The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Third Avenue · 4th floor · Seattle, Washington 98104 · (206) 684-0228

REPORT ON DESIGNATION LPB 5/02

Name and Address of Property: **Fremont Library**
731 N. 35th St.

Legal Description: Legal Description: Denny and Hoyt Add., Block 34, Lots 9-12 and W ½ of 13

At the public meeting held on December 19, 2001, the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the Fremont Library as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standards for designation of SMC 25. 12.350:

C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, city, state or nation.

D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period, or of a method of construction; and

E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder

F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age or scale, it is an easily identifiable feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Public Libraries in America

The public library in America has played a critical role in promoting literacy and self-governance. In this sense, the library reinforces a quintessentially American concept of democracy. Its existence, as such, has paralleled the emergence of an architecture of increased access and openness.

Libraries, as buildings to store written materials, have existed since ancient times. Stacked rolls of cloth containing hieroglyphic information have been found in Egyptian archaeological sites, suggesting that special places were reserved for such functions. Libraries were established in classical Greek, Roman, and Arab cities. In Europe, the monastery and university served as

repositories of information. It was during the Industrial Revolution, however, that the public institution emerged, due in part to affordable mass printing technologies, which enabled books to be available to many. Individuals and private clubs also emerged to collect and share books.

In the U. S. the first printing press was established in 1639, in Boston. The city's clergymen established a "Publik Library," in 1655. This and other library collections in seventeenth and eighteenth century America were supported by the clergy, and tended to emphasize religious works. It was during this period too that the nation's system of public education expanded. Thus, the library and the school evolved simultaneously, as twin institutions of learning.

In the 1730s, the first public lending library was created in Philadelphia. Essentially it was a library club, but with voluntary dues and an open membership. It primarily served merchants and working class patrons. A century later, in 1833, the first tax-supported library was established in Salisbury, Connecticut. In 1835, the State of New York passed legislation, allowing schools to use tax funds to support school libraries that were open to the public.

The Boston Public Library opened in 1854. It served as a physical model for library buildings for more than half a century. Its design, with an interior courtyard and reading room placed along the front facade, recalled the palazzo of the Italian Renaissance, the Bibliotheque St. Genevieve in Paris, and the monastery libraries of the Medieval period. However, the plan of the Boston Public Library, with its linear spaces, mezzanine, and alcove stacks, resulted in functional inefficiencies for both patrons and librarians.

The role of the librarian emerged during the nineteenth century, marked in part by the founding of the American Library Association (ALA) in 1876. The ALA helped to establish standards for the profession, and contributed to development of public library's emphasis on increased public access. Populist ideology at the turn of the twentieth century encouraged such access. This change in library policy raised questions of whether stacks should be open to public browsing, and how librarians could both effectively monitor public activities and control the checkout of books.

The evolution of the nineteenth century library saw employment of a variety of plans. Organizational concepts included the tall reading room walled by balconied stacks, the alcoved reading room, where each alcove contained books on a particular subject, and the decentralized version, in which books were kept in open or in locked cases within a series of rooms.

The Carnegie Corporation and Its Influence on Libraries

Philanthropic contributions by Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation initiated wide-spread library construction in America. They indirectly fostered basic changes in library planning as advocated by the profession of librarians in the early Twentieth Century. The methods of Andrew Carnegie and his secretary and designated library planner, James Bertram, redefined the nature of library use in North America, increased the number of libraries, and provided the general public with greater access to books.

Another collective effect of the Carnegie Corporation's influence on library design was to shift from a domestic model, formerly associated with libraries, to a more orderly and efficient program based on a business organizational model.

The Pre-Carnegie era library, as a building type, was relatively limited. It generally served as a multi-purpose cultural institution, as a forum for those already having access to books to share ideas and discuss books, rather than provide access to all readers. During the 1870s and 1880s, a new, uniquely American building type emerged. This new library often employed reading rooms with high ceilings, surrounded by balconied stacks, or had books arranged by subject in separate alcoves or placed in cases, in a series of interconnected decentralized rooms.

Problems arose with these arrangements relating to storage, access, and supervision of patron activities. In addition, interior building temperatures were difficult to control in gallery halls, resulting in damage to books in the upper shelves. The exteriors, meant to be "show buildings," were frequently, from the standpoint of the librarians, "needlessly extravagant."

By serving more as a forum for public debates and book discussions rather than providing access to books, the late nineteenth century library building was regarded as a treasure house, an image inconsistent with progressive ideals. These organizational and identity problems raised questions as to whether architects or librarians should direct library planning.

In the late 1800s, programs for library administration were shaped by new ideas that advocated changes to library organization, with the intent of bringing readers and books together. This shift resulted in increased sensitivity to public needs and increased services. These changes shaped the emerging concept of the "Modern Library."

Librarian Arthur E. Bostwick described the "Modern Library" in 1910, as having public support, open shelves, children's services, and cooperation with schools, with provision of branch libraries, traveling libraries, and advertising for libraries. However, lacking funds to build new facilities, the ideas of librarians remained largely conceptual.

The Carnegie Corporation began providing grants for libraries in the late 1890s. Funds were given to municipalities and private library organizations to construct free public libraries. The efficient funding methods of Carnegie and Bertram, unequaled by other philanthropists of the time, allowed a large number of buildings to be constructed in a short period.

The Carnegie Corporation's grant stipulations encouraged progressive concepts in library planning. Thus, the concept of the Modern Library came into widespread, as a result of the increased use availability of funds, coupled with Carnegie's design stipulations.
By keeping centralized decision-making to a minimum, regularizing procedures, and initiating a system of checks and balances, the Foundation was able to increase efficiency in its review of proposals, and reduce subjective decisions.
Carnegie's philanthropy had two distinct donation periods, the retail and the wholesale. During the initial "retail" era, from 1886 to around 1896, he gave over $1,860,000 for the construction of fourteen buildings including public libraries in six United States communities.

The "wholesale" period began around 1896. It followed a several year lag in gifts. Donations during this late period increased to total over $39 million for 1,412 libraries throughout forty-six states. Most of the grant money was intended specifically for libraries in small communities, and more than half of these grants were for less than $10,000. Most of the libraries constructed were in the Midwest, but forty-three, including six neighborhood libraries and the Central Library in Seattle, were built in Washington State. In capital appropriations, Washington was fourth, with $66.90 per 100 inhabitants, and ranked fourteenth in the number of buildings received. By 1919, Carnegie had paid for half of the 3,500 libraries then in existence in the United States.

