



Berkeley Public Library - Branch Improvement Program

Claremont Branch Library

Frequently Asked Questions

When is the branch expected to reopen for service to the public?

The branch is anticipated to reopen during Winter/Spring 2012. Notice will be provided in advance of the branch opening, including information about the opening day celebration.

Why does the Claremont Branch need to have any work done?

The Library is committed to making all of its branch libraries seismically safe, current code compliant and ADA accessible, as promised in voter approved Measure FF.

What work will be done to Claremont Branch?

A renovation of interior spaces, refurbishment of existing historic features and windows and an approximate increase of 340 gross sq. ft. infill, which includes a new picture book alcove in the children's area. The facility cannot be expanded because of site constraints. In addition to improved structural integrity and accessibility, the branch will have improved landscaping, exterior and interior lighting and will receive updated mechanical, plumbing, electrical and telecommunication systems.

Is the building landmarked?

No; however, the design team has been working with a Landmarks Preservation Commission subcommittee on the branch project to address preservation concerns.

Where can I view the branch plans?

Branch project information and plans may be viewed on the Library's website or by visiting your neighborhood branch. The direct website link is: http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/b-renovation.php

Who are the architects?

The design team is Gould Evans / Baum Thornley (btarchitects.com) based in San Francisco.

Has the community been involved in the design process?

Yes. Service and facilities surveys were conducted during the *Branch Libraries Facilities Master Plan* (2008) process as well as early during the branch renovation program planning (2009). Four community meetings were held during the conceptual, schematic design and design development phases and three Board of Library Trustees presentation / design workshops were held (2009-2010). Additionally, there have been three Landmarks Preservation Commission subcommittee meetings and one full Commission meeting, all publically noticed and held during the design process.

Is there still a chance for me to provide input?

Yes, the Library always welcomes feedback and input. Comments cards may be filled out at any library branch, via online at http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about_the_library/b-renovation.php, or by calling the Library at 510.981.6195.

Will there be any improvements to the check out area?

The new lobby services area will be clear of clutter and easier to access; additionally, there will be three fully accessible self check out stations, a new service desk, popular materials (movies and bestsellers) and computers.



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What will happen to the historic entrance nook?

The nook will be glazed and made into an interior reading nook and the existing bricks will be reused to make exterior planters.

What will the branch be gaining or losing?

The Claremont Branch will be gaining inviting, uncluttered open lobby space; efficient and ergonomic self-checkouts; improved and well-functioning service desks; a new teen room; and staff work areas that are physically and acoustically separated from public space. The branch also will gain 41% more seating; 36% more computers and more electrical outlets for laptop use; and an overall facility size increase of 5%. The branch will be losing approximately 14% shelving but will be gaining new types of shelving to allow for improved browsing and displays.

Why is there a decrease in shelving?

The branch must become fully ADA accessible and accommodate enlarged restroom facilities per code. Space also is needed for staff operations, which need to be physically separate from the public space to allow them to work more efficiently; additionally, space is needed to accommodate the new dedicated teen room, which will be acoustically separate from the rest of the service areas. Site constraints prohibit the facility from significant expansion other than a proposed small bump out. Since the facility cannot expand greatly, space must be carved out of existing areas. During the planning process the community voiced its desire for more seats and tables for reading, as well as a greater number of computers and electrical outlet access for laptop use. These community expressed program priorities shaped the current branch interior.

If there is a decrease in shelving what happens to the collections?

Collection sizes always exceed the number of shelves allotted because a certain portion of the collection always will be out in circulation, which is expected to increase when the branch reopens. As part of collection maintenance librarians not only select materials but also weed materials for condition, format and turnover – items that have not circulated in several years to make room for newly acquired material. The redesigned branch will allow for improved functional spaces, including more shelving for holds, new browsing shelving that displays and highlights collections, new media shelving, less congested lobby space, increased seating and a variety of seating type, and more computers with space around them.

Will the branch have to close during construction, and if so, for how long?

The branch will be closed to allow for move out, construction, restoration, and subsequent move in and set up. Notice will be given in advance of closure and the branch will be closed for approximately 12 months for construction. The branch will have to close for public safety because the site will be considered a construction zone.

Where will I pick up my holds when the branch is closed?

The Library will be providing book van service at a location near the Claremont Branch Library for pick up of holds and receiving returns. Van service will be provided during scheduled hours, which will be posted on the Library's website. Patrons are encouraged to visit the Library's three other branches (Central, West and South), which will be open during branch construction.



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What will happen with the landscaping?

The design team is working with a landscape architect to address the exterior greenscape. The current footprint will remain the same, including current traffic flow and bike parking. New bench seating will replace existing benches on Benvenue Avenue and permeable pavers will be added to allow rain water to pass through to a layer of gravel to percolate into the underlying soil. It's a sustainable design and will not cause run off into neighboring properties. All rain water will be filtered through three new planter boxes. The exterior lighting will be improved, as will signage along Ashby Avenues, giving the neighborhood library better street presence.

Are there any green elements you are contemplating regarding construction efforts?

It is a project goal to attain at minimum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver certification. The design team also is exploring other green options with Stopwaste.org - Bay-Friendly Landscaping (Alameda County) and the City of Berkeley Sustainability Team.

How much will it cost to make these improvements to the Claremont Branch library?

The project has a hard cost construction budget of about \$3.3 million to renovate the building, not including furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E). All designs are subject to change to meet this fixed budget. Bond funds also cannot be used for collections. The Berkeley Public Library Foundation will raise \$3 million from private donations to pay for the FF&E costs. To help with the campaign, please call 510.981.6115 or email to bplf.org.