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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 1901Vine Street, bounded by 19th, 20th and Wood Streets, Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania. The library faces south onto Logan Circle and the Benjamin Franklin Parkway that runs at a diagonal from Vine Street.

Owner: The library is part of the Free Library of Philadelphia system and is owned by the City of Philadelphia.

Present Use: Central library

Significance: The Central Library, built between 1917 and 1927, was designed by well-known architect Horace Trumbauer and his associate Julian Abele and it is the flagship of the Philadelphia Free Library system. Favoring French architecture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they based their design on the twin Ministère de la Marine and Hôtel de Crillon on Place de la Concorde in Paris. The library was the first structure to be erected along the city's new parkway, which was likewise inspired by Parisian precedents, namely the Champs d'Elysee. It too was the work of Horace Trumbauer, with architects Paul Cret, Clarence Zantzinger, and French planner Jacques Greber. Intended as a grand boulevard linking City Hall to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Fairmount Park, it was later named for Benjamin Franklin. The parkway and the civic structures and monuments that line it were a product of Philadelphia's City Beautiful movement.

Philadelphia was the recipient of one of the largest of industrialist-turned-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie's grants for library construction. Although the Central Library was not a component of the endowment, Carnegie financed the construction of its twenty-five branch libraries, erected between 1905 and 1930 under the direction of the city's Carnegie Fund Committee. The branch libraries remain as a remarkable intact and cohesive grouping rivaled only by that of New York City with its sixty-seven branches.[1] The construction of the Central Library furnished a long-anticipated permanent home for the Free Library, an institution that was chartered in 1891 and previously housed in a number of pre-existing structures. When completed, Philadelphia's Central Library was touted as one of the most beautiful and technologically sophisticated libraries in the world, and its capacity of more than one million volumes was exceeded only by that of the British Museum, the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress.

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[1] Carnegie provided funding beginning in 1903 for thirty branch libraries; due to rising costs, only twenty-five were built. Four of the twenty-five libraries are no longer extant and a fifth is altered beyond recognition. Four others were adapted for other purposes. In New York, fifty-seven were still standing, and fifty-four still operating as of 1996. The next largest grants for branch libraries were given to Cleveland (15), Baltimore (14), and Cincinnati (10).

Historian: Catherine C. Lavoie.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The Central Library was erected between 1917 and 1927. Ground was broken on 12 May 1917 and the formal opening was held on 2 June 1927.[2] The fact that the building campaign extended a full decade can be attributed to various work stoppages. Local political disputes stalled the appropriation of necessary funding by the city council, and shortages in labor and building materials were particularly acute during the period that spanned World War I. The most significant delay occurred on the outset; the groundbreaking took place in 1917, but the foundation was not laid until 1921.

2. Architect: The architects for the Central Library were Horace Trumbauer (1868-1938) and his associate Julian Abele (1881-1950) who together formed an extraordinary partnership lasting over thirty years. Although the two differed in many ways, they were bound by mutual respect and by the certain inequities that each faced. The elder, Trumbauer, gained international recognition as an architect during the early twentieth century. Yet despite his renown, he was denied membership into the American Institute of Architects until 1931 by those who scoffed at his lack of formal education.[3] Abele, on the other hand, was highly educated and was in fact the first African American to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania School of Architecture. In spite of his skill and first-rate education, Abele was not recognized for his accomplishments due to the racial prejudice that forced him to recede into the background. Trumbauer received the credit for the firm's work even though Abele either created or contributed significantly to an estimated 250 designs, including that of the Central Library. As Abele stated in the latter case, "The lines are all Mr. Trumbauer's, but the shadows are all mine."[4] Although it was not uncommon to sign architectural sketches with the name of the firm rather than that of the individual, as historian Susan Tifft informs us, intolerance combined with Abele's "self-effacing personality" helped perpetuate his anonymity.

Like many architects of his generation, Trumbauer received his training through apprenticeship rather than through formal architectural training. He was a mere fourteen years of age when he left public school to study architecture under the tutelage of George W. and William D. Hewitt of the well-known Philadelphia firm of Hewitt & Hewitt. Trumbauer showed remarkable aptitude for his chosen profession and quickly progressed from errand boy to draftsman. Trumbauer was at Hewitt & Hewitt when the firm was

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[2] "The New Free Library of Philadelphia," *The Library Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 12 (15 June 1927), 633.

[3] It has been said that criticism of Trumbauer also stemmed from the fact that he designed homes for Philadelphia's "brashest nouveaux riches" and that the varying architectural styles that he applied to his work demonstrated a "chameleonism" that many architects found contemptuous. David B. Brownlee, *Building the City Beautiful; The Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1989), 72.

[4] Susan R. Tifft, "Out of the Shadows," *Smithsonian* magazine (February 2005) http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/shadow.html.

designing one of its best known estate homes, *Drum Moir*, in Chestnut Hill. Such exposure undoubtedly influenced his subsequent career as a designer of palatial residences. In 1890, at age twenty-one, Trumbauer left the firm to begin his own practice, opening an office at 310 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia.

Trumbauer began his solo career by designing houses for local builder/developer Wendell & Smith at locations such their *Overbrook Farms* community. Within only a few years he was designing the large-scale residences for which he became best known, including numerous estate houses for Philadelphia's elite located in the growing suburbs surrounding the city. His first major estate design was the forty-room, English-castle-styled *Grey Towers* for William W. Harrison in Glenside, Pennsylvania in 1893. Its success attracted the attention of other wealthy Philadelphians, such as those of the Widner and Elkins families for whom he designed a number of houses including the 110-room Georgian Revival *Lynnewood Hall* for Peter A.B. Widener in 1897 and the sixty-room Tudor Revival *Ronaele Manor* for Widener's granddaughter in 1923. Working outside Philadelphia, he designed lavish townhouses in New York City and in Washington, D.C., as well as "Summer Cottages" in Newport, Rhode Island, such as Widner's Neoclassical *Miramar*, and the French Chateau inspired *The Elms* for Julius Berwind, complete with ballroom and conservatory.

Trumbauer's designs were predominately influenced by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French architecture. In fact, he formed an alliance with French architect Jacques Greber, who he later worked with on the master plan for the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. In the meantime, Greber planned numerous garden landscapes to accompany Trumbauer's house designs. Although he favored French influenced, largely Beaux Arts style designs, Trumbauer also drew on historical precedents to work in other revival styles of the period such as Georgian and Tudor Revival. It has been said of Trumbauer that his work was not reflective of the traditional "Philadelphia School" of architecture. Unlike local contemporaries such as Wilson Eyre, Jr., H.L. Duhrang, and the firm of Mellor, Meigs & Howe, Trumbauer did not practice the typical restraint indicative of the "Quaker City." Instead his work is often compared with that of more opulent New York firms such as McKim, Mead & White, and Carrere & Hastings.[5]

Trumbauer's associate Julian Abele was also a native Philadelphian. He graduated from the Quaker-run Institute for Colored Youth (now Cheyney University) and Brown Preparatory School in Philadelphia before attending the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture. At that time, the university's program focused on the architectural style and method of study established by the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Abele appreciated the classical forms that were at the heart of the program. He thrived at the University of Pennsylvania and was well respected by his classmates who named him president of the student architectural society in his senior year. During the school year 1902-03, Abele also took a course in architectural design at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. After graduation he traveled to France to further his understanding of the

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[5] Roger Moss and Sandra Tatman, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930* (Boston: G.K. Hall & Company, 1985), 800.

Beaux Arts and his general appreciation for French arts and culture.[6] Upon his return to Philadelphia in 1906 Abele was hired by Horace Trumbauer. Abele took a position as assistant to chief designer Frank Seeburger. Within a few short years, Abele demonstrated enough competence to succeeded Seeburger when he left to start his own practice in 1909.

After World War I, the firm's focus switched from largely residential to commercial and institutional designs to create over forty structures in center city Philadelphia. Among the most noteworthy of these are the Railroad Station on Broad Street, the Public Ledger Building, Elkins Memorial YMCA, the Benjamin Franklin and Ritz Carlton hotels, the Central Library of the Free Library, and the Philadelphia Art Museum (also on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway). Collegiate designs include the Gothic Revival University of Pennsylvania's Irvine Auditorium, and the buildings of the Duke University campus that are considered among their masterpieces. The latter project in particular was largely the work of Julian Abele and one for which he has only recently received the public recognition that he so richly deserves. The design of the Central Library was the other project through which Abele made his most significant architectural contributions.[7] In 1938, following the death of Horace Trumbauer, Julian Abele and colleague William O. Frank took over the firm, operating as "The Office of Horace Trumbauer." The Trumbauer firm was responsible for executing over 1,000 commissions, and at the height of its practice included a staff of thirty.

3. Owners: The library is part of the Free Library of Philadelphia system and is owned by the City of Philadelphia. The city provided the lot through the creation of a municipal loan approved by Philadelphia voters in 1897. However, it was years before the final site was selected. Among the sites considered early on was one adjacent to City Hall. At the same time that the city was seeking a suitable site for the Central Library, an idea that had been proposed earlier for a grand boulevard for the city resurfaced. The plan was officially reinstated in March 1903, and Head Librarian John Thomson lost no time in calling for "the establishment of the Main Library Building at the city entrance of the magnificent Boulevard proposed to be opened from the City Hall to Fairmount Park."[8] The selection of the specific location was delayed pending the determination of the exact route of the boulevard. A plan was developed and accepted in 1907, but it was not until 1911 that Mayor John Reyburn's newly-formed Comprehensive Plans Committee was able to confirm the parkway's path. At that point, Mayor Reyburn and Fairmount Park Commissioner Eli Kirk Price led the campaign to move the city's civic institutions, including the Free Library, to the new thoroughfare.[9] The Free Library was given its current and most prominent site across from Logan Square shortly thereafter.

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[6] Purportedly Abele's studies in France were paid for by Trumbauer. It was also said that he studied at the exclusive Ecole des Beaux Arts, although their records do not support that claim. It is likely that he studied at one of the many ateliers available through the Ecole. Moss and Tatman, 1.

[7] Tifft, "Out of the Shadows." It was the library *and* the Philadelphia Museum of Art that Tifft considered Abele's greatest achievements.

[8] Free Library of Philadelphia, "Celebrating 75 Years on the Parkway, Quest for a Home, 1895-1910" an exhibition available on-line at http://libwww.freelibrary.org/75th/plans.htm?page=his.

[9] Brownlee, 71.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The foundations for the library were laid by the Standard Construction Company between February and November 1921. The general contractor was P. H. Kelly Construction Company, who submitted the low bid of $1,367,000. The steel structural system was fabricated by the American Bridge Company and was substantially completed by the start of 1923. The ornamental limestone carving was undertaken, largely during 1924, by the John Donnelly Company, whose other important commissions included work at the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C. The stone carvers hailed from Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, England, and the United States. Among the highlights of their work are the seventy colossal Corinthian columns and the pediments depicting the history of writing and printing. The exterior was complete by spring 1925. The contract for the interior of the library was awarded to the F. W. Mark Construction Company on 29 July 1925, at a cost of $2,417,241.

5. Original plans and construction: Preliminary plans (dated 1911) were developed by the architect in consultation with Free Library of Philadelphia Assistant Librarian John Ashhurst. Although changes were made in the final design, these preliminary plans clearly informed the general layout of the library. It was a good partnership; input from the librarian made certain that the building functioned well as a central library, while the architects ensured its prominence as a visually appealing structure. According to Ashhurst, "The aim thruout [sic] has been to plan a library building which will be safe for the books, comfortable for the readers, large enough for future growth, economical to administer, and worthy of the city and of the people of Philadelphia."[10] Towards those ends, the functional core of the library is its tremendous free-standing metal book stack which extends across the rear of the building 166' in length and 50' in width and (beginning 25' below street level) rises three stories in height. The library also included a state-of-the-art transport and communication system as well as a full-service book processing facility. Library patron's book requests were transmitted via a teletype system from librarians in the reading rooms to pages within the stacks. Once the page retrieved the book it was placed on a conveyor belt that traveled from the stacks to the first mezzanine level where the book was then carried by dumbwaiter to the reading room. Likewise, messages were carried to librarians and administrators through a pneumatic tube system that included dozens of stations throughout the library. The book process facility included a card catalog and tracking system as well as a book bindery.

