

August 2023

Introduction:

In 2019 the library director and the trustees decided to investigate the possibility of a new addition to the library. They interviewed three different architects and drove around the state to look at each of their buildings. They concentrated on architects that have designed other small libraries. The trustees hired Lavalee Brensinger with Ron Lavallee being the main architect. The second meeting with Ron was supposed to occur in March 2020 to start the process, but COVID interrupted our plans.

Finally, in late 2022, the trustees decided to speak to him again and restart the planning. At that point Ron had gone off on his own and recommended an architect from another firm to work alongside him...Brenda Braun of Stevens Pond. Brenda has worked closely with Ron on many projects.

Because the trustees had selected Ron, they wanted to make sure that he would be with the project every step of the way...which he assured them he would.

The Social Trustees, Susan Bascom (chair of the public trustees) and Susan Gilbert (library director) started the planning with Brenda and Ron.

A survey was sent out to all the residents in Kensington with over 10% being returned. (see attachment)

We met with Ron and Brenda who asked about our wants and needs for an addition.

The Social Trustees committed to paying Brenda for her services. They also, on her recommendation, had a feasibility study done to get an idea of project scope and existing conditions. A geotechnical survey was done by Summitt and a site survey conducted.

Current space:

The current library was built in 1895 with a small reading room. In the early 1980's an addition was added that included a children's room on the ground floor (25' by 20"); a stack room (25' by 20") above on the ground level.

The “Sawyer Room” was created out of an attic in the 1980’s which was paid for by Alan Lewis in memory of his grandmother. The room currently contains many old artifacts belonging to both the library and the Historical Society. The only access to the Sawyer Room is by stairs and an old elevator chair.

There are two bathrooms: one on the ground and one on the first floor which are not ADA compliant.

Parking is either up front or in the school parking lot which has 5 spots for patrons’ cars. A path was created giving access to the side door of the building from the lot.

Services & Programs

The library has many activities throughout the year.

During the school year, there are many after-school and early release day events for elementary aged kids. Due to space constraints, we are only allowed 10 people in the room (KFD regulation) which makes it difficult to host a larger group. Often events are held in the Sawyer Room which is inconvenient. The room was designed as a place for meetings and historical research, not for crafts and messy events. There are too many valuable items upstairs at risk of being damaged.

During the summer all ages sign up for the Summer Reading Program and weekly late-afternoon events for kids are held for 6 weeks. Over 25 usually attend these activities.

The library also hosts at least two events each month for adults. As these tend to attract older patrons, the inaccessibility of the Sawyer Room makes it problematic for many seniors. Different venues in town have been used such as the Grange and the Town Hall, but the acoustics sometimes make it difficult to hear the speaker. Additionally, hosting programs at the library supports KPL’s mission statement;

- ❖ Offer programs and services that encourage the development of reading and learning in children;
- ❖ Provide a community space where residents can meet, interact, enjoy programs of public interest, and study, and enjoy programs of public interest;

Future space Possibilities

Feedback from both the survey, patron's comments, and librarians "wish lists" indicate that more space is needed for both children and adults.

Foremost, the Library envisions a fully accessible library for all. It does not currently meet federal and state code requirements for access to all areas.

A two-level addition with an elevator would provide needed space for all ages:

1. A room added to the existing children's room would allow for larger groups to attend events as well as room for playtime in the room with the train table, STEAM projects and sitting room for reading. Often parents and grandparents will bring kids in to just sit for an hour and either read or let the child(ren) play. An extra room to allow this activity would not interfere with those looking for books and reading. It would also allow the children's librarian to offer a wider array of events for kids such as cooking, messy art projects etc.
2. A second level could be used for adult events and include an elevator, a handicapped accessible place for events with an ADA compliant bathroom. Patrons could move around from floor to floor without climbing stairs.

The room could be used for many purposes such as a quiet place for those working remotely, senior activities such as board games, cribbage, cards, and a place to hold speaker events (these ideas were mentioned repeatedly in the survey.)

3. One or two "cubicles" for quiet study is desired. Those working remotely (larger number since COVID) could work in an area away from others and access the library's wifi.
4. Space for teens to sit and work with comfortable chairs in an area with young adult books. Ideally enough space if library was going to provide equipment for gaming, chrome books, etc.
5. Space for staff including: director's office, processing area with cabinets and storage, break area for lunch, secure space for records retention, office supply area etc.

