

## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: REIMAGING PUBLIC LIBRARY AS PUBLIC SPACE

Christopher Joon Pho Lee, Master's of Architecture, 2016

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Once regarded as the public's center of knowledge and information, public libraries today are challenged by the rise of mobile technology and the Internet. Information behavior of everyday library patrons have transformed to rely on instant access of information through Google search instead of the resources housed in their local libraries. The focus of public library design is shifting from storing & protecting valuable resources (books) to the experience of an active public space of learning, engaging and reading.

This thesis reimagines a public library branch in East Baltimore City by evaluating the architecture of public library examples of the past and of today. By understanding the user experience of the three key elements of public library design – procession, services & flexible space - a new public library design that engages and responds to the local community can be proposed.

REIMAGINIG THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AS PUBLIC SPACE

by

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## Dedication

I like to dedicate this research to the friends and family that always challenge me to think bigger and to always think of others.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Representing the American ideal of information democracy, public libraries today face unprecedented change in purpose and usage due to great shifts in user information behaviors. Technology today is changing the fundamental forms of information while the Internet has revolutionized how users' access and use information and show no signs of slowing down as the growing numbers of mobile devices are projected to triple the number of people by 2017.<sup>1</sup> Does the public library, especially local branch libraries,

Frequent visits to the library were important to my lifelong learning and for my involvement in my local community. The convenient five minute walk to the Baltimore County Public Library in Timonium, MD allowed local patrons such as my parents and myself to engage in community activities while discovering new books. As first generation immigrants, my parents found the library as a rare and valuable resource. The library did not only provide leisure reading materials, but important informative materials in multiple languages to answer the needs of a diverse local community. The library was viewed as a public space that provided high school students, such as myself, a quiet place to study and a safe place to gather. Every day community activities such as music performances, face painting and annual summer reading challenges activated the public space. Over time the introduction of desktop computers changed how patrons used the library spaces. So with the exponential rise

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<sup>1</sup> "Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2015–2020 White Paper." Cisco. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 May 2016.  
<http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/mobile-white-paper-c11-520862.html>



of portable information technology, will libraries be able to remain relevant in a culture that relies on Google to answer its everyday questions?

A 2009 report from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, describes how essential it is “for museums and libraries to take a proactive and positive stance in facing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.”<sup>2</sup> The report continues to remind librarians and the communities they serve that effective and relevant library services are driven by user needs, not by technological advances alone. As the progression of digitizing existing material continues to empty shelves and make more information available to more people outside the confines of a physical location, how does the library of the future answer the needs of a changing information culture?

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<sup>2</sup> Hendrix, Jennifer C, *Checking Out the Future. Perspectives from the Library Community on Information Technology and 21st-Century Libraries* (ALA Office for Information Technology Policy.) Accessed May 18, 2016, [http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/oitp/publications/policybriefs/ala\\_checking\\_out\\_the.pdf](http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/oitp/publications/policybriefs/ala_checking_out_the.pdf).

## Chapter 2: The Public Library

### History

Over two hundred years, public libraries in North America were designed and developed as civic spaces that preserved and provided services for its local communities. Today the role of public libraries are changing due to dissolving government support, constantly changing user demographics and growing influence of the Internet and information technology. The history of public libraries reveals how the institution's foundations are rooted in democratic ideals and local community, despite controversies around the purpose of public libraries in today's digital age. Social scientist, Robert Putnam, explains the importance of public libraries as a "network of civic engagement that anchors people to communities and fosters and sense of fellowship, civic participation and democratic living."<sup>3</sup>

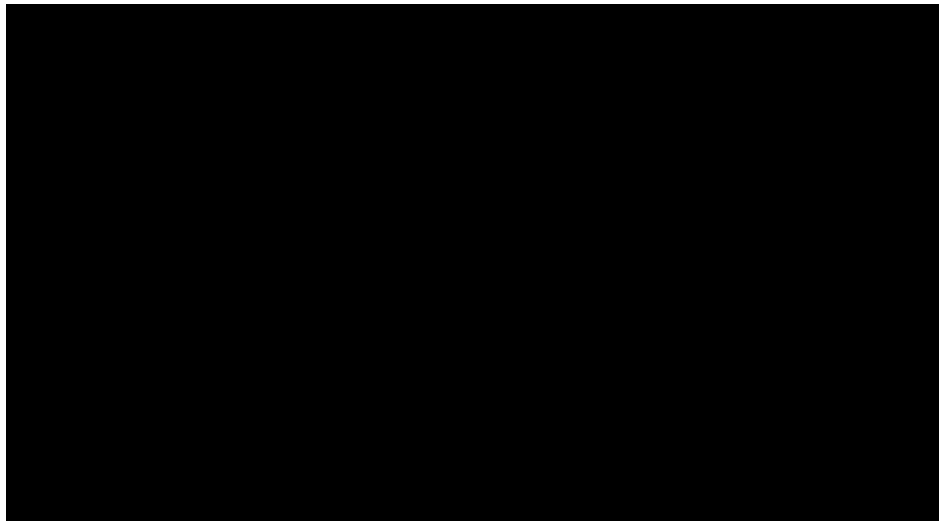
Before libraries became public institutions, libraries began as collection of material that was strictly circulated amongst the privileged and the wealthy. The affluent owned the printed materials and were only circulated as donations and/or were bequeathed to churches, schools and towns. By the 18th century, circulating libraries were established for those who could afford library memberships. Matthew Battles, Harvard associate director of metaLABs, explains the reformation of private library collections to address the needs of the general public during the 19th century: "It was in these years of class conflict and economic terror that the public library movement swept through Britain, as the nation's progressive elite recognized that the

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<sup>3</sup> Redmond Kathleen Molz and Phyllis Dain, *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, C, 1999)

light of cultural and intellectual energy was lacking in the lives of commoners.”<sup>4</sup>

These early private collections and the rise in democratic values would shape the public library systems the U.S. use today. Public libraries in North America developed in the late 18th century as the nation’s interest turned to the publishing and sharing of knowledge. By the 1870’s there were nearly three hundred public libraries in the U.S. and almost a thousand by 1900.<sup>5</sup> The first large scale public library in the United States was the Boston Public Library established in 1848.



**Figure 1 Boston Public Library**

Willis, Catherine J. Boston Public Library. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2011. Print.

With the support of businessman and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, public libraries began to appear in the 19th century and were brought into actualization during the 20th century. The emergence of state and federal programs that financially supported and promoted library services during the 20th century offered local libraries money, stimulation and standards for library development. The modern public library evolved over 150 years and “afforded a multiplicity of viewpoints, a

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew Battles, *Library: An Unquiet History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015)

<sup>5</sup> Molz and Dain. *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age.*

voice, and a hearing even in the silence of the stack.”<sup>6</sup> The modern public library reflects the trends of the society at large and is viewed as microcosms of a macrocosm of American society. Economic conditions, political currents and societal trends are reflected through the activity and the material housed in public libraries.

### *Carnegie Libraries*

Public libraries remained an integral part of American society throughout the 1900’s because the support of public library in progressive cities was an understood and accepted concept in society despite the fluctuating number of library users. Later in the early twentieth century, an unprecedented relationship between the government and steel philanthropist and businessman Andrew Carnegie accelerated the support of public libraries in the United States. By 1929, Andrew Carnegie had donated \$41 million dollars to establish more than 2,500 public libraries.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Molz and Dain. *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age*.

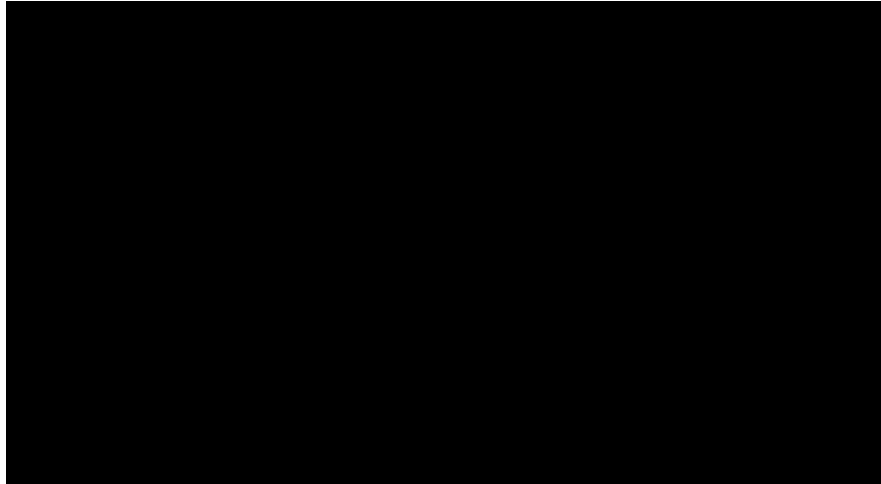
<sup>7</sup> Susan Stamberg. "How Andrew Carnegie Turned His Fortune Into A Library Legacy." NPR, (August 2003): accessed May 18, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2013/08/01/207272849/how-andrew-carnegie-turned-his-fortune-into-a-library-legacy>



**Figure 2 Andrew Carnegie**

[http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/carnegie/aa\\_carnegie\\_phil\\_1.html](http://www.americaslibrary.gov/aa/carnegie/aa_carnegie_phil_1.html)

Influenced by the ideas of social Darwinism, the financial pledge was offered to the institution in order to support the nation's educational goals and uphold responsibility of the cultural knowledge and skill for a successful future. Endowed with the responsibility of society's overall educational success, public libraries would be civilizing agents and objects of community pride. Andrew Carnegie's monetary donations to public libraries did not just erect concrete and structure, but developed a common understanding that libraries are important civic institutions to local communities. The rapid development of the public spaces across the United States stimulated interest in public libraries in progressive cities. The libraries were voluntary in their use which made libraries popular public spaces, but would leave the institution without a definite audience.



