

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, GERMANTOWN BRANCH
(Center in the Park)
5818 Germantown Avenue (in Vernon Park)
Philadelphia
Philadelphia
Pennsylvania

HABS PA-6752
PA-6752

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA, GERMANTOWN BRANCH
(Center in the Park)

HABS No. PA-6752

Location: 5818 Germantown Ave (in Vernon Park), Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

Present Owner: City of Philadelphia

Present Occupant: Center in the Park

Present Use: senior citizen center

Significance: Germantown was one of twenty-five branch libraries constructed between 1904 and 1930 by the Free Library of Philadelphia using a \$1.5 million grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Andrew Carnegie's public library construction grants were a major impetus for the growth of these institutions throughout the country. Philadelphia was second only to New York City in the size of its Carnegie grant and number of branch libraries constructed. Each jurisdiction receiving Carnegie library funds was responsible for providing a site and operating expenses equal to ten percent of the cost of construction. Prior to receiving the Carnegie funds in 1903, branch libraries of the Free Library of Philadelphia (founded 1891) were housed in a variety of preexisting structures. The Carnegie library construction campaign provided twenty-five purpose-built branch libraries for the City of Philadelphia, each designed within the current ideal of efficient operation and using fashionable, but conservative, architectural forms and motifs.

Germantown was the fifth Carnegie branch library opened by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Plans for the structure were approved by the Free Library Board of Trustees Carnegie Fund Committee on September 29, 1905 and the branch opened to the public on June 24, 1907. The Germantown Branch was designed by the well-known Philadelphia architectural firm of Frank Miles Day and Brother. Day used Georgian Revival motifs including the gray random ashlar stone characteristic of local building traditions. It was located in Vernon Park close to the historic Wister Mansion. The Germantown Branch library was closed in 1978 and its services shifted to the new Northwest Regional Library. The

building has been used as a senior citizens center by the non-profit Center in the Park since 1986.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Date of erection: groundbreaking March 5, 1906; opened June 24, 1907
2. Architect: Frank Miles Day and Brother
3. Original and subsequent owners/uses: Free Library of Philadelphia branch library, 1907 to 1978; Center in the Park (non-profit senior center), 1986 to present.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:¹

General contractor - Appleton and Burrell, \$45,779

Heating - Mr. P. Gormley, \$6,470

Electric lighting – Keller-Pike Co, \$3,416

5. Original plans and construction: Frank Miles Day designed the Germantown branch library during 1905 and construction proceeded during 1906. Architectural drawings have not been located for this structure.
6. Alterations and additions: Historic photos indicate that the former branch library retains its original appearance on the exterior with the exception of a low concrete addition on the south end façade to provide a handicap accessible entrance and elevator. The interior spaces are heavily altered and partitioned although some historic features remain.

B. Historical Context:

In the nineteenth century most libraries in the United States were private or available only to subscribers. Starting in the late nineteenth century, many cities began to found “free library” systems with the goal of providing educational material and services to a wider array of citizens, particularly the burgeoning immigrant population. The Free Library of Philadelphia was founded in 1891 and proceeded to establish a central library and a network of neighborhood branches. Despite ambitious goals, however, these libraries remained rather modest affairs housed in rented space and utilizing mainly donated collections and volunteer staffing.

During this same period the library construction philanthropy of wealthy industrialist Andrew Carnegie would have a profound effect on both the development of professional library standards and the evolution of the building type. The Free Library of Philadelphia received a \$1.5 million grant in January 1903 from Andrew Carnegie and

¹ Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes, 9 February 1906. The minute books are in the collection of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Central Branch, Director’s Vault.

the Carnegie Corporation to build thirty branch libraries.² Carnegie had been engaged in library building philanthropy since 1886, but the program was expanded to jurisdictions outside of his personal and business sphere only in 1898. Carnegie library historian George Bobinski calls this later period the “wholesale phase” of Carnegie’s library philanthropy. From 1898 to 1919, he gave over \$39 million to 1,406 communities. The unprecedented scale of this effort contrasts with the “retail phase” between 1886 and 1898 when Carnegie donated \$1.8 million to six communities.³ The \$1.5 million gift to Philadelphia’s fledgling free library system was quite generous. Only New York City, which received a \$5.2 million grant for sixty-six libraries in 1899, built more branches using Carnegie funds. The next largest grants went to Baltimore and Cleveland; each city built fourteen libraries.⁴

