

# Dovercourt - Bloor/Gladstone Branch

## Planning and Building Dovercourt Branch, 1911-1913



Architectural Rendering by Chapman & McGiffen, Architects, December 1911  
Toronto Reference Library, Manuscript Collection, #2  
Toronto architects Alfred H. Chapman & Robert B. McGiffen designed the branch in a Beaux Arts adaptation of the Italian Renaissance style. Its symmetrical plan featured a low, hipped, green-tile roof with extended eaves, red Flemish bond brickwork, with stone and terracotta detailing, and expansive round-arched windows. It was described in 1995 as "a tasteful Roman villa set down in a district of workers' housing."



Proposed design by C. M. Manly, 1911?  
Toronto Reference Library, Manuscript Collection, #2  
Charles MacDonald Manly (1855-1924) was a Toronto artist.



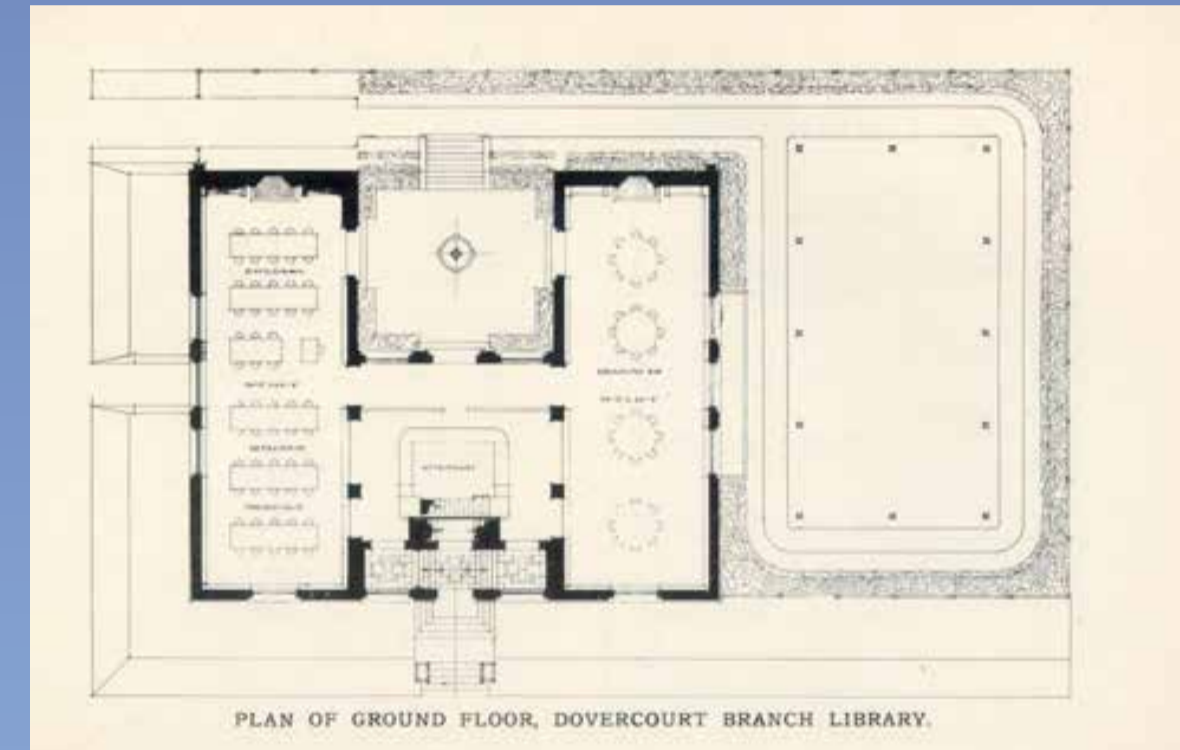
Laying the Cornerstone, 16 October 1912  
Toronto Reference Library, T 12132  
L to R: Architect Alfred H. Chapman; Toronto Public Library Board members Hugh T. Kelly; W. T. J. Lee; T. W. Banton, Chairman John Turnbull; N. B. Gash; Edward S. Caswell (Assistant Librarian and Secretary-Treasurer); T. W. Self and Hon. Sir



