

Landmarks Preservation Commission
May 16, 1995; Designation List 264
LP-1867

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, TOTTEVILLE BRANCH,

7430 Amboy Road, Tottenville, Staten Island. Built 1903-04. Carrère & Hastings, architects.

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Tax Map Block 7899, Lot 9.

On October 1, 1991, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch, and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Three witnesses, including a representative of the New York Public Library, spoke in favor of designation and no witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. The Commission has received three written submissions in favor of designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

Built in 1903-04, the Tottenville Branch of the New York Public Library is the oldest public library building on Staten Island and one of the oldest in the city. Its construction was the result of industrialist Andrew Carnegie's unprecedented philanthropic campaign to extend and consolidate the library branch system in New York City, and eventually to erect library buildings throughout the English-speaking world; the Tottenville application was the first to be submitted when Carnegie's program was announced in 1901. The library building was designed by the notable architectural firm of Carrère & Hastings, which not only designed the Main Building of the New York Public Library and many branch buildings, including all the Carnegie libraries erected on Staten Island, but several other significant structures in that borough. As a public building and village symbol, the Tottenville Library is appropriately inspired by classical architecture, as exhibited in its entrance portico, thermal windows, and symmetrical layout, yet simultaneously the building has a subtle rustic quality, in keeping with the villagelike character of Tottenville and the landscaped site. Those features place the building among Staten Island's finest works of public architecture. The Tottenville Branch traces its roots back to 1899, when the Tottenville Library Association established the Tottenville Free Library, the first free modern public library on Staten Island. The founding of the library coincided with the climax of the village's growth due to the prosperous coastal industries of shipbuilding, oystering, and seaside resorts. For more than ninety years the Tottenville Branch, which survives nearly intact, has been visually and historically an important component of its community.

History of Tottenville¹

The southwestern tip of Staten Island (Richmond County), once an important Native American habitation site and burial ground, has a recorded history which dates to the 1670s, when Captain Christopher Billopp built a stone manor house (the Billopp or Conference House, a designated New York City Landmark) and initiated ferry service to Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Billopp's plantation, later enlarged and given the title "Manor of Bentley," was the largest holding in the West Division (later renamed Westfield Township), one of the four precincts into which the county was divided. Following the Revolution, the Billopp property was confiscated by the State of New York, partitioned, and sold; it continued to be used largely for farming and as a base for fishing and associated maritime trades. Gradually the land was subdivided into smaller lots and by the 1840s a hamlet began to form around the ferry landing and the nearby sections of Amboy Road, the path leading to it. The slow-growing settlement soon came to be known as Tottenville, after the prominent family who had erected a wharf, Totten's Landing. Many local residents were engaged in the oyster business and ship-building, which remained leading occupations and mainstays of the area economy into the 1920s, while the waterfront setting and frequent steamer and ferry connections prompted the development of small summer resorts, restaurants, hotels, and other recreation businesses.

The completion in 1860 of the Staten Island Railroad, which ran from Vanderbilt's Landing on the island's east shore to a depot near the hamlet's ferry landing, establishing an important link between the developing village and the rest of the island, spurred the growth of an adjacent commercial area. During the subsequent decade, a post office was begun and soon named Tottenville, and the hamlet was officially incorporated as a village — the only one to be chartered on the island's southern and western sections. The village, re-incorporated in 1894, reached a peak of development at the close of the nineteenth century, when many commercial and civic institutions — such as the Tottenville Free Library, several weekly newspapers, the Atlantic Terra Cotta Works, and the Tottenville Copper Company — were established. From the 1870s through much of the present century, Tottenville has been the largest, most populous, and most cohesive settlement in the southern section of Staten Island

and has retained its individuality as a suburban village.

The Tottenville Free Library

Early American libraries were associated with churches, towns (or school districts), colleges, or cooperative groups; during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the progressive free public library movement overshadowed those initiatives. On Staten Island, particularly following the Civil War, libraries slowly began to form with the development of literary and historical societies, two of which were based in Tottenville.² In 1897 a group of women founded the Philemon Club (later known as the Philemon Literary and Historical Society), to pursue their interest in literature, art, science, civics, philanthropy, and music; their male counterparts established the Philo Debating Society. Together they called a public meeting on February 6, 1899, at which time the Tottenville Library Association was organized. In the subsequent weeks, the Board of Trustees was established, a constitution adopted, and officers elected: Frank Joline (president), Mrs. Cynthia M. Little (vice president), Mrs. Mary Mason (secretary), Gilbert S. Barnes (treasurer), and Rev. J.C. Hendrickson; committees were appointed, by-laws adopted, and an application for a charter was made to the regents of the University of the State of New York. Mr. Joline, a United States customs official, solicited residents of the town for books, maps, charts, and related materials, as well as for funds.

On April 29, 1899, the Tottenville Free Library opened to the public. It was the first free public library chartered for Richmond County by New York State. Its 230 volumes, mostly unbound, were housed in two rooms on the ground floor of a double house at 137 (now 204-206) Johnson Avenue, a frame structure featuring a full-width wood porch. Association vice president Cynthia M. Little and secretary Mary Mason were the first librarians. The state charter was received in June. A printed announcement from 1901 offers a detailed view of the fledgling institution: following the appointment of Mrs. Leonora C. McCormack as librarian, the building was open Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 2 to 5 and 7 to 9 and

Reference books at the Library include[d] a Standard Dictionary, a set of Encyclopædia Britannica, 20 Volumes of "The World's Best

*Literature," Rand & McNally's Atlas — and many other valuable works.*³

The Association especially urged library patrons to read "standard works" and permitted the use of the rooms as a common meeting-place, where, under proper restrictions, games of checkers and chess could be played, enabling Mr. Joline to posit, "Thus the sphere of a small library, can with good to a community, be extended beyond its ordinary limits."⁴ By 1901, the Tottenville library had taken over the administration of a state traveling library located at the Prince's Bay office of the S.S. White Dental Company plant.