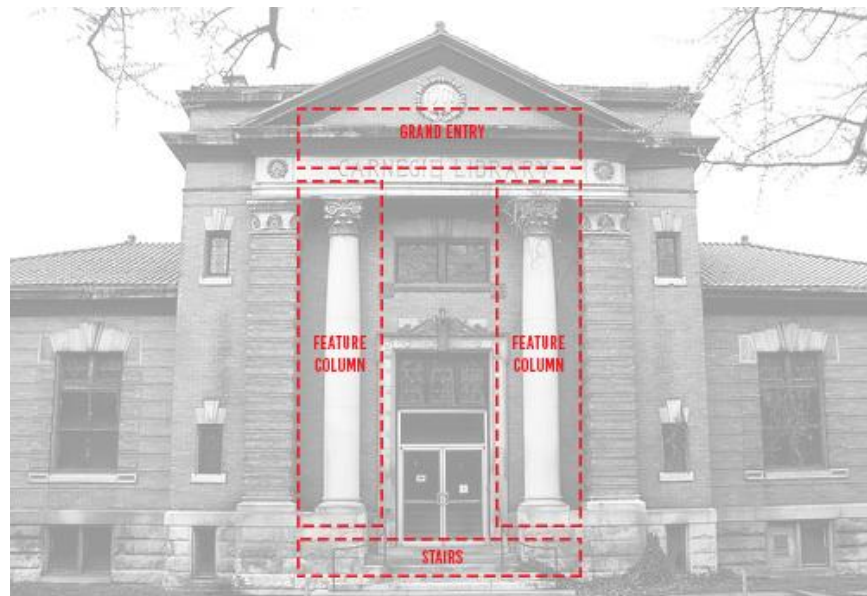
**Figure 3 Library Patrons in Carnegie Library Reading Room in Munhall, PA (1900)**  
<http://www.npr.org/2013/08/01/207272849/how-andrew-carnegie-turned-his-fortune-into-a-library-legacy>

Early Carnegie library designs primarily were devoted to the preservation of the library collection. The organization of the library including the role of the librarian, the circulating desks and even the bookshelves ensured the protection of the valuable material found in libraries. The preservation of library collection remained a priority over democratic values in early libraries. Limited shelf browsing and restricted book borrowing were practices installed to protect important manuscripts and material that was expensive to reproduce.

#### Carnegie Library Example: Coshoctan Public Library

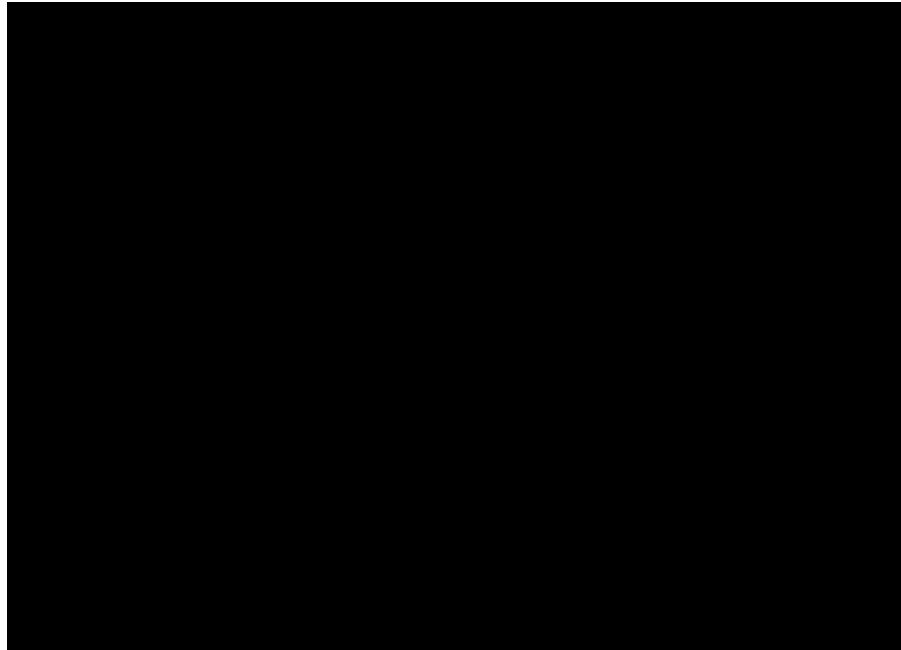
The Coshoctan Public Library is located on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Chestnut Street in Coshocton, Ohio. It was the 1,000<sup>th</sup> library that Andrew Carnegie had funded. The library was recently renovated in 1995 to include spaces for children's programs and improved accessibility. The library has a typical Carnegie Library plan that is composed of three essential elements of a public library: procession, service area and flexible spaces.

Carnegie Libraries share similar qualities in their design especially in their front elevations and in their plan layouts. The entry elevation is a reminder of what the library symbolizes as a community center. The main entrance of the library is designed to include feature columns and couple of stairs to remind visitors and members of the local community the importance of the public institution.

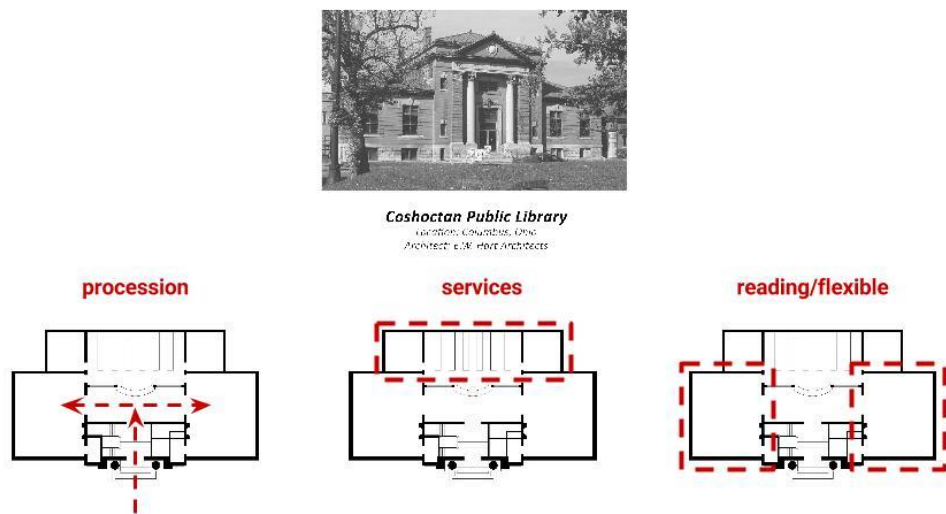


**Figure 4 Coshoctan Public Library Façade (Image by Owner)**

The typical experience of an earlier Carnegie Library would include requesting resources from the delivery room. The delivery room is where the experience of public libraries begins and ends – at the librarian’s desk. This pivotal program element is where the public engages the library’s resources/books. Upon requesting the sought printed material, the library would enter the stack room and bring your material to the library patron. Trustee rooms and librarians offices are located along the stack rooms where the books are archived and protected.



**Figure 5 Coshoctan Public Library Plan**



**Figure 6 Public Library Elements (Image by Author)**



### *The Struggles of Public Libraries*

Political scientist, Robert D. Leigh, published writings in 1950 about the sense of purpose of public libraries and how it is founded on the idea of “library faith.”<sup>8</sup> Leigh describes library faith as “a belief in the virtue of the printed word, especially of the book, the reading of which is held to be good in itself or from its reading flows that which is good.”<sup>9</sup> The ideal of public libraries as institutions of knowledge diffusion versus a specific audience or body of knowledge motivated the progress of public libraries despite critics of the overly optimistic view of “library faith.”

#### Addressing a Fluctuating Demographic

The library was seeing an influx of students as first generation baby-boomers entered their collegiate studies during the early years of 1950’s. The increase number of students doing research papers and theses promoted high circulation figures that would not last very long. The inner cities where public libraries were located faced a demographic shift as middle class residents begin to move to the suburbs. The public library was now finding itself serving a transformed audience – a non-print oriented community. The social and demographic movements of American urban life questioned the future role of urban public libraries. Librarians began to explore inner cities in search of people to provide services for and therefore public libraries redirected its services, broadened its programs and changed their methods. The trend of providing services for and underserved areas aggregated local libraries into library systems we now have today. Examples of this type of library system include Chicago

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<sup>8</sup> Robert D. Leigh, *The Public Library in the United States: The General Report of the Public Library Inquiry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Leigh. *The Public Library in the United States: The General Report of the Public Library Inquiry*.

Public Library, the Seattle Public Library and the Enoch Pratt Free Library located throughout the city of Baltimore.

Public libraries not only had to address changing demographics of users and their shifting living locations, but public libraries in larger urban cities devoted considerable services and resources to the “Americanize” new immigrant populations during the early twentieth century. Their growing number of immigrant clientele fueled the user need of foreign language materials. Branch libraries located in high immigrant populations were referred to as the “Polish branch “or” Russian branch despite their designated audience. Despite some critics’ castigation as social control, the public library became vital to the educational and employment opportunities of foreign-born readers.

