

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 _____
Please summarize any amendment(s) _____

Property name Southeast Branch Library
If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.

Address 403 7th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

Square and lot number(s) Square 875, lot 1

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6B

Date of construction 1922 Date of major alteration(s) none

Architect(s) Edward L. Tilton Architectural style(s) Classical Revival

Original use Library Present use Library

Property owner DC Public Library

Legal address of property owner DC Public Library, 1990 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Capitol Hill Restoration Society

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) 420 10th Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

Name and title of authorized representative Elizabeth Purcell

Signature of representative _____ Date _____

Name and telephone of author of application Elizabeth Purcell 202 544-0178

Date received _____
H.P.O. staff _____

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Southeast Branch Library

other names/site number Southeastern Branch Library

2. Location

street & number 403 7th Street, SE

☐

not for publication

city or town Washington

☐

vicinity

state DC code _____ county _____ code _____ zip code 20003

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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 X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A _____ B X C _____ D

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

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.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY

REVIVALS/Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: _____

walls: Brick

roof: slate

other: _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Southeast Branch Library on Capitol Hill is a red brick, limestone-trimmed Classical Revival-style building prominently sited on a triangular-shaped lot between D Street and South Carolina Avenue, SE at 7th Street SE, directly across from the Eastern Market Metro plaza. The building, set upon a berm above street level, features a pedimented façade facing east to the plaza, and long side walls with arched window openings extending along the diagonal avenues. The building has a triangular footprint, dictated by its site, and is covered with a hipped roof. The principal entrance to the library is reached by a long flight of stairs leading from the sidewalk at 7th Street and is framed by the double-height pediment supported by paired, Giant order stone columns giving the building its Classical character.

The lot upon which the building sits is landscaped with shrubs and mature trees, on all sides, with plantings occupying the berm as it slopes down to a concrete retaining wall. The retaining wall encircles the lot and, at the 7th Street entrance steps, continues uninterrupted as the side walls to the broad stairs.

Narrative Description

Site

The library is located in lot 001 in Square 875, bounded by 7th Street, D Street, and South Carolina Avenue, S.E. Lot 001 is a five-sided polygon, which reads as an irregular triangle, with its eastern point truncated by 7th Street, and the western end by the lot line between lot 001 and lots 30 and 31. The library's footprint follows the property line of lot 001. Figure 1. The site's elevation rises approximately four feet from the street to the basement story, a condition shown in a 1922 construction photograph. Photo 2. The library occupies the entire site. Concrete stairs bisected by a metal railing lead from 7th Street up to the main entrance. Mechanical equipment is sited outside on the South Carolina Avenue (south) side, where there are also two outdoor seating areas reached from a gate in the rear. There is a small parking area at the rear of the library (west side). The north, south and east side are landscaped with shrubs and trees, including two large *Magnolia grandiflora* flanking the entrance stair. A concrete retaining wall and chain-link fence surround the library. There is a curb cut on the north (D Street) side leading to a small parking area at the rear of the building. In 2007, the Friends of the Southeast Branch Library paid for a new sign.¹

¹Elissa Silverman, "Makeover Artists Dust Off an Old Classic; Don't Judge Library Its Cover; Inside SE Branch is Hip." *Washington Post*, 12 July 2007, sec. DE, p. 1.

Southeast Branch Library Building

The library's dimensions are: south side: 73 feet, north side: 80 feet, west side: 33 feet on each side of the oblique angle, and, east side: 40 feet 6 inches. Figure 1, Site plan (1921). Edward L. Tilton's library is a Classical Revival design, three bays in front, five in the rear, seven on the north side, six on the south side, in red brick and limestone, two stories (basement and main). Figure 3. The large entrance portico, its pediment outlined in limestone dentils, is supported by two limestone Corinthian columns (acanthus and palm leaves), with a pair of Corinthian pilasters in the same pattern behind each column. Over the entrance in metal letters is "Southeastern Branch" and in the architrave, "Public Library." The dentils continue from the pediment to the limestone cornice.² A lantern hangs over the entrance. The entrance has a double-leaf door, which appears to be a replacement, surmounted by two six-light transoms, which also appear to be replacements, set in a stone tablet framed by scrolls. The five-pane scallop transom reads "403" in the center three panes. Photos 3-5. The windows on the main story are large, 10-over-15 arched semi-circular windows, single-hung, set in a round opening framed by headers with a keystone, allowing ample light into the reading rooms. Photos 4 - 8. Under each of these windows is a sunk panel. These windows appear to be replacements, because the metal sash liner enabling the sash to slide vertically would not original to the 1920s, the muntin profile looks too flat for a 1920s window, and because the window openings, visible in the interior, appear to have been altered.

On the rear (west) elevation are two pairs of the same large semi-circular windows. Photo 9.. On the basement level are square single-hung eight-over-eight windows with brick lintels and limestone sills, covered with metal bars (not original), and centered under the main story windows, plus one square window in the rear. These windows appear to be replacements. A limestone watertable divides the building and the two sets of windows. The brick coursing is a variation on American Bond 5:1, with the header course in Flemish Bond. On the D Street (north) side is a door (which appears to be original, based on Tilton's sketch of the library (Figure 3) and the brick coursing), an added ADA ramp, and another door on the D Street side closer to 7th Street, which appears to be non-original, (based on the altered brick coursing.) Photos 10-11.

The library has a shallow hipped roof covered in slate shingles. There is a door in the rear, which, based on the brick coursing, is original. Security cameras are mounted on the front and rear elevations.³

The library's exterior appears virtually unchanged from photos from 1927, 1962, and the 1970s. Photos 12 -14.

Interior

Carnegie's "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings," (1915), sent to all municipalities seeking funding for Carnegie libraries, strongly recommended a two-story building, with the main story devoted to reading rooms for adults and children, storage of books, and a basement story for lecture rooms, conveniences for staff and the public and a heating plant.⁴ The Southeast Branch Library follows Carnegie's recommendations.

Main level Marble steps, which appear to be original, lead from the entrance up to the main floor reading room, a single open space. Fluted wood Composite half columns and pilasters cover the support columns, and are repeated at the entrance stairs, with a single half column on the north and south wall. Photo 15. The wood framing over the entrance is typical of 1920s woodwork.⁵ All these features appear to be original; additionally, the columns and pilasters are visible in a 1968 photo of the interior. Photos 16- 17. The floors are covered in an alphabet-design green or brown wall to wall carpet.

There is a line of tables and chairs for computers running through the center of the room, from east to west, ending near the west wall. Wooden bookcases, approximately seven feet tall, line the outside walls. The children's books are on the north wall. Photo 18. On each side of the computer tables are metal bookcases, approximately seven feet tall, with

² In awarding the construction contract, the head librarian, president of the library board of trustees, and the Engineer Commissioner decided to approve a limestone cornice, which would cost \$3,000 more than a metal cornice. "Decides on \$67,000 Branch of Library," *Washington Post*, 5 Jan. 1922, 2.

³ DC Public Library Minutes of Trustees, Jan. 1922-Dec 1932, 23 Feb. 1922.

⁴ "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings," (1915), reproduced in Abigail A. Van Slyck, *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture: 1890-1920* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 221-223.)

⁵ *Homes and Interiors of the 1920's* (Ottawa, Canada: Lee Valley Tools Limited, (1987, 396), M-9001 door trim).(originally published as *Building with Assurance* (Morgan Woodwork Organization, (1923).

colorful photographs and quotes from the *Canterbury Tales*. On the center of the west wall is a fireplace (not operable) spanning the angle in the wall, part of the story hour space creating "the traditional Victorian home-like atmosphere." and faced in reddish brown tiles depicting characters from the *Canterbury Tales*, with a wood mantel and manteltree.⁶ The hearth is original. The librarians' desks flank the interior entrance. Photo 17. Photos 18-19. Simple circular glass chandeliers light the room.⁷ Photos 19-20.

In 1922, instead of an open space on the main level, there were several reading rooms, with open stacks where visitors could examine books, read them at tables in the reading rooms, and if they wished, borrow the books. On the south side was reference room, beginning at the front entrance, then moving toward the rear, the adults' reading room, and further back, another reading room, both with shelves. There was another reading room at the rear, and moving toward the front of the building, the children's room (an innovation from the Boston Public Library) and a room with open stacks. Figure 21. When it opened, the library was also furnished with shelving, desks, chairs, and tables in light wood with a greenish finish.

In 1922, a key feature on the main level was the charging desk in the center of the space (where the computer desks are now located.) As shown in the 1921 plans, Figure 21, visitors entering the main level immediately came to the charging desk (also known as the delivery desk) where they borrowed and returned books. The charging desk was wood-paneled octagonal, 13 feet 4 inches in diameter occupied the center of the floor, with shelving, trays, desk, and cash drawer, as shown in the 1921 plans and in a 1968 photograph). Photos 22, Photo 16. Tilton wrote that the charging desk was the heart of a small library, and it should be located, as it was in 1922, prominently in the center of the reading room, near the entrance.⁸ The charging desk was removed some time after 1968.

No early photographs of the interior were found. However, it is possible that in 1922 the main level was lit by circular metal chandeliers holding bare light bulbs, as in Tilton's Mount Pleasant Branch Library (1922). Photo 23. In 1968, the main level was lit by suspended florescent lights, probably replaced in 2007. In 1955, the fireplace was closed up (maintaining the fireplace mantel and decorative tiles), A stair leading from the story hour space to the basement was removed and an electric dumbwaiter was added.⁹

In 2007, architect Henry Myerberg volunteered to redesign the interior, replacing the ceiling and adding modern lighting, new checkout desks and wall to wall carpeting.¹⁰

Basement level. Today, marble steps lead down from the main level to the basement, which contains a staff workroom, staff lounge, a meeting room, and two toilets. In 1922, the basement level was used for both abandoned and current functions. As shown in the 1921 plans, Figure 24, in the rear (west side) was a coal storage room, a boiler room, and receiving; there is one window in this section, near the south side. On the south side, beginning at the west end (rear) of the building and moving toward the front (east side) were a bedroom (with toilet), living room; It is likely that the janitor, (one of the employees listed in the budget for the Southeast Branch), occupied the basement suite because his salary was listed as \$960 per year plus "\$120 allowance for quarters." Sample plans for Carnegie libraries show a room in the basement for the janitor.¹¹ These uses were discontinued. There were also two club rooms (meeting rooms) separated by an accordion door; each room linked by a double-loaded corridor to rooms on the north side, where, beginning at the rear (west side) were a teachers' room (adjacent to the receiving room), a staff room, a stack room, and a toilet. Two sets of stairs led up to the main level; only the stair at the front entrance remains. The double-loaded corridor is gone. In 1955 and 1982 the library was remodeled; the ADA ramp and elevator (1982) were added.¹²

⁶ Neal Gregory, President of the Friends of the Southeast Library, said the these tiles came from pottery at Doylestown, Penn. Interview 8 Feb. 2019. the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works, Doylestown, Penn., continues to produce decorative tiles with *Canterbury Tales* images. www.BucksCounty.org, Internet; accessed 8 Feb. 2019. Clara W. Herbert, "A New Branch Library in Washington," *The Library Journal*. Vol. 18 (Jan.-Dec. 1923, cited in EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 1998). Washingtoniana Collection.

