

# History of MAIN STREET BRANCH 1921 – 2021

## THE ANNEXATION OF EAST TORONTO

Once More the City Is Asked to  
Open Its Arms and Take  
in Large District.

East Toronto may be annexed to the city ere long. The Board of Control indicated such a policy to-day when a deputation from the town appeared before them to urge that the city take in East Toronto and all the district lying between, with a total population of 9,000.

Mayor McMillan and Councillors Baker and Lyonde were on the deputation. They told of the growth of the town, and how its population had doubled in five years.

Toronto Daily Star, January 29, 1908

## Annexation of East Toronto, 1908

When the Town of East Toronto was annexed to Toronto the assets of its library were transferred to the Toronto Public Library. The central street in East Toronto was Main Street with the commercial centre of the town located at Main Street and Lake View Avenue (present day Gerrard Street East).

## Eastern Toronto Branch Opens in Y.M.C.A., 1914

The Eastern Branch opened on December 15, 1914 in rented rooms at the Y.M.C.A. at Gerrard Street East and the northeast corner of Main Street on the current site of the Ted Reeve Arena.



Eastern Branch located in Y.M.C.A. building, 1915

## New Building, 1921, J.P. Hynes, Architect

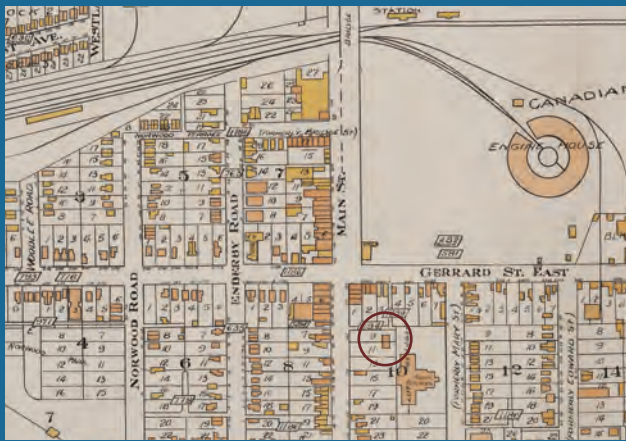
When the library vacated the Y.M.C.A. the Library Board secured a convenient site for a new library on Main Street, east side, between Swanwick Avenue and Gerrard Street East on the former site of some old cottages. This branch was to serve a large section of the eastern portion of the city, which was badly in need of proper library service. The architect designed a two storey English style brick and timber frame structure. The main feature of the plan was the second floor Boys and Girls Reading Room with brick walls, fireplace and high wood ceiling. The ground floor was finished in rough stucco, the trim being of British Columbia fir, oiled and stained. The cost of the completed building was twenty-two thousand dollars and it opened December 15, 1921.



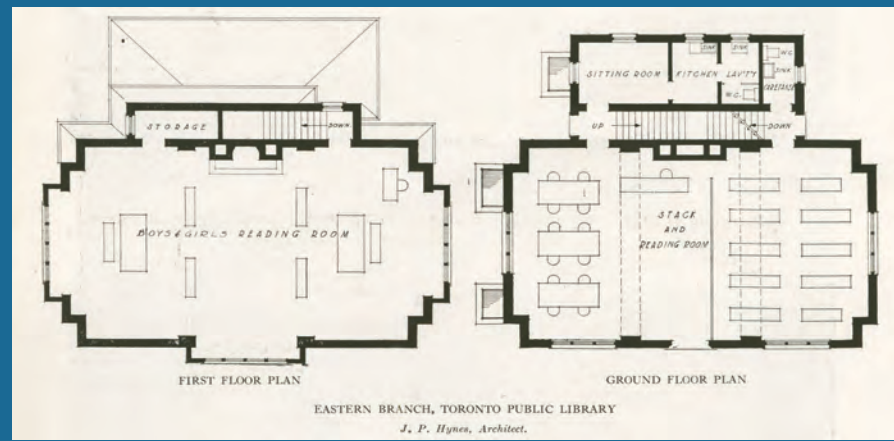
Toronto Architect, J.P. Hynes



Construction xv, 1922



Atlas of the City of Toronto, 1923



Architectural plans from R.A.I.C. Journal iii, May/June 1926

## Renovation, 1928

A one-floor extension was erected on the south side for a stack-room to provide additional shelving. Circulation was increasing each year and the branch required additional space in order to provide a comfortable space for borrowers and an efficient workspace for staff.