#### *Young People and the Public Library*

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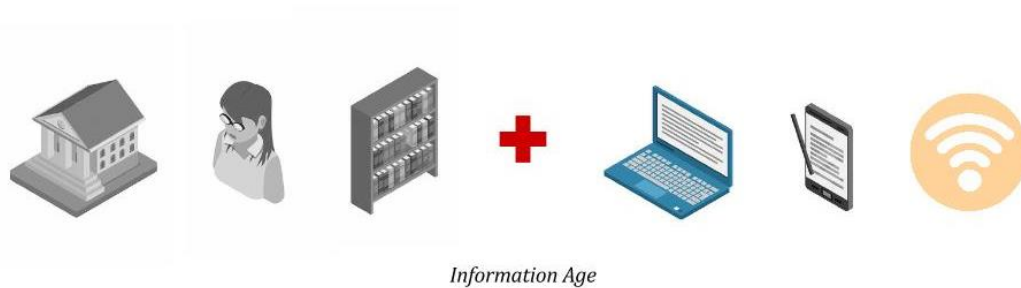
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#### Developing the Right Collection & Services

Public libraries explored new initiatives to contest their depreciating national role. An early strategy used by library systems like Baltimore County Public Library was to create an alliance with surrounding collection holders. BCPL increased their value by cooperating with the Enoch Pratt Free Library in the city of Baltimore. A local resident would be able to rent and return materials at any location throughout the state of Maryland. By cooperating together, local libraries can service full needs of their users through a “fluid” collection that is shared while maintaining their local individual identity. The development of data processing and computer systematization facilitated in the creation of a fluid collection and organization of

localized services.

The public institution has always faced the dichotomy of the contents of the library collection. The appeal to popular culture comprised of fictional narratives and recreational reading has to share shelves with classical works that embodied the noble aim of the diffusion of knowledge. The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge is a study that was published in 1924 proposed that public libraries should serve the intellectual service for its community.<sup>10</sup> Technical and vocational information including guidebooks for travelers, picture collections for artists and text geared for students began to shape special collections to answer the local communities' variety of interests. Public libraries, to this day, struggle with balancing support for recreational material and classical reading and research material. With government appropriations dependent of their circulation figures and overall value, public libraries must address the changing demographics and interest of their local community.



**Figure 7 Library Resources (Image by Author)**

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<sup>10</sup> William S. Learned, *The American Public Library And The Diffusion of Knowledge* (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924)

## Fluctuating Funding

Libraries have been primarily funded through local or municipal funding, but in the last decade libraries have faced financial scrutiny and budget cuts. The library has struggled with declining financial support especially during 1970's when the nation was struggling through economic dilemmas like escalating oil prices and high food costs. The emphasis of information during a service base economy put additional stress on the limited roles of libraries as urban poor service providers. The library dependence on the medium of print diminished its significance during the era of the television.

Although today the usage of the public library has increased in recent years, 40% of states have reported an overall decline for the financial support of their libraries. The decrease in funding has affected the libraries expending budget thus having to limit daily hours to compensate for the loss funding.

Libraries have explored supplemental funding sources through new library services or added commercial components such as cafes, bakeries and gift shops. Other libraries pursued partnership with for-profit ventures by becoming "dual-use" or mix use spaces. These private-public relationships incorporate business opportunities to the community while still providing a communal public space.

## Representing American Democracy

The public library represented democratic values in its no costs services to all. The valuable collections that the public libraries maintained and circulated for its community represented the nation's fight against tyranny of knowledge. Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences prepared a proposal in 1973 that described the

overarching role of the computer in the development of knowledge services.

Management and security of the growing amount of digital knowledge has turned information into legal tender.

## Chapter 3: Contemporary Trends of Public Libraries

*“The Library is not a building, a website, or a person; it is a platform for scholars, students, cultural enthusiasts, and others who want to absorb and advance knowledge.”* (Brian Mathews, Think Like a Startup) <sup>11</sup>

An institution that is visited by more than two thirds of the American population, the changing demographics and their trending needs are shaping the contemporary public library. It will be necessary for libraries to offer space for books, shelves, tables and chairs, light and solitude, and community space, but the nostalgia of print material alone will be unable to sustain the relevance of these now multifaceted social institutions. Public libraries have developed over history with a strong commitment to the ideals of “public service” have consistently looked to serve a “kaleidoscope of contemporary American life.” <sup>12</sup>

Some of these user activities include new immigrants learning English, job seekers improving their resumes to technophiles exploring the Internet on computer workstations. The architectural design of public libraries must address the demanding types of experiences evolves as the nation’s economy evolves from a product-based to experience-based ideal.

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<sup>11</sup> Brian Mathews, “Think Like a Startup: a white paper to inspire library entrepreneurialism,” (Virginia Tech., 2012), pg. 3

<sup>12</sup> Molz and Dain. *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age.*

### User Centered

The marketability of public libraries is founded on the civic services that the institution provides for its patrons. The original American ideal of public libraries performing as educational institutions for the educated and cultural workforce waned as other library concepts were adopted to advertise their services. Instead of filling shelves with materials with what “librarians feels should read or use, but those materials which most users do read or use.”<sup>13</sup>

This philosophy of demand was aided by successful cooperation of library systems such as the coalition between Baltimore City (EPFL) and Baltimore County (BCPL). Other marketing strategies were implemented in the details of the library such as outward facing shelving so that the covers of library books can face the reader. Lighting above bookshelves, populist sign systems and moving kiosks for paperback books contributed to the marketing movement of public libraries.

By offering pluralistic materials for a contemporary culture with a various taste in information while providing quality material has been an ongoing struggle for public libraries. Once a youth employed in Enoch Pratt Free Library and now a Pulitzer-Prize winner, Karl Shapiro expresses the importance of this debate:

*“The availability of books of all levels, not simply the best or the greatest books, I see as a stimulus to the creative mind. Multiplicity is the criterion and it is the best one for this purpose. It is quite right for this library to treat the bulk of books as perishables; it is quite right to regard the bulk of printed matter as potting soil.*

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Wedgeworth, *World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1993) pg. 677.



*Whatever else it does it makes things grow.*”<sup>14</sup>

### *Immigrant Population & Public Libraries*

The communities that public libraries were providing services for were multicultural and required different types and formats of information services. Originally the main objective of addressing the immigrant population began as a means to preserve the “American” culture. The conflict between assimilation and multiculturalism involves the participation of public libraries are driven by changes to the immigration policies.

An example of a successful collaboration and service to immigrant library patrons is the Queens Borough Library, a classic example of a city with a large population of immigrants. The library system offers instructional language material in 70 different languages and reading materials in 49 languages.<sup>15</sup> It has developed the largest demand for ESL classes and after a director’s visit to China would invite a partnership with Shanghai Public Library that would involve exchanging technology, materials and even staff in order to better provide services for both parties. The demand for public libraries amongst the immigrant population is found in the idea of “library faith” and is tied with the understanding of public libraries as a vehicle for upward social mobility for themselves and their future generations.

### *Young People & Public Libraries*

Another major age group that frequents the public libraries are children. Just as the

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<sup>14</sup> Molz and Dain. *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age.*

<sup>15</sup> Joseph Berger, “Queens Libraries Speak the Mother Tongue,” *New York Times* (January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011): A18, accessed May 18, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/03/nyregion/queens-libraries-serve-59-languages.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/03/nyregion/queens-libraries-serve-59-languages.html?_r=0)

nation was adapting their services to growing immigrant populations in urban landscapes, service to children were becoming common to libraries around the U.S. around 100 years ago. Librarians would have the same goals of preparing children and immigrants to become citizens, but would have to provide different format and spaces for children to learn and engage in. Libraries would be informal schools for citizenship and formal places of learning and discovery for children. Parent of children find libraries important part of their children's lives as the Pew Research Institute's studies show that three in five parents with minor age children take them to their local libraries.

Out of the 18 million people would visit public libraries in the U.S., 60 percent of typical weekly number of visits would be children under the age of 18 years old. Children's services have become a priority to public libraries as families depend on their local libraries to promote, family literacy, stimulate interests for books and encourage a lifetime habit of reading. These services are directly tied with children's knowledge and perceived success, thus libraries provide services to a range of age groups and reserve materials and spaces for children.

### Technology Access

The greatest impact of technology diffusion in libraries today is the aggressive shift of printed material to digital content. Printed material is being transformed to digital formats for user availability and the growing demand for information. The rise of electronic books and journals, the digitization of rare manuscripts to online library services. As one of the few places that the mediums of information from emerging technology and traditional information methods can be used for discovery, public

libraries strive to accommodate the book and the byte or as Marilyn Gell Mason, director of Cleveland Public Library, would describe “the ying and yang of knowing.”

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### *The Library & the Internet*

The ongoing digital shift from the industrial onset during the early 1800s is called the Information Age. Libraries have begun to use the Internet to extend their services to their users outside of the library building. A 1996 survey discovered that 62% of public libraries have their own homepages that patrons can frequent.<sup>17</sup>

The homepages gives access to the hours and functions of branch libraries in order to better serve the community. National studies about library usage reveal that online visits to public libraries stimulate in-person visits to physical libraries and museums.

The libraries webpages add value to libraries as information about cultural institutions, calendar of events, schedules of legislative bodies, sport teams, job banks, availability of child care and bus maps are expanding as digital civic information. This allows the user community to be connected with the services of the library.

In order to expand this service, the Library of Congress started the National Digital Library in 1994. The main objective of this movement was to digitize over 2000 several millions of original historic content so that is may be used by individual

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<sup>16</sup> Marilyn Gell Mason, *The Yin and Yang of Knowing*, (*Daedalus*125 (4). The MIT Press) pg. 161–71, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027391>.

<sup>17</sup> “Public Library Use,” American Library Association, Last Updated in October 2015, accessed on May 18, 2015, <http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet06>

library users. Though like any services offered to users like the printed book, the digital material is filtered through the librarian and what they believe is important and relevant topics for their local community. Managing the content found online maybe controversial, but public libraries as civic spaces proves necessary.

