. Consequently, it anticipated the recommendations of the McMillan Plan for Washington – a plan adapted from the L'Enfant Plan that produced a city center of classical-style government buildings organized around formal axes and open spaces, that would be promulgated just three years later in 1902.<sup>61</sup>

## **CHRONOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT**

### **Design and Construction of the Central Library**

#### *Architectural Competition*

Following the selection of the site at Mount Vernon Square, the newly created Washington Public Library Commission organized a competition to select an architect. The parameters of the competition were determined by the 1899 Act providing the building site, which required the commissioners to invite ten architects or architectural firms to participate. The competitors were to be “of conspicuous ability and experience.” The winner would be determined by the commission in cooperation with two other judges, to be selected by the competitors, and would receive a commission of three percent of construction costs. The Act also stipulated that a qualified officer of the Government would oversee construction.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 314-315.

<sup>61</sup> Hoagland, 75.

<sup>62</sup> United States Congress, *An Act to provide a site for a building for the Washington Public Library*, 55<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> Sess., Ch. 455 (March 3, 1899): 1372-1373.



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The Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) protested the terms of the competition, noting that the fee of three percent was unusually low and that the AIA considered it demeaning to the architect to be placed below a supervising government officer. An article in the organization's *Quarterly Bulletin* noted, "many architects whose standing and work was known did not consider it proper, in justice to themselves, to enter the competition."<sup>63</sup> In spite of the AIA's objections, the Library Commission, headed by president John W. Ross, chose to proceed as directed. The competition program was created by Colonel Theodore A. Bingham, Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds for the District of Columbia, and Lansing H. Beach, District Commissioner and member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Both men were engineers educated at West Point. They presented the architectural program on April 14, 1899.<sup>64</sup>

The program provided competitors with a strict set of guidelines. It specified that the total cost of the building could not exceed \$250,000, which was intended to cover everything but the furniture. It noted, "the commission prefers that the exterior walls be faced with marble, if within the limitations of the cost of the structure a building of this material can be constructed which shall furnish ample areas for all the practical uses of a modern lending and reference library of the best type."<sup>65</sup>

Other requirements included:

1. All rooms should receive as much daylight as possible, though electric light may be needed in the book stacks.
2. Windows should be large and extend nearly to the ceiling. They should be at least five and no more than six or seven feet from the floor in the reading rooms.
3. Book stacks should be placed near the main entrance as well as the lending and delivery desks, cataloger's room, accession room, reading rooms, periodical room, children's room, and librarian's office.
4. Cataloger's room should adjoin the reference room.
5. Glass partitions should be employed where possible.
6. A front basement entrance for bicycles should be provided.
7. A rear basement entrance should be provided for receipt of books and another entrance for workmen, engineers, suppliers, and other deliveries.
8. Book stacks should begin on the first floor and extend to the roof with decks at intervals of seven feet.

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<sup>63</sup> American Institute of Architects, "The Washington Public Library," *American Institute of Architects Quarterly Bulletin*, January 1 - April 1, 1900, 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> Hoagland, 84.

<sup>65</sup> Washington, D.C. Public Library Commission, *Programme of Competition for the Washington Public Library* (April 1899) reprinted in *Second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees and First Annual Report of the Librarian of the Public Library of the District of Columbia* (1899), 8-9.

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9. Particular attention should be given to departments that will increase the library's ability to supplement public schools.<sup>66</sup>
10. The building should accommodate at least 225,000 volumes, with room for expansion.<sup>67</sup>

Aside from the request for marble on the exterior, the program gave little direction on design and siting of the building.



Figure 40: The main public library of Columbus, Ohio (constructed 1903-1907) was also funded by Andrew Carnegie and was designed by Albert Randolph Ross. Ross was a principal in the firm of Ackerman & Ross that designed the Washington, D.C. Central Library, which accounts for the buildings' similarity of appearance. World Digital Library.

*Ackerman & Ross, Architects*

The commissioners selected nationally prominent architects George B. Post and Henry Van Brunt as their two additional judges. Post was the sitting president of the national AIA, while the Brunt had previously held that position. In addition to the ten invited firms, the jury received submissions from fifteen additional architects and firms. Ackerman & Ross was among the firms who submitted a design without an invitation.<sup>68</sup> Ackerman & Ross was a New York-based partnership between William Ackerman and Albert Randolph Ross (1868-1948), who formed the practice in 1897. Ackerman, a mechanical engineer, graduated from the Stevens Institute of Technology in 1891.<sup>69</sup> Ross, an architect, studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris before working for the firm of McKim, Mead & White for nine years. The partnership would last only until 1902, by which time Ackerman & Ross would also design Carnegie libraries for San Diego,

<sup>66</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 104-105.

<sup>67</sup> *Programme of Competition for the Washington Public Library*, 8-9.

<sup>68</sup> American Institute of Architects, "The Washington Public Library," *American Institute of Architects Quarterly Bulletin*, January 1 - April 1, 1900, 11-12.

<sup>69</sup> American Society of Mechanical Engineers, "William Sickles Ackerman," *Mechanical Engineering* Vol. 41, Issue 1 (January 1919): 81.

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Nashville, Atlanta, and other American cities.<sup>70</sup> After the firm disbanded, Ross also designed the Carnegie Library of Columbus, Ohio in 1903.<sup>71</sup>

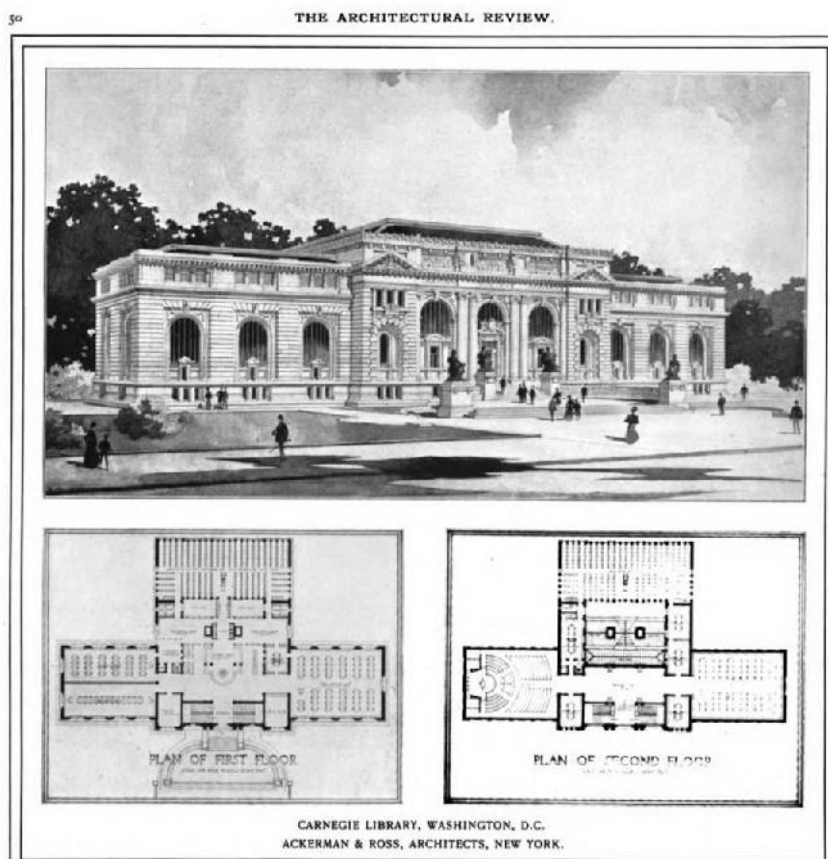


Figure 41: Winning Design by Ackerman & Ross. *Architectural Review* Vol. IX, No. 1 (January 1902), p. 50.

Taking their cue from the request for a white marble exterior, Ackerman & Ross submitted a design for a Beaux-Arts structure. The use of this style was indicative of Ross's architectural training as well as his work with Charles McKim, designer of the famed Agricultural Building at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exhibition, the event that popularized Beaux-Arts architecture in the United States. The building would be sited in the center of the square. Ackerman & Ross planned an ornately carved, marble exterior. Pursuant to the requirements of the program, their design featured large windows on all elevations. The north elevation additionally introduced tall, narrow windows that would allow natural light to penetrate the stack room. The jury selected Ackerman & Ross's design as the winner of the competition on July 18, 1899.<sup>72</sup> The design was accepted on the condition that they make some modifications, as it was expected to exceed the

<sup>70</sup> Hoagland, 88.

<sup>71</sup>"Carnegie Library, Columbus, Ohio," World Digital Commons, [https://cml.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1190123105\\_history\\_of\\_the\\_columbus\\_public\\_library/en/item/9582/](https://cml.bibliocommons.com/item/show/1190123105_history_of_the_columbus_public_library/en/item/9582/) (accessed December 22, 2016).

<sup>72</sup> Hoagland, 87-88.

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available funds.<sup>73</sup> This was the case despite Carnegie having provided an additional \$50,000 on April 1, 1899. He added another \$50,000 on September 28, 1899, bringing the total available funds to \$350,000.<sup>74</sup> Ultimately, even this increased amount would prove to be insufficient to complete the building as designed.