James Bertram further refined the initial grant application process in 1904 when he began assessing library design plans and budgets. Bertram equated cost over-runs with inefficient planning, and by 1908, the Foundation required his signature for approval on all library designs. Increased efficiency, use of common plan types, and economy of design resulted.

Bertram compiled his thoughts, and the advice he had gained from librarians, in his 1911 Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings. He revised and expanded the book over the next eight years. By its last publication, six plans were included. The fundamental concept behind Bertram's notes, which were included with grant awards, was an "(insistence) that practical matters take precedence over artistic expression."

Bertram thus defined architecture as the "expressive stylistic elements on (the) exterior (and the building as a) practical accommodation of heating, lighting (and) structural soundness." His directives redefined the nature of the public library, and re-sorted the social hierarchy of its design. The status of the library patron rose, changing the building's identity, from a guarded treasure house to a place of welcoming trust.

Library patron status was improved within the library by removing the implied presence of paternalistic donors. Fireplaces, which had been considered a "tempting shrine to benefactors" were removed, and separate rooms for trustees were eliminated. Instead, trustees shared a meeting room in the basement with the library staff, a location that suggested both the trustees and staff were lower in the hierarchy than the library patrons. In addition, benefactor portraits were eliminated. In later years, recipient communities were not required to inscribe donor's names on the building exterior.

Changing the library's identity also meant changing spatial relationships within the library. Stacks were opened to library users to allow people to browse and find their own books. Signs of Victorian domesticity and hierarchy were removed, and uniform ceiling heights and evenly lit rectangular rooms were created.

By 1911, the librarian's role had also changed. It had evolved to be akin to a manager, as in a factory or office building. Therefore, the circulation desk was placed prominently in a central location. This afforded the librarian a panoptical view, allowing visual control over the stacks and supervision of patron activities. The prominent central location of the circulation desk established a close association of librarians with the library's identity. Meanwhile, the simple, symmetrical exterior identified the library as a welcoming, easily understood public building.

These physical changes helped establish a relationship of trust between the library and its patron and thus instilled democratic principles through building design. As a result, the Carnegie Library came to be identified as a center of learning for the self-motivated reader. New libraries accommodated nearly the full spectrum of the community, by including children and eliminating gender segregation. "The reformed library, a single room dominated by a centrally placed circulation desk and lined with book shelves, was the physical embodiment of the contractual arrangement between the philanthropist and the beneficiaries of his gifts, an agreement that specified and limited the recipient's obligations."

Andrew Carnegie contributed immensely to the development of free public libraries. His philanthropy lifted fundamental restraints that had limited their development by providing stable funding and permanent library facilities. The resulting widespread dispersal of libraries across the United States laid the foundation for permanent and publicly financed library systems. Carnegie's clearly defined procedures, streamlined approach, and requirement of city involvement, contrasted markedly with the whim and fancy by which other philanthropists had made donations.

Andrew Carnegie and James Bertram

Andrew Carnegie was born November 25, 1835, in Dunfermline, Scotland. His formal education began at age eight, and lasted only three years. His appreciation for reading and books stemmed, in part, from listening to readings and discussions at the Tradesmen's Subscription Library. His father, a weaver, helped create this library.

Industrialization of the textile business led to the closure of many small businesses, including his father's. This prompted the Carnegie family's emigration to Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1848. There Carnegie worked as a bobbin boy in a textile factory, and later as a messenger boy for a local telegraph company. During this time, he learned telegraphy, and made important contacts with the Pennsylvania Railroad. At age eighteen he began working for the railroad as a private telegraph operator. Over the course of the following twelve years, he rose to become superintendent of Pennsylvania Railroad's Pittsburgh division.

Carnegie was self-taught using borrowed books from a private library. He learned how to invest money, and gained the technical information to make the investments that led to his fortune. He was also active in debating and self-improvement societies.

In 1865, Carnegie left the railroad to manage the Keystone Bridge Company, which replaced wooden bridges with iron ones. He invested simultaneously in other businesses, including oil, steel, and railroad locomotives. During the 1870s, he focused on steel manufacturing and created the Carnegie Steel Company. His absolute control over his company's stock enabled him to withhold dividends in prosperous years, and buy out competitors at bargain rates during hard times. Eventually his company became the largest in the United States.

In 1889, Carnegie wrote The Gospel of Wealth to express his views on philanthropy. He noted that wealthy men should live without extravagance, provide moderately for dependents, and distribute the rest of their fortune to benefit the welfare and happiness of the common person. He organized

these thoughts and plans in a second book, The Best Fields for Philanthropy, where he listed the seven recipients for donation: universities, libraries, medical centers, public parks, meeting and concert halls, public baths and churches. Later he expanded this list to include scientific research, the general spread of knowledge, and world peace.

Carnegie was generally well regarded until the steel labor strike in July 1892, in which eighteen were killed at his plant in Homestead, Pennsylvania. Though Carnegie was in Scotland at the time, his indifference to events surrounding the strike was harsh. Henry Clay Frick, in charge of Carnegie Steel while Andrew Carnegie was in Scotland, broke off negotiations with striking workers and locked them out of the plant. He then called in 300 Pinkerton detectives to protect the plant and its nonunion workers. A gun battle erupted between the union workers and the Pinkertons, and the Pennsylvania National Guard was called to restore order and guard the plant. Later that fall, the strike broke. Thereafter Carnegie's grants were often viewed as "tainted money," Carnegie's wealth having been gained at the expense of the very working people for whom he promoted public libraries.

In 1901, Andrew Carnegie sold his steel company to a group of investors organized by J. P. Morgan. He retired, and devoted his energies to philanthropy. Although donating to a variety of charities, he favored branch libraries as they reached the masses of people a central library might not. To Andrew Carnegie, libraries represented change, and an opportunity for people to improve themselves. He considered people's use of the library, even when small in number, to be of great community value.

James Bertram, Carnegie's personal secretary, was born in Corstorphine, Scotland (presently part of Edinburgh) on March 17, 1872. He attended Daniel Stewart's College, receiving an education in business. In 1888, he began work with the Great Northern and Northeastern Railway Company in Edinburgh. He later moved to South Africa, where he worked in the mining industry. At age 25, after returning to Scotland, he began working for Andrew Carnegie. Bertram's personality was described as being methodical, systematic, and a stickler for precedent. He worked for Andrew Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation from 1897, until his death in 1934 at the age of 62.