Boys and Girls Reading Room, 1930



Children reading in Boys and Girls Reading Room, 1930



Eastern Branch, 1939, City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231



Edward Bear concert, Eastern Branch, Festival-on-the-lawn, 1974

## Renovation and Renaming, 1977, Carter & Greenberg, Architects

An extensive renovation costing \$204,000 included a large new two-storey wing on the north side, a glazed conservatory at the front with a reading room and the re-design of the front yard landscaping. The inside of the library received a facelift to lighting, painting, furnishings and shelves. A Citizen Advisory Committee representing neighbourhood community members and library staff worked closely with the architects. The renovations increased the collections and reading room capacity by one-third. The Library Board renamed the branch Main Street Branch.



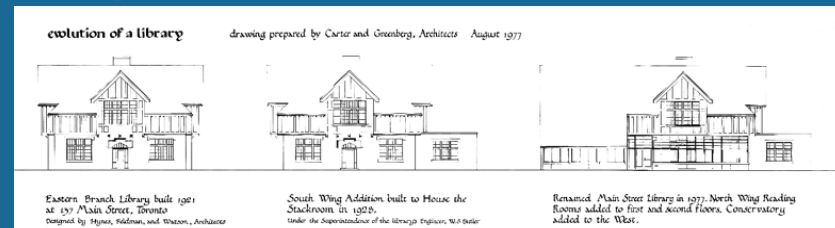
Children outside the Main Street Branch, 1977

## Main St. Library sports new look

If you haven't visited Main Street Library for the past year or so, chances are you won't recognize it today. Architects Phil Carter and Ken Greenberg have done a fantastic job of redesigning. There is a new two-storey extension on the north side of the building. Upstairs a separate room for kids has been added. Downstairs a community room has been included and it will be for public use. But the best addition is the conservatory which will serve as a reading room. It is almost all glass and there will be wicker furniture, lots of plants and even birds. Besides its new look, the library also has new material. The record collection has been doubled, there are more magazines, children's games and a selection of close to 2,000 popular paperbacks.

The Main Street Library Citizen's Advisory Committee has been actively involved in the renovations. A building committee of library staff and community residents was established. Committee members are: Anne Doherty, Donald Durst, Sheila Blinoff, Marta Coulls, Helen Cram, Rod Travers-Griffin and Ann Wright. The library is now open, but official ceremonies take place on Saturday, September 24, beginning at 2 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the Arcadian Concert Band, the Malvern Concert Band, and children will enjoy the talents of a clown and juggler. There will be a draw, free refreshments and a used book sale.

Ward 9 News, September 13, 1977



Drawing prepared by Carter & Greenberg, Architects, August 1977

## Toronto Sesquicentennial, 1984

A quilt depicting scenes from Toronto's Ward 9 was stitched and quilted by a group of ninety women, men and children co-ordinated by Hilary Rowland during 1984, Toronto's sesquicentennial year. The quilt is displayed in Main Street Branch.



Quilt square by Julie Rowland

## Branch Renovation, 1985, Klein & Taylor Architects

An addition to the front entrance of the library was completed in 1985.



Main Street Branch, 1985



Main Street Branch, 1980s



Citizen adviser Ann Doherty (left) joins architects Ken Greenberg and Phil Carter, and Sheila Blinoff of the Ward 9 Community News in examining the scale model of the renovations soon to begin at the Eastern Library, 1977

## Gardens at Main Street 2008

The Main Street gardens were redesigned in 2008 by the Beach Garden Society and are maintained by a core group of volunteers.



Main Street Branch garden volunteers

## Main Street Branch Centennial, December 15th 2021

Main Street Branch maintains its vital role in the Upper Beaches neighbourhood serving the dynamic needs of its diverse community.



Main Street Branch, 2021



Main Street Children's area, facing south, 2021