



Danforth Branch Library now Pape/Danforth Branch



Designed in a Tudor Revival style, Danforth Branch was one of two libraries (with Runnymede) built by the Toronto Public Library Board with a grant of \$100,000 from the City of Toronto in 1928. The 40- x 110-foot site on the east side of Pape Avenue south of Danforth Avenue cost \$10,618.50 and the two-storey building, which covered almost the entire lot, was constructed for \$34,814.

The Toronto architectural firm George, Moorehouse & King planned the stone-and-stucco façade “in the style of an old English shop front: bay windows, small glass panes, an overhang to the upper storey, a timbered front, a heavy panelled door, a shingled and gabled roof.” Chief Librarian George Locke noted in 1929: “It is one of the most attractive of our branches and is confessedly a library adapted to commercial conditions – the most attractive shop in a district of shops.”

The lower floor housed the adult and adolescent library rooms, and the upper floor, with a separate approach, the children’s library and story-hour room.

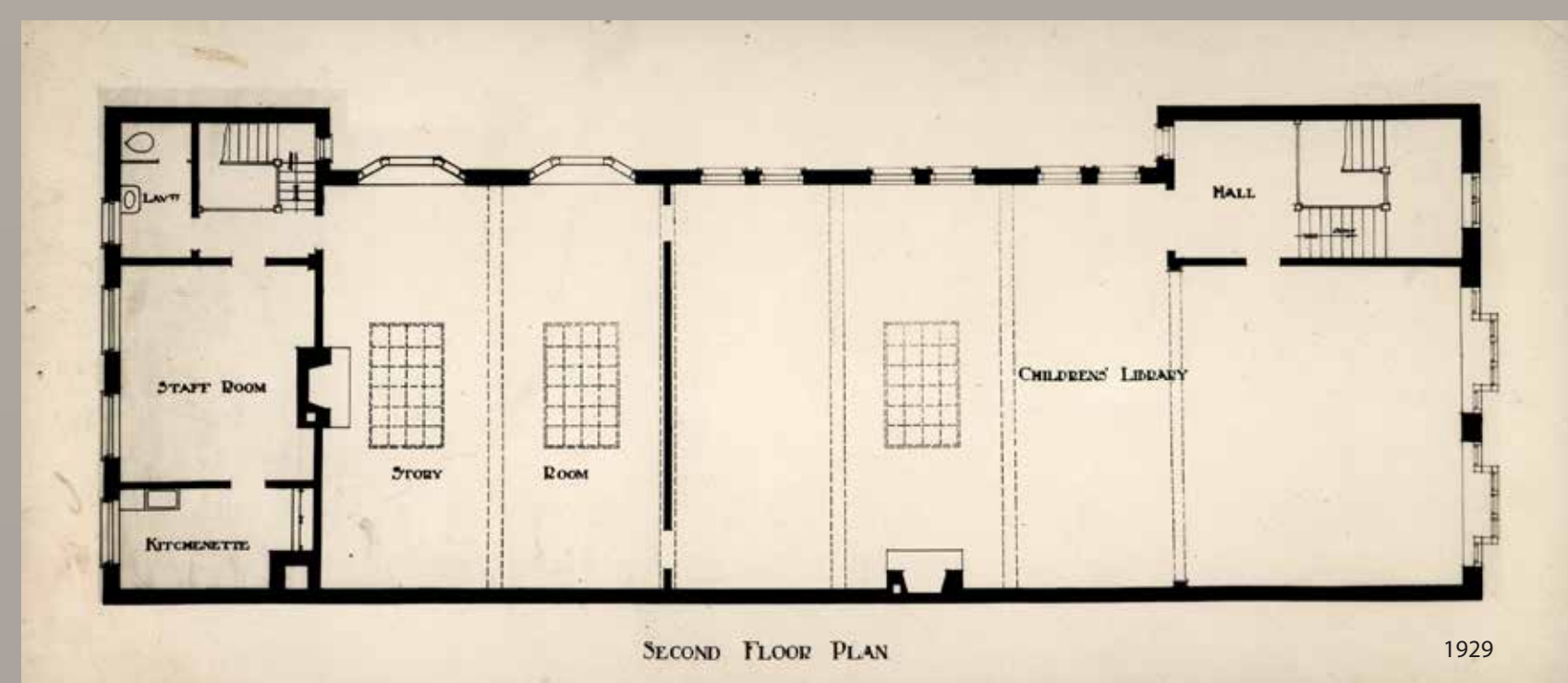
Opened on 20 November 1929 and renamed Pape/Danforth in 1979, the library has been renovated several times, most recently by Hariri Pontarini Architects (2006).