In Philadelphia there was a delay while the various government agencies worked out a mechanism to legally accept and administer such unprecedented largesse. According to Bobinski, “the Pennsylvania State legislature had to approve an act authorizing the Philadelphia city council to enter into contracts with the trustees of the public library so that the arrangements necessary for receiving the Carnegie gift could be carried into effect.”⁵ After a year of bureaucratic maneuvering, the state legislature finally passed the law enabling the city to officially accept the gift. The final step before the Free Library could proceed was an ordinance approving this arrangement passed by Mayor John Weaver in January 1904. John Thomson quickly sent a letter to James Bertram, Carnegie’s personal secretary and gatekeeper for the library philanthropy program, expressing his relief that the Free Library could move forward with branch construction:

I have the pleasure of informing you that I have this morning received from the Clerk of Councils official notice that the Mayor has signed the Ordinance accepting Mr. Carnegie’s splendid gift to the City of Philadelphia. The matter has been one of great anxiety. . . . Arrangements are on foot to accept 4 or 5 sites and it is hoped that the preliminary arrangements for locating the system of Branch Libraries, made possible by Mr. Carnegie’s munificence, will be put in active motion at once. . . . I think we shall be able very rapidly to show our appreciation of what Mr. Carnegie has put it in our power to do.⁶

² While the original grant stipulated funding for 30 libraries at \$50,000 each, rising construction costs caused the number to be scaled back in 1918. For the remaining branches, the Carnegie fund provided only part of the construction cost with the city or neighborhood groups making up the difference. See letter from Librarian John Ashhurst to James Bertram, Secretary, Carnegie Corporation officially changing the total number of Carnegie branches to “25 or 26,” (11 October 1918), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

³ George S. Bobinski, *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1969), 13-14.

⁴ Bobinski 229, 231.

⁵ Bobinski 44.

⁶ Letter, John Thomson to James Bertram (13 January 1904), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

The year-long delay in officially accepting the gift gave the Free Library time to quietly prepare to construct new branch buildings and move rapidly once approval came. Carnegie did not specify architectural designs or review plans at this time, but he did express a strong preference that the branch libraries include lecture rooms.⁷ In a letter officially accepting Carnegie's gift, Free Library Board of Trustees President Joseph G. Rosengarten noted that the Trustees "concur[red] fully" with his lecture room suggestion and planned to expand the already successful Free Library lecture program.⁸

Beyond a general desire for new branch buildings and an interest in including lecture rooms, it is not clear what guidelines or models informed the Free Library as they developed a fairly consistent branch library plan for their city. When Philadelphia received its Carnegie grant there was no official design review by Carnegie or his staff. By 1908 Carnegie's secretary James Bertram had to approve the building plans for all new grants. The Carnegie publication "Notes on the Erection of Library Buildings" [sic.] was first issued in 1911 by Bertram.⁹ While the Philadelphia branch library designs progressed independent of Carnegie design oversight, it appears both were developing simultaneously and in harmony with the latest precepts in library planning. Germantown, as one of the earlier branches, seems to have received a large amount of design review from the Committee before arriving at a form closer to the evolving standard for Philadelphia branch libraries.

The Board of Trustees of the Free Library formed a Carnegie Fund Committee in March 1904 to oversee the details of this ambitious branch building effort. In response to a request from the Carnegie Fund Committee for instructions on how to select architects, the Board of Trustees implemented an ad hoc system. They sought to avoid the expense and complication of holding competitions so instead proposed to appoint an architect as branch sites were chosen. Selection seems to have been based on reputation and personal contacts, with some architects asking to be considered as work on the branches proceeded. The written record is thin on this point, but it seems apparent librarian John Thomson and assistant librarian John Ashhurst were instrumental in this process. John Thomson served as secretary of the Carnegie Fund Committee and the Free Library's leading staff member on all matters. Ashhurst's assistant librarian position was specifically created by the Board of Trustees "in order to undertake part of the very heavy extra work that would now be involved in carrying out the Andrew Carnegie Branch Library Building scheme."¹⁰

⁷ "Carnegie Offers \$1,500,000 to City," *Philadelphia Times*, 7 January 1903, clipping in Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

⁸ Letter, J. G. Rosengarten to Andrew Carnegie, (5 March 1904), Carnegie Corporation Correspondence microfilm, Reel 25, Special Collections, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York.

⁹ Abigail Van Slyck. *Free to All: Carnegie Libraries & American Culture, 1890-1920*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 35-36.

¹⁰ Free Library of Philadelphia, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, (12 February 1904).