⁷ Silverman, "Makeover Artists Dust Off an Old Classic."

⁸ Edward L. Tilton, "Library Planning," *The Architectural Forum* XLVII (1927) (Dec. 1927): 497-506, 499. Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 166-167.

⁹ Southeast Branch Library Remodeling (2 Aug. 1955), DC Public Library Archives. Herbert, "A New Branch Library in Washington

¹⁰ Silverman, "Makeover Artists Dust Off an Old Classic."

¹¹ DC Public Library Minutes of Trustees, Jan. 1922-Dec. 1932, 28 Sept. 1922. Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 38-39.

¹² Southeastern Branch Library plans (1921). DC Public Library Archives.

Landscaping

When built, the library had minimal landscaping; it was all in grass as of 1927. Photo 12. In 1962, the D.C. Highway and Traffic Department engaged landscape architect J.J. Bailes to prepare a landscape plan for the library. His list of plants is keyed to numbered circles. Photo 25. His plans included two Southern Magnolias, one on each side of the front steps; these trees are visible in photographs from the 1970s and 2018. Photos 4, 7, 8, 10, 14. Other plants for the front (7th Street) side included Japanese holly and Russian olive. He also planned privet and Russian olive as foundation plants on the D Street side; for the South Carolina side, abelias, Norway spruce, and Kwanzan cherries, forsythia and privet, and near the parking area, Washington hawthorns.

Item no.	Quantity	Botanical name	Common name
1	19	Abelia grandiflora	Glossy abelia
2	15	Azalea Kur. Hinodesiri	Dark red azalea
3	4	Cornus florida	White flowering dogwood
4	3	Cretegeus phaenopyrum	Washington hawthorn
5	6	Elegans augustifolia	Russian olive
6	4	Forsythia intermedia	Showy border forsythia
7	2	Ilex rotundifolia	Roundleaf Japanese holly
8	11	Ligustrum lucidum	Glossy privet
9	2	Magnolia grandiflora	Southern magnolia
10	1	Picea excelsus	Norway spruce
11	3	Prunus serrata Kwanzan	Double pink flowering cherry

The Capitol Hill Garden Club implemented Bailes' plan and provided most of the needed funds for planting. Capitol Hill Restoration Society and the Southeast Citizens Association also contributed funds. The Garden Club also contributed 20 books on gardening to the library.¹³ In addition to the magnolias, two cherries, a dogwood, and other shrubs remain. A crape myrtle was later added on the South Carolina side.

In 2007, a Girl Scout troop and Gingko Gardens, a Capitol Hill garden center, donated money and labor for additional landscaping, including the two patios on southern side of the building.¹⁴

Integrity

The Southeast Branch Library retains high integrity. The building is on its original site and retains its historic setting. There have been no additions, and alterations on the exterior are limited to a new door on the north side, and an ADA ramp. The building retains a high degree of integrity in design and materials.

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.)

¹³ "Branch of D.C. Library Aided by Landscaping," *Washington Evening Star*, 27 Apr. 1962, 29.

¹⁴ Silverman, "Makeover Artists Dust Off an Old Classic."

Property is:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A | Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | removed from its original location. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C | a birthplace or grave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D | a cemetery. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F | a commemorative property. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G | less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Period of Significance

1922

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Edward L. Tilton (Architect)

Period of Significance (justification)

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Southeast Branch Library, built in 1922, meets National Register Criteria A and C at the local level, with significance in Architecture, Education, and Community Planning and Development. The library was the third Carnegie library and the

second branch library to be constructed in the District. Brainard H. Warner, a successful real estate developer active in civic affairs, including serving on the library board of trustees, persuaded Andrew Carnegie to fund the first public library in the city, the central library at Mount Vernon Square. Dr. Bowerman, the chief librarian, led the effort to build branch libraries, and at the central library's dedication in 1903, Carnegie promised to pay for branch libraries. The library, with its children's reading room and story space near a welcoming fireplace, emphasized reading and education for children from the beginning, including a children's librarian, books for children, coordination with schools to supply books on schools' reading lists, plus story time. Dr. Bowerman led the way when he visited the library shortly after it opened and happily reported many children visiting the library, and that a large number of children had signed up for library cards. Through the decades, continuing into the present, children's education has remained an essential goal for librarians, Friends of the Southeast Branch Library, and residents.

The Southeast Branch Library also meets Criterion C, as an excellent example of Classical Revival design applied to library building, and an excellent example of the work of Edward L. Tilton, who worked for McKim, Mead & White while the firm was designing the Boston Public Library (1887 to 1895), who mastered the Classical Revival style, and designed many Classical Revival libraries. The Southeast Branch Library embodies the Classical Revival style in its symmetry, entrance portico, reading rooms on the piano nobile, large semi-circular windows on the main story, children's reading room, and shallow hip roof. Tilton succeeded in adapting the library to its constrained and irregular site.

The Period of Significance of the Southeast Branch Library is 1922, representing its period of construction.¹⁵

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

Education: The design, staffing, and operation of the Southeast Branch Library, prioritized children's learning from the beginning. The library featured a children's reading room and story space next to a fireplace, where a children's librarian told stories. Shortly after the library opened, librarians realized that they needed more children's books, and quickly obtained them from the central library. The librarians coordinated with neighborhood schools to insure that the library stocked the books on schools' reading lists. Elementary and high school students had their own spaces; the librarians stocked periodicals for high school students to read about current events. The library was a welcoming place for white and African-American children to read and do their homework. Through the decades, continuing into the present, children's education has remained an essential goal for librarians, Friends of the Southeast Branch Library, and residents.

Community Planning and Development: The Southeast Branch Library also represents a notable community planning effort. The Southeast Branch Library is significant under Education and Community Planning because it was the second branch library to be built in the District, and the third of the four Carnegie-funded libraries. Brainard H. Warner, a successful businessman active in civic affairs, and vice president of the Washington Public Library board of trustees, seized on a chance meeting with Andrew Carnegie to persuade Carnegie to fund public libraries in the city. The first library, the central library, opened in 1903 at Mount Vernon Square. Dr. Bowerman, the chief librarian, and Andrew Carnegie spoke at the ceremony, and Carnegie promised to build branch libraries, library trustees and Dr. Bowerman worked to add branch libraries, and after the first branch library opened in Takoma Park in 1911, two citizens organizations, Dr. Bowerman, and the library trustees began lobbying for a Southeast Branch Library.

They succeeded in getting funding from Congress in 1921, and then Carnegie paid for the Southeast Branch Library. The Southeast Branch Library is the result of the efforts of Dr. Bowerman and civic leaders to expand libraries. In later years, the Friends of the Southeast Library advocated for improvements to the library, and provided many educational programs. The Capitol Hill Garden Club carried out an extensive landscaping plan, and Girl Scouts and a local garden center added slate patios.

Architecture: The Southeast Branch Library has Architecture as its Area of Significance because it is an excellent example of Classical Revival style applied to a neighborhood library. McKim, Mead & White designed the Boston Library (1887 to 1895), a notable and highly influential Classical Revival building. The firm has been called "the undoubted masters and chief propagandists of Beaux-Arts Classicism." Classicism appealed because it echoed powerful, majestic images from

¹⁵Excavation for the library began in February 1922, and the library opened in December 1922. "Start on Branch Library," *Washington Post*, 25 Feb. 1922, 4. "The Public Library of the District of Columbia: Opening Exercises the Southeastern Branch Library, December 8, 1922, 8 p.m.," cited in EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 43).

the Roman Empire and order in a time of unrest in the late nineteenth century. The Boston Public Library trustees wanted a "palace for the people" so McKim, Mead & White based their design on a Renaissance palazzo and Labrousse's Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève; the most important rooms, the reading rooms, are on the second floor with higher ceilings (the piano nobile) and a "grand arcade" of large windows.¹⁶ Another key influence was Leon Battista Alberti's Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini.

Edward L. Tilton worked for McKim, Mead & White when that firm was designing the Boston Library (1887 to 1895); that experience, together with his training at the École des Beaux Arts, gave Tilton a thorough understanding of the Classical Revival style as applied to public buildings. He designed in this style throughout his entire career and specialized in libraries. The Southeast Branch Library incorporates key features of Classical Revival design: the first story (basement) subordinate to the piano nobile with large round windows lighting the reading rooms on the main level, symmetry, Classical ornament (a pedimented portico, Corinthian columns and pilasters), watertable delineating the stories (in place of rustication), and a hip roof.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Southeast Branch Library was built to meet the needs of a growing Capitol Hill community in the early twentieth century. A century earlier, businesses and residences developed near the Capitol and the Navy Yard. After the Civil War, Washington expanded rapidly. In the 1870s, the territorial government paved roads, installed water and sewer lines and streetlights, including on Capitol Hill.¹⁷ The Organic Act of 1878 obligated Congress to fund one-half of the city's expenses, ensuring that Washington would remain the nation's capital. Civil service reform, enacted in 1883, ended the spoils system¹⁸ and offered stable employment for federal government employees, including Capitol Hill residents.¹⁹ During this time, business leaders also accepted that the city would never become a manufacturing center, but instead, its economy would be centered on government and real estate, providing work for government employees and members of the building trades.²⁰

In the 1880s and 1890s, Capitol Hill was one of the few areas in the city with affordable land and amenities (nearby commercial areas and transportation). In the 1890s, streetcar service was available between East Capitol Street, H Street, NE and the Navy Yard to downtown. Car barns were built at 14th and East Capitol streets, 13th and D streets, NE and near the Navy Yard.²¹ These factors attracted developers and caused Capitol Hill to become a middle-class community of workers in government, the building trades, and small business.²² After the new Eastern Market opened in 1873, new brick rowhouses were built, primarily two- and three-story houses, for the middle-class market. During the early twentieth century the city as a whole was growing rapidly. The southeast section of Capitol Hill, District 4 in the 1900 and 1910 Census (the area south of East Capitol Street, east of South Capitol Street, and north of the Anacostia River), was the fastest growing section in the original L'Enfant City, increasing from 31,475 residents in 1900 to 36,874 in 1910, a growth

¹⁶ Mark Gelertner, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context*. (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1999, 202-203). Francis D.K. Ching, *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture* (New York, N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995, 26).

