

**BYRAM SHUBERT BRANCH
GREENWICH LIBRARY**

BUILDING PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 2004

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*The Board of Trustees wishes to thank the following
members of the Byram Shubert Library Steering
Committee for all of their hard work and dedication:*

Jane & Stuart Marsh, Committee Chairmen
Karen Mehra, Committee Chairman
Mario Gonzalez, Library Director
Miguel Garcia-Colon, Branch Librarian
Tracy McKenna, Byram Friends Chairman
Jenny Baldock
Candice Barbiarz
Bob Bishop
Dean Goss
Bill Saltsman

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

The Byram Shubert branch is part of the Greenwich Library System. The system-wide *mission* is to provide patrons with free and convenient access to information, while promoting the love of reading and research, the joy of lifelong learning and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities. The constant *vision* of the Greenwich Library System is to provide the community with superior library services, to serve as the cultural and intellectual crossroads of Greenwich and to be a leader among public libraries in a rapidly changing world. Included in the vision statement is a section specifically devoted to the branch library:

The Byram Shubert branch fulfills two important roles:

- The branch offers a current collection that meets the local community's needs and facilitates access to the broader collection and services provided at the main library.
- The branch library is a dynamic community center that attracts patrons to diverse educational and cultural experiences.

HISTORY OF THE BYRAM SHUBERT LIBRARY

The original 4,954 square foot branch Library was built in 1974 with gifts from the Shubert Foundation, the Friends of the Byram Shubert Library and gifts from the community. In 1987, the Library underwent an addition of 388 sq. feet. Today, the square footage of the building totals 5,342. The Library is located on an acre of land that was formerly part of the New Lebanon school property. The Greenwich Board of Education released this parcel, and the Town of Greenwich leased it to the Library for 99 years for a token rental of \$1.00 per year.

The Byram Shubert Library is a well-respected, highly valued community resource that serves a census tract population of 8,302, which reflects all of Byram and fifty percent of the surrounding towns of Pemberwick and Chickahominy. The Library continues to demonstrate its importance to the community through the programs, resources and services it provides. Library use has increased dramatically over the last three years as the staff has worked to improve collections, offer more programs and create an attractive and welcoming environment for people of all ages. Because the Library is easily accessible and conveniently located, it attracts residents who might find the Main Library too large and intimidating.

Currently, the Library is open five days a week for a total of thirty-nine hours. The existing facility houses a collection of approximately 30,000 print and non-print materials. There are ten computer stations with Internet capability and word processing options available for patron use, as well as one PAC for public and staff use.

SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The projected population of the census tracts that are served by the Byram Shubert Library is 8,386 for the year 2020. According the Connecticut State Library Space Planning Guide, the current square footage of the Library needs to be expanded by a minimum of 4,276 for a grand total of 9,618 sq. feet upon completion of the project, in order to adequately meet the future needs of the community.

The Work Area Forms highlight strategic and specific renovations/additions that will allow the Library to provide its patrons with superior services and programs.

ENTRY

There is no current distinct Entry Area in the Library. Patrons walk in through double-doors and are immediately confronted with book stacks, magazine racks and a set of four computers. The newly renovated Entry Area would allow for hooks for coats as well as have space available for possible future self-checkout.

CIRCULATION

The circulation area of the Library is crowded and makes serving the patrons a frustrating and difficult situation. In addition to being an area for the reserving or taking-out of materials, it also serves as the Branch Manager's office space. The office machinery that is located in this area contributes to its crowded and uncomfortable feeling.

The new circulation area would have three stations for serving patrons and would allow for ample space for holds or returns. Staff would have more mobility and privacy when necessary, and the sense of confusion of this space would be diminished by increasing the square footage and counter space. Part of the circulation desk would be dedicated to serving children and the handicapped by being set lower for easier access by these users.

ADULT

The Adult area will be located in the existing building. This area is now a general space for browsing and contains shelving for books and videos for adults, young adults and teens. Due to overcrowding, there are no comfortable spaces to read or for quiet study. The new Adult area will boast approximately 3,200 square feet, and adults will have the ability to enjoy quiet reading areas, specific browsing areas and tables for wireless computers. Renovating the existing building to serve the adult community will enable them to better utilize the resources that will be available to them, without the feeling of intrusion by teens and children that they feel now.

BRANCH MANAGER'S OFFICE

There is no space in the existing structure for a Branch Manager's Office. This impedes the Manager's ability to best manage the business functions of the Library and also prevents any privacy when speaking with staff or patrons.

The new Branch Manager's Office will allow for 115 square feet of space and will include a desk, chair, visitor's/staff chair and will include the necessary equipment for the Manager to conduct business functions necessary for running the branch.

CONFERENCE ROOM

Today, the Byram Shubert Library has no conference room. Staff and groups who wish to conduct small meetings are forced to compete for time in the current community gathering area.

The new Conference Room that will be located adjacent to the Director's Office will enable the Director to schedule productive staff meetings. Additionally, smaller groups of library volunteers will be able to utilize the room for specific projects. This room will advance the sense that the staff and volunteers have a special, designated place for them, apart from the general public.

CHILDREN

Currently, the Children's Area is comprised of a row of bins and low-level shelving that contain picture and easy-reader books. There is no story time area. Additionally, the space lacks child-friendly, movable furniture, as well as cushions for relaxed reading. There is little to no space for caretakers to sit with children. It is cluttered and nondescript.

