

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Weber County Main Library

Weber County, Utah

Name of Property

County and State

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Weber County Main Library

Other names/Site Number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2464 Jefferson Ave.City or town: Ogden State: Utah County: Weber

Not for Publication: _____ Vicinity: _____

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

_____ National _____ Statewide X Local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A _____ B X C _____ D

Signature of certifying official/Title	Date
Utah Division of State History/Office of Historic Preservation	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title:	State or Federal Agency/Bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ Entered in the National Register
- ☐ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ Removed from the National Register
- ☐ Other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper_____
Date of action**5. Classification****Ownership of Property***(Check as many boxes as apply)*

- Private ☐
- Public – Local ☒
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property*(Check only **one** box)*

- Building(s) ☒
- District ☐
- Site ☐
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property*(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)*

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0**6. Function of Use****Historic Functions***(Enter categories from instructions)*

Education: Library

Current Functions*(Enter categories from instructions)*

Education: Library

7. Description**Architectural Classification***(Enter categories from instructions)*

MODERN MOVEMENT: New Formalism

OTHER: Brutalism**Materials***(Enter categories from instructions)*

CONCRETE

BRICK

GLASS

METAL: Bronze

Narrative Description

*(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)*

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Summary Paragraph

The two-story, rectangular Weber County Main Library was built at the corner of 25th Street and Jefferson Avenue in downtown Ogden, Utah. The building is a public library built in the New Formalist style dating to 1968. The building measures 230 feet by 80 feet. The surrounding park provides an expanse of open lawn and mature trees to the north and east that is an important part of the view from the building interior. The building was constructed on a raised plinth defined by low concrete retaining walls on most sides and is strongly volumetric. The main entrance is located toward the north end of the long axis on the west side, and the building exterior is symmetrical around the north-south axis. A compatibly designed parking lot lies north of the building, and the original site design includes ramps and stairs, pebbled concrete sidewalks, a matching brick book depository and water tower enclosure, concrete benches, brick planter boxes, light standards with globe fixtures, and a flag pole. The service area is located at the northeast corner of the building and includes an approach ramp to the basement level, a concrete retaining wall, a metal fence, and loading dock. There are no other buildings on the property.

Narrative DescriptionExterior

The Weber County Main Library is a west-facing, rectangular-plan public library; the building is in the style of New Formalism but also incorporates elements of Brutalism, which was still developing at the time of its construction. The building's façade faces west. The exterior walls are built on a low, poured concrete foundation that is largely obscured by plantings. The walls themselves are clad in pale brown bricks laid in a vertical, stacked bond with recessed mortar joints of matching color. The bond creates a regular geometric pattern for the walls and enables the brick to "flow" around the curves of the wall. The result is a homogeneous surface that seems to organically sheath the building. The brick walls are divided into eight bays by narrow, vertical bands of recessed windows. A wider, recessed bay with entry doors on the main level and windows above defines the short axis of the building. The metal-framed, fixed-pane windows have tinted glazing and panels of ridged, bronzed metal separating the first and second floors. The recessed main entrance originally had pairs of side-hinged glass doors with dark metal frames that have since been replaced. The walls are capped with a recessed band of ridged metal, from which extends a massive, swooping soffit finished in smooth stucco. The roof is flat and not visible from street level, and the roof-mounted mechanical systems are only visible from across the park.

The south side of the building is similar in design to the west façade but has only two brick bays separated by a wide band of windows, which define the second major axis of the building. The south side is accessed by a single door for emergency use only that is inconspicuously incorporated in the window band.

The east side of the building is a mirror image of the west side, and (aside from surrounding landscaping and site features) is functionally identical. The doors are automatic, metal-framed, sliding-glass doors.

The north side of the building is identical to the south side of the building (aside from surrounding landscaping and site features). This visual symmetry contributes to the highly volumetric, sculptural form of the building, further emphasized by its corner location and siting on a raised plinth.

Interior

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The interior of the building has three levels: the first and second stories and a basement level. The first and second stories are very similar in design, layout, and materials and hardware. In plan, the first and second floors comprise a series of modular bays with curved corners, each measuring 26 feet east-west by 22 feet north-south; these are separated by 4-foot spans that are filled by recessed, full-height windows. Each floor is arrayed in a series of nine modules (north to south) by three modules (east to west). The main entrance and window band on the west side, the window bands on the east side, and the window bands on the north and south ends take the place of one module and two window spans. The first and second floors have open plans that are arranged into reading areas and rows of free-standing shelving, with small, enclosed service and meeting rooms arranged around the central foyer on each floor. A secondary staircase and a small conference room are located in the southwest and southeast corners of the building, respectively. Four enclosed service modules form the four corners of the foyer. The basement level is divided into meeting rooms, administrative offices, staff work areas, and storage.

The first floor of the Weber County Main Library is approached through the main entry on the west side of the building. The metal-framed, glass exterior doors are replacements, as are the sidelights and transoms. The sliding double doors lead to a short vestibule with glass walls. The matching, non-original, interior automatic doors lead into an open foyer.

Throughout the building, the window bands provide vistas of the surrounding park, with low furnishings and bookcases allowing for unobstructed views to the outdoors. The building was originally furnished with Eames-designed Herman Miller furniture. Many of the original furniture pieces remain in use in the library today, including molded plastic chairs, tables, sofas, and Barcelona chairs; additionally, some furniture was replaced in kind ca. 2015 (personal communication with Lynnda Wangsgard, February 13, 2019). The powerfully horizontal space of the interior, amplified by relatively low, flat ceilings and a dark interior, is relieved by a nearly square atrium that opens above the cross axis to the floor above. The connection between inside and outside is strengthened by the stacked brick walls and curved corners of the enclosed modules, which continue uninterrupted from the building's exterior. And in all locations around the first floor, the full-height windows and minimal window framing give the impression that the floor and the flat, plastered ceiling move fluidly to the exterior.

The second floor of the Weber County Main Library is accessed by the main staircase on the east side of the building and the elevator in the southwest service module, as well as a secondary staircase at the southwest end of the floor. Both the staircase and elevator open into a spacious foyer, with the atrium immediately to the north. The second-floor plan is very similar to the first-floor plan, comprising an array of nine modular bays (north to south) by three bays (east to west) separated by recessed, full-height windows. The pre-teen areas to the east and west of the atrium and the long window walls on the north and south ends take the place of one module and two window spans. Four enclosed service modules form the four corners of the second-floor foyer. As with the first floor, this is a powerfully horizontal space with a strong visual connection between the inside and outside.