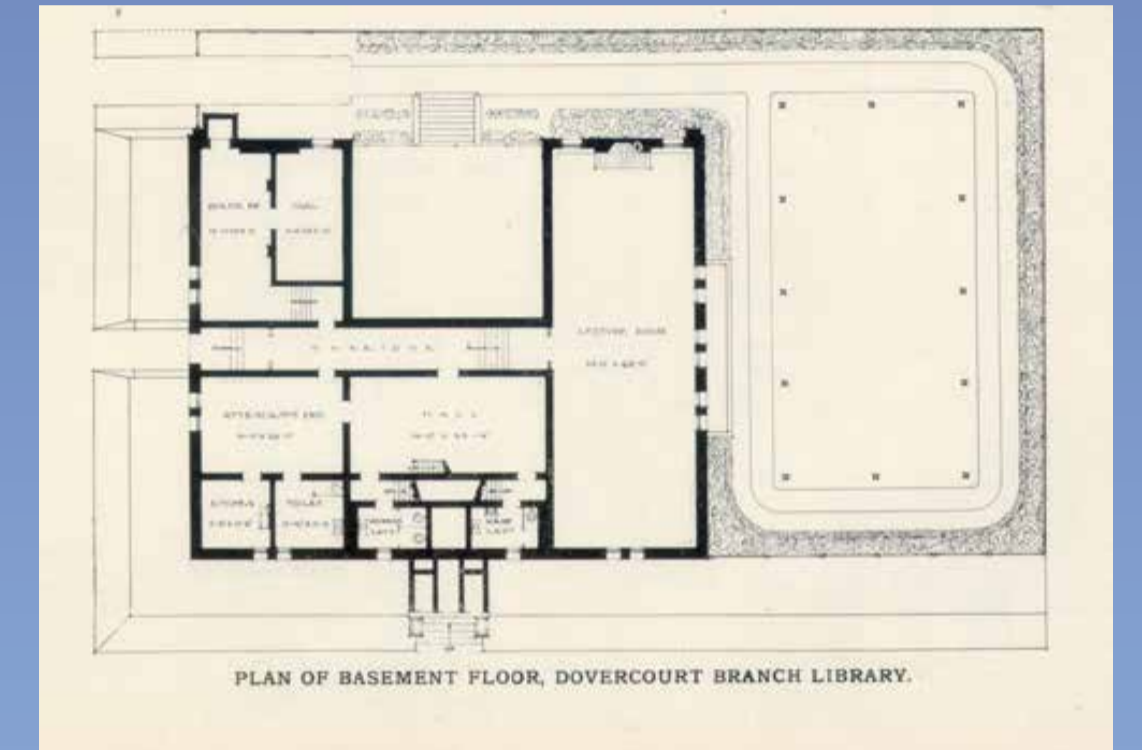
Toronto World, 23 October 1913  
Toronto Reference Library, Newspapers Collection



Toronto Star, 13 December 1911  
Toronto Reference Library.



Ground Floor Plan, 1913  
Toronto Public Library, Annual Report, 1913  
The ground floor of the U-shaped composition featured two symmetrical reading rooms flanking a central hall and an open-air, protected courtyard.

