

Stapleton Library

Staten Island, NY



Andrew Berman Architect
PLLC

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NY, NY 10007

212 226 5998
andrewbermanarchitect.com

The main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all.”

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name _____ Location **Stapleton, Staten Island** City _____ State _____

Owner _____

Project Use(s) _____

Project Size _____ Total Development Cost _____

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) _____

Date Initiated _____ Percent Completed by December 1, 2014 _____

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) _____ Project Website (if appropriate) _____

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates _____

Application submitted by:

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone () _____ Fax () _____

E-mail _____ Website (if appropriate) _____

Perspective Sheets:

Organization _____ Name _____ E-mail _____

Public Agencies _____

Architect/Designer _____

Developer _____

Professional Consultant _____

Community Group _____

Other _____

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Direct Mailing | Direct Email | Previous Selection Committee member | Other (please specify) |
| Online Notice | Previous RBA entrant | Professional Organization | _____ |
| | Social Media | Bruner/Loeb Forum | |

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Signature _____ Date _____

Stapleton Library

Project Dates

2005 Andrew Berman Architect is awarded the Stapleton design commission by the DDC

2006 Schematic Design

2008 Design Development

2009 Ground Breaking

2010 Construction Begins

2013 Opening Day

Stapleton Library is awarded the AIA NY City Design Merit Award

Stapleton Library is awarded the AIA NY State Design Excellence Award

2014 Stapleton Library is awarded the Lucy G. Moses Excellence in Historic Preservation Award

Columbia Graduate School of Architecture students tour Stapleton Library

Stapleton is Archtober Building of the Day

Stapleton Library celebrates its one-year anniversary since the renovation and expansion

The number of programs offered have tripled from 242 to 664 in its first year

Programs have reached more than 15,600 users in its first year from a previous 5,648

The number of patrons received by the library in its first year has nearly doubled to a record 128,767 patrons.

During its first year, the Stapleton Library has successfully partnered with several community organizations such as LiteracyINC, Staten Island MakerSpace, the Tappen Park Association, Stapleton/Concord/Clifton Committee, Van Duzer Civic Association, WorkForce1, 120 Precinct Community Council, Mormon Helping Hands, GrowNYC, and many more.

Please visit the NYPL Stapleton Branch website for an ongoing and evolving list of free programs available to the Stapleton community.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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This sheet, the Project Data sheet, and the representative photo will be sent to the Committee in advance as the *Project Overview*.

Project Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

1. Give a brief overview of the project. Approximately 500 words.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.) Approximately 500 words.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project? Approximately 500 words.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project? Approximately 500 words.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. Approximately 400 words.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. Approximately 400 words.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Andrew D. Berman FAIA	Title	Principal and Lead Designer
Organization	Andrew Berman Architect	Telephone	(212) 226-5998
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Signature ? 	Date	Dec 9, 2014
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1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc. Approximately 400 words.

In keeping with the NYPL's vision of itself as a series and system of public resources for the local communities of New York City, the Stapleton library was designed to be an open, inviting and accessible public space. The project brief required the library be a single level and handicapped accessible. The library would necessarily have to be both flexible and robust and the new building would have to fluidly connect to the existing building. An open plan, easily monitored by staff, providing strategic spatial separations between the children's areas, teen area and adult areas was desired.

Working with the sloping grade of the land, we chose to site the new building such that the street entrance could be accessed from grade without steps. Teen and adult areas are located adjacent to each other in the new building, separated by a transparent community room. The original Carnegie Library, now immediately accessed by the new entry, was restored true to its original design and functions as the children's reading room.

Glue laminated timber was used to create an efficient, warm and exposed structure for the new building. The new timbers speak to the original casework and shelving of the Carnegie Library. Use of the shop fabricated timber allowed for the structure to be fabricated under controlled conditions, ensuring precision and consistency in the material and workmanship. Erection time on-site was streamlined, enabling the structure to be erected and made weather-tight more quickly. The library is naturally lit by overhead skylights and through fritted glazed facades. A radiant heating system efficiently warms the polished concrete floors.

We worked closely with the New York Public Library's administration and staff to understand their vision of a successful contemporary library. We studied the existing Carnegie Library thoroughly to understand its scale and character, with the desire to revitalize the historic structure's potential and purpose. We sought to site the new library to create a clear public exterior space in front of the building, across the street from and with a strong visual physical connection to Tappen Park, the Victorian center of the original community.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design. Approximately 400 words.

The public library is a space for people of varying age, race, ethnicity, and economic position. The neighborhood of Stapleton is economically disadvantaged, with a withered local economy and predominantly low-income households. Crime is still endemic. In this context, providing a library that is understood to be public space that is open, safe, and comfortable for all is the primary social concern motivating this project. The provision of information, knowledge, books, and digital access is all of the utmost importance, but still secondary to the creation of a public space understood to be common ground for the entire community.

Toward this end, we designed a transparent building that discloses itself and occupants to the pedestrian while maintaining a warm interior that has the scale and enclosure to make its users feel comfortable and secure. The interior character is defined by its wood structure and the walls lined with books. It is a calm space animated by people and the natural light that enters through the glazed facades and skylights above.

Programmatically, the library is first a shared facility for the neighborhood. It is open public space ready to receive people of all ages and interests. It has appropriately furnished areas for children, teens, adults, and those seeking access to digital media. The library is still cherished and much used for its books, and other lending media. As such, we wrapped the entire library with bookcases, showcasing books, music, and films. Indeed, all vertical surfaces within the library that one can touch, aside from those that are glazed, are bookcases and book displays.

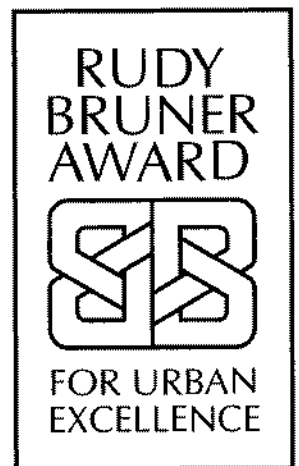
The library houses a community room at its center. This space is used by patrons as a quiet reading room when it isn't being used by classes and groups for meetings and events during the day. It is a simple space, outfitted and furnished to be flexible in use. It is transparent and situated within the center of the library so as to be visually accessible and suggestive of the wide variety of activities that can, and do occur within the public library.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project. Approximately 400 words.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context. Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Robert Gibbs	Title	Library Manager
Organization	New York Public Library (Stapleton Branch)	Telephone	(718) 727-0427
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Signature		Date	12/4/2014
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1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? Approximately 400 words.

The Stapleton Library has been serving the community for more than a century and continues to be a center of community life. The branch serves a diverse neighborhood and offers a wide-range of programs and services, such as circulating materials, technology classes, storytimes, and more. Over the years, the branch's role in the community has grown and we needed our building to grow with it. It was a truly exciting day for all last June, when our newly-renovated library reopened to the public. With a beautiful and highly-functional modern addition that more than doubled the branch's original size, this original "Carnegie Library" can serve more people than ever before.

This project was made possible with support from the City of New York - Mayor, City Council, Staten Island Borough President, and the Department of Design and Construction; the State of New York - NYS Senate and Assembly; the United States Congress; and Virginia James; as well as with the amazing support community residents.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Approximately 400 words.

The Library takes every precaution when renovating a local branch. When we undertake a renovation, such as the one at Stapleton, there are times when the branch is closed to the public and we realize that this can be an inconvenience to our users. In order to accommodate those who were impacted by the temporary closing of Stapleton, several branches in the area expanded their hours and patrons were able to request materials to be delivered to other branches as well.

However, as a home to many young children and teenagers in an area lacking resources and locations for afterschool enrichment, many young users suffered from the temporary loss of the location. While accommodations were made at neighboring library locations, many of these young users simply did not have the means to commute beyond the neighborhood. Additionally, many users either could not afford to or were not able to find time to travel to a neighboring location. To remedy this, the library increased off-site outreach efforts in Stapleton area schools, assisted living facilities, and various community events.

The Stapleton has always had very active community residents and these residents fought hard to support the library renovation. For a long time, these residents anxiously awaited the opportunity to create a space that better accommodated the needs of their ever-growing and ever-evolving neighborhood. The Library as a whole and at the Stapleton branch team in particular has appreciated the continued support of our users during this time and we were very excited to welcome them and new users when the branch reopened.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? Approximately 400 words.

The Stapleton Library Summer Grand Reopening kicked off with explosive turnout in visitation along with rocket-propelling attendance numbers at library programs and events, as the neighborhood raced to return to their newly reborn community hub. Freshly released from school for their Summer break, children and teenagers turned out in droves to explore their new library digs and enjoy all of the exciting activities planned and prepared by the Stapleton team. This trend followed the library all throughout the year as the Stapleton branch saw record-setting boosts in visits, which far surpassed frequencies experienced by the library prior to renovation.

The newly reopened site saw visitors from all throughout Staten Island; media coverage and word of mouth helped to generate a buzz which worked to draw in users from near and far. With brand new collections ordered specifically to anticipate an excited user base, Staten Islanders flocked to the library to take advantage of the literary collections that were greatly expanded by the new space. After living without a local library for over three years, the Stapleton Community conveyed their reliance on NYPL services by returning to the location in record-breaking numbers, to a library which was once among the lower attended Staten Island locations. During FY09 the Stapleton Library saw 96,694 visits followed by a 68,954 during FY10 prior to the closure of the building that early Spring. In the wake of the renovation, FY14' saw the frequency of visits climb to 128,767 in the full year since reopening.

With a record-shattering 664 program and outreach offerings throughout FY14', the library reached a total of 15,662 users; compared to the programming and outreach total of 242 reaching 5,648 users in FY09' and total 140 reaching 2,544 users in FY10' prior to closure that Spring. Throughout the year the Stapleton Library hosted and a total of 64 classes among our local neighborhood schools, where students and teachers were given an overview of collections, services and ongoing programs taking place at the library.

This past year Stapleton Library was successful in efforts to reintegrate the library into the surrounding community by building relationships with a number of different organizations. These organizations have included: LiteracyINC, Staten Island MakerSpace, the Tappen Park Association, Stapleton / Concord / Clifton Committee, Van Duzer Civic Association, WorkForce1, 120 Precinct Community Council, Mormon Helping Hands, GrowNYC, and many more.

The Stapleton branch has had an amazing and impactful return to the community. While much has been accomplished by an amazing team of library staff, thanks are also due to the many amazing local non-profit agencies who have collaborated with the library to provide amazing services for our users. Additionally, the community itself must be recognized for the part it has played in the library's successful reintegration — by welcoming the library back into both their neighborhood and their livelihoods.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? Approximately 400 words.