The service modules on both the first and second floors have a number of additional design details. Windows, when present, are metal-framed and extend from floor to ceiling. Doors are of solid, dark-finished wood. The ceilings are dropped to the height of the door and window lintels. The original circulation desk in the northwest module has been replaced, but all of the other modules remain relatively unaltered, including the main elevator and the carpeted staircase with its closed baluster and raised, curving wood handrail. On the second floor, all of the modules remain relatively unaltered, including the main elevator and the carpeted staircase, although the two conference rooms in the northwest module have been combined to form one larger room; another module on the second floor has been altered for use as a restroom, although the original window and door openings were retained.

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Generally, the floors on both levels are covered with carpet as they were originally (although the carpet has been replaced). The building underwent rehabilitation between 2014 and 2018; as part of that project, closed cell foam insulation was applied to the previously uninsulated exterior walls. The overall design of the walls remains the same, however, including the character-defining curves that visually connect the interior to the exterior. Perforated gypsum board has also been installed on the ceilings to replace the original acoustic plaster.

The lower level of the Weber County Main Library is accessed by the main staircase on the east side of the building and the elevator on the west side, as well as a secondary staircase at the southwest end of the floor. Both the main staircase and elevator open into a lobby, with administrative offices and work spaces to the north and public meeting rooms to the south. The lower level is rectangular in plan and retains the modular array of the upper floors, but this is not expressed on the interior walls in part because the floor is devoid of the windows that define the modules in the upper floors. South of the lobby, along the east side of the building, are mechanical, electrical/data, and storage rooms. Along the west side, separated from the east side by a long hallway, are a board conference room, two meeting rooms, and a special collections area. Restrooms flank the elevator on the west side of the lobby. Access to the administrative area is through two sets of doors on the north side of the lobby. The east door leads to a delivery area and storage. The west door leads to an open staff area and restrooms; two enclosed offices and a training room open from the hallway leading to the west door. A loading dock is at the north end of the building.

Generally, the floors on this level are covered with carpet as they were originally, although the carpet has been replaced. Acoustic tiles have been added to the ceilings. The layout of the north half of the lower level has undergone alteration since its construction through the addition of walls to create new rooms. The south half of the lower level has not been altered, with the exception that a previously unfinished storage room was finished and converted into a multi-purpose room for the public. An addition has also been added to the east side of the building to provide space for mechanical equipment and electrical and data rooms. This addition is entirely underground and has not resulted in any changes to the exterior appearance of the building.

Building Rehabilitation

When originally designed, the Weber County Main Library was created with modification in mind. John Piers, the architect, intended that changes in library services could be made without being restricted by the physical layout or design of the building (Friends of Weber County Library 1998a:14). The building underwent rehabilitation in 2014–2018, but this rehabilitation work did not result in the loss of the building's character-defining features. Key exterior alterations consisted of the construction of a below-grade seating area/amphitheater on the east side of the building and the replacement of original light fixtures and the installation of custom LED light fixtures in the parking lot (based on the original lighting design). Interior alterations included the installation of a secondary entry on the east side, modification of interior walls (such as the application of closed cell foam insulation on previously uninsulated exterior walls), and the replacement of windows. The original textured metal panels on the exterior walls were replaced with a custom textured metal composite panel system that closely matches the original panels' appearances. The new entry on the east side resulted in alterations to the design of the building, but it reinforced the design intent for first floor circulation by leading visitors into the same open central space where the building axes cross.

Most interior materials were replaced as part of the rehabilitation, including the original flooring (which was replaced with new carpet), wall coverings, and the acoustic plaster on the ceiling (which was replaced with perforated gypsum board). Throughout the building, a limited number of interior light fixtures were replaced, but most were retained. The location of the first-floor restroom was changed to occupy one of the modules that define the interior space, but the module features (such as the door and windows) were

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retained to preserve the appearance of the space. Finally, an addition was made on the southeast side of the building on the basement level to provide additional space for mechanical, data, and heating, air conditioning, and ventilation equipment. However, this addition is underground and has resulted in no visual impact to the exterior of the building.

Although extensive, the alterations have not resulted in changes to key features of the building such as its exterior massing, its fenestration patterns, the horizontal flow of the interior, the visual connection between the interior and exterior spaces, its setting in an open park area, and the use of modules in dividing the interior spaces. Significant interior materials and features have also been retained, such as furnishings, wood paneling, and light fixtures. Other alterations (such as the application of acoustic plaster to the building's structural concrete tees) were designed to reduce the visual impact of the changes.

Because these alterations and the addition have had only a limited visual impact on the building and its site, the library retains integrity, particularly in the aspects of design, setting, workmanship, and feeling. It continues to function as a public library and is in its original location, and therefore integrity also remains in the aspects of association and location.

Site/Setting

The building's site is original and has been landscaped. Significant original site features include the building's prominent and isolated location at the corner of 25th Street and Jefferson Avenue; the open space of Lester Park to the east; the building's construction on a raised plinth; the location of the main entrance, book depository, and parking lot access on Jefferson Avenue and the resultant activity on the street front; the compatibly designed parking lot to the north (including brick screen walls, light standards, and plantings); the location and appearance of hardscaping features like the ramps and stairs, pebbled concrete sidewalks, and battered concrete retaining walls; the brick book depository and water tower enclosure; the concrete benches, brick planter boxes, and light standards on the entry plaza; the flag pole; and the dramatic nighttime illumination scheme. The service area at the northeast corner of the building is of secondary significance but retains its original configuration and features, including the approach ramp, concrete retaining wall, metal fence, and loading dock. The only significant alteration to the building's site is the modern installation of a sunken exterior seating area/amphitheater on the east side of the building that consists of a sunken lawn accessed via various sets of concrete paths and stairs.