In November of 1917, the Carnegie Corporation, in response to wartime demands, ended library gifts. Following the war, construction resumed on those libraries already promised, until 1923. Endowments after 1919 were made for library education, rather than buildings. In 1925, the Carnegie Corporation began making grants to the ALA for the training of librarians. Andrew Carnegie died in 1919, at the age of 84. He had spent one quarter of his life on causes he believed in, and had given $350 million (roughly ninety percent of his fortune) in gifts to charities that improve people's lives through education. Carnegie's grant program had an effect in Washington, as it did elsewhere, of developing the funding infrastructure for the public library, and providing permanent library buildings. The Carnegie grants were instrumental in furthering concepts of public access, education, and literacy.

The Carnegie Grant Process

The Carnegie Grant Program was never formally advertised, but relied on word of mouth. Progressive ideas of the 1900 – 1920s fueled community improvement, resulting in a shift from private to public support of basic services. Consequently, municipal funds were stretched thin. Life safety and basic amenities, such as police, fire, and sewer and water systems, took precedent over public libraries. Private philanthropy, especially the Carnegie grants, were an important source of funding when public funds might otherwise not have been available.

To obtain a Carnegie Library, a community had to initiate the process with a written request to Andrew Carnegie or the Carnegie Corporation. The Corporation would respond, seeking statistics on the community's population, existing library facilities, the availability of a site, and extent of town council support for a library. Once this information was reviewed, the final applications would be brought to Andrew Carnegie for approval. A form letter would be sent to the community, notifying them of the award conditions and amount.
A city had to meet minimum qualifications, with a population of at least 1,000, municipal ownership of a suitable site, and proof of legislation for an annual tax (typically 10% of the grant). The amount of the gift was usually set at two to three dollars per person; a town with a population of 1,000 would receive a $2,000 - $3,000 grant. The Foundation's methods ensured that the grants would be an investment in people who possessed the "strength of character" to use them.

There were no stipulations as to where the library should be located. The annual tax was for building maintenance, purchasing books, and the librarian salaries. The local resolutions provided Andrew Carnegie the assurance his money would not be wasted on a town unwilling to commit to the long-term civic responsibility of library operations.

Prior to 1908, the community had complete freedom to design and build the library. After that date, Bertram began assessing library plans for their efficiency and possible cost overruns. Applicants negotiated only with James Bertram, to substantiate their needs with increased details. A grant amount could rarely be raised after the initial amount had been determined. Any funds already raised by the community were to be spent before the Carnegie award could be used. Bertram later even "required the mayor's personal pledge that (a) building would be completed on budget."

Following notice of a grant, communities submitted architectural drawings for Bertram's approval. After 1911, both the recipients and architect(s) had to consider Bertram's Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings. Grant funds were distributed in three installments, the first installment at groundbreaking, and the second when the foundation was completed. Final funds were disbursed upon receipt of both the architect's certification, and library board's approval – that the amount awarded in the grant matched the work completed.

A History Seattle's Public Library System

Seattle's first Library Association was organized on August 7, 1868. The next year, a small loan library opened in Yesler Hall on First and Cherry, with a collection of approximately one hundred

books. Little is known about that particular library, as it folded after a few years, with the collection being sold to the Territorial University.

During the ensuing decade, the city spread northward along Elliot Bay during its early development. Steep grades made the slopes above Front Street (First Avenue) unattractive to horse-drawn and pedestrian commerce, but provided a location for many residences, away from the noise and odor of the harbor. By the 1880s, Seattle's population surged from less than 7,000 to nearly 64,000.

In 1888, the Ladies Library Association was organized at the home of Mrs. Bailey Gatzert, in a renewed effort to establish a free public library in the city. Assisted with seed money from Leigh S. J. Hunt (owner and editor of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*) and businessperson Henry Yesler, the library was adopted as a branch of the Seattle City Government in October 1890. From 1891 to 1894, the library was housed in the Occidental Block in Pioneer Square. It then moved northeastward to the Collins Block for two years, followed by another two-year stay in the Rialto Building. In 1898, the collection was moved to the elegant, forty-room Yesler mansion, which provided ample room, light, and convenience for its patrons.
Early downtown re-grades and those on Denny Knoll and the steeper Denny Hill, north of Pine Street, were followed by the introduction of streetcars, and commercial development along First and Second Avenues. The national depression in 1893 slowed local economic growth, and the city did not fully recover until the onset of the Klondike Gold Rush in 1897. With the transcontinental railroad connection, the city's population growth resumed, its population rising to 110,000 in 1900.

By 1900, the city's public library had over 25,000 volumes and close to 10,000 registered borrowers. Patrons were allowed direct access to shelves to browse and select books, a rarity for libraries on the West Coast. The many rooms of the Yesler mansion allowed the library staff to establish separate departments, such as a Children's Room.

On New Years Day, 1901, fire swept through the Yesler mansion, destroying almost the entire library collection. Three days later Andrew Carnegie provided the sought after assistance. Carnegie previously had declined to provide funding when representatives from Seattle approached him in 1899, due to his view that the city was a "hot air boom town." In this new time of need, he admired the city's pluck and donated $200,000 for a new building. Subsequent gifts also allowed the Library to establish its first permanent neighborhood branches.

In 1901, the City of Seattle purchased the Central Library's present site for $100,000. Construction began in 1905, and the central Carnegie Library opened in 1907, with a collection of 93,784 volumes and 29,118 borrowers. The new building allowed for additional departments and services, such as a periodical room, and a Fine Arts Division. That same year, the first embossed books for the blind were circulated and several deposit stations opened around town -- nineteen of them in fire stations.

Seattle maintained an extraordinary growth rate through annexation and immigration. The city's land area nearly tripled in 1907, with annexations of Ballard, West Seattle, and Southeast Seattle, and by 1910 its population reached 285,000. Public schools, which served as national models at the time, and cultural activities, such as theater and symphony, also made great advances prior to World War I.

Changes and turbulence within the city's social, economic, and political fabric characterized the city's history during the decades of 1900 – 1920, and the residential population during this time increased 190 percent. Efforts were underway to bring utilities, police and fire, as well as sewer and water services under municipal control, while industrial relations and the fight for civil liberties raised issues of life quality. Reform campaigns brought these issues to the fore of public discussion.

City residents living in the neighborhoods received their first municipal library services through stations, which were managed by a separate Branch Department. In 1908, the City received a Carnegie grant of $105,000 for construction of three branches including Greenlake, West Seattle, and the University Branch. A $70,000 Carnegie Grant, in 1911, funded two additional branches – Columbia and Queen Anne. In 1917, the Carnegie Corporation promised $35,000 for a branch library in Fremont. Halted by World War I, the commitment was honored and construction resumed following the war, with the library's completion in 1921. The Yesler Memorial Library, renamed the Douglass-Truth Library in 1975, is of the Carnegie era, but was not built with the help of a Carnegie grant.