The librarian also worked with the architects to help determine the overall layout of the Central Branch. Significant elements established during the preliminary design phase include: a grand main entrance hall bisected by a perpendicular hallway, reference and periodical rooms on the entry level with the principal reading rooms on the elevated first floor, and an enormous book stack to the rear of the building. Also called for in the preliminary plans are the light courts located near the center of the building flanking the stairway(s). The most significant difference between the planned and as-built structure, particularly from an aesthetic standpoint, is that the area to the rear of the entrance hall

[10] "The New Free Library of Philadelphia," *The Library Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 12 (15 June 1927), 638.

that accommodates the grand stairway was originally conceived as an exhibition hall with the catalog area above it on the second floor. Instead of a single grand stairway, two separate (enclosed) stairways appear on the early plan, flanking the exhibition hall. While the preliminary plans do indicate numerous specialized functions, more of these types of spaces were added to the final plans. Despite later changes, the initial plans were instrumental in determining the ways in which the library would function.

Perhaps not coincidently, the plan of the Central Library also resembles that of the New York Public Library designed by Carrere & Hastings. Key components of both libraries included the monumentally scaled entrance hall and the grand stairway that leads to the *piano nobile* styled principal level. This arrangement placed the main reading room one flight up from the street level, with the vertical stacks to the rear, and ran a central corridor (that contained the card catalog) the length of the building, perpendicular with the entrance hall. The library has three main floors with a mezzanine level between the two principle floors that allows for the soaring heights of the main hall and reading rooms and creates multiple levels for the book stacks. Upon completion of Philadelphia's Central Library in 1927, the interior arrangement was described as follows:

> The first floor, reached from the main entrance, acing Logan Square, contains on either side of the entrance hall the reference room and the periodical room, the first having a capacity of about 12,000 volumes, and the second of about 30,000 volumes. The department for the blind, and the public documents reference room and the cataloging room, the last two opening upon the bookstack, the telephone exchange, and executive offices, including filing rooms and the bookkeepers' room, occupy part of the space between the first and second floors.
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> The second, or main, floor contains the main reading room and circulating department, measuring 52 feet by 167 feet, facing Logan Square. This room, fifty feet high, is lighted in daytime by thirteen large windows overlooking the square. It has a book capacity for 25,000 volumes, with direct access to the shelves. Pepper Hall, a room of equal dimensions, facing north on Wood Street, of equal book capacity with direct access to the shelves, contains books for reference only. A music room, a map room, a print room and a manuscript room, occupy the remainder of this floor. A second mezzanine floor, containing individual study rooms and store-rooms occupies part of the space between the second and third floors.
>
> Three large exhibition rooms or picture galleries, a rare-book room, a photographing room, and a kitchen and store-room for the staff are on the third floor. The roof, reached by stairs and elevators, has an open air reading room extending across nearly the whole of the front of the building and an enclosed rood reading room for winter use. A staff rest room and a staff lunch room occupy the Nineteenth Street end of the roof.[11]

While the interior of the Central Library followed the plan established in conjunction with the librarian of the Free Library, the exterior architectural design and the interior finishes were left to architects Trumbauer and Abele. Expressive of their preference for French architecture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the exterior of the Central Library resembles the twin Ministère de la Marine and Hôtel de Crillon by French architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel, located on Place de la Concorde in Paris.

6. Alterations and additions: The library remains largely intact, although the purpose of some of the rooms has changed over time to accommodate new patterns of library use,

[11] Ibid.

new collections and new technologies. For example, the Library of Congress Card Catalog that originally lined the corridors of the halls that bisect the library lengthwise has been removed and access to this information is now available through a computer data base. The Periodical Room on the first floor is now the Popular Library and the Reference Room across the main entrance hall from it is now the Music Department. On the second floor, the Main Reading Room now houses the Social Science and History collections (including maps), the former Music Room is now the Education, Philosophy, and Religion section, and the former Music Room is now used for the Automobile Collection. A 160,000 square-foot glass-enclosed addition is currently being planned for the rear of the library, designed by internationally recognized architect Moshe Safdie. The addition will include new children's and teen's departments (originally located in the basement), 300 new computers with two internet browsing centers, and a new auditorium, and on the whole is intended to increase access to materials and reduce overcrowding.

B. Historical Context:

The Development of Carnegie Libraries & the Free Library of Philadelphia System

Between 1886 and 1917 Andrew Carnegie provided forty million dollars for the construction of 1,679 libraries throughout the United States, causing Carnegie Libraries to become one of the most numerous building types in America. In fact, Carnegie's library construction program has been called "an enterprise without parallel in the history of American Philanthropy."[12] Carnegie's benevolence was motivated by his own immigrant experience and by his social and political beliefs. Despite his poor, working-class upbringing he made a fortune through the production of steel. Carnegie felt that the affluent were obligated to give back to society, a concept that he outlined in an essay published in the *North American Review* in 1889 entitled "Wealth."[13] While his philanthropy began years before, he set out to spend before his death the entire 400 million dollars that he received through the sale of Carnegie Steel Company in 1901. Carnegie argued that given a good work ethic and the proper tools, anyone could be successful. He was self-taught and credited much of his success to the fact that he was allowed admittance to one gentleman's private library. At that time, libraries, where they existed at all, were generally private and access was through subscription so that only those who could afford the fees were allowed entry. Beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century, wealthy philanthropists, primarily from New England, began financing the construction of libraries in their communities. Nonetheless, such institutions remained uncommon before the Carnegie endowment. Carnegie promoted the power of libraries to create an egalitarian society, one that favored hard work over social privilege by allowing equal access to knowledge. Carnegie referred to libraries as the "people's university." In addition, he held that such opportunity would help immigrants better

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[12] Timothy Rub, "The Day of Big Operations:' Andrew Carnegie and His Libraries," *Architectural Record*, 173:1 (July 1985): 81.

[13] This essay was later reprinted as the title essay of Carnegie's book entitled *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays*. This publication and Carnegie's philosophies on charitable giving are outlined in Theodore Wesley Koch, "Carnegie Libraries, An address before the American Civic Association," Reprinted from the *Chautauquan Magazine*, June 1906.

acclimate to American culture. Hence libraries became a focus of his charitable donations as a key to both learning and socialization.

Although Carnegie's motivations were in large part paternalistic, the impact of his library campaign is far greater than merely providing the working class with access to books. The vast resources that he applied to this area led to great advances in library science as well as to the development of the American library as a building type. Carnegie applied the corporate business models that had made him successful as an industrialist to the development and production of libraries. He make certain that local municipalities had a stake in their libraries by insisting that they contribute the building site as well as ten percent of the total construction cost annually for maintenance. He also insisted that the community or municipality supply all the books as a means of ensuring that catered to the particular needs and interests of the community. By doing so, Carnegie took libraries from the arena of private philanthropy to that of civic responsibility. Any town that was willing to meet those terms was generally able to receive grant funding. The process began via a letter of application submitted to Andrew Carnegie's personal secretary and the individual charged with management of the library grants, James Bertram. The city of Philadelphia did just that.

On 3 January 1903, James Bertram responded to the Free Library of Philadelphia's request for a grant to finance library construction with the promise of $1.5 million for a planned thirty branch buildings. Despite the fact that Philadelphia figures quite prominently on the timeline of American Library history, it had no purpose-built public libraries prior to the Carnegie endowment. Philadelphia *did* have the nation's first private subscription library, known as the Library Company, founded in 1731. Numerous other private libraries were created as well, such as the Mercantile Library, Ridgeway Library, and the library at the University of Pennsylvania. And it was in Philadelphia that the American Library Association was formed in 1876. The establishment of the Free Library in 1891 placed Philadelphia among the first American cities to institute a non-subscription public library system for the benefit of all its citizens.[14] As Library Board president J.G. Rosengarten stated in 1903, "Proprietary libraries have grown into valuable adjuncts to our other education institutions. None of them, however, serves the public as does the Free Library, providing good reading for our school children, for our industrious adult population, and for the city's useful employees, firemen, and telegraph operators."[15] As Rosengarten's comment indicates, the library system was viewed as an important component of the city's system of public education.

Prior to the Carnegie funding, the city's fourteen branch libraries, each of which were started by interested local communities, were dependent upon old mansions, storefronts, or back rooms of commercial buildings and civic institutions for space. As Rosengarten points out, "The [Carnegie] gift gave welcome relief from the expense of the rented rooms occupied by the branches, and from much of the risk to which the collections were subjected in these temporary

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[14] The Free Library of Philadelphia was chartered in 1891 through a legacy grant from George S. Pepper, at the request of his nephew, Dr. William Pepper, a physician, educator, and the provost of the University of Pennsylvania, who launched an effort to establish a free library in Philadelphia. The library, initially housed in a few rooms of City Hall, first opened its doors to the public in 1894. Other early free libraries include the Boston Public Library established in 1848, and Baltimore's George Peabody Library, begun in 1866.

[15] Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1917), 85.

quarters."[16] Likewise, prior to the completion of its permanent home in 1927 the Central Branch of the Free Library was housed within three different preexisting buildings including, City Hall, an abandoned concert hall on Chestnut Street, and a building at the northeast corner of 13th and Locust streets. The Library Board also hoped to gain support for the construction of a grand central library as well as the branch buildings by playing upon their illustrious past and invoking old-fashioned civic rivalry. As noted in their annual report for 1905,

> The board called attention to the earnest appeal of the Librarian for a new central main library. It is greatly needed and a suitable site and a building worthy of Philadelphia will enable the city to follow one good example set in Boston, and Chicago, in Milwaukee and Washington, and in characteristic splendor in New York. . . . Philadelphia is the birthplace of public libraries in America and in the year of bicentennial of Franklin, his memory as the founder of the first American public library could receive no better honor than the selection of a good site for a good central library.17

By this point, however, Carnegie had become unwilling to finance elaborate central libraries, favoring instead neighborhood branch libraries that would better serve the working class. In 1908, he formally ended funding for central libraries, although he did support a "tiered system" of central building and associated branches. This is the system that had already been established in Philadelphia and one that would continue, eventually including a locally financed central library at its core. But even without funding for a central library Philadelphia's endowment was among the largest ever offered by the Carnegie Corporation for library construction, second only to New York City's 1901 grant of $5.2 million for a planned sixty-five branch libraries built between 1902 and 1929.[18] In Philadelphia, twenty-five branch libraries were built between 1905 and 1930, five less than anticipated due to the rising construction costs that rendered it impossible to stay within the estimated allotment of $50,000 per branch. According to an acceptance letter sent to Library Board president Joseph B. Rosengarten from James Bertram:

> The offer is that Philadelphia can establish Branch Libraries up to thirty while Mr. Carnegie and his estate will be bound to furnish the money from time to time. If it be found that $50,000 for each building is unnecessary, the City can decide to spend a less amount on any particular branch and a correspondingly less amount for maintenance. Mr. Carnegie wishes the City to be free to do what it likes as to details."19

As suggested, Carnegie provided funding for the physical plants, but the city was responsible for furnishing building sites, books, and an annual appropriation for maintenance.[20] The money was set aside in an investment account controlled by the Carnegie Corporation. The city was allowed

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee, *Tenth Annual Report, 1905*.

[18] In his book on Carnegie libraries, Bobinski includes a chart indicating that New York City received most branches (66), followed by Philadelphia (25), Cleveland (15), Baltimore (14), Cincinnati (10); Pittsburgh, Denver, Louisville, Detroit (all 8+ M); most in 2-4 range; 34 out of 59 included a main branch. George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969).

