

## CENTRAL LIBRARY: THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

### Friends of the Regina Public Library Town Hall Meeting

7:00 to 9:00 PM, Tuesday March 13, 2012

#### 1. Central Library: The past and The Future, *Joanne Havelock* (Title Slide)

- The first part of this slide show will give you an overview of the history of Central Branch building. I will be focusing on the building itself and unfortunately won't have time to talk about the many important developments in library services. As part of this history, the steps in the current planning process for the upgrading of Central Branch will be outlined. We will talk about the heritage aspect of both Central Branch Building and the Masonic Temple, and current protections for municipal heritage buildings in the City of Regina. Then we will bring forward the important things to consider about public private partnerships. The key issues raised by this information will be summed up. Following that there will be a question and answer period, and opportunity to determine our next steps.
- I would like to thank Susan Birley, Jeannie Mah, Ann Campbell - the History Book editors - and others from the history book team, such as Bob Ivanochko, for the work they did that allows us to provide this history, and the RPL who provided grants and assistance with research.
- In addition it is important to preface this discussion with the comment that FRPL does appreciate the work that the current Library Board has done in keeping the Library Branches open and other positive efforts, such as the new Prince of Wales Branch. FRPL has worked together with the Library Board on projects such as the Trudeau fund-raiser luncheon and the History Book project. But we do have some serious concerns about the planning process for upgrades to Central Branch.

#### 2. History of Central Library Buildings & Planning, *Joanne Havelock* (Section Title Slide)

##### 3. Carnegie Library

- Citizens petitioned in 1907 for a public library. The City provided the land and operating costs, Carnegie gave two grants totalling \$50,000 and the library opened in 1912.

##### 4. New Neighbour

- The Library gained a new neighbour in 1926, when the Masonic Temple was built. By the 1940's the library was feeling crowded and the city bought land north of the Carnegie building for expansion. Portnall designed an addition to the Carnegie building.

##### 5. Lorne Street Around 1960

- This is the view about 1960 when the Knox Met Church, YWCA, Masonic Temple and Carnegie Library were all in place.

##### 6. New Library

- Portnall's designs were not used. In 1956 Moses, an American architect, recommended demolishing the Carnegie building rather than trying to add on to it. The Citizens Committee for a New Library campaigned for a vote and in 1960 Reginans voted to approve a debenture to raise the funds for a new library. The library designed by Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama opened in 1962.

## 7. 1962 to 2002

- This is the library before the mezzanine was built in 1973 – look at those gorgeous windows! Major renovations were done in 1984, but by 1997 there were public meetings about the future of Central Branch. In 1994 the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District was formed.

## 8. Branches Kept Open

- In 2003 Friends of the Regina Public Library led the efforts to stop the closures of 3 branches and the Dunlop Art Gallery and Prairie History Room. The Task Force commissioned by the Regina Public Library Board recommended having a smaller Downtown Branch, rather than the large Central Branch. The Friends of the Regina Public Library also had a Task Force which suggested moving administration and other services to another location. A facilities review was conducted by RPL in 2005 but information about Central was not released from this review. Considering the future of Central Branch was part of the 2006 RPL strategic plan.

## 9. 2007 – A “Gem”

- The RPL 2007 Program and Services Review included an examination of RPL facilities. There was an architectural and engineering study of Central Branch but it was not made public. In that same year, the Ordinary Amazing Symposium brought architects from across Canada to Regina and Central Branch was named as a gem of modernist architecture. Also in 2007 the work started on developing Regina’s Downtown Plan.

## 10. Planning for Big Building Starts

- Somewhere along the way the RPL Board decided to start laying plans for a large development, without having consulted the public, as at least one organization was approached in 2008 about joining in on a larger project.
- In 2009 the start of planning about Central Branch became more public with an announcement in February of a plan to replace or expand and renovate Central Branch. An architect was chosen and also suddenly Harvard Developments was part of the team. In June there were public consultations where people were told to think big. Some block diagrams were shown in August of 2009. And that was the last of the public consultation.
- That same year the Regina Downtown Plan was released – this is the vision they had of Downtown Regina, looking across Victoria Park.