*Bernard R. Green, Superintendent of Construction*

In December 1899, the Library Commission appointed Bernard Green to serve as superintendent of construction for the Central Public Library, filling the role of supervising government officer required by the 1899 Act of Congress. Bernard Richardson Green (1843-1914) was a Harvard-educated civil engineer who also served as the Superintendent of Construction for the Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress, which opened in 1897. Subsequently, he served as the Library of Congress's Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, becoming an advocate for contemporary library design. Green invented a modular, closed-stack system for the efficient storage of library books, manufactured by Snead & Company Iron Works. The system was first employed in the Library of Congress and later in libraries nationwide, including in the Washington Central Library and the main branch of the New York Public Library.<sup>75</sup> During his distinguished career, Green oversaw the construction of a number of prominent buildings in Washington and beyond, including the State, War, and Navy Building (now the Eisenhower Executive Office Building); the U.S. National Museum (now the National Museum of Natural History); the Willard Hotel; the completion of the Washington Monument; and the Pennsylvania State Capitol Building.<sup>76</sup>

*Design Development*

From late 1899 through early 1900, Green worked with Ackerman & Ross to revise the specifications for the new library building. Green was concerned that the ornateness and rich materials of the winning design would be impossible to complete within the budget of \$315,000 available for construction out of the total \$350,000 provided by Carnegie.<sup>77</sup> The main point of contention was the marble exterior. As a January letter from the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, Vermont, indicated, "It may be that in certain places we have taken the stock off too heavy on account of the lack of sections and that it could be thinned down and the prices

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<sup>73</sup> "Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia," Survey No. DC-457, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (1988), 9.

<sup>74</sup> EHT Tracerics, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 105.

<sup>75</sup> Bernard R. Green, *Book Stack and Shelving for Libraries* (Jersey City, NJ: The Snead and Company Iron Works, 1908), 1-17.

<sup>76</sup> "Death of B.R. Green, Noted Engineer of Washington Became Ill in His Office," *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), October 23, 1914.

<sup>77</sup> Merrill Ann Kaegi, *Architectural Design and Sculptural Decoration of the Washington, D.C. Public Library Building*, 1969, fig. 1, no page number, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

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somewhat reduced.”<sup>78</sup> Ackerman & Ross clung to this hope, insisting in a letter to Green that they were skeptical of the cost estimate, but acknowledging that “If the bids should exceed the bequest we will simply be compelled to substitute one or more of the alternatives until the total price is reduced to the required.”<sup>79</sup> By February 7, 1900, they were considering substituting limestone for marble.<sup>80</sup>

Another point of contention was the use of bronze. In a February 7, 1900 letter, Ackerman & Ross suggested that another cost saving measure would be to use solid bronze only for the main entrance, while the basement and rear entrances would be of wood covered in bronze sheeting, with bronze grilles.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, however, they proposed to replace raised thresholds in areas where book carts would be used with strips of bronze.<sup>82</sup>

Meanwhile, the project experienced delay when Henry Adams, engaged to provide the heating, ventilation, and mechanical plans, did not complete them as scheduled.<sup>83</sup> This forced Green to delay advertising for bids, which he had hoped to do by February 1, 1900. When Adams’s plans were finally received, Green proposed increasing the interior lighting, but asked Ackerman & Ross to eliminate the planned chandeliers.<sup>84</sup>

In spite of the cuts made, costs continued to be a major concern for Green. On March 7, Green wrote the following to Ackerman & Ross:

The more I consider the plans and specifications the more firmly convinced I become that the design of the building has been altogether too expensive for the funds, and that, at best, contracts will have to be made for the lowest and cheapest orders of materials and workmanship provided for in the alternatives. I feel this so much that I believe it wise that you should immediately consider means of simplifying the design, so that if it prove [sic] that contracts for the building cannot be made we can contract for the basement and excavation walls, so as to get the work underway promptly and then revise the design as to exterior stone

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<sup>78</sup> Vermont Marble Company to Ackerman & Ross, January 4, 1900, Folder 1, Box 31, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>79</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, January 30, 1900, Folder 1, Box 31, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>80</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, February 7, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>81</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, February 7, 1900.

<sup>82</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, January 30, 1900.

<sup>83</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, February 8, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>84</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, February 28, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, March 2, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



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work details, as well as interiors, for the purpose of getting new bids in time to make contracts without delaying the construction.

In another letter of March 8, Green continued in the same vein: "The drawings show me, for the first time, the design of the stucco work and ceiling ornamentation of the building, and I am surprised to find it so elaborate. How we are going to build the building for the money is quite beyond my comprehension."<sup>85</sup> He also addressed the planned granite tiling of the front platform, which he also feared would be very expensive if properly executed.<sup>86</sup>

But Ackerman & Ross were unwilling to change their design without pushing back. In a letter to Green dated March 11, 1900, they insisted that the rise in costs is due to changes in the price of materials, not the design. As an example, they claim, "The price for iron in August 1898 was \$23.00 per ton, the price today is \$48.00 per ton, which only shows that we were very high in our preliminary estimate."<sup>87</sup> They also continued to contend that the marble estimates offered by the Vermont Marble Company were too high. Finally, as a conciliatory gesture, they suggested replacing all bronze work with iron to save an estimated \$30,000.<sup>88</sup>

However, Green's misgivings were not assuaged. He wrote to the Library Commission on March 14, 1900 with a list of suggested cuts:

The plans should be revised by reduction of the workmanship and details of the exterior marble and granite work, so that their total cost may not exceed about \$90,000; the steel construction revised as to amount of metal and workmanship; the interior marble work and mosaic of floors, and the oak wood work, ornamental iron work, and ornamental plastering reduced in quantity and cost. All bronze work should be omitted. The lime stone walls in basement should be changed to brick and plaster, and many minor items of interior treatment now represented as rich and elaborate in the drawings, simplified and made plainer, trusting somewhat more than was necessary before to effective coloring of walls and ceilings.

Finally, he suggested changing the marble of the exterior walls for granite. Green's letter was effective in securing the support of the Library Commission, which wrote to Ackerman & Ross and directed them to make reductions based on Green's suggestions. But Green was not finished. On March 17, he further recommended lessening the spread of the foundations, making

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<sup>85</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, March 8, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>86</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, March 8, 1900.

<sup>87</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, March 11, 1900, Folder 1, Box 31, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>88</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, March 11, 1900.

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the court skylight smaller, and altering the heating and plumbing plans. He also insisted that the building must be better ventilated, particularly the lecture hall and basement areas.<sup>89</sup>

Despite his recommendation of exchanging marble for granite, on March 22, 1900, Green wrote to the Vermont Marble Company and asked if there was anything they could do to reduce the estimate for the exterior marble by thirty to forty percent.<sup>90</sup> He reported to Ackerman & Ross on April 2 that the Vermont Marble Company was firm with their estimate, and that he was now considering revisions to the structural steel as a cost-cutting measure.<sup>91</sup>

On April 13, 1900, Green reported to the Library Commission that Ackerman & Ross had completed their revisions to the drawings. However, he noted, "The architects have not been willing, however, to make the somewhat radical modification necessary in the design of the exterior stonework to positively ensure the needed reduction in cost." Therefore, he made known his intentions to ask for proposals for exterior cladding of marble with a Milford granite base or, alternatively, all granite.<sup>92</sup> On April 23, he submitted copies of the specifications to the Library Commission, and also relayed that advertisements for bids for a general contractor would run in the *Evening Star*, *Washington Post*, *Washington Times*, *New York Tribune*, and the *Engineering Record* of New York.<sup>93</sup> The advertisements were to run April 25, 26, 27, and 28 and May 12 and 14. The opening of the bids was scheduled for May 19.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, March 17, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>90</sup> Bernard Green to Vermont Marble Co., March 22, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>91</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, April 2, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>92</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, April 13, 1900, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>93</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, April 23, 1900, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>94</sup> Bernard Green to *New York Tribune*, April 32, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Figure 42: One of the cost-cutting measures undertaken by Green was to use Milford Granite rather than marble for the base of the building. The color difference between the two stones is discernible in this 1906 photo. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

## Construction and Design Refinement

On May 22, Green reported to the Library Commission the results of the call for bids. Only two bids were received. The first, from Charles McCaul of Philadelphia, was for \$382,379. The second, from Norcross Brothers of Worcester, Massachusetts, was for \$409,784. Both bids were significantly above the “less than \$300,000” available to complete the project.<sup>95</sup> Green expressed the belief that no other bids were made because contractors were aware that they were unlikely to be able to produce a bid within that limit. He expressed disappointment in Ackerman & Ross, since “notwithstanding specific directions given to the architects in March, to reduce the cost of the stone work of the exterior, as well as that of many of the items and details of the interior, they had not, after several weeks [sic] time, accomplished as much of that as they should, and as to the stone work made practically no change whatever.” He also added, “It has been very unfortunate that the original drawings indicated a very expensive building, and that as a consequence the architects have worked rather with an effort to make the money go as far as possible than to keep safely within its limit.” Rather than accepting either of the bids as offered, Green proposed working with the low bidder, Charles McCaul, to reach a new agreement.<sup>96</sup> In a letter to Ackerman & Ross of May 27, Green expressed a desire to bring the construction costs down to \$279,300.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, May 22, 1900, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>96</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, May 22, 1900.