One of the things that might have benefited the development process for this project might have been greater communication as well as input, throughout the course of logistic decisionmaking, with the actual front-line library staff that would be responsible for day-to-day building operations. Additional feedback, especially towards the end of the project regarding things like furniture selection or shelving spaces might likely have been beneficial for better tailoring the branch to our specific and diverse community needs.

Overall however, the renovation and restoration of the library achieved its goal of providing a well-deserving community with a facility that is now better able to house the high quality lifelong learning services that they desire. Community interest, turnout, and involvement have come to far exceed projected expectations and the Stapleton Library, formerly one of the least visited library branches on Staten Island, is now one of the liveliest.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name	Faith Rose	Title	Executive Director
Organization	NYC Public Design Commission	Telephone	(917) 573-7248
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Signature	Faith Rose	<small>Digitally signed by Faith Rose DN: cn=Faith Rose, o=ny, email=frose@cityhall.nyc.gov, c=US Date: 2014.12.02 16:20:59 -0500</small>	Date	12/2/14
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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

The Department of Design and Construction is the primary management agency for New York City's capital construction. We manage a portfolio of approximately \$10 billion, which includes public buildings such as fire stations, museums, libraries, and shelters, as well as roadways, plazas, and parks.

The Department of Design and Construction has a premiere program called "The Design Excellence Program", through which it contracts with NYC's top architecture firms. Through an open, Quality Based Selection process, firms are awarded a three year contract which allows them to bid on city projects, including renovations, additions, and new buildings. We are very proud of this program, as it has brought us in contact with fantastic architects such as Andrew Berman, and yielded us highly successful public buildings, like the Stapleton Branch Library.

Andrew Berman has held a number of Design Excellence contracts with the Department of Design and Construction, and this project was awarded to him through the Design Excellence program. As the Senior Design Liaison at the Department of Design and Construction, I was responsible for running the Design Excellence program for the Commissioner of DDC from 2004-2014. As such I led the procurement and consultant selection process, reviewed and approved the scope document, attended all project meetings during the design phase, ensured stakeholder consensus throughout the process, and led the project through various city approval processes, including the Public Design Commission. I was intimately involved with the design, and worked closely with Andrew and the others on the team.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

Libraries are one of the few truly democratic spaces in the city. They are a place where everyone is welcome, and everyone belongs; the only documentation required for a library card is proof of address. Library operations works hard to provide needed programs and services to their users. Especially in underserved neighborhoods, libraries are vital.

Andrew's project did a number of transformative things for the community: it brought more visibility to the library, it re-organized the collection to make it far more accessible to the users, and it created distinct and welcoming spaces for various types of users, including a warm and inviting children's library, a communal computer area, and an accessible 'foyer' area for periodicals and lighter reading.

When Stapleton library was completed, we did a post-occupancy survey with patrons who were using the library. One of the people we interviewed was a 78 year old woman. She had not left her house for ten years because she was terrified of the neighborhood. She told us that since the new library addition had opened, she had visited it every day; the daylight flooding in, the simple layout, and the tranquility of the architecture all contributed to making her feel safe and welcome. I cannot think of a higher measure of success for a public building.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession? Approximately 400 words.

The City of New York has approximately 200 branch libraries, and the Department of Design and Construction renovates many of them. Projects like Stapleton Library are priceless in that they raise the bar for not just future libraries, but for all types of city buildings, and show that quality architecture is possible in an environment where urgency and budget austerity prevail.

Stapleton Branch Library is proof that good architecture is one of the best problem solving tools we have on hand. It is proof that supports the conversation about the importance of design in the city; it has convinced people who were previously focused only on schedule and budget that design has worth.

I have seen the effect this project has had on the New York Public Library as well – the space has proven to them that the proper spatial organization can bolster many of the new programs they would like to roll out.

In the past year Stapleton has been used to study how new programs might be conceived within library spaces; this past spring it was one of seven libraries chosen in an AIA NY study of how libraries might house Universal Pre-K classes. I understand that the New York Public Library is considering using it as one of their first locations for food and cooking education classes as well. It is truly a space that inspires new ideas about what a library can be.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

This project was successful in many ways that might not be obvious at first. One difficulty was that the scope called for an addition that was much larger than the original Carnegie library, but did not want it to overshadow the original building. Andrew achieved this by creating a quiet building that picked up on the roofline of the Carnegie. I especially appreciate the 'reveal' that Andrew created between the new building and the existing Carnegie. It graciously solves many issues that arise when a new addition abuts a historic building.

The site was also extremely difficult – the addition was located behind the original building, but the scope called for relocating the main entrance to the addition. Andrew managed to create a building and entrance plaza that gently pulled people in on an oblique angle that is very successful. The monumentality of the Carnegie's original entrance made this task even more difficult; even with the creation of a successful new entrance, Andrew needed to express that the existing entrance was no longer in use without indicating that the library was closed. The simple removal of the sidewalk in front of the original Carnegie library, as well as continuing the original fencing across the front of the property, simply and subtly indicated the entrance was now only ceremonial while leaving its original grandeur unmarred.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Joanna Pestka	Title	Vice President for Capital Planning and Construction
Organization	NYPL (The New York Public Library)	Telephone	(212) 930-0071
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Signature		Date	Dec 8 2014
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1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

As the client, the New York Public Library (NYPL) was an active participant and continuous presence through all aspects of project development and completion. This included the:

- Determination that the Branch and greater neighborhood was a needful recipient of increased Library resources that would better serve the Library's mission.
- Retention of the existing library site on centrally located Tappen Park as an invaluable connection to the community's past and current civic hub.
- Procurement of adjacent city lots next to the library in order to serve the efforts of the future expansion.
- Consolidation of the lots for a single use as part of the New York City Uniform Land use Review Program.
- Selection of an Architect that would best serve the needs of the library and community.
- Engagement with the Architect and the City managing agency through the duration of project design to better understand and inform the design team on the library's diverse space requirements, visual and physical adjacencies, comfort and conditioning needs, environmental and physical desires.
- Active participation with the community to convey our goals and seek community input. The collection and incorporation of stakeholder input was a critical component to build community trust, commitment and develop a successful project that served their needs. This included directed engagement with the public, community boards, community, city and state representatives, etc.
- Continuous presence through the course of construction to ensure that the library's requirements and detail driven needs were successfully implemented by the Architect and Construction team.
- Outreach to garner public, political and financial support for the project.

This allowed the NYPL to ensure that its utilitarian, programmatic needs were met, while serving our intent of creating an invigorated, fresh presence for the library in the community.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

The Stapleton Library plays an essential role in the neighborhood. Information needs are expanding. This Library serves to provide a full-featured, state-of-the-art community hub that provides diverse, high quality resources--preschool and children's programs, teen arts and crafts programs, books, music and videos, reading discussion groups, free internet access, and job information--to people of every background, and of every age, including those who might not otherwise be able to access them.

The renovation and expansion of the branch served to reinforce a commitment to the growth and vitality to the community, and serves as a keystone in the proposed waterfront revitalization development plan for the area.

The funding, design, development and construction of a key community facility can be lengthy and onerous. Short-term expedience is often sacrificed at the expense of goals and vision. Obtaining the support from the community to advance these goals at the expense of immediate, necessary needs required an intensive collection of public will.

The library was designed and built through a period of tremendous uncertainty. Through the downturn, active commitments were redoubled to stand for the civic and democratic intentions of the library in a less than sure-footed environment. This required expenditure of significant effort to communicate and get the financial and political support for strong ideas over convenient ones. The Library was the principal in this time-consuming and ultimately rewarding effort.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

Library patrons pay over 18 million physical visits to NYPL branches each year. The New York Public Library remains one of the few common community spaces in New York City. The Stapleton Branch provides a safe venue to materials that will inform, instruct and delight patrons. It provides access to computer technology in an environment where digital access is sparse.

Part of the Library's desire to demonstrate that contemporary design can be successfully used to create a warm, welcoming environment and serve the libraries current, pragmatic and technological needs--and at the same time appeal and delight the patrons that it serves. Stapleton Library in particular showed the ease with which a modern sensibility and strong preservation could reside within one structure.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

The Library successfully blended private and public revenue streams from multiple city and state agencies and venues. The project was designed and constructed during a period of economic uncertainty, and creativity was required to ensure that the full project was completely and clearly capially funded in light of existing funding exclusions and restrictions. Solutions included:

- The development of clear, architectural materials that compellingly communicated the goals and intent of the proposed facility as a means to support the goals of capital plans.
- The early incorporation of design input and objectives for qualifying grants to allow for a synthetic and integral development of the project design.
- Engagement of the community and political stakeholders at an early phase, with clear support materials (architectural models, renderings, direct interface with the design team) to specifically address community desires.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

Reaching the right solution with the right team and the right kind of support for this project took time. As a careful process in an uncertain time, small steps required greater intermediate support, and extended the process of delivering an institution of the best order to a community in wait.

With that in mind, the NYPL Stapleton Branch Library achieves its goal of providing a safe, civic facility, which serves its role as hub for the community with pride and beauty. The branch provides a warm and welcoming environment that physically speaks to the past and future of the neighborhood in one common facility. It serves a collective, local resource for the world of information, in an aspirational, inspirational and accessible space. It continues to serve as a beacon for the community.



view of the eastern facade



Stapleton Library

Branch of the New York Public Library

Location
Staten Island, NY

Completed
2013

Client
New York Public Library

Area
12,000 sq ft

Awards
AIA New York Design Excellence Award
AIA New York Merit Award
Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award

Architect:
Andrew Berman Architect

Landscape Architect:
Wallace, Roberts & Todd New York

Structural Engineer:
Gilsanz Murray Steficek LLP

M/E/P Engineer:
IP Group Engineers

Lighting Consultant:
Cline Bettridge Berstein Lighting Design

Geotechnical Consultant:
Langan Engineering & Environmental Services



site of new library



store adjacent to the library on corner of Wright and Canal Street



interior of original Carnegie library prior to restoration



northeast corner sidewalk of original Carnegie library

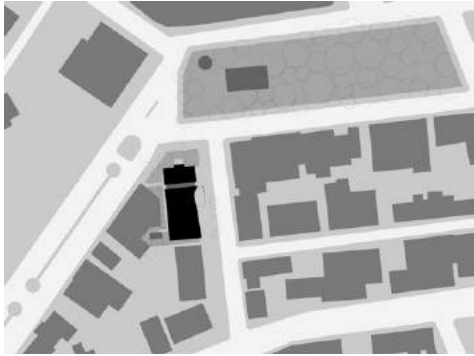


site of new library with the original Carnegie library



east facade of original Carnegie library

views of Stapleton neighborhood and original library in 2009, before the renovation and expansion