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register Listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Period of Significance

1968

Significant Dates

1968

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

John L. Piers

Kenneth E. Hasenoehrl

Donald W. Mathewson

Edmund W. Allen

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Weber County Main Library in Ogden, Utah, is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the history of Weber County, Utah, in the area of Education, as the first public library serving the consolidated city and county library system in Weber County, Utah, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its historic period. The library's period of significance is 1968, when it was constructed. The building reflected, on the local level in Weber County, a growing national emphasis on the construction of public libraries. The library also represents a high-style example of New Formalism in Utah and incorporates early elements of Brutalism. As a result, the Weber County Main Library is significant under both Criteria A and C at the local level.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION A: EDUCATION

The Weber County Main Library is significant under Criterion A in the area of Education because of its role as the first (and, for a period, only) public library serving the consolidated city and county library system in Weber County, Utah. The library, which replaced Ogden's Carnegie Library (the first public library in the city), was designed to serve the growing community and to unify the city and county library systems to serve a broader geographic area than the individual systems could. The library, which received federal grant funding under the Library Services Act of 1956 and the Library Services and Construction Act of 1964, as well as support from local taxes and bonds, is also representative of how the national push to build public libraries during the mid-twentieth century played out at the local level in Weber County, Utah. As a result, the Weber County Main Library represents an important point in the history of education within Weber County.

Historic Context

The period of significance for the Weber County Main Library is 1968, the year it was built. However, to provide necessary background information, the context begins in 1892 with the initial establishment of a public library in Ogden.

Ogden Carnegie Free Library (1892–1961)

Ogden has a long history of leadership in Utah in the area of public libraries. In 1864 the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah formed the Ogden Library Board, which was supported by Ogden's citizens and local businesses because the territory's laws did not allow local governments to levy taxes to support public libraries (Weber County Library 1964-1969, 1892-1903, 1894-1894-1897, 1895, 1901, 1903, 1904-1930). The Ogden City Library Society, which took over fundraising and organizing for the proposed library, struggled for support and even a permanent location to keep the books. Although the society worked to increase public interest in their fledgling library and offered access to the collection, it continued to struggle through the 1860s and 1870s, and no records exist about it after 1876 (Hunter 1966:500-510).

The next attempt to establish a public library was made by the Ogden Public Library Association, which established a free library and reading room in 1892 (Stauffer 2007:391). This pattern of local support for libraries continued into the twentieth century. In 1901, W. L. Maginnis, Minnie Kiesel, and the Reverend

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E. L. Goshen sent a letter to Andrew Carnegie requesting financial assistance to build a permanent library in Ogden (Weber County Library n.d. [ca. 1980s]:2; Stauffer 2007:392). Carnegie offered \$25,000 toward the library if “the city would arrange an annual maintenance fund of ten percent of that amount and furnish a suitable site.” The city agreed to Carnegie’s offer, and the new library was completed in 1903 at the corner of 26th Street and Washington Boulevard (Weber County Library n.d. [ca. 1980s]:2). It was the first of 23 Carnegie libraries to be built in Utah and was the first building in Utah to be used exclusively as a library (Jones 1997; Work Projects Administration 1941:208).

The Ogden Carnegie Free Library served the region for more than 60 years, by which time the collections had outgrown the space and the building required extensive repairs (Friends of Weber County Library 1998a:13; Marchant 1998:8). In 1960, the Junior League of Ogden sponsored a questionnaire regarding library service satisfaction and found that 60 percent of respondents wanted to expand the existing building. In 1961, a proposal to use sales tax revenue to build an extension to the library was considered but was never approved (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:13).

Preparing for a County Library, 1962–1965

In 1962, a plan to create a consolidated city and county library system was introduced to the Ogden City Council, which led to discussions about updating Utah’s library laws and building a new library that could serve the significantly larger local population (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:14). This consolidated city and county library system would increase the geographic area served by the library. The Weber County Main Library was the first planned library for what was intended to be a much wider-reaching library system. In June, Mrs. Paul (Cissy) Seeger, president of the library’s Board of Directors, requested funds from the Ogden City Council to retain an architect for preliminary design of a new main library large enough to serve the area for 20 years (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:14). In August, the County agreed to build the new library after the City Council approved the request (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:14). “After interviewing every architect in Weber County,” the board selected John Piers, an Ogden architect, to prepare the plans for the new library (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:14).

Also in 1962, the board established the Friends of the Library organization. With Frank M. Browning, a state senator and founder of the Bank of Utah as its first president, the Friends were instrumental in supporting the library and shepherding the design and construction of the new building to completion (Marchant 1998:8–9). Importantly, in 1963, Browning successfully co-sponsored a bill in the Utah legislature that changed state laws to allow for the creation of countywide library systems and the levy of a countywide tax to pay for library operations (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:14–15).

Initial plans for the new library called for constructing it on the site of the existing Carnegie Library; because the parcel was already owned by the library, its reuse would considerably reduce the project expense. Due to a lack of adequate parking at that location, however, two alternative locations were proposed: in Lester Park or on 25th Street between Kiesel and Grant Avenues (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:15). Ultimately, the board approved the initial plan, and Piers presented the specifications for a proposed \$1.15 million library on the Carnegie site in December 1963 (Friends of Weber County Library 1998a:15–16). In the same month, the Weber County Commissioners and the Ogden City Council adopted a motion that the new library be a countywide facility with its construction financed through a county bond issue (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:14). The \$1.5 million bond was approved by voters on December 8, 1964, although there was some opposition from voters in rural areas and in Roy, Utah (Ogden Standard-Examiner 1964a).

A major source of opposition came from two new county commissioners who were elected in November 1963: Maurice Richards and Bud Favero. The two men called a meeting with Maurice Marchant, then the Carnegie Library director, and informed him that \$1.5 million was too much to spend on a library and that

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no architect would be needed because Richards “had a friend in the construction business who could design and build it” (Marchant 1998:10). Richards and Favero thought the library could be built for one third of the \$1.5 million and that the remaining money could be used for other projects, such as a quarter horse racing facility (Marchant 1998:10). Without consulting the city library board, the commissioners also announced their intention of changing the location of the new library and converting the Carnegie Library into a pioneer museum (Marchant 1998:10).

