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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Camden Free Public Library Main Building
other names/site number Carnegie Library

2. Location

street & number 616 Broadway NA not for publication
city or town Camden vicinity
state New Jersey code 034 county Camden code 007 zip code 08102

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
[Signature] 9/2/92
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Delores Byers Date of Action 10/15/92
~~Entered in the~~
~~National Register.~~

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Neo-Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls limestone (south & west)
brick (north & east); granite (stairs)

roof slate

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See narrative description.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1905

Significant Dates

1905

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hale & Morse

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Camden County Historical Society

Carnegie Library
Name of Property

Camden County, New Jersey
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property One-third acre

Camden NJ-PA Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 489900 4420600
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4
 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Thompson, Historic Preservation Officer

organization Camden Redevelopment Agency date February 11, 1992

street & number 542 Cooper Street telephone (609) 757-7600

city or town Camden state New Jersey zip code 08102

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Camden Redevelopment Agency

street & number 542 Cooper Street telephone (609) 757-7600

city or town Camden state New Jersey zip code 08102

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Camden Free Public Library Main Building
Camden City, Camden County, NJ

The Camden Main Library is a large, Neo-Classical Revival structure prominently located at the northeast corner of Broadway and Line Street. While the building faces Broadway, a principal commercial thoroughfare in the City, it is set within a dense, urban neighborhood. The library's status is therefore noted by its grand scale and a large, fenced lot well in excess of neighboring properties.

The building, as completed in 1905, was square in plan with its front facade facing west. The building was constructed of Roman brick on the principal elevation and common brick on the rear (east) elevation. The decorative trim and ornament on the principal facades, to include cornices, quoins, surrounds and pilasters, are limestone. The roof is low mansard, covered in slate with copper flashings. At the corner of the roof was a glazed monitor or skylight. The roof is extensively deteriorated, with most of the slate and copper missing. Only fragments of the skylight survive; the majority of the structure and trim have been stolen or have collapsed into the second floor.

In elevation, the building is two stories in height on a raised basement. The basement is faced with limestone on the Broadway and Line Street facades. The Broadway facade is a tripartite composition, incorporating a central double-leaf door with a full surround ornamented with limestone swags, a transom with cartouche, and a full entablature. The existing doors are mid-twentieth century replacements. The entrance is approached by a broad series of steps with limestone-trimmed flankers. Above the door is a tripartite thermal window. The entrance is flanked by a pair of engaged modified Ionic pilasters supporting a full entablature with a bracketed cornice and pediment and a heavily molded cartouche with flanking cornucopia. Flanking the central entrance on the first floor are a pair of brick recessed panels with stepped corners. Above the panels are modified entablatures incorporated as part of a string course with limestone swags. The second floor contains tripartite windows with limestone surrounds. The windows were fitted originally with one-over-one double-hung sash. The cornice is comprised of a frieze inscribed with the names of literary luminaries, above which is a bracketed cornice. The whole is surmounted by a plain limestone parapet with subtly stepped ends.

The Line Street (south) elevation is divided into three sections. The central projecting section is three bays in width divided by stepped Ionic pilasters. The first floor central bay has tripartite sash with flanking single-bay sash. Originally, the windows were fitted with tripartite single-pane sash with corresponding transoms.

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Above the sash is a limestone band, or string course, ornamented with garlands. The second floor originally had stepped brick panels corresponding to the fenestration of the first floor. Two of the panels were altered with a pair of sliding sash added circa 1950.

Flanking the projecting central section of the Line Street elevation are identical one-bay compositions comprising a limestone raised basement with a window and a plain, projecting water table. The first floor has a single window, originally fitted with sash matching the central bay, and a similar limestone band with swags above. The second floor contains a single tripartite sash originally fitted with one-over-one double hung sash. The cornice and parapet are identical in detail to the Broadway facade.

The rear (east) and side (north) elevations are less ornamented than the Broadway and Line Street elevations. The rear facade is common brick with a simply detailed pressed metal cornice and brick parapet above. The rear facade is seven bays in width with a central five-bay projection. The side, or north elevation, has a similar fenestration to the east elevation, but is more finely detailed through the use of the same Roman brick as the primary elevations, and through the incorporation of recessed brick panels and corbeled brick to define the bases and caps of the central projecting bays' pilasters.