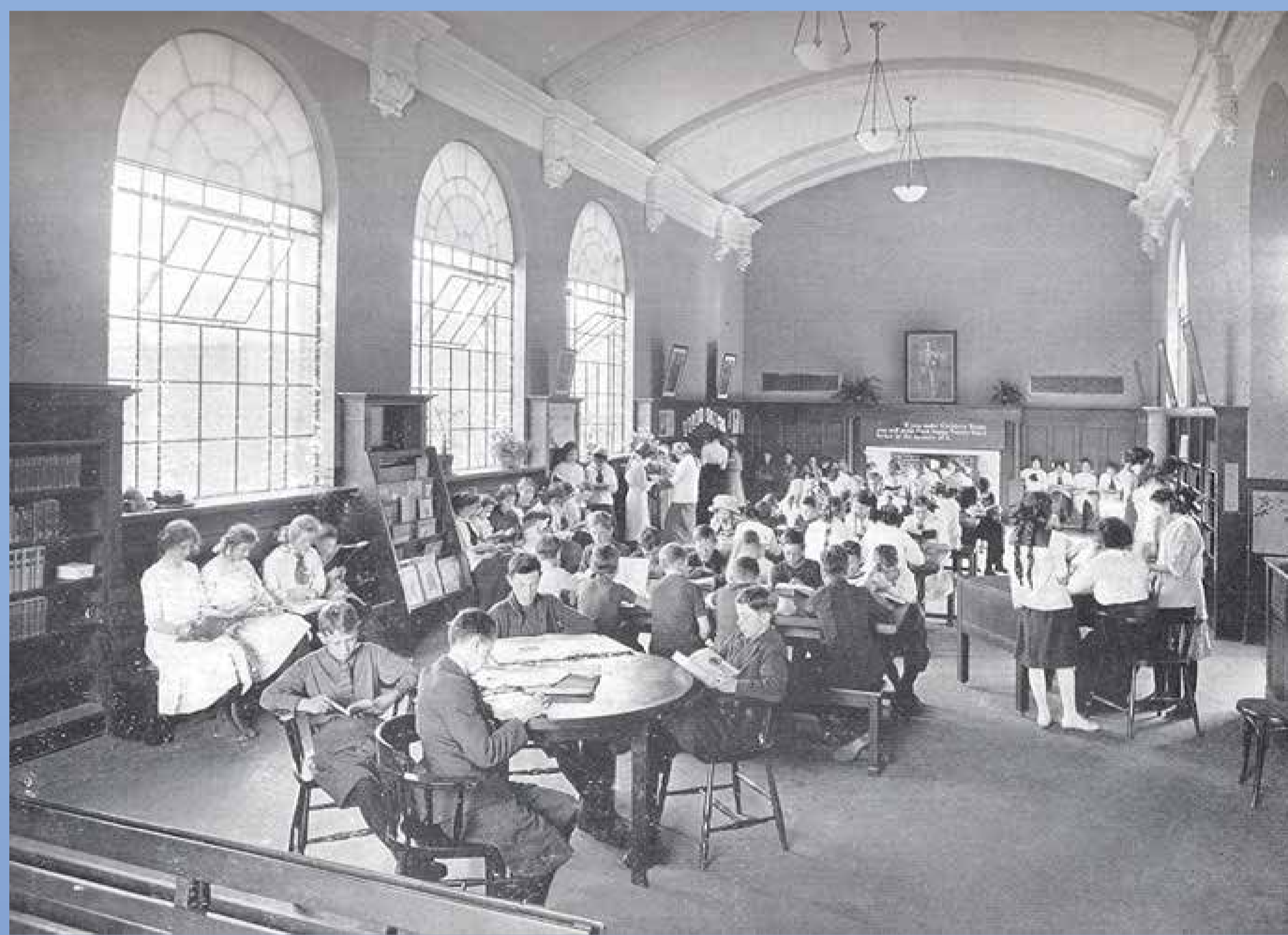


Basement Floor Plan, 1913  
Toronto Public Library, Annual Report, 1913  
A large lecture room was the main feature of the basement level.

