



# Friends of the Regina Public Library

2042 Garnet Street, Regina, SK. S4T 2Z6

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September 20, 2022

Sean Quinlan  
Chair, Regina Public Library Board  
Regina Public Library  
2311 12th Avenue  
Regina SK S4P 0N3

Dear Mr. Quinlan:

Friends of the Regina Public Library (FRPL) would like to submit the following for the consideration of the Regina Public Library (RPL) Board at their September 27, 2022 meeting, to make a presentation, and to have this letter and its Appendices included in the official public record. (Appendices include: FRPL's June 16, 2021 letter to the RPL Board, and "Regina's Central Library and Victoria Park" by Bernard Flaman, Heritage Architect.)

## **Value of Libraries**

The RPL document presented to the City of Regina Executive Committee on September 7, 2022 contains a number of aspirational positive messages about the value of libraries, with which everyone would agree. The people of Regina greatly appreciate the library, the resources, the services provided and the wonderful staff.

There are many ideas in the RPL presentation and reports, including it seems, the retention of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Prairie History Room, and Film theatre.

## **Public accountability**

On September 16, 2022 the RPL updated its Central Library Renewal / Development webpages. Previously, in August 2022, only 5 reports were publicly available. On September 16, one report was deleted (the P3 Canada Fund application from 2011) and 12 reports were added. Some of these reports date back to 2009. In addition, the recent reports that FRPL was told

weren't available because of delays due to Covid, were actually completed in 2020 and 2021.

This previous withholding of information does not allow the public to understand and contribute to decisions being made. We hope that this welcome new release of information is a practice that the RPL will continue in the future.

FRPL suggests that the RPL provide print copies in the Reference section at Central Branch for:

Central Library reports

- reports going back to 1995, as cited on page 14 of the 2012 RPL Building Assessment report
- reports now available on the RPL website, and including the 2011 P3Canada Fund application

RPL Board ongoing work reports

- Minutes of RPL Board meetings
- RPL Strategic Plans
- RPL Service Plans
- RPL Management Discussion and Analysis Reports (and former Annual Reports)
- RPL Budgets
- RPL Audited Financial Statements
- RPL Public Accounts

RPL should provide copies in advance of reports being discussed at public Board meetings and attach them to their minutes.

## **Public Engagement**

FRPL and many City Councillors have stressed the importance of the RPL providing options for any improvements to the public before any decisions are made. The RPL has stated that it will do so. Yet, after so many years of analysis, the RPL seems to be suddenly rushing into a decision without taking the time for adequate public input. The public had 4 days only to review 12 new reports, dating back to 2009, before developing written presentations for the RPL Board's September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting. This is not nearly enough time.

We recommend that the RPL Board tables the decision on the future of this library until next spring, giving the public sufficient time to be fully engaged in the decision on the future of the central library branch.

Where is the step where the RPL will put any proposals forward to the public for discussion at a public meeting and other options for input?

Even though the Board uses the Teams program, they have not allowed the public to see meeting presentations online. The Board representatives said on September 7<sup>th</sup>, that it is looking at how they can allow public access to viewing. Previously, due to Covid, the public could only attend Board meetings by teleconference; perhaps this can now change. Unlike City Council, the Board does not share its meeting reports in advance, only mostly referring to them obliquely in their discussions. While the Central Library Renewal / Development reports were listed on separate webpages, we did not see any other reports added to the draft agenda for this Sept 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, nor links from the agenda to the Central Library reports.

The list of “stakeholders” as identified on page 7 of the 2020 Needs Assessment and Project Plan report seems to focus on business and development organizations and exclude a lot of groups.

Surveys have asked very general questions, and page 3 of the Executive Summary of the 2020 Needs Assessment and Project Plan report says 90% were in favour of maintaining library services. This indicates there is enthusiastic support for Regina’s libraries. But does this support tearing down the current library building?

Consultation questions have used the vague terms of “Renewal” without specifying what the RPL Board was contemplating.