The location disagreement would drag into 1965 with suggestions for a variety of solutions, such as building the library on “25th Street across from the federal building or combining it with a public safety building” (Marchant 1998:11). As a compromise, the Ogden City Council recommended building the new library in Lester Park and, in July 1965, the county commissioners approved that location (Marchant 1998:11). Lester Park, originally known as Liberty Square, had been set aside for public use when the original Ogden city grid was platted; it appears on maps as early as 1875. The park encompasses the entire block bounded by 24th Street to the north, Madison Avenue to the east, 25th Street to the south, and Jefferson Avenue to the west. The park was in the midst of a residential area, with the highest housing density located to the west of Jefferson Avenue (Assist Incorporated 1988:8). In fact, the chief objection to the Lester Park location had been its residential nature and its removal from the heavy pedestrian traffic of the downtown area, where many users combined visits to the Carnegie Library with work and shopping (Marchant 1998:9).

The park site was finally chosen, but the dispute and the actions of the county commissioners had proven so contentious that Marchant resigned from his position as city and county library director in June 1965. He was replaced by Guy Schuurman, a Salt Lake City resident who had been working for the Utah State Library (R.L. Polk & Co. 1965:742). Schuurman was born in the Netherlands in 1931 and emigrated to the United States in 1949, receiving an undergraduate degree from the University of Utah and a “master of librarianship” from the University of Washington in 1961 (Ogden Standard-Examiner 1971). He served as Weber County Library director until 1971, when he became the director of the Salt Lake County Library System, a position he held until his retirement in 1987. Schuurman was likely a good fit: during his career, he was remembered as “exuberant” and was described as a visionary and a motivator who “could sell ice to an Eskimo,” a skill he may have needed to get the new library built (Deseret News 1989).

In 1965 or 1966, the city and county received a \$243,000 federal grant to supplement the bond and help fund construction of the new library (Ogden Standard Examiner 1971). Two pieces of federal legislation played a significant role in the increase of public library construction in the 1960s: the Library Services Act of 1956 (LSA) and the Library Services and Construction Act of 1964 (LSCA). The LSA, signed into law by President Eisenhower, provided the opportunity to expand library services to areas that had limited or no public library access, which accounted for nearly 76 million rural residents in the United States (Fry 1975:7–9). The LSA was to provide \$7.5 million annually for “the extension and improvement of rural public library service” (Fry 1975:10). In 1960, the LSA was extended until 1966 (Fry 1975:14). In 1963, “President Kennedy sent to Congress a special education message” which recommended an amendment to the LSA to authorize “a three-year program of grants for urban as well as rural libraries and for construction as well as operation” (Fry 1975:14–15). The bill, which would become LSCA, was signed into law by President Johnson in 1964 and was designed to expire June 30, 1966 (Fry 1975:16). The LSCA would provide funding “to include construction of new buildings; expansion, remodeling and alteration of existing buildings; initial equipment; and architects’ fees and land acquisition costs” (Fry 1975:16). Both the LSA and the LSCA provided the push to increase access to libraries and were considered a success by many in Congress.

Another public library that was built to accommodate a growing population was the Salt Lake City Main Library. The library was completed in 1964, but planning of the new building began in 1960 (URS

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Corporation 2007:3–4). While the project did not receive funding under the LSA, the library was built in much of the same spirit as the Weber County Main Library would be several years later, and is similar in massing, architectural style, and interior open space. In addition, the design for both structures appears to have been influenced by the existing library planning concepts and literature produced by the American Library Association.

Post Construction Period, 1968–present

On March 4, 1968, the new Weber County Public Library opened its doors to the public; it was dedicated on April 4, 1968 (Ogden Standard-Examiner 1968). The library was given an award “for its striking use of brickwork” by the Utah Bricklayers and Masons Association (Ogden Standard-Examiner 1968). A few early changes were made to the interior, including the addition of light fixtures that descended from the ceiling and the construction of a glass-and-metal partition wall between the foyer and the south reading room. And unfortunately, despite the involvement of professional librarians and consultants in the design of the library and the use of American Library Association standards, the organization and shelving of materials has long been a problem. “Materials were shifted many times during the late 1960s and early 1970s, then the staff finally gave up and left things as they were” (Wangsgard 1996:14).

The original vision for a Weber County-wide library system had included the construction of branch libraries, which would replace the Bookmobile program currently in use. These were slow in coming and funding was a perpetual issue, not only to construct the buildings but to fund operations and collections acquisition (Pettersen and Burton 2001). The existing historical collection from the original Carnegie Free Library served as an important core of the new county-wide system (the first such system in Utah) (Weber County Library 1964-1969, 1892-1903, 1894-1894-1897, 1895, 1901, 1903, 1904-1930).

Eventually, the Weber County Public Library system added four new branches: the first was the Southwest Branch in Roy (1976), and the second was the North Branch in North Ogden City (1983). However, “The opening of a second branch library, without an appropriate adjustment in the tax rate to support operational costs, caused an almost total collapse of the Weber County Library System” in 1984 (Pettersen and Burton 2001:3).

To make matters worse, the consistent neglect of the infrastructure at the Main Library, now sixteen years old, left the facility severely compromised and in need of major repairs to the roof, heating and cooling systems, sewer system, and elevators. Carpeting was worn through to the cement floor, ceilings were streaked with soot from lack of money to purchase air-stream filters, and the front doors no longer closed properly because they had been worn off their hinges. (Patterson and Burton 2001:3)

The Library Board considered closing the library temporarily but instead hired a new director, created a detailed financial plan, and conducted an internal audit; the county commissioners also granted a modest tax increase in 1985. This allowed for maintenance and repairs at the Main Library (including carpet replacement, the installation of automatic doors at the main entrance, and upgrades to the cooling system) and brought a return to financial stability, but provided no means to construct additional branch libraries (Piers at el. 1966; Pettersen and Burton 2001:3). A tax rate adjustment in 1993 allowed for construction of the Ogden Valley branch in 1995 on a site donated by the town of Huntsville, and “the new funding was also stretched to refurbish the Main Library and the North and Southwest branches” (Pettersen and Burton 2001:4).

Despite improvements and the addition of branch facilities, in 1996 the library director estimated that the main library contained 50,000 more items than it was designed to hold (Wangsgard 1996:13). In 2001, a \$22 million bond to upgrade the existing libraries and build two additional branches was proposed but defeated. Another tax rate adjustment, combined with fundraising efforts and a land donation, allowed for

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construction of the Pleasant Valley Branch in 2009 (Weber County Library System 2014). This was followed by a \$45 million bond proposal to upgrade and further expand the county library system, which was approved by voters in 2013. The bond was used to fund major renovations to the Main Library from 2014 to 2018 (Salt Lake Tribune 2013). As part of the work, a historic preservation plan was developed to guide rehabilitation work at the library, ensuring that its character-defining historic features were retained while allowing for important upgrades and improvements.

