

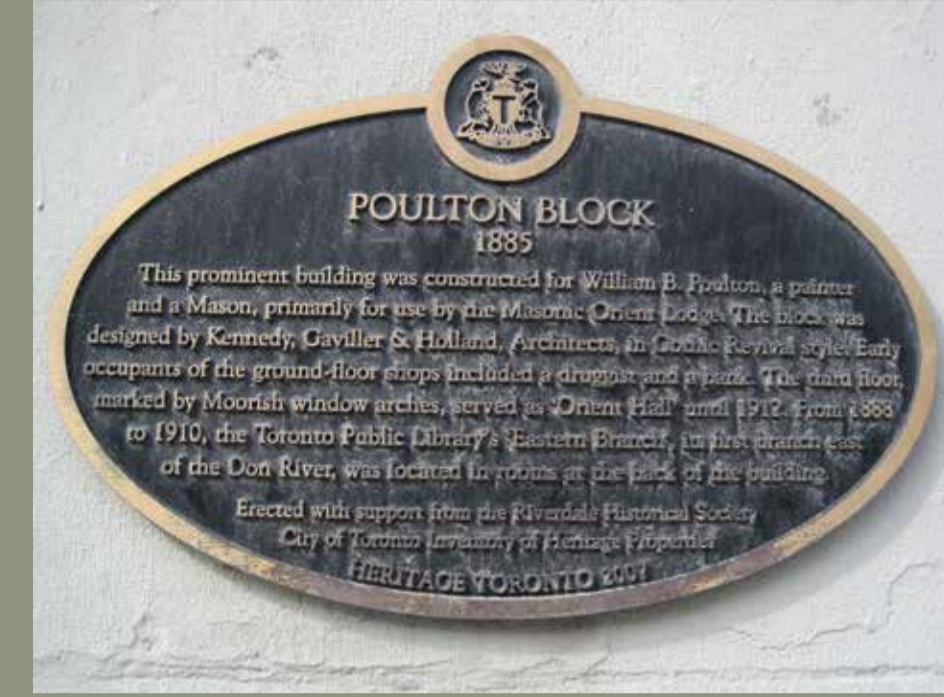
Riverdale Branch

Early library service: Eastern Branch, 1888-June 1910

- 1883** Toronto Public Library is established, 3 January. It is one of the first free public libraries in Ontario.
- 1888** Eastern Branch opens on 31 October in rented premises at the rear of Poulton's Block, Queen Street East at the northwest corner of Boulton Avenue.
- 1910** Eastern Branch is closed, June, with readers tickets issued at this location "honoured at Central [Library] until the new Riverdale Branch is ready."



Eastern Branch, 1900
This was the third branch opened by the Toronto Public Library.



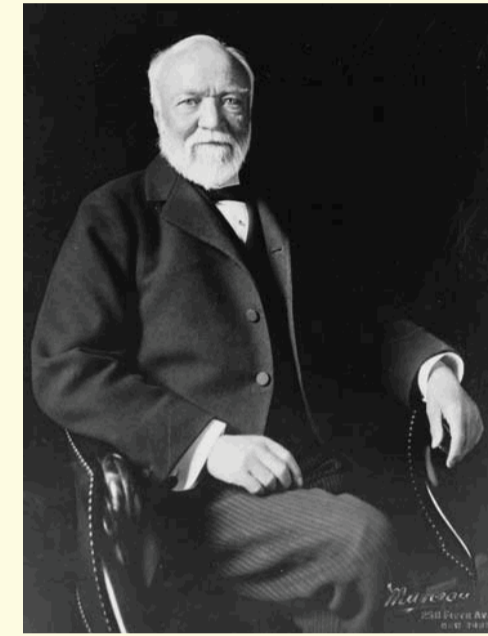
Poulton Block heritage plaque, 2007
Poulton's Block was listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1975. This heritage plaque was presented in 2007.



Poulton Block, 792 Queen Street East, northwest corner of Boulton Avenue, 2010

Planning and providing service at Riverdale Branch, 1903-27

- 1903** Andrew Carnegie grants \$350,000 to the Toronto Public Library for a new central library and three branch buildings, 23 January.
- 1906** Riverdale Business Men's Association is formed and begins to lobby for a permanent library branch in Riverdale.
- 1909** The City of Toronto provides a 85- x 84-foot (25m) site for the new branch on part of the Don Jail Governor's garden on Gerrard Street East at the northwest corner of Broadview Avenue.