Surveys have asked what people want in a library, but as pointed out by a citizen’s letter to Executive Committee and verified by the RPL Board representatives, the RPL surveys have never directly asked “Are you in favour of demolishing the current Central Library building in order to provide additional services.”

In 2009, the RPL Web Survey Results, page 13, indicated that 64% of those with an opinion said that the RPL should expand and renovate rather than replace Central Library. The majority of people attending the February 5, 2020 RPL public meeting were in favour of retaining the current building.

## **Heritage**

Central Library is nationally recognized as an iconic example of a modernist building, well built on a strong foundation. This modernist style is also seen in buildings such as the SaskPower building. It is historical in that it reflects the changes in thinking starting in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to break free from

the constricting ideas of the previous centuries. Thus, modernist architecture is a social and political commentary for democratic accessibility; its simple and clear lines are a statement for a bright inclusive future.

The current building is legally designated in the Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District, Bylaw #9656 passed May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1996. In order to have the building demolished City Council must change its own bylaw, if the building is rehabilitated, no changes to the bylaw are needed. There is a heritage permitting process and a regulatory process based on conservation standards. City of Regina staff would be engaged as they would be on any building project involving a building permit.

Options to retain and expand Central Library building must be explored further.

## **Rehabilitation**

We really care about the excellent staff who dedicate their time and energies to the public library, and want them to work in good conditions. We understand the need to do some renovations in the Central Library building, but think that rehabilitating the building and constructing an addition will better preserve heritage and the inherent resources in the building materials, rather than a teardown and rebuild.

Renovation, or as it is called in heritage conservation, "rehabilitation", of Central Library and building an addition would create jobs, just as a new build would do. "Rehabilitation" would involve bringing the building up to all current codes (accessibility, ventilation, energy use, and so forth).

It is unfortunate that the RPL, as stated at the Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting, has done only immediately needed repairs. The RPL has chosen not to invest funds in needed upgrades that were outlined in the 2015 Central Library Building Assessment Report, by Group2 Architecture and Design. RPL stated that they thought it wasn't worthwhile to invest money in these repairs, in case they decided to tear down the building. Is this another example of "demolition by neglect" so common in the City of Regina?

## **Options**

Over the years, many suggestions have come forward from the public about ways to handle any renovations needed to Central Library. We had hoped that these ideas would receive full and serious consideration by the RPL and

the merits of these proposals would be fully discussed in any review of options.

Keeping the current building with needed renovations. This option is addressed in several of the RPL reports.

Adding a third storey to the current building. The 2012 RPL Building Assessment report stated that adding one or two stories, plus a penthouse for mechanical equipment purposes, would be possible. Some important consideration would be placement of supporting columns, removal or overlaying the current roof, and spanning the width of tall open spaces. Adding upwards was used as the option for renovation in the 2017 Deloitte report Central Library Business Case – Phase 1. The 2020 Central Library Renewal Needs Assessment and Project Plan report makes no mention of this option.

Creating a structure that goes “up and over” the current library building, as was elegantly done with the Centennial Library in Winnipeg. Although rejected verbally by the RPL representatives on September 7<sup>th</sup>, this option does not seem to have been specifically discussed in any of the RPL reports. What is the factual and cost basis for the RPL Board to be rejecting this option?

Constructing a tower on the west section of the library property was envisioned by the library’s original architects, if more space were needed in the future. The future is now. RPL Board representatives have stated that the footprint of this tower would not be big enough. Where is the engineering or architectural analysis of this option? It seems to have received no attention in any of the reports. While the RPL has verbally said adding a tower to the west would be awkward because of the need for a street level entrance and connections between the two floor levels, surely creative design could figure out these logistical problems?

Putting resources into local branches in our many neighbourhoods rather than building a large edifice downtown. But the RPL is going to review the functions of the local branches AFTER it deals with Central Library. Isn’t this going about the situation a bit back to front?