¹⁷ Myers, "Capitol Hill," 280.

¹⁸ The term spoils system was derived from the phrase "to the victor belongs the spoils" by New York Senator William L. Marcy (referring to the victory of the Jackson Democrats in the election of 1828). After a political party won an election, government civil service jobs were given to its supporters, and to their friends and relatives as a reward for working toward victory, and as an incentive to keep working for the party—as opposed to a merit system. Demands for reform began in the 1860s, and gained momentum after a disappointed office seeker assassinated President Garfield in 1871. Civil service reform was enacted in 1873. "Spoils System," Wikipedia. www.wikipedia.org. Internet; accessed 31 Dec. 2016.

¹⁹ Carroll D. Wright, *The Economic Development of the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Academy of Sciences, 1899). Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington, Capital City*: vol. I (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963, 9). Ch 180, An act providing for a permanent form of government for the District of Columbia, 20 Stat., 102, 104 (45th Cong. 2d Sess. 1878). An act to regulate and improve the civil service of the United States, Ch. 27, 22 Stat. 403 (47th Cong., 2d Sess. 1883).

²⁰ US Census, Manufactures, 1880, 1890, 1900, quoted in Green, *Washington, Capital City*: vol. II, 27.

²¹ LeRoy O. King, *100 Years of Capital Traction* (Taylor Publishing Co., 1972, 35, 286). The 13th and D streets, NE barn opened in 1895, burned in 1912 and was never rebuilt. DC Inventory of Historic Places (2009), Navy Yard Car Barn (1891), East Capitol Street Car Barn (1896).

²² More affluent residents generally clustered on East Capitol Street, and A and B Streets, NE and SE. Meyers, "Capitol Hill," 280, 283.

rate of 17.2 %. (The Census districts in the former Washington County had lower populations and thus, when population increased, the growth percentage was higher.) In 1910, District 4 had 9,656 people of school age (ages 6 to 20), of whom 6,094 (63.2 %) attended school, approximately the same percentage as in the city as a whole.²³ Figure 26 (1904), shows multiple schools in District 4 for educating these 6,094 students. In 1917, the Commissioners of the District of Columbia agreed with the library trustees that a system of branch libraries was needed and that next branch library to be built should be in Southeast (Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street, SE):

A branch is needed to serve this section and should be built first. The suggested site is more than 2 miles from the central library and about three-fourths mile beyond the Library of Congress. The 1910 Census shows a population 36,874 in this portion of the District.²⁴

Between 1886 and 1917 Andrew Carnegie or the Carnegie Corporation funded 1,681 public libraries in 1,412 communities. Although local communities selected the architect, after 1908, commissions were often awarded to firms with expertise in library design, such as Tilton and Githens.²⁵ Community leader Brainard H. Warner, and chief librarian Dr. Bowerman succeeded in bringing Carnegie-funded libraries to Washington.

The Washington Public Library was authorized by an act of Congress in 1896. Public libraries were integrated from the beginning. As of 1898, the library operated in rented space. The next year, Brainard H. Warner, the vice president of the District of Columbia Public Library Board of Trustees, met Andrew Carnegie at the White House, where, while both waited to meet the President, Warner mentioned the need for a library in Washington, and Carnegie agreed to pay \$250,000 for a new library (later increased to \$375,000, plus \$25,000 for furniture) if Congress provided the land. (Carnegie's practice was to donate funds for construction, if Congress provided land and funds at least equal to ten percent of the building's cost for maintenance expenses.)²⁶

Mount Vernon square was selected as the site for the new main library, to be designed by Ackerman and Ross. At the library's dedication in 1903, Carnegie stated:

" I have given the library to Washington, and whatever branches are to be established, I shall insist upon the privilege of supplying the funds. The giving of public libraries in the District of Columbia is my province, and you are to let me know when to provide them." ²⁷

Carnegie Corporation paid for three branch libraries: Takoma Park (1911), Southeast (1922), and Mount Pleasant (1925).²⁸

In 1903, Dr. George F. Bowerman was selected as the head librarian. He expanded library services through deposit stations, while working to build a central library and branch libraries. Brainard H. Warner (1847-1916) came to Washington, worked in a series of clerk positions, studied law, and succeeded in the real estate business. He also founded or served on the boards of multiple banks, insurance companies, as an officer in the Washington Board of Trade (where he also served on the public library committee), was as a trustee of American and Howard Universities, and president of the George Washington University Alumni Association. Importantly, he was one of the founders of the Washington Public Library, was its vice president when it was incorporated, and served on its building committee. It was Brainard who seized on a chance meeting with Andrew Carnegie and obtained a commitment from Carnegie to build libraries in the District.²⁹

Soon after Carnegie announced that he would fund branch libraries, 14 neighborhoods or civic associations vied for a branch library. The East Washington Citizens' Association wanted three libraries somewhere in southeast. Allan Davis,

²³ Department of Commerce and Labor, *Supplement for the District of Columbia*, 568, 577.

²⁴ Commissioners of the District of Columbia, *Report of Commissioners* (1917, 372, 381-382). The 1917 report lists the five additional branch libraries to be built next.

²⁵ "Tilton and Boring/Tilton and Githens." www.opendurham.org/businesses/tilton-and-boring-tilton-and-githens. Internet; accessed 3 Dec. 2018.

²⁶ *Annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia*, 1920-1921 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1921, 4-5, 22-23), cited in *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 41. Mission and History, www.dclibrary.org/about/mission.

²⁷ EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 198).

²⁸ The main library at Mount Vernon Square is listed in the DC Inventory of Historic Sites (8 Nov. 1964) and in the National Register (3 Dec. 1969). The Takoma Park Library and the Mount Pleasant Library are not listed.

²⁹ "Brainard H. Warner is Called by Death," *Washington Post*, 17 May 1916, 3. Washington Board of Trade annual reports.

the principal of the Business High School (located on 1st Street, NW between B and C streets), wanted a library near the Navy Yard. The first branch library was built in Takoma Park after residents raised funds to purchase a site for their branch library. After several unsuccessful efforts, Congress finally authorized construction of that library in 1910. Marsh & Peter designed the building.³⁰

Beginning in 1917, the library's board of trustees lobbied Congress to appropriate funds for the second branch library, to be located in Southeast Washington. Theodore W. Noyes (1858-1946), the editor of the *Washington Evening Star*, the president of the library board of trustees, led the effort.³¹ The East Washington Citizens' Association and the Southeast Washington Citizen's Association campaigned for a library in southeast Washington. The East Washington Citizens' Association advocated for improvements in the eastern section of the city, primarily in southeast, west of the Anacostia River: additional schools, expanded sewers, a new bridge across the Anacostia River, a cross-town electric railway, and relocating the jail.³² The association wanted three branch libraries in east Washington (in unspecified locations), but opposed the Northeast Washington Citizens' Association's plan to locate a library in a city park, such as Lincoln Park.³³ The Southeast Citizens' Association advocated for improvements in infrastructure, housing, schools, and public safety. In 1920, they urged Dr. Bowerman to establish a new public library in the Old Naval Hospital at 9th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, SE.³⁴

In 1921 Congress approved \$10,000 to purchase a site for the Southeast Branch Library. The library trustees voted to accept the \$10,000 and to accept Carnegie's offer to donate \$50,000 (later increased to \$67,000) for construction. The trustees selected vacant Lot 001 in Square 875 (near Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street, SE), as the library site because it was within sight of three schools, two other schools were nearby, and the site was one block from a streetcar stop.³⁵ A 1904 map shows at least 10 schools within walking distance of the library. (Figure 26),

Lot 001 in Square 875 was once part of The Maples estate.³⁶ Emily Edson Briggs (1830-1910), one of the first woman journalists, covered the Civil War in a series of letters from "Olivia," her pen name. The Maples mansion, 610 D Street, SE started as a pioneer's cabin; William Mayne Duncanson, a British Army officer, purchased the property and built a frame house. Francis Scott Key bought the house in 1815. In 1838, it was purchased by Major Augustus A. Nicholson, and in 1856 by Delaware Senator John M. Clayton, who added a ballroom. In 1871, Emily Edson Briggs bought the entire square including the house, naming it Maple Square, and lived there for 40 years. During the last several years of her life, her son, John Edson Briggs, began selling lots in Square 875 for development, and in 1921, after her death, he sold lot 001 to the District government. Friendship House operated a settlement house in The Maples beginning in 1937. After Friendship House closed in 2010, The Maples was sold, and is now part of a condominium, duplex, and townhouse development.³⁷

According to the minutes of library trustees' meetings, the trustees never held a competition to select an architect for the Southeast Branch Library. While selecting the architect was a decision for the trustees, because Carnegie was funding the library's construction, the trustees were possibly influenced by James Bertram, who ran the Carnegie library program,

³⁰"Many Requests for Proposed Branch Libraries," *Washington Evening Star*, 30 Oct, 1903, 17, 22. "High School Class," *Washington Evening Star*, 30 May 1901, 15. EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 35).

³¹"Many Walks of Life Pay Last Tribute to Theodore W. Noyes," *Washington Evening Star*, 7 July 1946, 3.

³²Ed Hatcher, "Washington's Nineteenth-Century Citizens' Associations and the Senate Park Commission Plan," *Washington History* 14 (2002) (Fall/Winter 2002): 70-95. "East Washington Citizens," *Washington Evening Star*, 6 Feb. 1901, 11. "Opposes Construction," *Washington Evening Star*, 26 Mar. 1901, 11. "Vigorous Protest," *Washington Evening Star*, 2 Oct. 1901, 7. "Cross-Town Electric Railway," *Washington Evening Star*, 6 Nov. 1903, 16.

³³"Business Discussed," *Washington Evening Star*, 6 Mar. 1903, 16. "Many Requests for Proposed Branch Libraries," *Washington Evening Star*, 30 Oct, 1903, 17,

³⁴"Plea in Southeast For More Houses," *Washington Evening Star*, 29 Sept. 1920, 19. "Traffic Officer Request Denied," *Washington Evening Star*, 27 Oct. 1920, 13.

³⁵*Annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 22-23). DC Public Library Minutes of Trustees, Jan. 1922-Dec. 1932, 27 Apr. 1922.

³⁶Lot 001 in Square 875 is vacant in the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1904). The real estate tax assessments from 1887 through 1922 indicate that there were no improvements on lot 001.