In November 1900, supporters of the library began to discuss the purchase of land for a building site, so it is not surprising that the Association was poised to take advantage of industrialist Andrew Carnegie's offer to finance new buildings to be used as free, public circulation libraries.⁵

New York Public Library and Andrew Carnegie⁶

The New York Public Library, a private corporation providing library services under contract to the City of New York, is the product of an amalgamation first of several privately-owned libraries and, later, various free circulating libraries. The consolidation in 1895 of the excellent research facilities of the privately-owned Astor and Lenox Libraries (founded respectively by the will of John Jacob Astor in 1849 and by the famous book collector and philanthropist James Lenox in 1870) and the Tilden Trust (established in 1886 by the will of former governor of New York Samuel J. Tilden) formed the basis for the Reference Department. Meanwhile, the New York Free Circulating Library, established in 1878, incorporated two years later, and aided by public funds beginning in 1887, was supported initially by wealthy New Yorkers such as Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jacob H. Schiff, and Henry G. Marquand, who were interested in encouraging the self-education of the poor and aiding the underprivileged. In 1901 the Free Circulating Library, which had grown to include eleven branches, was incorporated with several smaller free circulating libraries in the city to form the Circulation Department of the New York Public Library (now the Branch Libraries System).

The Library branch system, which serves the boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten

Island, owes most of its development to industrialist Andrew Carnegie, the exemplar of the self-made man. His philanthropic philosophy was spelled out in two articles published in 1889 in the *North American Review* and later reprinted as the title essay of his book, *The Gospel of Wealth and Other Timely Essays* (1901). Carnegie's aim, "to help those who would help themselves," would be achieved through "a free library ... 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, an adjunct to these."⁷ As early as 1881 he had donated a library to his native town in Scotland and later to Pittsburgh and other Pennsylvania communities. In New York, where he had lived since 1867, he served on the board of the Free Circulating Library beginning in 1893 and assisted in money-raising campaigns. In 1901 he sold his steel company to J.P. Morgan and began seeking a substantial philanthropy to which he could direct his attention and his wealth. Following the guarantee that the Public Library and the Free Circulating Library would merge, as Carnegie had advocated, he pledged \$5.2 million for the establishment in New York City of sixty-five library branches (divided among the New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public Library, and Queens Borough Library) to cost \$80,000 each. For the three boroughs it served, the New York Public Library would construct and equip the libraries with the Carnegie funds and operate them as free circulating libraries on lease from the city, which would maintain the properties. In November 1901, the New York Public Library agreed that architectural services for the anticipated buildings would be provided by three highly prestigious firms: Babb, Cook & Willard; McKim, Mead & White; and Carrère & Hastings. Carrère & Hastings received contracts for all four Carnegie libraries built on Staten Island. It was agreed that the Carnegie branches would embody a distinctive type, uniform in design, materials, general characteristics, and scale; the resulting buildings were of superior architectural quality.⁸ Eventually Carnegie's unprecedented beneficence totaled \$65 million for approximately 2,900 libraries in the English-speaking world.

Carrère & Hastings⁹

John Merven Carrère (1858-1911) was educated in Switzerland before entering the Ecole des

Beaux-Arts in 1877. Thomas Hastings (1860-1929), born in New York, spent a short time at Columbia University before entering the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. The future partners met in Paris, both earned their diplomas — Carrère in 1882, and Hastings in 1884 — and entered the office of McKim, Mead & White, where they became reacquainted. In 1885, the two established a partnership in New York City. Encouraged by Henry Flagler, a partner in Standard Oil and a promoter interested in the development of Florida railroads and real estate, they designed and supervised the construction of churches and hotels in Florida which reflected the Spanish Renaissance style and were innovative in their use of concrete. Their later hotels include the Laurel in the Pines Hotel (1889-90) at Lakewood, New Jersey, and the Hotel Jefferson (1893-94) in Richmond, Virginia. The firm's later buildings were designed in the French Renaissance and Beaux-Arts styles, the latter exemplified in their winning competition design (1897) for the New York Public Library. The library (1898-1911, a designated Landmark) established Carrère & Hastings as one of the country's leading architectural firms and a leading exponent of the Beaux-Arts style. The firm was also responsible for the design of at least thirteen Carnegie-funded libraries in New York, commissions awarded to the firm after the success of the main library building.

The highly prolific firm produced many other memorable designs which survive as designated New York City Landmarks. The First Church of Christ, Scientist (1899-1903) at the northwest corner of Central Park West and West 96th Street is in the finest tradition of Beaux-Arts classicism. The approaches and arch of the Manhattan Bridge (1905) and Grand Army Plaza (1913, a designated Scenic Landmark) show the firm's interest in city planning. Richmond Borough Hall (1903-07), Staten Island, exhibits the firm's predilection for the brick-and-stone architecture associated with early seventeenth-century France. In addition to monumental public architecture, Carrère & Hastings was very active in residential design; among the most highly regarded urban examples are the John Henry and Emily Vanderbilt Sloane Hammond Residence (1902-03) at 9 East 91st Street, which was inspired by Roman sixteenth-century palazzo design, and the Henry Clay and Adelaide Childs Frick Mansion (begun 1913-14) at 1 East 70th Street, modelled on eighteenth-century French sources. The firm is responsible for many

large estates in the Northeast, as well as Woolsey and Memorial Halls (1906) at Yale University and the House and Senate Office Buildings (1906) in Washington, D.C.

Carrère was a resident of Staten Island, and his firm's work is well represented there, including the Kunhardt Mausoleum (1896) at Moravian Cemetery, dwellings at 110-144 Vanderbilt Avenue (1900), the Port Richmond Branch Library (1905), the St. George Library Center and Stapleton Branch Library (both 1907), the County Courthouse (1919), and the Hughes Memorial Branch Library (1928) in New Dorp, in addition to the already mentioned Borough Hall and Tottenville library.