Adding onto City Hall parkade for additional parking for RPL staff. With all the parking lots downtown, is this really necessary? RPL could choose to compensate staff for renting parking spaces.

## Costs

The 2012 RPL Building Assessment report, by P3Architecture estimated \$71,929,000 for renovations and an addition, either vertically or horizontally. A new build was estimated at \$79,674,250.

The Deloitte report of 2017, Central Library Business Case – Phase 1, estimated costs, including an option for an addition of storeys onto the current building. On page 21 Deloitte provided the following capital construction costs: Renovate \$26,603,000; Renovate with Additions \$26,603,000 + \$35,026,000 = \$61,629,000; New Library \$68,738,000. Total costs, provided on page 26, looking at capital, lifecycle, operational, and project risks: Renovate \$110,473,970; Renovate with Additions \$195,036,540 and New Library \$195,737,090. Thus, retaining the current building with additions was less costly than building a new building.

The 2020 Central Library Renewal Needs Assessment and Project Plan report, by KPMG, starts with 8 options on page 57, outlines 7 options on page 60, then only discusses 3 options. Costs are only provided for a New Build on page 66, outlining \$124,000,000 in construction costs. The report states on pages 6 and 63 that a new building would only be expected to last 60 years.

Is the publicly stated guesstimate of \$50 million building renovation costs based on the 2015 Group2 table on the short, medium and long-term costs of building rehabilitation on page 3 in the Executive Summary? Plus, a guesstimate for inflation? These renovations were supposed to occur in the 20 years following the report, therefore by 2035. The RPL has done some immediately needed work. But not everything that was recommended in the 2015 report. How much of this figure represents work that the RPL has already completed, and therefore not an additional cost?

Libraries such as the Calgary Library can cost up in the range of \$250 million dollars. What is the RPL envisioning? What is the price range?

Central Library already is a cultural centre and hub.

## Environment

There is embodied energy in this building that will be lost if the building is demolished. Rehabilitating the building, with attention to current environmental building standards, would contribute positively to Regina's goal of being a sustainable city. Cost estimates of the resources lost if the

building is torn down do not seem to be in the RPL reports. This kind of analysis is needed.

Rehabilitating the building would provide better insulation and operating systems that would reduce the environmental impact of the building. And an addition would be built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.

## **Design Process**

An option to retain and expand Central Library building must be written into the consultant terms of reference. This is fundamental.

The library is a very important part of downtown. But should it be the only public indoor space in downtown Regina? Should it be the only place where people facing life challenges get support?

Should the library be taking on additional services right now when it has limited space? For example, the closure of the Outreach Services room, dispersing throughout the main floor the resources and equipment that assists people with visual challenges, makes access difficult for people who formerly used the Outreach Services room and greatly appreciated the staff, location and resources. Who did the library consult before making these changes?

Where is money best spent to make Regina a livable community - on housing for the homeless, services (in collaboration with other levels of government), free public spaces for people, libraries or, other facilities? This is an important question to be examined by the citizens of Regina and Regina's City Council.

## **Conclusion**

Libraries are about preserving and sharing knowledge. This knowledge is contained in books, in digital formats, in art, in music and in buildings and landscapes. Thus, preserving the public heritage embodied in the Central Library building is part of the Regina Public Library's role.

Not every library building will necessarily have significant historical and cultural value, but the Central Library building does.

Let's work together to identify and share the options available, and engage in needed public consultation, before decisions are made.

Sincerely,

Joanne Havelock  
Chair, Friends of the Regina Public Library



## APPENDICES



# Friends of the Regina Public Library

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June 16, 2021

Sean Quinlan  
Chair, Regina Public Library Board  
Regina Public Library  
2311 12th Avenue  
Regina SK S4P 0N3

Dear Mr. Quinlan:

The Friends of the Regina Public Library (FRPL) was willing to discuss the points noted below at the Regina Public Library (RPL) Board meeting at 4:30 PM on Tuesday June 22, 2021. However, since Central Library is not on the draft agenda of June 11<sup>th</sup>, we would be available to make a presentation at a future meeting. We are also enclosing a PDF of a PowerPoint of photos about Central Library for Board members to review.