The interior was divided into two functional uses. The first floor contained the library (with stack storage in the basement) and the second floor housed an auditorium and stage. In plan, the building is divided into three zones; the west zone contains the main circulation areas. There is a vestibule on the first floor and a pair of flanking staircases which access the basement and second floor. The middle, and largest zone, contains the main library and open stacks on the first floor, and on the second floor the auditorium. To the east are the service areas; such as the service stairs, catalogue room, and stacks; on the second floor are the auditorium, dressing rooms, and toilet room.

The interior, prior to the extensive loss of finishes due to water damage, was richly ornamented in the classical Beaux Arts style. The first floor vestibule, staircases and second floor hall had faux ashlar walls with full cornices, pilasters, and panels all rendered in plaster. The staircases with their semi-elliptical ends are distinguished by classically ornamented railings with oak rails and bold finials.

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Architecturally, the most important space was the main reading room with its central octagonal disk and eight radiating stacks. All of the case work was classically detailed and of quartered oak or faux quartered oak finishes. Each of the radiating stacks has two levels with a circular niche facing into the room. Plinths in these niches suggest that they were intended to inframe busts. Each stack has an internal stair which accessed balconies at the second level. The stacks on the main floor of the library were arranged in a pan-opticon pattern, radiating outward from the main desk in a full circle. They were fifteen feet high with their own built-in steps and small balconies with seating.

The perimeter walls and ceiling were divided by a series of stepped pilasters, panels, and coffering in the Georgian Beaux Arts style. The same ornamental treatment was continued through to the second floor auditorium. The auditorium, which is a square room in plan, was originally dominated by a highly ornamented coffered ceiling with a skylight in the central coffer with laylights. The stage was removed circa 1960 and the ceiling, laylights and skylight have collapsed due to water penetration. The plaster wall ornamentation throughout the room has also been destroyed by water damage. The doors, door surrounds, window surrounds, baseboards, and wood trim throughout the building were quartered oak. Originally varnished, much of this trim was painted over at a later date.

The Camden Free Public Library is an important example of Beaux Arts design, planning and ornamentation. The exterior, with the exception of the roof, remains largely intact; however, the interior finishes, which survived until recently with few alterations, have been lost due to water damage and vandalism.

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Camden City, Camden County, NJ

A. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CAMDEN FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY (THE CARNEGIE LIBRARY)

Andrew Carnegie was born in a weaver's cottage in Dunfermline, Scotland in 1835, but by the age of sixty-six, after immigration to this country in 1846, he had amassed a fortune of well over 500 million dollars through various businesses including the Keystone Bridge Company, the Woodruff Sleeping Car Company and the Carnegie Steel Corporation. One of the most powerful industrialists of the era, and known as "The Steel King," he retired from the business world in 1901 and set about dispersing his fortune through a wide variety of philanthropic projects. Carnegie spent ninety percent of his fortune on such causes as the Carnegie Hero Fund, the Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the Carnegie Institute in Washington, D.C., the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh. He also paid for organs for 7,000 churches. But it was Carnegie's library program that had the widest ranging effect. Known as the "Patron Saint of Libraries," Carnegie donated \$56,162,622 for the construction of 2509 libraries throughout the English speaking world.

In 1889, Carnegie published an essay entitled "Wealth" in which he put forth his theories of philanthropy. Carnegie urged those who were fortunate enough to possess wealth to live their lives without extravagance, provide moderately for their dependents, and then consider the remainder of their money a surplus, to be distributed for the best promotion of welfare and happiness among those less fortunate.¹ In a second essay published the same year, entitled "The Best Fields for Philanthropy," Carnegie stated that universities and libraries were the most worthwhile fields in which to donate money. Carnegie was a strong advocate of education and ascribed to the belief that everyone possessed a natural right to knowledge. This knowledge was necessary in a democracy where the electorate needed to be enlightened in order for it to make informed, responsible choices.² Thus libraries not only increased the population's general

¹ Bobinski, George S. Carnegie Libraries. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969) p. 11

² Bobinski, p. 5.

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general knowledge, but aided in creating a society that would elect a government for sound reasons. There were two phases to Carnegie's library philanthropy. The first was the so-called "retail" period, from 1886 to 1896, in which Carnegie paid for the site, building, and books, and also provided an endowment for the library. During these years he gave away \$1,860,869. for 14 libraries in six communities. The second, or "wholesale" period, took place from 1898 to 1919 during which Carnegie gave away \$39,172,981 for 2495 libraries in 1406 communities. In this phase, Carnegie only paid for the library building and furnishings. Furthermore, the town or city had to provide a suitable site and agree to spend a minimum of 10% of the amount of Carnegie's gift in tax dollars each year for the maintenance of the library. The libraries in this period acted as catalysts for developing strong library programs in towns that were committed to doing so, but didn't have the means. This condition mirrored Carnegie's entire theory of philanthropy. He wanted to help people who would help themselves. He was not in the business of giving hand-outs. Instead, with his generous gifts he motivated people to better themselves. In a 1906 speech delivered before the American Civic Association, Carnegie stated that, "a free library occupies the first place, provided the community will accept and maintain it as a public institution, as much a part of the city property as its public schools, and, indeed, and adjunct to these. It is no doubt that my own personal experience may have³ led me to value a free library above all other forms of beneficence."