³⁷"Pioneer With Her Pen," *Washington Post*, 10 July 1904, sec. E, p. 8. "Funeral of Mrs. Briggs," *Washington Evening Star*, 5 July 1910, 16. "600 Watch Friendship House Take Over Historic Residence," *Washington Post*, 29 Nov. 1937, 13. Sarah Booth Conroy, "In Celebration of American Women," *Washington Post*, 4 July 1994, sec. D, p. 3. "Friendship House," wikipedia. Internet; accessed 29 Jan. 2019. DC Real Property Tax Assessments 1887-1890, 1893-1894, 1897-1900, 1902-1903, 1917-1918, 1921-1922. DC Office of Surveyor, DCOS 33/34 (11 Apr. 1908), John Edson Briggs' subdivision creating rowhouse lots in Square 875).

and was a friend of Edward Tilton. There is no indication in the trustees' meeting minutes that Albert L. Harris, the Municipal Architect, had any role in selecting Tilton as project architect.

Charles A. Langley and Arthur L. Smith & Co. submitted bids to build the library. The Municipal Architect Albert L. Harris, Edward L. Tilton, and Major Cary Brown, the assistant to the Engineering Commissioner, reviewed the bids. Arthur L. Smith Co. was awarded the contract.³⁸

The library was dedicated on December 8, 1922; Dr. Bowerman and leaders from the Southeast Washington Citizen's Association and the East Washington Citizens' Association spoke at the event.³⁹

In 1922 the trustees specified a staff of eight for the Southeast Branch Library: a librarian, Frances S. Osborne, an assistant librarian, a children's librarian, three assistants, a page, and a janitor, for total salaries of \$11,460.⁴⁰ The trustees wanted adequate resources to open the library 72 hours a week, the standard schedule, but because of inadequate funding, the library was open only six days a week, for 51 hours.⁴¹

The Southeast Branch Library was expected to serve approximately 40,000 people, 33,000 whites and 8,000 African-Americans, and to reach an annual circulation of between 150,000 and 250,000 books. When it opened, the library had 5,000 books and 75 periodicals. During the first two weeks of operation, the average daily circulation of books was 550.⁴² When Dr. Bowerman visited the library in January 1923, he met 200 children in the children's room, and reported that 1,200 children already had library cards.⁴³ Nearly 1,400 extra books for young readers were transferred from the main library to meet demand. Children's story hour, held on Saturdays, was a popular and important activity offered at the Southeast Branch, even when budgets were tight, and if Saturday hours had to be cancelled, they were resumed as quickly as possible.⁴⁴

By the end of June 1923, after seven months of operation, the library had circulated 86,822 books and registered 3,904 patrons. During that time the library's book collection had grown from 5,000 to almost 8,000 volumes and circulation in the first year was 130,675. As of 1931, the library's annual circulation was 201,225, up 17,568 from the prior year. On January 4, 1937, the library's had its largest daily circulation, 1,777 books.⁴⁵

In 1926, the two largest book borrowers were women and children. Of the 13,000 books circulated monthly, 5,000 were nonfiction, including books on Washington history. Readers also preferred classic fiction, mysteries, and romances. The Southeast Branch was so popular that residents told the librarian that they would not want to move away unless there was another branch library nearby.⁴⁶

During World War II, the library supported Navy Yard workers by stocking books on drafting, welding, and metallurgy. After the war, the library served 20,419 people within one-half mile, an area including 12 public schools, four parochial schools, Friendship Settlement House, Providence Hospital, the Navy Yard, and the Marine Barracks.⁴⁷ In the early

³⁸"Decides on \$67,000 Branch of Library," *Washington Post*, 5 Jan. 1922, 2.

³⁹"More Branch Libraries Urged," *Washington Post*, 12 Oct. 1917, 6. "The Public Library of the District of Columbia: Opening Exercises of the Southeastern Branch Library, December 8, 1922, 8 p.m." Program of events cited in *D.C. Public Library Survey*, 43. "Southeastern Branch Library Opened Amid Great Enthusiasm," *Washington Evening Star*, 2 Dec. 1922, 4. "Branch Library Opens Dec. 8," *Washington Post*, 25 Nov. 1922, 3.

⁴⁰*Annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia*, 1922 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922, 4-5, 22-23),

⁴¹*Annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia*, 1922 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923, 4),

⁴²"Decides on \$67,000 Branch of Library," *Washington Post*, 5 Jan. 1922, 2. Tilton observed that librarians measured status and success by circulation numbers. "Library Planning," *The Architectural Forum* XLVII (1927) (Dec. 1927): 497-506, 499.

⁴³"Demand Overruns Southeast Library," *Washington Evening Star*, 19 Dec. 1922, 3. "\$25,000 for New Library Welcome," *Washington Evening Star*, 5 Jan. 1923, 2.

⁴⁴DC Public Library Minutes of Trustees, Jan. 1922-Dec. 1932, 28 Sept. 1922.

⁴⁵"History of the Southeast Branch, 1922-1995," unpublished monograph in vertical files in Martin Luther King Memorial Library, cited in EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 199).

⁴⁶"Housewives Are Heaviest Readers, Library Reports," *Washington Post*, 7 Feb. 1926, sec. R, p. 2. Dr. George F. Bowerman, "The Libraries of Washington," *Washington Post*, 15 May 1927, sec. R, p. 1.

⁴⁷"Southeastern Branch Library," Report of the Public Library of Washington, DC (14 Jan. 1947), cited in EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997).

1970s, the library served 80,700 people, including many residents of public housing, offered 57,610 books, and 700 people a week used the reading rooms. In 1996, the library circulated 52,000 books. In recent years the library's book circulation was: 120,627 (fiscal year 2015), 140,222 (fiscal year 2016), 145,829 (fiscal year 2017), and 181,735 (fiscal year 2018), the third highest for all branches, plus 92,564 digital items (music, magazines, videos). The library's meeting rooms were and are used for community meetings.⁴⁸

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Southeast Branch and other branches also held art exhibits, and concerts described as "afternoons with the Victrola."⁴⁹ In the early 1970s, the library offered 180 community programs, such as poetry readings and adult education. Later, in the 2000s, there were children's events at the library most weeks.⁵⁰

The Southeast Branch Library was designed to serve children. Tilton specified a children's room (an innovation from the Boston Public Library) and a story place near a welcoming fireplace. The desks in the children's room were arranged in orderly rows, in the same manner as in the adults' reading room. Figure 24.

From the beginning, Dr. Bowerman and the Southeast Branch librarians prioritized serving children. When Bowerman visited in 1923, he made a point of seeing how many children were using the library and how many had library cards. As of 1925, the children's room was divided into sections for elementary and high school students. High school students could read about current events in magazines; the children's librarian held a story hour every Friday afternoon. Mrs. Osborne, the librarian, consulted with the schools on their reading lists and made sure that the library had those books available. She and her assistants gave individual attention to help children select books. School groups visited the library to learn how to use the reference section.

In the 1930s Esther Woodfolk, an African-American, visited the library as a child. She had moved to Capitol Hill in 1933, when she was eight. The library offered a safe and quiet space for children to read and study; she recalled that she and her brother, who also loved to read, visited the library where they did their homework and checked out books.⁵¹

In the 1950s, Virginia Strickland, the children's librarian at the Southeast Branch Library, wrote a series of reviews on the best children's books for the *Washington Post*. She certainly would have had these excellent books available for children visiting her library. In 2018, the library continues to offer many programs for children.⁵²

Friends of the Southeast Library, established in 1982, fundraises and advocates for the library. Friends member Margaret Hollister successfully campaigned to fix the malodorous toilets in the library. In 2007, the Friends paid for a new sign, and in 2018, they sponsor programs including story time for babies and toddlers, families, and a kid's knitting club. At a public meeting October 30, 2018 on renovating the library, approximately 50 people, attended and made clear that story time remains very important to the community, and that they wanted story time to continue throughout the renovation.⁵³

⁴⁸EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 199). Library Services Quarterly Reports (2015-2018) www.dclibrary.org. Internet; accessed 11 Dec. 2018.

⁴⁹ DC Public Library Minutes of Trustees, Jan. 1922-Dec. 1932, 23 Feb. 1922, 21 Dec. 1922 *Annual report of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of the District of Columbia*, 1922 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1923, 16), "Demand Overruns Southeast Library," *Washington Evening Star*, 19 Dec. 1922, 3. "Library Adopts Saturday Change," *Washington Evening Star*, 8 Oct. 1932, 3. "Traffic and Dry-Enforcing Issues Put to Congress," *Washington Evening Star*, 1 Dec. 1924, 3. "Book Circulation of Library Rises," *Washington Evening Star*, 18 Oct. 1931, 16. For concerts, see e.g., *Washington Evening Star*, 18 Apr. 1943; for exhibits see e.g., "Library Will Sponsor Exhibits at Branches," *Washington Post*, 17 Sept. 1933, sec. S, p. 11.

⁵⁰ "General Statistics, 1970 Southeast Library, report of the DC Public Library, (23 Apr. 1971), cited in EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 199). See e.g., "District Community Events," *Washington Post*, 2 June 2005, sec. T, p. 12.

⁵¹ Esther Woodfolk oral history (22 Aug. 2005), www.capitolhillhistory.org. Internet; accessed 9 Dec. 2018.

⁵² Virginia Strickland, "Tolly Finds a Family and Kids Will Love It," *Washington Post*, 2 Oct. 1955, sec. E, p. 6. "Biographies Relate Mans' Challenge of the Unknown," *Washington Post*, 13 Nov. 1955, sec. K, p. 5. "Fiction Offers Choices of Chortles or Chills," *Washington Post*, 13 May 1956, sec. E, p. 7. "Summertime Flights to Faraway Places," *Washington Post*, 5 Aug. 1956, sec. E, p. 6. "In the Rockets' Red Glare," *Washington Post*, 7 July 1957, sec. E, p. 6. "This Magical Ship is Made to Order," *Washington Post*, 13 July 1958, sec. E, p. 7. www.dclibrary.org/southeast. Internet; accessed 11 Dec. 2018.

⁵³ "War Brings Specialization of Library Near Navy Yard," *Washington Post*, 3 Feb. 1942, 6. EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 199). www.dclibrary.org/southeast. Margaret Hollister oral history (30 June 2014). www.capitolhillhistory.org. Internet; accessed 9 Dec. 2018. Silverman, "Makeover Artists Dust Off an Old Classic."

Edward L. Tilton

Edward Lippincott Tilton (1861-1933) was born in New York and worked at McKim, Mead & White from 1881 to 1887. Photo 27. McKim, who had studied at the École des Beaux Arts, encouraged young architects to travel to Europe to complete their education, and if possible, to study at the École. It is possible that McKim gave this advice to Tilton, who left the firm to study at the École des Beaux Arts from 1887 to 1890, where he met future partner William A. Boring. They returned in 1890 to work at McKim, Mead & White while the firm was working on the Boston Public Library (1887-1895), a landmark in library design⁵⁴ Photo 28.