<sup>97</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, May 27, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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On June 2, 1900, Green wrote to the *Evening Star*, *Washington Post*, and *Washington Times* to place an advertisement for bids for the excavation, foundation, and drainage only. Bids were due June 16.<sup>98</sup> On July 20, he reported to the Library Commission that bids had been received and that the lowest bidder was Columbia Construction Company. However, he added that he believed that company to be unreliable and found their bid to underestimate the excavation needed by forty to fifty percent. Therefore, he recommended accepting the bid of the next lowest bidder, Richardson & Burgess, which came in at \$18,108.<sup>99</sup> Richardson & Burgess offered to reduce their estimated cost by \$715 if the grade were raised twelve inches, and Green accepted pending Library Commission approval. At the same time, he approved the use of Vulcanite Portland cement for the foundation, as long as it was also approved by the District of Columbia Chemist's inspector.<sup>100</sup>

In July 1900, Green prepared for a second round of bids for the general contract. On July 23, he proposed to Ackerman & Ross that they might further reduce the thickness of the exterior stone as well as the ornamental ironwork. He also suggested substituting plaster for the soffit marble in the main stair.<sup>101</sup> On July 31, he again wrote to the newspapers to place an advertisement for a general contracting bid to run August 1-7. The bids were to be opened August 18.<sup>102</sup> An August 8 letter from Green to the D.H. Hayes company, which was considering making a bid, says "You will observe that close figuring will be necessary to secure the work. I believe it can be done, for we have twice reduced the design and specifications in order to secure the building for the funds available and retain a suitable white marble or granite for the exterior walls."<sup>103</sup> Evidently, at this point Green was no longer considering limestone as an acceptable exterior cladding substitute.

Richardson & Burgess completed the excavation, foundation, and drainage by August 17, 1900, which was approximately what the schedule specified. On August 18, Green reported to the Library Commission that the bids for the general contract had been received and opened. There were two bids, but the first from John H. Parker Co., exceeded the available funds. Richardson & Burgess's bid was for \$277,000. It specified that the exterior would be completed in Vermont "B" grade white marble, but that Milford pink granite would be substituted at the basement level

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<sup>98</sup> Bernard Green to *The Evening Star* Newspaper Co., June 2, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>99</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, June 20, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>100</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, June 20, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>101</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, July 23, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>102</sup> Bernard Green to *The Evening Star* Newspaper Co., July 31, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>103</sup> August 8, 1900 – Bernard Green to D.H. Hayes Company, August 8, 1900, Box 34, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archives, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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up to the water line.<sup>104</sup> The marble would be provided by the Vermont Marble Company, while the granite would be supplied by the Bay State Granite Company of Milford, located in Worcester, Massachusetts. Green awarded the contract to Richardson & Burgess.

Other subcontracts executed by Richardson & Burgess included:

1. Structural steel – Carnegie Steel Company
2. Structural iron work – James H. McGill
3. Plaster work – Thomas E. Lendon
4. Electric lighting – National Electric Supply Company
5. Metal and skylight work – A.S. Reavis
6. Plumbing – R.B. Caverly
7. Millwork – W. T. Galliher & Bro.
8. Hardware – James B. Lambie
9. Heating and ventilation – W.W. Biggs Heating and Ventilation Company
10. Terra cotta work – Globe Fireproofing Company
11. Interior marble work – Hillgartner & Sons
12. Mosaic floors – National Mosaic Company
13. Ornamental Iron – Snead & Company Iron Works

Further contracts were executed directly by the Library Commission. These included:

1. Book stacks – Snead & Co. Iron Works
2. Electrical fixtures – C.H. Muddiman & Company
3. Electric elevator – Marine Engine & Machine Company
4. Sculptor – Philip Martiny
5. Furniture – Robert Mitchell Furniture Company<sup>105</sup>

Philip Martiny, who was responsible for the exterior marble ornamentation as well as the plaster clock surround in the Delivery Room, was specifically requested by Ackerman & Ross, who had worked with him in Atlanta on the Carnegie Library building there. Martiny was a French sculptor with experience in American Beaux-Arts architecture: he had previously worked for McKim, Mead & White on their palatial Agriculture Building at the Chicago World's Fair (circa 1893).<sup>106</sup> He was also one of many sculptors to work on the Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress.<sup>107</sup> Although the Vermont Marble Company was originally awarded the exterior

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<sup>104</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, August 18, 1900, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>105</sup> "Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia," Survey (photographs, measured drawings, written historical and descriptive data), Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior (1988), 7.

<sup>106</sup> Kaegi, *Architectural Design and Sculptural Decoration of the Washington, D.C. Public Library Building*, 4.

<sup>107</sup> Kaegi, *Architectural Design and Sculptural Decoration of the Washington, D.C. Public Library Building*, 13.



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sculpture as part of their contract, Green agreed with Ackerman & Ross that Martiny was “a more competent and artistic sculptor than is currently contemplated by the contractors.”<sup>108</sup>

Accordingly, with the permission of the Vermont Marble Company, Martiny was contracted in November 1900 to provide “not only five large pieces with six human figures and two heads, but many ornaments and column capitals, festoons, keystones, etc.”<sup>109</sup> Although the Vermont Marble Company was prepared to provide the sculpture for \$700, it was agreed that Martiny would be paid \$2,000.<sup>110</sup>

From late 1900 and into early 1901, Ackerman & Ross were still determining their preferred design details. In a letter of November 14, 1900, they specified that they wished the exterior entrances to be veneered oak, stained dark green, with plate glass (at this stage, the earlier vision of bronze doors had been cast aside entirely). For the south entrance, they also wanted metal rosettes in bronze with antique green finish or cast iron with Bower-Barff finish.<sup>111</sup> On the interior, they noted that they assume wooden bases for wooden floors and Keene’s cement bases for granolithic floors, having previously specified marble bases for marble floors. They requested that room skirting be made of Vermont white or green marble, and not Tennessee marble. Finally, their intent for the interior wood floors was to stain them dark green and finish them with wax or varnish.<sup>112</sup> Correspondence from December 8 clarifies that in Rooms XLI, XLIA, and XLIB, specifications were that the door trims were to be quartered oak, while “the trims of openings, the columns, pilasters, and dado cap” would be Keene’s cement.<sup>113</sup>

As Ackerman & Ross supplied their preferences, Bernard Green often had to curtail their expectations. In a letter to Richardson & Burgess of October 29, 1900, Green noted that Ackerman & Ross intended the roof to be green slate, but that later specifications called for black slate to reduce costs. Green considered at this point reintroducing the green slate, as the Alden Speare’s Sons Company of New York offered to provide it for only “\$6.65 per square.”<sup>114</sup> In November, Green informed Ackerman & Ross that, because their specifications were not supplied in time, they could not expect the contractors to wax and varnish the floors, nor to use Keene’s cement for the trims and bases in Room XLI, nor to provide Keene’s cement bases for

<sup>108</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, November 19, 1900, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>109</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, November 19, 1900.

<sup>110</sup> Kaegi, *Architectural Design and Sculptural Decoration of the Washington, D.C. Public Library Building*, 16.

<sup>111</sup> Bower-Barff finish is a rust-resistant, black finish compatible with steel or iron.

<sup>112</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, November 14, 1900, Box 32, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>113</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, December 8, 1900, Box 32, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>114</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, October 29, 1900, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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granolithic floors. However, he offered Portland cement bases for granolithic floors instead.<sup>115</sup> Ackerman & Ross also requested bronze hardware with “verde antique” finish throughout, but Green decided to substitute plain bronze.<sup>116</sup> Green also added the plate glass to the reading room doors so that patrons could see if there was someone approaching on the other side, although Ackerman & Ross’s specifications called for the doors to the main reading room, the open shelf room, and the children’s reading room to pine covered in leather.<sup>117</sup>

The cornerstone of the library building was laid Wednesday, April 14, 1901.<sup>118</sup> By June 13, the building walls had reached the second story, but a delay in the steel for the roof, supplied by subcontractor James H. McGill, brought a halt to construction progress in September.<sup>119</sup> When the delay reached, Richardson & Burgess withdrew their contract from McGill in January 1902 for nonfulfillment of terms.<sup>120</sup>

During the time that work was stopped Green had continued to work with Ackerman & Ross as well as Richardson & Burgess to refine the final design. On September 18, 1901, Green wrote to Theodore Noyes to describe the changes made in the design of the exterior marble work:

You may understand the principal changes in the exterior if you have a copy of the perspective at hand by noting that the medallions in the upper cornice of the two wings are omitted and a small ornament instead is distributed along the crest of the wall. Also that the cresting ornament on the top of the central pavilion walls has been substituted by a plainer line containing fewer and simpler ornaments. The consoles or small brackets shown in the original perspective just under the upper cornice of the central pavilion are also omitted. Otherwise, excepting of