### Technology Support

Public libraries strive to discover balance of support for traditional materials and new technologies. Information technology that has been gaining speed since the 1960's. New technologies assist in advertising and fulfilling services for their communities such as English as Second Language Programs. Commission on Libraries and Information Sciences prepared a proposal in 1973 that described the overarching role of the computer in the development of library services. The proposal stated that “the computer would become ultimately central” and that “rapid and inexpensive telecommunications among libraries could turn out to be the greatest boon ever to the national distribution of knowledge for education and progress.”<sup>18</sup>

The library of the future can remain both a portal and a destination for information seekers, whether they access the information via a handheld computing device or the front door of their local library. Web 2.0 technology has enabled librarians to offer new services such as virtual references, personalized OPAC interfaces or downloadable material that users can use whenever they have Wi-Fi access.

Public libraries have supported the long term educational and knowledge role of its local communities and as its role is being replaced by other means of learning

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<sup>18</sup> Molz and Dain. *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age.*

and educating, the library seeks to strengthen its community involvements by forming partnership with local community organizations. By becoming a part of the community network, public libraries will expand their user relationship while growing interests in library use.

### *The Public Library and Librarians*

Earlier public libraries relied heavily on the roles of librarians as collectors and organizers, today the complexity of the public libraries' material and system demand librarians to adjust their role in an age of Information. Without reimagining and embracing the changing role of librarians in the age of Google search, the profession could face the process of “disintermediation” or the elimination of the medium between the information and user.<sup>19</sup>

Historically librarians have focused on people regardless of the technical aspects and many traditionalist worry about the overwhelming attention put on new technologies without retaining the humanistic focus of public libraries. Librarians are having to develop new skills to meet community demands especially regarding organizing and retrieving sought after information. Libraries are investing into training their staff how to use communications technology and how to use the Internet for research. The changing role of the librarian will be a focal point in retaining value for public libraries as they strive to expand their roles as partners in learning and in community development. Effective measures have been taken at the King County library system to have the staff engaged in community studies and needs analyses. Keeping the staff up to date with communities needs allows the librarian to procure

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<sup>19</sup> Tom Kwanya, Christine Stilwell and Peter Underwood, *Library 3.0: Intelligent Libraries and Apomediation* (Cambridge: Chandos Publishing, 2014)

their services to better meet patron's needs.

### *Spaces Designed for Discovery*

Contemporary public libraries do not have to rely on “library faith” and traditional materials to become a valuable institution with the rise of connectivity today. The direction of information doesn't end with books, but technology and the Internet provide opportunities for discovery. In early 2009, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's initiative on digital learning reported the initial funding of its 5-year, \$50 million survey and investigation. The researchers found that the Internet is empowering a tech-savvy generation to pursue a central element of 21st century education-self-directed learning. As users of public libraries are discovering new methods of access through their online library sources, the public library can apply their services to aiding users to create content as much as they absorb content.

Allowing users to create and participate in information discovery will draw new users to the public libraries. Chris Anderson, an editor in chief of Wired Magazine, describes this process of acquiring new users as the “long tail.” In an article about public libraries in 2004, Anderson explains how the non-blockbuster movies and books have a greater number of demanders than the popular material. This material is ignored and by designing libraries and services to discover these materials will attract more value in the services of public libraries.

### Collaborative Spaces

Canadian-American architect and writer, Witold Rybczynski, diffuses the prevailing idea of the demise of public libraries in his writings and argues that the

libraries “mutating role urban hangout, meeting place and arbiter of information, the public library seems far from spent. This has less to do with the digital world- or the digital word – than with the age-old need for human contact.”<sup>20</sup>

As a civic space, the public library invites all to participate in the pursuit of individual and community knowledge. R. David Lankes, a professor at Syracuse University’s School of Information Studies, emphasizes most important or accessible collaborators in public library participation – the library user and the librarian. This relationship will propel the adoption of library services, hone the services and shape physical and digital library spaces. The use of public libraries inspire a new type of collaboration amongst patrons of the library: content creation.

#### Public Space

Location selection of public libraries remained important to the library usage. Including public libraries as the civic center improves foot traffic and public awareness of the library building and is the main determinant for site selection. Though there is a growing factor of access of the automobile as library designs are including parking and traffic accessibility.

A current trend in recent years is the expanding or remodeling of existing library branches like the Anacostia Library Branch in Washington D.C. Overtime libraries have experienced an increase in their need of space to include the required equipment to serve the community and the rate materials are able to be created in today’s age of technology.

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<sup>20</sup> Molz and Dain. *Civic Space/cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age.*

## Flexible Spaces

The growing number of smartphones, media players, and computers have become portable and personalized that ultimately frees the information seeker complete from wired sources and the needs of a catered space. To bridge the gap, the library temporarily filled the space with beanbag chairs and studied what the space would become. Students were drawn to the space and started to discover their own configurations by moving around the chairs and bringing their own furniture and accessories. Today the flexible space offers moveable whiteboards, special areas for media production and gaming and a 14-seat presentation space with a SMART board. William M. Brown describes future physical library spaces: “A future-proof library design strives to create spaces that are lovable, responsive, energy productive, and resource effective...and perpetually significant. Future-proof libraries thrive on change.”

Library designs have focused on the organization of its collection of books, but the success of today’s library may rely facing outwards towards its patrons. Library services that once relied on patrons within a space can now access its collections from their mobile devices. The more the librarians are engaged with the user and are not found behind a reference desk, the better the library are able to keep relevant to user needs. “There is no question that almost all the library functions being planned for today will need to be reconfigured in the not-too distance future. The public library has reinvented the idea of flexibility that would give library spaces the “ability to rearrange contents of the library and to shift functions from one space



to another to keep up with the collection and user growth.”<sup>21</sup>

The future architecture of the library that successfully reflects the evolving taste, goals and information behaviors of their local community has spaces that can be easily reconfigured to serve a variety of uses. Future connectivity and technologies are allowing library spaces to be wireless and less bound by traditional organizations such as book shelves. Contemporary public libraries are embracing new trends in technology and community building in an effort to provide relevant, useful and flexible spaces in which local populations can congregate and interact.

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<sup>21</sup> Raymond M. Holt, “*Trends in Public Library Buildings*,” *Library Trends*, v36 n2 (1987): 267

## Chapter 4: Precedent Studies

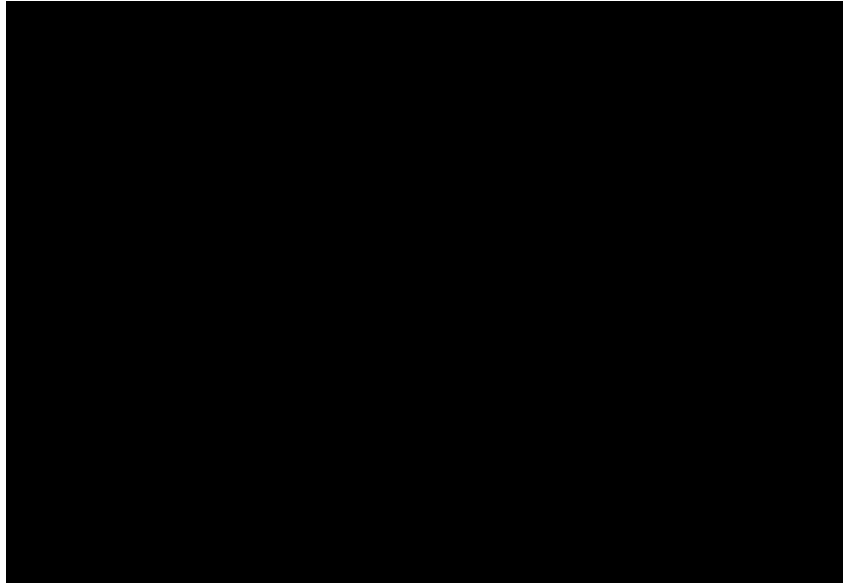
Modern public libraries will be analyzed through the lens of the public library elements studied in the Carnegie libraries – procession, services and flexible spaces. By studying and visiting local libraries of Washington D.C., the public's experience of public library architecture can be better designed to answer the changing audiences. The Seattle Public Library will be examined for its design process that involved community participation and for OMA + LMN challenges to the programmable elements of public libraries of the past in the overwhelming rise of technology.

### Seattle Public Library

When the city of Seattle was granted the opportunity of design a new public library, the city looked to their love for books and their reputation for public process participation as design strategy. The city was experiencing a transition bound by history of the land to a city inviting successful aviation and technology industries. The city of Seattle was in search of a complete identity and was looking at the public libraries to bring its cultures and identities together.

Completed in 2004, REM Koolhaas & OMA's design for the Seattle Central Library has received mixed reviews by architects and the local community for its unusual form in the middle of Seattle's urban fabric. In its design, the Seattle Public Library embraces the future of libraries by introducing flexible spaces that can be used for various activities from socializing (cafes & meeting rooms) to creating and accessing cultural/local material (art galleries, screening rooms and recording

studios). Andra Addison, the communications director for the Seattle Central Library, emphasizes the architecture flexibility of the spaces and how they are focused “more on expressed user needs than on flashy technology trends.”<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 8 Interior View of Seattle Public Library**  
<http://www.downtownseattle.com/2014/10/library-survey/>

### Anacostia Public Library

The newly renovated Anacostia Public Library is located in Washington, DC. The 22,000 square foot library is located within a small residential block in the historic neighborhood of Anacostia. The library features a small collection of physical material, but has a variety of spaces for user needs from local church bible studies to video conference calls for local inmates. Anacostia Library’s support area is home to

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<sup>22</sup> Hendrix, Jennifer C, *Checking Out the Future. Perspectives from the Library Community on Information Technology and 21st-Century Libraries* (ALA Office for Information Technology Policy.) Accessed May 18, 2016, [http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/oitp/publications/policybriefs/ala\\_checking\\_out\\_the.pdf](http://www.ala.org/offices/sites/ala.org.offices/files/content/oitp/publications/policybriefs/ala_checking_out_the.pdf).

more children than other DC library branches and the library design reflects the focus of children's spaces and experiences. The large entry plaza and flexible interior children spaces provide children of the neighborhood various levels of interaction and experiences.