By 1913, library patrons throughout Seattle were served from 495 distribution points: the Central Library, six drugstore deposit stations, seven branch libraries, six playgrounds, eight special deposit stations, twenty-four fire engine houses, and 443 separate schoolrooms.

In 1910 the Library's Schools Division was opened, under the supervision of the Children's Department. School children were served exclusively by SPL until 1927, when responsibility for library service shifted, and the Library System and Seattle Public Schools created the first model school library in Wallingford's Hamilton Intermediate School.

In 1930, the Library published a "Ten Year Program," which included studies of the population and collection growth; library revenues and endowment funds; school, municipal reference and county services; and expansion of the Central Library.

The 1920s saw a resurgence of old problems such as unemployment, and social and political unrest. The move for municipal ownership dominated city politics, while funding was reduced or eliminated for socially sensitive programs in schools. Circulation during the 1920s and early 1930s grew along with the city's literate population. By 1930, the SPL collection had grown to nearly 450,000 volumes, with over 100,000 borrowers. Nearly one-fourth of Seattle's residents had library cards. A large foreign section was in place, indicating the diversity of Seattle's growing population. Circulation reached a highpoint in 1932.

In the 1930s, with the Hoover years and the Great Depression, Seattle experienced minimal physical development and a continuation of unresolved social and political issues. The Depression and cutbacks in municipal funds impacted public library services. Library staff, salaries, and benefits were cut, and many services were curtailed for a full decade. Library hours were restricted, extension services eliminated, and in 1933, branch departments were abolished. All deposit stations were closed and book mobile services ceased, and only ten branches remained active. In 1935, workers organized the Seattle Public Library Staff Association, which led to their inclusion in the city's pension program and a return to pre-Depression salary levels. A forty-hour workweek was also instituted.

The onset of World War II eased class tensions, but it also precipitated dramatic social changes. The internment of thousands of Japanese Americans, along with an influx of large numbers of African Americans, the introduction of women to many traditionally male jobs, and the establishment of a technocratic middle class dependent on the aerospace and defense industries all contributed to a shifting of Seattle's demographics.

Seattle boomed during the war, and its library services expanded vastly to serve military personnel, as well as local residents. In 1940, the library inaugurated its film library, the Great Books Program, discussion groups and an art gallery in its downtown auditorium. Collections were expanded, including phonograph records. Free service was extended in 1941, to all soldiers and sailors in the Puget Sound region, and in 1942, to all war workers. Adult education, which was organized in 1928, to provide individual reading programs, shifted its focus in 1942, to group literacy classes. Between 1942 and 1948, twenty-five library stations were established. In 1943, the King County Library System was created, contracting with the Seattle Public Library for services.

Expansion of post war library services continued in the 1950s, in both Seattle and surrounding King County. In 1953, Seattle annexed nearly fifteen square miles, including the Lake City and Northgate areas, increasing its population by 54,000. Library services in these new areas continued to be provided by the King County Library System, which by 1956, included thirty-seven branches and two bookmobiles. Seattle's library expanded its services in the 1950s, to include chamber concerts, teas, book clubs, and annual classroom visits to 150 public schools.

A $5,000,000 bond was sought in 1950 for a new Central Library and five branches, but it was defeated at the polls. After a second $1,500,000 library bond failed in 1952, City Librarian John Richards successfully lobbied the Seattle City Council for funds from the Cumulative Reserve Fund for three new branch libraries and the purchase of a second mobile unit.
It was not until 1956, when voters approved bonds for construction of a new Central Library and six neighborhood branches, that significant funds would be spent on the maintenance and construction of Seattle's public libraries. By the end of 1960, registered patrons in the city numbered 260,425, nearly half the city's total resident population.

By the early 1990s, the Seattle Public Library system had grown to more than twenty-five branches. Its downtown hub was severely stressed in serving the needs of the system and its immediate patrons. The Library proposed a major bond issue in 1994, to build a new Central Library and add several regional centers. This was joined on the ballot with major bond issues for police precincts and the Seattle Public Schools. All of these bonds failed.

Following this defeat, the Library Board launched a new review of its capital needs with extensive citizen participation. This process confirmed the need for a new Central Library, and a system-wide program of improvements, "Libraries for All." This bond passed with a majority of nearly 70 percent, and provided $196.4 million to renovate libraries throughout the city. In addition, this bond was intended to provide support for the arts, cultural diversity, and neighborhood vitality through the renovation of Seattle's Public Library buildings.

A new Central Library, and three new libraries, to serve the Delridge, International District, and Northgate communities, will be added to the present system of twenty-two neighborhood libraries.

Plans call for renovation, and expansion of existing facilities and services, to be completed over an eight-year period from 1999 to 2007. These plans include system upgrades and expanded service and public program space in the Carnegie-era Libraries.

In addition to the public funding, the Seattle Public Library Foundation pledged to raise $40 million from the private sector. This private investment will complete that vision and ensure funding for high quality furnishings, works of art and new technology. In addition, it will build endowment funds for books, materials, and programs.

An Overview of the Fremont Neighborhood

The Fremont neighborhood is located at a distinct physical juncture of the city. It developed historically as a bridgehead community. Prior to its nineteenth settlement, the area was part of a forested slope that rose from the northeast edge of Lake Union up to Green Lake. A natural drainage ditch at this corner of Lake Union ran from Fremont to Salmon Bay.

Early settlers came to the area to establish homesteads beginning in the 1870s. Fremont's commercial core, was part of a homestead of William Strickler. By 1887 the Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad was bringing passengers twice daily from downtown Seattle to the outlying town of Ballard, and the villages of Latona, Edgewater, and Fremont.

In 1887, Edward Blewett and his agent, Luther Griffiths, purchased a townsite parcel for $55,000. The two men, originally from Fremont, Nebraska, named the town after their hometown. In 1888 they platted the Denny-Hoyt Addition, which comprised most of lower Fremont, into commercial and residential lots.

In 1891 the Seattle Electric Railway and Power Company trolley service was extended, traveling from downtown Seattle along the edge of Queen Anne Hill to Fremont. Later the Seattle Electric Railway also was routed through Fremont. The Fremont community grew quickly with housing for mill workers, local shops, churches, boarding houses, and hotels. By 1891, when Fremont was annexed into the City of Seattle, it had an estimated population of 5,000.
Fremont's commercial center emerged in the 1880s and 1890s with a meat market, hardware store, harness shop, hotel, bicycle repair shop, and real estate office located near the intersection of North Thirty-Fourth Street (then known as Ewing Street) and North Fremont Avenue.