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<sup>115</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, November 17, 1900, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>116</sup> Ackerman & Ross to Bernard Green, March 1, 1901, Box 32, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, June 20, 1901, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>117</sup> Bernard Green to Ackerman & Ross, February 18, 1901, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>118</sup> John A. Ross to Bernard Green, April 18, 1901, Box 32, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>119</sup> Bernard Green to Sneed Iron Works, June 13, 1901, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Bernard Green to Theodore Noyes, September 13, 1901, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>120</sup> Bernard Green to John W. Ross, January 23, 1902, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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course the statues sketched on the tops of the four pedestals at the main entrance, no noticeable change has been made in the original design.<sup>121</sup>

Green also wrote to Richardson & Burgess many times. On November 12, 1901, he reported that the Library Commission had finalized the names they wished to be incised in the frieze of Room XXXIII, choosing Homer, Shakespeare, Plato, Bacon, Galileo, and Newton.<sup>122</sup> On January 7, 1902, he specified that the floors would be of “fine and straight-grained Georgia Pine.”<sup>123</sup> On January 14, he supplied the finishes for the flooring chosen by Ackerman & Ross: for the oak doors and trim, a stain of bluestone, sulphate [sic] of iron mixed in ammonia, shellacked and finished in wax; for the floors, white shellac finished in yellow wax.<sup>124</sup>

The many details of the design had depleted the funds provided by Carnegie to the point that, on July 8, 1902, Green wrote to the Library Commission that they would not be able to cover the cost of the interior paint, although he promised that the remainder of the architects’ designs would be completed.<sup>125</sup> Aside from paint, the interior was essentially complete. Richardson & Burgess transferred the first-floor keys to Green on December 3, 1902.<sup>126</sup> Three days later, Green reported to the Library Commission that the building was finished, with the exception of the stair rail provided by Snead & Company Iron Works. Green recommended that the Library Commission accept the building from Richardson & Burgess as complete on December 15, with the stipulation that the stair rail must still be completed.<sup>127</sup> Green continued to work with contractors, including the Milford Pink Granite Company, Cranford Paving Company, and Washington Granite Monumental Company, to finish the exterior approaches.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Bernard Green to Theodore Noyes, September 18, 1901, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>122</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, November 12, 1901, Bernard Green to Theodore Noyes, September 13, 1901, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>123</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, January 7, 1902, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>124</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, January 14, 1902, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>125</sup> Bernard Green to Richardson & Burgess, January 14, 1902, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>126</sup> Note by Bernard Green, December 3, 1902, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>127</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, December 6, 1902, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>128</sup> Bernard Green to Norcross Bros., October 15, 1902, Box 35, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Bernard Green to Col. Theodore A. Bingham, February 2, 1903, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Bernard Green to Washington Granite Monumental Co, May 26, 1903, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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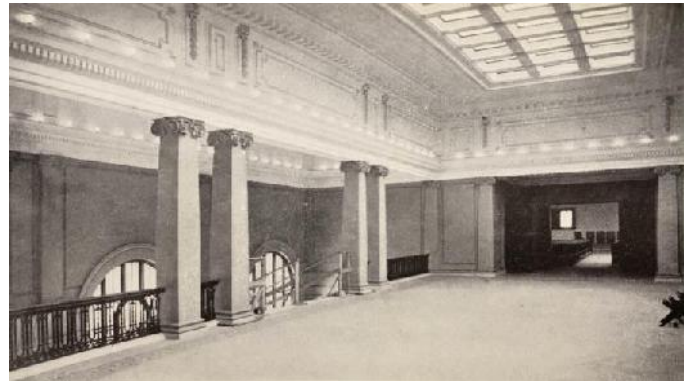


Figure 43: Early Views of the Central Public Library, 1902. Clockwise from top left: exterior north elevation; first floor delivery room; second floor lobby; stack room; second floor lecture hall, and first floor reading room. Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia, 1902, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

The building was dedicated January 7, 1903. Andrew Carnegie attended, going against his usual practice of refusing to appear at dedications for the libraries he funded. In his speech, he praised the Library Commission and the mission of free libraries, saying, "Free libraries maintained by

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the people are cradles of democracy, and their spread can never fail to extend and strengthen the democratic ideal.”<sup>129</sup>

## Opening and Early Operations

When the building opened in January 1903 as the Washington Public Library, it held 250,000 volumes in the closed stacks and additional volumes on the open shelves in the fiction and general reference rooms.<sup>130</sup> The introduction of open shelving reflected the latest trends in library science; however, the closed stack system, which housed the majority of the library’s collection, was quickly becoming obsolete. In an article on developments in library architecture published in July 1898, William E. Forster observed that “It is evident from a study of [ ] recent buildings that the stack is not yet eliminated as a feature in library arrangements and construction. Yet it is noteworthy that the movement in the direction of open shelves is very well intrenched, even in those libraries which have a stack.”<sup>131</sup> The Carnegie Library’s closed stacks were too narrow to allow patrons access, but limited open shelf space could accommodate only 25,000 to 35,000 books out of a total collection of 382,352 in 1903.<sup>132</sup> Thus, the new building was partially outdated before it even opened to the public.

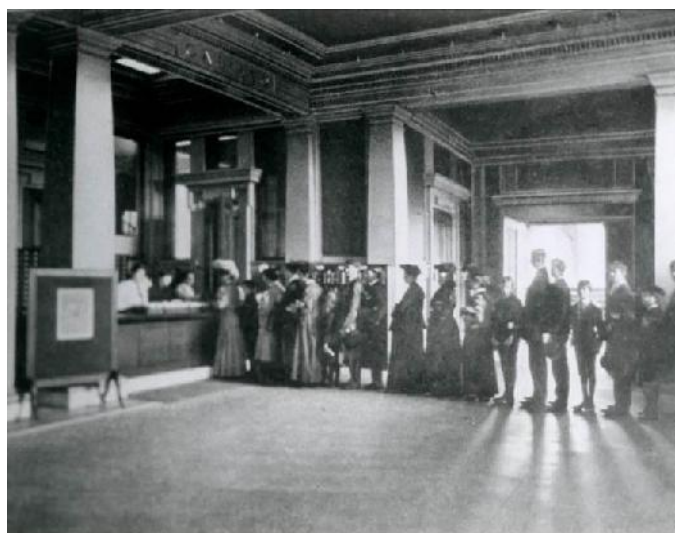


Figure 44: A line at the delivery desk circa 1901-1905 is evidence of the library’s immediate popularity. Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

The space limitations of the new building were exacerbated by the library’s instant popularity. By 1903, demand was already exceeding the capacity of the building as well as the staff. Andrew Carnegie had offered to finance the construction of branch libraries, but Congress had not yet accepted, fearing the maintenance costs that would arise from stewardship of further

<sup>129</sup> “Public Library,” *Evening Star*, January 7, 1903, [www.newsbank.com](http://www.newsbank.com) (accessed June 15, 2016).

<sup>130</sup> Although the building is commonly referred to as the Carnegie Library, that has never been its official name.

<sup>131</sup> William E. Foster, “New Ideas in Library Buildings,” *The American Architect and Building News* Volume LXI, No. 1179 (July-September 1898): 39.

<sup>132</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 30.



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structures. Instead, the Public Library established experimental library deposit stations, open a few hours each week. The first of these locations, Neighborhood House, was located at 456 N Street, S.W. Though also very popular, the new location was not sufficient to address overcrowding at the Carnegie Library, which had reached circulation of 214,261 volumes per year. The overcrowding and lack of staff was exacerbated in February 1903 by the transfer of a large number of volumes from the Library of Congress and other government libraries in the area.<sup>133</sup>

The first head librarian, Colonel Weston Flint, resigned in 1903, having served since 1898. He was replaced by George F. Bowerman, the unanimous choice of the Board of Trustees. Bowerman had previously served as the Librarian for the Wilmington Institute Free Library in Delaware. Under Bowerman's leadership, six additional deposit stations, staffed by community association volunteers, were opened throughout the city during 1905-1906. Bowerman soon introduced nonfiction materials to the open shelf room and introduced Sunday hours. He also instituted a six-month apprenticeship course for job candidates, but relatively low salaries led to significant staff turnover.<sup>134</sup> This condition would continue to plague the library system for its first twenty-five years.<sup>135</sup>

Thanks to Bowerman's conviction that service to children was among the libraries most important charges, the Public Library had a particular interest in cooperation with local schools. A special library and reference room for teachers was established, and a small number of books were sent to local high schools. This program would eventually expand to a full-scale, citywide classroom deposit service. Bowerman appointed Clara Wells Herbert as children's director in 1907. In this position, she developed book sets to be delivered directly to classrooms. The success of the deposit stations and classroom programs inspired the Board of Trustees to push Congress harder for the establishment of branch libraries beginning in 1904. They were ultimately successful, and the first of these libraries, Takoma Park, would open in 1911.<sup>136</sup> Following the establishment of the first branch libraries, the Carnegie Library became known as the Central Library.