## 11. Regina Downtown Plan

- More visions from the Downtown plan – a summer and winter area on the west side of the library. A building that wraps around the Masonic Temple. But had the Masons been consulted? A development that seems to be an addition to the existing Central Branch, or is it a brand new building? And what is that big tower there? The plan also talked about a “dramatic library transformation”. So the seeds were already well sown at this point. But who in the public knew what could grow from these seeds?

## 12. Surprisebrary

- Anyway in April 2010 it really was a surprise to the public when Nick Milkovich Architects from Vancouver inadvertently released concept drawings as seen here. They were said by the Library Board to be one of many concepts at one time, then the ideal concept at another. The RPL Board

pushed through City Council in less than a week a proposal for a Cultural Centre that was to be an application to the P3 Canada fund.

- Due to the limited time and the insistence by the RPL Board that the proposal not be opposed, FRPL did not make a presentation to City Council, assuming there would be consultations soon to find out more and determine what the best approach was.
- The Masons opposed the proposal as it showed a building taking over their land, when they hadn't agreed to sell it. They also expressed concerns about being expropriated and the private sector involvement.
- In the Fall the RPL Board's proposal to the P3 Canada fund was accepted to the second phase of the approval process, but the public was not made aware of this development.
- In December the Statements of Significance of heritage value for the buildings around Victoria Park that had been commissioned by the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee in 2010 were finally publicly released by the City Administration.

### 13. This Year

- In 2012 the RPL Board revealed at their AGM that they were actively negotiating with the Masons for the purchase of their land.
- At this time FRPL determined that it had waited too long for proper consultations, and since the March 31 deadline for submitting a business plan to the P3 Canada fund was fast approaching, FRPL took the lack of consultation as an issue to the media on January 24.
- The RPL says that it has a plan for consultation and that it will provide the options to the public when all the research is completed and they are ready to talk to people. FRPL is concerned that too much has gone on behind closed doors, that decisions will be pre-made long before the project gets the public consultation it deserves. It is sad that this could have been an excellent exercise in public involvement, but has not turned out that way, so far.
- I would like to say that the planning process has been more positive with another project of the Library – the recent building of the new Prince of Wales Branch had public consultations and a committee with community representatives advising the project. Everything went well, with a nice finished new branch that everyone appreciates. So the Library Board has had a good planning process elsewhere, it just doesn't seem to be going well for the Central Branch planning process.

### 14. What We Know

- Most of the details about the plan are not known, but there is some information available.
- Many patrons find the current library very functional, but staff find the building crowded, especially the basement, and would like more room for programming. The heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system needs some work.
- The Library would like about 1½ to 2 times its current space (but the exact square footage is not known.) Globe Theatre would need a very large horizontal space. So is it really necessary to have such a large project?
- Under the proposed Surprisebrary plan there would be some kind of public private partnership. But there are many types of PPP arrangements. It is not known if the library would own the land, and sell the airspace for the building, and then lease back space for library operations or if the

development company would own the land, or if the Library would be leasing on a “rent-to-own” basis.

- The Globe Theatre and perhaps museums have expressed interest in partnering on the project, as well as possibly a hotel/condo operation (the tall tower). There was also mention of possible use of the building for some city functions. It is not know about other partners.
- The Library is in the second phase of the P3 Canada Fund application process, with a deadline of March 31, 2012 for submitting a business plan.
- Prairie Dog magazine submitted a Freedom of Information request to obtain the Library’s P3 Canada fund application, but the request was denied by the Library, saying that they would be doing consultations soon.

#### **15. The Masonic Temple, Joanne Havelock (Section Title Slide)**

##### **16. Masonic Temple**

- Freemasonry dates back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It promotes friendship and building values and emphasizes the importance of charity and community. The Masonic Temple building is owned by 5 Regina Masonic Lodges. It has operated continuously since 1926, and also serves the provincial Grand Lodge and two women’s organizations.