Carrère was a member of the Architectural League of New York, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, a member of the Beaux-Arts Society of New York, and director of the American Academy at Rome. He was killed in an accident in 1911. Hastings continued to work under the firm's name, producing designs for large office buildings such as the Standard Oil Building (1920-26, with Shreve, Lamb & Blake) at 26 Broadway and the Cunard Building (1917-21, with Benjamin Wistar Morris) at 25 Broadway. Hastings was an early exponent of the curtain wall system of construction and experimented with it in the Blair Building (1902, demolished) at 24 Broad Street and Exchange Place. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and a founder and a president of the Architectural League.

The Tottenville Branch of the New York Public Library¹⁰

At the time of Carnegie's offer to fund branch libraries, the two-year-old Tottenville Free Library had almost 3,400 volumes and was in need of its own building. On March 16, 1901, the day that the Carnegie gift was announced in the newspapers, Library Association President Frank Joline submitted an application for funding on behalf of his Board of Trustees; two separate accounts claim that Tottenville's request was the first filed with the City Comptroller, who "on reading it, said laughingly, that the committee must have been at work before breakfast."¹¹ The application was then presented to the appropriate New York Public Library officers. Three building lots on Amboy Road were offered as a site by Manhattanite William Ziegler, a capitalist who, after earning his fortune in banking and confectioners' supplies, ran a highly profitable real

estate operation in Brooklyn and suburban areas, though he is best remembered for outfitting an expedition to explore the Arctic. The city promised to enlarge Ziegler's assemblage with one additional lot, and in December the Association made an application to the Advisory Board of Staten Island for that location (see fig. 1), an especially appropriate site given its proximity to Public School No.1. Based on the assurance of receiving a new building, the Association, during the summer of 1902, voted to transfer its property to the New York Public Library whenever the latter was ready to receive and operate it, an event which occurred on December 31, 1903.

The Tottenville Branch is not only Staten Island's oldest modern public library, it is one of the city's oldest. Of the handful of public libraries which predate it, several were built independently of the Carnegie program — the Ottendorfer (1884) and Bloomingdale (1898, no longer part of the NYPL) Branches in Manhattan, both designated Landmarks, the Jackson Square Branch (1888, now decommissioned) in Manhattan, and, the Brooklyn Mercantile (1866-68, demolished) Branch, also called the Montague Branch, and the Bay Ridge Branch (1896, subsequently rebuilt), both in Brooklyn — while others were the products of Carnegie munificence — the Aguilar (1899, enlarged in 1905 with Carnegie funds), Yorkville (1902), and Chatham Square (1903) Branches. Tottenville was among the earliest of the nearly fifty branches erected during the Carnegie library construction boom of 1904-09. Almost every New York City public library building erected before 1930 was the result of Carnegie funding; eventually the city received sixty-one Carnegie libraries (plus two which were partly erected with Carnegie funds).

Design and Construction¹²

At the turn of the century, American architects were substantially influenced by classicism as taught by the Parisian Ecole des Beaux-Arts, which stressed rationality, correctness, and thinking on a grand scale. Resulting public buildings are most often exuberant versions of this approach. In Manhattan, the Carnegie libraries were designed for urban sites, a condition which encouraged palazzo-like facades and simple interior layouts characterized by a tripartite scheme: vertical circulation was contained along one solid side wall, and front and rear rooms, separated by a librarians' station, were aligned along

a second side wall, typically lined with bookshelves. Whereas, on a less restrictive site, a freestanding library typically had a symmetrical front with a central entrance leading to a room containing the librarians' station, which was flanked on two sides by large reading rooms and at the rear by a smaller room used to stack books or as the librarians' office. The basement accommodated a packing room, boiler, and toilets.

The Tottenville Library followed the second model while employing a classical vocabulary and taking advantage of its small-town site on Amboy Road (figs. 2-3). Composed of one tall story on a raised basement, the building's major rectangular mass is capped by a flared, hipped roof, its ridge running parallel to the street. On the symmetrical facade the full-height, shallow entrance wing is articulated like a Tuscan portico *in antis* (the columns are framed by solid walls; see fig. 4) and fenestration is given the classical "thermal" (round-arched and tripartite) form, as above the door, or an elongated version, as in the four windows of the wings, each wing containing a reading room. Yet the classical vocabulary of the exterior has a distinctly rustic accent. Bucolic features include the already-mentioned roof form; an emphasis on brick, stucco, and wood; and a fluid relationship among parts, which are detailed in simplified ways. The Flemish-bond brick basement becomes the *antae* (projecting side walls) of the portico and the quoining of the otherwise stuccoed side wings, while the simple wooden cornice has simple modillions and the pediment features metopes that are simple raised "X"s. The library is set back from the street by a considerable lawn, which originally had privet hedges along the walkways. The side and rear elevations are consistent in architectural character and the rear has a projecting central wing, which houses offices and a staircase. Theodore W. Koch, author of *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (1907, 1917), described the Tottenville Branch as "unpretentious but most attractive,"¹³ and it is clearly related architecturally to other works by Carrère & Hastings, such as the brick-and-stone Richmond Borough Hall and St. George Library Center.

The festive opening of the new library building took place on Saturday afternoon, November 26, 1904.¹⁴ Staten Island Borough President George Cromwell presided and addressed the audience on behalf of the city, George L. Rives (who commissioned Carrère & Hastings to design his own

Manhattan townhouse at 67-69 East 79th Street, built in 1907-08 and a designated Landmark) spoke on behalf of the Trustees of the New York Public Library, and music was provided by the Tottenville Philharmonic Club. Circulation of books from the new structure began the following Monday, and the Tottenville Library Association dissolved itself.