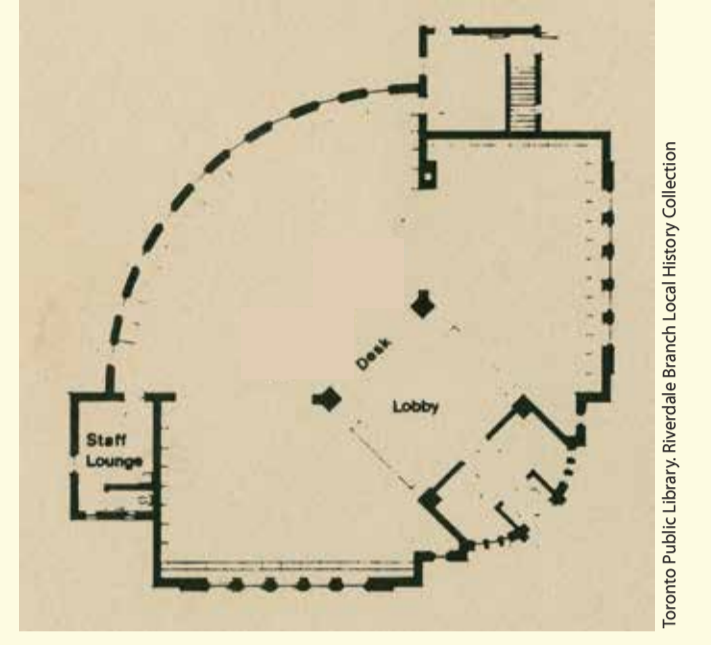
Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), 1913
The Scottish-born philanthropist amassed a fortune in the American steel industry, eventually giving more than \$56 million worldwide to build 2,509 free public libraries.



Early letter from the Riverdale Business Men's Association about building a local library, 27 June 1906.



Toronto Evening Telegram, 24 June 1910



Original floor plan, 1910-27
Riverdale Branch had reading rooms on the south and east facades, one for adults and the other for children up to age 14, with open access stacks between the two rooms.

City Architect Robert McCallum (1851-1916) designs Riverdale Branch. Construction contracts are awarded on 16 July.

- 1910** Riverdale Branch is opened, 19 October. It is the last library built with the 1903 Carnegie grant to Toronto.
- 1912** A children's librarian is appointed and story hours are started.



Riverdale Branch, about 1911
Designed in a Georgian Revival style by city architect Robert McCallum, the branch was constructed of red brick with white Ohio sandstone trim at a cost of \$24,174. It featured a distinctive upper balustrade, a retaining wall in matching materials, and, rare for a Carnegie library, a corner entrance. Note the benches in front of the wall installed in 1911 with funds provided by the Riverdale Business Men's Association.



Postcard of Riverdale Branch, about 1910
Riverdale Branch was located at a "great transfer corner" between two streetcar lines with the corner rounded off to be a Toronto version of the London circus.



Open access stack room and receiving counter, 1910
Riverdale Branch was Toronto's first library designed under the 1909 "open shelf" policy that allowed borrowers in branches to browse for books themselves instead of asking library staff to retrieve them from closed stacks.



Reading Room, 1910
Riverdale Branch had seating for 50 people in each reading room.

Building changes and service enhancements, 1928-78

- 1928** Boys and Girls addition opens on 23 January. It was designed in April 1927 by William S. Butler, Toronto Public Library's superintendent of buildings.
- 1969** Closed for repairs following fire set by vandals on 10 November, reopened 1 December.
- 1973** The Chinese language collection is established.
- 1977** Listed on Inventory of Heritage Properties adopted by Toronto City Council, 6 February.