After a few years of donating libraries, Carnegie and his personal secretary, James Bertram, established a set of guidelines to regulate the process due to the large number of requests from towns and cities all across the country. A form application had to be used by all those interested in obtaining a library, and a pamphlet was published by Carnegie, starting in 1911, which set up certain architectural guidelines for the library buildings, Called "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings," this pamphlet set forth standards by which libraries using Carnegie money should be built. This pamphlet provided minimum requirements of accommodations within the buildings

³ Carnegie, Andrew, from an address from the American Civic Assoc., cited in A Portfolio of Carnegie Libraries by Theodore W. Koch. Reprinted from the "Chautaccuan Magazine," June, 1906

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that money should not be wasted on extravagant exteriors. "Each community was to obtain the greatest amount of usable space consistent with good taste in building."⁴ Furthermore, the architect was to, "keep a plain dignified structure and not aim at exterior effects that might make a practical and economic layout of the interior impossible." Bertram warned against building "Greek temples instead of Libraries."⁵

The main library in the City of Camden was built with Carnegie funds between 1904 and 1905 and is an example of a Carnegie library from the early years of the "wholesale phase." It was built before Carnegie and Bertram instituted building standards on the designs of the libraries and therefore shows the free hand of the architects in its design. The building also contains an auditorium, which was later considered unnecessary for library buildings by Carnegie. It is significant in that it was Camden's first free public library and remained in service for 81 years. It also links Camden to a national trend of library building that occurred at the turn of the century. Because the funds were provided by Carnegie, the structure is an important monument to the tradition of philanthropy in America, as started by Stephen Girard and Benjamin Franklin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and brought to new levels in the twentieth century by the charity of legendary philanthropists such as Carnegie and the Rockefellers.

In October of 1902, a prominent Camden resident, bacteriologist and novelist Dr. Dowling Benjamin, wrote a letter to Andrew Carnegie asking for funds to build a library in the City of Camden. The chance for Camden to have a free public library had only been made possible in November of the previous year when New Jersey passed the "Free Library Law," which gave the state the power to tax its citizens for money that would be used for the establishment of public libraries. After much correspondence between Carnegie's Secretary, Bertram, and Dr. Benjamin, followed by letters from various members of the Public Library Board, arrangements were made for Carnegie to donate 100,000 dollars to Camden for the construction of a main library and two branches. The City agreed to provide 10,000 dollars

⁴ Bobinski, p. 58.

⁵ Bobinski, p. 65

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a year, 10% of Carnegie's covenant, for the maintenance of the building, and provide a site. These were two conditions that were mandated by Carnegie for all libraries he donated. The January 4, 1903 letter from Bertram finalizing the offer reads as follows:

If the city agrees by resolution of council to maintain a free public library at a cost of not less than \$10,000 a year, and provide a suitable site for the building, Mr. Carnegie will be glad to furnish \$100,000 to erect a free public library building of Camden.⁶

A City resolution, dated February 26, 1903, accepted Carnegie's offer. Camden decided that \$80,000 of the \$100,000 would be spent on the main library and \$10,000 would go to each of the two branches. The site chosen by the city was purchased from Paul Shinn on November 2, 1903 for a sum of \$15,000. The site measured 80.5ft. x 60ft. and was "situated at one of the chief thoroughfares of the city and centrally located." The library was designed by the architects. Herbert Hale and Henry Morse. The two men maintained a temporary office in Philadelphia from 1900 to 1905, and practiced permanently in Boston and New York, respectively. Hale was trained at Harvard and Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, while Morse attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The design of the library called for a neoclassical Beaux Arts-style two-storied building with a pedimented entrance portico on the west facade facing Broadway. On July 4, 1904, the cornerstone of the building was laid and construction began. The builder was the firm of J. E. and A. L. Pennonck, of 4605 Chester Avenue, Philadelphia. When the library was completed, the City did not have enough of Carnegie's funds left to furnish the building. Carnegie agreed to supply an additional \$20,000 on the condition that the City

⁶ A letter from James Bertram to Dr. Dowling Benjamin, January 4, 1903. In the collection of the Carnegie Files, Butler Library, Columbia University.