[19] Carnegie Corporation of New York Correspondence, letter from James Bertram to Joseph Rosengarten, 2 December 1903.

[20] Carnegie has been criticized over the years for not supplying books for his libraries. However, his idea was that the books should reflect the needs and interested of the individual community. For that reason, the Free Library branches were required to conduct demographic surveys periodically in order to better serve their public. Many have their own ethnic language books or books relating to local trades and industries.

to draw on the funds as various milestones in the construction process were reached. The design and construction of the libraries was also left to the grant recipients; as historian George Bobinski points out the Carnegie Corporation "never interfered with choice of architect."[21] Bertram consulted regularly with New York architects, Edward Tilton and Henry Whitfield, and later, only when asked, offered them as architects who "might" develop a suitable plan. However, as a rule Bertram did not endorse any particular architect(s) and dealt only with city officials throughout the process. The municipalities were free to hire whomever they chose and were therefore able to significantly influence building design.

This policy began to change by 1908; it was in that year that Bertram first required that plans be submitted for review before library grants were approved. The change came in response to what Bertram viewed as a number of ill-conceived or overly ornate libraries built with Carnegie funds. In 1911, Bertram took further steps towards shaping the design process with the introduction of basic guidelines entitled *Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings*. Bobinski points to the Carnegie Corporation correspondence which is filled with lengthy letters "offering suggestions or requesting changes in plan" as evidence that Bertram had become "deeply involved in architectural control."[22] In his *Notes*, Bertram outlines his idea of the quintessential Carnegie Library:

> The bilding should be devoted exclusively to: (main floor) housing of books and their issue for home use; comfortable accommodation for reading them by adults and children; (basement) lecture room; necessary accommodation for heating plant; also all conveniences for the library patrons and staff. Experience seems to show that the best results for a small general library ar adopting the one-story and basement rectangular type of bilding, with a small vestibule entering into one large room subdivided as required by means of book cases. . . The rear and side windows may be kept about six feet from the floor, to giv continuous wall space for shelving. A rear wing can be added for a stack-room (when future need demands it) at minimum expense . . ."[23]

While the guidelines provided by the *Notes* were "suggestive rather than mandatory," compliance was the pathway to a successful library grant application. Furthermore, the *Notes* reflected the most up-to-date ideas about efficient library design and function due to Carnegie's enthusiastic support of the progressive library planning being developed and promoted by the American Library Association.[24] Focusing on functionality rather than on aesthetics, the *Notes* included six different schematic floor plans, although the variations in the plans had more to do

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[21] Bobinski, 64.
[22] Ibid, 63.
[23] "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings, Version 3, ca. 1915. As cited in Abigail Van Slyck, *Free to All; Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), Appendix I, 221-23. As Van Slyck points out, the "Notes" were revised and expanded over the next eight years, 35. Note that Bertram was an advocate of "simplified spelling" as a business shorthand; these are not spelling errors.
[24] According to Abigail Van Slyck, "The advice that Bertram passed on to the recipients of Carnegie's gifts was hardly new, and certainly not of his own devising. Rather, it was based directly on ideas about library administration that librarians had espoused in the previous twenty years. Drawing on the writing of Poole [librarian who published plans and ideas on library planning in *Library Journal*], Dana [librarian who called for open access to books] and others, as well as on his conversation with Cleveland's librarian, William Howard Brett, Bertram began to see that cost overruns were the result of inefficient library planning, rather than the product of inept financial management. The planning principles espoused by library profession became Bertram's catechism, and the spread of what he called 'effectiv [sic] library accommodation,' his holy mission," p. 34.

with configuring buildings to accommodate available building lots than varying ideas about efficient library design. In years past, library patrons were generally not allowed access to the book stacks; the stacks were located behind the "delivery desk" and book selections could only be retrieved by the librarian. Bertram's library layouts consisted of open plans utilizing low shelving to create divisions among the reference, adult, and children's sections. Still a bit wary of permitting patrons the freedom to roam the library, however, a centrally located "charging desk" allowed the librarians maximum visibility and control. Carnegie's investment in both library buildings and library science through funding for various initiatives of the American Library Association, as well as for the first library training programs, was instrumental in the development of efficient public libraries. As one Carnegie library architect of the period stated,

> To-day there are many fine libraries assembled through years of patient toil so inadequately housed as to achieve but half their purpose; but happily a new era is dawning for our libraries. . . It is this realization of a noble opportunity which has been brought home to Andrew Carnegie and a host of other awakening philanthropists, which is just now giving a new, through long-deferred impetus to library building construction throughout the broad land of ours."[25]

Efficient library plans were one factor, but when it came to *architectural style*, no particular form was endorsed. In fact, Bertram discouraged undue attention to such matters. As historian Abigail Van Slyck informs us,

> Bertram campaigned aggressively against the full-blown temple front, castigating 'pillars and Greek temple features, costing much money, and giving no return in effective Library accommodation.' When these verbal diatribes made little impact on the majority of local design decisions, he took the more drastic action, providing smaller and smaller individual grants.[26]

The architectural style of the Carnegie-endowed libraries, including those built in Philadelphia, was dictated not by Carnegie or his secretary, but by popular tastes, in this case the aesthetic affinity for the Beaux Arts style, particularly when it came to the design of the civic architecture of the era. The style took its name from the renowned Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and was based upon the architectural forms of ancient Greece and Rome. The school became immensely popular throughout the western world, influencing American architectural design for decades. The style was formally introduced to the American public at the World's Columbian Exhibition held in Chicago in 1893. The gleaming *White City* of nearly 200 buildings built according to the principles of European classicism left an indelible mark on architectural design as well as on newly developing city planning principles. Although some Carnegie libraries took on a regional architectural flavor, the Beaux Arts style was by far the most widely used, including the temple front that Bertram argued against![27] In 1902, the *Architectural Review* compiled a list of the sixty-seven best modern library designs, fifty-seven of which were in the Beaux Arts oeuvre.[28] The style became so aligned with libraries that architects often found that their clients would accept nothing else. As was reported at the 1903 meeting of the Illinois Library Association,

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[25] Koch, 207.
[26] Van Slyck, 150.
[27] According to Van Slyck, a sampling of eight-five Carnegie libraries revealed that over sixty-eight percent included the temple front motif as an entry pavilion, Van Slyck, p. 147.
[28] Van Slyck, 28.

> Let an architect suggest Romanesque or Gothic or Early French Renaissance or Byzantine, and he is, especially in the smaller cities, met with a stony smile, plainly saying 'You think because I don't live in Chicago I don't know anything about architecture, but you may as well understand that I am quite up-to-date, and know what is the proper thing in library styles.' In fact, so arbitrary is this fad, that to submit a competitive design for a public library in any other style [than neoclassical] is practically fatal to an architect's chances.[29]

The tremendous boom in library construction created by the Carnegie grants coupled with the popularity of the Beaux Arts style resulted in remarkable uniformity among the buildings, despite the lack of strict design standards.

In Philadelphia a fairly cohesive collection of branch libraries was created that must have greatly pleased the Carnegie Corporation. In fact there is very little variation in general architectural style and even less in plan. A few of the designs realized during the early phase of the building campaign that began in 1905 were more elaborate than would be accepted by Bertram in later years. On the other hand, some of the earliest designs are among those most true to Bertram's later ideal, despite the fact they were completed before the publication of the *Notes* in 1911, including the Thomas Holme (1906) and Tacony (1906) branches. The question then is where did the design prototype originate?

The responsibility for the planning and design of Philadelphia's branch libraries was assumed by the city appointed Carnegie Fund Committee. The Committee was created by the Library Board on 31 March1904 for the expressed purpose of undertaking responsibility for their design and construction program. As was stated in their early minutes,

> To this Committee shall be entrusted the preparation of the plans of the Branch Libraries, nomination of architects and arrangements in connection with the erection of such Branches, provided [that] no plans shall be accepted, architects appointed or contracts awarded until same shall have been submitted to and approved by the Board.[30]

By February 1904, John Ashhurst had been hired as Assistant Librarian to help Librarian John Thomson with this monumental task.[31] Thomson and Ashhurst (who became Librarian following Thomson death in 1915) played fundamental roles in this process. While no design guidelines for the branch buildings of the Free Library of Philadelphia have been located, it is clear from the similarities exhibited that the Carnegie Fund Committee provided some guiding principles to the architects they hired. Despite the wide array of architects employed, with few exceptions Philadelphia's Carnegie libraries followed the same basic layout, which most closely resembles "Plan B" as outlined in the *Notes*. Most included the rear ell that Bertram suggests as an economical means for expanding the libraries, and all include the requisite lecture hall.

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[29] Rub, 85.
[30] Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee Minutes, 1904, 9 April 1904.
[31] Ibid., Board of Trustees, Minutes, 12 February 1904, "Mr. Montgomery [State Librarian and representative to the Board of the American Library Association] called attention to the necessity of the appointment of an Assistant Librarian in order to undertake part of the very heavy extra work that would now be involved in carrying out the Andrew Carnegie Branch Library Building scheme [to fruition]." The minutes also noted that an appropriation was already in place, and that they had in mind John Ashhurst, to whom the appointment would go.

In formulating their design guidelines, some reconnaissance was undertaken. Librarians Thomson and Ashhurst traveled to New York City and the borough of Brooklyn in May 1904 "in order to obtain information as to the Branch Library buildings erected in those places under Mr. Carnegie's gift."[32] New York Public Library's Carnegie building campaign was just getting underway at that time, and only a handful of buildings were completed (although plans for others must have been available). Interestingly enough, most of New York's libraries were designed in keeping with the architecture of the city's fashionable townhouses.[33] Thus they took the form of Italian Renaissance Palazzos rather than the single-story Beaux Arts form that Philadelphia's branch libraries generally assumed. This reflected not only the desire to blend with the local "vernacular," but the fact that New York's advisory committee was composed of nationally recognized architects such as Charles F. McKim (of McKim, Mead, & White), John M. Carrere (of Carrere & Hastings), and Walter Cook (of Babb, Cook &Willard). These same individuals collectively designed more than half of New York City's Carnegie libraries.[34] Carrere & Hastings also created the Beaux Arts design for the central New York Public Library building begun in 1902. Its construction was the physical manifestation of the New York Public Library system created in 1895 by the merger of the private Astor and Lenox libraries (created in the 1840s) and by a large endowment from former New York Governor Samuel J. Tilden.

Philadelphia's Carnegie Fund Committee took a completely different tact, placing librarians and not architects at the forefront of the planning process. This is likely the primary reason for the relative standardization of the libraries, particularly with regard to layout. This important decision on the part of Philadelphia's Library Board was in keeping with the sentiments endorsed by the Carnegie Corporation. James Bertram was generally distrustful of architects as library planners, preferring the advice of librarians who better understood how the buildings needed to function. Bertram believed that architects tended to render libraries unnecessarily expensive by adding unusable space and superfluous detail merely for effect. Both Philadelphia's Library Board and Carnegie Fund Committee included librarians, former Pennsylvania State Librarian and American Library Association representative Thomas L. Montgomery, and the Free Library's John Thomson and John Ashhurst. Board of Education President Henry R. Edmunds was also on the Committee, an indication of the significance of the libraries to the city's public education initiatives. Prominent businessmen and attorneys filled the remaining positions. Conspicuously absent from the Committee was anyone from the architecture profession. As the Committee minutes indicate, the Librarian and Assistant Librarian were left to work out the details with the architects, and generally had the last say when it came to finalizing the plans.[35]

[32] Ibid., 13 May 1904.
[33] It should be noted, however, that exceptions to the townhouse design were made for a "village site" versus the typical urban location. Those built in Staten Island, such as Tottenville (1904), Port Richmond (1905), and Stapleton (1907) resemble the most typical Carnegie library one-story with center entry form. For images of all the New York Carnegie Libraries see Mary B. Dierickx, *The Architecture of Literacy; The Carnegie Libraries of New York City* (New York City: The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Art and Science & NYC Department of General Services, September 1996). The book includes an inventory of all branches with a photograph and brief description and historical information.
[34] Dierickx, 27-29. A discussion of the role of the Architects' Advisory Committee and a list of its members appear on these pages.
[35] Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees, Minutes, 1 July 1904. "On motion resolved, that the matter of procuring plans and securing bids be referred to the Carnegie Fund Committee with power." And also, Carnegie Fund Committee Minutes, 17 May 1912. An entry from this meeting (one of many) illustrates that practice: "Mr.

