

**Cedar Rapids Public Library
Board of Trustees
Informal Meeting – Brown Bag Work Session
August 27, 2009**

Board members present:

Susan McDermott, Phyllis Fleming, Harriet Kalinsky, Joe Lock, Susan Corrigan, Doug Elliott, Hilery Livengood and Paul Pelletier.

Staff & others present:

OPN Architects Bradd Brown and Bruce Hamous, Karen Johnson, Christina Riedel, Jackie Haverman, Doug Munson, Nancy Geiger, Leon Green, Jeff Krohn, Erin Ely, Sue Stannard, Karla McMurrin, Tamara Glise, Brian Monroe of ME & V and several members of the public.

Library Board Vice-President Doug Elliott – Doug welcomed attendees to this informal Brown Bag Work Session on best practices in library design. The purpose of the session is to continue to educate board members with information helpful to building a new library. The previous Brown Bag Work Session 2 weeks ago was a summary and update of the Building Program.

A. Best Practices in Library Design, Bradd Brown and Bruce Hamous:

Bradd Brown is the Project Principal and will guide the team in terms of resources. He will design the project from start to finish and have absolute oversight. Bruce Hamous is the Project Manager and he will work with the library and the library's consultants. OPN has designed over 30 public libraries. Two weeks ago when George Lawson covered the Library Building Program, he spoke about the functional aspects of the library. Bradd wanted to talk today about the emotional aspects. It's his job to take George's information and ideas and make a building out of it. In order to make this a special facility OPN asked questions such as, "Who is the audience? What is the relationship with the community? What is this building's use?"

When designing the library, OPN will take into consideration:

- **User Demographics** - Age, area, and types of users such as event users, potential users, distance users, staff and volunteers. At the City Open Houses the library placards were the most popular area. Everyone in the community - regardless of age - interacts with the library.
- **Appearance (Exterior)** – No one appearance or style defines a library. The building should be responsive to the site context and the community and should recall its function internally specific to what it is. Ideally, there should be a sidewalk connection and transparency from the outside to the building's function so there is a connection to the community. The entrance should be self-evident so patrons will be drawn into the building and are not looking for an entryway.
- **Floor to Floor Height** – There is a need for good lighting for all shelving, so the building will need a little bit of ceiling height (18 feet floor to floor) in order to take advantage of indirect light and possibly a reflective ceiling.
- **Structure/Bones** There are constraints in terms of floor load and ceiling.

- **Columns Speak Volumes** – Adequate clearance is needed between shelving; areas need to be movable and expandable.
- **Exterior Space** – There should be adequate exterior space to enjoy prior to going into the building and also functional space for such things as bus stops, drop-off lanes, book drops, parking, etc.
- **Events/Programming** – Libraries support event and civic use by utilizing programming space, media, meeting rooms, community rooms and auditoriums. Emphasis is on connecting with the community.

The entrance to the library should be an opportunity for people to understand how to use building before entering. The following should be taken into consideration:

- **Hours of Use** – Does the community have the ability to use the building outside of regular library hours for after-hour meetings and activities? Are community events or meetings held within the library during operating hours disruptive to regular library use?
- **Transparency** – What are the views from outside in/inside out? What is the use of light? Is the building well-lit with natural light that is without excessive glare, which will aid in energy consumption?
- **Wayfinding:** Retail book chains have had a huge impact on libraries. When patrons use libraries, they don't always know what they want to take home with them when they arrive. In addition, people go to libraries not only to find something to take home to read, but also to spend time in the library whether it's reading a newspaper, magazine, or attending a program. The biggest challenge in building a library is wayfinding – layout and architecture are very important. There should be flexibility and clarity of space. It's important that the structure be expandable. Part of the problem with the original library building was wayfinding.
- **Browsing/Navigating:** Shelving matters and signage is important. The new trend is how to incorporate signage that advertises pieces within the collection (i.e. staff recommendations, best sellers, new books). Iconic elements can also create thresholds/boundaries.

Experiencing the Library:

- **Varied choices** - One time a patron might be going to the library with their family, another time they might be there to collaborate with others, or maybe the patron just wants to spend a couple of quiet hours. Color, texture, ceiling height, natural light, surfaces, materials, and furniture should all be taken into consideration.
- **Technology** – Technology is ever-changing. This can be addressed with building flexibility into the facility – particularly wiring considerations. These elements require good planning.
- **Administrative/Staffing** - How can the building maximize the effectiveness of staff members regarding repetitive motion issues, carpal tunnel, supervision, and key staff points for observation of library?

Taking it With You:

- **Books flow in and books flow out - Check In/Out** - There has been a transition from staff to self-serve check out. Some libraries have a combination of staff/patron locations and self-check stations. Kiosks are often utilized. Flexibility can be built in. Self-checkout can be similar to that used at airports with the same e-ticket philosophy.

Libraries can create something very state-of-the-art. For example, the Indianapolis library is well over 200,000 square feet. They have approximately 25 self-checkout kiosks located in a variety of sections for patron convenience. Staff wander the library wearing headsets to assist patrons. These are the types of ideas that OPN is looking at when considering the design of the library - processing information, creating resonance, and serving the public.

B. Question and Answer Session:

Q: Per OPN, over one-quarter of the comments at the City Open House sessions were proponents of Westdale Mall.

A: The *possibility* would have to be studied. The current structure may not support it.

Q: Hilery Livengood asked the following 3 questions:

1. Should there be entry level parking?
2. Should the library incorporate special use design – particularly with regard to contents given our experience with the flood?
3. What if all funding does not come in at once? Is phasing a possibility and how would that be incorporated?

A: *Raising the Building* – This could not be done using the existing structure. A rotated grid with multiple structural columns is not efficient for working parking around. A building could be designed to meet the program and to satisfy the need at that location. What it comes down to is intangibles such as street presence, understanding what the building is – people being able to see into the building. We are trying to draw people into building. It's important. At the old library there were 1,200 people a day entering the building. All those folks would have to go up a level to enter the building. Parents dropping off children would not be able to see their children walk into the building. Book drops and drive-by lanes would all have to come up. Deliveries could be problematic. It really comes down to what you see as a long-term solution. There are issues associated with raising the building.

Special Use/Flood Mitigation – There is a factor of safety needed to keep water out of a building. A mitigation strategy at the old site would be to elevate the building with parking. At Green Square Park, the building could be elevated several feet. If the building is built up, then the question arises as to how does one control the building if water surrounds it to keep humidity out, which would require emergency generation (this you see primarily in labs, etc.).

Phasing – Phasing is a possibility. It has been done in the past, such as with the Moline, IL Library and the Williamsburg Library. It's possible to design a building in such a way that you can add on to the building at a later time. The shell can be built and the interior left incomplete, such as at the Williamsburg Library. The Williamsburg Library was originally designed at 19,000 feet, but was later downsized a bit. They did not finish the program rooms. They have a functioning library and are doing just fine. Once design is in place, however, it is harder to downsize and that's why you look at the budget. Early in process the overall look of the building is determined, floor plan, image and cost module. That way if not enough money is available, the design can be reevaluated.

The Brown Bag Work Session was adjourned.