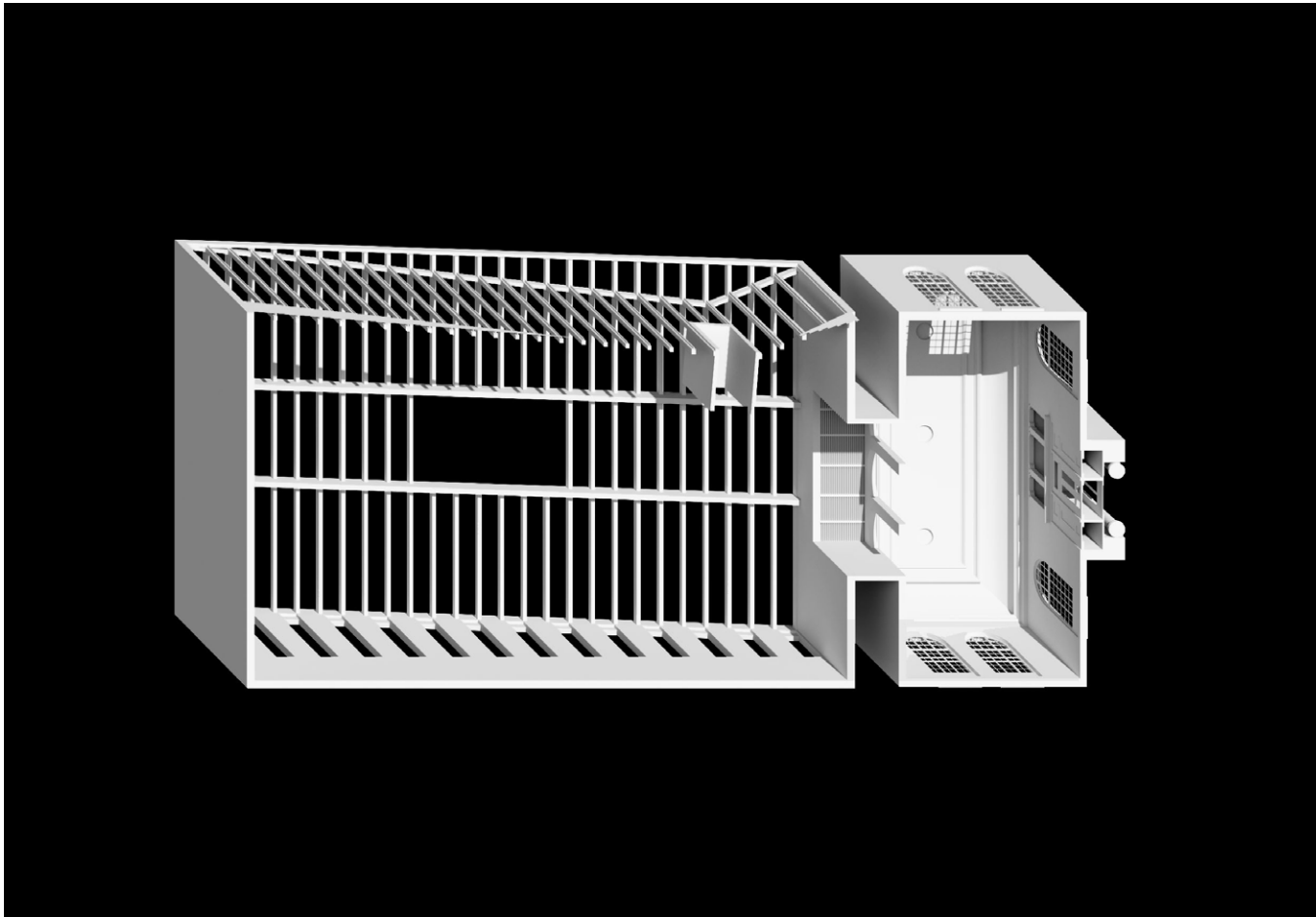
site plan



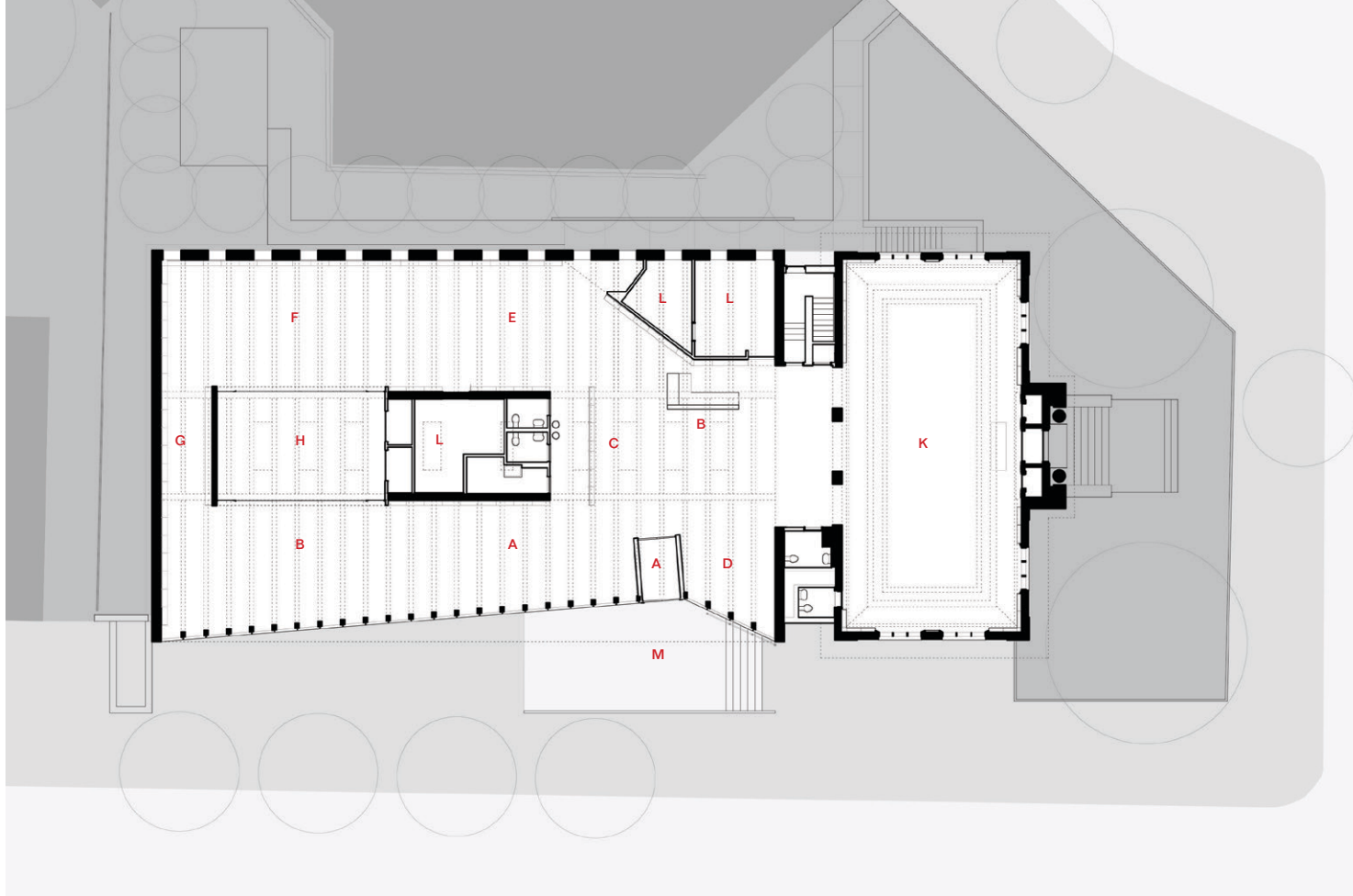
view of eastern facade from Tappen Park



view of entrance approaching from south on Wright Street



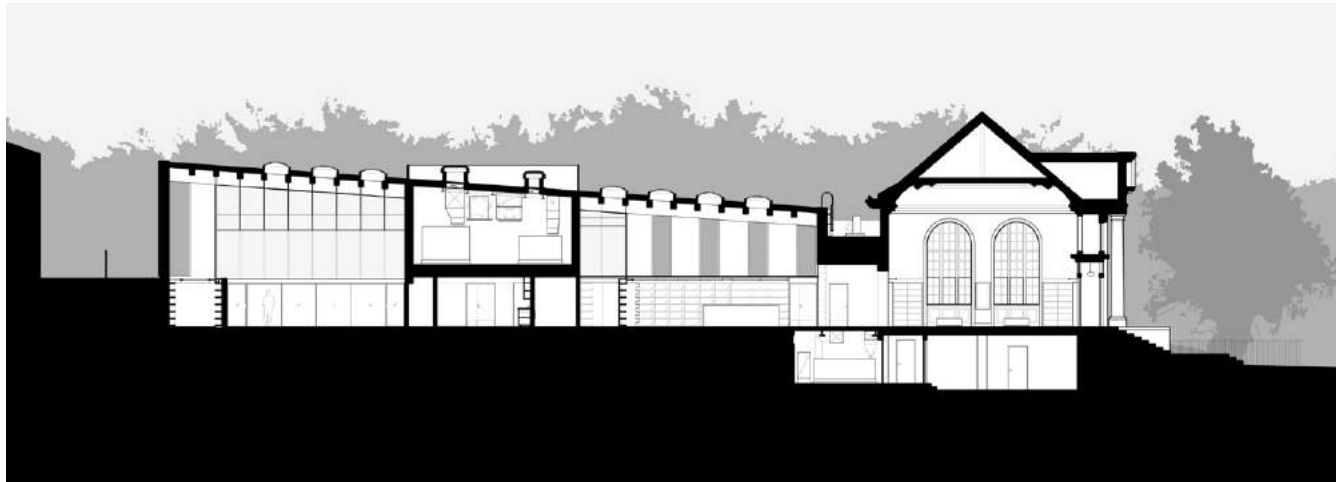
axonometric cutaway, from below



- A** entrance vestibule
- B** reference desk
- C** curated books
- D** periodical area
- E** teen computer area
- F** teen reading area
- G** south stacks
- H** community room
- I** adult reading area
- J** adult computer area
- K** children's reading room
- L** staff room
- M** public plaza