In the interest of moving quickly to open new branch buildings, those projects launched first were typically either on a readily available site or city-owned property. In the case of the new Germantown branch building, one of the first motions approved by the Carnegie Fund Committee proposed building a branch library in Vernon Park, a city park and the current location of the Germantown branch.¹¹ Since Carnegie's grants did not include funding for books, the committee's decisions also were influenced by the availability of a book collection that could simply be transferred to the new branch building, usually from an existing Free Library branch or donation/acquisition of a local library.

Germantown was founded as an independent jurisdiction in 1683. It was incorporated into the City of Philadelphia with the consolidation of 1854. A Germantown Library was first opened on October 15, 1895 as Branch No. 6 of the Philadelphia Public Library. It was located in Vernon Hall at Chelton and Germantown Avenues. On January 1, 1896 it officially became the Germantown Branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia. In April 1898 the library moved to the Vernon House, an eighteenth century house also known as the Wister Mansion.¹² This historic house is still located in Vernon Park near the Germantown Branch Carnegie library building.

The 1904 *Annual Report* of the Free Library noted that "Frank Miles Day has been appointed architect of the proposed new building" in Germantown.¹³ Both the minutes of the Board of Trustees and the Carnegie Fund Committee fail to mention exactly why Day was chosen, but presumably his reputation, experience, and links to the branch neighborhood made him a logical choice for the Committee. Frank Miles Day (1861-1918) was a prominent Philadelphia architect known for his popular use of historical styles and extensive residential and collegiate work. He started his firm in 1887; in 1893 he was joined by his brother Henry Kent Day. Major projects in Philadelphia included the Philadelphia Art Club (1888), the American Baptist Publication Society Building (1896), and Franklin Field at the University of Pennsylvania (1902). He is known to have designed two other libraries prior to the one in Vernon Park. In 1902 he unsuccessfully entered a design into the competition for the Camden County Public Library across the Delaware River in nearby Camden, New Jersey. He also designed the Free Library in Madison, Wisconsin that opened in 1904 (now demolished).¹⁴

Plans to locate the new branch library building in Vernon Park did not proceed smoothly. Almost immediately managers of the City Parks Association raised objections about locating branch libraries and other public facilities in city squares. They felt that it

¹¹ Carnegie Fund Committee Meeting Minutes, 9 April 1904. The committee also passed a motion to build a branch library in McPherson Park, another city property. The other early branches were all built on donated sites.

¹² Free Library of Philadelphia, *Eighteenth Annual Report* (1913), 6.

¹³ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Ninth Annual Report* (1904).

¹⁴ The firm became Day Bros. and Klauder in 1911 with the addition of partner Charles Z. Klauder. See entry for "Frank Miles Day," Roger Moss and Sandra Tatman, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930*, (New York: G.K. Hall & Company, 1984), 192-197.

was a dangerous trend to take away open space for buildings and they hoped that the Free Library would reconsider. They recognized that the fact the prior location of branch libraries in existing historic houses in both McPherson Square and Vernon Park set a precedent for constructing new Carnegie-funded buildings at these sites, although they disagreed with this approach. A petition against locating the new library in Vernon Park was signed by approximately 200 of Germantown's business leaders and citizens. Other organizations that spoke out against the plan at a city council hearing in May included the Civic Club, the Germantown Site and Relic Society, the Business Men's Taxpayers' Association, and the Plastic Club. The Business Men's Association and the Twenty-Second Ward Improvement Committee circulated a counter-petition supporting locating the library in the park, primarily to discourage young people from congregating the park and "spooning" after hours. In June 1904, the protestors succeeded in having the City Council recall its original ordinance locating the library in Vernon Park and plans were made for the citizens of Germantown to raise \$20,000 to acquire another site.¹⁵

It is not clear exactly how this controversy was resolved, but plans did move forward to locate the new library building in Vernon Park. In November 1904, the Carnegie Fund Committee expressed concern regarding whether Day would still serve as the architect for this branch given the controversy. John Thomson was instructed to write to Day "stating that having regard to the strong views he had expressed upon the selection of a piece of Vernon Park as a site and his connection with the Parks Association, if it should be conscientiously disagreeable to him to act as architect of the building in the Park, the Trustees would release him from his acceptance of his appointment as architect for this building."¹⁶ Day declined to remove himself as architect and subsequently explained his decision:

Realizing that my position as architect of this building made it inadvisable for me to take part in the controversy regarding the site, I declined sundry invitations to conferences and meetings upon which this subject and from the time the objection to the site was first brought to my notice by yourself to the present writing, I have attended no meetings of any kind of the City Parks Association upon this or any other subject and have refrained from taking any part in the controversy in way [sic.] whatever.¹⁷

This response must have been acceptable to the Carnegie Fund Committee because at their January 13, 1905 meeting they discussed a "general sketch" submitted by Day. No drawings have been found, but there are a number of entries in the Carnegie Fund Committee minutes indicating that Day produced a number of versions of his design before one was approved. This first attempt was met with a request to add an 500-person

¹⁵ "Oppose Buildings in City Squares," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 April 1904, 16; "Object to Library on Vernon Park," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 19 May 1904, 2; "Library Curfew for 'Spooners,'" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 20 May 1904, 14; "\$10,800,000 Loan Now Appropriated," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 17 June 1904, 15.

¹⁶ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, 25 November 1904.

¹⁷ Letter, Frank Miles Day to John Thomson, (5 December 1904), entered in Board of Trustees meeting minutes, (9 December 1904).

auditorium and for Day “to reconsider his plan and report as to the relative cost of building a library and auditorium both on one floor and of building the auditorium either underneath or above the Library but in either case the seating capacity of the auditorium to be 500 persons.”¹⁸ At the next month’s meeting, just a brief note was made in the minutes that sketch number eleven was approved and Day was to proceed with detailed plans.¹⁹ However, in April 1905 that approval was withdrawn and it was requested that Day meet with Thomson and the President of the Board of Trustees.²⁰

In May 1905 the Carnegie Fund Committee took the unusual step of meeting at the offices of Frank Miles Day to compare the one and two-story versions of the plan. While the record is still sparse, the minutes from this meeting do contain some interesting information. One concern was that the costs of the Germantown branch not exceed \$50,000, including architect’s fees. The committee then decided to accept the one-story version of the plan. After discussion of various details, the committee decided that Day “should confer with the Librarian [John Thomson] and Mr. Ashhurst as to some arrangements in the basement and subject thereto that he should transmit to the Library a set of 1/8” plans in order that the same might be submitted to the Carnegie Fund Committee for their final consideration.”²¹ The committee also debated and then agreed to approve a roof twenty-two feet high at center, providing the cost of the building was twenty-two cents per cubic foot. These brief insights into the design process for Germantown imply that the Committee, and particularly Thomson and Ashhurst, worked very closely with the architects. However Germantown seems to have had a more drawn out process of review and revision, at least compared to most other branch libraries under their supervision.

In July 1905, the Carnegie Fund Committee minutes note that the site in Vernon Park was being regraded.²² Perhaps this was the reason for requesting one- and two-story versions of the design. It appears the site had to be altered to accommodate a one-story library, which would be more in keeping with the emerging typical Philadelphia Carnegie branch library design. In September 1905, the Committee asked Day to prepare the specifications for bids and to invite bidders on the general, heating, and electric lighting contracts.²³ This procedure was typical, with the low bids being chosen upon opening sealed proposals from a handful of pre-selected contractors. When the Committee opened the bids in January 1906, they were dismayed to discover that the lowest general contract bid was \$61,400, still much more than they were prepared to spend. They asked Day to confer with the contractors to see what reductions might be possible.²⁴

¹⁸ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, 13 January 1905.

¹⁹ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, 18 February 1905.

²⁰ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, 20 April 1905.

²¹ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, (27 May 1905).

²² Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, (10 July 1905).

²³ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, (29 September 1905).

²⁴ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, (27 January 1906).

A number of changes were made to the specifications to lower the cost. On the exterior these included altering the stonework from tool face to rock face, simplifying moldings and in some areas changing them from stone to wood, as well as substituting less expensive materials for other features. Most of the interior changes consisted of using less expensive flooring materials or timbers. Subsequently the total cost for the library was estimated at \$60,967, not including furniture or books. The general contract for \$45,779 was awarded to Appleton and Burrell. The heating contract for \$6,470 was awarded to Mr. P. Gormley and the \$3,416 electric lighting contract went to Keller-Pike Co..²⁵

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new library was held on March 5, 1906. At this time the fate of the Wister Mansion currently housing the library at the center of the park was unknown. According to the 1905 *Annual Report* “. . .considerable effort is being made to secure the old building for use of the Germantown Site and Relic Society.”²⁶ Construction proceeded through 1906 and the Germantown Branch opened on June 24, 1907. It was one of three new Carnegie libraries opened in Philadelphia that year; the other two were the branches in Holmesburg and Spring Garden.²⁷