We are just at the planning stage of this endeavor.

Both the Social and Public trustees and the library staff feel strongly that we should provide the community with a library that needs to evolve from the quaint jewel of a small community library into a 21st century resource for life-long learning and cultural activities, while maintain Kensington's community values.

# of Responses to questions asked in survey (92 submitted)		
More room for kids activities and crafts	40	
bigger teen area	16	
handicapped accessible meeting room for events	30	
space for seniors to gather and play games, do crafts, etc.	43	
Quiet work/Study areas	41	
Space for STEAM and play areas for kids	28	
Public space for lectures, events, etc.	50	
Other:		
More books	2	
Crosswalk	1	
Movie nights	1	

The Need for more space

Over the past several years, we have been trying to increase the children's programming. In addition to a weekly storytime, we now offer after-school activities and programs on early release days.

The room we have now does not function well as a multi-use space.

There are no quiet reading areas when a program is in session. There is no space to put a beanbag or reading chair.

Children trying to pay attention to storytime are distracted by younger siblings playing with puzzles, learning toys, or the train table, a couple of feet away.

Not enough open floor space.

There is not enough open floor space to hold a circle group for storytime. As a group, we are not able to spread our wings without touching one another.

If kids are reading or playing on the floor, there is no walking space. Adult and kids are literally walking over each other. Parents and caregivers often have to stand, due to the lack of space and seating.

The space is not wheelchair accessible and neither is the one bathroom.

Tight areas can lead to more conflict between children.

The Sawyer Room is not a substitute for the children's room.

The Sawyer Room was not designed for a space for children. It is three flights up and inaccessible for kids and families with disabilities. If a child who uses a wheelchair was interested in attending a program, he/she would have to be carried up the three flights of stairs. The bathroom is three flights down. The supply room for all arts and crafts is three flights down. The Sawyer room is also three flights up from the games, toys, and books.

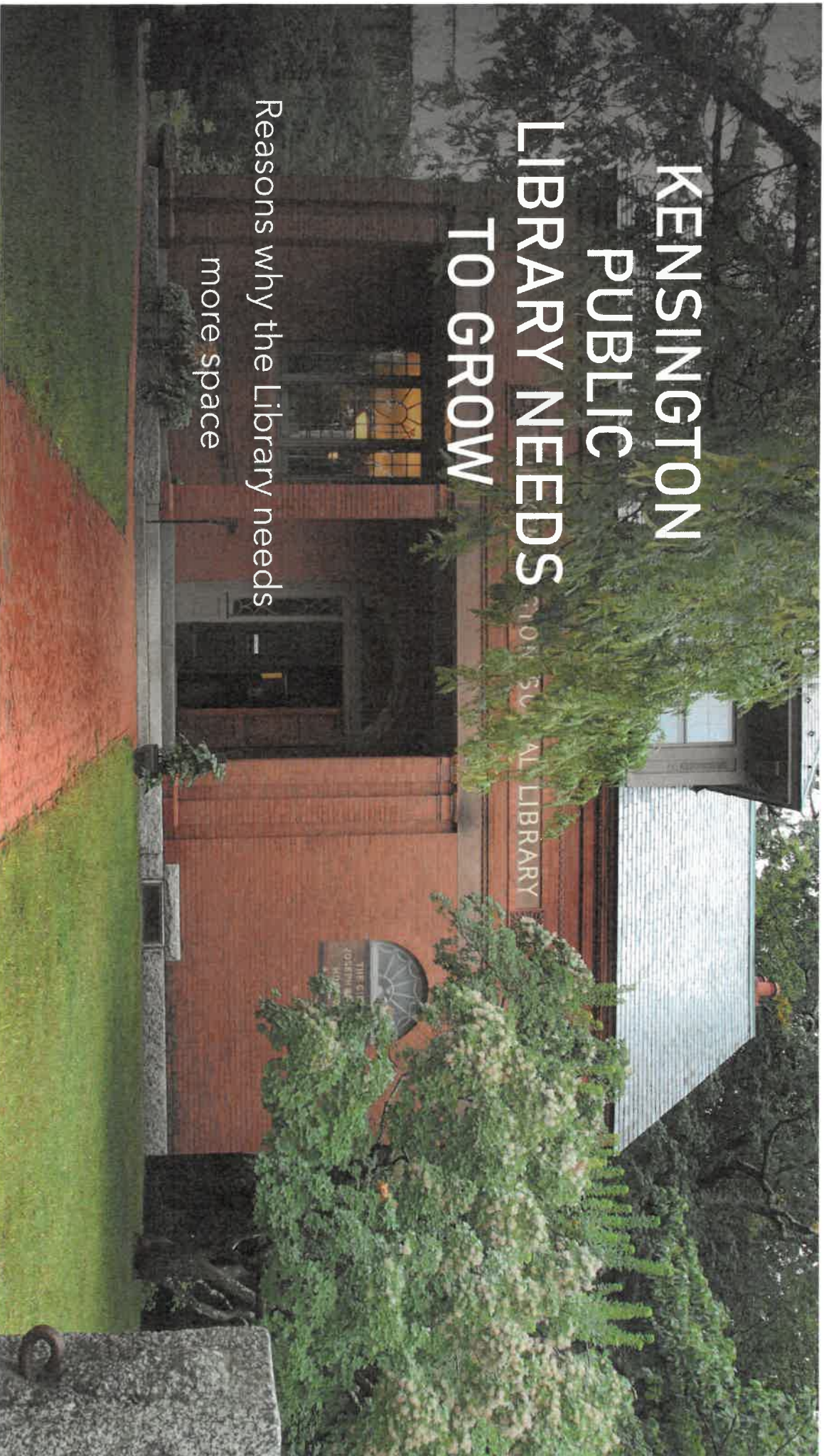
The Grange is not a substitute for a functioning children's room. The young residents of Kensington and their families should have a relationship with the library. Young patrons are not inspired to browse through the books and check them out at the Grange.