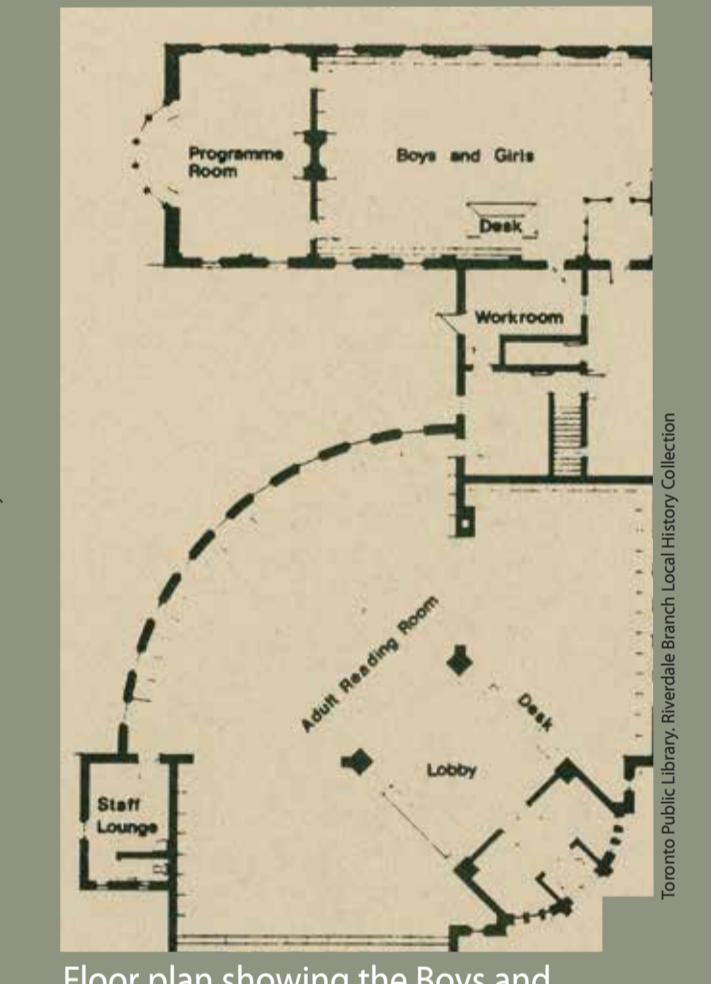
Boys and Girls Reading Room, 1928
"The congestion at Riverdale was so great that the Library Board was forced to erect this special room (with a Story-Hour Room off it) to accommodate the boys and girls. The picture represents Saturday morning between 9 and 10 o'clock." Reading in Toronto: annual report of the Toronto Public Library, 1927.



Damage after fire on 10 November 1969
Vandals lit fires in the children's storyroom and in the workroom, causing \$35,000 in damages and the destruction of 2,000 books.



"Chinese Day" celebrating the opening of the Chinese collection, 29 September 1973
Far right: Ruth Schwarz, Branch Head and Newman Mallon, Deputy Chief Librarian



Floor plan showing the Boys and Girls addition, 1927-8

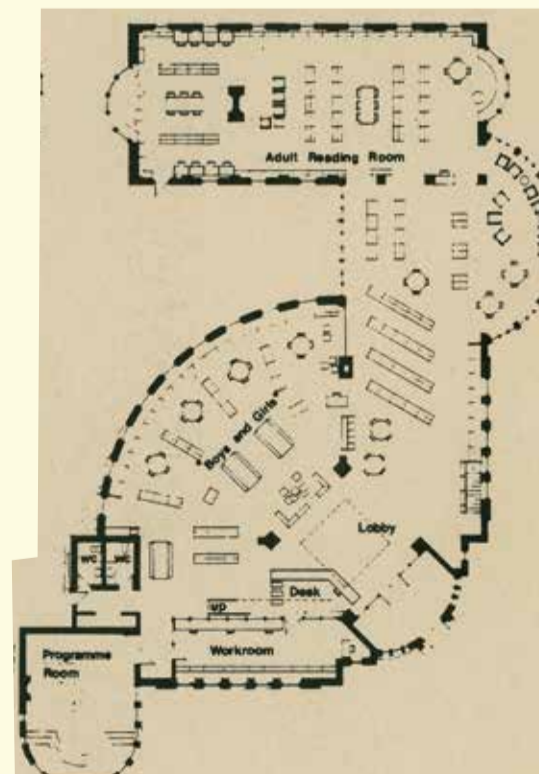
Building changes and service enhancements, 1979-2010

- 1979-80** Renovation by Hancock & Simpson Architects. Construction contract is awarded on 1 August 1979. Branch officially reopens on 19 April 1980.
- 1991-3** Renovation by Quadrangle Architects. Closed 2 December 1991 and reopened 29 March 1993.
- 1997** Computer learning centre opens with funds from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- 2010** Renovation by Quadrangle Architects. Closed 29 July and reopened 28 September.