By 1909, the Central Library opened the Department of Useful Arts and Science, later to be renamed the Industrial Department. Additional divisions were added over time as needed, and included Technology, Sociology, Music, Fiction, Art, and Washingtoniana, the local history division. In 1913, the Public Library assumed local service for blind patrons, taking over from the Library of Congress; however, based on the preference of these patrons, the service was returned to the purview of the Library of Congress after only one year.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 34.

<sup>134</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 34-35.

<sup>135</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 41.

<sup>136</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 36-38.

<sup>137</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 108; 39.

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The Public Library system continued to expand through the 1910s and 1920s. In 1926, Congress amended the Organic Act to support development of branch libraries. Consequently, the Public Library presented a five-year extension program, that proposed, in part, expansion of the main library building. Instead, the Act authorized the Board of Trustees to rent suitable spaces in other buildings for branch libraries and distribution centers, a temporary solution for an ongoing problem. By the 1930s, it had become clear that the Central Library had “outgrown its accommodations and is unable to furnish ample and efficient service to the public.”<sup>138</sup> Rather than look for solutions within the existing building, to alleviate personnel overcrowding in the Central Library and reclaim space for public use the Library Board and staff slowly began to remove library operations from the main building. In 1931, the book acquisitions, cataloguing, and binding departments—including their heavy equipment—were relocated to a defunct Methodist church and later to the former Ford Motor Company Building on Pennsylvania Avenue.<sup>139</sup>

*Early Changes*

Although work on the new library building officially concluded upon the opening of the building on January 7, 1903, there was still some work that was accomplished in the early years of operation. After his visit to Washington for the dedication, Carnegie decided to donate an additional \$25,000 for the appointment of the building’s interior, which had been left unfinished due to insufficient funds. On June 18, 1903, Green reported to Albert R. Ross—no longer in partnership with Ackerman—that they would now be able to paint the interior walls. Ross devised a scheme that included a variety of rich colors as well as some gilding. Green hired Elmer E. Garnsey for the project.<sup>140</sup> Garnsey had also been the painter for the interior of the Library of Congress. The Library Commission accepted the proposed paint scheme with two alterations. First, though the majority of the basement rooms would remain unpainted, the future children’s reading room was to be painted the same olive gray and buff as the upstairs reading rooms; second, the Delivery Room was not to be painted “old red,” though another color was not specified.<sup>141</sup> A 2001 paint study found that old red was used regardless of the Library Commission’s objections.<sup>142</sup>

In addition to the paint scheme devised by Ross, the additional funds allowed Green to contract the Snead Iron Works to extend the iron stacks from three to five tiers, the height originally

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<sup>138</sup> “House DC Body Listens to Pleas For New Library,” *Evening Star*, 7 July 1937.

<sup>139</sup> “Public Library Has Moving Day,” *Washington Post*, January 25, 1931, M11, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>140</sup> Bernard Green to Elmer E. Garnsey, August 27, 1903, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>141</sup> “The Public Library: Work of Embellishing New Building to Begin Soon,” *Evening Star*, September 25, 1903, [www.newsbank.com](http://www.newsbank.com) (accessed June 22, 2016).

<sup>142</sup> Sara Chase and Lee Noel Chase, “A Brief Study of Historic Paints and Finishes in Selected Areas,” Draft Manuscript, 2001, 6.

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intended for the stack room.<sup>143</sup> He also purchased a dumbwaiter for the stack room and arranged for “minor remodeling of plaster work, enclosures for the rear basement stairs and elevator machinery, equipment of the bindery, the installation of cold water drinking fountains and filter, and the installation of a number of slop sinks and a kitchen sink.”<sup>144</sup> Other minor projects undertaken included the installation of a plaster clock piece by Martiny in the delivery room.<sup>145</sup> In 1905, Green commissioned Fred S. Gichner to supply basement window screens of 2” galvanized steel mesh, to be painted the same dark green as the window surrounds.<sup>146</sup> Another change made in the earliest years of operation was the addition of semi-flush and pendant lighting fixtures to several reading rooms, as the large windows were found to admit insufficient light.

Few alterations were made between 1905 and 1962. Around 1907, the Delivery Room was reconfigured, and the desk changed to a circle in the center of the room.<sup>147</sup> Though the purpose of other rooms was shuffled several times, minimal alterations were made to accommodate these moves. In 1926, the stone screens that covered the second story windows were removed as they did not allow sufficient light or air to enter the building.<sup>148</sup> In 1952, partitions and mezzanines were installed in the large reading rooms to provide more shelf space; however, the partitions were removable.<sup>149</sup>

In 1962, the first major expansion and renovation of the building was undertaken. Two rooms were enlarged, an elevator installed, a mezzanine was added in two of the reading rooms, and two boilers were replaced. The total cost, paid for by funds from Congress, was \$241,990. However, the renovations were only a temporary stopgap for the inability of the building to provide adequate services to library patrons.<sup>150</sup>

## **Later History and Building Evolution**

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<sup>143</sup> Bernard Green to Albert R. Ross, June 18, 1903, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>144</sup> Bernard Green to Library Commission, September 12, 1904, Engineers Reports 1899-1906, DCPL collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>145</sup> Bernard Green to Albert R. Ross, December 12, 1903, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>146</sup> Bernard Green to Fred S. Gichner, November 17, 1905, Box 36, Subseries II, Buildings and Grounds Series, LC Archive, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

<sup>147</sup> Board of Trustees of the District of Columbia Public Library, “Annual Report 1909,” no page number, DCPL Collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>148</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Central Public Library, Washington, District of Columbia, National Register #69000290, 2.

<sup>149</sup> Ward Bucher Architects, *Central Public Library Historic Structure Report*, Draft Manuscript (2002), 21.

<sup>150</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 109.

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Beginning in the late 1920s, the Library Board of Trustees had begun to explore alternatives to meet the growing demands of the system.<sup>151</sup> The earliest proposals were to expand the existing Central Library, either through the addition of wings on the 1903 building or through a new building on the square to the north, connected via a tunnel under Mount Vernon Place. Both proposals were met with no action. By the late 1930s, it was clear that there were no possible changes to the existing building that could accommodate the library's need for additional space. Focus shifted to finding a site on which to construct an entirely new building, and District-owned Square 491 arose as the favorite. Square 491, bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, Sixth Street, C Street, and John Marshall Place, N.W., was south of the District Municipal Complex. In 1939, Congress appropriated \$60,000 for the design of an "extensible" building, which, when completed, would occupy the entirety of the square and house the new central library. In 1940, it appropriated \$350,000 for the construction of one of the planned extensible units, to be located at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.<sup>152</sup>

Also in 1940, Head Librarian George F. Bowerman retired. He was replaced by his assistant librarian, Clara Wells Herbert. During World War II, Herbert oversaw the establishment of a War Reading Room at the Central Library, followed by a Work Interests and Home Interest Rooms for war workers. Libraries citywide accommodated Red Cross courses, feeding stations, rations board meetings and Civilian Defense information centers. To make room for this programming, in 1942 the administrative offices moved to a house at 707 Mt. Vernon Place, across the street from the Central Library. Meanwhile, the first section of the promised building at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue was constructed in 1941 to the design of Municipal Architect Nathan Wyeth. However, in 1942, the Office of Production Management refused a priority for the completion of the building for the Public Library. Due to wartime space needs, it was subsequently approved for completion as an office building for the federal government.

The Library was finally able to occupy 30,000 square feet in 1947, when the wartime agency occupying the building was dissolved. The library's administrative offices as well as the acquisitions, cataloguing, and preparations departments moved into the space. However, the planned additions were never completed, and the library never reclaimed the entirety of 499 Pennsylvania Avenue for public use. Instead, the library administrative offices remained at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue until the completion of the new Downtown Central Library in 1971-1972.<sup>153</sup> Also in 1947, Herbert retired and was succeeded by Harry N. Peterson, the former head of the Public Library in Fort Worth, Texas. Under Peterson's supervision, the various

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<sup>151</sup> The Board of Trustees, formed in 1898, is distinct from the Library Commission. The Board of Trustees was concerned with overall operations, while the Commission was formed in 1899 specifically to oversee the construction of the Central Library building (*Washington, D.C. Public Library Annual Report: 1898-1907*, 3-7, DCPL Collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, Washington, DC).

<sup>152</sup> Booz, Allen & Hamilton, *A Study of Central Library Facilities in the District of Columbia* (Washington: The National Capital Downtown Committee, 1961), 5. An "extensible" building is one that is designed initially to receive additions when expansion is needed. This design approach was frequently employed by the Office of the Municipal Architect during the early twentieth century.

<sup>153</sup> Booz, Allen & Hamilton, 5-6. The building at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue was demolished circa 1979.

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departments continued to vacate the Central Library for other locations. In 1955, the schools division moved to the Southwest Branch Library at Thomas Jefferson Memorial Junior High School (est. 1941). Also in the 1950s, the extension division and bookmobile service headquarters moved to the Northeast Branch Library (est. 1932).<sup>154</sup>

By the 1950s, the Central Library building was woefully inadequate to house the number of volumes in the collection. To address this issue, in 1950 the Central Library staff undertook a reorganization of the building. The aim of the project was to create more open shelving space. Staff successfully utilized 5,500 feet of previously underutilized space and increased the number of volumes available in open shelving from 35,000 to 150,000. At the same time, a new layout of rooms redistributed the load of patrons throughout the building.<sup>155</sup> However, the reorganization was clearly not a permanent solution, and Peterson began to push for a significant overhaul.