**Figure 9 Front Public Space (Image by Author)**

The front of the library is set back from the Good Hope Road that creates a plaza inviting children of the community to play under the shelter of the extended roof over the plaza. The plaza looks into the designated children's commons area which allows children to freely move in and out of the designated children's spaces.



**Figure 10 Urban Context & Lighting Design (Image by Author)**

The Anacostia Public Library is north-south on the large sloped site. The slope was used to treat water in a bio retention pond towards the north side of the library. Glazing that faces the north allows for sunlight to enter the main upper floor while the southern entry façade uses roof overhang to mitigate direct sunlight while keeping views open to the Good Hope Road and allowing the neighborhood to see the activity in the library.



**Figure 11 Flexible Space Anacostia Library (Image by Author)**

The staff at the Anacostia Library were scattered throughout the library space. Designated librarian desks that overlooked the entrance and the computer stations functioned separately from the front entry desk. Unlike the earlier designs of the Carnegie libraries, the Anacostia Library does not terminate the procession of the library with the librarian's desk rather aligns it with the linear procession. The librarian's desk, bathrooms and smaller meeting rooms align the clear circulation path and faces the flexible common spaces to the west side of the building.



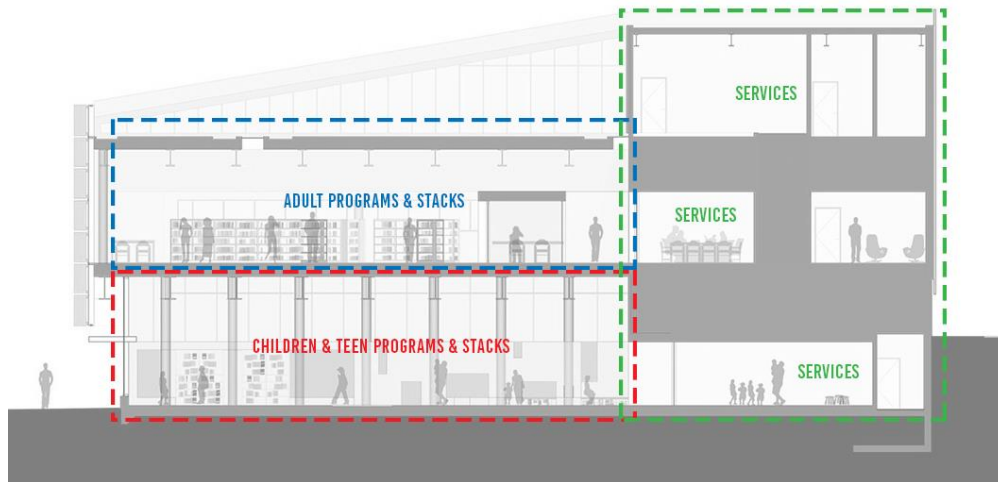
**Figure 12 Elements of Anacostia Public Library (Image by Owner)**

The main open reading space on the second floor houses the many linear rows of stacks and scattered study spaces. Throughout the day user activity is usually found at computer stations and in private reading rooms while the major stack spaces are void of user presence. The relatively small library space serves the community with three rentable classroom spaces of different sizes and a “special programs” room where jobseeker clinics and children story reading events are held daily. The support spaces of the library are consolidated on the east side of the building and on the first floor.

As the library services the space needs of its users, the community is invited to support the library with their involvement. Paintings done by neighborhood children and local artists are exhibited on the library walls. The effectiveness of Anacostia Library as a successful public library is not strictly dependent on the services & spaces provided by the library, but the community’s participation in the activities that happen within the physical bounds of the built library.

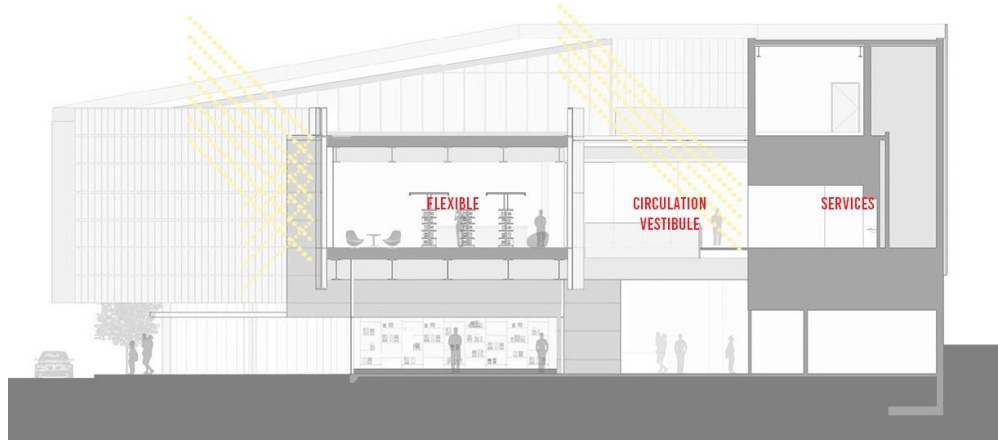
Tenley Friendship Library

The Tenley Friendship Library is an award winning library that invites its local community of Tenley Friendship in Washington D.C. to use its variety of space types. The Freelon Group Architects designed the 21,500 square foot library to feature large and small meeting rooms, children’s learning rooms and more private study and tutoring rooms. The ground floor of the library houses the children’s program spaces and resources such as printed material, supervised computer stations, DVDs and mixed media kits while the common stacks and programs for older library patrons exists above on the second level of the library. The children’s librarians daily manage specialized children’s programs that encourage reading and early literacy.



**Figure 13 Tenley Friendship Library Section (Image by Author)**





**Figure 14 Lighting Control Design (Image by Author)**

Located on the corner of major highways Albemarle Street and Wisconsin Avenue, the library is oriented to take advantage of sun conditions. The entry lobby with feature stair has glazing facing north to allow sunlight to enter these transitory spaces while allowing for views to the sky. The skylight above the atrium bring light to both levels of the library. Direct sunlight is filtered through the use of vertical fins angled to respond to the changing sunlight throughout the day. s

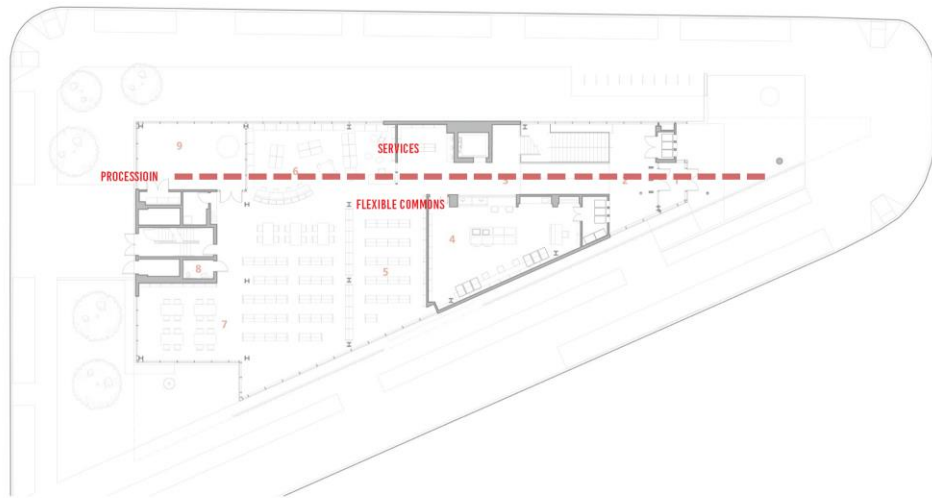


**Figure 15 Tenley Friendship Library Elements**

Watha T. Shaw Public Library

The Watha T. Shaw Public Library is located on a uniquely shaped triangular urban site in Washington D.C. The three story building is 22,800 square foot building with one floor below grade. The public space before entering the library is capped by an art installation done by a local artist. The extended perforated wall screen creates an exterior room that invites pedestrians off the sidewalk and into the ground floor. The ground floor houses the children's library area and is the main point for resources and staff servicing. The adult programming is housed on the upper level with

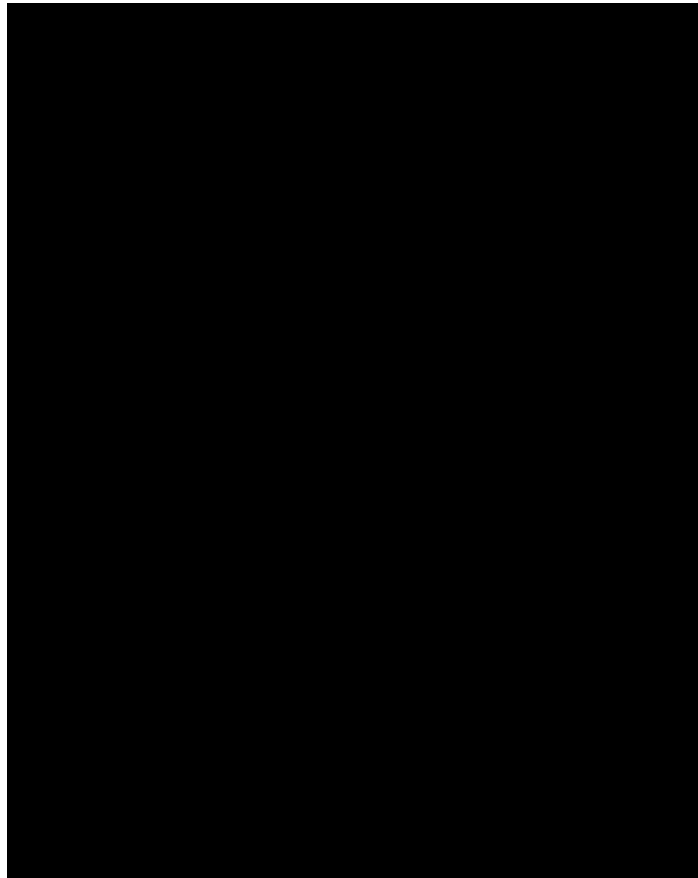
conference rooms and individual study rooms that are aligned with the flexible commons. The branch library has a small building footprint and uses online catalogs and other technology scattered throughout the library to provide resources in a small space.