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE

The Weber County Main Library is significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture as a building that embodies the distinctive characteristics of its historic period. The building is a high-style example of New Formalism, and its construction occurred during a period of increasing urban construction in the state that reflected mid-century modern architectural trends (Huffaker 2007:2). The Weber County Main Library comfortably fits into this stylistic period, but it also represents a sophisticated and up-to-date library design based on national architectural trends and thought, putting it in contrast with the comparatively unsophisticated mid-century modern buildings built in Utah during the preceding decades (Goss 1975:236).

Historic Context

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Utah experienced an economic recession. As a result, little new construction of large buildings occurred. One of the first buildings to be built after the recession was the Salt Lake City Main Library, constructed from 1962 to 1964. The library building was intended to spur new construction in the city and to inspire Salt Lake City's residents. The Salt Lake City Main Library was progressive in Utah as its first example of New Formalism (Huffaker 2007:1–2).

The introduction of New Formalism to Utah and its use in the Salt Lake City Main Library represented a significant change in the state's architectural trends. Although buildings in mid-century modern styles were certainly being built in Utah after World War II, the designs were often lackluster. "Even after World War II the new designs of the late 1940s and early 1950s were pale imitations of the sources that inspired them, and this continued to occur even as late as the 1960s, despite the fact that many buildings reflect a desire on the part of the design profession to keep abreast of styles in other parts of the country" (Goss 1975:236). This was the result of several factors: the economic recession, the stylistic preferences of in-state designers, and the lack of competition with out-of-state architects to stimulate better design (Goss 1975:236). The design of the Salt Lake City Main Library represented one of the first serious efforts to fully express national architectural trends (Huffaker 2007:2).

Based in part on its successful use for the Salt Lake City Main Library in 1962 to 1964, the New Formalist style quickly became popular in Utah. Numerous examples of New Formalist buildings in Utah date to the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s. The Weber County Main Library is an example of a building originating in that trend and is particularly significant because it was designed by a native Utahn, John Piers. Piers made a distinct effort to collaborate with architects and design teams outside of the state and to incorporate national architectural trends into his design. In the case of the Weber County Main Library, this included working with Galvin-Van Buren Associates, a design team based out of North Carolina that specialized in libraries, and traveling to Chicago to learn about library design (Galvin and Van Buren 1959; Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:15).

John L. Piers (1922–1997) was born on May 11, 1922, in Ogden, Utah, to Eber Francis and Mary Rae Keck Piers (Deseret News 1997). He attended Weber State College and the University of Utah, and served in the Navy Air Corps during World War II. After the war, he lived in Los Angeles, California (Deseret News 1997; Ogden Standard-Examiner 2005). While there, Piers earned degrees in business

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administration and architecture from the University of Southern California. In 1952, he returned to Ogden to practice architecture with his father, Eber Piers (1889–1961), a well-known local architect and inventor.

John Piers would have learned a great deal about architectural design and practice from his father, but he was also a formally trained architect of the modern kind, a member of the American Institute of Architecture who worked in Utah for 35 years. He had “a special interest in education and developed innovative and progressive designs for primary and secondary schools in Utah and Wyoming,” including the Weber High School (Deseret News 1997). In addition, Piers designed numerous commercial and institutional buildings, among them St. Benedict’s Hospital (now Ogden Regional Medical Center) (Deseret News 1997). After retiring, Piers and his wife moved to St. George, Utah, where they lived until Piers’ death in 1987 (Deseret News 1997; Ogden Standard-Examiner 2005).

When the first building was designed for the Carnegie Library site, then-library director Marchant recalled: “We wrote a program to give direction to John [Piers]’s work, relying on the [American Library Association] public library standards for much of our information. It contained standards for such factors as minimum seating and collection size” (Marchant 1998:9). The Ogden City Council also obligated funds in 1963 to send Piers and one member of the Library Board to Chicago, where they visited a “library building institute” and attended a design conference (Friends of Weber County Library 1998b:15).

In 1965, when the Lester Park site was approved, Piers created an entirely new design to take advantage of the larger space. Preliminary plans were unanimously approved by the Weber County commissioners in February 1966.

The three commissioners called the preparatory work by the board building committee and architect John Piers, an “outstanding job.” Their sentiments were echoed by Russell Davis, director of the Utah State Library, who said today that the physical plant as envisioned in the schematic drawings will be the best in the state.

“Complete flexibility is built into the building so if library services are modified from present ideas the building will not restrict them. Also, the whole approach of the design by Mr. Piers is patron-oriented. The interest and concern of the building is for the library user and not just for the librarian or staff,” Mr. Davis said.

In the architect’s opinion, the new facility should provide all necessary uses for about 30 years before expansion will be required. It will be exceptionally attractive with the roof and first floor spanning 80 feet without any columns. This type [of] construction is made possible by a pre-cast method. The roof is designed with a slight upward curving that also is reflected in the rounded walls, according to the architect, and there is a continuous plane from ceiling to the eaves. (Friends of Weber County Library 1998a:14)

Assisting John Piers in the new design were Donald W. Mathewson, associate architect, and Kenneth E. Hasenoehrl, associate. Mathewson earned his bachelor’s degree from the University of Utah where, in 1959, he wrote a thesis titled “A Central Public Library for Ogden, Utah, with Facilities for Serving County and Region.” The thesis provides evidence that a new county library had been under discussion for a number of years before the proposal was presented to the City Council in 1962. Mathewson acknowledges Maurice Marchant and his predecessor, librarian Therma Scoville, for their assistance, and goes on to provide a description of the deficiencies of the Carnegie Library, a consideration of various sites (he too favored the Carnegie Library site), and a discussion of the programming and design features important in a modern public library. He concludes with drawings for a library that are stylistically

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similar to the 1963 design proposed by Piers, and he was no doubt hired by Piers because of his undergraduate work.

Ken Hasenoehrl attended the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, where he was awarded a \$30 second place prize in a student design competition (Spokane Daily Chronicle, June 1, 1955).