In 1889, the B. F. Day Elementary School began operations with donated funds. After Fremont's annexation into the City of Seattle, in 1891, construction began on the present school building. Additions to the school were constructed in 1901 and 1916. In 1902 the first fire station north of Lake Union was built, and by 1904, a local bank was established.

Due to its location, Fremont became a strategic transportation hub. Its character as a major crossroads was strengthened in 1902 with construction of the first Fremont Bridge. The Northern Pacific Railroad also constructed a trestle near the same location in 1914.

Between 1914 and 1917 the Lake Union (Government) Ship Canal and Chittenden Locks were constructed to link Lake Washington and Lake Union with the Salmon Bay in Ballard. The freshwater lakes were envisioned for the city's primary shipyard facilities. Repair yards were established on Lake Union, serving ships and federal military fleets during and after World War I. The shipyards prospered until the early 1930s, adding to Lake Union's industrial character. The lake's commercial focus on shipbuilding shifted after 1932 when construction of the George Washington Memorial Bridge was completed, as the bridge limited entry of tall mast ships into Lake Union.

The Fremont Bridge opened in 1917, further identifying downtown Fremont and serving as its southern gateway. Cars, trolleys, buses, commercial transport on trucks and ships passed through the neighborhood with increased traffic congestion. In the 1920s the Fremont Library, Odd Fellows Hall, and Baptist Church were built.

Fremont developed an early reputation as a diverse blue-collar neighborhood with an upstanding reputation. Until speakeasies were created during Prohibition, the neighborhood was dry, due in part to an early prohibition on saloons within a two-mile radius of the University of Washington. Fremont suffered during the Depression, particularly with bankruptcy and closure of the Bryant Mill in 1929.

In the late 1930s, the neighborhood lost its only bank, and in 1944, the post office was relocated. The opening of the Aurora Bridge and Interstate Highway 99, high above the neighborhood, routed people away from Fremont. The neighborhood's commercial center lost some of its vitality as a result. Fremont gradually became the home of low-income and poorer families, unemployed workers, and retired people. Many neighborhood buildings were characterized as "blighted" by the 1950s.

The community's resurgence began in the late 1960s and 1970s. Bohemians, students, artists, and craftspeople moved in and opened studios, small stores, and workshops. The Fremont Fair was first created in 1972 as a fundraiser for the food bank operated by two neighborhood churches, Fremont Baptist and St. Paul's Lutheran. It was followed later by the community's annual Solstice Celebration. The Fremont Public Association (FPA), a social service organization, was established in 1974. Other neighborhood groups include the Fremont Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1982, the Fremont Revitalization Project, and the Fremont Arts Council.

Few new buildings were built in Fremont between the 1930s and the early 1980s. Development followed increased economic interest in the inner city in the late 1980s and 1990s. Presently the community remains physically diverse, and appealing to pedestrians. There are newer, large development projects, which contain service businesses such as Adobe, grocery stores and destination retailers. Crafts studios, cafes, restaurants, and specialty shops continue to be established, creating a vital new neighborhood center.

Elements of public art characterize the distinct heritage of the Fremont neighborhood, and these have become recognized as *de facto* landmarks – "Waiting for the Inter Urban" and the Aurora Bridge "Troll." Other contemporary pieces of privately owned and appropriated art – the large bronze sculpture of Lenin and the Rocket – express the community's unique artistic heritage.

History of the Fremont Library

The Fremont Library has come to represent a stable influence in its community, despite considerations of closure, while its neighborhood has undergone significant changes to its fabric in the last century.

Early interest in reading prompted the accumulation of approximately 1,000 books in a temporary location over a local drugstore in downtown Fremont. By 1903, this collection became the Seattle Public Library System's first neighborhood library. In 1912 the collection was moved across the street to a site that afforded a larger room and street level access.

Community demand for a larger permanent library led to a Carnegie grant application, and in August 1917, a $35,000 grant was awarded, pending acquisition of a site. In addition, a pledge was required by the Carnegie Corporation from Seattle's mayor to assure the building would be completed according to estimated costs. (The city applied for a $50,000 - $70,000 grant based on the population increase during those three years and increased building costs, but the Carnegie Foundation denied this request.)

The local Business Men's Club raised the funds necessary to purchase a site and started a drive for five dollar donations. Community activities, such as dances and card parties, helped to raise a total of $7,000 in funds for purchase of a site. The site, however, was not purchased until August of 1920, three years after the initial Carnegie award.

Several sites were considered. In November 1919 the City Architect, Daniel R. Huntington, was called in for consultation over the grading problems associated with the steep grade of the potential site. He felt the grade difficulties could be resolved and recommended purchase of the present Library site at North Thirty-Fifth Street.

Huntington was asked to design the building. Construction began in March of 1921 after review and changes to his drawings, as suggested by the Carnegie Corporation. The building was completed on August 19, 1921, at a total cost of $36,939. A formal opening ceremony, attended by thousands of local residents, was held on July 27, 1921. Printed flyers preceded the celebration. The Library, in addition to regular services, provided the neighborhood with an auditorium, a juvenile collection, and services by a Children's Librarian.

During the Library's early years many single family residences moved out of the area, moving largely to the north. This seriously depleted the library's circulation base. Construction of commercial buildings and transient boarding houses increased in the area. Circulation increased in the 1930s, with the Depression and construction of the George Washington Memorial (Aurora) Bridge. The Library's collection at this time contained approximately 14,000 volumes. After construction of the bridge was completed, circulation dropped, as traffic continued over the bridge, above Fremont, to the Greenwood and Green Lake Districts.
The auditorium was actively used by classes during the 1930s, by such as the weekly Beauty Culture class, and weekly baby clinic (1931 – 1940s, held under supervision of the City Health Department). In 1938, the auditorium was used as a recreation center for youth ages twelve to fifteen three evenings a week, under supervision of the Lincoln Co-ordinating Council. A renovation of the

surrounding commercial area in 1945 did little to help circulation, as the 1950s and 1960s brought further economic decline to Fremont. Not until the housing boom in the late 1960s did library circulation increase. In the meanwhile, its basement served for temporary storage for the Library for the Blind as well as for building facility service and public meeting space.

By 2001, Fremont Library services had grown to offer a range of services, including Internet access, preschool story time and parenting classes in addition to regular services, and public meetings.

The service area for the Fremont Library encompasses the residential and commercial area North of the library, between the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Woodland Park, until about Eighth Avenue Northwest. The edges of this service area are shared with Ballard Library to the Northwest, and the Wallingford/Wilmot Library to the Northeast. Woodland Park breaks up the area north of the Fremont Library, and the Greenwood and Green Lake Libraries provide service to more northern neighborhood.

