

About Hennepin County's new Webber Park Library

This is the fourth library to serve the Camden Neighborhood in North Minneapolis. The first, called the Camden Library, opened in 1910 at a Park Board field house on Webber Parkway. It was remodeled in 1954 and renamed for the park nearby. A new library was built in 1980 in Webber Park. That location closed in 2013; the Camden Center strip mall has housed a temporary library while the new building was under construction.

Community members and neighbors shared their ideas for the new library in meeting over several months; their ideas influenced the design direction.

Historic building blocks

Mohammed Lawal, of Minneapolis-based LSE Architects designed the \$10 million new. Lawal's firm also designed the East Lake Library and renovations of North Regional and Nokomis libraries in Minneapolis. Adolfson and Peterson Construction built the facility.

The library's exterior includes a veneer of Lake Superior green granite, echoing the composition of the Victory Memorial just a mile to its west. Other materials include zinc panels and Douglas fir wood columns that support the porch canopies. Inside, wood-finish ceilings, granite accents and fir structural columns echo the look and feel of outdoor spaces, as well. Window walls flood indoor flexible spaces with natural light and bring outdoor the landscaping inside.

The library's early literacy play space for the youngest readers also works to bring the outside in. Children can pretend they are at a ranger station, a veterinary office or anywhere their imaginations take them.

Providing inviting indoor and outdoor reading and gathering spaces, the building has a wraparound porch, facing Humboldt Avenue North, which echoes the fronts of the homes in the neighborhood.

It has been Hennepin County's practice to landscape roadsides and other county-owned areas with pollinator-friendly flower gardens. The 1.4-acre site will include native plantings with walkways and benches to make them appealing to people, as well.

About the new space

The new Webber Park Library features:

- 8,300 square feet, twice the size of the last library
- 1,070 feet of shelf space for an expanded collection of 15,415 books, CDs and DVDs.
- 23 computers, twice the number the old library had, and improved Wi-Fi access
- Three meeting rooms, to accommodate study groups of six or community group meetings of as many as 30 people
- An early literacy space for young readers and pre-readers
- Connections to multiple transit routes, as well as walking and biking routes and sheltered bike parking
- Expanded hours: The new library will be open six days, or 48 hours a week, twice as many as the old library. New hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday, noon to 8 p.m.