The main focus for this letter and/or presentation is the Central Library planning process. We understand that the RPL Board is expecting some additional reports to complete this phase of the work by Colliers Project Management and KPMG.

The reports will no doubt contain options for consideration. Will the reports be released to the public and then public response gained before the Board makes decisions, giving current and potential library patrons, and tax-paying Regina citizens fair input into decisions to be made?

## **Central Library Renewal Process**

The history from the past which gives the public grave concern is the 2011 RPL proposal to build a large commercial complex on the site of the current Central Library and engulf the Masonic Temple. This proposal did not go ahead, but the intent, scope, and lack of consultation with the Masonic Temple in advance of money being spent on preliminary designs, is something that is not forgotten, and gives everyone a sense of extreme concern about what future plans may be developed.

As FRPL noted in its presentation to City Council, any changes to Central Library will be a major financial investment for the citizens of Regina. City support will be required for any loans, debentures or other financial arrangements to borrow money for work to be conducted, which will cost in the many millions of dollars.

City Council approval is also needed for any changes affecting the Victoria Park Municipal Heritage Conservation District, which includes Central Library.

To review the current situation, in 2019 the RPL sent out a request for proposals for a consultant to help guide the RPL Board's decisions regarding Central Library. The consultants' Phase 1 task was *"...using existing information and material, along with obtaining and/or preparing necessary additional information, develop and present a business case to the Board and undertake associated activities to support the Board through their decision-making process.... Subsequent project phases may include supporting the Board in its work with Regina City Council to secure funding for the Project, lead procurement of design and construction services, provide oversight of design and construction services, lead logistics for occupation, and conduct a post-occupancy review. While future phases will fit generally into these categories of work, their precise nature depends upon the decision made as a result of Phase I.* (Owner's Representative for Central Library Project RFP # 2019-07, October 10, 2019)

RPL contracted the services of Colliers Project Leaders and KPMG to develop a needs assessment and project plan for the future of Central Library. Research for the plan started with review of previous reports and a public needs survey. This was followed by a community open house on February 5, 2020. The overwhelming majority of people attending this event were in favour of retaining the current Central Library building, with upgrades if needed.

While the Board had expected the needs assessment and project plan to be ready in spring 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced a temporary delay. Work has since continued.

On March 10, 2021 the RPL website noted that "... The next step in this plan is to gather public opinion about Central Library investment through random sample polling. The Owner's Representative [Colliers Project Leaders and KPMG] has contracted the services of a third party to conduct this polling in the next few weeks." FRPL contacted the RPL to ask: What survey company is doing the survey? When will the survey be done? What questions will they

be asking? We did not receive any details in the reply back from the RPL. When will it be possible to find out further details about this survey?

### **Current Location of Central Library**

No one argues against the location of the current Central Library building. Its usefulness and accessible geographical location add cultural dynamism and recreational and educational opportunities for all in downtown Regina. Central Library anchors city centre. People can also shop, if need be, contributing to downtown revitalization. Regina's Central Library, is not only an iconic example of modernist architecture, but an economic anchor for downtown Regina. Its central location and good public transport links make the building an easy trip for anyone without a vehicle, often new immigrants, who, like others, might also take advantage of literacy classes, pioneered in Canada by the Regina Public Library, and many more library offerings.

### **What is needed?**

FRPL understands the desire to have good services and facilities for providing those services. However, the language on the RPL website seems to be supporting a foregone conclusion: a completely new Central Library building. But is this really the solution for Regina?

The current Central Library building is already a cultural hub. Do we need to tear it down to build a huge expensive edifice building in downtown Regina? Can we not maintain the current building and create an addition? There are many needs and ideas identified by the RPL in its March 10, 2021 update, as well as in the many previous planning documents about Central Library. Perhaps some of the needs or desires of librarians can be met through satellite locations in downtown Regina, either newly constructed on vacant parking lot space or in existing downtown buildings, assisting in the revitalization of Regina's downtown? Could our model of library services be decentralized and democratic, emphasizing the value of neighbourhoods and walkable branches throughout the City, with funds spent on additional resources throughout the City?