Subsequent History¹⁵

Since its establishment, the library has remained an important community resource and public educational institution for Tottenville and the entire south shore of the island. Among the librarians who managed the Tottenville Branch were Miss Mary Saleski, Miss Frances Westover, Miss Ella E. Wagar, Mrs. Genevieve Bedell, and Mr. Henry Sumfleth. Several anniversaries of the founding of the library have been marked by substantial celebrations which have produced lasting records of the town's history as well as that of the library. The most significant example is associated with the thirty-first birthday of the library, at which time Miss Wagar directed the compilation of local reminiscences in a loose-leaf binder, labeled "Our Fathers Have Told Us — Tottenville Facts and Traditions Told By Lovers of Their Home Town, 1935" and still used today by researchers of Tottenville's history.

Changes to the building exterior have been few. Very early views of the building reveal that soon after construction, the large windows were altered from six panes to nine panes. A Works Progress Administration project executed interior renovations in 1936 and the basement level was renovated in the early 1960s. During the early 1990s, alterations made the building accessible to the physically handicapped (the front walkway and staircase were replaced by the current configuration, and the historic double-leaf glazed wood door was replaced by a single glazed wood door) and several features were restored to their historic condition (the brickwork was cleaned and repaired, and the entrance enframingent, window frames, entablature, and pediment were painted white).

Description

The Tottenville library occupies a nearly rectangular site on the south side of Amboy Road. The building is situated on the southern portion of the site and is fronted by a lawn with several mature trees and a flagpole. A sloped brick-and-concrete

walkway, leading from the sidewalk — where it is flanked by two historic random ashlar curved retaining walls — terminates at the library entrance in a recently-installed platform. The platform is flanked by handicapped access ramps and a staircase leading down to the concrete driveway which runs along the western edge of the site. During the early 1990s a granite signboard was added to the lawn.

Composed of one tall story on a raised basement, the building's major rectangular mass is capped by a flared, hipped roof, covered with synthetic shingles, with its ridge running parallel to the street. On the symmetrical facade the full-height, shallow entrance wing is articulated like a Tuscan portico *in antis* and fenestration is given the classical "thermal" (round-arched and tripartite) form, as above the door, or an elongated version, as in the four windows of the wings. The Flemish-bond brick basement is punctured by rectangular openings with stuccoed lintels (now painted) and iron grilles fronted by wells capped by iron grilles; most of the wells retain their stone coping. At the basement, some double-hung wood sash windows survive; other openings contain metal louvres. The basement terminates in a molded brick watertable. Each wing features edges of keyed brick quoining which are joined near the basement and frame stuccoed walls with two round-arched openings united by a common sill. Each opening contains a grid of wood-framed windows — two rows of awning windows capped by three fixed panes which conform to the arch. A modillioned wood cornice terminates the wall.

Between the wings stands the pedimented entrance bay, its tall stone columns (now painted) and brick *antae* supporting a wood entablature; the architrave contains the words "NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY," the frieze features metopes that are simple raised "X"'s, and the modillioned cornice sets off the triangular pediment containing a raking modillioned cornice. Behind the columns a stuccoed wall features the original wood doorway enframingent of fluted pilasters supporting a cornice and bracketing a five-pane transom, the iron grille of which is a later addition. Although the glazed wood door was installed during the early 1990s, the flanking wood panels are historic and seem to be jamb panels reused from the original entrance configuration. The entrance is surmounted by a tripartite thermal window with wood-framed panes. A recessed light fixture has been installed in the wood soffit. At the right side of the portico is

mounted a molded bronze plaque bearing the shield of the New York Public Library and the words "NEW YORK / PUBLIC LIBRARY / CARNEGIE GIFT / TOTTEVILLE BRANCH" (fig. 5).

A low brick extension (housing a staircase leading from the basement) stands at the eastern edge of the facade and contains a metal door with a small window. Each side elevation of the library is a single-bay version of the north front of the wings. At the west side (fig. 6), an adjacent iron gate separates the driveway from the paved rear yard.

The rear has a projecting central wing which is stuccoed and contains a double-hung window with a security gate. A brick chimney, located near the center of the elevation, rises above the roof. Downspouts attached to all elevations, though of different eras, all appear to be copper.