McKim, Mead & White drew on Labrouste's Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève, based on a Renaissance palazzo, with a piano nobile (reading room) and basement (stacks), but McKim emphasized the lower level, using square windows, adding rustication, and changing the single entry to a recessed vestibule behind three arches.

... the Boston Public Library immediately established a standard of excellence and restrained elegance in public buildings, contributing to a climate that soon gave rise to the New York and Chicago public libraries and scores of others. Its plan became the model for many which followed, whether municipal or collegiate, though almost always minus the central court.⁵⁵

In 1891 Tilton and Boring opened their own office in New York. The firm enjoyed success, and completed several larger commissions, but failed to win competitions to design public libraries in Pittsburgh and Milwaukee. Their big breakthrough came in 1897, when they won the competition to design new buildings at the U.S. Immigration Station on Ellis Island, for which they won awards. They practiced as a firm until 1904, and afterwards worked separately and shared office space. Tilton and Alfred Morton Githens formed a partnership in 1920 and the Southeast Branch Library was designed during Tilton's partnership with Githens. The firm's commissions consisted almost entirely of libraries and institutional buildings, primarily in the northeast. They remained partners until Tilton's death.⁵⁶

Before 1907, Tilton, with his experience in Classical public buildings, had turned to library design. A key early project was the central library in Springfield, Mass. (1907). Photo 29. The Springfield library owed many elements to the Boston Public Library: Classical design, half-raised basement, piano nobile, round arched windows, and a shallow hip roof. Tilton added his own innovations: the "open plan," putting many of the most popular books on open shelves on the main floor, and less-popular books in a stack room on the lower level. He incorporated these features in the Southeast Branch Library⁵⁷

By 1905, Tilton had completed five Carnegie libraries, all under budget. Tilton and Carnegie's secretary, James Bertram, were friends. Bertram managed the library grant program, and consulted Tilton on library design; Tilton may have drawn the six sample library plans that Bertram sent to each municipality seeking funds for a Carnegie library. Their friendship may have aided Tilton's success in obtaining commissions for Carnegie libraries.⁵⁸ According to Tilton's analysis, architect's fees and contingencies combined would generally be ten percent of the construction budget. Tilton often completed the all the plans, construction drawings, and specifications, and a local architect supervised construction in exchange for five percent of Tilton's fee. It is unknown if a local architect aided Tilton with the Southeast Branch Library project.⁵⁹

⁵⁴Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White Architects* (New York, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1983, 5). Richard Guy Wilson, *McKim, Mead & White* (New York, N.Y.: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1983, 181). "Edward Lippincott Tilton", : wikipedia. Internet; accessed 3 Dec. 2018. "Tilton and Boring/Tilton and Githens." www.opendurham.org/businesses/tilton-and-boring-tilton-and-githens. Internet; accessed 3 Dec. 2018. "Boston Public Library, McKim Building," wikipedia. Internet; accessed 2 Dec. 2018.

⁵⁵Roth, *McKim, Mead & White Architects*, 130.

⁵⁶Lisa B. Mausolf, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen. *Edward Lippincott Tilton: A Monograph on His Architectural Practice* (Manchester, N.H.: Currier Museum of Art, 2007, 2, 5). "Tilton and Boring/Tilton and Githens." www.opendurham.org/businesses/tilton-and-boring-tilton-and-githens. Internet; accessed 3 Dec. 2018.

⁵⁷The Boston Public Library had closed stacks: a patron selected books from the card catalog, and the librarians delivered the books to the patron who could then borrow the books, or take them to a reading room. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White Architects*. 127. In contrast, the Southeast Branch Library had open stacks.

⁵⁸Van Slyck, *Free to All*, 37-39, 58-59.

⁵⁹Mausolf, *Edward Lippincott Tilton*, 2. Edward E. Tilton, "Library Planning," *The Architectural Forum* XLVII (1927) (Dec. 1927): 497-506, 497. The D.C. library trustees' minutes mention only Tilton in connection with the design and building of the Southeast Branch Library.

Tilton and his firms designed over 100 libraries in the U.S. and Canada, including the Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, N.C. (1911). In 1930, the American Institute of Architects awarded them a gold medal for the Wilmington, Del. public library.⁶⁰ In 1922 Tilton was selected to design Washington's third branch library in Mount Pleasant. The two-story library with a raised basement is a Classical Revival building in Indiana limestone, built at a cost of \$160,000.⁶¹ This is the last Carnegie library to be built in Washington and also Tilton's last library commission in Washington.

Tilton was a noted expert on library design, advocating collaboration between architects and librarians to best serve the public, and explaining with detailed examples and mathematical calculations how to approach all aspects of planning a library from the necessary size of the building, to siting, lighting, reading rooms, number and design of stacks and shelves, and workspace for staff. He incorporated many of his ideas into the Southeast Branch Library:

- Both the main level and the basement level should have excellent natural lighting. To achieve good lighting in the basement, the entrance must be above grade level (reached by climbing stairs on the exterior).
- The public should enter through the main entrance, through a vestibule to the "delivery room", where in a smaller library, three key services are offered: registration, charging (loaning books), and receiving books. This delivery counter (sometimes called the charging counter) should be on the main level, near the front entrance, where the librarian can see the entrance, shelves, and readers, and minimizing noise affecting the reading rooms.
- Reading rooms should be well-lit, with about five feet between tables.
- A children's department is vital, and should be its own room, to minimize noise affecting others.
- Club rooms (equivalent to seminar rooms in colleges) are essential. There were two club rooms in the basement level.
- In a small library, the librarian's office should be near the delivery desk.
- Card catalogs should be readily accessible. These were probably located in the reference room on the main level.
- Lighting reading rooms by ceiling fixtures is effective.
- Everyone should exit through the main entrance.
- Stacks, as opposed to book shelves, should be located below the main level, where the books are more protected from sunlight.
- There should be a comfortable place for staff to work, with access to toilets and a rest room. The Southeast Branch also had a suite for the janitor, a feature Tilton did not mention in his article.

Some of his ideas could not be implemented, such as land for easy expansion. Other ideas may not have been adopted:

- An adjacent room near the charging desk "wherein to shunt garrulous gossips" who were creating a distraction.
- Space for reading newspapers was a waste, because anyone could buy a newspaper, and newspapers in libraries attracted loafers.⁶²

Arthur L. Smith & Co.

Arthur L. Smith (1853-1941) was a successful contractor in the 1920s and 1930s. He built or remodeled schools in the city and suburbs (e.g., Roosevelt High School, and John Eaton School, Washington, James Madison Elementary School in Falls Church, Va., a dormitory at Charlotte Hall Military Academy, Charlotte Hall, Md.). He also built the bird building at the National Zoo.⁶³ From newspaper accounts it appears that the only library he built was the Southeast Branch Library. He was an officer in the Builders' and Manufacturers' Exchange, and in 1925 he was one of the contractors selected to revise the building code. He declared bankruptcy in 1940 and died the next year.⁶⁴

J. J. Bailes

Only limited information could be found concerning J. J. Bailes, the landscape architect who created the plan for the library's grounds in 1962. John J. Bailes, Jr. (1921-1999) served in the U.S. Marine Corps, or was a civilian employee; he

⁶⁰Henry F. Withey, Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. (Los Angeles, Cal.: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970, 601). Mausolf, *Edward Lippincott Tilton*.

⁶¹EHT Traceries, *D.C. Public Library Survey* (1997, 45). "Edward Lippincott Tilton," wikipedia. Internet; accessed 3 Dec. 2018.

⁶²Tilton, "Library Planning," *The Architectural Forum* XLVII (1927) (Dec. 1927): 497-506, 499.

⁶³"New Falls Church School Dedicated," *Washington Post*, 21 Sept. 1926, 5. "New Charlotte Hall will be ready soon," *Washington Post*, 28 Aug. 1927, sec. R, p. 10. "Eaton School Contract Awarded," *Washington Post*, 22 Feb. 1930, 2. "Contracts Awarded on 2 High Schools," *Washington Post*, 31 Aug. 1932, 16. "Proposals Opened for Zoo Bird Building," *Washington Post*, 11 May 1927, 11.

⁶⁴"New Building Code Calls for Inclosed Fire Escapes," *Washington Post*, 2 June 1925, 22. US. Census (1940, Wheaton, Md. ED 13-64). "Died," *Washington Post*, 16 Dec. 1941, 34. "Bankruptcy Notices," *Washington Post*, 4 Sept. 1940, 27.

received an award from the Marine Corps in 1955 and was buried at Quantico National Cemetery. Although he was employed by the Highway Design Division of the DC Highway and Traffic Department, a predecessor of the DC Department of Transportation (DDOT), DDOT's librarian found no record of him.⁶⁵

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

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Withey, Henry F., Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles, Cal.: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970, 601).

Woodfolk, Esther, oral history (22 Aug. 2005), www.capitolhillhistory.org.
Internet; accessed 9 Dec. 2018.

Wright, Carroll D., *The Economic Development of the District of Columbia* (Washington, D.C.: Washington Academy of Sciences, 1899).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approximately 0.15

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

6,431/43,560= 0.15

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

38.8843393, -76.99619359999997

1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

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

The National Register boundary for the Southeast Branch Library consists of lot 001 in Square 875 in the District of Columbia. Lot 001 is bounded by 7th Street, S.E., D Street, S.E. and South Carolina Avenue, S.E. and by lots 30 and 31 in Square 875.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The library was built on lot 001 in Square 875 in 1922. Its boundaries include the library building and its grounds.