They often accompanied the architects to the sites and eventually were given responsibility for the execution of construction contracts as well.[36]

There are a few other indications that an effort was made by the Carnegie Fund Committee to develop standard plans for the branch libraries. A reference appears in the minutes for 1904 to a solicitation made on the part of the Committee to the well-known architectural firm of Hewitt & Hewitt for a plan for an inexpensive library prototype. According to the minute:

> Mr. Edmunds [of the Carnegie Committee] reported that he had obtained from Messrs. Stevens and Edmunds, who are both employed in the office of Messrs. Hewitt, a plan showing what kind of building could, in their judgment, be erected for $30,000, the building to measure 60' x 40' and to be about 45' in height.[37]

The brief specifications outlined are for a building that is generally smaller and certainly less expensive than any of those actually built. The specifications most closely align with those of the 62' x 42' Thomas Holme Branch built not long thereafter, in 1906. The notion that either a prototype or a set of general guidelines were developed is further supported by mention in the Committee minutes for 1914 of the "Committee on Comprehensive Plans," William C. Stanton, Secretary, but no further information is given.[38] A reference to guidelines for heating systems also appears the following year. It was suggested that savings could be obtained through the standardization of the plans for heating and ventilation. By September 1905 a "memorandum of instructions to architects to be followed by them in all Branch Library Buildings" with regard to heating and ventilating had been prepared.[39] The latter example certainly indicates that the Committee strove to take advantage of the economies of scale offered by standardization.

If a model for Philadelphia's libraries existed, it is surely the branch buildings that Andrew Carnegie had erected for the city of Pittsburgh. Beginning with the Lawrenceville Branch in

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Richards [architect] be instructed to prepare plans for the proposed new Paschalville Branch and that the President be authorized to approve plans for such Branch when same were agreed upon by himself, the Librarian, Asst. Librarian and the architect."

[36] Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee, Minutes, 12 April 1912—The Committee was called to order . . . and on motion of Mr Woodruff the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. John Thomson was formally designated as the proper person to execute contracts for the erection and equipment of Branch Library buildings on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

[37] Ibid., 14 July 1904.

[38] Ibid., 29 November 1914; "A letter from William C. Stanton, Secretary of the Committee on Comprehensive Plans, addressed to the Librarian ... November 22, 1915. . . the asst. Librarian was authorized to inform the Committee that the contract for the architect was now in the hands of the city solicitor."

[39] Ibid., 29 September 1905, "Mr. Kates report on heating and ventilating – memorandum of instructions to architects to be followed by them in all Branch Library Buildings: 1. Steam coils to be placed all around the room beneath the bookcases, at a height of a couple of inches above the floor, and to occupy as much of the space now taken by the lower shelf of books as may be necessary. 2. Where lecture rooms are on the library floor and open directly out of the library the same system is to be adopted. This will render it possible at a future time to place wall shelving around the lecture room. 3. Basement lecture rooms to be treated individually. 4. the system described above to be used in basement lecture rooms where practicable, and artificial ventilation by fans only to be installed where it cannot be avoided. 5. The wall of both library and lecture rooms, whether the latter are on the first floor on in the basement, to be built with vents sufficient to install an indirect system of heating and ventilation if at any time such a system may be deemed necessary."

1898, the architectural firm of Alden & Harlow designed eight buildings, the very first Carnegie branch libraries to be built. Frank E. Alden worked previously for the well-known architect Henry Hobson Richardson, coming to Pittsburgh in 1885 as supervising architect for Richardson's Romanesque-styled Allegheny County Courthouse (now recognized as a National Historic Landmark). After Richardson's death, Alden formed a partnership with Alfred Harlow and together they became one of Pittsburgh's leading architectural firms. They won the design competition for Pittsburgh's main Library, the first of their many Carnegie commissions. It is worth noting that Alden's former employer H.H. Richardson had already earned a reputation for library design by the time that Alden came to work for him in 1880. It seems apparent that exposure to Richardson's library designs informed Alden's own work and may have inspired in him an interest in that area. Commissioned largely by wealthy New England philanthropists, Richardson provided an important early model for libraries through the development of grand Romanesque designs such as that of the Oliver Ames Memorial Library built in North Easton, Massachusetts in 1877-78.

During the 1890s Alden's firm designed the Homestead Library, an addition to the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, and, most significantly in terms of its influence upon the future of library design, Pittsburgh's eight branch libraries.[40] Less sophisticated than the commissions for large single or central libraries, branch libraries presented Alden and subsequent architects with a design challenge. Abigail Van Slyck explains that unlike the monumental palazzos that served as central library buildings, branch libraries needed to be more welcoming so that they could "communicate to its working-class neighbors that this was a library specifically for their use." Using Richardson's early model as a starting point, Alden drew upon familiar elements such as the archway and the elevated placement of windows used to accommodate the book stacks. But instead of Richardson's irregular, stone-constructed Romanesque forms, Alden applied "classical vocabularies" to a restrained, symmetrically arranged brick building.[41] As the first, the Lawrenceville Branch became the prototype for subsequent branches. According to historian Margaret H. Floyd, the Lawrenceville Branch was the most innovative and important of the Pittsburgh branches because its design "broke from Richardson precedent in both style and plan."[42] It was the first to employ the standard open plan that allowed patrons access to the stacks while permitting librarians a clear view of the entire space for monitoring purposes. As later outlined in Bertram's *Notes on the Erection of Libraries,* the open plan included a general reading room and, for the first time, a children's room. These two areas were positioned to either side of an entry/lobby area that included a circulation desk to the center of the plan.[43]

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[40] These were the only branch libraries for which Andrew Carnegie acted directly as the client. It is worth noting that Pittsburgh's branch library building campaign was well underway when James Bertram began work as Carnegie's secretary in 1897. Alden worked instead with a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, half of whom were appointed by Carnegie and the other half by the city. Without Bertram to rely upon it is not unlikely that Alden received feedback for his designs directly from Andrew Carnegie with whom Alden reportedly maintained a "cordial correspondence," Van Slyck, 103.
[41] Ibid, 103-04.
[42] Margaret Henderson Floyd, *Architecture after Richardson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 231.
[43] According to Floyd, Lawrenceville *was* the plan featured in *Notes on the Erection of Libraries*, although that attribution does not appear there. The simplified plan that appears in the *Notes* does great resemble the Lawrenceville Branch, but without the semicircular rear extension.

As an article that appeared in the *Library Journal* while the Lawrenceville Branch was still under construction indicates, there was still some apprehension about allowing patrons unencumbered access. As stated, the new plan "required that every part of this floor should be visible from the [librarian's] delivery-desk, *in case it should be decided* to give the public free access to the shelves." The "commanding view of the entire floor" was said to have been the "distinctive feature" of the plan.[44] Other prototypical elements of the plan included a stack room located in a section to the rear, and a basement lecture hall. Lawrenceville, like most of the Carnegie Branch libraries that came afterwards, is set on a high basement, is rectangular in shape, and has a central entry ornamented by a classical frontispiece flanked by windows. In the buildings that immediately followed, such as the West End (1899) and Mount Washington (1899-1900) branches, Alden took additional steps towards the development of the simplified prototype by toning down the details, placing the windows higher on the wall, and substituting Lawrenceville's semi-circular rear auditorium for a simpler square-shaped reference room to form a T-shaped building configuration. As Floyd further suggests, "Clearly the Pittsburgh branch library program was intended as the functional model for the nation, while its architecture was envisioned by Carnegie and the city as adequate rather than lavish."[45] The Pittsburgh branch libraries signified Carnegie's shifting philosophy from the creation of libraries as individual architectural monuments to more compact and serviceable structures that could be built in small towns and communities across the nation.

The Free Library of Philadelphia Branch Building Campaign

In Philadelphia, twenty-five branch libraries were erected with funds provided by the Carnegie endowment, twenty of which are extant and, of those, sixteen are still being used as libraries. The Philadelphia branch libraries constitute a remarkably cohesive and intact collection of Carnegie library structures, rivaled only by those of New York City. Of the twenty-five branch libraries erected in Philadelphia, all but seven consist of a rectangular main block with a rear section that resulted in a T-shaped configuration as just described. And of those seven variations, three are simply missing the rear extension that generally housed the reference section and sometimes doubled as a lecture hall. With few exceptions, all the branches include raised basements with a lecture hall/classroom, heating plant, restrooms, and support facilities for staff. The lecture halls were intended to enable the libraries to become a "headquarters of increased intellectual life and activity" within the neighborhood, and were used for formal lectures as well as children's activities.[46] In terms of architectural style, most of the branch libraries exhibit the Classical vocabulary of the Beaux Arts to include a symmetrical facade with central pavilion entry, elevated windows (generally in a tripartite arrangement with decorative spandrels below), and an ornamental frieze.

Of those branch libraries that deviated from the standard plan, two of the four, Frankford (1905-06) and Spring Garden (1907-07), likely did so because of their need to conform to urban lots

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[44] "The Lawrenceville Branch of the Carnegie Library of Pitttsburgh," *The Library Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 9 (September 1897): 440. There appears to be enough apprehension about the open plan that the article ends by asking that "criticism and suggestions" regarding the plan (an illustration of which was included) to the Librarian of the central Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh.
[45] Floyd, 234.
[46] Koch, 86.

that were deeper than they were wide. They were also among the first to be built and are far more ornate than later designs erected after 1908, when the Carnegie Corporation began reviewing drawings prior to approval. The elongated plan of Germantown (1906-07), the third variant, accommodated a large lecture hall on the main floor rather than in the basement. Along with Chestnut Hill, Germantown also differed in that it was built of the native stone indicative of the historic buildings of that neighborhood. The fourth variant, Southwark (1912), is more in keeping with the urban designs found in New York City, consisting of a square-shaped building with a raised *piano-nobile* styled main level.

Philadelphia's twenty-five branch libraries were designed by almost as many different architects. It was only near the end of the branch library building campaign, as funds were dwindling in the face of rising costs, that two architects were invited to provide additional library plans. Phillip Johnson created plans for three of the last four libraries to be built, including Kingsessing (1917-19), Greenwich (1926-29), and Wyoming (1930). Johnson was likely selected because he was already employed as an architect for the city, thus potential eliminating an out-of-pocket expense. John T. Windrim, who first designed the Passyunk Branch in 1914, was also called upon to plan the Nicetown and Logan branches in 1917. Windrim was likely called in due to his proven competence in the design of civic structures and his stature within the architectural community. While it was customary to select an architect for a public building through a design competition, city authorities came up with another plan. According to the minutes,

> The matter [of selecting architects] was fully discussed and the Board returned the report to the Carnegie Fund Committee with a recommendation that no competitive plans be invited for each individual Branch but that a suitable architect be selected to submit plans for each Branch as the same is ready to be proceeded with.[47]

Instead of competitions, promising architects were invited to prepare drawings based upon the recommendations of Committee members.[48] It is likely that the Committee created written guidelines for selecting architects, as suggested by a reference which appears in the Board minutes for May 1908,

> The Librarian reported the result of his recent visit to St. Louis in the examination of the Library and branches of that City, and that the Public Library Board of St. Louis in submitting two new branches for competition has adopted the Free Library of Philadelphia's system. A copy of the ***Programme of Conditions and Instructions*** to govern Competition was submitted and ordered to be filed.[49]

Abigail Van Slyck suggests that such practice was not uncommon when it came to Carnegie library planning. Design competitions were falling out of favor by this time, and in the case of smaller branch libraries, they might not have warranted the time or expense involved. Furthermore, by inviting architects whose work the Committee members admired they were

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[47] Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees, Minutes, 15 April 1904.
[48] Ibid., Carnegie Fund Committee, Minutes, 7 January 1916. The following entry is an example of the procedures through which the architects plans were executed and accepted by the Committee: "When first installment is made, instruct Mr. John T. Windrim the architect for the Logan Branch to execute the preliminary sketches, etc. and when these have been passed upon by the officers of the Library to proceed with the working drawings and specifications."
[49] Ibid., Board of Trustees, Minutes, 15 May 1908.

guaranteed a satisfactory outcome.[50] Philadelphia's selection process also served to subordinate architectural style in favor of functional use, as was in keeping with the policies of James Bertram and the Carnegie Corporation.