ground floor plan



longitudinal section



internal perspective from the entrance and reception area, before opening day



view from teen tech area looking south



view from teen reading area looking north



view from community room looking east



view through community room looking west



view from adult reading area looking northwest



view from community room looking south



view of community room, evening



view of teen computer area, 18 months after opening day



view of teen computer area



view of teen reading area



view of teen area



view of teen reading area, community room, and adult reading area



view of teen area



library patron studying



library patron praying



view of community room looking south



view of adult computer area and looking north



view of teen in lounge seating spaced between douglas fir columns



view of adult computer area looking south



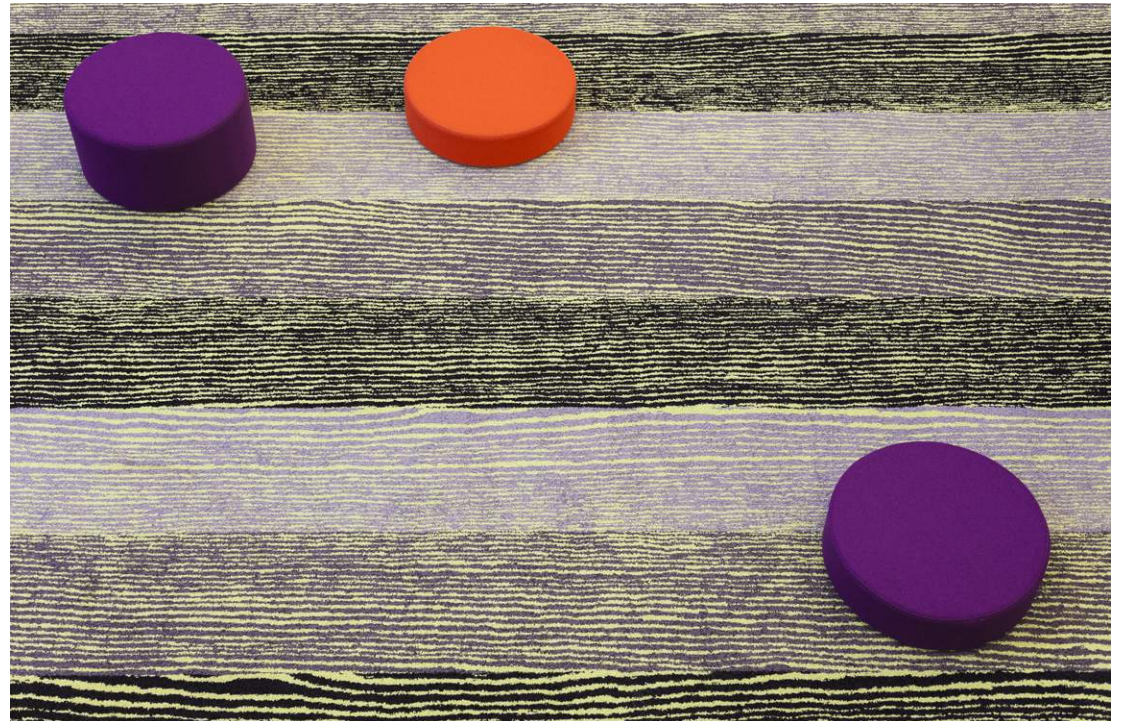
view of children's reading room looking south



view of children's reading room looking north



view of children's reading room southwest corner



custom rugs reflect the wood structure of the original building and addition.



view of children's reading room looking east



view of children's computer area



view of the eastern facade and interior at dusk



view of entrance from Wright Street looking southwest

Credits

photo: p. 2, 3 - 9 ©nkubota
p. 1, 10 - 25 courtesy of Andrew Berman Architect



view of library before renovation and expansion

7. Supplementary Materials

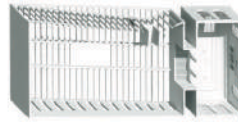
2	Casabella
6	Oculus
7	American Libraries
8	Wall Street Journal
11	NY Daily News
13	SI Live
15	One Mans Library Education
18	Historical Tappen Park Community Partnership
20	NYPL Stapleton ongoing list of events
21	A Year in Praise of Stapleton Library



78 ANDREW BERMAN

L'UTILITARISMO DEMOCRATICO DELLA FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY AMERICANA INTERPRETATO DA ANDREW BERMAN

MARCO BIAGI



La Carnegie, infatti, in questi edifici "moderni", come, per esempio, il 1911, rivestimento in ferro e acciaio, ha un'idea di stile che non è mai stata prima: New York, 1911

«La sala computer di fronte al museo...»

«The main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves: to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to rise the aid by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all.»

telegrafista e ascoltato magnate della siderurgia, detentore di uno dei patrimoni personali più ingenti che la storia del capitalismo moderno ricordi.

La figura di Andrew Carnegie ha incarnato in maniera paradigmatica il mito del angelo americano, è stato anzi, ricorrendo, tra i personaggi che quasi tutti hanno concorso a creare. Nato in Scozia nel 1835, figlio di un umile tessitore vittima della disoccupazione prodotta dall'avvento del telaio meccanizzato, Carnegie, a soli tredici anni, si trasferisce negli Stati Uniti, al seguito della famiglia, per cercare fortuna e diviene quel che si definisce un autentico self-made man. Con l'aiuto della sola tenacia, il duro lavoro e un innato fiuto per gli affari egli riesce, nel volgere di pochi anni, l'istituto scolastico al successo, passando da semplice

Un patrimonio che, nella seconda fase della sua vita, Carnegie s'impegna a ridistribuire in parte alla comunità avviando un'istituzione e civiltà attività filantropica che gestisce con metodi imprenditoriali fino allora estranei alla prodigalità volubile e suntuosa del vecchio paternalismo industriale. Nell'arco di 110 decenni, dal 1890 al 1917, il Carnegie Trust impartirà un impulso decisivo all'opera del tipo in chiave funzionalista e finanziando la scolarizzazione di 1.600 piccole biblioteche e finanziando la scolarizzazione di 1.600 piccole biblioteche e finanziando la scolarizzazione di 1.600 piccole biblioteche e finanziando la scolarizzazione di 1.600 piccole biblioteche...

Andrew Berman, Architect, P.L.L.C. **Restaurazione e ampliamento della Stapleton per la New York State Library, State Library, New York, Stati Uniti** Fotografia: Peter Schmitt

Stapleton ha studiato, progettato e realizzato il restauro e l'ampliamento della Stapleton per la New York State Library, State Library, New York, Stati Uniti. L'edificio è un esempio di architettura contemporanea che integra l'edificio storico con nuove volumetrie e materiali. L'edificio è un esempio di architettura contemporanea che integra l'edificio storico con nuove volumetrie e materiali. L'edificio è un esempio di architettura contemporanea che integra l'edificio storico con nuove volumetrie e materiali.

CASABELLA 845

77



of Library Buildings [sic] contiene sette schede standard e le linee guida per la progettazione di questi edifici espositivi, musei, generalmente a pianta rettangolare, di un solo piano fuori terra, consentiti in un'ampia sala ricreata da scaffali aperti fino a un'altezza di 1,80 metri e divisa in due aree di lettura dal banco di controllo centrale e peraltro, l'area destinata agli adulti, l'altra ai bambini. Nella povertà americana di quegli o nuclei pubblici che contraddistinguono il paesaggio urbano della provincia americana, le Carnegie libraries, con il loro carattere rigorosi, le pareti di mattoni gialli o rossi, i tetti a le finiture di pietra bianca, gli scolari di gesso hanno saputo affermare, insieme a poche altre architetture, quelli di solito la sedi del tribunale o del liceo cittadino, come presenza istituzionale riconoscibili e familiari, simboli adomesticati ma identitari delle comunità locali. È per tale motivo che oltre il 90% delle biblioteche originali

sovrannominate da Carnegie, sobbone in taluni casi convertito ad altri usi, ingrandito o modernizzato, sopravvive e assolve tutt'oggi i compiti per cui è stato pensato. In questo 2009 sono omologate anche le 31 delle 39 strutture originali che ancora formano l'armatura portante del sistema bibliotecario pubblico newyorchese, spesso ubicato in mezzo a quartieri popolari o piccoli borghesi.

Figli di loro vi è anche la biblioteca di Stapleton, il cui recente ampliamento è illustrato in questa pagina, storica sobborgo portuale e manifatturiero lungo la costa orientale di Staten Island, casale in cui passione dopo la costruzione del porto di Verrazzano nel 1904. Processo dall'ex giunta Bloomberg e affidato alla competenza dello studio di Andrew Berman. L'intervento si è incentrato sul restauro conservativo, dell'estensione e dell'adeguamento tecnico-funzionale della vecchia biblioteca di zona, un tipico esemplare di "Carnegie rectangular" costruito

78 ANDREW BERMAN



CASABELLA 845

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ANDREW BERNAR

30, 31, 32
 -Una sezione della
 zona di lettura per
 gli adulti sul lato
 ovest, della sezione
 orientale ospitano
 tavole, impianti e
 una workstation e
 della comunità con
 -Un'altra zona di
 lettura sul lato
 ovest di The West
 Side containing se-
 ctions, tables,
 plant systems, the
 workstation, and the
 community zone



33
 -Accoglienza, ingresso
 dell'area di legge-
 re e accoglienza
 -Informa reception
 -Zone Area The In-
 formation and Reception
 zone

CASABELLA SAS

85

English Translation :

The figure of Andrew Carnegie embodied the myth of the American Dream in a paradigmatic way. In fact, Carnegie was certainly one of the personalities that helped to create that myth. Born in Scotland in 1835, son of a humble weaver put out of work by the arrival of mechanical looms, at the age of 13, Carnegie moved with his family to the United States to seek his fortune and to become an authentic “self-made man.” With the help only of tenacity, hard work and inborn business sense, he climbed the ladder of success in just a few years, passing from telegraph operator to wealthy steel magnate, in possession of one of the largest personal fortunes known to modern capitalism.

During the second phase of his life Carnegie set out to redistribute that fortune, in part, to the community, initiating an intense systematic program of philanthropy managed with entrepreneurial methods previously unknown in the annals of largesse of industrial paternalism. In a span of three decades, from 1886 to 1917, the Carnegie Trust decisively launched the epic of the so-called “free public library” in America, revising the facility in a functional way and financing the construction of 1,689 small civic libraries in all the towns that requested one, on the sole conditions that their respective administrations freely donate the land and guarantee continuing service. A booklet published in 1911, ‘Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings’ contains seven standard schemes and guidelines for the design of these

simple, austere buildings, usually with a rectangular plan, a single level above ground, a large room lined with open shelving up to a height of 6 ft and divided into two reading areas by the central lending counter, one area for adults, the other for children. In the endemic dearth of public spaces and signs of the townscape in the American provinces, the Carnegie Libraries, with their recurring characteristics—walls of yellow or red brick, friezes and finishings in white stone, granite steps—emerged, together with a few other architectural works like courthouses or high schools, as recognizable, familiar institutional presences, domesticated but identifying symbols of local communities. This is why over 90% of the original libraries subsidized by Carnegie, though some have been converted for other uses, expanded or modernized, still survive today and still perform the job for which they were built. This 90% also includes 31 of the 39 original structures that still form the backbone of the public library system of New York, often located in working class or lower middle class neighborhoods.

