

## Cambridge Public Library: Visitation Report (DDG, 1/26/2012 and 2/8/2012)

See [http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/portfolio/2010/10/cambridge\\_public\\_library.asp](http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/portfolio/2010/10/cambridge_public_library.asp) for some excellent images

Location: 449 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02138

### Library system

- System: consists of the main branch plus six branches
- Circulation (2010/11): 1,397,593; audio downloads 310,687; remote renewals 310,687  
(2009/10): 1,087,446; audio downloads 819; remote renewals 196,635
- Computer sessions 2010/11, (individual): 177,016
- On-line database use (2010/11): 436,980
- Visitors: 1600-2000 per day since reopening in October 2009 (previously 1000 per day)

### Physical space:

- 104,000 square-foot facility consisting of an 1888 building renovated by Ann Beha Architects with a 2009 addition designed by William Rawn Associates, both Boston based
  - New building consisting of a “book emporium” first floor that most likely has its roots in Rem Koolhaas’s “living room” design for Seattle; it has a well-thought-out floor plan, with circulation inside the doors, a central information desk immediately behind, and a self-check to the left in the corridor leading to the old building; lots of reading desks, computer terminals, tables near vending machines, and chairs for lounging are located in this sequence as you move further into the first-floor space; the second floor has stacks and a centrally located reference desk that provides for access to the archives room behind; and the attic-like third-floor children’s library has a “tree-painted” (?) ceiling, an area for babies and young children to relax with parents, and more tables and computer terminals
- Renovated 1888 building with a beautifully designed reading room and teen room; the other spaces, open stacks and a computer technology room, are less successful
- The connecting bridge between the two structures creates interesting vistas both within and looking out of the building
- The new building also has several below-ground floors, with numerous study and meeting rooms throughout the building, above and below ground, and an auditorium, technical services, and a parking garage below ground

- The building is located next to the Cambridge Latin School in a park-like space with a playground

### Green technology

The new building is state-of-the-art and has a double-skin curtain wall of low-iron glass that conserves energy; the cavity between the two layers of glass also incorporates internal shading devices that shield the library interior from direct sunlight while allowing indirect light to penetrate more deeply

### Library holdings

Please note: There was extensive deaccessioning at the time of the shift from the old to new structures. I was informed by a reference librarian (and acquaintance from Harvard) that the new structures hold fewer books than the old 1888 building did. In other words, the move is to digital access and computers. . . .

### Events and programming

- Exhibits
- Book groups
- ESL and writing groups (see <http://www.cambridgema.gov/cpl/Services/theliteracyproject.aspx>)
- Early Childhood Resource Center with on-line information and on-site programming (see <http://www.cambridgema.gov/cpl/eventsandprograms/earlychildhoodresourcecenter1.aspx>)
- Extensive collaboration with other community groups within Cambridge

### Work flow and daily operations

The arrangement of spaces is highly conducive to interaction between librarians and patrons; there are some line-of-sight issues in terms of location of reference desks, and the best resolution of this problem occurs in the teen room, where the desk is placed in the middle of a long, rectangular space