The list of architects for Philadelphia's branch libraries is comprised of local notables as well as up-and-coming architects; only two were not Philadelphia based, Bertram's own architectural advisors Edward L. Tilton (Richmond Branch, 1908) and Henry D. Whitfield (Wissahickon, 1909).[51] The minutes periodically note when architects are recommended and by whom, and further note when added to the approved list.[52] An example of the process is indicated in the minutes pertaining to the design for the Falls of Schuylkill Branch. A recommendation was put forth by someone other than a Committee member, perhaps an individual from the community. The chairman of the Committee, Mr. Edmunds "promised to inquire as to the skill and experience" of the prospective candidate "through some members of the T Square Club." In the end, the proposal was rejected in favor of an architect approved by the Librarian and Assistance Librarian.[53] However, during the concluding stages of the building campaign architect John T. Windrim took control of the Board. In this capacity, Windrim was expected to select the architects and review their work.[54]

Within two years of receiving the Carnegie endowment, Philadelphia's Carnegie Fund Committee had approved designs for the construction of ten libraries. It is worth noting that of the ten, eight were built in locations where libraries had been established already by the local community. In fact sixteen of the twenty-five branch libraries built with Carnegie funds provided a purpose-built structure for libraries that, up until that point, were housed in preexisting buildings. In addition, seventeen of the twenty-five libraries were erected on lots donated by civic institutions or by private citizens. The remainder of the lots was provided by the city in locations intended to round out the distribution of libraries throughout the city. These latter sites also tended to be in less-affluent, largely immigrant inhabited areas of Philadelphia.

While it was a close finish, the first branch library to be completed was West Philadelphia; the cornerstone was laid in April 1905, and the library opened to the public in June 1906. It was designed by Clarence C. Zantzinger, an architect trained at the University of Pennsylvania and the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris. The library does not have a rear wing and its ornamental terra cotta facades set it apart, but otherwise its symmetry and Beaux Arts styling is fairly typical of

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[50] Van Slyck, 83, 112-13. According to Van Slyck, "In Detroit, there were six library commissioners and (initially at least) six financed branches, a coincidence that seems to have suggested an easy solution to the problem of selection architects: in contrast to their [competitive] procedure for the main library each commissioner simply named an architect to design one of the branches.

[51] Free Library of Philadelphia, Carnegie Fund Committee, Minutes, 25 November 1904. A letter was received from Henry D. Whitfield, and a motion was made to submit his name to the Board as architect of the "Pencoyd Iron Works Branch" [properly named Wissahickon]; same for Edward L. Tilton, to be referred for next branch.

[52] Ibid, 27 May 1905, "motion that these be added to list to design branches: Benjamin A. Stevens, Louis Baker of Baker and Dallett, Wilson Eyre, Edgar V. Seeler, David Knickerbocker Boyd, Francis G. Caldwell." Of these, Stevens, Eyre and Boyd received commissions for Manayunk, McPherson Square, and Southwark, respectively.

[53] Ibid, 10 October 1911 and 21 April 1911.

[54] Ibid, 6 March 1923. The following is given in evidence: "Mr. John T. Windrim, a member of the Board of Trustees, had been asked to recommend an architect." In this instance, Windrim chose Edmund Gilchrist as architect for Cobbs Creek.

Carnegie libraries. Frankford was the next branch completed. Begun in 1905, it opened in October 1906, just three months after the West Philadelphia Branch. Frankford was designed by architects Watson & Huckel. Watson was a native of Frankford and became one of the city's most important church designers. The library's architectural ornamentation and elongated plan more closely resembles a branch *bank* than a branch *library*. Dubbed an "old stuffed shirt Carnegie building" in 1959, it was "redesigned" or more accurately, replaced, by a Modernist structure. Its reconstruction was part of a larger movement spearheaded by Librarian of the Free Library Emerson Greenway to transform their "outdated and outmoded" Carnegie buildings. Frankford was the only major casualty of that mid-century effort, which otherwise was manifested mainly through systems upgrades and the installation of new fixtures and furnishings.

The Lehigh Branch opened a month after Frankford. Designed by the well known local firm of Hewitt & Hewitt, it is the largest and among the most detailed of the branch libraries, built with ornamental terra cotta. While the Carnegie Corporation had estimated the cost of each of Philadelphia's branch libraries at $50,000 the low-bid construction contract for the Lehigh Branch came in at nearly $90,000. The scale of this library would not be repeated by subsequent branch buildings. One week later the Tacony branch was opened. It was designed by Lindley Johnson, who trained at the University of Pennsylvania and was one of the founders of Philadelphia's T-Square Club. Tacony is the typical Carnegie branch library with its symmetry, T-shaped plan and Beaux Arts styling.

The Germantown and Thomas Holme branches opened next, within days of each other. Thomas Holme is another example of a quintessential early branch library built in keeping with the Carnegie prototype. The cornerstone was laid in 1906 and the library opened in June 1907. It was designed by the local architectural firm of Sterns & Castor, who were known for their designs for commercial, industrial, and hospital structures. The Germantown branch is an example of one that does not conform to the prototype, but instead forms an asymmetrical meandering plan to include a first-floor lecture hall with a capacity for 500 persons. Its cornerstone was laid in 1906 and the library opened in June 1907. Its design was the work of architect Frank Miles Day, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania who was known for his historically-based designs, particularly those for collegiate structures. Day twice served as the president of the American Institute of Architects. In November 1907, the Spring Garden branch opened. It was designed by architects Field & Medary in the Gothic Revival style for which they were best known. The Spring Garden Branch was far more elaborate than most of the branches and was not built in the typical T-shape. Unfortunately this building no longer stands.

Three more libraries opened in 1909. The first was the Wissahickon Branch that was begun in 1907 and opened in January 1909, but has since burned to the ground. It had the distinction of being one of two Philadelphia branch libraries built by New York architects who served as advisors to the Carnegie Corporation's James Bertram. It was designed by George Whitfield and, as might be expected, followed the Carnegie prototype. One month after the opening of the Wissahickon Branch, the Manayunk branch opened. It was designed by Benjamin Rush Stevens. Just prior to this project Stevens had worked for the firm of Hewitt and Hewitt and was one of the two architects who one year before developed a prototype for a $30,000 library at the request of the Carnegie Fund Committee. This distinctive library clearly was not that design. The Manayunk Branch has since been adapted for reuse, resulting in the complete reconfiguration of

the interior and corresponding changes in the exterior windows resulting from the installation of a second floor level. The Chestnut Hill library opened in October 1909. It was designed by Cope & Stewardson, one of Philadelphia's most influential and prolific architectural firms, and is one of only two branches built of native stone. Chestnut Hill is also among the early examples of a library sponsored by a local community organization, the Christian Hall Library Association, which established its library in 1879.

Within a year's time, two more branches opened. Richmond is the second branch that was designed by one of Bertram's hand-picked architectural specialists from New York, Edward Tilton. It opened in March 1910, just a month after the Manayunk Branch. It conforms to the typical plan, but strays from the preferred Beaux Arts style to create an elaborate Tudoresque Gothic Revival building. The cornerstone for Oak Lane was laid in 1910, and the library opened in December 1911. It was designed by Ralph E. White. While typical in its plan and architectural detailing, an interesting feature of Oak Lane is an elaborate secondary entrance created towards the rear corner as a separate entry into the first floor lecture hall. The library was erected on a corner lot, and this entry was in part the result of a community dispute over which of the two streets the building should face.[55]

Southwark, which opened nearly one year later, is among the handful of Philadelphia Branch libraries that did not adopt the standard plan. Its square-shaped, raised form is more like the branch libraries built in New York City than in Philadelphia. In *piano nobile* style, one enters from the street but immediately ascends a flight of stairs into the main reading room which included a mezzanine level. The library was designed by D. Knickerbocker Boyd, known as a progressive and industrious architect who began his career planning residential structures for Philadelphia's northern and western suburbs. He later served as vice president of the AIA and was instrumental in developing zoning ordinances that would determine the height and massing of New York City's skyscrapers. Southwark was so popular with its largely immigrant population that it quickly became overcrowded and a new library was erected on another site. This library was sold and adapted for reuse; it currently houses the Chinese Cultural Center.

Built next was the Falls of Schuylkill Branch, which opened almost exactly one year later, in November 1913. It was designed by Rankin, Kellogg & Crane architects. Although the firm was recognized as one of Philadelphia's most successful designers within the Beaux Arts tradition, Falls of the Schuylkill is a richly ornamented English Tudor Gothic structure. It is one of the few Philadelphia branch libraries built without the rear ell section due to the fact that it is built against the hillside. Its banked site does work to advantage in another regard, allowing for a convenient street-level, side entry into the basement lecture hall. Edward Crane, who appears to have taken the lead on this project, also served as city architect for Philadelphia by the time construction began; concurrent with this project Crane worked on the 1912 restoration of Independence Hall.

A return to the quintessential Carnegie type was the Passyunk Branch, begun in 1912 and opened in April 1914. It was the first of three branch libraries built by well-known Philadelphia architect John T. Windrim. He was a natural choice as an architect for a branch library. Like his

[55] Ibid., 15 April 1910 and 22 April 1910.

father before him Windrim was a very successful designer of commercial, public, and municipal buildings, executed mostly in the Beaux Arts style. Similar to the concept of branch libraries, Windrim designed neighborhood sub-stations for the Philadelphia Electric and Bell Telephone companies (along with their large central facilities and headquarters buildings).

South Philadelphia Branch opened in November 1914. Its architect, Charles Borie, was partner to C.C. Zantzinger, who designed the West Philadelphia library. Along with Horace Trumbauer, architect of the Central library, Zantzinger and Borie later designed the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In later years, a modern library building was built adjacent to the original South Philadelphia Branch, which was retained and is now being used as a community center. While there was no preexisting library in this neighborhood, the city recognized the need to serve its growing immigrant population and provided the site. By the time that the South Philadelphia Branch opened, construction had begun on the Paschalville Branch. The cornerstone was laid in 1913, and the library opened in April 1915. The architect, Henry Richards, was known as a designer of school buildings. As with South Philadelphia, the city saw the need for a library in this neighborhood where none had existed before.

The next branch library to open was Haddington, designed by Philadelphia architects Albert Kelsey and Paul Cret, who collaborated on a number of projects (including the Organization of American States building in Washington, D.C.) but generally worked separately. Kelsey was educated at the University of Pennsylvania, was a founder of the Architectural League of America, and was active in the T-Square Club and the Philadelphia Chapter of the AIA. Cret was one of the city's most influential architects during the early twentieth century and taught at the University of Pennsylvania where many Philadelphia architects received their training. The Haddington Library has some of the most elaborate and colorful terra cotta work to be found among the branch libraries, including a frieze with cartouches of old printers marks. The cornerstone was laid in 1913 and the library opened in December 1915.

McPherson Square, built in 1916-17, is another example of a variation from the standard theme, in this case, to create a Georgian Revival building form complete with a full-blown portico. It was designed by renowned Philadelphia architect Wilson Eyre, Jr., generally known for his English-influenced residential designs. This library was built on the site of the old Webster Mansion that had served as the library building since 1898. The placement of the library on this exact spot was hotly debated by the local community, and its Georgian styling was undertaking upon their request, perhaps out of respect for the old building that it replaced.