##### **17. Masonic Temple – Classical Style**

- This architectural and historical assessment is taken from the Statement of Significance prepared for the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee. The Masonic Temple was designed by Portnall and Reilly of Regina in the classical style. The building has been unchanged on the exterior and has retained its original interior. It has many elements that are of architectural interest.

##### **18. Masonic Temple- Historical Value**

- The Masonic Temple’s historical value is in its continuous use for its original purpose. The interior has specifically designed and functional spaces, such as meeting rooms, a library and offices. The building exterior has many elements reflecting Masonry, such as the compass and set square and the specially dated corner stone. And it is built of bricks.

#### **19. A Note About Modernist Architecture, Joanne Havelock (Section Title Slide)**

- Jeannie Mah is going to explain the many reasons to appreciate Central Library. But first a little about Modernism, to understand why they did what they did. Modernist architecture dated from post World War 1 to the early 1970’s. It started in Europe with a sense of social consciousness and a desire to break from the past. Scientific analysis was used to design buildings which emphasize function for specific needs rather than the form, avoiding the ornamentation in the previous Victorian and Art nouveau styles, embracing concrete steel and glass.
- Photo: I.M. Pei, Architect - Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University  
<http://architecture.about.com/od/20thcenturytrends/ig/Modern-Architecture/Modernism.htm>

20. **Modernist RPL**, Jeannie Mah (Section Title Slide)

21. (Aerial Photo Victoria Park)

- This is the streetscape just before the new RPL was built 50 years ago, so you can see what history and architecture we have already lost. I am no expert on Heritage architecture, so I am paraphrasing from the essay of Bernie Flaman, from our upcoming book on 100 years of the RPL (*thank you!*).

22. (Central Branch, northeast corner)

- With its flat roof, simple cubic composition and large expanses of glass, Central Library is a good example of the International Modernist style. Architect Kioyshi Izumi, of Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama, designed a building where **form follows function**: each element is articulated differently - the Dunlop Art Gallery, the Reading Room, and the offices -so that the inside can be understood from the outside.

23. (Regina Public Library sign & windows – north side)

- Built with enduring high quality materials, the richly clad surface of granite, the most durable stone, adds a luxurious appearance within its strict modernist sensibility. Different colours and treatments are used

24. (Regina Public Library sign & tree shadows)

- ...– rough, polished smooth, and split – with large flat expanses,

25. (Regina Public Library sign close-up)

- ...small rough cubes, and linear strips to materially frame office windows.

26. (Windows exterior sunscreen)

- The geometric aluminum sunscreen, or *brise soleil*, allows a generous amount of natural light into the interior. Functional and elegant.

27. (East entrance)

- The prominent double-height glass entry, facing Victoria Park, is an active interior and exterior space. The ramp that crosses over the courtyard is a nod to Modernist master, le Corbusier, who often favoured an “architectural promenade” where, in the act of entering, the visitor experiences important elements of the building.

28. (Entranceway boot racks)

- The smooth terrazzo flooring is easy to clean, and in great shape after 50 years, and I love the boot racks!

29. (Entranceway mural)

- The large mural by Saskatchewan artist Douglas Morton was a Centennial gift to the RPL, and, like Central itself, is a tangible symbol of Regina’s engagement with Modernism.

30. (Large interior windows)

- The spacious elegant interior has accommodated changes in technology and philosophy for 50 years, and the clear site-lines allow for easy retrieval of books. Reference and Circulation are visible and accessible.

31. (Close-up elephant rebar sculpture)

- At the **Ordinary Amazing** Symposium in 2007, the Regina Declaration proclaimed:

32. (Central Branch north entranceway at night)

- *Regina Public Library, Central, is a building of national, historical, cultural and architectural merit. We urge City Council and the Library Board to find a way to keep and maintain and enhance the heritage values of this fine building as well as explore creative possibilities for a building enlargement that would complement the 1962 building.*

33. (East side of Central Branch from plaza)

- Central Library exists with its neighbours, in harmony with Victoria Park. Buildings which frame the Park should be sensitive to the Park in design, scale, material and texture.