11. Form Prepared By

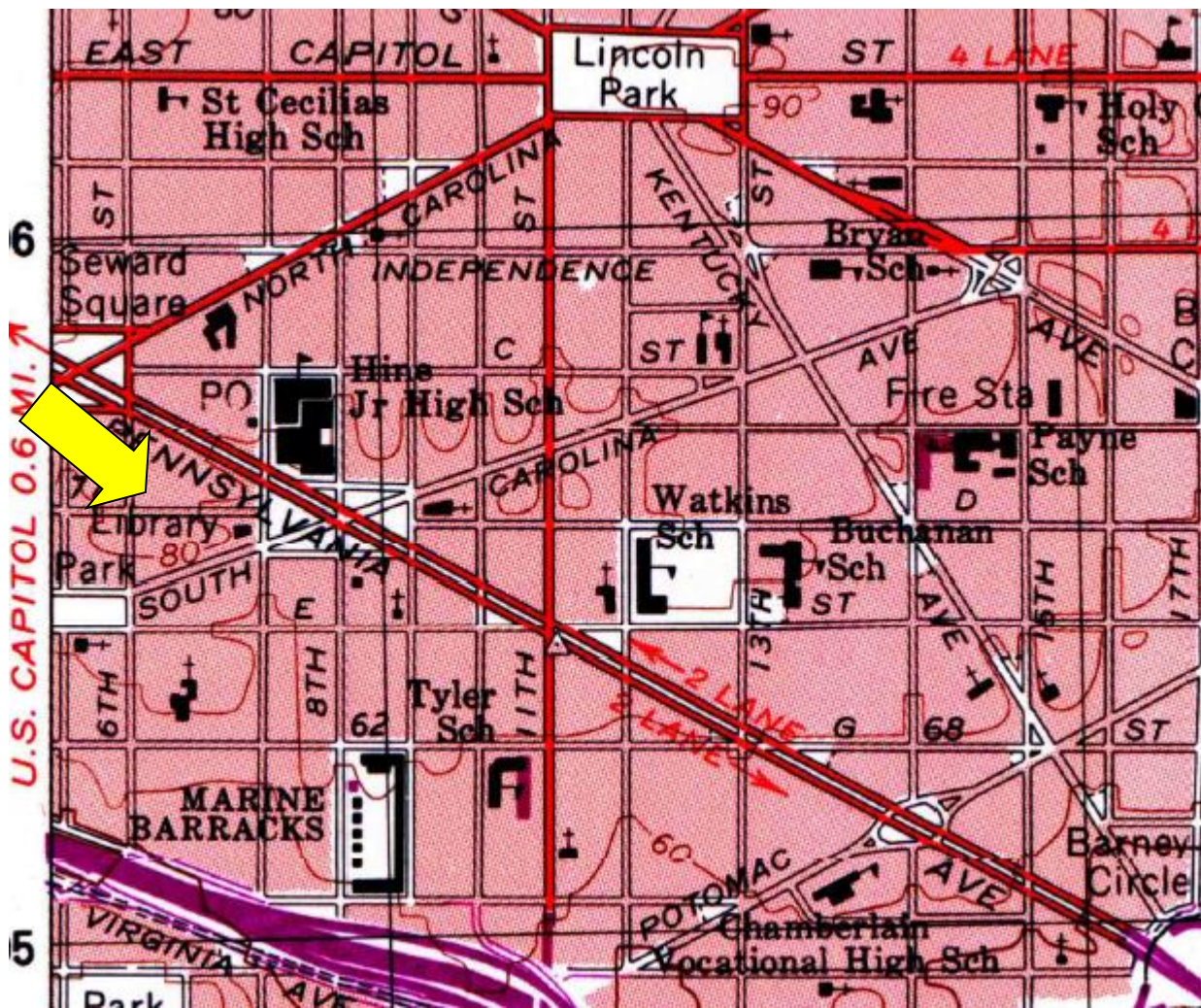
name/title	<u>Elizabeth Purcell</u>		
organization	<u>Capitol Hill Restoration Society</u>	date	<u> </u>
street & number	<u>420 10th Street, SE</u>	telephone	<u>202 543-0425</u>
city or town	<u>Washington</u>	state	<u>DC</u> zip code <u>20003</u>
e-mail	<u>Beth@eapdc.com</u>		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

Geographical Site Map for Southeast Branch Library, showing latitude and longitude points
(USGS Washington, DC East, ISBN 978-607-13453) 38.8843393, -76.99619359999997





National Register Boundaries (DC Atlas Property Map)

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

Photo and Figure Log

Name of Property: Southeast Branch Library

City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.

Country: State: DC

Figure 1. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C.. Site plan. Photocopied by Elizabeth Purcell. Date copied: 30 Nov. 2018.

Photo 2. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer unknown. Southeast Branch Library under construction, east elevation (front) and side elevation (south), looking northwest. District of Columbia Public Library (1922). dcpl_archives_0138.tif.

Figure 3. Edward L. Tilton, Sketch of Southeast Branch Library (1921). DC Public Library Archives.

Photo 4. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of front (east) exterior, looking west.

Photo 5. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of front (east) exterior, looking west, detail of entrance.

Photo 6. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of east side (front) exterior, looking south, showing detail of entrance and columns.

Photo 7. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of north elevation, looking south.

Photo 8. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 4 Dec. 2018. View of south elevation, looking north.

Photo 9. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of west elevation, looking south, showing rear door and parking area.

Photo 10. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of north elevation, looking south, showing steps and door to basement under the fourth window, counting westward from the front elevation.

Photo 11. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of north elevation, looking south, showing steps and side door.

Photo 12. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer unknown. The Rambler Collection, #1655, exterior general view, looking northwest. March 13, 1927. Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

Photo 13. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. View of front entrance looking north. Photographer: Walter Oates, *Washington Evening Star*. Date photographed: 27 Apr. 1962.

Photo 14. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C.. Photographer unknown. Outdoor event at Southeast Branch Library, 1970s front (east) elevation, looking west. [dcpl_archives_0140.tif](#).

Photo 15. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of interior, looking toward front door in east elevation showing steps to the reading room on the main level. Steps to the basement (not visible) are to the right of the figure on the stairs.

Photo 16. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Library interior, main level. The desk in the center appears to be the octagonal paneled special charging desk shown in a 1921 blueprint. Star Photograph Collection, 10 Aug. 1968. Photographer: F. Routt, *Washington Evening Star*. Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King Memorial Library.

Photo 17. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 8 February 2019. Composite fluted wood semi-column and pilaster in interior of main level.

Photo 18. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. Interior of library, reading room, looking out the window in east elevation (right) and out two windows in north elevation.

Photo 19. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. Interior, view of lighting, fireplace on west wall; fireplace enclosed in 1955.

Photo 20. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 8 February 2019. Detail of tile hearth on west wall in main level.

Figure 21. Southeast Branch Library. Plans for main (first) level. (1921). DC Public Library Archives. Photocopied by Elizabeth Purcell. Date photocopied: 30 Nov. 2018.

Photo 22. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Blueprint for the construction of the octagonal special charging desk on the main level. See 1968 photo of interior. DC Library Archives, 1922. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 30 Nov. 2018.

Photo 17. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 8 February 2019. Composite fluted wood semi-column and pilaster in interior of main level.

Photo 23. Reading room, Mt. Pleasant Branch Library, Washington, D.C., designed by Edward L. Tilton in 1922. Samuel H. Ranck, "Ventilating and Lighting Library Buildings," *The Architectural Forum* XLVII (1927) (Dec. 1927): 529-552, 539.

Figure 24. Southeast Branch Library. Plans for basement level. (1921). DC Public Library Archives. Photocopied by Elizabeth Purcell. Date photocopied: 30 Nov. 2018.

Photo 25. Southeast Branch Library. Landscape architect J. J. Bailes's Landscape Development Plan for the Southeast Branch Library. (Feb. 1962). DC Highway and Traffic Department Highway Design Division. DC Public Library Archives. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 30 Nov. 2018.

Figure 26. Map of the District of Columbia showing location of schools (1904). White schools are in red, black schools are in blue. Arrow showing library site added by form preparer.

Photo 27. "Edward Lippincott Tilton," Wikipedia; Internet; accessed 28 Nov. 2018.

Photo 28. View of Boston Public Library, McKim, Mead & White (1895), Detroit Publishing Co. no. 017039. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print> det 4a11354 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/det.4a11354

Library of Congress Control Number 2016794797

Photo 29. View of Springfield Central Library (1907), Edward L. Tilton. Detroit Publishing Co., publisher Created /
Published [between 1900 and 1910]
Call Number/Physical Location LC-D4-68314 [P&P] Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington,
D.C. 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>DC Public Library</u>		
street & number	<u>1990 K Street, NW</u>	telephone	<u>202 727-1101</u>
city or town	<u>Washington</u>	state	<u>DC</u> zip code <u>20006</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Figure 1. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Site plan of Southeast Branch Library. DC Public Library Archives.

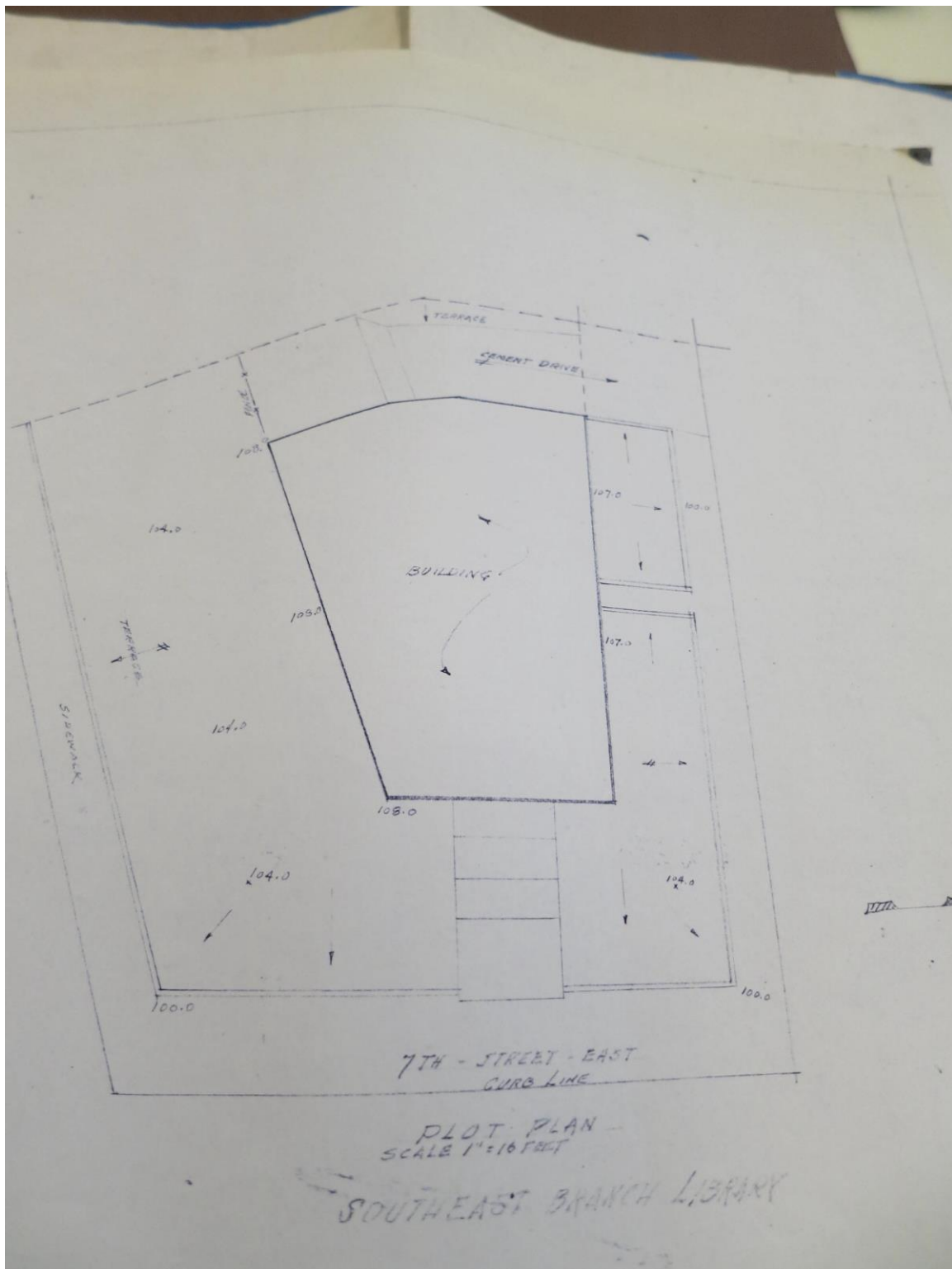


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Southeast Branch Library under construction, east elevation (front) and side elevation
(south), looking northwest. District of Columbia Public Library (1922).
dcpl_archives_0138.tif.