*Report prepared by
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NOTES

1. Research for this report was greatly facilitated by Tottenville Branch librarian Michael Loscalzo. LPC Commissioner Charles L. Sachs contributed much to the editing of this section, which is based on the following sources. F.H. Walling, *Map of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York* (New York: D.A. Fox, 1859); F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Staten Island, New York* (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1874); a description of the town in the *Richmond County Gazette*, June 11, 1873, p. 2; E. Robinson and R.H. Pidgeon, *Atlas of the Borough of Richmond, City of New York* (New York: E. Robinson, 1907), pls. 22-23; Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis, *Staten Island and Its People: A History, 1609-1929* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1930), vol. 1, 351; Irene C. Jacobs, "A Chronological History of Tottenville, 1860-1978, and Report of Architectural Survey," typescript (Urban Studies Internship, College of Staten Island, 1979), found in the box labeled "Tottenville Historical Material" at the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences (hereafter, SIIAS); Ms. Jacobs cites Benjamin Franklin Joline, "Tottenville in Retrospect," bound typescript with illustrations (Staten Island: the Author, 1950), 9; Edna W. Holden, "Staten Island Resource Manual for School and Community," passim; Henry G. Steinmeyer, "Staten Island, 1524-1898," 117, 127. "Our Fathers Have Told Us, Tottenville Facts and Traditions Told by Lovers of their Hometown, 1935," a loose-leaf binder documenting the town's history, compiled by [Ella E.] Wagar, 276, 282; Vincent Sweeney, "Tottenville Exhibit, Suggested Theme: Tottenville Commercial Area — 1896," typescript found in the Tottenville Exhibit Folder at SIIAS. *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Richmond, New York City, Staten Island, New York*, vol. 5 (New York: Sanborn, 1937-93), pl. 531.
2. Harry Miller Lydenberg, *History of the New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations* (New York: New York Public Library, 1923), 283-284; Arthur E. Bostwick, *The American Public Library*, 4th ed. (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1929), 5-17; B.F. Joline, 24-25; Leng and Davis, vol. 1, 523-525; Philip J. Brittain, "Staten Island's 1st Public Library," *Staten Island Advance* [?] (hereafter *Advance*), undated newspaper article from the 1960s, found at the Tottenville Branch of the NYPL; "Literary Societies Brought First Libraries to Island," *Advance*, Mar. 27, 1986, p. E-61.
3. "The Tottenville Public Library / Sustained by The Tottenville Library Association / Tottenville, Richmond Borough, N.Y.," found in "Our Fathers Have Told Us."
4. Frank Joline, "An Address Delivered by Mr. Frank Joline on Nov. 26, 1904 at the Dedication of the Tottenville Library," typescript found in "Our Fathers Have Told Us," [3].
5. Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries* (New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1917), passim, and Koch, "Carnegie Libraries," bound excerpt found at the Research Branch of the NYPL, 345-351; F. Joline, [3]; Lydenberg, 284.
6. Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries*, 12-19, 38; Phyllis Dain, "The New York Public Library: A History of its Founding and Early Years," Ph.D. dissertation (Columbia University, 1966), abstract and 477-481, 555; Dain, *The New York Public Library: A History of its Founding and Early Years* (New York: NYPL, 1974), esp. 209-247; LPC, *Schomberg Collection for Research in Black Culture Designation Report*, report prepared by Rachel Carley, LP-1133 (New York: City of New York, 1981); LPC, *New York Free Circulating Library, Bloomingdale Branch Designation Report*, report prepared by Betsy Bradley, LP-1616 (New York: City of New York, 1989).
7. See Koch, "Carnegie Libraries," 345-351.

8. According to a study done by NYC, Department of General Services, Historic Preservation Office, "New York City Carnegie Libraries" (draft report, Jan. 1992), of the fifty-two buildings erected with Carnegie funds which remain in use, almost ninety per cent retain their architectural significance.

The branches designed by Carrère & Hastings and their dates of completion were: Tottenville (1904); Port Richmond (1905) at 75 Bennett Street, S.I.; Riverside (1905, decommissioned) at 190-192 Amsterdam Avenue, Manhattan; Tremont (1905) at 1866 Washington Avenue, the Bronx; Muhlenburg (1906) at 209-211 West 23rd Street, Hudson Park (1906) at 66 Leroy Street, Hamilton Fish (1906, decommissioned) at 388-392 East Houston Street, and Epiphany (1907) at 228-230 East 23rd Street, all in Manhattan; St. George Library Center (1907) at 10 Central Avenue and Stapleton (1907) at 132 Canal Street, both S.I.; High Bridge (1908, decommissioned) location undetermined, and Melrose (1914) at 910 Morris Avenue, both in the Bronx; and Washington Heights (1914) at 1000-1002 St. Nicholas Avenue, Manhattan.

9. "The Works of Messrs. Carrère & Hastings," *Architectural Record* 27 (Jan., 1910), 1-120; John Merven Carrère obituary, *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), Mar. 2, 1911, p. 9; "John Merven Carrère," *Who Was Who in America* (Chicago: A.N. Marquis, 1967), vol. 1, 197; "Thomas Hastings," *Who Was Who in America*, vol. 1, 533; Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*, (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), 109, 269; Dennis Steadman Francis, *Architects in Practice in New York City, 1840-1900* (New York: Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records, 1979), 20; "Carrère and Hastings," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek (New York: Free Press, 1982), vol. 1, 387-388. Regarding individual commissions by the firm, see: LPC, *First Church of Christ, Scientist of New York City Designation Report*, LP-0833 (New York: City of New York, 1974); *John Henry Hammond House Designation Report* LP-0677 (New York: City of New York, 1974); *Henry T. Sloane Residence Designation Report* LP-0937, (New York: City of New York, 1977); "Architects' Appendix," *Upper East Side Historic District Designation Report* LP-1051 (New York: City of New York, 1981); "Architects' Appendix," *Upper West Side/Central Park West Historic District Designation Report* LP-1647 (New York: City of New York, 1990); "Architects' Appendix," *Expanded Carnegie Hill Historic District Designation Report* LP-1834 (New York: City of New York, 1993).
10. F. Joline, [3-4]; Lydenberg, 283-284; Dain, 578-579; NYC City Planning Commission, *Program for the Public Libraries of New York City*, prepared under the direction of Lawrence M. Orton by Alfred Morton Githens and Ralph Munn (New York: City of New York, 1945), 50; "Ziegler, William," *Who Was Who in America*, vol. 1, 1395.
11. F. Joline, [3].
12. For plans and facades of some Carnegie libraries, see Russell Sturgis, "Notes & Queries: The Carnegie Libraries in New York City," *Architectural Record* 17 (Apr. 1905), 237-246; and Bostwick, 324-327.
13. Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries*, 61.
14. Announcements found in "Our Fathers Have Told Us."
15. "Officials and Public Note Thirty-First Birthday of the Tottenville Library," unidentified article; "Tottenville Public Library Celebrates 31st Birthday," *Advance*, Nov. 27, 1935; "Miss Westover Leaving Tottenville After Five Years at Library," [1923?]; and "Library Set for Affairs," *Perth Amboy Evening News*, Nov. 22, 1954, p. 6, all found in Wagar, [14-15, 141]; B.F. Joline, 25; Philip Brittain, "Library Cellar Restored to Use," *Advance*, Mar. 15, 1962; Paul M. McPolin, "Tottenville Library maintains family charm," *Advance*, Mar. 25, 1990, p. A-17.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch, has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Tottenville Branch of the New York Public Library, built in 1903-04, is the oldest public library building on Staten Island and one of the oldest in the city; that it was built as part of Andrew Carnegie's unprecedented philanthropic campaign to extend and consolidate the library branch system in New York City and that the Tottenville application was the first to be submitted when Carnegie's program was announced in 1901; that it was designed by the prestigious architectural firm of Carrère & Hastings, which designed the Main Building of the New York Public Library, many branch buildings, including all the Carnegie libraries erected on Staten Island, and several other significant structures in that borough; that the firm's classically inspired design, as articulated in the central portico of stone and brick, thermal windows, symmetrical composition, and other elements, was the favored approach for public buildings at that time; that the design simultaneously exhibits a rustic quality — as articulated in its slightly flared roof, stuccoed walls, simple wood entablature, and other features — which is appropriate to the landscaped site and to the village character of Tottenville; that those features place the building among Staten Island's finest works of public architecture; that the Tottenville Branch traces its roots back to 1899, when the Tottenville Library Association established the Tottenville Free Library, the first free modern public library on Staten Island; that the founding of the library coincided with the climax of the village's growth due to the prosperous coastal industries of shipbuilding, oystering, and seaside resorts; that the Tottenville Branch has been visually and historically an important component of its community for more than ninety years; and that the exterior of the building has survived nearly intact.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch, 7430 Amboy Road, Tottenville, Staten Island, and designates Staten Island Tax Map Block 7899, Lot 9, as its Landmark Site.