⁷ From a letter from Howard Cooper, president of the Free Public Library Board of Camden, to James Bertram, 1903. Carnegie Files, Butler Library, Columbia University.

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funds for maintaining the building would increase proportionally. Camden agreed and the library was furnished and opened on June 27, 1905.

For most of this century, the library fulfilled its purpose of providing the people of the city with a place to read and learn. As the main library building in Camden, it served as a focal point for the community and a landmark for the City. Said Doris Smith Gaines, supervisor of the library, "This is a very, very busy library. We have people come in and check out stacks and stacks of books."⁸

Unfortunately, Camden experienced a sharp economic downturn. The funds for the library had to be cut drastically in the early 1980's when they were needed the most to restore and maintain the building. The original electrical system was still being used and there was no air-conditioning, which meant that computers could not be put in the building. Also, there were no public restrooms and no handicapped access. To make matters worse, the roof leaked constantly causing the plaster to crumble and floors to buckle. In 1982, it was decided to convert the old Public Service Gas and Electric Building on Federal Street into the main library at a cost of approximately \$1 million. The work on the new library took three years longer than expected and was \$200,000 over budget. On December 23, 1986, the Carnegie Library Building was officially closed and its collection was transferred to the new site. Since the building was closed in 1986, water damage and vandalism have caused extensive loss of historic fabric. The greatest losses have been sustained by the roof and all of the interior finishes.

⁸ Gaines, Doris Smith, quoted in an article by Vancessa Williams in the Philadelphia Inquirer, December 19, 1986, p. B12

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George S. Bobinski, Carnegie Libraries
Theodore W. Koch. A Portfolio of Carnegie Libraries
James Bertram to Dr. Dowling Benjamin January 4, 1903
(in the collection of the Carnegie Files, Butler Library, Columbia
University, N.Y., N.Y.)
Howard Cooper to James Bertram 1903 (Carnegie Files, Butler
Library, Columbia University, N.Y., N.Y.)
Vanessa Williams, The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
December 19, 1986
Kise, Franks & Straw, Camden Free Public Library: Building
Preservation Plan (unpublished manuscript for the Camden Redevelopment
Agency, January 1992).

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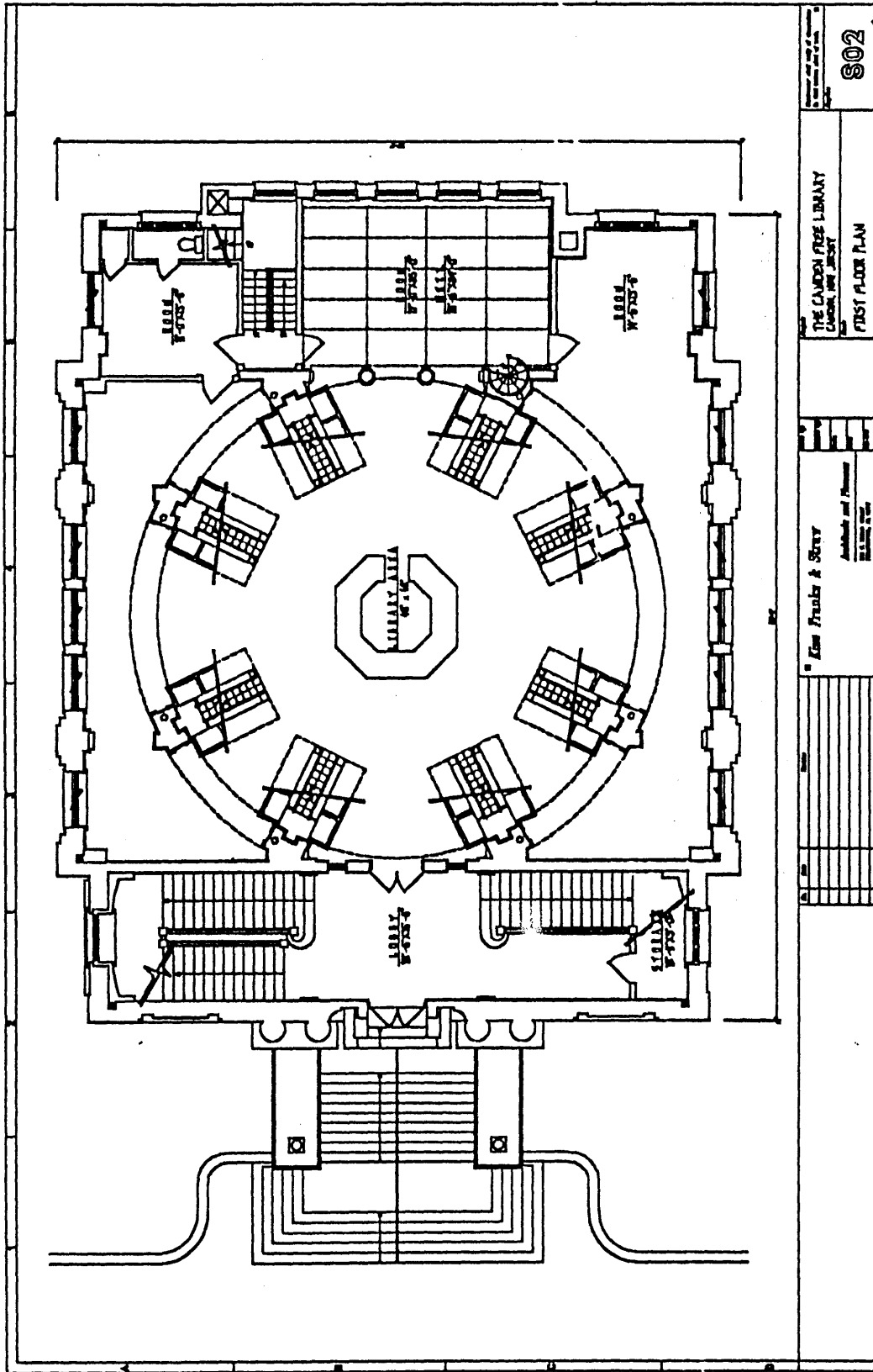
Camden Free Public Library Main Building
Camden City, Camden County, NJ