Owing to Peterson's efforts, the 1950s saw two major proposals that nevertheless failed to result in a new facility. The first, pursued between 1951 and 1953, planned for an expansion of the current Central Library at Mount Vernon Square. The plan was to be executed in two phases. First, a U-shaped addition would be constructed to the rear of the existing building. Second, at an undetermined future date, the original portion of the building would be demolished and replaced with new construction. Objections from the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the National Park Service killed the project by June 1953.<sup>156</sup> The second proposal was introduced in 1957, when the DC Urban Renewal Office suggested that a new library facility be included in the proposed Northwest Urban Renewal Project in the Mount Vernon Square neighborhood, adjacent to the existing Central Library. Although not Peterson's preferred solution (which would have been a new location in the heart of the downtown business district), he accepted the idea, suggesting that the new facility contain at least 250,000 square feet of space, be five stories high, and emphasize functional design utilizing an open interior plan. However, no plans ever materialized, as the Northwest Urban Renewal Project was halted pending final settlement of the design of the freeway system proposed to run through the Mount Vernon Square area. The freeway was ultimately never constructed.<sup>157</sup>

*Relocation of the Central Library*

In early 1961, the National Capital Downtown Committee (NCDC) hired the management consulting firm of Booz, Allen & Hamilton to study the current and future needs of a Central Library in the District of Columbia with an eye towards construction of a new library facility in downtown Washington.<sup>158</sup> Included in the scope of the report was assessment of the "(1) present

<sup>154</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 46; 108-109.

<sup>155</sup> EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 108.

<sup>156</sup> Booz, Allen & Hamilton, 7-9.

<sup>157</sup> Booz, Allen & Hamilton, 10.

<sup>158</sup> EHT Traceries, Inc. and Martinez + Johnson Architecture, *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library: Historic Structure Report*, Vol. 1, prepared for the District of Columbia Public Library, December 2016, 32.



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and projected population grown of the Washington metropolitan area, (2) past, present and future employment patterns in and around the Downtown of Washington, D.C., (3) economic status and age distribution of metropolitan area residents, (4) planned development of rapid transit facilities serving and/or intersecting downtown, and (5) tourist and other transient population trends.”<sup>159</sup>

In March 1961, representatives of Booz, Allen & Hamilton began their study with a tour of the existing Central Library and the administrative building at 499 Pennsylvania Avenue. According to Peterson, the firm representatives were impressed by the cramped conditions. Initial estimates indicated that approximately 345,000 to 360,000 gross square feet would be required in a new facility, at least 268,000 more than the 77,000 available in the existing facilities.<sup>160</sup>



Figure 45: The Booz Allen Hamilton report included photos of the crowded conditions in both public and private spaces at the existing Central Library. “A Study of Central Library Facilities in the District of Columbia,” prepared for the National Capital Downtown Committee, Inc. by Booz, Allen & Hamilton, July 10, 1961, 66-68.

The final Booz, Allen & Hamilton report analyzed a variety of topics, including the role and capacity of a central library, its ideal location within an urban area, Washington-area demographics, the logistics of an integrated library system, space arrangements, and architectural styles. It also analyzed several previous studies dating back to the 1940s and compared computed space needs with projected future population growth. According to the report, existing facilities provided “only 35% of the space necessary to perform efficiently and adequately the activities now being undertaken, and only 25% of the space needed to provide a full range of library services.”<sup>161</sup> In conclusion, the report offered five overall recommendations:

1. A new central library structure should be building containing at least 400,000 square feet.
2. The building should be located as near to the heart of the business district as possible.

<sup>159</sup> Draft Copy of Agreement Between the National Capital Planning Commission and Booz, Allen & Hamilton, DCPL Board of Trustees Minutes, November 21, 1960; DCPL Collection, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King, Jr., Library, Washington, DC, as cited in EHT Tracerics, Inc. and Martinez + Johnson Architecture, 32.

<sup>160</sup> EHT Tracerics, Inc. and Martinez + Johnson Architecture, 32-34.

<sup>161</sup> Booz, Allen & Hamilton, iv.

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3. The building should be located on a level, rectangular plot of land containing a minimum of 50,000 square feet of space.
4. One additional story should be provided on the building for ultimate expansion. This space can be used for District of other governmental offices until needed by the library.
5. The proposed new structure should be modern inside and out, with low ceilings, central heating and air conditioning. Permanent walls, columns, or partitions should be kept minimal.<sup>162</sup>

In these conclusions, the report echoed the conclusions of several general library planning studies sponsored by the American Library Association, chief among them Wheeler and Githens's *The American Public Library*: "The location of the library should attract and serve the greatest number of people...A public library building is first of all a public service plant and not a monument. The ideal site for a library building is where a large department store, a popular bank, the busiest office building or drug store could be successfully located. It is vital to secure such a site."<sup>163</sup>

The Booz, Allen & Hamilton report was presented to the Library Board of Trustees in the fall of 1961, and the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to accept the report. In February 1962, the Board formally selected a site at Ninth and G Streets, N.W. for the new library building, termed the Downtown Central Library to differentiate it from the existing Central Library at Mount Vernon Square. However, funding to purchase the site was not forthcoming until the spring of 1965. The District then began the process of acquiring the existing buildings on the site, which took until December 1966. Meanwhile, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was approved by the Board to design the building in October 1965. Van der Rohe's design was wholeheartedly approved by the CFA, the NCPC, the Library Board, and the public. Construction began in the summer of 1968 and the Downtown Library, by then renamed the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, opened at 901 G Street, NW on August 21, 1972, ushering in the end of the Carnegie Library's use as the main public library of the District of Columbia.<sup>164</sup> During this time, The significance of the Central Public Library was recognized with the successful listing of the building in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1969.

*University of the District of Columbia*

The Carnegie Library building was vacant from 1972 until 1977, when the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) purchased the building to serve as the library and president's office for a new campus to be built north of Mount Vernon Square. By this time, the slate roof thought to have been installed on the building originally had been replaced with copper; however, the

<sup>162</sup> EHT Tracerics, Inc. and Martinez + Johnson Architecture, 32.

<sup>163</sup> Harry N. Peterson, "Where to Build?" *Library Journal*, Vol. 77 (December 15, 1952), 2100; cited in EHT Tracerics, *DC Public Library Survey*, 157.

<sup>164</sup> EHT Tracerics, Inc. and Martinez + Johnson Architecture, 34-67.

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exact date of this change is unknown.<sup>165</sup> The building was in poor condition from its six year of neglect; looters had taken copper from the boiler and pipes, bronze hardware, and leaded glass from the skylights. Funds for a renovation were provided by Congress.<sup>166</sup>

The largest change implemented during the UDC renovation was the reorientation of the building through the construction of a new main entrance on the north elevation. A single flight of stairs with a large landing was constructed over the top of the existing basement-level entrance. The bottom windows of the central bay were removed and the marble ashlar between became posts supporting an overhang that covered the double door and two adjacent windows.

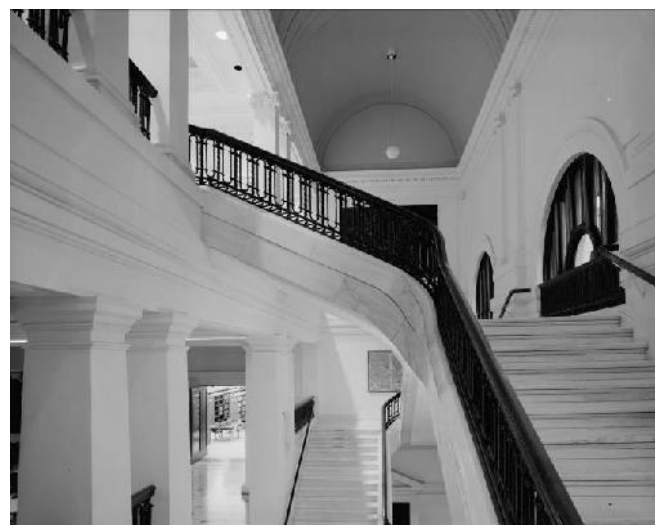


Figure 46: Carnegie Library during UDC operation, view views of modified north stair and entrance (above left) and interior stair (above right), 1985. Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey.

Other renovations included the removal of the book stacks, addition of a large HVAC unit above the central skylight, and new lighting. The former stack room and lecture room were converted into office spaces. The delivery counter in the main lobby was also removed so that the space could accommodate art exhibitions. The existing stairway at the west side of the northern portion of the building was altered. The original decorative plasterwork was coated in an additional 1/4" to 5/8" of plaster.<sup>167</sup>

The total cost of the restoration was \$4.2 million. The building re-opened in 1980, but by then the plan to relocate UDC's campus to the Mount Vernon Square neighborhood had been abandoned. The renovated facility was eventually taken over by UDC's architecture

<sup>165</sup> Chatelain, Samperton & Carcaterra, Roof Plan Demolition (Drawing A-4), Renovation of Old Central Library [Architectural Drawing], in Renovation of Old Central Library [Architectural Drawing Set]. February 25, 1977.