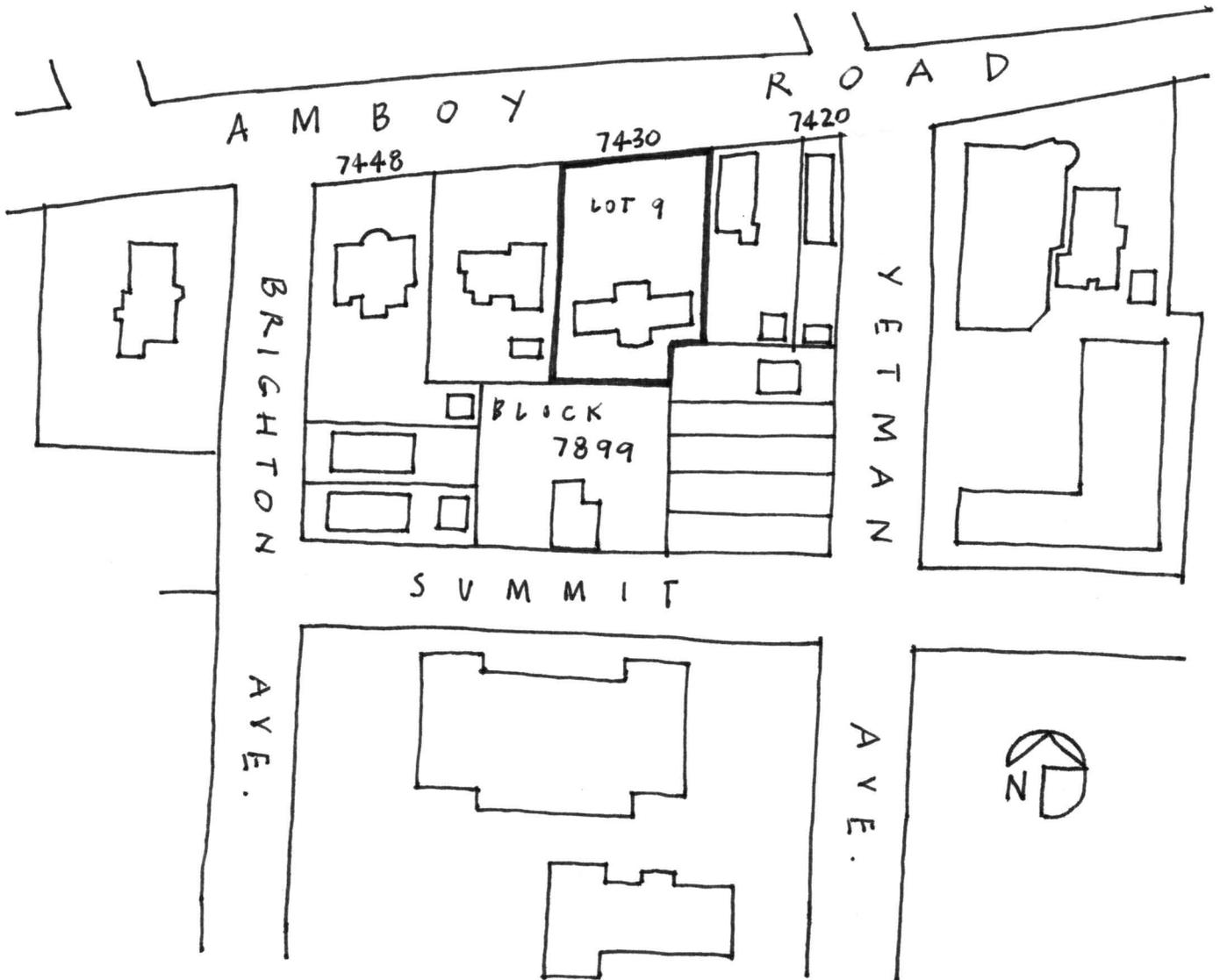


Fig. 1 New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch
Graphic source: *Insurance Maps of the Borough of Richmond, Staten Island, New York City, NY*,
vol. 5 (New York: Sanborn, 1937-93), pl. 531

