

## **George Bruce Branch of the New York Public Library**

Individual Landmark

518 West 125th Street

Designation Date: January 13, 2009



*The New York Public Library, George Bruce Branch, 518 West 125th Street, Main elevation (north). New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission New York Public Library George Bruce Branch Designation Report. Photo by Carl Forster.*

The striking brick and limestone George Bruce Library building is an excellent example of Georgian Revival-style civic architecture, designed by the prominent architecture firm of Carrère & Hastings. The firm is noted for the design of the New York Public Library's main branch building at Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street.

The George Bruce Library building is three stories high and four bays wide. The historic ground-floor entryway features an arched transom with Gothic muntins, and sidelights, and is flanked by historic copper lanterns and an ocular window above the entrance, with a surround of bricks and a stone keystone. The black-and-red header brick facade forms a distinctive checkerboard pattern. The second floor has three large windows with flared lintels. The third floor has four smaller windows, each with a center keystone. The engraved stone frieze below the denticulated stone cornice is topped by a brick-and-stone paneled parapet.

The George Bruce Library is named for a Scottish inventor of printing machinery. In 1877, his daughter Catherine donated \$50,000 for a library building and books in her father's memory. Completed in 1888, the original George Bruce Library was located on 42nd Street. When it was sold in 1913, the proceeds were used to build the current library located on 125th Street.

Carrère & Hastings designed 14 Carnegie-funded libraries in New York. This commission was awarded to the firm after the success of the main branch building. This library was designed shortly after the tragic death of Carrère and reflects the firm's interest in English architecture.

[Read the full NYC LPC designation report here.](#)