**Figure 16 Shaw Public Library Plan Elements**

The Shaw Public Library uses daylight management and solar control to control the qualities of interior space. Direct sunlight is mitigated through the use of perforated metal screen on the southern face of the building. The metal material allows limited views to the neighborhood while creating usable spaces without harsh sunlight. The south façade is designed to interact with the main highway of Rhode Island Avenue. Openings in the perforated metal skin reveal and hide views from and into the library space. As drivers and pedestrians pass by the building throughout

different times of the time, the library changes from a floating metal volume to a volume of light during evening hours.



**Figure 17 Watha T. Shaw Public Library at Night**

## Chapter 5: Site Selection

### Patterson Park Branch

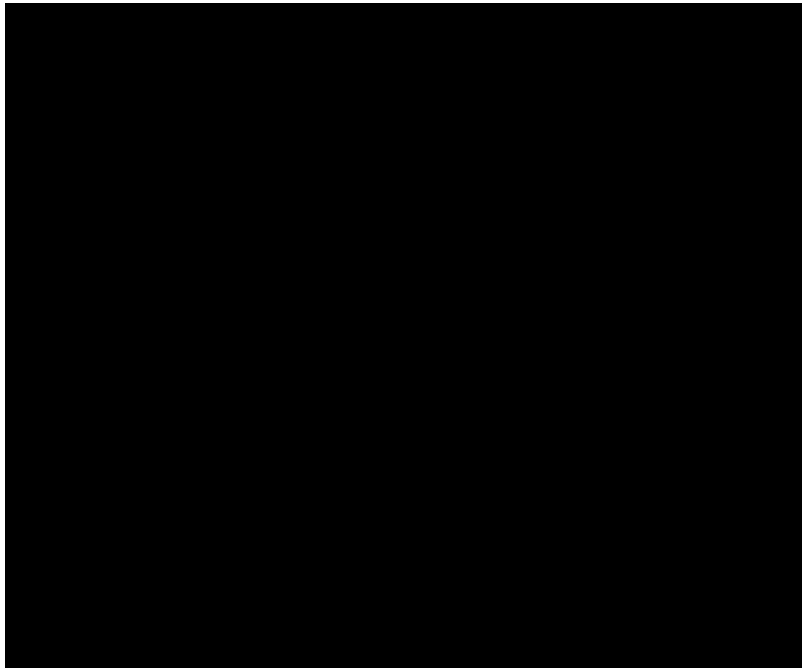
#### History

The Patterson Park Branch Library is part of the free public library system of Baltimore City – Enoch Pratt Free Libraries. Philanthropist Enoch Pratt established the Enoch Pratt Free Library on January 21, 1882. Enoch Pratt dreamed of a circulating library system that "shall be for all, rich and poor without distinction of race or color, who, when properly accredited, can take out the books if they will handle them carefully and return them."<sup>23</sup> A central library and monetary endowment by Pratt founded the twenty-two branches throughout the city of Baltimore. Andrew Carnegie financially endowed 15 of the 22 library buildings and only 14 of the original institutions remains. The Patterson Park Branch was selected for this thesis study for its site opportunities and historic connection to the Carnegie libraries of the past.

The Patterson Park Branch was completed in 1910 and has a typical organization of a Carnegie Library with a procession, services area and reading rooms. It is 1 of the 4 remaining Carnegie libraries in Baltimore City that functions as a public library. Originally called Branch 13, this the Patterson Park Branch was the first location to offer Spanish language materials and continues to engage with the changing demographics of its neighborhood.

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<sup>23</sup> "History of the Library." - *Enoch Pratt Free Library*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 May 2016.



**Figure 18 Inside of the Patterson Park Branch (1954)**

#### Architecture

The Patterson Park Branch has a typical Carnegie library entrance façade with entry columns with entablature and feature stairs. The building is of brick construction and has high window openings for daylight management and light wells that bring sunlight into the basement level. Today the entry façade is closed off to the public and has been reconfigured to be the back of the library. The lack of ADA access and inability to ramp to the feature stairs & landing changed the Carnegie entrance as a symbolic façade rather than actually entering through it.



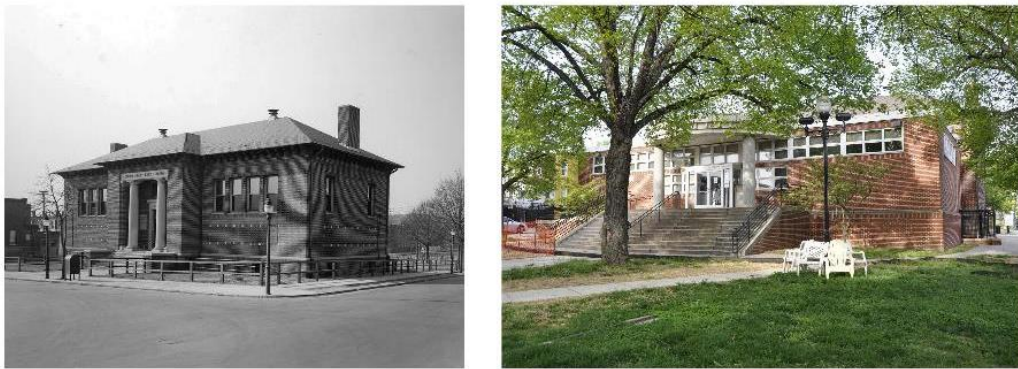
**Figure 19 Entry Facade (Image by Author)**

To meet the needs of the growing community in East Baltimore City and answer the need of a new entry, the library went through an extension in 1953. The new west extension included a new entry lobby, new staff offices and stack space. The lobby functions similar to the procession of the delivery rooms found in Carnegie libraries of the past. High traffic and poor circulation exists in the only entrance and exit of the new library extension entrance. The extension also features an even larger feature stairs to appropriate the height difference from the east to west elevation

change.



**Figure 20 Extension Entry Lobby (Image by Author)**



**Figure 21 Old & New Entrances of Patterson Park Branch (Image by Author)**



Site Study



**Figure 22 Baltimore City Figure Ground (Image by Author)**

The Patterson Park Branch is located two blocks north of Patterson Park and is located where major highways Pulaski Highway and Fayette Street merges west towards the Inner Harbor and major downtown area. The two highways merge to create a triangular site divided by N. Kenwood Avenue.

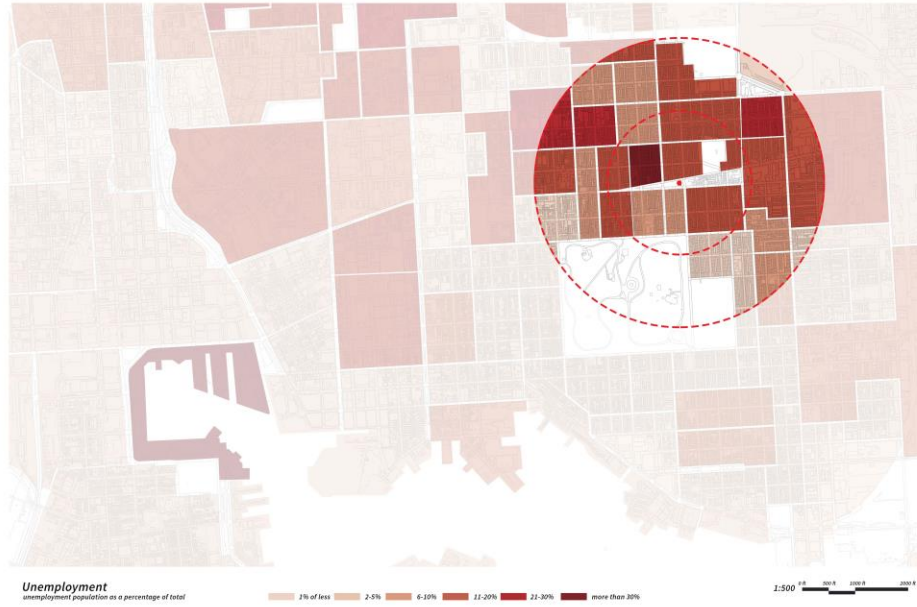
## Demographics

The Patterson Park Branch services East Baltimore City which includes a high minority population and struggling economic conditions. Parts of Patterson Park neighborhood experience an income lower than \$10,000 dollars and/or some parts have 30% of their community members unemployed. The statistics change from the harbor south towards the north of the city.

