

JANUARY 31, 2013

TO: BUILDING COMMITTEE
CHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

FROM: STEPHEN WOOD
ARCHITECT

RE: PROPOSED RENOVATION OF
CHESTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

REVIEWING THE FEASIBILITY STUDY I'M CONCERNED THAT THE PRESENT PROPOSAL DOES NOT SUFFICIENTLY RESPECT THE HANDSOME HISTORIC BUILDING.

TWO EXAMPLES ARE: REMOVAL OF A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE WEST WALL AND UNBALANCED ASYMMETRICAL ADDITIONS TO THE PRINCIPAL FACADE.

Chairman, Chester Library Hearing

I object to the proposed plan to expand the library for the following reasons: It is a gem and -

- 1) As a historically significant building, the library was entered on the State Register of Historic Places in May 1995. Although this is an honorary designation, the Register guides officials and the public in identifying buildings which should be preserved as an important historic resource.
- 2) The expansion plan does not respect the integrity and proportions of the original structure by adding wings.
- 3) The eastern and western walls of the original building would be demolished for the proposed expansion.
- 4) The additions would destroy the Beaux Arts style of the building - one of the over 2000 library buildings of which Andrew Carnegie was the benefactor when it was built in 1909. The building has been called an important architectural resource by the director of the State Historical Commission. It enhances the town and must be preserved in its original state.

Possible options might be to add the material on local history and genealogy to the early land records, maps, etc at the Town Office building. This would make research material on Chester history and residents more easily available to scholars and families with Chester roots.

Another option would be to move the circulating library books to a community center building that could be built across the street from the present building.

Renovation of the interior can be carried out in the present building without any additions.

Barbara S. Delaney

Chester is fortunate that it is a veritable school of architectural styles of the centuries since its beginnings as an ecclesiastical quarter of the Congregational Church in Daybrook. The library is an admirable example of early 20th century libraries. Built in 1907, it has not been altered since. The interior has been renovated many times but the exterior remains the same. Let us continue that tradition. Any addition should not alter the facade.

A ramp could be added to the parking lot - similar to that at the Meeting House; and further interior additions in the lower level are possible. But the exterior should be maintained.

Barbara D. Kellogg