Kristin Berardino

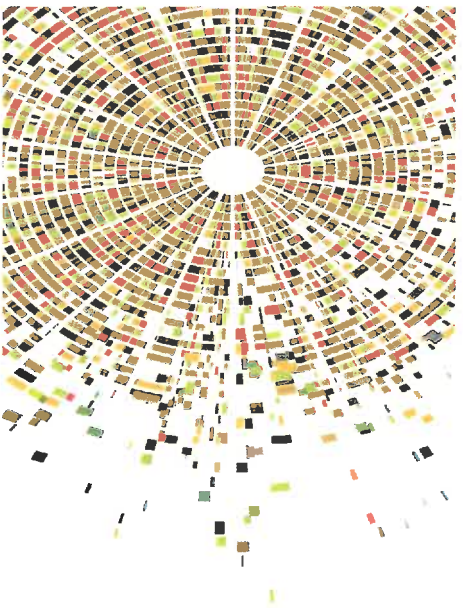
Children's Librarian

KENSINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY NEEDS TO GROW

Reasons why the Library needs
more space



Demographics in town changing



- As of July 31st, added 57 new families as patrons
- Library had almost 6,000 visits last year (500/month,) 1000 of which were for events.
- Almost 10,000 items were checked out last year; 8000 books of which half were children's books.

Results of survey sent to townspeople

We mailed a letter and short survey to every household in town so we could get feedback on what residents would like to see in a future library. Over 10% replied. Here are the responses. (multiple answers were given by most who responded.)

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Needs for more space for children's room

- **More space for children's books**

We are running out of room to display and hold children's books

- **Children's room**

We need a larger space for games, STEM tables, book browsing.

Families come in to spend up to an hour with their kids and we need to be able to provide more space.

Story times often bring 4 or 5 families to our existing small space and there isn't enough room for all.

An extra room set up with sink, room for supplies for crafts and events, area for Storytime would free up existing space for book browsing and reading.

Needs for more space for patrons

- **Quiet study areas** for patrons to study, work remotely, read, etc.
- **Handicapped accessibility** to Sawyer room and bathrooms
- **Larger area for teens**
- **More space for Fiction**
As we get new releases, we need room for them as well as older books in stack room.



Need place for processing books,
storing personal items and office
materials, eating lunch, etc.

Small directors' office for privacy:
paying bills, holding files and
library information

Climate controlled space for
storing crafts, old files, furniture,
seasonal items, etc.

And, lastly, more space for day to day functioning of
library