Boundary Description

Block 376, Lot 17 of the City of Camden Tax Map
The Library, centrally sited on the 80' x 160' lot bounded by
Broadway, Line Street and St. John Street, is oriented to the west.

Boundary Justification

The boundary conforms to streets on three sides and the property line
on the north. It includes all land historically associated with the
Carnegie Library.



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 Camden City, Camden County, NJ

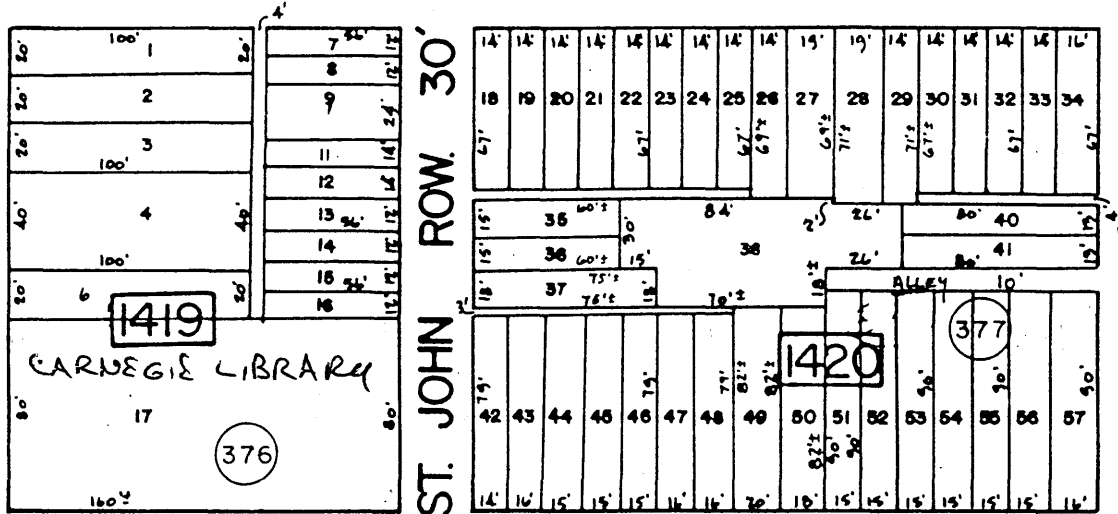
Existing First Floor Plan

SEE SHEET 391

ROYDEN ST. ROW. 55'

BROADWAY ROW. 66'

KEY MAP 4



LINE ST. ROW. 55'

SIXTH ST. ROW. 60'

KEY MAP

Camden Free Public Library Main Building
(Carnegie Library)

Tax Map (1981)
City of Camden
Camden County, New Jersey

Scale: 1" = 40'