At this time Philadelphia's Carnegie library building campaign began to experience serious setbacks. Building costs were skyrocketing due to war-time labor and materials shortages. In March of 1916 the head Librarian and the chair of the Carnegie Fund Committee traveled to New York City to discuss the situation with Carnegie Corporation Secretary James Bertram. The average cost of the eighteen branch libraries already built had been about $58,000 rather than the planned $50,000. They optimistically informed Bertram that they expected the next three branches then under construction to cost about $60,000 apiece. This left a balance for the remaining nine branches of only $30,000 each. The decision was thus made to erect only five rather than the planned ten branches at the original projected cost of $50,000 apiece.

Perhaps as a hopeful solution to their budgetary woes the committee decided to use a highly experienced architect with whom they had already worked to help them complete the remaining branch libraries. John T. Windrim was called upon to design the next two branches, those in the Nicetown and Logan neighborhoods. Nicetown, which is no longer standing, was built in 1917. The Logan Branch followed the next year. Despite their best efforts to reduce cost and cut back on unnecessary frills, the bid for construction of the Logan Branch came in at $75,000, which was $15,000 more than budgeted. The Committee, however, was determined to proceed and ground was broken in June 1917. The library opened in November 1918. Although handsomely executed to include a formal portico, the building is considerably more understated in its architectural expression than previous branches due to war-time expense overruns.

The Kingsessing Branch that opened in November 1919 faced similar challenges. In order to keep costs down, the city opted to construct the library on land they already owned. Occupied by a recreation center and playing fields, the addition of a library was in keeping with the use of this tract as a center for community activities. They also opted to use an architect already employed by the city's Department of Health, Phillip Johnson, who designed a number of notable hospital complexes as well as firehouses, police stations, and armories. The bid for construction, however, still reached $82,000 due to war-time shortages. The city was quickly running through the Carnegie endowment and resolved at this point to halt further library construction until after the war.

When the twenty-third branch library at Cobbs Creek was finally erected in 1924-25 it required substantial contributions from the city, as the Committee could only ask the Carnegie Corporation for $30,000. The Department of Public Works provided the building lot and another nearby lot was sold to help finance construction. Local residents also were required to make substantial contributions. John T. Windrim, who by this time had been appointed to the board of trustees, selected local architect Edmund B. Gilchrist. Gilchrist served on various planning committees for both the national and local chapter of the AIA, and the same year that construction began on the library, they presented him with a meritorious service award. He later became known for his revival style country house designs. While the building maintains the general layout and symmetry of the other branch libraries, its concrete construction and banded windows distinguish it as a modernist interpretation of the old Beaux Arts prototype.

The next branch to be built was Greenwich, which opened in June 1929, but is no longer standing. City architect Phillip Johnson, who had designed the Kingsessing Branch a decade prior, was called on to design this library as well. And while the city had hoped to erect the Greenwich Branch for $60,000 construction bids came in at nearly twice that price. By the time that the next branch was underway, only about $15,000 remained in the Carnegie fund, requiring the city to borrow $120,000 in order to see to its completion. Once again, Phillip Johnson was asked to serve as architect for Wyoming, the last of Philadelphia's Carnegie branch libraries. Wyoming's opening in October 1930 officially marked the end of Philadelphia's Carnegie Library building campaign. In fact, it was the last Carnegie funded library to be built anywhere.

The Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia

When the Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia opened in June 1927 it was touted as "the latest in libraries" reflecting exceptional architectural design, innovative library planning, and sophisticated technological systems.[56] The exterior design, developed largely by Horace Trumbauer's chief designer Julian Abele, was based on French architect Ange-Jacques Gabriel's landmark creation for the twin facades of the Ministère de la Marine and Hôtel de Crillon on Place de la Concorde in Paris. Both Trumbauer and Abele greatly admired eighteenth century French architecture and by using these buildings as their model, they demonstrated their intention to bring the best of French design to Philadelphia. The interior plan of the library was developed by Trumbauer in concert with the Librarian of the Free Library, but also resembled that of the landmark New York Public Library. The Central Library's mammoth metal book stacks, rising three stories from the basement to the first mezzanine level, provided capacity for more than one million volumes, an amount then exceeded only by the British Museum, the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress. A state-of-the-art book retrieval system and fireproof construction and interior fittings and furnishings were among the library's impressive technological features.

During the opening ceremonies George Wharton Pepper described the triumph manifested by the new building; the Free Library had risen from two modest rooms in Philadelphia City Hall in 1891 to a Central Library that was "complete in every detail and beautiful beyond words" with branch buildings scattered throughout the city.[57] To some, even more significant than the Central Library *building* was the opportunity that it provided for the cultural and educational enhancement of Philadelphia's citizens. President of the City Council Charles B. Hall spoke enthusiastically of the usefulness of libraries in improving the "minds and morals" of its patrons. In fact, the libraries were viewed as a valuable component of the city's education system, as is demonstrated by the appointment of the president of the Board of Education, Henry R. Edmunds, to the Library's planning committee.[58] The Central Library was equipped to serve a broad range of interests and at every reading level to include popular periodicals and reference books, maps, manuscripts, rare books, music, prints, study rooms, a children's section, and even a department for the blind.

Within a larger historical context, the Central Library was also a product of the City Beautiful movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The library was the first of many monumental structures intended to enhance the dignity and grandeur of the newly created Fairmount Parkway (renamed the Benjamin Franklin Parkway in 1937) while also supporting Philadelphia's learned and cultural communities. In addition to the Free Library, buildings were erected for The Franklin Institute, the American Philosophical Society, the Academy of Natural Sciences, the Rodin Museum, and the Board of Education. The parkway was designed by Central Library architect Horace Trumbauer, along with colleagues Paul Cret and Clarence Zantzinger, with landscape designs by French planner Jacques Greber.[59] Inspired by Paris' celebrated boulevard known as the Champs d'Elysee, it too was to be one of the great avenues of

[56] "Philadelphia's New Library," *Libraries*, Vol. 32, No. 7 (July 1927): 350.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Henry R. Edmunds was appointed as the chair of the Carnegie Fund Committee when it was originally established.
[59] Their plan was based on an earlier plan developed in 1892 by James Hamilton Windrim, architect of the Masonic Temple, and the father and business partner of John T. Windrim, designer of three branch libraries.

the world. A mile in length, the parkway cut a diagonal path across the city grid, extending from City Hall to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the gateway to Fairmount Park. As well as enhancing the attractiveness of the city, like many City Beautiful projects, the parkway's development also eliminated urban blight and eased industrial congestion by removing scores of what many considered to be unsightly factory buildings and row houses. Little remains of the earlier architectural fabric of this part of the city, with the exception of one of the five original squares planned by colonial proprietor William Penn. Reconfigured as Logan *Circle*, its central location and elegant Swann Memorial Fountain make it a focal point of the parkway. The Central Library enjoys a choice location facing the circle.

Plans for the construction of the Central Library began in late 1906, following the selection of Horace Trumbauer as architect. In addition to Trumbauer's skill and reputation, his appointment has been attributed to the patronage of local industrialist Peter A.B. Widner. As both a long-serving trustee of the Free Library and one of Trumbauer's most prominent clients, Widner strongly endorsed Trumbauer's appointment.[60] By January 1907 Trumbauer had prepared preliminary sketches. However, debate over the proposed course of the parkway delayed further progress on the project until 1911. That year, action was spurred by the appointment of a committee to oversee the construction of the library, chaired by reformer and executive council for the Municipal League of Philadelphia, Clinton Rogers Woodruff. The committee reaffirmed Trumbauer's involvement in the project and set him to work that summer with Librarian for the Free Library John Thomson to design an efficient layout for the new purpose-built library. Thomson was thus able to influence the general layout of the library based upon models of efficiency. By the fall, Julian Abele's design for the library's exterior had also taken shape.

The classical design and innovative plan of Philadelphia's Central Library undoubtedly received inspiration from the New York Public Library as well. As one of the two most influential examples from this period, the New York library greatly influenced the design of central libraries nationwide (the other prime example being the Boston Public Library). In fact, as historian Abigail Van Slyck points out, remarkable similarities existed between central libraries nationwide; in city after city, libraries consisted of "large rectangular blocks of granite or marble, articulated with monumental classical elements" that were "modeled on the great cultural institutions of a previous generation."[61] Similarities in style during the period can be attributed in part to the popularity of the Beaux Arts style among both architects and their patrons. Regard for Beaux Arts design ran concurrent with the City Beautiful movement and fulfilled the demand for inspirational civic design. Although central libraries were intended for use by the masses, their imposing scale and architectural grandeur clearly catered to a more sophisticated clientele. Like New York Public Library, Philadelphia's Central Library is an elaborate, classically styled structure located in a fashionable urban district. Both libraries also contain state of the art technology, such as the huge vertical stack located at the rear of the building, and interior design features such as an imposing entrance hall, and principle reading rooms elevated above street level in the fashion of the *piano nobile*.

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[60] Brownlee, 72.
[61] Van Slyck, 90-91.

By the spring 1912, the architectural plans for the Central Library were well in hand. A ground-breaking ceremony was planned for June when the first of many problems arose that would plague the building's construction. Unable to secure the full funding required by law to proceed, city officials employed numerous avenues to circumvent the problems that hampered the construction of both the library and the parkway. Tactics included putting the decision regarding funding in the hands of the taxpayers through a referendum in 1915, and annexing the parkway property to the independently operated Fairmount Park Commission. By early 1917 the city was finally able to accept construction bids only to face even more daunting challenges caused by America's entry into World War I, and by labor contracting disputes. Despite the uncertainty, library and city officials unwilling to accept further delays proceeded with ground-breaking ceremonies on 12 May 1917. The site was then excavated in preparation for the laying of the foundation. However, due to the aforementioned problems, with the exception of the rain water that collected in it, the excavated pit remained empty until 1921. The delays and war-time shortages also conspired to drive-up originally projected construction costs. To cut costs, the overall size of the library was reduced. Additionally, steel beams were used to replace load-bearing masonry walls, which finally took shape in time for the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone on 24 January 1923. By mid-summer the steel frame was complete and the stone facades were erected upon them. The next two years were spent carving and setting into place the ornamental stonework, including the library's massive columns. By the spring of 1925, the exterior was complete. Work then began on the two-year effort to assemble the interior, which ranged from installing the free-standing, six-tier book stacks to applying the copious ornamental cast-plaster elements that appear throughout the building.[62]

The long-anticipated dedication of the Free Library of Philadelphia's Central Branch was held on 2 June 1927, in the presence of over 2,500 spectators, and the library officially opened to patrons the following day. According to one account, the event was attended by the largest and most diverse audience in the city's history, including lawyers, clergymen, doctors, bankers, city clerks, and school children.[63] Presiding over the ceremony was Dr. Cyrus Adler, President of the Board of Trustees (and of Dropsie College). In attendance were the mayor, city council, and other local dignitaries including former U.S. Senator George Wharton Pepper, a descendent of library founder Dr. William Pepper. He recalled how William Pepper forty years prior had "dreamed the dream that is realize today" by the opening of the Central Branch.[64] William Pepper convinced his wealthy uncle, George S. Pepper, to leave the city an endowment to provide the books that formed the core of the library's collection. The chair of the Building Committee, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, presented Adler with the key to the building, and he, in turn, passed the key to Librarian John Ashhurst.[65] Ashhurst then proceeded to open the doors, allowing Philadelphians an opportunity to tour their new library. Today the Free Library of Philadelphia

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[62] "Delays, 1912-1919" and "Construction, 1920-1927," *The Central Library; A Vision Realized*, an exhibition by the Free Library of Philadelphia, http://libwww.library.phila.gov/75th/plans.htm?page=his.
[63] "Philadelphia's New Library," *Libraries*, Volume 32: 7 (July 1927), 351.
[64] "The New Free Library of Philadelphia," *The Library Journal*, 52:12 (15 June 1927), 639.
[65] Ibid, 633; "Philadelphia's New Library, 350.

ranks twenty-second among the nation's libraries in terms holdings, including those of university libraries; with 6,307,978 volumes, the Central Library is the fifth largest of the public libraries.[66]

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Unlike the modest branch libraries tucked away in residential neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia, the Central Branch is pretentious in both its architectural style and its scale, and is prominently located along the city's grand boulevard. The design for the Central Library was created by Horace Trumbauer and his associate Julian Abele after the eighteenth-century twin structures the Ministère de la Marine and the Hôtel de Crillon by Ange-Jacques Gabriel and located on Place de la Concorde in Paris. Built between 1755 and 1775, the French structures are considered to be among Europe's finest examples of neo-classical architecture. Its colonnades, which have been favorably compared to those of the Louvre in Paris, are unsurpassed by any in Europe.[67] It is not surprising that based on Trumbauer's and Abele's predilection for eighteenth-century French architecture that they would choose these as their models.