There is a need for public spaces downtown, places that support learning, creativity and training. While the RPL is open to everyone and is a community hub, the City of Regina should be considering other additional venues that can provide public meeting spaces and opportunities for people. Should some of the needs and aspirations of people in the downtown area be met by other organizations in other locations in the downtown? Is this not something that the City of Regina and downtown organizations and businesses should be considering together with the citizens of the city?

With regard to the Central Library building being old, some improvements are needed. But we do not tear down our houses because the furnace or roof shingles need replacing or the electrical system needs upgrading. In other countries, buildings have continued to exist and be useful after hundreds of years.

Green architectural building principles recognize that it is less expensive and more environmentally responsible to use a building that already exists, than tear it down, take the remains to the landfill and rebuild. Recent engineering reports have stated that Central Library is a structurally sound quality building. Engineering reports also have stated that it is possible to build up to two additional storeys on the current building.

**“Thinking ahead,” the 1962 Central Library Opening Day program noted directions for future expansion: “...if more space were needed, a tower could be built on the lot west of the building.” Regina might look to the Winnipeg Public Library’s Patkau addition and redesign created a useful social space, as an excellent elegant and economic way to ‘rethink’ Central Library.**

With renovations and/or expansion to the current property as originally designed, FRPL believes the current building can continue to fulfill the intended mandate of being a community hub and FRPL firmly supports the preservation of our Heritage Modernist Central Library.

### **Central Library Heritage and Cultural Value**

There are many aspects to the heritage and cultural value of Central Library.

Central Library’s location is both beautiful and practical, acting as Regina’s downtown cultural hub. Central Library is within “Regina’s Victoria Park Heritage Conservation District” (VPHCD), established by City of Regina Bylaw #9656 on May 27, 1996 under the provisions of the provincial Heritage Property Act. The current building, at 2311 - 12th Avenue, faces Frederick Todd’s Victoria Park, replacing the earlier Carnegie Library (1912), the current Central Library building was opened in 1962. Central Library, the SaskPower Building (1963), and the Bank of Canada Building (1964) are quality mid-century buildings, all designed to sensitively integrate with earlier Victorian Revivalist buildings, including the 1926 Masonic Temple.

Furthermore, the value of this building to Regina’s history is solidified by the fact that it was designed by a Regina engineering and architectural firm. Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama. Izumi, who was raised in Regina and

matriculated from Regina College in 1944, returned to Regina in 1954 after extensive architectural studies and experience.

The 1962 library is an iconic example of modernist architecture, part of the exciting and innovative modernist movement, a material statement of our mid-century optimism. Modernism arose in the early part of the 20th century as a cultural movement in art, politics and science, reflecting the experience and values of modern industrial life and modern society. New images, materials and techniques were used. The old social constrictions and styles were left behind.

Modernism occurred throughout literature, fine arts and architecture, most evident in buildings designed from the 1930s to the 1960s (and beyond) expressed in the phrase “form follows function” and of minimalism. Modernism stressed the use of materials such as natural stone and wood, reinforced concrete, steel frames, curtain walls and ribbon windows. And in having these materials honestly viewed, rather than covered up by plaster or wallpaper or ornamentation. Designers preferred open plan interiors, filled with light and having a sense of spaciousness. Some international examples of modernist architecture include: Le Corbusier’s 1927 Villa Savoye; Shreve, Lamb and Marmon’s 1931 Empire State Building; Niemeyer’s 1960 Palácio do Planalto in Brasilia; Gropius and Mayer’s 1911-13 Fagus Factory in Germany; Frank Lloyd Wright’s 1935 Fallingwater in Pennsylvania; Utson’s 1973 Opera House in Sydney Australia.