One such facility is the library of Stapleton, whose recent expansion is shown on these pages. The town is a historic port and manufacturing suburb on the eastern coast of Staten Island, plunged into disuse following the construction of the Verrazzano Bridge in 1964. Promoted by the Bloomberg administration and assigned to the studio of Andrew Berman, the project called for the conservative restoration, extension and technical-functional upgrading of the old neighborhood library, a fine specimen of the ‘Carnegie rectangle’ built in 1907 by Carrere and Hastings next to the Victorian nucleus of Tappen Park. The new addition links to and interprets the spirit more than the forms of the existing build to which it is attached, maintaining linguistic and visual independence from it thanks to an enclosure in glass and galvanized sheet metal, and the groove of shadow of a recessed joint. Inside, an exposed framework of prefabricated beams and pillars in laminated wood has made it possible to cut down on the time and costs of implementation. The single full-height volume is divided into distinct zones for young people, adults and researchers by a central core that contains restrooms, mechanical units and a meeting room for the community. The shelves run along three sides of the perimeter, for free access, and light enters from large lateral windows and skylights on the roof. The roof is shaped by a single pitch to echo the slight slope of nearby Wright Street, in front of the new main entrance identified by an asymmetrical play of the curtain wall of the facade, converging at the precise point of coincidence between the internal level of the floor and the external level of the descent that offers access for the disabled. The contiguous historical building has been adapted as a Children’s library. The addition has an area of 7,000 sq ft, bringing the whole facility to a total of 12,000 sq ft. With these supplementary spaces that maintain the sober utilitarian composure of the original matrix, and with the up-to-date technologies that have been installed, the Stapleton Library can continue for many years to perform the mission assigned to it by its historic sponsor, that of a place in which disadvantaged youth, above all, can freely approach the precious treasures of knowledge and imagination through which youth may ascend.

Branching Out

There's much more to today's public libraries than books, and architects are adding to their shelf life

BY RICHARD STAUB

It goes against libraries' traditional image to become news stories. But for the last several years, two unfolding public dramas have concerned libraries. Consider the controversial and finally doomed plan to turn the book stacks of the New York Public Library's (NYPL) landmarked main branch, the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, into a Foster + Partners-designed circulating library. To help pay for it, two nearby facilities, the Mid-Manhattan Library, the main circulating branch and the busiest in the system, and the Science, Industry and Business Library (SIBL), were to be closed and sold.

Under a new plan, SIBL will move into the Schwarzman Building, which will get renovated, up-to-code book stacks under Bryant Park. But the Mid-Manhattan Library, which NYPL President Anthony M. Marx has said was never an inspiring place, will be completely renovated to include a media and computer lab and a large adult education center.

Libraries were also in the news in 2012 when, acting as community gathering places and information centers, they were a stabilizing force in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. That crisis highlighted a shift noted in "Branches of Opportunity," a 2013 study by the Center for an Urban Future, which considered the evolving role of branch libraries. Their use has increased 59% over the last decade. "During that time, 48 different branches citywide have at least doubled annual attendance at programs, ranging from computer literacy classes to workshops on entrepreneurship, while 18 have more than doubled their circulation." It continues: "Although they are often thought of as cultural institutions, the reality is that the public libraries are a key component of the city's human capital system." They are part of the city's social infrastructure and should be valued as such. Note, however, that between 2002 and 2011, city funding for libraries decreased by 8%.

Stapleton Library, Staten Island, NY
 CLIENT: New York Public Library; NYC Department of Design + Construction
 ARCHITECT: Andrew Bernish Architect
 DESIGN TEAM: Andrew D. Bernish, FAIA, Dan Merl, RA, Wind So
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: WRT New York
 STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Gilman Murray-Steflock
 MEP ENGINEER: P Group Engineers
 CIVIL ENGINEER: Langan Engineering
 LIGHTING DESIGN: Cline Bettridge Bernstein
 CONSTRUCTION MANAGER: NYC Department of Design + Construction
 GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Plaza Construction

(left) Stapleton Library: Passersby get an expansive view of the new extension's long, high-ceilinged great room.

Indeed, it is the library's role in the community that keeps coming into play as new branch facilities and additions are being built by the city's three library systems: NYPL, which serves Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island, and the separate systems in Brooklyn and Queens.

All of them were created by architects chosen through the NYC Department of Design + Construction's (DDC) Design Excellence Program. What is noticeable is how different they are from the 67 Carnegie libraries built between 1901 and 1923, which are the foundations of the three systems. With the majority created by McKim, Meade & White and Carrère and Hastings, these sober masonry buildings were designed in a variety of historic revival styles as civic monuments to learning and uplift.

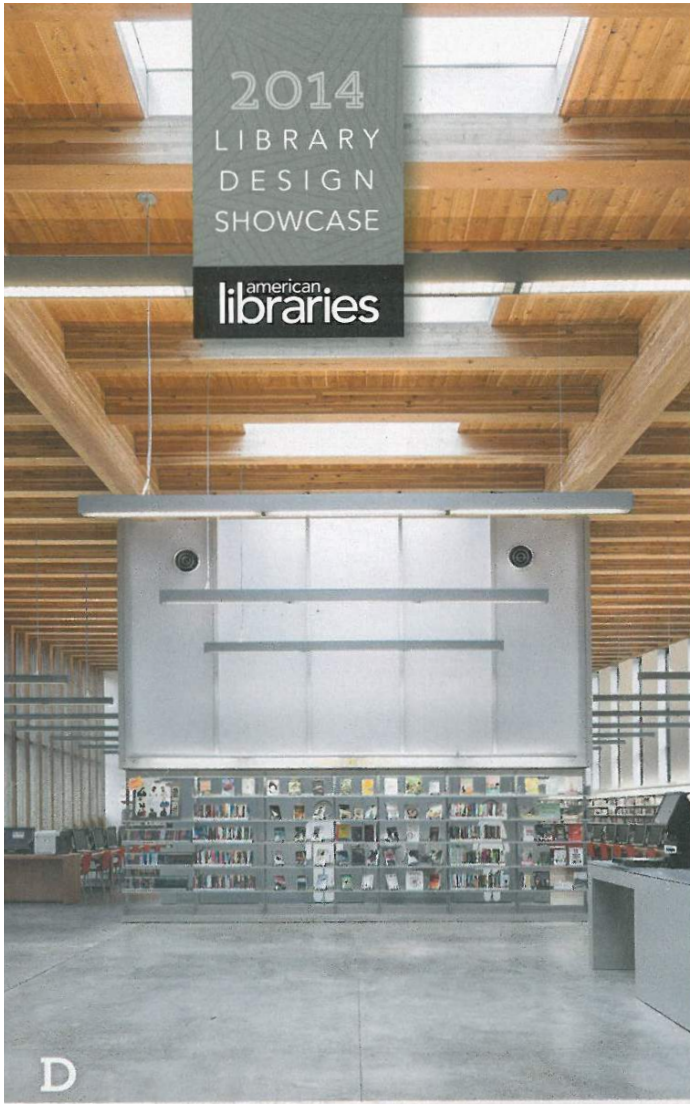
"Libraries are now an active presence in communities, and instead of just being about solitary pursuits are also places where people connect," says DDC Commissioner Feniosky Peña-Mora. "Each new library project has to take on the specific needs of its community, whether it's in Queens, where many immigrants need to be introduced to how libraries can help them succeed, or Staten Island, where they are beacons for underserved communities."

A well-used civic presence expands

Three award-winning buildings in middle- or low-income neighborhoods are illustrative. With generous glass walls and straightforward entrances, they are meant to be as welcoming as possible. Their programs are similar: separate spaces devoted to children, teens, and adults; a community room for meetings, cultural events, and training



(above) Stapleton Library: The 1907 Carrère and Hastings-designed building now houses the children's area.



REUSE AND RESTORATION

34 | september/october 2014

americanlibrariesmagazine.org

D NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, STAPLETON BRANCH

NYPL renovated the existing 1907 Carnegie Library in Stapleton, Staten Island, blending old and new by adding a new 7,000-square-foot modern addition alongside the older building. The addition is constructed of glue-laminated Douglas fir posts, beams, joists, and roof. The older adjacent building was transformed into a children's reading room.

Renovation and Expansion
Andrew Berman Architects

Size: 12,700 square feet

Cost: \$15 million

Photo: Naho Kubota

NY CULTURE

Rethinking Andrew Carnegie's Library Gift

Library Officials Say Branches Funded by the Industrialist Are Costly to Maintain

 Email  Print  0 Comments

 A A

By JENNIFER MALONEY 

July 7, 2013 10:33 p.m. ET



On Staten Island, a small Carnegie library was expanded with a modern addition in a \$15 million renovation that was completed in June. *Jonathan Blanc/NYPL*

They were meant as a generous gift: 67 library branches across New York City, funded with \$5 million given by Andrew Carnegie after the turn of the 20th century. Built with decorative flourishes and grand entrances, dozens still stand as stately ideals of a public edifice.

But sometimes, the industrialist's gift can feel like a burden.

The so-called Carnegie branches, built between 1902 and 1929, are costlier than others to repair, maintain and upgrade, said officials with the city's three library systems. The buildings generally aren't handicapped accessible, and their layouts don't always serve modern needs. Many are landmarked, making renovations pricier.



Enlarge Image

The Stapleton branch on Staten Island is pictured at the start of the 20th century in this archival image. The branch opened in 1907. *New York Public Library*



Enlarge Image

The newly renovated Stapleton branch on Staten Island. *Jonathan Blanc/NYPL*

Parting with them, though, can be difficult. For instance, a plan by the Brooklyn Public Library to sell a Carnegie—the Pacific branch in Boerum Hill, which needs \$10 million in repairs—has been met with fierce resistance.

It was one of two locations that Linda Johnson, the library's president and CEO, proposed selling to pay for two replacement branches and repairs to other buildings. The \$15 million the library receives each year on average from the city to maintain its buildings isn't enough, Ms. Johnson said, estimating that deferred maintenance amounts to \$300 million a year.

Some critics said they feared that this and other library sales planned in Brooklyn and Manhattan would result in an overall shrinking of public assets. Others said the 110-year-old, Neoclassical-style Pacific branch had architectural and sentimental value,

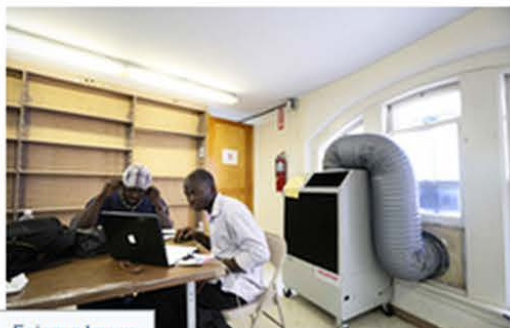
and vowed to fight to give it landmark status.