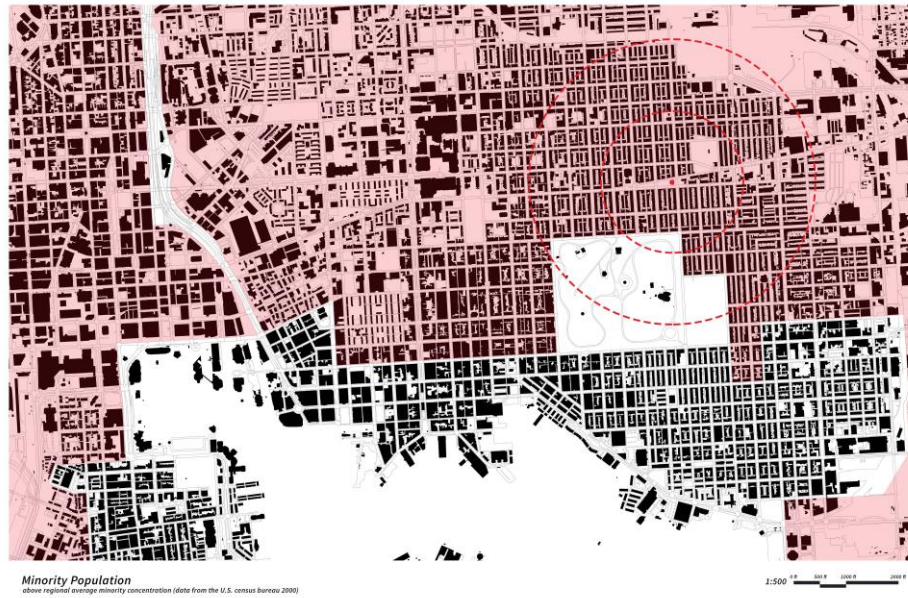
By acknowledging the struggling demographics of the local community, the library can begin to include programmable spaces that answer the specifics needs of the community such as career services and vocational training.



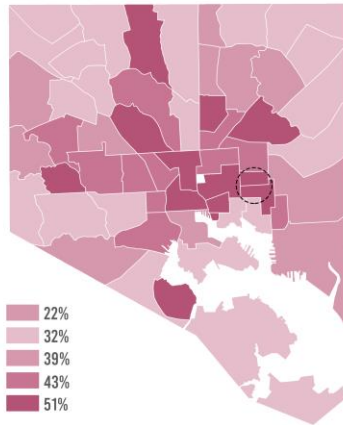
**Figure 23 Income Per Capita in Baltimore City (Image by Author)**



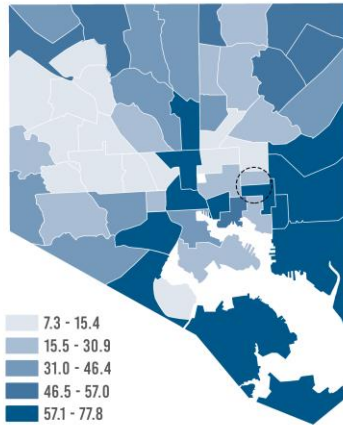
**Figure 24 Average Unemployment in Baltimore City (Image by Author)**



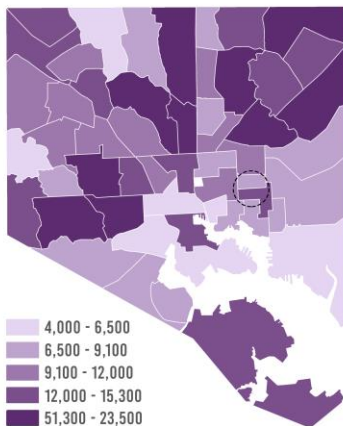
**Figure 25 Minority Population in the City (Image by Author)**



LIBRARY CARD OWNERSHIP CREATED BY BNIA-JFI, 2016



RACIAL DIVERSITY CREATED BY BNIA-JFI, 2016



POPULATION DENSITY CREATED BY BNIA-JFI, 2016

**Figure 26 Baltimore City Demographics (Image by Author)**

## Community Activity

The residential neighborhood is mostly composed of rowhomes and industrial warehouses to the east of the library. The community activity mostly resides closer to the campus of Johns Hopkins University towards the east of the city. Commercial activity and educational programming happens closer to main downtown of Baltimore City while the library sits amongst many public gathering spaces such as churches and open green spaces like Patterson Park and Ellewood Park to the north.



**Figure 27 Local Schools in East Baltimore City (Image by Author)**



Figure 28 Commercial Activity in East Baltimore City (Image by Author)

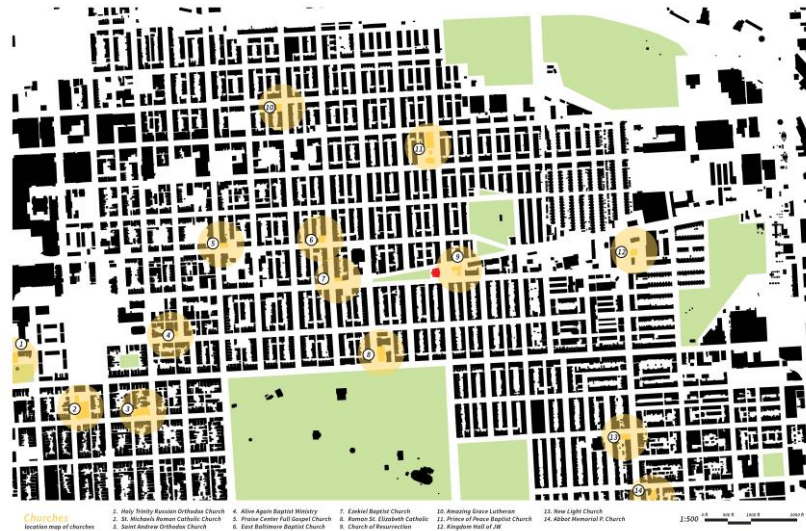


Figure 29 Local Religious Buildings in East Baltimore City (Image by Author)

### Site Features

Majority of the site area is composed of an outdoor park space that is owned by the Baltimore City’s Department of Recreation and Parks. Currently the public space is being transformed into a public art garden with local artists contributing art installations, ornate fencing and murals. Park amenities such as bikes and paved paths are creating unique along the main procession to the new library extension entrance.



**Figure 30 Public Space facing Carnegie Library (Image by Author)**

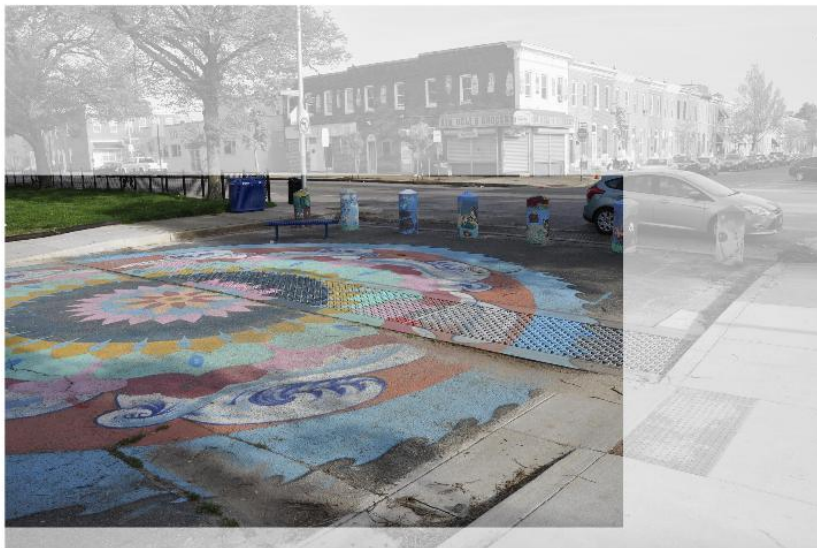


**Figure 31 Site Plan**

The site features a Spanish War Memorial statue to the west and the Church of Resurrection to the east across the street from the library. Art along the surrounding buildings and on the cross streets creates unique moments throughout the site.



**Figure 32 Spanish American War Statue (Image by Author)**



**Figure 33 Street Mural (Image by Author)**



## Chapter 6: Design Methods

### Preserve

The preservation of the original Carnegie Library built in 1910 became a design challenge. Repurposing the old library as an “archives” that houses community events and historically significant material provides the opportunity to move the original functions of the library to a new location on the existing site.

By eliminating the extension completed in 1953, the height differential mitigated by using a gentle slope to the new archive building and incorporating new stairs in the interior of the building. The new entry extension is a minimal attempt to draw community members to the “pavilion” in the garden that houses memories of libraries of the past while connecting to the new library across the park.