The structural engineer for the project was Edmund W. Allen (Piers et al. 1966), who graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in civil engineering in 1952. His firm went on to participate in the design of many prominent buildings in state, including the Matheson Courthouse in Salt Lake City and the seismic base isolation system for the Utah State Capitol, the first of its kind in the United States. He is only one of 20 graduates to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Utah's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (University of Utah 2014). Edward T. Case provided mechanical and structural engineering services.

Piers also worked with the library consulting team of Galvin-Van Buren Associates, who were based out of Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1959, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published a manual written by Hoyt Galvin, Director of Libraries, Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenberg County, and Martin Van Buren, an "interior architect," on the design and construction of the small library, written in general terms so that it could be applied internationally and published in three languages (Galvin and Van Buren 1959). The pair collaborated on numerous modern public library designs throughout the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.

The result of this collaboration was a building based on the architectural principles of New Formalism. Architectural historians and theorists have yet to agree upon the stylistic terminology for the multitude of movements following the post-World War II hegemony of Modernism and its heralded "death" in 1959. Indeed, "architectural movements are complex affairs, part stylistic and part ideological, part unconscious practice and part conscious convention, and any transition from one era to another is bound to be a flowing thing, an evolution, fast or slow" (Jencks 1980:6). But it is agreed that the mid-1960s began an era of pluralism (or ended an era of Modernist prohibitionism) that continues to this day. In the later 1960s and 1970s, particular styles like Formalism and Brutalism are commonly recognized, and the library presents an interesting combination of these two styles.

New Formalism was popular from about 1960 to 1975 and is sometimes called "neo Palladianism;" it was applied mainly to public buildings such as banks, auditoriums, museums, and libraries.

The style represents yet another 20th century effort to enjoy the advantages of the past while adapting technology and popular features of the present. As such, New Formalist buildings embraced many Classical precedents such as building proportion and scale, classical columns and entablatures (which were highly stylized), and the use of a colonnade as a compositional device. However, in contrast, they used the newly discovered plastic-like qualities of concrete with the use of umbrella shells, waffle slabs and folded plates. . . Buildings designed in the New Formalism style have a carefully organized hierarchy of space, and an emphasis is placed on the structure or construction grid of the building. A single volume structure is preferred, and the buildings are often separated from nature by being set upon a raised podium or base. Many have an exotic "Near Eastern" flavor and exterior wall surfaces of cast stone, brick and marble can be found. New Formalist civic buildings. . . used grand axis and symmetry to achieve a monumentality to the structure. (Docomomo 2014)

The Weber County Main Library exhibits distinct elements of New Formalism, in particular its siting on a raised plinth, grand axis, simple rectangular volume, symmetry, adherence to a unitized construction grid, and plastic use of concrete for the eave. The building lacks the typical use of delicate columns and

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colonnades, however, its curved corners, recessed windows, and sweeping eave hint at the more massive, sculptural qualities typical of the early Brutalist buildings, in particular those designed by Le Corbusier (e.g., the Secretariat Building in Chandigarh, India [1953] and Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp, France [1954]).

The use of New Formalism for the Weber County Main Library places it within a stylistic trend in Utah during its period of construction in the 1960s. It represents the work of an important local architect, but unlike many earlier mid-century modern buildings in Utah, its appearance reflects the influence and full expression of national architectural trends. It utilizes the New Formalist style popular at the time, as well as elements of the Brutalist style that was just gaining popularity. While the library typifies the architectural trends of the time for public and institutional buildings in Utah, it also represents a particularly sophisticated attempt to incorporate new architectural styles and to use resources on the national level to create a building best suited to the needs of its patrons.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #_____

Primary Location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University

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☒ OtherName of Repository: Weber County Main Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property: 2.43 acres

(Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: <u>41.221108</u>	Longitude: <u>-111.9644</u>
Latitude: _____	Longitude: _____
Latitude: _____	Longitude: _____
Latitude: _____	Longitude: _____

Or**UTM Reference**☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: _____	Easting: _____	Northing: _____
2. Zone: _____	Easting: _____	Northing: _____
3. Zone: _____	Easting: _____	Northing: _____
4. Zone: _____	Easting: _____	Northing: _____

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The legal parcel number of the Weber County Main Library is 01-024-0001. The property consists of the southwest quarter of Block 28, Township 6 North, Range 1 West in Ogden, Utah.

The boundary for the Weber County Main Library consists of a rectangular area encompassing the library building and the associated landscaping (including the amphitheater on the east side and the parking lot to the north). This nomination excludes Lester Park from the boundary, which is also included in the legal parcel.

See map for boundary.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Property boundary includes the principal building, associated structures, and landscaping historically associated with the Weber County Main Library but excludes nearby Lester Park (which is part of the legal parcel but did not serve any important library functions).

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11. Form Prepared ByName/Title: Kate Hovanes, Anne Oliver, and Stephanie Lechert, architectural historiansOrganization: SWCA Environmental ConsultantsStreet & Number: 257 E 200 S, Suite 200City or Town: Salt Lake City State: Utah Zip Code: 84111e-mail: khovanes@swca.comTelephone: (801) 322-4307Date: May 2, 2019**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property:	<u>Weber County Main Library</u>
City or Vicinity:	<u>Ogden</u>
County:	<u>Weber</u>
State:	<u>Utah</u>
Photographer:	<u>EDA Architects</u>

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1 of 18 Photograph of renovated building in evening with exterior lighting. Camera facing southeast.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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2 of 18 Landscaping and parking lot. Rehabilitation retained all existing brick features and the original design of the space. Camera facing southeast.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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3 of 18 West side of building. Camera facing east.

Date Photographed: March 11, 2019

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4 of 18 West and south sides of library. Note landscaping and built features leading to main entrance. Camera facing north-northeast.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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5 of 18 East side of library. Amphitheater on left. Camera facing west.

Date Photographed: January 25, 2018

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6 of 18 East side of building with landscaping alterations including below-grade seating area/amphitheater. Camera facing north.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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7 of 18 North side of building with parking lot in foreground. Camera facing south.

Date Photographed: March 11, 2019

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8 of 18 North and west sides of building with parking lot and landscaping. Camera facing southeast.