There are seven public and private elementary and high schools within the Fremont Library general and shared service areas, but only three are in close proximity. Thus there are more adult patrons served by this library than by the other Carnegie branches. The unique character of the Fremont Library stems largely from the large reading room, a single space without partitions, the exposed interior trusses and stained wood ceiling finish, and the distinctive irregular Mission Revival facades. In size, scale and visual appeal, the Fremont Library blends well with the quality of the surrounding neighborhood.

The Architect, Daniel R. Huntington

Daniel Huntington's buildings are generally characterized by their straightforward plan solutions and elegantly details, based on pragmatism that he brought to design.

Born in Newark, New Jersey on December 24, 1871, Huntington spent his early life in New York City. He attended Columbia Grammar School, a prep school for Columbia College. By 1889, he was an apprentice with the architectural firm Balcom & Rice in Denver. In 1894, he returned to New York, where he worked in the well-known office of W. Wheeler Smith until 1900, when he returned to Denver. From 1900 to around 1904, Huntington was partner in the Denver firm, Fisher & Huntington, designing mostly apartments and residences.

In 1904 or 1905, Huntington arrived in Seattle. By 1907, he had entered a short-lived partnership with James Schack, but this partnership split up the following year. Huntington worked independently until Carl F. Gould joined him as a draftsman in 1909. The firm of Huntington & Gould focused mainly on mixed-use and residential buildings. Huntington also continued his independent practice. In 1912, he joined Arthur L. Loveless in a new partnership, designing mainly residences and apartments. Huntington's late design for the Tudor styled original Firland Sanitarium (currently the Christa Ministries Campus in the Richmond highlands) may have resulted from influence by Loveless during this period.

On September 19, 1912, Huntington was appointed as City Architect, a position he would retain until 1921. His designs during this period included structures for the Seattle Lighting Department, such as the landmark Lake Union Steam Plant (1909 and 1911 – 1921), the concrete piers at University Bridge (for which he was awarded an AIA Honor Award in 1927), and ten municipal fire stations, including the Shingle Style Wallingford Police and Fire Station/45 Street Clinic. The Mission Revival Style Fremont Library (1920 – 1921) was likely one of his last projects as City Architect, and is considered one of his best designs. According to architectural historian, Carolyn Tobin, Huntington referred to the library's design as "Italian Farmhouse."

During the early 1920s, after leaving his city position, Huntington worked on several commercial structures, taught at the University of Washington (1923 – 1924), and completed construction of his own residence (1924). His projects in the 1920s included the Daughters of the American Revolution bridling on Capital Hill (1925), a reduced replica of George Washington's Mount Vernon.

In the late 1920s, Huntington entered a partnership with Arch Torbitt. Their work together included the Piedmont Apartments in Seattle, and the Seventh Street Theater in Hoquiam (both in 1927 – 1928). Huntington left active practice during the Depression. From September 1944 until August 1946, he worked as a staff architect for the University of Washington. In 1947, he retired and moved to Oregon City, before returning to the Seattle area in 1955. Daniel Huntington died at the age of 91, on May 13, 1962.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Urban Context

The built environment of the Fremont District has experienced constant change over the years. Prior to the 1920s, this area contained single-family residences, commercial and service oriented buildings, and many industrial buildings along the Lake Washington Ship Canal and Lake Union. In 1921 - 1922, when the Fremont Library was built, the area surrounding it contained numerous unbuilt lots. The Library was located at the transition point between the commercial area along Fremont Avenue North and the outlying residences.

By the late 1970s, the Fremont District contained a variety of components, including a central business area, remnants of waterfront industries, and residential areas in the areas north of the Ship Canal. Remnants of the historic era remain in the area with wood frame, two and three-story commercial structures.

Fremont has a dense, unique and pedestrian friendly downtown with many small business, restaurants, and cafes around the intersection of North Thirty-Fifth Street and Fremont Avenue North. Waterfront light industries and commercial uses occur along the ship canal. Construction of mixed-up buildings has increased in the last decade. The surrounding area is residential, made up by single and multi-family residences. The neighborhood is characterized as a bridgehead community with its identity tied to the landmark Fremont Bridge, three blocks southwest of the library, and the Aurora Bridge, which arches above it one block to the east.

The Carnegie Building Type

The Carnegie library plan of the early twentieth century was typically rectangular and featured bi-axial symmetry and open floor plan. Although variations emerged, its functions were proscribed, and the building was divided into specific spaces – entry stairs, vestibule, central area and circulation desk, open shelf area, reading rooms, work and staff rooms, and restrooms. Buildings typically featured separate children's area, story hour room or alcove. A lecture or meeting room (auditorium) located at or partially below grade, was another standard addition to the library program. Spatial volumes were tall, with perimeter windows located 6' above floors to accommodate book shelving.

The front of the Fremont Library appears to defy the conventions of symmetry with its Mission Revival styled facade, and frontal placement of service spaces. The topography of the site also negated the typical Carnegie plan with raised steps and semi below grade basement. Instead, the Fremont Library has its main floor on grade and a daylight basement below.

The Library Site

The Fremont Library is located in Seattle's Fremont neighborhood at 731 North Thirty-Fifth Street. The site, a 16,200 square foot, rectangular lot, is in a mid-block location. The 135' wide and 122' deep site slopes steeply down (from the north property line to the south property line) roughly twenty-four feet. Consequently both the front and east side entries to the main floor, and the west side entry to the basement, are at grade, although they are to different levels.

The building is object-like in its setting. It is set back approximately 17' from the street, 46' from the back alley, and 29' and from neighboring properties on both sides. The main public entry and primary front facade are oriented north, onto North Thirty-Fifth Street. In a relatively unusual arrangement for a Carnegie building, both the service area and book drop are placed to the front of the public reading room, located off the northeast corner of the library

Along with building renovation, there were changes to the site made in 1987 – 1988. These included the exterior trash service space and exterior book drop, both enclosed in stucco clad walls, and the secondary entry to the public reading room. These are accessible from North Thirty-Fifth Street by a 16' wide paved driveway, which provides off-street parking for two vehicles.

Original drawings of the Library show very few plantings at the side and main entry. There was lawn on all sides of the building. The plot in front of the library sloped upward gradually to meet the sidewalk. The lot was terraced to accommodate the building, and a separate sidewalk and stairs descended on the west side to the first floor auditorium entry.
Presently the library is landscaped with lawns on all four sides, with small shrubs and planting beds along the front and west of the entry. A row of tall poplar trees remain along the west property line. Large laurel bushes are planted along edge of the east property line, on the adjacent property. These have recently been pruned by SPL to provide greater visibility of the under-story area. Fine scaled deciduous trees are planted in the bed along the street, and low hedges line the walkway to the primary entry.

