

New York Public Library - Stapleton

132 Canal Street, Staten Island

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Carrère and Hastings' one-room Carnegie Library was a charmer, but the Stapleton neighborhood had long outgrown this Neo-Classical Revival cottage. Now residents have the best of the old and new, with a restored historic library and a glass-and-wood addition that respects the original building's character and more than triples the usable space.

The red-brick facades and limestone trim of the 1907 library were restored. The tall, arched, triple-sash wood windows rebuilt and re-glazed with laminated, UV-inhibiting glass. The projecting pediment, once covered in frayed painted canvas, was rebuilt. Historic photographs guided a brighter color scheme for the exterior, more in keeping with the original design.

The new structure expands the library from 2,225 square feet to a total of 12,700 square feet. It appears to be a discrete and complete entity but allows for internal circulation between the two sections. The Carnegie Library is now the Children's Reading Room. Its oak bookcases, trim, and casing were stripped and refinished and a new oak floor matches the original, long hidden under layers of flooring and carpet.

While the two buildings are visually distinct, they form a balanced union that follows the New York Public Library's goals: to be a center for the community, and to balance a respect for preservation with the incorporation of new technologies and resources into its collections.