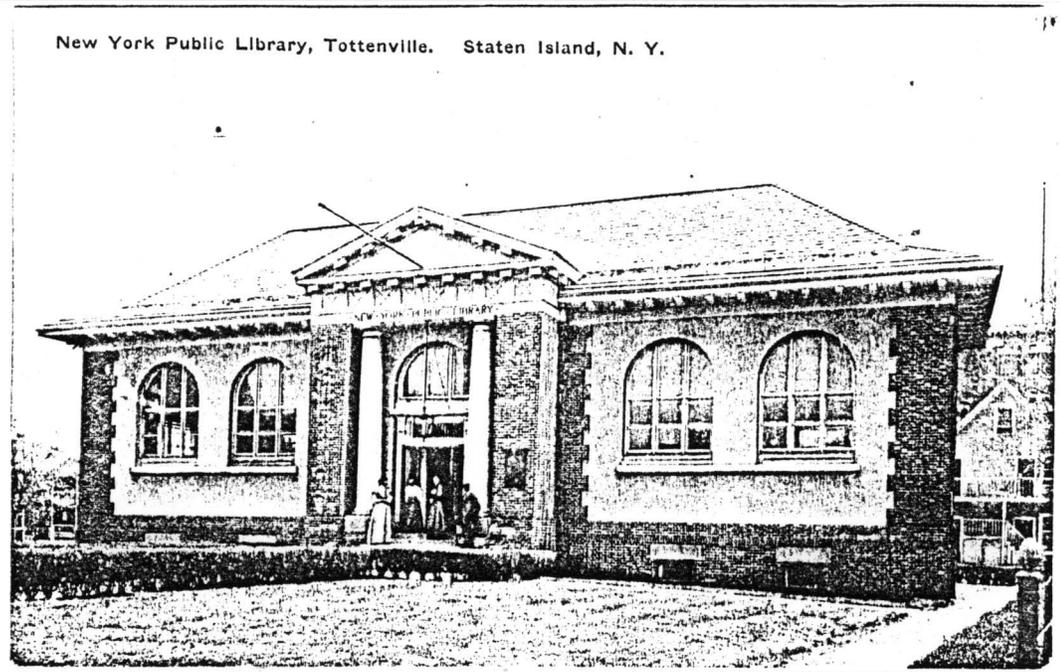
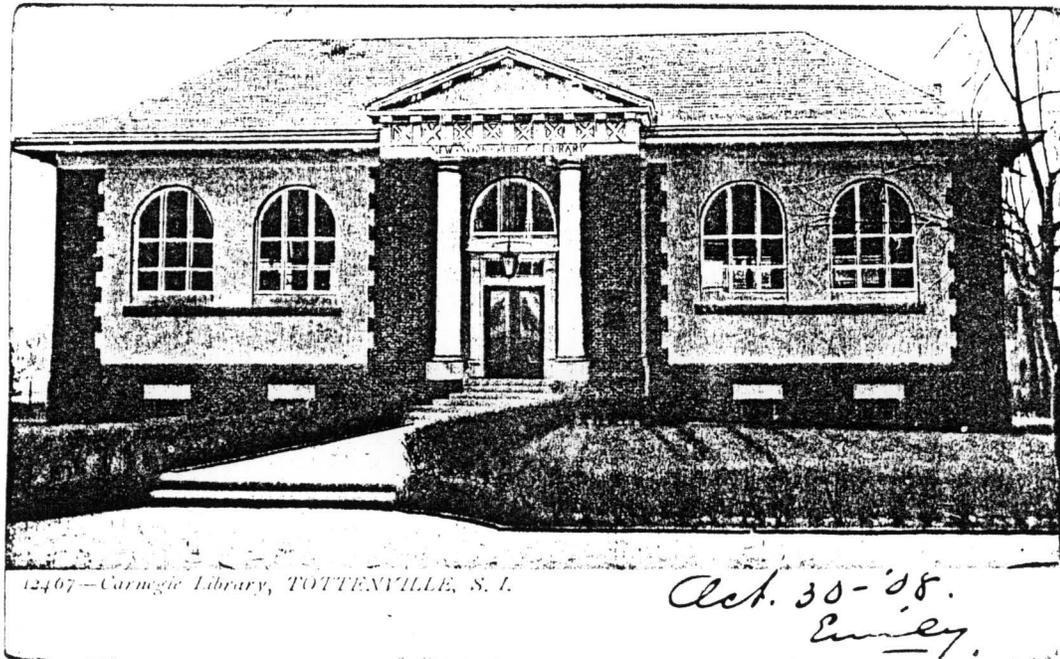


Fig. 2 New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch
Graphic source: Historic postcard views in the collection of the Tottenville Branch



Fig. 3 New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch, facade (photo: DMB)