Circulating library and reading room, looking west, 1929.

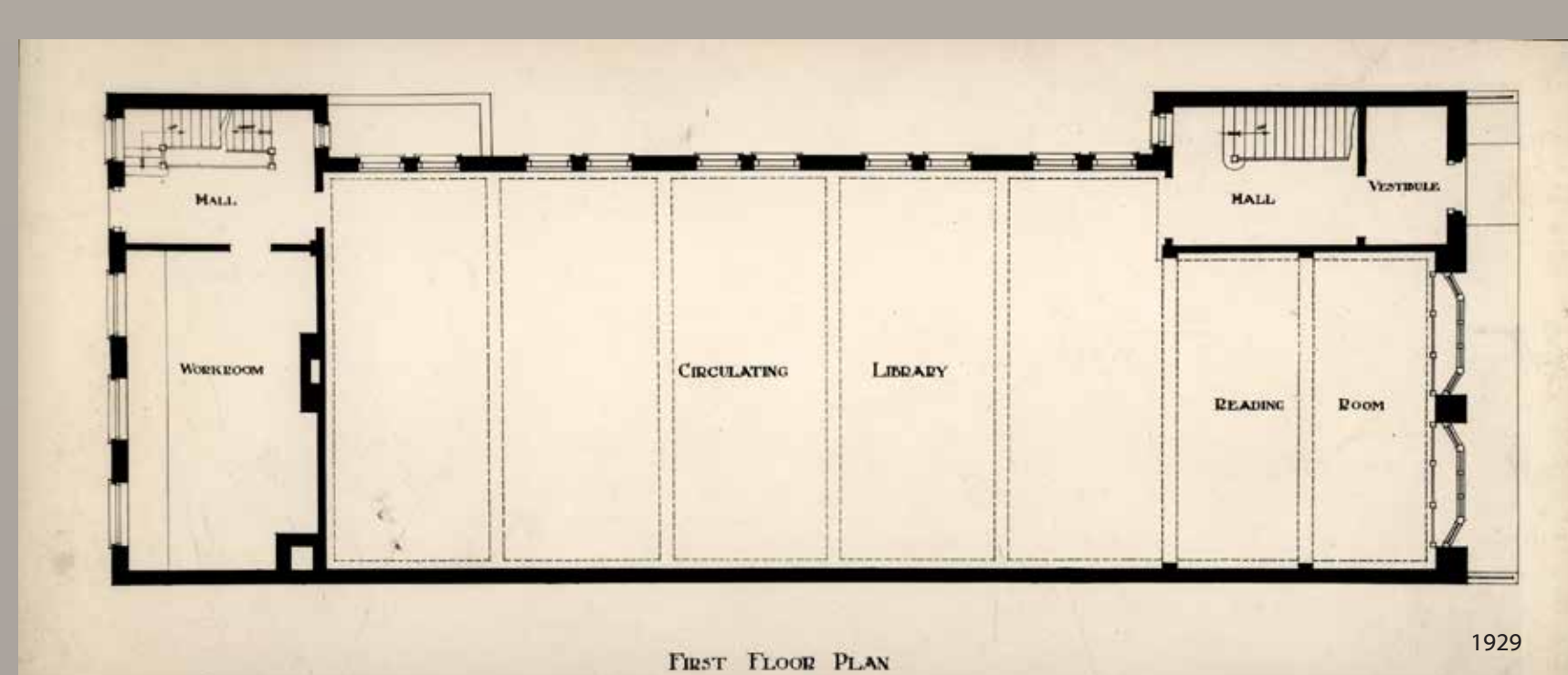


Children's circulating library and reading room, looking east, also showing entrances to the story hour room, 1929