"Why destroy something that thousands of families have used throughout their childhoods?" said Abuwi Waheed, a 52-year-old computer information systems master's student said recently at the Pacific branch. He said he remembered visiting the branch as a child growing up in Bedford-Stuyvesant. "It's so sentimental to me that I don't want to lose it."

In response to the outcry, the library dialed back its plan, pledging to consider keeping part or all of the Pacific branch open, though it hasn't ruled out selling the property.

In an interview with *The Wall Street Journal* in January, Ms. Johnson raised the possibility of selling more than one Carnegie branch. Library officials say there are no plans to sell others.

Carnegie built 1,689 libraries across the U.S., striking the same bargain each time: He paid for construction in return for a guarantee that they were operated and maintained with taxpayer funds. Of the 67 built in New York City, 53 are still in use.



Enlarge Image

The New York Public Library, which serves Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island, in 2005 closed a two-story red brick Carnegie library in the Bronx, and in 2006 opened the much larger \$46 million Bronx Library Center a few hundred feet away. The old branch is being used as office space for the city Department of Health and

Patrons Rodney Alexander and Truth Amedzekor work next to a portable air conditioning unit inside the Pacific Branch of the New York Public Library, a century-old Carnegie building in Brooklyn in need of repairs. *Kevin Hagen for The Wall Street Journal*



The Bronx Library Center on East Kingsbridge Road is pictured on July 3. *Kevin Hagen for The Wall Street Journal*

Development Corp. expects to issue a request for proposals from developers this year, an agency spokesman said. It isn't landmarked, according to the library.

"I miss the old library, but it's good to have something more helpful for people," said Samantha Flores, 22.

The library took a different approach in Stapleton on Staten Island, where a small Carnegie library was expanded with a modern addition in a \$15 million renovation completed in June. Some 31 of the system's 87 branches are Carnegies.

Meanwhile, the Queens Library, with the blessing of the local community board, last year tore down a Carnegie branch in Elmhurst and is building on the same site a \$28 million, 30,000-square-foot building, more than double the previous size.

"Every Carnegie is not equal," said Thomas Galante, the library's president and CEO, noting that renovations and additions made since it opened in 1906 had eliminated or covered over some of the building's original architectural features.

David Nasaw, a history professor at the City University of New York's Graduate Center and author of the biography "Andrew Carnegie," said the American steel industry pioneer wouldn't mind seeing some of his library buildings close in the name of progress. "Andrew Carnegie was not a preservationist," Mr. Nasaw said, though he noted that Carnegie would have wanted the buildings that replaced them to be just as grand.

Maintaining and upgrading Carnegie branches is a particular challenge because of their age and their design. "Where does the elevator go?" said Anne Coriston, vice president for public service at the New York Public Library.

Large circulation desks were beautiful but created a barrier between the staff and the public, she said. In renovations, they have been reimagined as laptop bars. In many cases, the buildings have large physical footprints, but comparatively little public space, with rooms intended for book processing no longer needed for that purpose.

In Brooklyn, the recent \$6 million renovation of a Carnegie branch in Park Slope included a new ramp and elevator; upgraded climate control systems; new reading spaces for children, teens and adults; the restoration of an opalescent glass ceiling and the sourcing of glass pendant lamps that evoked the period. In that borough, 18 of 21 original Carnegies are still in use. Together, they require nearly \$78 million in repairs.

—Alison Fox contributed to this article.

Write to Jennifer Maloney at jennifer.maloney@wsj.com

Stapleton branch library on Staten Island reopens after three-year, \$15M renovation more than doubles its size

Branch was built in 1907 by Andrew Carnegie. New features include bright reading rooms, computers and bean bag chairs.

BY TANAY WAREKAR / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2013, 2:02 PM

4 5 0



MARK BONIFACIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Visitors use computers at the newly renovated Stapleton, Staten Island branch of the New York Public Library, which features a light-filled reading room with floor-to-ceiling glass.

Staten Island's historic Stapleton library reopened Tuesday after a three-year, \$15-million renovation that not only modernized the 106-year-old building, but more than doubled its usable space.

The renovated library, one of the original Carnegie branches built in 1907, now includes a swanky, light-filled reading room, lounges with fuschia bean bags, and a special area for toddlers, bringing the total size up to 12,000 square feet from the original 4,800.



MARK BONIFACIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

The 106-year-old building has been modernized and its usable space doubled.

"Children are 25% of our population, but 100% of our future," said Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro.



MARK BONIFACIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

A lion made of Legos greets patrons at the checkout desk.

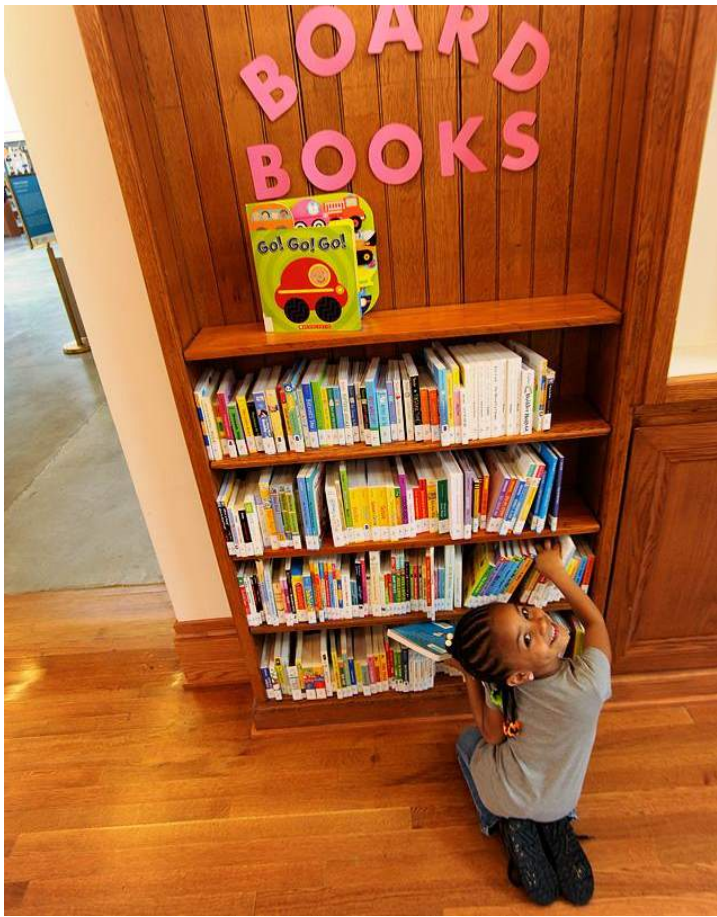
The library also now has 50 desktop computers, and wireless internet throughout the building, which is near the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in the northeastern corner of the island.



MARK BONIFACIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

The renovation adds a modern touch to a classic branch.

"We know how much the residents of Stapleton wanted and needed their library back, and we're so happy to say that it's back and better than ever, now able to adequately serve the needs of this community," said NYPL President Tony Marx.



MARK BONIFACIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Lakyah Clark, 5, looks through some board books at the library on Tuesday.



NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Another reading room features big bean bag chairs.

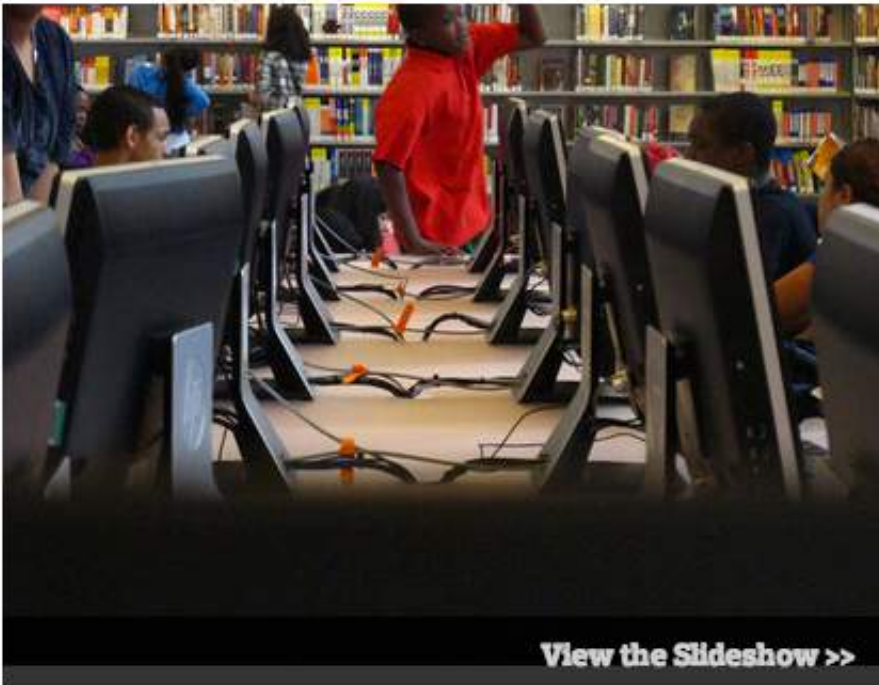


MARK BONIFACIO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

The outside of the Carnegie branch has been cleaned up, too.



Photos: Staten Island's Stapleton library reopens, to roars of approval



(Gallery by Clement Thiery)



By **Staten Island Advance**

on June 11, 2013 at 6:59 PM, updated June 12, 2013 at 9:07 AM

 [Print](#)

By **JOHN STILLMAN**

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- City officials stood before a crowd that included cross-legged schoolchildren, local readers of all ages, and a man in a fuzzy lion costume. They had gathered for the reopening of the Stapleton branch of the New York Public Library, and the excitement was suggestive of a pep rally more than of a study hall.

Library President Tony Marx introduced the crowd to the twin lion icons that preside over the library steps in Manhattan -- Patience and Fortitude, by name -- the latter of whom was present, in mascot form, for the ceremony. "Staten Island has been through a tough year," Marx said, recalling Hurricane Sandy and the sight of boats on local streets. "But it showed its fortitude and we celebrate that today with this great library, with this civic space."

With that, it was time to cut the ribbon, and Fortitude was there with a pair of scissors to help perform the honors.

would recall in both his [book on racial turmoil in the American college](#) and his [memoirs](#) decades later: the "Mrs. Merrill" the author inquired about. In addition to providing Wiggins with a love of books and learning while he was stationed in Staten Island, Anne Marie Merrill sent Wiggins more reading material and even college catalogs after he was shipped to Europe. In fact, after Wiggins was mustered out of the U.S. Army in 1946, he returned to New York City where he stayed at the renowned [Hotel Theresa](#) in Harlem (as many of the "downtown" Manhattan hotels were as segregated in the 1940s as the Alabama Wiggins had left.) One night in 1946, Wiggins came back to Staten Island to have dinner with his old friend, and she reminded him that the [G.I. Bill of Rights](#) would pay a portion of a veteran's tuition should he enroll in college. Wiggins pointed out that at the time he lacked even a high school diploma. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Merrill wrote a petition to his home town in Alabama attesting to his level of academic accomplishment, his rise in the U.S. Army from Private to First Lieutenant and his level of intellectual aptitude and he was granted a high school equivalency certificate. Shortly thereafter, Wiggins enrolled in [Tennessee State University](#) and would go on to a prominent career as an academic, author and one who would promote civil rights and the stress the value of diversity throughout his career.