<sup>166</sup> Lawrence Feinberg, "Old Library Will Be Renovated to Serve as Library, UDC President's Office," *Washington Post*, June 1, 1978, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>167</sup> Ward Bucher Architects, 23.

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department.<sup>168</sup> By 1993, UDC was no longer using the building and had fenced off the building and portions of the square, which had become dilapidated; however, UDC retained ownership of the building until 2000-2001.<sup>169</sup>

*City Museum/Historical Society of Washington*

In 1999, Congress designated the Carnegie Library as the site for a city museum. The act made \$2 million available for the project, provided local officials could match the funds. The Historical Society of Washington (HSW), which would operate the museum, would lease the building for one dollar a year for 99 years. Also in 1999, the newly named City Museum of Washington was added to the list of official projects recognized by Save America's Treasures, a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. UDC vacated the Carnegie Library to make way for these new uses.<sup>170</sup> Mayor Anthony A. Williams claimed that "we don't have a true identity as a city if we don't recognize our own history."<sup>171</sup> Renovations to the building made to accommodate the City Museum, which opened in the spring of 2003, included: a newly constructed 150-seat theater in the east wing of the building; a new stairway in central-east portion of the building; community galleries focusing on DC neighborhoods; two galleries, a public reading room, and a library on the second floor; and an archaeology lab, with classrooms and workshops in the basement. The museum's "iconic" exhibit resided in the permanent exhibition room, formerly the west reading room on the first floor.<sup>172</sup> Set into the floor and lit from below, the piece (which was removed during the 2017-2019 rehabilitation) is a large-scale aerial photograph (made up of pieced together satellite images) of the hundred-square-mile terrain of the original District of Columbia. HSW, moving from the Heurich House in Dupont Circle, designated the third floor as their office space.

Although the City Museum only remained operational from May 2003 through November 2004, HSW remained in the building, and continued to operate a research library and special exhibits.

*EventsDC/Other Uses*

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<sup>168</sup> Judith Valente. "UDC Opens \$4.2 Million Library, But Its Campus Not Likely to Be Built," *Washington Post*, December 11, 1980, Proquest Historical Newspapers

<sup>169</sup> Linda Wheeler, "A Museum the District Can Call Its Own," *Washington Post*, March 2, 2001, Proquest Historical Newspapers; DDOT Back in Time, "Carnegie Library," <https://ddotlibrary.omeka.net/items/show/86> (accessed October 23, 2017).

<sup>170</sup> Linda Wheeler, "A Museum the District Can Call Its Own," *Washington Post*, March 2, 2001, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>171</sup> Linda Wheeler, "City Museum Closer to Reality: Group Leases Building; Focus Will Be D.C. Neighborhoods," *Washington Post*, 16 July 1999, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>172</sup> Benjamin Forgey, "An Elegant House of History; Old Library a Fine Fit for the City Museum," *Washington Post*, 16 May 2003, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

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Following the closing of the City Museum, the HSW continued to occupy the space, holding responsibility for its operations and maintenance. Faced with the loss of anticipated income from the failed Museum, HSW looked to the District Government for assistance. This was provided in 2011 in the form of an agreement with the Washington Convention and Sports Authority. That same year, the city's unveiled a new brand, EventsDC, which, acting on behalf of the District of Columbia, signed a lease amendment for the Carnegie Library with HSW, which allowed EventsDC to take over a majority of the building lease. In return, EventsDC agreed to operate and maintain the building, with HSW continuing to maintain a research and museum presence on site.<sup>173</sup>

Between 2017 and 2019, under the administration of EventsDC, Apple Inc, leased the majority of the building and undertook its substantial rehabilitation to support a retail store and cultural events spaces, as well as the continued use by HSW.<sup>174</sup> As a District-owned property within NCPC's Central Business Zone, the proposed rehabilitation was reviewed under Section 106. This included public consultation and reviews by the DC SHPO, NCPC, and CFA. As a result, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was executed.<sup>175</sup> The MOA called for mitigation including the preparation of a National Register Amendment, Historic Structure Report, and a Cultural Resource Inventory of Mount Vernon Square, and an exhibition on the building's history displayed in the building's former Bicycle Room. The approved rehabilitation project was designed consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and included the removal of non-original features that had resulted from the 2001-2003 renovation, such as the 150-seat theatre in the east wing, the raised map exhibit platform in the first floor of the west wing, two sets of non-original stairs in the second floor hall, and infill construction above the Delivery Room. Original plaster ceiling panels, laylights, and beams in the Delivery Room were also removed to create a two-story atrium with a new skylight above. The rehabilitation also resulted in the loss of a small amount of historic fabric elsewhere throughout the building, including a portion of the exterior granite pier on the north elevation. Despite this and other earlier renovation projects, the building retains a high degree of integrity and continues to convey its original use as a library. The retail and cultural events space, operated by Apple Inc., opened in May 2019. HSW continues to utilize portions of the building for its administrative offices, research library/reading room, archival storage, and exhibition gallery.

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<sup>173</sup> "Events D.C. gets 80% of Carnegie Library in deal with Historical Society," *Washington Post*, November 21, 2011.

<sup>174</sup> HSW moved out the building in 2017 to allow for the rehabilitation work. The organization returned to Carnegie at the completion of the project in 2019.

<sup>175</sup> *Memorandum of Agreement among the National Capital Planning Commission, the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office, the Washington Convention and Sports Authority, the Historical Society of Washington, DC, and Apple, Inc. Regarding the Carnegie Library Rehabilitation and Modernization Project in Washington, DC*, October 2017.

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*The Washington Post* Archive, Proquest Historical Newspapers.



Central Public Library

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the property are confined to the Central Public Library building and its immediate appurtenances to the north and south.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The site on which the Central Public Library was constructed is owned by the District of Columbia Government. Mount Vernon Square is separately owned by the United States Government. Because this nomination is being prepared and submitted on behalf of the District of Columbia, the property boundaries were confined to those under its ownership.

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**13. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Emily Eig, Alyssa Stein, Bill Marzella, Anna Dubansky

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street & number: 440 Massachusetts Avenue, NW

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e-mail: [eht@traceries.com](mailto:eht@traceries.com)

telephone: (202) 393-1199

date: June 2019

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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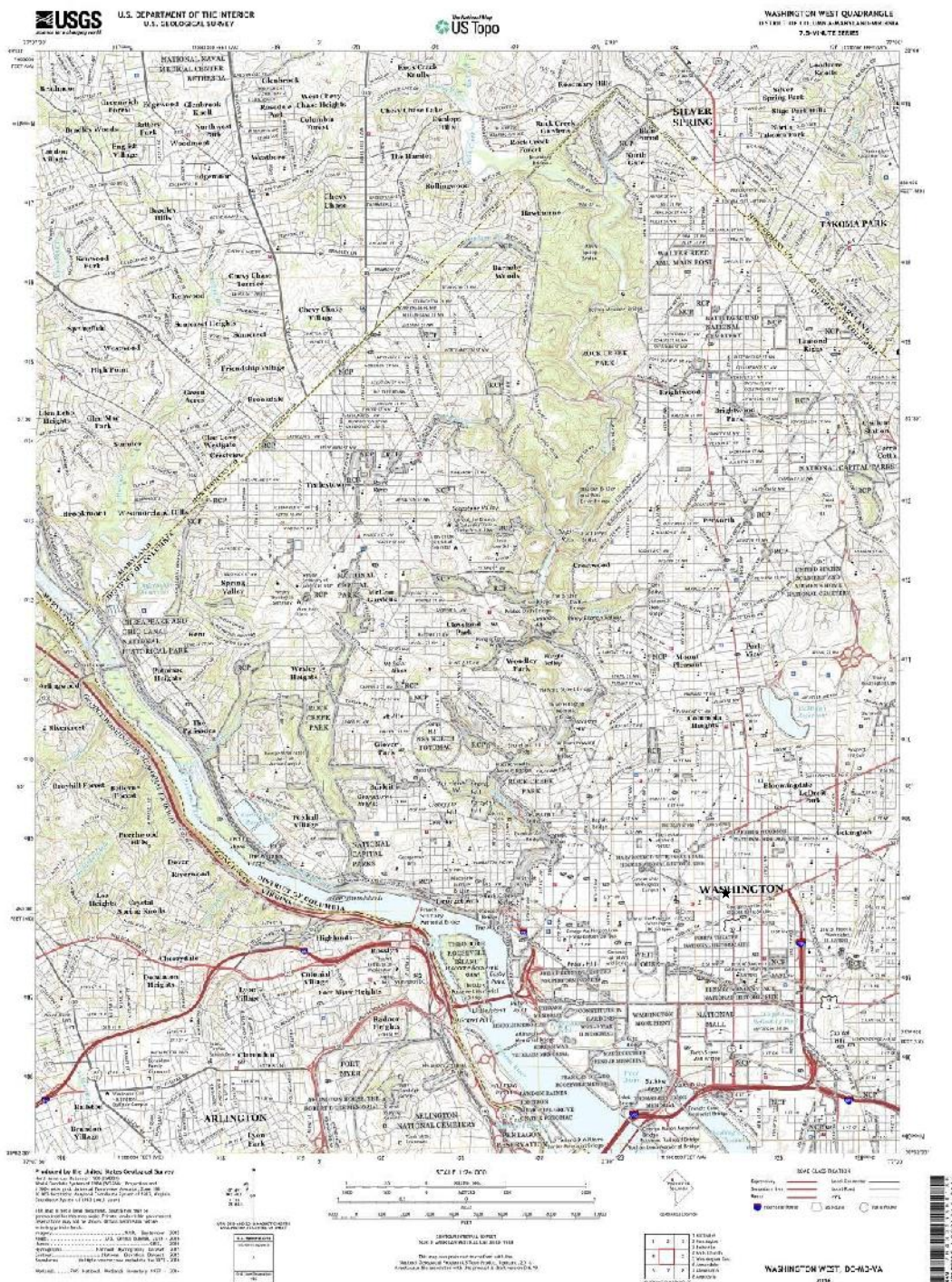