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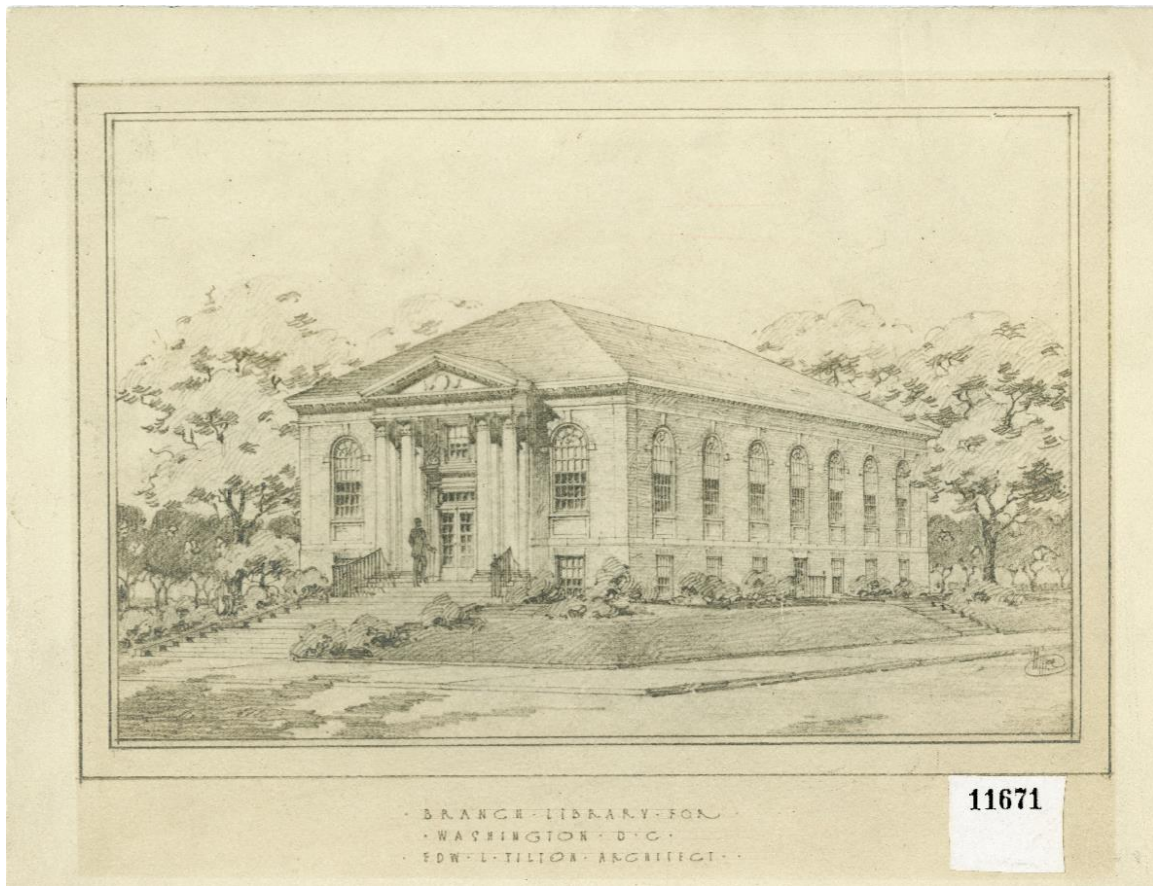


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Photo 7. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell.
Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of north elevation, looking south.



Photo 8. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell.
Date photographed: 4 Dec. 2018. View of south elevation, looking north.



Photo 9. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of west elevation, looking south, showing rear door and parking area.



Photo 10. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of north elevation, looking south, showing steps and door (replacing a basement window) to basement under the fourth window, counting westward from the front elevation.



Photo 11. Southeast Branch Library, Washington, DC. Photographer: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photographed: 28 Nov. 2018. View of north elevation, looking south, showing door (replacing a basement window) to the basement/ADA entrance.



Photo 12 . Southeast Branch Library, Washington, D.C.. Photographer unknown. The Rambler Collection, #1655, exterior general view, looking northwest. March 13, 1927. Historical Society of Washington, D.C.



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dcpl_archives_0140.tif.



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Figure 21. Southeast Branch Library. Plans for main (first) level. (1921). DC Public Library Archives. Photocopied by: Elizabeth Purcell. Date photocopied: 30 Nov. 2018.

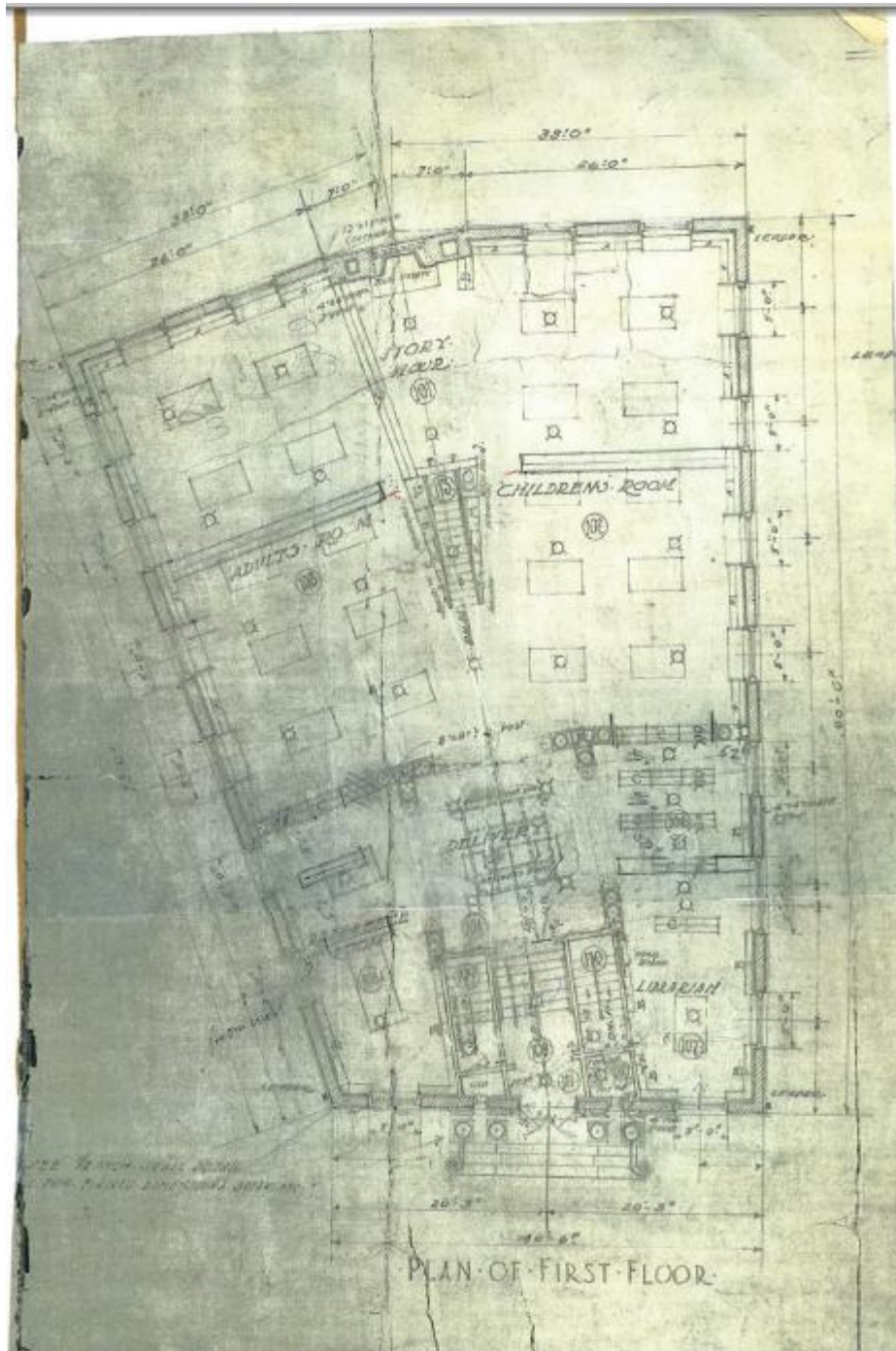


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Plans on Back

READING ROOM
MT. PLEASANT BRANCH LIBRARY, WASHINGTON
EDWARD L. TILTON, ARCHITECT

Figure 24. Southeast Branch Library. Plans for basement level. (1921). DC Public Library Archives. Photocopied by Elizabeth Purcell. Date photocopied: 30 Nov. 2018.