34. (Elephant rebar sculpture)

- We must remember to build, and to rebuild, with great care, to preserve the beauty and urban planning which is a gift from those who came before us.

35. (Marjorie Dunlop at demolition of Carnegie library)

- Architecture speaks of our history, it connects us to geography and it embodies our shared cultural memory. This mid-century Modernist gem was built with a spirit of hope and optimism, at a time when we believed in our City, and in ourselves

36. (Paper heart on sidewalk)

- . We should not obliterate our optimism, ...

37. ("Public" in window reflection)

- we should protect the things we love, and the buildings who have made us who we are.

38. (Broken column from Carnegie library)

39. (Masonic Temple)

40. (Lorne Street Postcard)

41. **Heritage Protection**, Joanne Havelock (Section Title Slide)

42. Municipal Heritage Property

- So how do we protect heritage properties in Regina? Individual properties may be designated as Municipal Heritage Property. Neither the Masonic Temple nor Central Branch has this designation. Heritage Regina has recommended that a heritage review be done of all the buildings in the whole downtown, including buildings built after 1945.

43. Municipal Heritage Holding Bylaw, 1989

- So what protection is there for these important buildings? The Masonic Temple is listed under the Municipal Heritage Holding Bylaw. The selection of buildings for this bylaw was based on the Parks Canada Guidelines for buildings built before 1939. This does not give the City the right to approve or deny demolition. The City can only withhold demolition permits for 60 days while heritage options are considered.

44. Victoria Park Heritage

- The Masonic Temple & Central Branch are part of the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District, established in 1994.
- Alterations or new building must follow the Guidelines set out though the bylaw. A request to make changes to a building first goes to City Administration, then depending on the extent of changes desired by the owner, their request may go to the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee, Planning Commission & City Council.

- There are two options concerning demolition:
  - i. Issue a demolition permit for the building but keep the land in the VPHCD. This is easier for City Council to do, which is not good. But it means new property on the site would be required to have a heritage "look". OR
  - ii. Remove the property from the VPHCD which requires a change in bylaw. This is more difficult for City Council to do, but anything can be built on the site afterward, so there is no requirement to retain heritage character.
- Heritage preservation as it is viewed today is more than just retaining a few artifacts, such as was done with the Carnegie Library, or a few pillars such as was done in Cornwall Centre. Heritage designation would involve the retention of the most prominent exterior walls and key interior features.

#### 45. **Financing Options**, Joanne Havelock (Section Title Slide)

##### 46. Financing Options

- There are five main options for financing a larger expenditure.
  - i. Saving funds from the current budget
  - ii. Raising taxation rates for the library
  - iii. Fund-raising, such as the Home Lottery, endowments and other activities
  - iv. Debentures
  - v. Public-private partnerships.
- I am going to tell you a little about debentures, and then Cheryl Stadnichuk will explain more about Public-Private partnerships.

##### 47. Debentures

- Debentures are a bond that an organization issues where there is no collateral offered. Buyers presume that the organization is reputable and will repay them. A resolution of City Council is needed for a debenture in excess of the City's debt limit. A debenture was used to raise the funds for the new Central Branch in 1962.

#### 48. **What are Public Private Partnerships**, Cheryl Stadnichuk (Section Title Slide)

- Major source of information is Public Service, Private Profits by John Loxley from Winnipeg, published in 2010..

##### 49. What are P3s?

##### 50. P3 Models

##### 51. Problems with P3s

##### 52. P3s Cost More

##### 53. P3s Reduce Accountability

##### 54. Who's Pushing P3s?

##### 55. The P3 Canada Fund

##### 56. Alternatives to P3s

##### 57. (Summer view, west exterior courtyard, Central Branch)