The Mission Revival Style

The architectural style of the Fremont Library is Mission Revival. This style is somewhat unusual in Seattle, and is more often associated with sunny climates. The Mediterranean and Mission Revival styles flourished in Florida and California during the years 1915 to 1945. Building on an existing popular favor for regional traditions, ideas from similar European regions were added to local traditions, providing material affluence and a connection to venerated traditions. In these areas the use of the revival style avoided extensive adaptation of local traditions and provided "(guaranteed) the respectability of their precedents."

In the western United States the most directly related predecessor of the Mediterranean style was the Mission style. During California's 1890s-population boom, an immediate image and identity was needed to market real estate. Local eighteenth and nineteenth century Spanish Colonial Missions supplied the imagery and tradition necessary, exerting strong stylistic influences. Consequently Hispanic elements such as ogee gable ends, bell towers, and shallow tiled roofs were incorporated into the style. As elements were drawn from other geographically similar areas such as Mexico, Italy, Greece, and North Africa the Mission style developed into what is considered the Mediterranean style.

Characteristics of the Mission style, especially in the San Francisco Bay area, are described by architectural historians Sally B. and John M. Woodbridge as including stuccoed walls and deeply recessed openings – sometimes fronted by arcaded porches, and exposed often carved, rafter and beam-ends. Balconies, terraces, or patios provide a close indoor-outdoor relation. Decoration may only be ornamental ironwork and glazed tiles, or elaborate foliate and geometric motifs drawn from Plateresque or Churrigueresque styles in friezes and panels cast in terra cotta or plaster. Iron or turned-wood window grills are often present. Roofs are commonly low pitched with red tiles.

Features of the Mission Revival style at the Fremont Library include the use of gable and hip roof forms, clay roof tiles and stucco cladding, ornamental metal, and arched openings. Delicately detailed, polychrome terra cotta is used in the decorative, arched head window surrounds on the east and west ends.

With exception of some single family residences and low-scale court like multi-plex dwellings, there are few other examples of the Mission style in Seattle. Other buildings that utilize this revival style include the small Lake Union Power Auxiliary Plant (1912), Cornish School of Art (1921) and the L'Amourita Cooperative Apartments in the Eastlake neighborhood (1908).

The Building

Structure and Exterior Features

A review of the original design drawings, dating from October 1920, provides a contemporary view of the building. (Note: to coordinate between original and more recent drawings the floors are labeled as the first floor – titled the basement in original plans and located below the North Thirty-

Fifth Street grade; and the second floor titled the main floor in original plans – located at grade with North Thirty-Fifth Street).

The building's structure combined a number of systems and materials. Foundation, footings, and walls below grade were all concrete. Those above grade consisted of concrete frames with hollow clay tile infill, covered with cement stucco, and trimmed with a lower soldier course of red bricks. Floor framing included steel I-beams, which were carried on piers of both concrete and brick construction. In addition, there was a continuous concrete grade beam around the perimeter, and at the transition between the first floor and the second floor.

Structural support for the first floor was divided into two distinct areas, with concrete walls in the northeast, and a concrete frame and infill for the southern portion above grade. Joists and flooring for the second floor were wood. Eight concrete buttresses, which were clearly visible from the exterior, reinforced the two story south wall. These buttresses carried the ends of the heavy timber trusses used in the roof framing. In the northern portion of the second floor exterior walls, the use of buttressing, as both a structural and design element, was continued.

The building featured a gable roof over the principal volume and the entryway. Roofs over the stairwell and office areas were hipped gables, with a gable dormer over the office area. The roofing material was red Spanish clay tile. The roof framing over the reading rooms was very distinctive, especially for a public library and consisted of exposed, decorative fir trusses. Truss members ranged in size with 8x10s and 8x12s. A steel tension member ran from the apex of the truss, straight down, to the fir bolster; it remains visible from below. Attached to the steel rod on the interior, was an ornamental cast iron finial, which drew the bolster tight against the adjoining wood members.

Bolts, hidden by wood plugs, secured the trusses to ship knee brackets on the interior. The ship knees rested on cast stone brackets, which were bolted back into the wall. The roof framing, between both the trusses, and on the remainder of the walls, was attached by wood plate, bolted to the outer wall. All other roof framing was also wood. The overall expression is that of a well-crafted Arts and Crafts influenced Mission Revival interior.

Ornamental false rafter tails were used along the eaves to express the framing on the interior. Original hanging gutters were wood, with galvanized metal leader heads and downspouts. There was a brick chimney, adjacent the office space. A red tile, at each side on the top, was set in the stucco covering. In addition, the chimney was capped with brick and terra cotta.

The structure for the stairs, porch, and vestibule was made of reinforced concrete. Intricate detailing and materials characterized the entry. The original design featured stairs finished with brick, laid on edge. The entry porch floor and base were finished with 8" square red quarry tiles, and the vestibule was finished with a terrazzo floor. Marble thresholds were placed at the entry and between the vestibule and the reading room. In addition, wrought iron grillwork was placed over the entry doors and side openings. Other features included a cast iron mail slot and decorative cast iron exterior lamps.

Decorative elements on the exterior included ornamental terra cotta trim and panels around the windows at either end of the reading room. Directly above these windows was a patterned round terra cotta panel.

Windows feature wood sash and trim, brick sills and concrete lintels. Those placed in public rooms and the south side are composed in groups. Windows at the first floor were placed along the north wall of the auditorium, in the men's toilet, and in the boiler room. These were set directly on the concrete wall. The light well for these windows had a brick floor, with concrete walls, and a metal grills covering. Bricks were also used for all the remaining windowsills on the first floor.

All of the windows had vertical proportions and divided lites. Those in the lower floor auditorium were approximately 5' by 2'-6" with a pattern of nine lites each. Those into the boiler room and men's toilet were smaller, roughly 3'-6" tall by 2' wide, with a 2 over 2 glazing pattern. Windows along the lower floor south elevation opened into an unexcavated crawl space, and the original story hour room and auditorium. Those into the crawlspace and auditorium were approximately 5' by 2.5' with nine lites each, and those into the story hour room were 1'-6" taller than the auditorium windows, with twelve lites each. Two narrow windows, each with two lites, were placed to either side of the auditorium entry.
Windows into the second floor provided ample natural lighting to the interior reading room. Four located along the north wall of the reading room were the same type, size, and the trim as those below on the north wall of the auditorium. Another of this same type opened into the stairwell.

Three semi-circle arched windows, each approximately 2'-10" by 7' and framed by richly decorated, polychrome cream and blue colored, terra cotta surrounds, were placed symmetrically on both the east and west end walls. The surrounds included lower panels and narrow engaged columns between the windows.