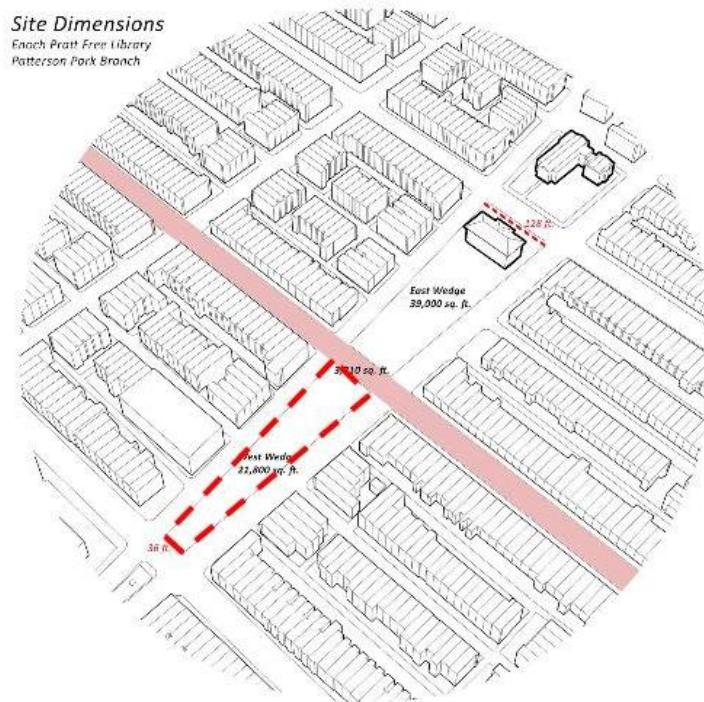


**Figure 34 The Carnegie Library Archives Reimagined (Image by Author)**

### Relocate

Relocating the library on the existing public space allows the opportunity to activate the entire space and not only one edge of the site. The site is currently divided by N. Kenwood Avenue with a street painting done by local artists. By using

bollards to stop automobile traffic, the public space is completed. The smaller wedge towards the west of the site has a total of 21,800 square feet of building area. Compared to the programmable floor area of the Anacostia Public Library, the west wedge provides enough space to relocate the modern day library functions.



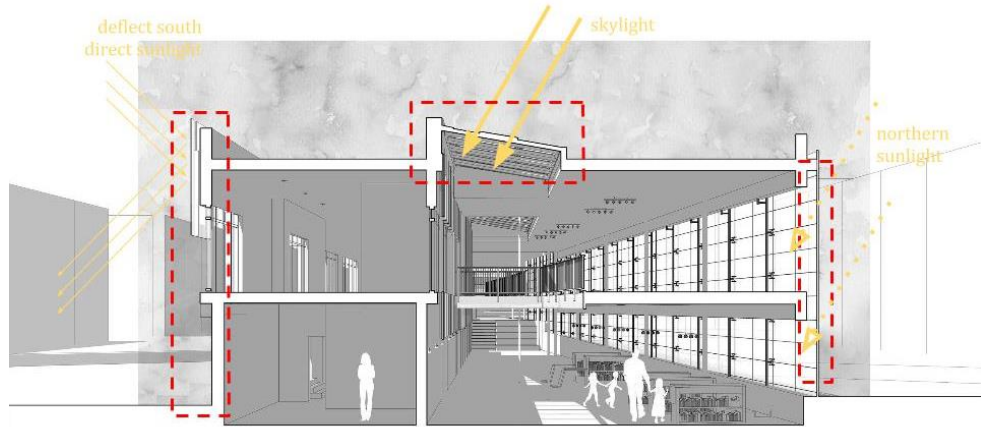
**Figure 35 Site Division & New Library Location (Image by Author)**

The relocated library is oriented to have a new east entry façade that engages with the public space and completes the public square with a church on one edge and a library on the other. The new façade expresses the three elements to library designs discovered in Carnegie libraries: the procession, service and flexible areas.

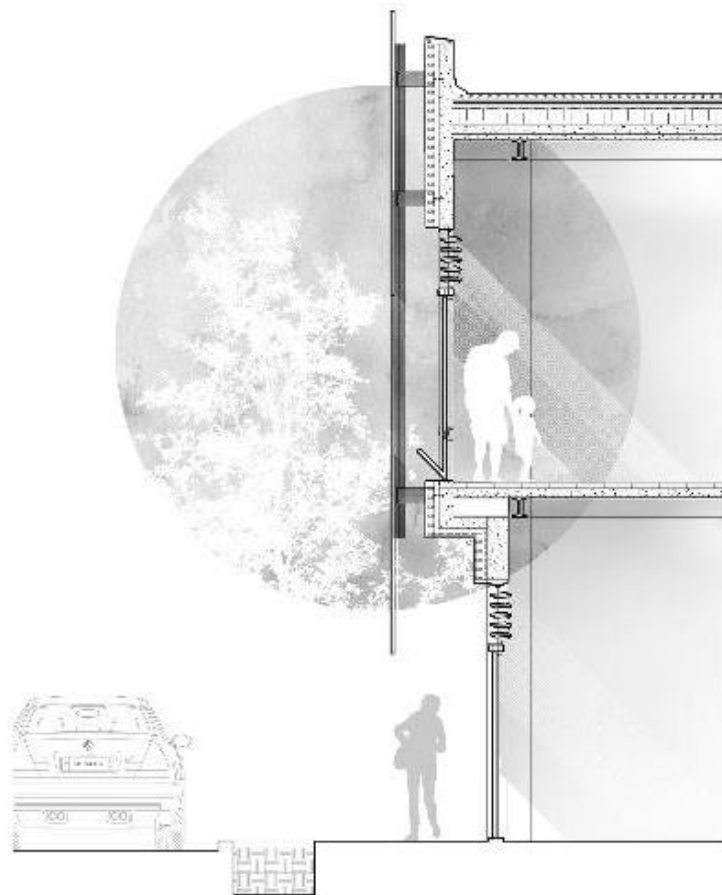


**Figure 36 New Library East Façade (Image by Author)**

The new library design uses different qualities of sunlight for the different elements of a library. The flexible commons is placed on the north edge of the thin site to allow sunlight to enter the spaces of gathering and learning. The linear procession has a skylight above it to allow views to the sky and direct sunlight in not a concern in a circulation space. The south elevation is composed of many layers to mitigate harsh southern sunlight. Concrete construction is covered by a metal paneling skin that opens at window openings to allow views to the surrounding neighborhood. The metal paneling is perforated to filter light and create unique lighting within the interior spaces.



**Figure 37 Lighting Design (Image by Author)**



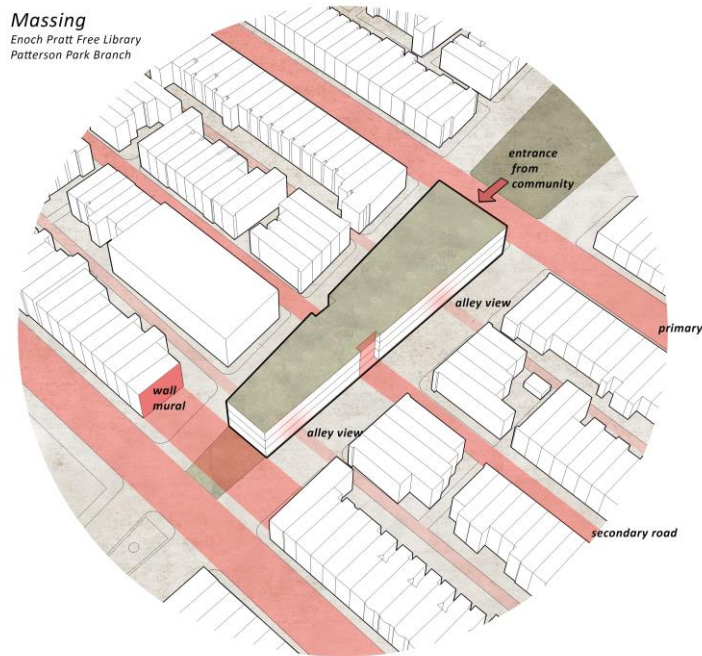
**Figure 38 Typical South Wall Section & Details (Image by Author)**



**Figure 39 Interactive South Facade (Image by Author)**

*Activate*

The metal paneling is held up by iron brackets that have imbedded LED lighting that responds to activity happening in the library. The lighting would move up and down to signify when the library is in high use and when the library is closed. The wrapping metal paneling creates the floating volume that represents the service bar that extends the whole building. The building responds to the surrounding neighborhood context by allowing the existing conditions to inform the building mass and details.



**Figure 40 Designing in Context (Image by Author)**

The streets that run north south begin to inform the building mass or where the window openings are located. Secondary streets such as N. Benlord Avenue allows pedestrians and drivers that use the streets to have points of visual access through and into the building activity. The wall mural on the west end of the site begins to inform where the new west entrance of the library would be located will also shape the new outdoor reading gardens that offers views to the Spanish War Memorial statue, the wall mural and back into the new library building.



**Figure 41 Benlord Avenue Existing View (Image by Author)**



**Figure 42 Benlord Avenue New Elevation View (Image by Author)**

The wall paneling found throughout the length of the new building wraps the new interactive towers at each end of the site. The towers stand tall amongst the residential neighborhood to signify to the community members of the presence of the

branch library. Because the building is aligned with a major highway, the views of the tower can be seen from all directions along street corridors. Instead of relying on a typical Carnegie façade elements such as columns, stairs and feature doorways, the new library uses grounded towers to represent the importance of the library in the growth of the local community.



**Figure 43 Existing West Wedge & Wall Mural (Image by Author)**



**Figure 44 New West Entry Tower and Private Reading Garden (Image by Author)**



## Chapter 7: Conclusions

In conclusion, new library spaces such as the Anacostia Public Libraries and its contemporary are not new in their purpose or their organizing principles. Libraries function with elements of procession, services/resources and flexible spaces for various kinds of activities of its surrounding community. The thesis research reveals the importance of site selection and allowing context to inform building design. Furthering this research would require more than studies about site, but understanding the history and progression of the community that library branches are in. By understanding the direction of their communities and how patrons are using their local libraries, libraries can be designed to answer shifting needs of the community. Further exploration of how to design a “flexible space” can begin to blur the line between a flexible space and public space. As these programs begin to merge with mobile technology and growing amount of data, new types of experiences can be designed.

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