Date Photographed: March 11, 2019

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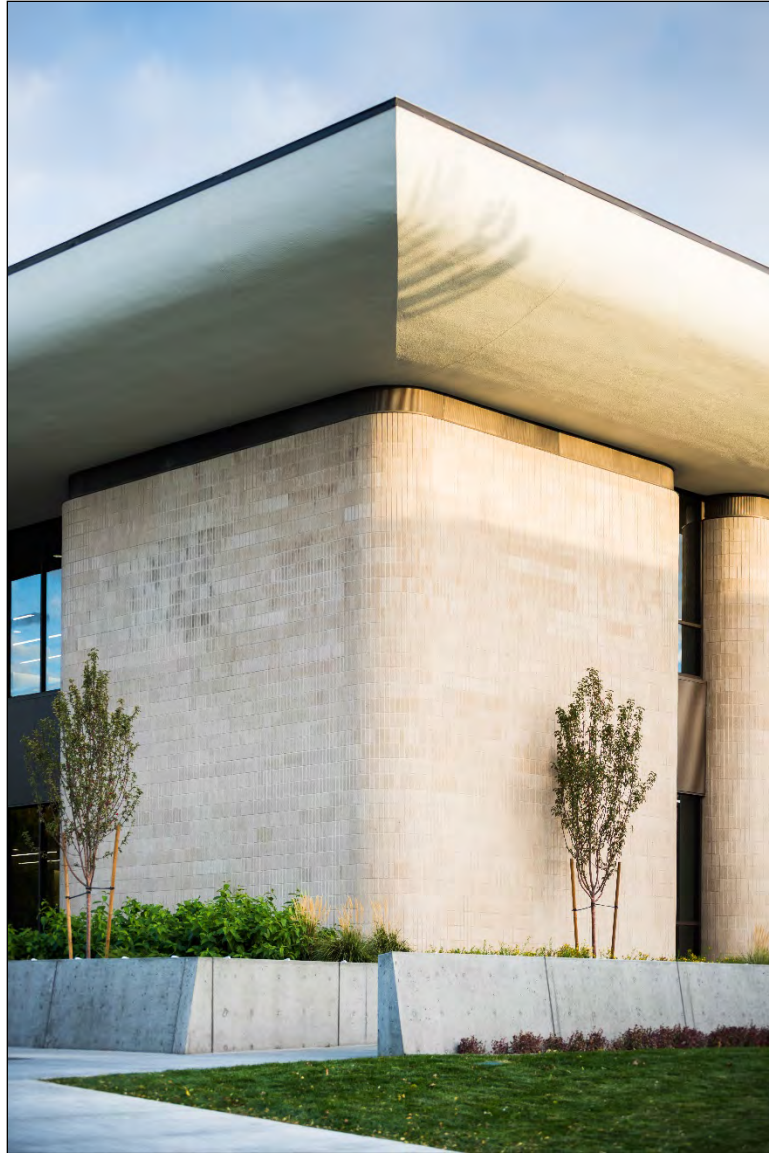
9 of 18 New entrance on east side of building. Although the new entrance has altered the layout of the building, its placement retains the overall fenestration pattern from 1968. Camera facing west.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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10 of 18 Character-defining plinth, sculptural brick walls, and soffit. Camera facing southeast.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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11 of 18 South side of building. Camera facing north.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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12 of 18 East side of building with landscape alterations. Camera facing west.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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13 of 18 East side of building. Camera facing southwest.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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14 of 18 First floor with atrium in center. Camera facing north.

Date Photographed: April 4, 2017

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15 of 18 Fiction and popular magazines area, first floor. Camera facing south. Note original structural tees, wood, and light fixtures.

Date Photographed: April 4, 2017

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16 of 18 Second story with seating and stacks. Camera facing north.

Date Photographed: April 4, 2017

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17 of 18 Special collections area in basement level with original wood paneling and original furniture in foreground. Camera facing south.

Date Photographed: April 4, 2017

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18 of 18 Second-floor atrium with new light sculpture. Camera facing northeast.

Date Photographed: October 17, 2018

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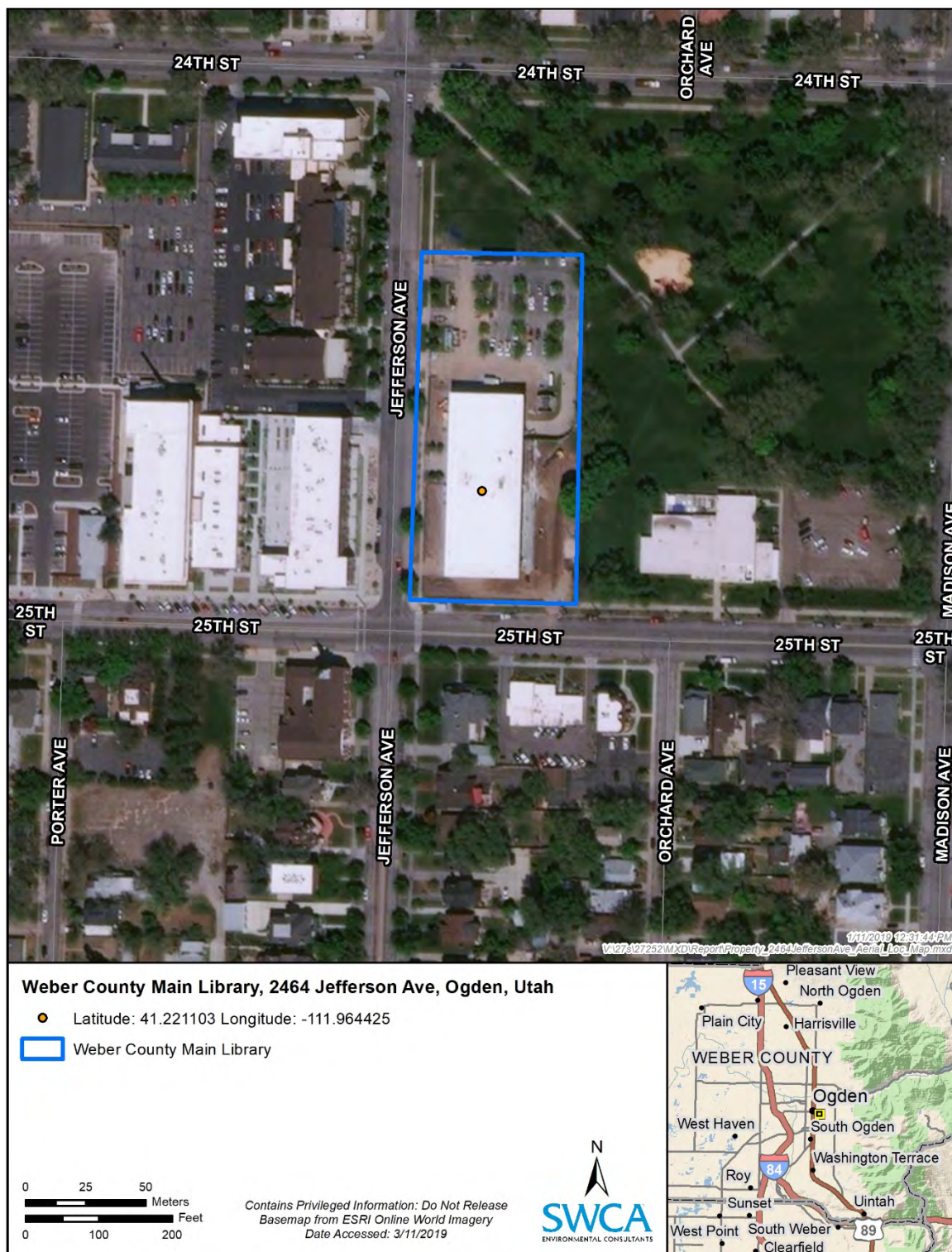