Smaller windows, with 2 over 2 glazing pattern, were provided into the women's room, the staff bathroom and kitchen area. The south wall featured large rectangular windows with nine lites each opening into the reading room, composed in three groups of four individual windows, each group placed within exterior buttresses.

The Original Interior

The Fremont Library plan was partitioned according to function, with specific rooms on the second floor for staff activities in the office, kitchen, storage area, coat closet, and staff bathroom. A janitor's room was provided for maintenance services. The reading room, vestibule, and stair hall provided space for public library functions.

Interior arrangement of public space on the second floor focused on the large, 37'-4" by 76'-8" rectangular reading room. Reading room arrangements within this area were symmetrical, and divided by the centrally located circulation desk. This allowed use of either side of the reading room for separate functions, which were easily monitored from the circulation desk. Furniture such as newspaper racks, children's book racks, benches and tables were arranged within these spaces, and 6' tall built-in bookshelves lined the edge of the reading room, just below the windows.

Finishes on the second floor were decorative yet simple. The flooring and ceiling between the exposed heavy timber trusses were made of stained wood, and plastered walls. Wood baseboard and trim were used around the doors and windows and the stair hall featured a wood cornice.

An interior stairway down between the first floor and second floors was located off the reading room, next to the main entry. The first floor landing was a stair hall, opening onto a corridor, which led to the story hour room, the auditorium, and the service hall. There were two intermediate landings. Stairway components included a wide variety of materials. Treads, newel, and flooring on the two intermediate landings were oak, and risers were fir. In addition, the balusters and railing were wrought iron, while the railing had an oak cap.

The L-shaped first floor was devoted primarily to public use, and included a story hour room and an auditorium, which contained a raised, wood platform. Service areas and the men's bathroom were grouped together in a compact area. Arrangement of the public space provided both internal and external entries to the story hour room and auditorium.

First floor finishes were simple and utilitarian. The floor was a concrete, and walls, piers, and ceilings were plastered. The walls were finished with an approximately six-inch concrete base. Decorative plaster cornices were used in the auditorium. The wall between the story hour room and the corridor was designed for use as a bookcase. Long narrow, rectangular windows, of "Venetian maze" or patterned glass, were used above the bookcase.

Doors between the interior spaces were stained wood, generally with one full-length wood panel. Above the panel on the janitor's door was a vent with wood louvers.

Changes to the Original Building and Current Conditions

According to building permit records from DCLU, upgrading and changes over time included the following:

1965	Alterations to heating system
1973	Extended circuits, replaced receptacles, add receptacles – City Electric and Fixture Co.
1974	Replace defective service switch, pickup existing circuits – City Electric and Fixture Co.
1984	Install lighting, and additional work – Tabor Electric
1987	Installation of security alarm system – Guardian Security Systems, Renovation of building per plans, Interior remodel, and new lights – Circle Electric Inc.
1987	Renovation
1999	Non-structural foundation repair

Changes to the site included a master landscape plan prepared in June of 1984, which proposed two options intended to make the site more manageable and usable. They included re-grading and planting trees along the west perimeter, as well as extensive shrubbery near the base of the building on all sides. However, the current landscape does not reflect a full implementation of the 1984 proposed changes. During the 1984 building renovation, the grade of the south slope was eased to

provide a pathway to the perimeter of the property. In 1987 the service area off the northeast corner of the Library was renovated, new free standing book drops were built, and the existing drive was removed and redone.

Changes to public rooms and in public access to the Fremont Library occurred during 1945, 1984, and the 1987 - 1988 renovations. Existing public entries experienced material renovations, but maintained their original configuration. A new public entry was provided to the basement in 1984, by extending to the floor an existing window opening on the south wall of the auditorium. A new concrete slab, with metal railing was continued from the auditorium stoop, around the west corner of the building to this new door. In 1987 a new service door, landing, and railing were added on the east wall of the second floor, into the reading room.

Material renovations in 1984 included adding a concrete riser to the existing auditorium stoop, and one riser below the entry to provide a flush transition the only ADA accessible entry for the first floor. In 1987 the main entry stairs and porch area were renovated. New handrails were installed, as well as a new concrete retaining wall just west of the vestibule. Interior cabinets and shelving and the circulation desk were renovated at this time. The exterior entry doors received new bronze kick plates, and both lanterns flanking the main entry were repaired.

Throughout these changes, the public room arrangements and connections have remained consistent with their original open plan configuration, characteristic of the Carnegie library building type. In 1945, the smaller of the two basements, likely the story hour room, was remodeled to accommodate storage material for the Library for the Blind. The shelves consisted of painting and the construction of floor-to-ceiling boxed shelving built by WPA carpenters. (This shelving was retained after the Library for the Blind left.) In 1987, a drop ceiling was hung in the auditorium to cover new ductwork.

The arrangement of features within the public space at the upper floor reflects ongoing adjustments to new service needs. The configuration and general location of the central circulation desk has remained the same. The children's area was moved into the northwest corner of the reading room. New painted wood, trellis-like casework, with integral light fixtures, was provided on both sides of the reading room to contain computer carrels, periodicals, children's collections, media, and bulletin boards, and to separate the children's and adult areas on the west side. New perimeter shelving was provided in 1987 to match the original shelving where old radiators had been taken out.

The original circulation desk was retained in 1987 but with some changes to its interior elements. Additional desk furniture was provided for library staff. Arts and Crafts styled furniture was selected for the public with oak Morris-styled chairs, reading tables and chairs, and stem-mounted table lamps. Paintings that depict the surrounding Fremont neighborhood were reinstalled on the west wall of the reading room, to the sides of the large arched head windows.

Finishes on the first floor remained largely unchanged from its original simple and utilitarian character. Wool carpet was provided at the upper floor reading room and ceramic tile in the accessible restrooms.

New roof framing, sheathing, and insulation were installed in 1987 for increased seismic resistance. Original clay roof tiles were removed, salvaged and re-used. At the same time, a new copper flat seam roof was installed over the stairway, and the existing wood gutter was replaced with a custom shaped galvanized metal gutter. The upper portion of the chimney was rebuilt and a new metal cap installed.

Windows during the 1984 renovation were repaired or replaced with insulated glass and new sash throughout the building. In 1987, new security grilles were installed over the windows on the south wall of the first floor.

The features of the Landmark to be preserved, include:

The site, the exterior of the building, and the interior of the main floor of the building excluding the movable furniture.

Issued: January 2, 2002

Karen Gordon
City Historic Preservation Officer

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