Some Saskatchewan examples of modernist architecture are: the original Mendel Art Gallery and the Faculty of Law at the University of Saskatchewan, both in Saskatoon; the Saskatchewan Power Corporation Headquarters, Regina Court of Queen’s Bench building and the Central Library building in Regina; and the Chapel at Silton.

As we know, one important cultural discipline doesn’t negate another: just as literature, in all of its forms creates a culture, so do heritage structures give cultural meaning, creating a context for the lives of citizens, as is shown in all world cultures.

The value of Central Library was confirmed nationally at “The Ordinary Amazing Symposium: The Cultural Value of Modernist Architecture” held in Regina in May 2007, with a declaration signed by national architects and Regina citizens. (A PDF is attached with this letter.)

*RPL’s Central Library is a building of national, historical, cultural and architectural merit and urges City Council and the Library Board to find a way to keep and maintain and enhance the heritage values of this*

*fine building consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada; as well as explore creative possibilities for a building enlargement that would complement the 1962 building, so it can continue to serve the changing needs of Regina's people, and enhance its key public spaces.*

As noted by Heritage Architect, Bernard Flaman (see Appendix), Central Library's flat roof, simple cubic composition and large areas of glass, are hallmarks of the modernist style. The durable split squares and polished slabs of granite cladding and aluminum modernist sunshades add texture to the exterior.

Yet as we discuss the merits and economy of Central Library that have made this building a national treasure, it is personal experience that has brought this library alive and a feature of our downtown. The entrance foyer, facing the greenery of Victoria Park, is filled with light and leads to the magic of a Children's Library; an Outreach Unit, assisting people with visual challenges, seniors and those not easily able to leave home; a Literacy Department and its volunteers, the Dunlop Art Gallery, the RPL Film Theatre, the Prairie History Room and more, all adding to the vibrancy of downtown Regina. The tall windows fill the Reading Room with natural light.

## **Conclusion**

Libraries are about preserving and sharing knowledge. This knowledge is contained in books, in digital formats, in art, in music and in buildings and landscapes. Thus, preserving the public heritage embodied in the Central Library building is within the role of the Regina Public Library. Not every library building will necessarily have significant historical and cultural value, but the Central Library building does.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this letter with the RPL Board to assist in the Board's work in guiding the future of Central Library.

Sincerely,

Joanne Havelock  
Chair, Friends of the Regina Public Library

## APPENDIX – CENTRAL LIBRARY



### **Regina's Central Library and Victoria Park**

*By Bernard Flaman, Heritage Architect*

When the original Carnegie Library was demolished in 1960, at the young age of 48, it was a brave new world: the ascendance of International Style Modernism, the predominant architectural style in Canada, saw many revival style buildings from the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century replaced with minimalist, modern structures.

The current Central Library, completed in 1962, was designed by the Regina architecture and engineering firm Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama. Along with its neighbours around Victoria Park; the Bank of Canada building (1962) by Durnford, Bolton, Chadwick and Elwood of Montreal, and the Saskatchewan Power Corporation headquarters, an extraordinary interpretation of Brazilian Modernism designed by Regina architect Joseph Pettick (1963), the Library reflected the arrival of modernism as a mainstream architectural style in Regina.



The Library's flat roof, simple cubic composition and large areas of glass, are hallmarks of the modernist style. Preliminary sketches indicated a much more ambitious project, with the Library and the Dunlop Art Gallery designed as two buildings separated by a plaza. The final design exhibits traces of the original idea, with the art gallery articulated as a separate object; a box that slides into the side of the library structure, like a giant drawer. The massing and architectural composition of the building reflect its functional components. While the exterior of the building may be austere, the cladding material comprised of various types of granite, the most durable stone for buildings, lends a rich and luxurious appearance. The aluminum sunshades add texture to the exterior and allow a generous amount of natural light into the interior without the problem of glare.