## Some Branch Services

### Historical Highlights

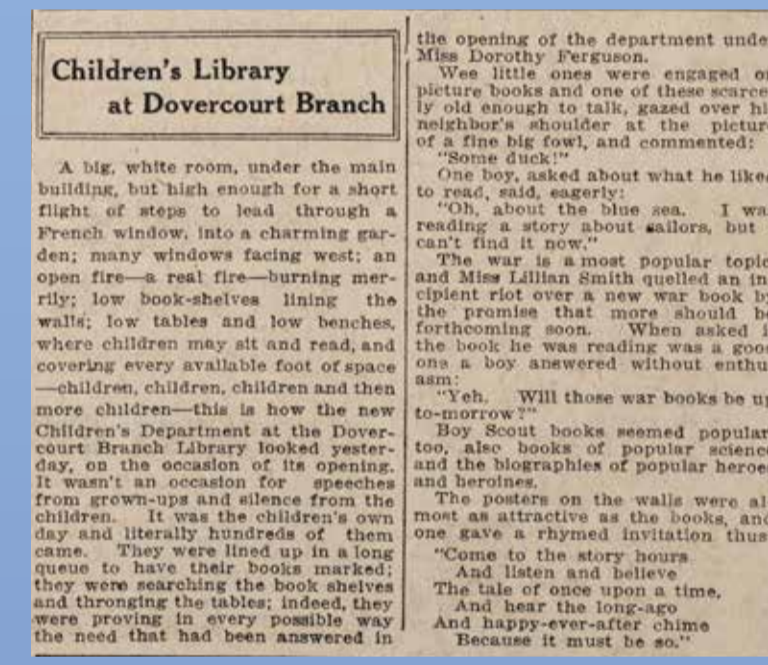
- 1911 Toronto City Council votes to provide \$60,000 (plus \$5,000 for books) to the Toronto Public Library Board for a new branch library in the Dovercourt district. A 150-by-100-foot (46- by 30- metre) site at the northwest corner of Bloor Street and Dovercourt Road is acquired. Plans by Toronto architects Alfred H. Chapman & Robert B. McGiffen are approved, 12 December.
- 1912 Construction starts, 30 April. Cornerstone is laid on 16 October.
- 1913 Dovercourt Branch is officially opened, 23 October and for business two days later. Then the largest branch library in Canada, Dovercourt was the first library building in the city to be constructed solely with municipal funds, and without the aid of Carnegie grants.
- 1916 Ontario's Provincial Library Training School is held for a month in the basement lecture room; a two-month session is provided there in September 1917.
- 1917 Children's room is moved to larger quarters in the former lecture room in the basement, opened 30 November
- 1938 Renamed Bloor and Gladstone Branch to avoid confusion about the location, December.
- 1970 Service for the "more alienated youth of the district" is provided at 'The Place,' a sub-branch project in a storefront on Bloor Street just east of the library; it is soon relocated and taken over by a community board.
- 1975 Closed for renovation and expansion, 24 November. Architects: Howard V. Walker and Howard D. Chapman (son of the original architect). Limited service is provided in a storefront at 1124-6 Bloor Street West (corner of Dufferin Street), opened 25 November.
- 1976 Reopened 7 April.
- 1991 Closed for carpet replacement on 2 July. Reopened 13 July.
- 1992 Closed for HVAC retrofit June 8. Reopened 5 July. Became known as Bloor/Gladstone Branch around that time.
- 1993 Listed on Toronto Historical Board's Inventory of Heritage Properties, adopted by City Council, 22 March.
- 2006 Closed for renovation and expansion, 30 December. Project Architects: rounthwaite, dick and hadley architects inc in association with Shoalts and Zaback Architects Ltd. and ERA Architects Inc.
- 2009 Reopened 23 July. Heritage plaque presented by Heritage Toronto in partnership with Toronto Public Library



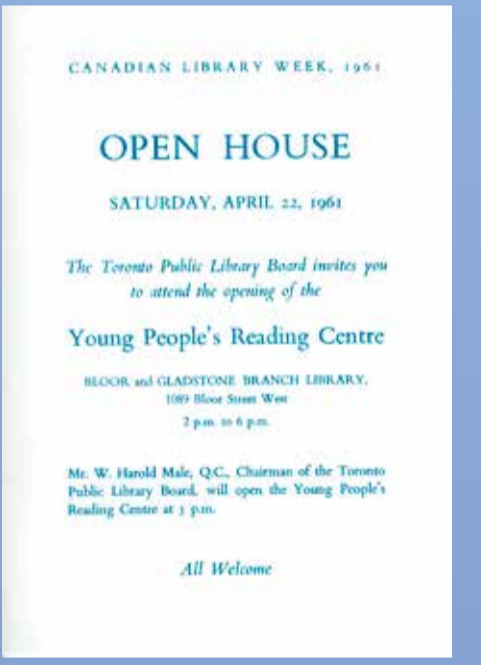
Children's Room, Ground Floor, about 1914.  
Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Public Library Archives fonds  
"A glimpse of the children's room in the Dovercourt Branch, Toronto, where the young citizens find a banquet in books and where stories are told to large and appreciative audiences every Saturday morning." Note the inscription on the fireplace mantle, a



Provincial Library Training School Class, 1916  
Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Public Library Archives fonds  
Classes for the training school were held in the basement lecture room at



The Children's Room moves into the old basement lecture room in late 1917.  
Toronto Globe, 1 December 1917  
Toronto Reference Library, Newspapers Collection



Opening of Young People's Reading Centre, 22 April 1961  
Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Public Library Archives fonds