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1929



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

1929

Want Branch Library On Danforth Avenue

A large delegation from the Danforth district waited on the Board of Control this morning asking that body to give favorable consideration to the request of the Library Board for an appropriation for the establishment of a branch library on the Danforth. It was pointed out that the Danforth section is really a city in itself, but has no library accommodation. The speakers included Principal W. R. Saunders, of the Riverdale Technical School; Ald. Bob Laxton, and Trustee Bridgen. Con. Bert Wemp introduced the delegation.

Toronto Telegram
1 February 1928



May Open Sundays.

“If you find that your require this branch library open on Sundays, get in touch with the City Council, and we will consult the Library Board,” suggested the Mayor, adding, “but I think it would be a mistake to open the libraries Sundays; then they will want the movies open. Once you open the movies on Sunday, we will have no Sunday. For myself, I am keeping the Sabbath closed.”

Foe of Communism.
Chief Librarian Locke, in congratulating the Danforth Business Men upon the new library, claimed that it was a credit to the city. Communism never makes any progress where there is intelligence, and always there is intelligence where there is found a library, he said.

“You cannot make grown people good, but you can make them more interesting,” contended Dr. Locke. “We are trying to make them more interesting by building libraries.”

Unique among libraries on the continent, the Danforth Branch Library, as explained by Dr. Locke to The Globe, follows the Queen Elizabeth period, and has been designed after an old shop in Chester, England. The shop design had made its appeal because of the location of the new library in the shopping district of Danforth.

To “Sell” Books.

“We are going to ‘sell books’ to the people of Danforth,” claimed Dr. Locke. Alderman R. Siberry, President of the Danforth Business Men’s Association, presided. Seated at the head table were representatives of the City Council and the Library Board and prominent men of the district, including: Alderman J. A. C. Cameron, Alderman R. A. Allen, Controller W. A. Summerville, T. W. Banton, Rev. F. E. Forrell, Controller Frank Whistler, Charles Probert, Fred G. Harrold, Charles Querrie, R. A. Cunningham, Alderman Frank Johnston, E. S. Caswell, ex-Trustee Ralph Day and Trustee Lorne Trull.

The luncheon arrangements were under the direction of the business women, with Mrs. M. Chambers as convener.

DANFORTH DISTRICT IS CONGRATULATED AS LIBRARY OPENS

Mayor McBride Declares
Himself Opposed to
Open Sunday

TRIBUTE TO DR. LOCKE

Indicative of the welding together of commercial and cultural life in the Danforth district was the official opening yesterday of the Danforth Branch Library, an event attended by nearly 200 men and women, representing the Danforth Business Men’s Association.

With luncheon tables spread in the spacious library room on the ground floor, the formal opening was featured by community singing and speeches by public men, while an orchestra contributed music to the program.

Mayor McBride, declaring the library open, after paying tribute to Dr. George H. Locke, Chief Librarian, said that legislation had been sought whereby 75 cents per capita might be levied for library purposes, and it might perhaps cost Toronto tax payers \$400,000. “But what is \$400,000 in a city growing like Toronto?” he asked.

Toronto Globe, 21 November 1929



Reading room, ca. 1975



Sankey Partnership Architects renovation, 1977



Hellenic evening, 11 April 1975



Hariri Pontarini Architects renovation
Digital rendering, 2006

Prepared by Toronto Public Library staff for the reopening of Pape/Danforth Branch, 20 August, 2006.