The NYPL keeps excellent records of its affairs. Each issue of the "[Staff News](#)" of the NYPL for the War years is held in the [Milstein Division of U.S. History, Local History and Genealogy](#). The [Annual Reports of the NYPL](#) are held in the [General Research Division](#) for all the World War II years. And one can also review each of the [Stapleton Library's Annual Reports](#) (manually typewritten) held in the [Manuscripts and Archives Division](#). In these various reports, no "Mrs. Merrill" was never mentioned—as a librarian—who worked at the Stapleton Branch during that period.

However, in the wartime Annual Reports, the Stapleton Branch Manager noted that, as the closest branch, it had to serve two enormous military facilities (since closed) that were very active during World War II. One was [Fort Wadsworth](#) that housed thousands of United States military men (including Jeff Wiggins) and the other was the [Fox Hills Cantonment](#) (that was a base of [the Woman's Army Core \("WAC"\)](#) as well as the [New York Port of Embarkation for the United States Army](#) (from which Jeff Wiggins shipped out.) One can get a sense of the importance of Staten Island during World War II by a review of [The Staten Island Advance](#) and the [Staten Island Telephone Directories](#) both of which are available in the [Microforms Reading Room](#) of the NYPL.

Interestingly, the Stapleton Branch Manager wrote in 1945:

[T]he Branch felt keenly the demand as long as troops in great numbers were stationed here... At the same time, several members of the WAC, stationed at Fox Hills, were working on a more elementary level with barely literate colored troops who were stationed there. In addition, we were able to provide several books on adult elementary education for one staff member who wanted to provide an even broader background than she found in any of the elementary materials and worked particularly closely with these men.

I think it highly likely that Anne Marie Merrill was the staff member of the Stapleton branch that helped Jeff Wiggins, while temporarily stationed on Staten Island, to discover the inner resources within himself that enabled him to become an educator, author of two books, and advocate of civil rights and diversity and who in his later years would help African-Americans achieve the "Double V" sought during World War II: victory over fascism abroad and over segregation at home. And what better reflects how a committed library staff worker can have an effect on the larger social issues of our time.

One Man's Library Education and the "Double V"

by Matthew Boylan, Ask NYPL

February 24, 2014

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Stapleton, exterior view Image ID: 100946

A Dutch author wrote to [Ask NYPL](#), the ready reference division of [The New York Public Library](#), with a request for information about a woman (only identified as "Mrs. Merrill") who may have been a staff member of the NYPL on [Staten Island](#) in the 1940s. Mrs. Merrill had been instrumental in encouraging the educational interests of the subject of her book, Jeff Wiggins, an African-American member of the (segregated) [U.S. Army](#) in World War II, who had been deployed in the [Netherlands](#) near where her family lived.

Jefferson Wiggins was born in 1925 in [Houston County, Alabama](#) where he had almost no formal education in the schools he attended as a child. One can search the "[World War II Army Enlistment Records, 1938-1946](#)" in the databases of the [National Archives](#) and find that Wiggins was enlisted in the U.S. Army in Alabama in 1942 where the [enlistment record](#) describes him as a "Negro," a "U.S. Citizen" and as having had a "grammar school" education. Soon the Army would send Wiggins to Staten Island which during World War II was home to several vast Army installations and one of the principal embarkation points for the European Theater.



The boys of the 372nd. Image ID: 1260306

While stationed on Staten Island, Wiggins was able for the first time to make use of the [Stapleton Branch](#) of the NYPL—something that had not been possible for him in Alabama. Wiggins was clearly a man destined for distinction. He was one of the very few African-Americans made an officer ([Second Lieutenant](#)) during World War II and ultimately received a [doctorate](#), became a respected educator and authored two books.

Wiggins profited while stationed in Staten Island from the interest of a truly dedicated NYPL staff member that he would recall in both his [book on racial turmoil in the American college](#) and his [memoirs](#) decades later: the "Mrs. Merrill" the author inquired about. In addition to providing Wiggins with a love of books and learning while he was stationed in Staten Island, Anne Marie Merrill sent Wiggins more reading material and even college catalogs after he was shipped to Europe. In fact, after Wiggins was mustered out of the U.S. Army in 1946, he returned to New York

City where he stayed at the renowned [Hotel Theresa](#) in Harlem (as many of the "downtown" Manhattan hotels were as segregated in the 1940s as the Alabama Wiggins had left.) One night in 1946, Wiggins came back to Staten Island to have dinner with his old friend, and she reminded him that the [G.I. Bill of Rights](#) would pay a portion of a veteran's tuition should he enroll in college. Wiggins pointed out that at the time he lacked even a high school diploma. Shortly thereafter, Mrs. Merrill wrote a petition to his home town in Alabama attesting to his level of academic accomplishment, his rise in the U.S. Army from Private to First Lieutenant and his level of intellectual aptitude and he was granted a high school equivalency certificate. Shortly thereafter, Wiggins enrolled in [Tennessee State University](#) and would go on to a prominent career as an academic, author and one who would promote civil rights and the stress the value of diversity throughout his career.

The NYPL keeps excellent records of its affairs. Each issue of the "[Staff News](#)" of the NYPL for the War years is held in the [Milstein Division of U.S. History, Local History and Genealogy](#). The [Annual Reports of the NYPL](#) are held in the [General Research Division](#) for all the World War II years. And one can also review each of the [Stapleton Library's Annual Reports](#) (manually typewritten) held in the [Manuscripts and Archives Division](#). In these various reports, no "Mrs. Merrill" was never mentioned—as a librarian—who worked at the Stapleton Branch during that period.

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[Home](#) › [Neighborhood](#) › Stapleton Public Library

Stapleton Public Library



Address: 132 Canal Street, Staten Island, NY, 10304

Categories: [Libraries](#)

Website: <http://www.nypl.org/locations/stapleton>

Stapleton Library

The Stapleton Branch of The New York Public Library, which opened in 1907, is located on Canal Street, near the center of Stapleton Village and adjacent to Tappen Park and the Old Village Hall. The graceful, single story, brick and limestone building was constructed with funds provided by Andrew Carnegie.

It was designed by Carrère and Hastings. Today the Stapleton Branch continues to be a center of community life. The branch serves its diverse neighborhood by presenting programs for all ages, providing access to computer technology and lending books, magazines and other media to inform, educate, and entertain.

Staten Island library opens with free family-friendly programs and activities all day

In June, 2012, the New York Public Library has reopened its Stapleton branch on Staten Island, offering patrons a newly-renovated library that is more than double its original size, and that seamlessly combines the charm of an original "Carnegie Library" with a beautiful and highly-functional modern addition.

The one-story, 12,000-square foot branch at 132 Canal Street was officially opened in a public ribbon-cutting ceremony on June 11 with community leaders and library staff. The United States Coast Guard participated in the event, attended by excited residents and nearby students. A day of public programs for all ages followed.

"We are so proud to offer the Stapleton community this much-needed and highly anticipated branch," said NYPL President Tony Marx. "Libraries are being used more than ever, and their importance to neighborhoods and to all residents of New York City cannot be overstated. We know how much the residents of Stapleton wanted and needed their library back, and we're so happy to say that it's back and better than ever, now able to adequately serve the needs of this community. We welcome everyone to visit, and we thank our elected officials for making this important renovation necessary." The renovated Stapleton Library includes a light-filled, sleek, 7,000-square-foot addition connected to the original 4,800 square-foot-branch, a Carnegie Library originally built in 1907. The original library has been restored as the new children's room. Public space has more than doubled, and new interior features include reading rooms, lounges and areas for toddlers, children, teens and adults, ADA accessibility, 40 new public access computers, 10 laptops available for patron use, WiFi capability, and a multipurpose community room. There will also be about 35,000 collection items available for the public.

The Stapleton community has been waiting with anticipation for the opening, and has long loved and used its library. The year before the branch was closed to begin construction, 90,000 items were checked out.

The \$15.2 million project was designed by Andrew Berman Architects and constructed by the City's Department of Design and Construction. The Library is deeply grateful to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, City Council Member Debi Rose, Former Council Member Mike McMahon, Former Council Member Ken Mitchell, Staten Island Borough President James P. Molinaro, New York State Senator Diane J. Savino; New York State Assemblyman Matthew Titone, Congressman Michael Grimm, David J. Burney, Commissioner, City of New York Department of Design and Construction, and Virginia James for their support of the critically-important project.

"We sought to create a library that is an inviting and dignified public space for the community," said architect Andrew Berman. "The original Carnegie Library has been restored and repurposed as the Children's Reading Room. The open, daylight filled new addition houses the teen and adult collections as well as extensive digital media. Together, this library is a unified whole that embraces the NYPL's history and its future as a vital public institution."

"Libraries are the cornerstones of our communities, and the new-and-improved Stapleton branch will give Staten Island a wonderful neighborhood resource," said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. "This renovation will give Stapleton families even more to do at the library, with new computers, more space and new free programming."

"Some of my fondest memories as a child were spent in a library, pouring over books for hours," said City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. "Libraries foster a love of reading and learning and are a tremendous, trusted resource to communities across the five boroughs. The reopening of the newly improved Stapleton Library branch will not only benefit the residents of Staten Island but future generations of New Yorkers as well. I thank everyone who made today possible, including The New York Public Library President Anthony Marx, Council Member Deborah Rose and Mayor Michael Bloomberg."

"I'm looking forward to the re-opening of the Stapleton branch of the New York Public Library. I am pleased to have allocated \$750,000 in capital funding toward the renovation of this historic library," said City Councilwoman Debi Rose, who toured the Stapleton Library prior to the re-opening. "The building is an architectural jewel! I was delighted to see the original brick and limestone edifice -- built by industrialist Andrew Carnegie in 1907 -- was restored. Inside, I was also pleased to see the library equipped with state-of-the art computers. I know that the children and families of Stapleton will enjoy and utilize the resources this beautiful state-of-the art library has to offer."