In spite of efforts to reduce costs, this branch was one of the most expensive at the time, with a total cost of \$69,098.37.²⁸ It included on the main floor an auditorium for 450 patrons, main library room, and adjoining alcoves for the children's and reference reading rooms. The basement housed coal bins and the heating system, staff room, and the janitor's quarters. This programmatic arrangement and its one-story form was consistent with the other new branch libraries, but the longitudinal orientation with a prominent auditorium wing made this branch unusual. It does not appear that Day designed another library building, although around 1912 he was asked to serve as an advisor to Detroit's library design competition.²⁹ Presumably this was through his role as national president of the American Institute of Architects, a position he held twice, rather than his library design experience.

Although more elaborate and with more specialized spaces than other branch libraries, Germantown is closely related to the open plan, T-shaped library that became common for the Carnegie-funded Free Library branches, as well as Carnegie Libraries nationwide. In *A Book of Carnegie Libraries*, Theodore Wesley Koch points out that a large room undivided by partitions became a defining feature of Carnegie branches across the country, as was providing a space for lectures. He notes that the lecture program was particularly successful in Philadelphia, where “each branch has a recognized clientele and

²⁵ Carnegie Fund Committee meeting minutes, (9 February 1906).

²⁶ Free Library of Philadelphia, *Tenth Annual Report* (1905), 18.

²⁷ Letter of the President in Free Library of Philadelphia, *Twelfth Annual Report* (1907).

²⁸ Statistics and photographs for Germantown Branch were accessed in the Director's Vault, Central Branch, Free Library of Philadelphia.

²⁹ Van Slyck, 84.

lecturers are always sure of a good sized audience.”³⁰ In her study of the Carnegie Library, architectural historian Abigail Van Slyck discusses the debate in this period between closed stack and open plan libraries. The library profession was struggling with conflicting philosophies restricting access to reading material and newer ideals of community involvement.³¹ Clearly the Philadelphia Free Library was committed to an open stack model for their branches, but still the main librarians’ desk was stationed in front of the entrance where staff could observe patrons throughout the reading rooms. This arrangement was used in all of the Free Library Carnegie branches and continues today.

This building served as the Germantown Branch of the Free Library from 1907 until 1978. That year the branch was closed and neighborhood library service was provided by the new Northwest Regional Library, the third regional library in the system (renamed Joseph E. Coleman Northwest Regional Library in 2002). The Vernon Park building has been used as a senior citizens center by the non-profit Center in the Park since 1986.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The former Germantown branch library is an early-twentieth-century Georgian Revival structure built of local fieldstone laid in a random ashlar pattern. It is an asymmetrical structure with a roughly T-shaped footprint that stands one story high on a low foundation. The main façade presents a long horizontal wing with a slightly taller perpendicular wing on the southeast end. The library entrance was located at the center of the horizontal section; the perpendicular wing housed an auditorium/lecture hall.

2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Both wings are five bays by one bay, set perpendicular to each other. Small ells of one or two bays are located on the rear façade.

2. Foundation: The foundation is constructed of gray random ashlar fieldstone and stands approximately three feet high with a carved water table.

3. Walls: The former library has gray random ashlar fieldstone walls typical of Georgian and Georgian Revival structures in the Philadelphia area. The entire structure features

³⁰ Theodore Wesley Koch, *A Book of Carnegie Libraries*, (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1917), 86.

³¹ Van Slyck, 122.

expertly done stone masonry with larger stones creating quoins at the corners. The gable end wall of the main library section is curved. Cut stones form a wide belt course near the top edge of the openings.

4. Structural system, framing: The former Germantown Branch library has load-bearing stone walls supported on a fieldstone foundation. Presumably a truss system is used to support the span the main reading room and the auditorium, but these structures were not visible.

5. Library entry pavilion: The library entrance at the center of horizontal section is located in a projecting one-story stone pavilion with triangular parapet. The front of the entry pavilion features decorative Georgian door surround with engaged Doric columns, an entablature and pediment with gable return, and a semicircular fanlight with curved muntins. "The Free Library of Philadelphia Germantown Branch" is carved into the wood panel above the doorway. A low marble stairway curves out from the doorway and features curved wrought iron hand rails and curtail step at ground level.