According to David Brownlee, the Library's design was an *allusion* to that of Ange-Jacques Gabriel's Paris structures rather than a copy; the "luxurious extravagance" of the ground-level freestanding arcade and the detached colonnade used by Ange-Jacques Gabriel at Place de la Concorde were eliminated in the design of the Central library. These subtleties are likely lost to the casual observer, however, and Brownlee asserts that Trumbauer's library plan defined him one of the most archaeologically correct classicist architects of his era.[68] The same should be said of Trumbauer's chief designer Julian Abele, who played a major role in the design of the Central Branch. Rather than a free-standing arcade, the Central Library sits on rusticated first floor punctuated by a series of arches through which are set the windows and doors. The main entryways are located within the three central arches and are accessed by a broad stairway. The entrance portals are graced with ornamental ironwork that includes gates providing security for the library when closed.

Above the base of the building, the main level rises to a full two stories, and is divided into three sections to create a central portion that is eleven bays across, and flanked by three-bay-wide projecting pavilions crowned by pediments. Enormous Corinthian columns support the entablature and balustrade of the central section, as well as the

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[66] The Library of Congress is the largest library in the nation and most others that rank higher than Philadelphia are university libraries. The public libraries listed that exceed Philadelphia, in ranking order include: Boston Public Library, County of Los Angeles Public Library, Detroit Public Library and Queen Borough Public Library.
[67] Russell Sturgis, *European Architecture: A Historical Study* (New York: MacMillian Company, 1896), 485-87.
[68] Brownlee, 73.

pediments of the pavilion sections. The columns are disengaged and the building façades are recessed, particularly in the central section. Behind the columns the windows are nearly full height, with small openings located at the base of each bay. Balustrades are also located between the bases of the columns in all three sections. The facades are further distinguished by cartouches, swags, niches and others forms of ornamentation. Likewise, the pediments are decorated with allegorical figures. The side elevations of the library are treated in a similar fashion, although there are no pavilions and the columns appear as pilasters separating the windows. The rear elevation is much simpler in its detailing, particularly the central section which is without columns. Columns do appear in the flanking pavilions, but the crowning pediments are unornamented. The exterior with its raised basement and full two-story principal level reflects the *piano nobile* style of the interior plan.

Also said to have served as a model for the Central Branch is the New York Public Library designed by Carrere and Hastings and completed in 1911.[69] This is likely in reference to the plan more so than the Parisian architectural styling. In actuality, the preliminary plans developed for the Central Library by Trumbauer and Librarian John Ashhurst bore greater similarity to the New York library than the structure as it appeared in its final execution. Like the New York Public Library, the early plan for the Central Branch included an "exhibition hall" to the rear, in the current location of the grand stairway. The original plan called for stairways tucked to either side of the exhibition hall, flanking the light courts, while the New York library stairway is located to the front of the building, flanking the main entrance. At that time, the New York Public Library and the Boston Public Library before it were considered the exemplary models for monumental library design. Key features of their designs incorporated into the Central Library plan include a grand entrance lobby located at the street level entrance and principal reading rooms elevated to the second story with access via a grand stairway.

2. Condition of fabric: The library appears to be well maintained and in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The library measures 300' in length, 200' in depth and 100' in height. The library sits on a raised basement with reading rooms elevated one flight to the main floor and rising two stories in height. While the building fenestration appears to be only two stories from the exterior, including basement and mezzanine levels, the interior actually consists of seven levels and a roof terrace.

2. Foundations: The building sits on a granite base.

3. Walls: The exterior walls are of Indiana limestone. The front façade is divided into three parts consisted of a center section identified by its free-standing two-story columns,

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[69] "Initial Plans, 1910-1912," *The Central Library; A Vision Realized*, an exhibition by the Free Library of Philadelphia, http://libwww.library.phila.gov/75th/plans.htm?page=his.

and flanked by pedimented pavilions. The stone at the raised basement level is of cut ashlar block.

4. Structural systems, framing: The building has a steel superstructure manufactured by the American Bridge Company, coupled with exterior wall panels of masonry.

5. Porches, stoops: A broad staircase composed of three low-rise steps ascends to the three centrally located entry portals at the lower level. They are flanked by low stone walls that support ornamental cast-iron light standards.

6. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is at street level where three portals support equally sized doorways. Similar archways create window openings all along the base of the building. The doors are of glass with side lights and include a similarly arranged light of equal height above, with a half-round light above that. The entry portals include ornamental ironwork with gates that are closed after hours for security.[70] The ironwork rises to the base of the upper arch.

b. Windows: The windows located at the base of the structure at street level are round-arched and divided into nine lights (with the three lights across the bottom twice the height as those in the two rows above). The typical window of the principal story is a large rectangular configuration divided into six lights, again, with the three across the bottom roughly twice the height as those above. The windows are recessed and flanked by plain pilasters to form reveals. Between these windows and those of the base, at the level of the balustrade along the top of the base, are smaller recessed windows.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The roof is flat and includes a roof terrace that surrounds the original, largely-glazed "roof reading room."

b. Cornice, eaves: The monumental columns that line the facades support a classical entablature and dentiled cornice, at the top of which is located a balustrade that runs around the front and side elevations. Pediments are found in the roofline of the pavilions that flank the central portion of the building to the front and rear.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Based on the original plans, the first floor or main entry level includes at its center a 45' x 88' two-story entrance hall with a grand stairway at the far end (behind

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[70] Although the maker of the ironwork is unknown, it has been speculated that it is the work of famed Philadelphia craftsmen Samuel Yellin.

which is located the 49' x 168' stack room). The main entrance is flanked by the 60' x 98' Periodical Room (now the Popular Library) to the east, and the 56' x 68' Reference Room (now the Music Department) to the west. A hallway runs perpendicular to the main hall, leading to other specialized reading rooms and offices. This hallway originally doubled as the area in which the card catalog was located, and is now lined with display cases. The east end included the Library for the Blind with a Catalog Room adjoining it to the rear, and other service areas in addition to a 28' x 48' Light Court that rises up to the full height of the building. The west end includes the Public Documents Reference Room, Librarian's offices, book keepers file room, and the Trustees Room (now housing the Fleisher Collection), as well as a Light Court and other service areas. The first mezzanine level allows for the soaring two-story heights of the principle rooms to the front of the library, and beneath the mezzanine are located the "decks" of the Stack Room and supplemental stacks for the periodicals.

The main floor (on the second story) includes the 52' x 162' Main Reading Room to the front and center, with the corresponding 48' x 144' Pepper Hall (containing books for reference only) to the rear of the building behind the stair hall. A perpendicular hall provides access to the four, roughly same-sized corner rooms; the Special Reading Room to the southeast and the Print Room to the southwest. Another Mezzanine level follows. The galleries of the main floor reading room rise up to the third floor space which is otherwise occupied by exhibition, study, and store rooms. The roof was designed to include a terrace for the use of library patrons, as well as a roof reading room, cafeteria and restrooms. The first level basement included a Lecture Room, Children's Room, Newspaper Room, and Bindery, Children's Class Room, training room, and restrooms, as well as the book stacks. The Newspaper and Children's rooms were designed with separate exterior entrances to allow for direct access to these areas (which also served to cut down on the noise that might disturb other patrons). The lower basement houses the utilities such as the boiler, fan, electrical and store rooms, as well as the principal stacks and the stacks for the newspaper room.

2. Stairways: The main stairway is located to the center of the library and measures 46' x 49' rising up to the full height of the building. The broad stair ascends from the first floor entrance hall up to a landing and then turns ninety degrees in either direction, raises a few steps to a secondary landing at each corner, again turns ninety degrees and continues in a single run to the second floor. Winged lions are carved into the newel posts at the top of the first run of the stairs, and on the landing is a statue of library benefactor Dr. William Pepper. The stair hall is open to the full height of the library with a coffered, domed ceiling that includes an octagonal skylight. Hallways flank the stairways on the second floor and are open to the stair, adding to its overall grandeur. The openings are supported by two Ionic columns joined by a classically inspired balustrade. The third floor openings that surround the stairway on all sides are round-arched, forming the spring-point for the vaulted ceiling. The secondary stairways include ornamental iron railings. The basement is accessed by enclosed stairways to either side of the base of the main stairway. They meet at a landing and then proceed to the basement in a single run. The stairs are made of marble, which corresponds to the marble walls (although the walls are scored to resemble ashlar block).

3. Flooring: The floors are of terrazzo and quarry tile to include pink Tennessee Marble with green Tinos Marble banding, and pink Tennessee, pink English, and black Belgian marble chips. Welsh Quarry tile flooring was also used.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the entrance and stair halls are marble scored or cut to resemble ashlar block, and are buttressed by attached Ionic columns. These columns appear in pairs at the openings into the perpendicular hallways in the entrance hall. The walls throughout the rest of the library are of plaster. In the Main and Pepper Hall reading rooms on the second floor the walls include ornamental pilasters flanking the windows on the outside walls (mirrored along the interior walls). The ceilings throughout much of the building, likewise, are highly ornamental. Pepper Hall includes arched vaulting that springs from the pilasters. The ceiling of the main reading room is coffered with decorative plasterwork and cornices. The coffered ceiling in the Automobile Collection room (former Music Room) includes brackets in the form of winged female figures. In the vaulted dome of the stairway, the ribs of the vault form a variety of geometric patterns in ornamental plasterwork. The ceilings of the principal hallways are likewise coffered, round-arched, and include ornamental plasterwork.

5. Openings:

> a. Doorways and doors: The doorways into the principal reading rooms are surrounded by classical entablatures, most with pediments and paneled and/or ornamented reveals. Many openings are flanked by pilasters.
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> b. Windows: The windows in the principal reading rooms are flanked by pilasters. Those in the Main Reading Room have flat arches with keystones. Some, like those in the Periodical and Reference rooms have round-arched window heads with drip molding.