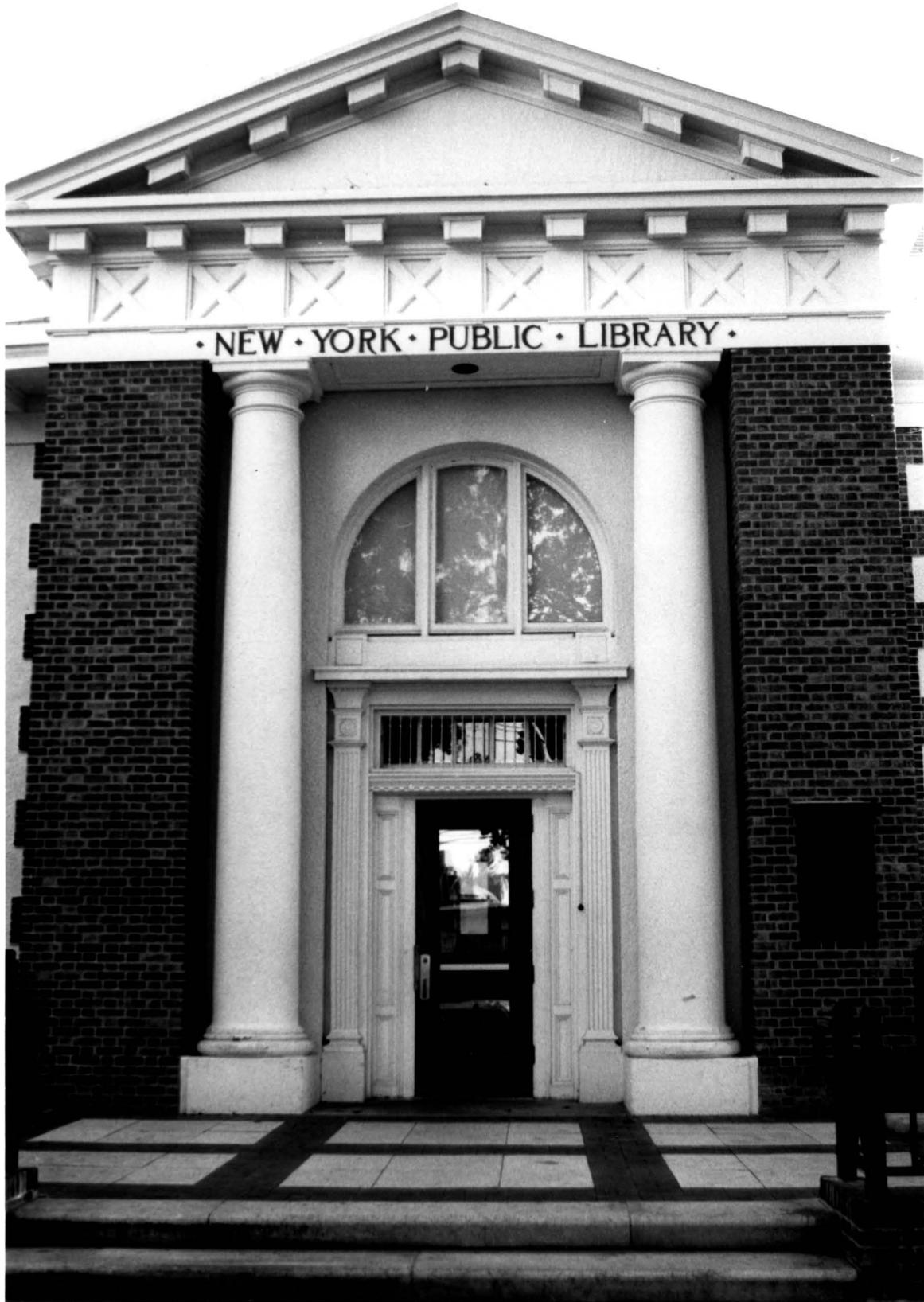


Fig. 4 New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch, portico (photo: DMB)

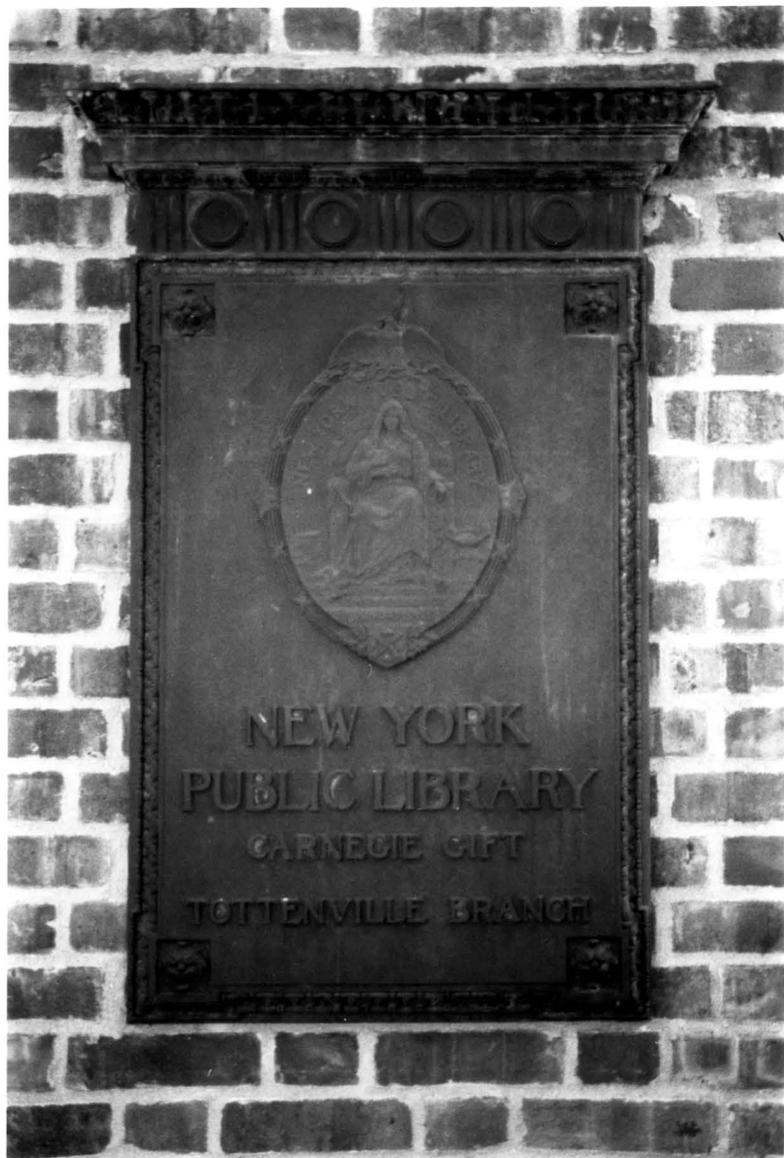


Fig. 5 Carnegie plaque

New York Public Library, Tottenville Branch (photo: DMB)



Fig. 6 East elevation