"I am pleased that the Stapleton Branch of the New York Public Library will be reopening to the community," said Staten Island Borough President James P. Molinaro. "The library provides important services to people of all ages, but especially our children. I have said that children are 25% of our population, but 100% of our future, and that when children learn to read, they can read to learn for the rest of their lives. The new Stapleton Library will be a great resource for this neighborhood, and will provide many generations to come with educations and recreational programs and opportunities." "Stapleton is in the middle of a renaissance from the waterfront development of the Rail and the Homeport, to the Gerald Carter Recreation Center and New Senior Housing at Stapleton Houses, to the historic hillside; all of which is centered on a redesigned Tappen Park and of course the rehabilitation and expansion of our beloved Stapleton Library," State Senator Diane Savino noted. "The renaissance of Stapleton, will establish it once again as a major shopping and recreation destination, which will now include a state of the art library for all children and residents to enjoy the gift of reading, education and skills classes and everything Stapleton Library will offer, I am thrilled the Stapleton Library is back as is every Staten Islander."

"I am excited to see that the Stapleton Branch of the New York Public Library is reopening, bigger and better than ever before, with more space, more computers and Wi-Fi," said Assemblyman Matthew Titone. "The newly renovated building will be an incredible asset to the community, helping better prepare children and adults to become 21st century leaders."

"The newly renovated Stapleton library provides a warm and welcoming environment with endless learning opportunities," said Rep. Michael Grimm. "The new amenities will serve members of the community with resources for all ages and generations. Our greatest strength is our knowledge, and I am pleased that the doors of the Stapleton Library have reopened to foster growth through learning and education."

"The new Stapleton branch combines the best elements of the original Carnegie library building with a light-filled, modern addition," said David Resnick, AIA, Deputy Commissioner of the New York City Department of Design and Construction. "This happy marriage of historic and new elements has more than doubled the library's public space, created a welcoming entrance, and brought the library into the 21st century. It was a pleasure to work with architect Andrew Berman, general contractor Plaza Construction, and our partners at the New York Public Library to provide this beautiful new library for the people of Staten Island."

The Stapleton Library will be open: Monday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Tuesday, 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Thursday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

About The New York Public Library

The New York Public Library is a free provider of education and information for the people of New York and beyond. With 91 locations—including research and branch libraries—throughout the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island, the Library offers free materials, computer access, classes, exhibitions, programming and more to everyone from toddlers to scholars, and has seen record numbers of attendance and circulation in recent years. The New York Public Library serves more than 18 million patrons who come through its doors annually and millions more around the globe who use its resources at www.nypl.org. To offer this wide array of free programming, The New York Public Library relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support the Library at nypl.org/support.

<http://historictappenpark.com/neighborhood/stapleton-public-library>

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2014			
3 p.m.	Photo Editing on Tablets Learn how to use different photo editing apps on your tablet to enhance your pictures. Laptops and tablets are provided but you can bring your own too.	Stapleton Library	Adults, 50+, Adults
5:30 p.m.	LiteracyINC: Story Hour Readings by special guests with snacks and additional activities provided by LiteracyINC.	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Families, Children
6 p.m.	Girl Code Chat, hang out, and simply be fabulous at our library group for girls!!!!	Stapleton Library, Community Room	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2014			
4 p.m.	Kwanzaa Celebration! Janet "The Kwanzaa Lady" Robinson will lead children on a fun, educational and interactive journey to learn about the principles of Kwanzaa.	Stapleton Library	Families
4:30 p.m.	Bookcraft! Come to the library and have a blast listening to stories and making a fun craft!	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Children
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2014			
2 p.m.	Open Computer Lab Come by for one on one help with computers, technology, resumes, or whatever other digital needs you may have!	Stapleton Library	Adults
4 p.m.	Teen Salt Painting We did it in the Summer and we are doing it again! Come use household items- paper and glue and watercolor paints and make some unique pictures. Science and Art combined!!	Stapleton Library, Community Room	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2014			
3:30 p.m.	Wii Love Gaming! Challenge yourself, your friends and meet other kids in the neighborhood as you play cool Wii games on the big screen in the children's room! Challenge the librarian and you will probably win.	Stapleton Library	Children, School Age (5-12 years), Children
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2014			
1 p.m.	Eating Organically on a Budget Do you want to eat more organic, locally grown foods, but don't know where to start? Have you wanted to learn more about how an organic diet can benefit you and your family's health? Topics we'll cover: 12 Ways to eat organically on a budget How to eat mindfully and enjoy every meal Organic grocery shopping basics Practical delicious, recipes using organic ingredients 3 Simple ways to feel and look better both inside and out Video recipe demo Mona Laru is certified thru Thomas Edison S...	Stapleton Library	Adults
2 p.m.	A Christmast Carol A live theater performance based on Charles Dickens's classic tale of the old miser Ebenezer Scrooge. Presented by the Traveling Lantern Theatre Company. Recommended for children ages 4 to 12 years old.	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Children
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2014			
11 a.m.	All Join In! Come to the library for stories, songs, action rhymes and more! Have fun meeting other little ones in the area and their caregivers. For ages 0-3.	Stapleton Library	Children, Infant (0-18 months), Toddlers (18-36 months), Children
11:45 a.m.	Baby Space! Come for playtime, stories and songs for babies and their caregivers. For ages 0-18 months.	Stapleton Library	Children, Infant (0-18 months), Children
3:30 p.m.	Teen Study Afternoon Hang out in our community room for a quieter area to study, read, and focus.	Stapleton Library	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
3:30 p.m.	Math Club: Graphing Calculator Workshop Focused graphing calculator workshop for high school level math students.	Stapleton Library	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2014			
3 p.m.	Internet for Beginners An introduction to the Internet, including getting connected, using a web browser, and navigating web pages. Learn how to find information online using search engines and subject directories. Laptops are provided but you can bring your own too.	Stapleton Library	Adults, 50+, Adults
5:30 p.m.	LiteracyINC: Story Hour Readings by special guests with snacks and additional activities provided by LiteracyINC.	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Families, Children
6 p.m.	Winter Holiday Celebration! Celebrate the winter holiday season with festive stories and more!	Stapleton Library	Children

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2014			
4 p.m.	Graffiti Art Workshop You be you! Learn about the history of hip-hop and practice your graffiti art style. Presented by David Alicea. For ages 12 to 18 years old.	Stapleton Library Array	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
4:30 p.m.	Bookcraft! Come to the library and have a blast listening to stories and making a fun craft!	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Children
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2014			
2 p.m.	Microsoft Word 2010 for Beginners Welcome to the program that allows you to create letters, resumes, reports, and more!	Stapleton Library	Adults
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2014			
3:30 p.m.	Wii Love Gaming! Challenge yourself, your friends and meet other kids in the neighborhood as you play cool Wii games on the big screen in the children's room! Challenge the librarian and you will probably win.	Stapleton Library	Children, School Age (5-12 years), Children
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2014			
3 p.m.	Cinema Saturdays! Watch the library become a movie theater and enjoy a great film on the big screen! All ages.	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Children
MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2014			
11 a.m.	All Join In! Come to the library for stories, songs, action rhymes and more! Have fun meeting other little ones in the area and their caregivers. For ages 0-3.	Stapleton Library	Children, Infant (0-18 months), Toddlers (18-36 months), Children
11:45 a.m.	Baby Space! Come for playtime, stories and songs for babies and their caregivers. For ages 0-18 months.	Stapleton Library	Children, Infant (0-18 months), Children
3:30 p.m.	Teen Study Afternoon Hang out in our community room for a quieter area to study, read, and focus.	Stapleton Library	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
3:30 p.m.	Math Club: Graphing Calculator Workshop Focused graphing calculator workshop for high school level math students.	Stapleton Library	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2014			
3 p.m.	Advanced Email Learn how to manage your contacts through your address book, and how to send and receive document and picture files as email attachments. Laptops are provided but you can bring your own too.	Stapleton Library	Adults, 50+, Adults
5:30 p.m.	LiteracyINC: Story Hour Readings by special guests with snacks and additional activities provided by LiteracyINC.	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Families, Children
6 p.m.	Girl Code Chat, hang out, and simply be fabulous at our library group for girls!!!!	Stapleton Library, Community Room	Teens/Young Adults (13-18 years)
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2014			
12 noon	Festive Film Day! Join us for a festive day of Holiday films!	Stapleton Library	Children
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2014			
3:30 p.m.	Wii Love Gaming! Challenge yourself, your friends and meet other kids in the neighborhood as you play cool Wii games on the big screen in the children's room! Challenge the librarian and you will probably win.	Stapleton Library	Children, School Age (5-12 years), Children
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2014			
3 p.m.	Cinema Saturdays! Watch the library become a movie theater and enjoy a great film on the big screen! All ages.	Stapleton Library	Children, Pre-schoolers (3-5 years), School Age (5-12 years), Children
MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2014			
11 a.m.	All Join In! Come to the library for stories, songs, action rhymes and more! Have fun meeting other little ones in the area and their caregivers. For ages 0-3.	Stapleton Library	Children, Infant (0-18 months), Toddlers (18-36 months), Children
11:45 a.m.	Baby Space! Come for playtime, stories and songs for babies and their caregivers. For ages 0-18 months.	Stapleton Library	Children, Infant (0-18 months), Children

LUCY G. MOSES PRESERVATION AWARD 2014

Stapleton is awarded the Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award, one of the few projects involving new construction to be selected in the history of the award. The Moses Awards are the NY Landmark Conservancy's highest honors for outstanding preservation efforts, named for a dedicated New Yorker whose generosity benefited the City for over 50 years.

CASABELLA | OCT 2014

Stapleton Library is featured in the October issue of International Architecture publication, Casabella.

ARCHTOBER SHOWCASE 2014

Stapleton Library is selected as Building of the Day as part of the 2014 Archtober events organized by the American Institute of Architects. Architecture and Urban planning enthusiasts as well as members of the local community joined Principal and lead architect Andrew Berman for a tour of the library.

EUROPACONSORSIE 2014

Stapleton Library is featured on European Architecture online catalog Europaconsorsie

DOMUS

Stapleton Library is featured on Italian Architecture online publication Domus Web.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY GSAPP ARCHITECTURE TOUR 2014

Francoise Bollack's class visited the historic Stapleton Library in Staten Island with the architect of the new addition, Andrew Berman. The project recently won the 2013 Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award from the NY Landmarks Conservancy and a design award of merit from AIANY.

OCULUS MAGAZINE 2014

Stapleton Library is featured in the fall 2014 issue of Oculus magazine 'Branching Out' "there is much more to today's public libraries than books, and architects are adding to their shelf life."

AIA NY CITY DESIGN AWARD 2014

Stapleton Library is awarded a design merit award from the NYC American Institute of Architects.

AIA NY STATE DESIGN EXCELLENCE AWARD 2013

Stapleton Library is awarded a design excellence award from the NY State American Institute of Architects.

LIBRARY JOURNAL DESIGN SHOWCASE 2013

Stapleton Library is featured in Library Journals Design Showcase