Figure 47: USGS Map, Washington West, 2016

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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Carnegie Library

City or Vicinity: Washington

County:

State: District of Columbia

Photographer: Alyssa Stein, Carleigh Hessian

Date Photographed: May 2019



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South and east elevation, looking northwest. 1 of 51.



North elevation, looking south. 2 of 51.



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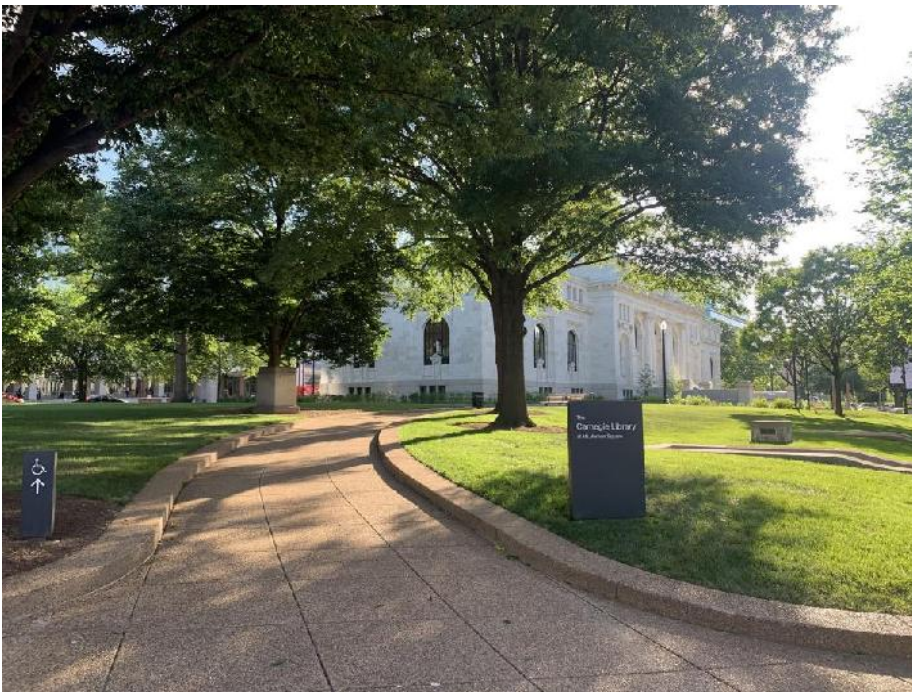
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West elevation, looking east. 3 of 51.



Southwest corner of site, looking northeast. 4 of 51.





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South elevation, looking north. 5 of 51.



Bioretention intervention within plantings, looking northwest. 6 of 51.



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Detail, handicapped entrance ramp, looking northwest. 7 of 51.



Main staircase. Image taken from eastern landing, looking southwest. Image 8 of 51.



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Main staircase. Image taken from western landing, looking east and down. Image 9 of 51.





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Delivery room and entrance vestibule, looking south. Image 10 of 51.



Delivery room, looking southeast. Image 11 of 51.





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Atrium, looking north. Image 12 of 51.



**Central Public Library**

Name of Property

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Atrium, looking northwest. Image 13 of 51.



**Central Public Library**

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Atrium, looking up and slightly southwest. Image 14 of 51.



**Central Public Library**

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Atrium, looking up and south. Image 15 of 51.



Stack room, looking west. Image 16 of 51.



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Stack room, looking north. Image 17 of 51.



East wing, looking east. Image 18 of 51.

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East wing, looking southeast. Image 19 of 51.



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Detail, wall unit in east wing. Image 20 of 51.



Detail, molding in east wing. Image 21 of 51.

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West wing door openings, looking southeast. Image 22 of 51.

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Western landing of main staircase, looking northeast. Image 23 of 51.



Main staircase. Image taken from western landing, looking up and east. Image 24 of 51.

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Barrel vaulted ceiling. Image taken from western landing, looking up and east. Image 25 of 51.



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Second floor hall. Image taken from central landing of main staircase, looking up and north.  
Image 26 of 51.



Main staircase, looking east. Image 27 of 51.



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Central landing of main staircase, looking south. Image 28 of 51.



Detail, back of marble pediment. Image taken from central landing of main staircase. Image 29 of 51.

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Second floor hall, looking east. Image 30 of 51.



Second floor hall, east vestibule, looking east. Image 31 of 51.



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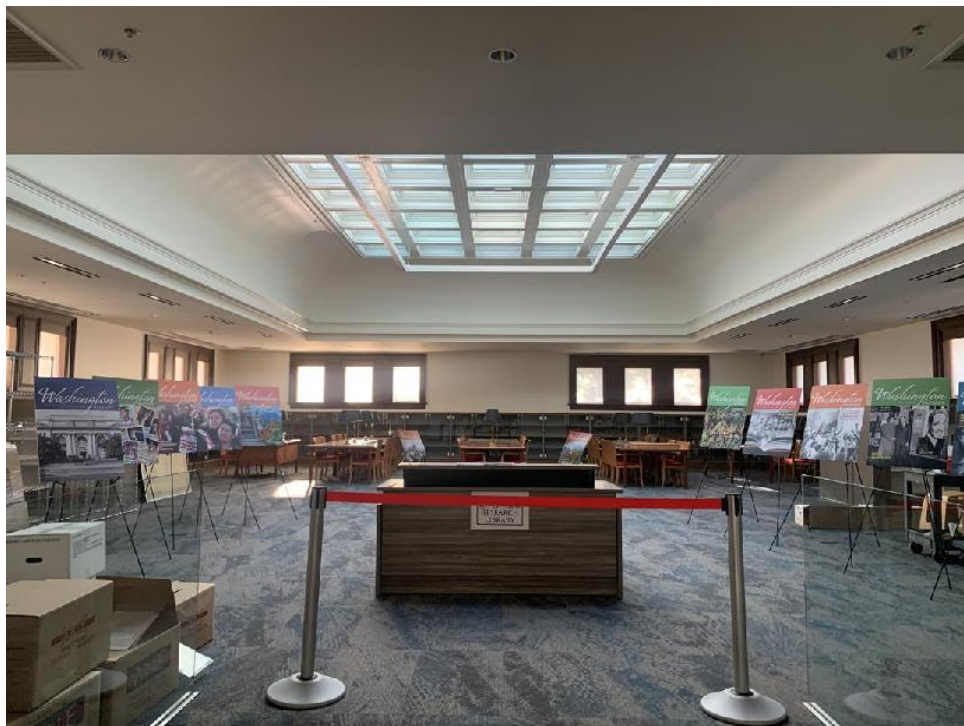
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Kiplinger Research Library, looking east. Image 32 of 51.



Kiplinger Research Library, skylight detail. Image 33 of 51.

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Second floor hall, west vestibule, looking west. Image 34 of 51.



West gallery, looking west. Image 35 of 51.



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West gallery, looking northeast. Image 35 of 51.



West gallery, looking south. Image 36 of 51.



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Second floor, anteroom, looking north. Image 37 of 51.



Second floor hall, looking north. Image 38 of 51.

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Atrium, second floor, looking down and northwest. Image 39 of 51.



Atrium, second floor, looking west. Image 40 of 51.



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Atrium, second floor, looking up and northwest. Image 41 of 51.





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North gallery, looking east. Image 42 of 51.





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Elevator vestibule, second floor, looking north. Image 43 of 51.



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HSW Office Spaces, looking east. Image 44 of 51.



Main stairway, looking down and west. Image 45 of 51.



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Main stairway, looking east. Image 46 of 51.



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Basement vestibule, looking east. Image 47 of 51.



Basement Vestibule, looking west. Image 48 of 51.





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Detail, Gustavino tile, basement. Image 49 of 51.



Basement gallery, looking south. Image 50 of 51.





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Basement gallery, looking east. Image 51 of 51.



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