## Bloor and Gladstone Branch Renovation, 1975-6

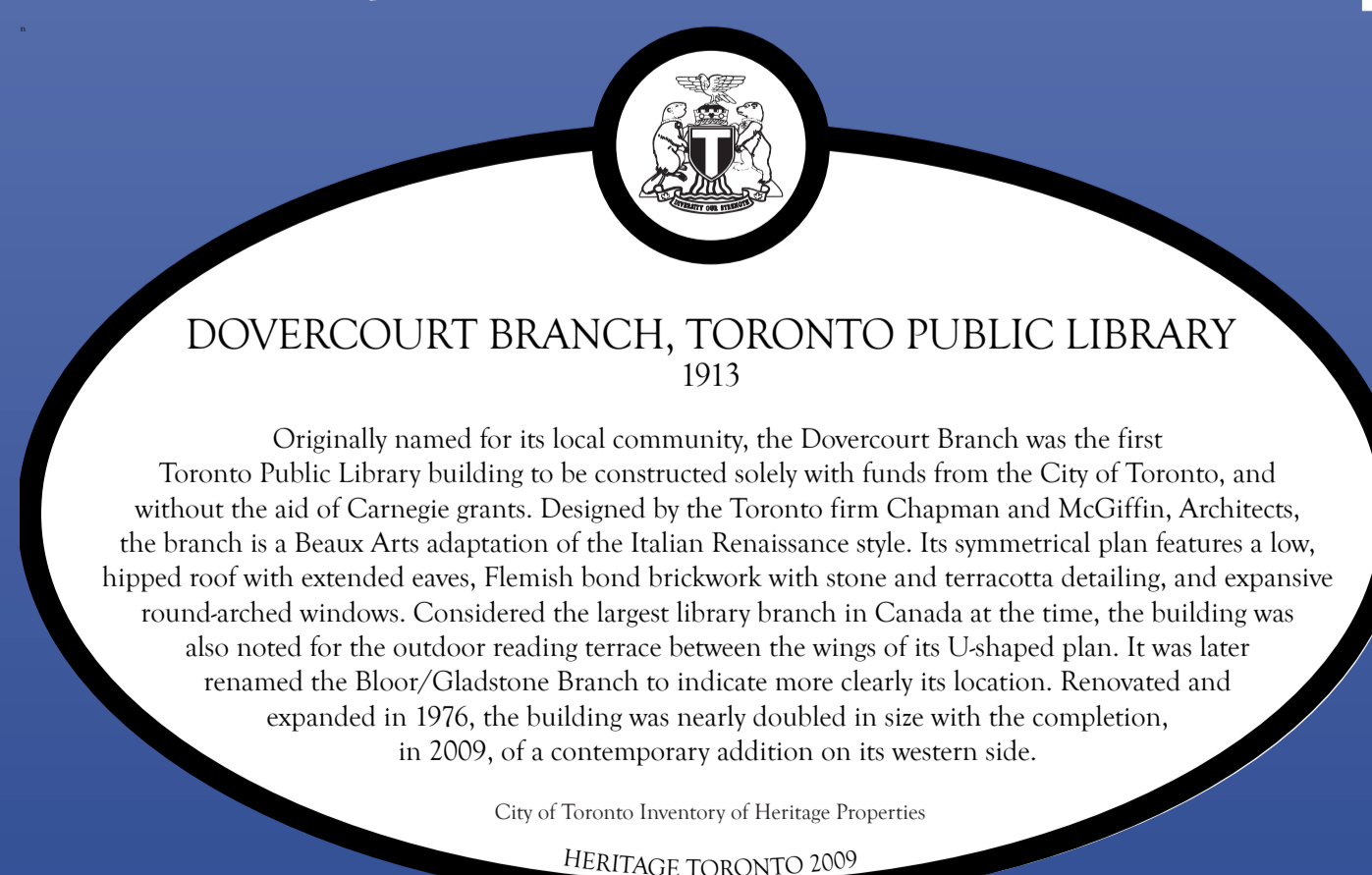


Bloor Street (north) Façade, about 1976  
Toronto Reference Library, Toronto Public Library Archives fonds  
A ramp for handicapped access and a new basement entrance on the west side were



Reading Room, about 1976  
Review of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, 1980  
The original courtyard was enclosed and converted into a reading room.

## Renovation, Restoration and Expansion, 2007-9



Heritage Toronto Plaque, presented at the reopening, 23 July 2009



Architectural Rendering by rounthwaite, dick and hadley architects inc., 2009  
The main entry remained in its original location, but at a lower level. The new glass addition added over 9,000 square feet to the library.