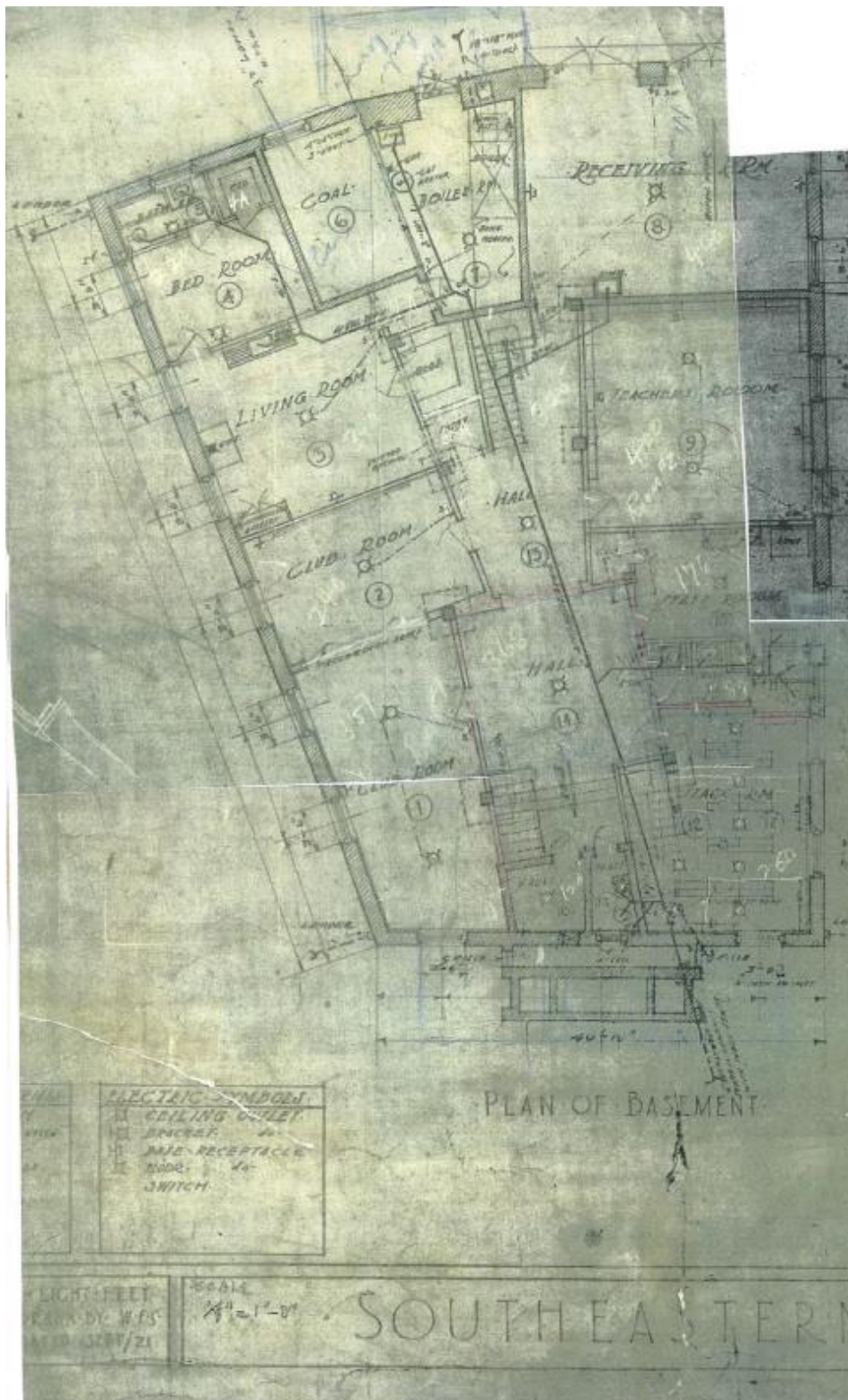


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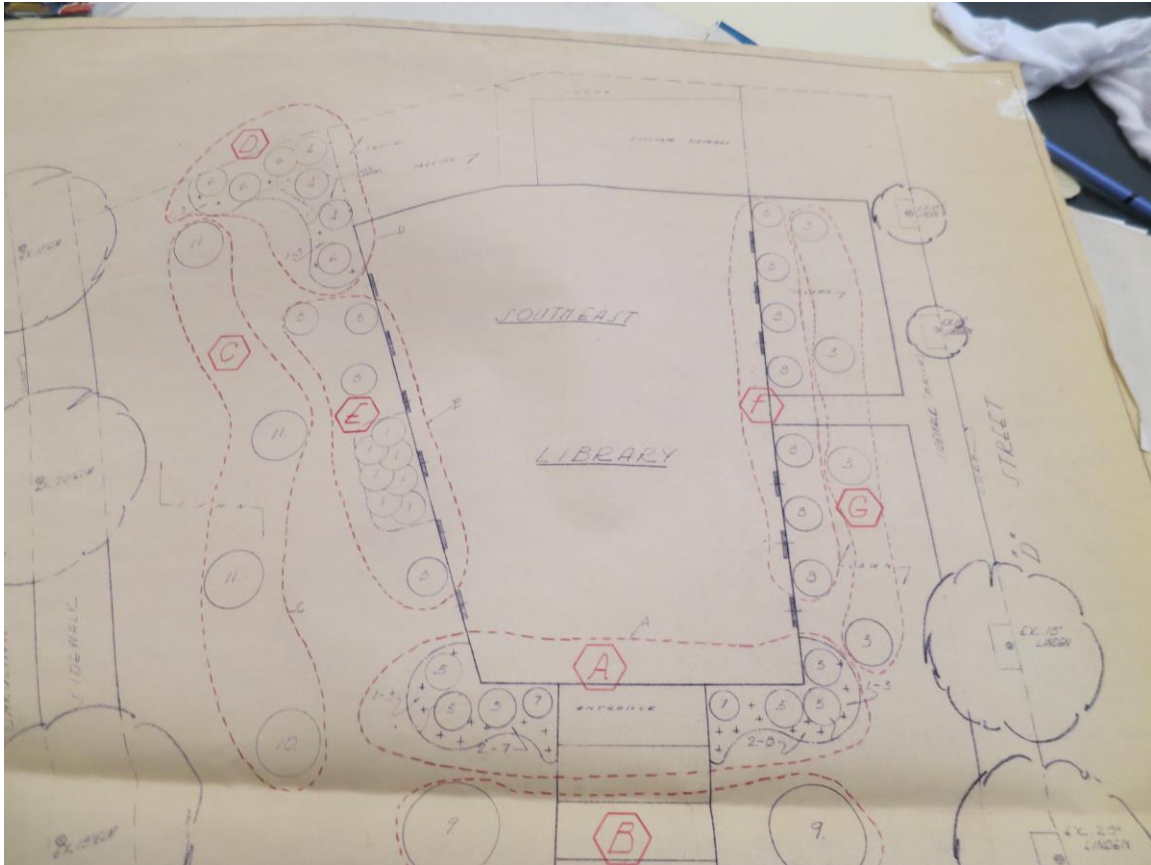


Figure 26. Map of the District of Columbia showing location of schools (1904). White schools are in red, black schools are in blue. Arrow showing library site added by form preparer.

U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey

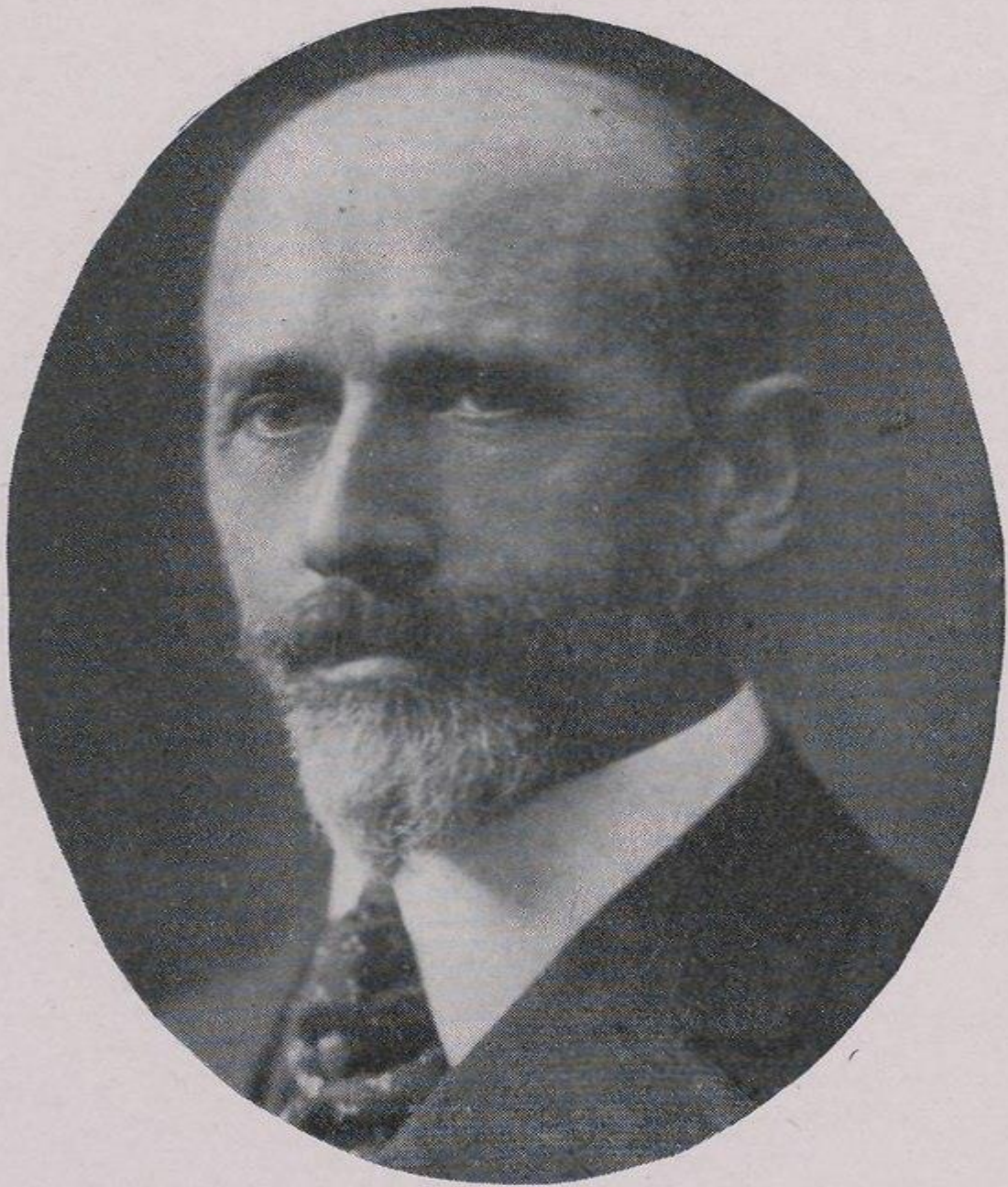
District of Columbia. Office of the Surveyor

dcpl_map_1904D.tif

Shows schools white and colored schools in the District of Columbia. Oriented with north toward the upper left. Includes notes and authorities. In lower margin: H. Doc. 7, pt 4, 59-1.

DC Public Library, Special Collections, Washingtoniana Map Collection





EDWARD LIPPINCOTT TILTON
Architect, Fellow of the American Institute
of Architects, Treasurer N. Y. Society of the
Archaeological Institute of America
New York City

Photo 27. Edward Lippincott Tilton, Wikipedia. Internet.

Photo 28. View of Boston Public Library, McKim, Mead & White (1895), Detroit Publishing Co. no. 017039. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>
det 4a11354 //hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/det.4a11354
Library of Congress Control Number 2016794797



Photo 29. Springfield Central Library (1907), Edward L. Tilton. Detroit Publishing Co., publisher Created / Published [between 1900 and 1910]
Call Number/Physical Location LC-D4-68314 [P&P] Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>