The newly added and designed Children's Area will include carrels for computers and a space for reference materials dedicated to children. There will be ample space for children to hang coats and backpacks, and they will have their media section and listening stations. With the expansion, new, stain-resistant carpeting will be installed, and the décor will include children's furniture and brightly colored cushions. A space will be dedicated for story telling, crafts and children's programming.

YOUNG ADULTS

The young adults have no space of their own in the existing Library. This is a popular user group, who often tend to "take over" the Library after school during the week. Because of the lack of space, special programs and services for teens are lacking, if not non-existent.

The new YA area will provide this group with a space to call their own. Reference books, computers and magazines will be available, and the design will include comfortable chairs and tables for group study. Poetry readings, SAT preparation tutoring and other programs for Teens could take place in the new area. Because this area would be located adjacent to the new Children's area, the issue of teens disrupting the adults will be resolved.

MEETING ROOM

The approximate 960 feet of community space that exists at the Library is not sufficient to meet the needs of the staff, patrons and local organizations. Special events and programs are very well attended at the Byram Shubert Library. Often, there is overcrowding, which makes it uncomfortable for visitors to see, hear or participate in programs. Local groups like the Garden Club and the RTM find the space inadequate for fruitful meetings and discussions. There are often concurrent requests for use of the room, and entertaining or educational programs have to be turned away or modified due to space constraints.

The new meeting space will be located in the lower level of the addition and will provide the Library with new open space that will allow for a maximum of 104 chairs to be configured in a variety of ways or 125 people. Movable or retractable dividers will transform the space into a multi-functional room for small meetings, ESL tutoring or quiet study. Staff will also be able to use the room for training and meetings. Because the new addition, as well as the existing space, will be completely wireless, this room will also serve as a technology training room. In compliance with ADA specifications, this room will be equipped with assistive listening devices.

STAFF LOUNGE

The current staff room is a basement room that is less than 100 sq. feet. It is an underutilized room, simply because of its location, lack of comfortable furniture and ineffective HVAC system. The only other area for staff is the Circulation Desk. Because the Library is so heavily used, staff desire the opportunity to take breaks for eating or taking care of personal business without being in the public eye.

The new staff lounge will house a small kitchenette and counter with chairs. The area would be set apart from the high traffic public areas and enable staff to meet informally or spend some time away from hustle and bustle of Library activity.

OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEW LIBRARY

The immediate areas served by the Byram Shubert Library are the most economically disadvantaged and ethnically diverse in the town of Greenwich. According to 2000 census data, over 30 percent of the total residents of the service population are Hispanic. In addition, over 25 percent have annual incomes of less than \$40,000. The primary driving force behind the capital project for expansion is the aspiration and the mission of the Library to positively influence the lives of these particular communities, with the goal in mind to enhance their quality of life through increased access to information and educational resources. Additionally, the Library is seeking to improve the space, services and programs for adults, teens and children of all ethnicities who represent a variety of economic and educational backgrounds.

When completed, the Byram Shubert Library will be able to offer its patrons the following:

- Increased hours of operation to include extended evening and weekend hours
- A warm and welcoming Entrance area that will provide space for coats and umbrellas
- ADA compliant restrooms, shelving and configuration for easy and comfortable navigation
- A new Meeting Room to accommodate up to 125 people, with the flexibility to serve as a multi-purpose room that will have removable or retractable partitions
- Distinct and ergonomic adult, teen and children's areas to increase patron satisfaction with the Library experience
- Comfortable areas for browsing for adults, story telling for children and quiet study for teens
- Enhanced space for staff, including a Director's Office, a Conference Room and a Staff Lounge
- Additional shelving for print and non print materials
- Regularly scheduled ESL classes; tutoring and homework help programs for teens; reading readiness programs for care givers and toddlers; and life skills training for young adults and adults
- Events to celebrate local and international culture and diversity

CONCLUSION

In its current condition, the Byram Shubert Library is unable to satisfactorily offer visitors superior programs and services. There are no specific areas deemed for use by adults, teens or children. There are only 10 computer stations, and patrons are often frustrated by having to wait hours for access. This problem is compounded when students flock to the Library after school. The influx of young adults, teens and children to the Library after 3 p.m. generally drives the adults away. Additionally, the staff is frustrated by their inability to assist patrons due to the physical constraints of the building and the lack of resources available due to the overcrowding of materials.

Although the Hispanic population has a significant presence among users, the Library is not equipped at this time to offer them meaningful opportunities for personal and/or professional growth. There are no regularly scheduled ESL programs or Internet training sessions; print and audio/video materials in the Spanish or Portuguese language are lacking; and signage in Spanish is almost non-existent.

The restrooms and a majority of the shelving are not ADA compliant, making navigating the Library a daunting task for anyone with physical limitations.

Expanding the Byram Shubert Library at this time will allow it to become even more of a hub of intellectual and cultural activity than it is now, despite its limitations. Because the Library is a central landmark in the community, visitors come for a multitude of reasons. Some patrons come to use the computers, others come to browse new books or even meet as representatives of local social or town organizations. Because of the Library's proximity to the New Lebanon, Hamilton Avenue and Glenville schools, young adults, teens and children come to the Library on a daily basis after school to do homework, work in study groups or share time with friends.

Adding to the current building, while at the same time preserving the existing architectural ambiance, will provide the service population with a reassurance that while the mission and vision of the Library will remain intact, the quality of programs and services will continue to flourish.