Riverdale Branch celebrates a century of service to the community on 2 October 2010.



East facade showing the 1910 building (on the left) and additions from 1927-8 (right) and 1979-80 (middle), 1980



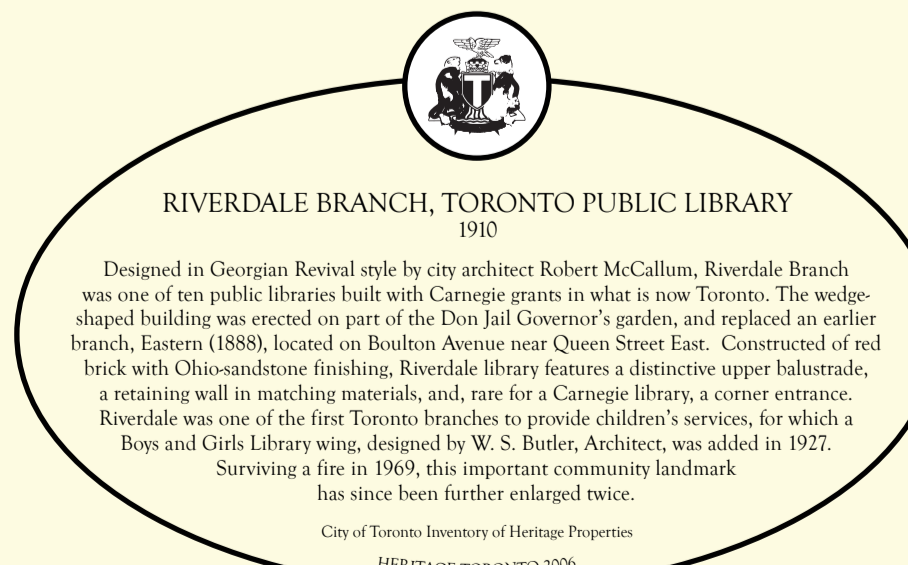
Floor plan showing 1979-80 renovations



Reopening announcement following renovations, 1993



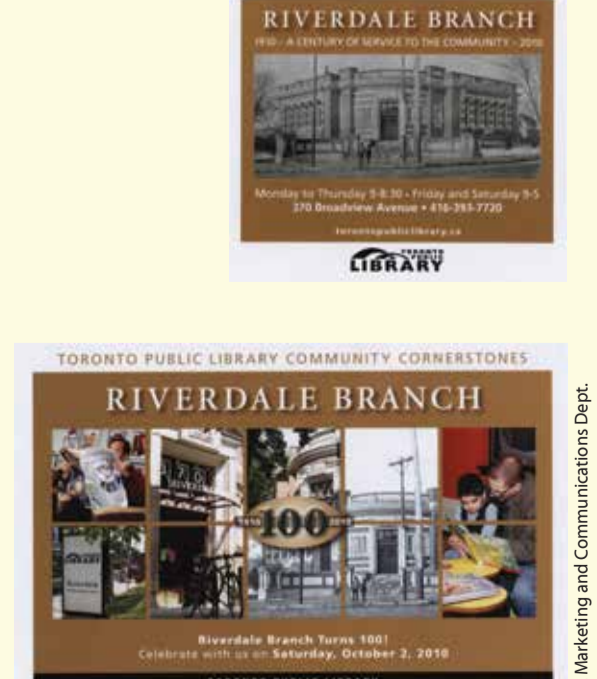
Branch head Fidelia Lau assists users at the Learning Centre, about 1997
Riverdale had one of first of these centres, providing PCs, and Internet access and training.



Text of Heritage Toronto plaque installed in 2006



Riverdale Branch, 2007



Centennial fridge magnet (top) and postcard, 2010