Izumi and Arnott were the architects in the firm and Sugiyama, the structural engineer. Known as "Joe" to his friends and colleagues, Kiyoshi Izumi had completed extensive architectural studies before returning to Regina to engage in practice.

Victoria Park appeared as the central square on the very first survey for Regina, the Canadian Pacific Railway plan of 1882. In 1907, while he was in Regina working on a design for Wascana Park, Frederick Todd of Montreal, Canada's first resident landscape architect, created a design for Victoria Park. Shortly after, institutional buildings, such as the Court House and the Carnegie library, began to replace the residential houses around the park. By the early 1960s, the International Style had arrived in Saskatchewan, reflected in three new buildings: the Regina Public Library, the Saskatchewan Power Corporation Headquarters, and the Bank of Canada Building, all completed between 1962 and 1963, adding an important layer to the buildings surrounding the park. It marks a moment when prosperity coincided with a significant period in architectural design.

The library addresses the park with a prominent double-height glass entry at the north-east corner. Here, the corner opens up to reveal the columned structure of the building and a sunken garden that provides a visual connection to the lower level. The entrance forms an inviting, generous and public gesture on the corner of Victoria Park, and shines like a beacon on even a cold, snowy winter evening. The ramps that cross over the courtyard are also modernist in nature and were often employed by the modernist master, le Corbusier, as part of an idea of "architectural promenade," where the act of entering allows the visitor to explore and experience important elements of the building. At the entrance to the library, token decorative stone elements from the original Carnegie Library of 1912 were salvaged in an early attempt at heritage commemoration, if not conservation. The limestone columns from the 1912 building are arranged in the courtyard,

and the original lintel stone, bearing the words, *Regina Public Library* is incorporated into the vestibule.

The interior of the building is characterized by a series of three major spaces: the entrance vestibule, the Dunlop Art Gallery, and the main reading room. All were conceived as tall spaces, however, a mezzanine was constructed in the reading room shortly after the library opened, to address a shortage of space. The vestibule, like the rest of the building contains expensive and durable materials, in this case, terrazzo flooring, and, in the same material, the unique boot racks. The benches with wood seating areas and heating ducts below still survive and offer comfort on a cold winter day. The vestibule features a large mural by Saskatchewan artist Douglas Morton. Inside the door, the window of the Dunlop Art Gallery is an important connection to the flow of foot traffic coming in and out of the library. It is perfectly located to attract library visitors, especially children, who may not otherwise think of visiting a gallery.



In 2012, the library celebrated its 50th birthday, and, indeed, is close to the same age as the 1912 building when it was demolished. This is at an awkward age for buildings; they often begin to suffer from the 50-year-old building syndrome. Symptoms include a run-down and shabby appearance

due to chronic lack of maintenance, because of little appreciation or recognition for their heritage value. A closer look at the Regina Public Library reveals a beautifully designed building clad in the finest materials that would likely be unaffordable today.

Victoria Park is now over 125 years old, and its buildings and architectural styles represent the achievements of one of the most interesting periods in Regina history. Having been recognized as the only municipal heritage district in Saskatchewan, it is a valuable, rare, and fragile environment. New interventions must stem from an understanding and acceptance of what is already there and always contribute to, rather than detract from, historical layers that define Regina's civic square.

*Text from Biblio Files: A History of the Regina Public Library.  
University of Regina Press. 2017. Pages 244-247.*

*"Central Library (1962) is a good example of the International Modernist style. Architect Kioyshi Izumi, of Izumi, Arnott and Sugiyama, was a Regina boy who matriculated from Regina College in 1944, earned an architectural degree in 1948 from the University of Manitoba, and after a Pilkington Glass traveling scholarship where he spent a year studying the economics of town planning at the London School of Economics, he received the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Scholarship in 1950, which he used to complete a graduate degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in city and regional planning. He returned to Regina and teamed up with Gordon Arnott in 1954.*

*Bernard Flaman: The Sun Never Sets: Victoria Park in Context.  
Dunlop Art Gallery. 2008*