6. Decorative features and trim: Decorative stone and plasterwork is found throughout the library. The entrance lobby and stair hall, secondary halls, and the reading rooms all include cast plaster details, cornices, and ceilings. The imagery depicted in plaster includes allegorical figures drawn from medieval Europe and ancient Greece and Rome such as those of Athena, Zeus, Hercules, and a band of Athenian horsemen, all created by the H. W. Miller Company. Several of the reading and special collection rooms and the grand entrance hall have richly ornate coffered plaster ceilings trimmed with key patterns and egg and dart moldings and punctuated with rosettes, pateras, and medallions. The classical columns, such as those in the entrance hall, the doorway entablatures, griffins and other decorative elements carved in marble and limestone are the work of the John Donnelly Company. The stair hall also includes marble walls and sculpted marble lamps. Located on the landing of the main stairway overlooking the entrance hall is a statue of Free Library founder Dr. William Pepper, sculpted in bronze by well-known artist Karl Bitters. Ornamental hand-wrought iron gates appear on the three front portals at the main entrance, on the two side stair doorways on the second floor, and on the entrances to the main elevators. The maker is unknown, although the designs reflect the work of famed

Philadelphia artist Samuel Yellin. The furnishings, cabinets, and equipment, selected for their fireproof quality, were all the work of the Art Metal Company of Jamestown, New York. It was said at the time to be the largest contract in the world for the supply of library metal furnishings and equipment.[71]

D. Site: The Central Library occupies a city block along Vine Street, bounded by 19th, 20th, and Wood Streets. It faces onto the Benjamin Franklin Parkway which cuts on a diagonal through the grid pattern of city streets. The parkway forms a broad, mile-long boulevard that extends from city hall at the southeast terminus to the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the entrance to Fairmount Park at the northwest end. The final design for the parkway was the culmination of over twenty-five years of planning and lobbying efforts on behalf of civic-minded politicians and prominent citizens. It combines early design efforts that began in 1892 with a plan by James H. Windrim and modified in 1902 by William J. McAuley, with plans developed by Paul Cret, Clarence Zantzinger (and partners), and Horace Trumbauer in 1907, and finally enhanced by French planner Jacques Greber in 1917. The library was the first of many monumental civic buildings planned for the parkway to be completed. It holds a prominent position across from Logan Circle, which is both the mid-point and highlight feature of the parkway. The centerpiece of the circle is the ornamental Swann Memorial Fountain built to commemorate Wilson Cary Swann, founder of the Philadelphia Fountain Society. It was designed by Alexander Sterling Calder and Wilson Eyre to include swans and Native American figures symbolizing the city's location between the Delaware, Schuylkill, and Wissahickon rivers.

The parkway plan was an outgrowth of the City Beautiful movement that took root nationwide beginning in the late nineteenth century. The movement traces its early establishment to the mid-nineteenth century rise of landscape architecture conceived on a comprehensive scale as exemplified by the work of Frederick Law Olmstead. Olmstead is credited with the development of key concepts of current landscape design such as the landscaped park and the boulevard system.[72] The movement was further driven by city planning principles manifested by the Columbian Exposition of 1893's *White City*, designed by Daniel Burnham. The public's overwhelming response to the *White City* helped to popularize ideas about regional planning as well as highlight the virtues of Beaux Arts architecture. The movement reached a crescendo during the first decade of the twentieth century and continued to influence city planning into the late twentieth century.

City Beautiful was rooted in the concepts of beauty, functionality, and control. Influenced by European models, stylistically the movement was a blending of naturalistic form (park spaces) with neoclassical architecture to create aesthetically pleasing environs thought to inspire civic pride. Neoclassical architecture called for the proportions and symmetry also conducive to planned landscapes, and as William H. Wilson points out, "Because of its range in time and space from classical Greek to Beaux Arts, it was adaptable." Furthermore, Wilson argues that neoclassical forms were well suited to public buildings that required ease of access to a few

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[71] Free Library of Philadelphia, "Celebrating 75 Years on the Parkway, Construction 1920-1926," 2002. http://libwww.freelibrary.org/75th/construction.htm?page=his.
[72] William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 34.

floors and that are low in proportion to their length and breadth. Christopher Tunnard agrees with this assessment; "It [Neoclassical design] was a flexible style which could make a unity of a building by combining boldness of plan with refinement of detail. It made possible the handling of entirely new building types, frequently of great scale, that a growing democracy required. There were the new state capitols, the railroad stations, and the public libraries, which are part of American's contribution to world architecture."[73] City Beautiful ideas were also about imposing order and restrain on unbridled urban growth or redeveloping blighted or otherwise uninspired areas of the city. Horace McFarland, president of the American Civic Association and a major proponent of the movement called it "the crusade against ugliness."[74]

In Philadelphia the idea behind the creation of a parkway linking Center City with Fairmount Park first emerged in the mid to late nineteenth century as vast tracts of real estate were assembled to develop Fairmount Park as one of the nation's largest urban parks. It was not until the 1890s, however, that serious consideration was given to the parkway idea, sparked by both the movement on the national scene (as just described) and by local lobbying efforts. In June 1891, a meeting of prominent citizens gathering to discuss the proposed project prompted a study by the Department of Public Works. As an architect and director of public works James H. Windrim was asked to devise a plan. Windrim gained both local and national attention through the design of structures such as Philadelphia's Masonic Temple and through his previous appointment as supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury. Windrim's design for a 160' wide boulevard extending from Penn Square to the south end of Fairmount Park was present by the mayor to the City Council on 25 February 1892. The plan required the demolition of blocks of brick mills, factories, and row houses. The chance to clear what some viewed as a blighted area lay behind the larger plan, an idea that troubled many citizens and politicians. Thus machine politics coupled with the financial panic of 1893 served to stall parkway plans. Although a bill passed in June 1894 allowed for the demolition of buildings in the path of the parkway, no significant progress was made for many years.

In 1900 the call was again sounded; in January Albert Kelsey, an architect and the founder and first president of the Architectural League of America, gave a lecture at Drexel Institute (later University). Entitled "A Rational Beauty for American Cities," the lecture argued for the implementation of newly conceived regional planning efforts in order "to re-organize the crude growths of American municipalities."[75] Kelsey and others formed the Art Federation of Philadelphia with Daniel Baugh, founder of the Art Club of Philadelphia, as its president. Over the next two years they worked to redesign the parkway based on a proposal put forth by architect Wilson Eyre, Jr, of their technical committee. This proposal differed from Windrim's in that it made use of existing structures, thus requiring a broken axis that shifted the parkway's path to accommodate the Catholic cathedral. The alternative plan also terminated with a statue of George Washington rather than with Fairmount Park. Modifications made in 1902 by William J. McAuley called for a slight realignment that would bypass the cathedral and proceed

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[73] Wilson, 88, and citing Christopher Tunnard, *The Modern American City*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), 47-48.
[74] Wilson, 51. According to Wilson, as the national spokesman for the City Beautiful movement, McFarland had given his "Crusade Against Ugliness" lecture in over 250 cities and towns by 1911.
[75] Brownlee, 17-18.

along a single axis to the park. Fortified by the participation of a number of wealthy Philadelphia industrialists, the Parkway Association formed in support of the new plan in June 1902. On 28 March 1903 the mayor signed an ordinance that reinstated the proposed boulevard to the city planning map.[76]

It was not until 1907, however, that any real progress was made towards the design and construction of the parkway. It was at this point that the Fairmount Park Art Association became involved, prompted by a promise made by industrialist Peter A.B. Widner to build a new art museum for the city should the parkway plan be extended to Fairmount Park.[77] A team composed of prominent Philadelphia architects Horace Trumbauer, Clarence C. Zantzinger, and Paul Cret was assembled to devise a new plan. According to the Association, the intent was, "To furnish a direct, dignified and interesting approach from the heart of the business and administrative quarter of the city, through the regions of educational activities grouped around Logan Square, to the artistic center to be developed around the Fairmount Plaza, at the entrance to Philadelphia's largest and most beautiful park."[78] The new parkway plan called for a straight realignment of the parkway, which would terminate with the art museum and a cluster of institutional structures. The greater length of the parkway would likewise be lined by significant civic, educational, institutional and religious structures. Backed by Mayor Reyburn and vice president of the Fairmount Park Commission Eli Kirk Price, the new plan gained widespread support. Many of the same architects that developed the parkway plan were also called upon to design buildings along its path, including the Central Library by Horace Trumbauer and Julian Abele.

In February 1907 demolition along the proposed parkway route began despite the fact that the exact path continued to be adjusted. Advancement of the plan was further stalled by conflicting political interests that served to hinder the appropriation of funding. It took nearly a decade before the Philadelphia City Council voted to annex the parkway to the independently operated Fairmount Park Commission as a means of eliminating politically motivated barriers. Occurring on 13 December 1916, this action transferred jurisdiction over the impeding development of the parkway to the Commission. Meanwhile, Mayor Thomas B. Smith secured a $9 million loan and signed an ordinance that allowed for the full extension of the boulevard to Fairmount Park on 24 July 1916. In the fall 1917 a paving contract was awarded that signaled the beginning of the final realization of the parkway plan.[79]

In the meantime the commission hired Jacques Greber in March 1917 to reexamine the proposed parkway plan with the intention of siting buildings and adding connecting drives and landscape features. The plan developed in 1907 by Cret, Zantzinger, and Trumbauer remained largely intact. Greber's redesign called for the expansion of Logan Square and the reduction in the number of buildings along the path of the parkway, tempering the landscape of the urban

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[76] Ibid., 18-20.
[77] Ibid., 22.
[78] Fairmount Park Art Association, *The Fairmount Parkway: A Pictorial Record of Its First Incorporation In The City Plan In 1904 To The Completion Of The Main Drive From City Hall To Fairmount Park In 1919*, statement made by Charles J. Cohen, President (Philadelphia: Fairmount Park Art Association, 1919), 2.
[79] Brownlee, 29.

boulevard with wedges of green space.[80] According to Greber's plan, the Philadelphia parkway was to emulate the Champs-Elysees in Paris, as was the duplication of the Place de la Concorde buildings in the form of the Central Library and its adjoining Municipal Court building. Cognizant of the resemblance of the parkway design to the Champs Elysees, Greber commented on the pleasure with which "the city of Paris may be enabled to bring to its sister in American the inspiration of what makes Paris so attractive to visitors."[81] Greber, who later became known for the plan of the Paris World Exposition of 1937, received approval by the Art Jury for his revisions on 25 January 1918. By then, construction of the Central Library was also underway. In 1937, on the eve of the dedication of a statue of Benjamin Franklin beneath the dome of the Franklin Institute, the City Council voted to name the parkway in his honor.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings: The original drawings produced by Horace Trumbauer and Julian Abele are still extant and are located in the private collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia, within the Director's Vault in the Central Branch. Some of Trumbauer's early sketches, executed in concert with the librarian, are available through the Prints and Pictures Department including:

Trumbauer, Horace, "1st floor plan, Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia based on the ideas of John Ashhurst," 1911, Prints and Pictures Department, Central Library (75A0271). Copies of drawings are also available via the Athenaeum of Philadelphia's on-line

Ibid. 2nd floor plan, Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Ibid. Transverse Section, technical drawing, Free Library of Philadelphia, Prints and Pictures Department, Central Library (75A0320).

Ibid. Longitudinal Section.

Ibid. Second Floor.

Ibid. Third Floor.

Ibid. Roof Plan.

"Public Library, Philadelphia, PA; Horace Trumbauer, Architect," *The American Architect*, Vol. 132 (20 September 1927): 407-409. Perspective photograph of the completed building along with architect's floor plans.

B. Early views: Trumbauer, Horace. "Front elevation drawing of the Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia, ca. 1911-1912," Free Library of Philadelphia, Central Library, Prints

[80] Ibid., 31.
[81] Jacques Greber, Quoted in *Department of the Art Jury, Eighth Annual Report* (1918), 18; as cited in Brownlee, 34.

and Pictures Department (75A0016). This early architects rendering of the planned library shows the exterior with thirteen central bays rather than the eleven that were actually built.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary Sources: The records of the Free Library of Philadelphia are located at the Central Library on Vine Street. The *Annual Reports* are located in the Municipal Reference Division, Cities P53-1154; and the Carnegie Fund Committee Minute Books are located in the Director's Vault (access by special permission).

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Central Library of the Free Library of Philadelphia was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief, during summer 2007 as part of a larger initiative to record the Carnegie Funded branch libraries of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The project is sponsored by HABS in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, John A. Gallery, director; and the Free Library of Philadelphia, William J. Fleming, Administrative Services Director, and made possible through a Congressional appropriation for recording in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The historical reports were prepared by Lisa P. Davidson and Catherine C. Lavoie. Large-format photography was undertaken for HABS by Joseph Elliott. Measured drawings were prepared of the Thomas Holme Branch as the typical branch library during the summer 2008. The drawings team was led by Robert Arzola, working with Jason McNatt, Paul Davidson, and Ann Kidd, architectural technicians.