Auditorium entry pavilion: This one-story front gable entry pavilion projects from the same elevation at the perpendicular wing but is larger and even more elaborate than the library entrance. It is also constructed of random ashlar fieldstone with larger stones creating quoins at the corners. The pavilion has a front gable roof with cornice and gable returns. The decorative Georgian door surround is set in a recessed semi-elliptical arch in the stone wall topped by a marble keystone. The wood door surround is a somewhat inventive classical entablature with engaged Ionic/Doric composite columns, coffered soffits, and other Classical details such as a Greek key motif over the door and mutule at the underside of the cornice and raking cornice. There is a small double hung window on the side façade of the pavilion. This pavilion is accessed from a stone landing with a short straight run marble stair at either side.

6. Chimney: A stone chimney is located at the northwest corner of the ell at the rear façade of the library wing.

7. Openings

a. Doorways and Doors:

Both the library and auditorium pavilions have a pair of wood doors with three raised panels of unequal size. The larger middle panels for the library doors have a small square fixed glazed opening; those on the auditorium doors have small glazed portholes. The elaborate Georgian Revival surrounds for these doorways are described above. The library entrance also has sliding wood pocket doors.

There are two double doors set into round arch openings on the rear façade. A modern concrete addition at the south end includes a steel and glass door.

b. Windows:

The former Germantown branch library has two typical window types. The front and more prominent side façades have large round arch windows set in a double course of stone and over large recessed spandrels. These openings have marble keystones and carved limestone or marble sills. The windows are fixed wood sash in the arch and movable wood sash with 32 or 24 square lights below. The rear façade and other less prominent areas on the sides have six over six or four over four rectangular wood sash windows set in a simple wood frame. The basement windows are partially set into recessed wells and topped by splayed jack arches executed in dressed fieldstone.

8. Roof: This building has low hipped roofs with a tall parapet. The auditorium wing appears to be sheathed with standing seam copper. This section also has a large cupola at the center with a curved conical roof and thin round arch openings filled with horizontal wood louvers. There is a dentilated pent eave below the parapets on all of the major façades, also sheathed with copper.

9. Lighting: There is an original cast iron lantern suspended over the former library entrance. Two original cast iron light standards are mounted on the auditorium wing landing; the globes have been changed.

C. Description of Interior: The interior was only partially accessible during the HABS survey, but even limited access showed that it has been heavily altered and partitioned into many small spaces. Some historic features such as cornices, window molding, and the dedication plaque in the former library entrance are still extant. Historic photographs indicate that the main library space was a large rectangular room with two smaller spaces – one through an arched opening at the curved bay on the north end of the section and other through a large rectangular cased opening at the rear. These spaces originally housed the reference and children's rooms. Bookcases lined the outer walls below the windows. The librarians' desk was located closed to the entrance and had wood railings controlling circulation into and out of the space.³²

D. Site: The former Germantown Branch library sits on a manicured lawn in Vernon Park, a mid-sized urban park with many mature trees. The historic Vernon House/Wister Mansion is nearby. Vernon Park is located along Germantown Avenue, a busy commercial thoroughfare.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings: Drawings have not been located for this structure,

B. Early Views: William Rau photographs (one exterior and one interior) in 1907 *Free Library Annual Report*. Other early exterior photographs were published in *The American Architect* 100, no. 1860 (16 August 1911). There are also a few undated

³² William Rau interior photograph published in *Free Library of Philadelphia, Twelfth Annual Report*, (1907).

photographs (interiors and exteriors) in the Frank Miles Day Collection and the Day & Klauder Collection at the Architectural Archives of the University of Pennsylvania.

C. Bibliography

The records of the Free Library of Philadelphia are located at the Central Library on Vine Street. The *Annual Reports* are located in the Municipal Reference Division, Cities P53-1154; and the Carnegie Fund Committee Minute Books are located in the Director's Vault (access by special permission).

Bobinski, George S. *Carnegie Libraries: Their History and Impact on American Public Library Development*. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969.

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PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the former Germantown Branch Library was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service, Richard O'Connor, Chief, during summer 2007 as part of a larger initiative to record the Carnegie Funded branch libraries of the Free Library of Philadelphia. The project is sponsored by HABS in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia, John A. Gallery, director; and the Free Library of Philadelphia, William J. Fleming, Administrative Services Director, and made possible through a Congressional appropriation for recording in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The historical reports were prepared by Lisa P. Davidson and Catherine C. Lavoie. Large-format photography was undertaken for HABS by Joseph Elliott.