Figure 1. Location map.

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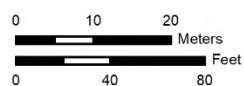
Name of Property

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**Weber County Main Library, 2464 Jefferson Ave, Ogden, Utah**

- Latitude: 41.221103 Longitude: -111.964425

Property Boundary



Basemap from Esri ArcGIS Online: World Imagery,
accessed March 11, 2019.
Contains Privileged Information: Do Not Release



Figure 2. Sketch map.

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Figure 3. Main entrance to Weber County Main Library as it existed prior to 2018 rehabilitation, west side of building. Note that built features and landscaping have been retained. Camera facing southeast. Photograph by Anne Oliver, April 30, 2014.

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Figure 4. East side of building as it existed prior to 2018 rehabilitation. Note changes to landscaping, particularly the below-grade seating area/amphitheater. Camera facing northwest. Photograph by Anne Oliver, April 30, 2014.

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Figure 5. First floor atrium in 2014. Camera facing north. Photograph by Anne Oliver, April 30, 2014.

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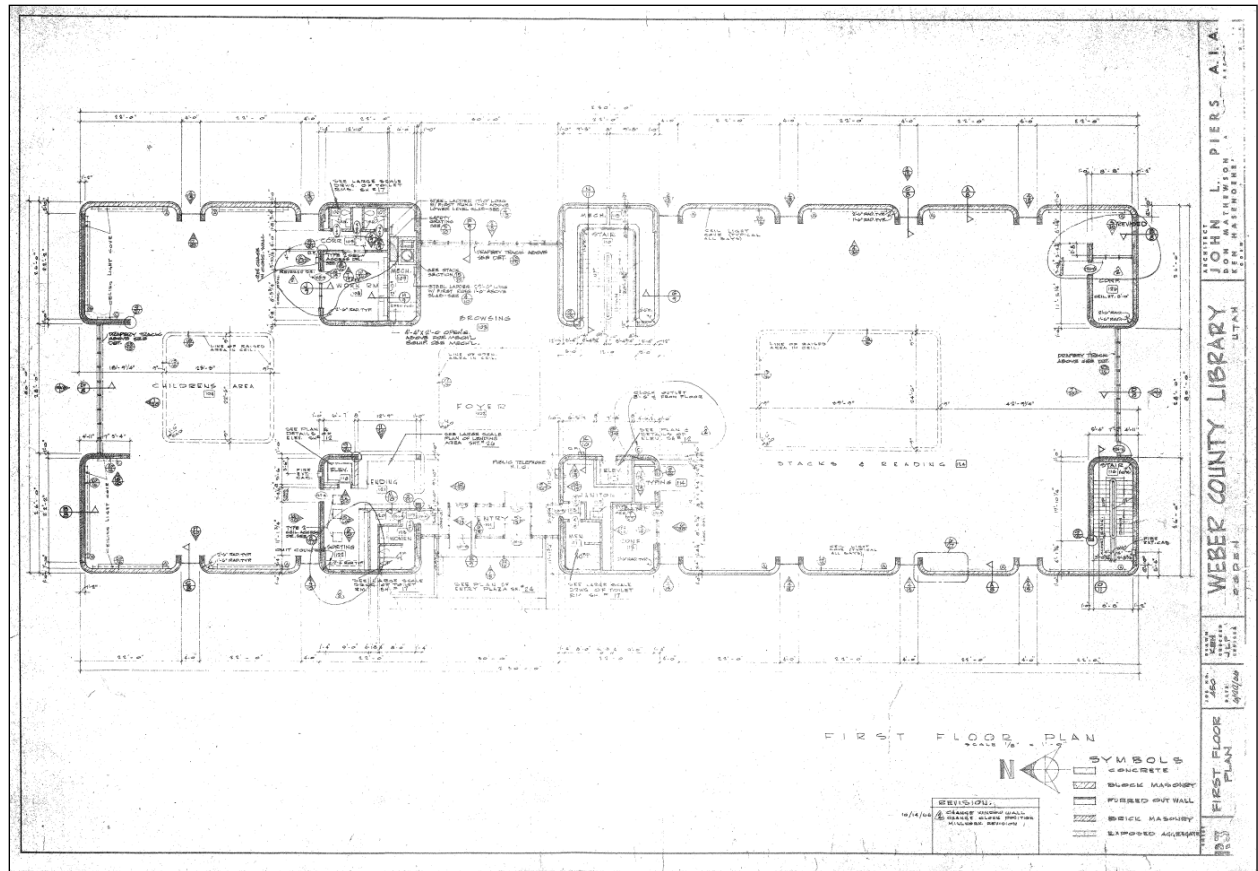


Figure 6. First-floor plan, Weber County Main Library. John L. Piers, 1966.

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Weber County Main Library

Weber County, Utah

Name of Property

County and State

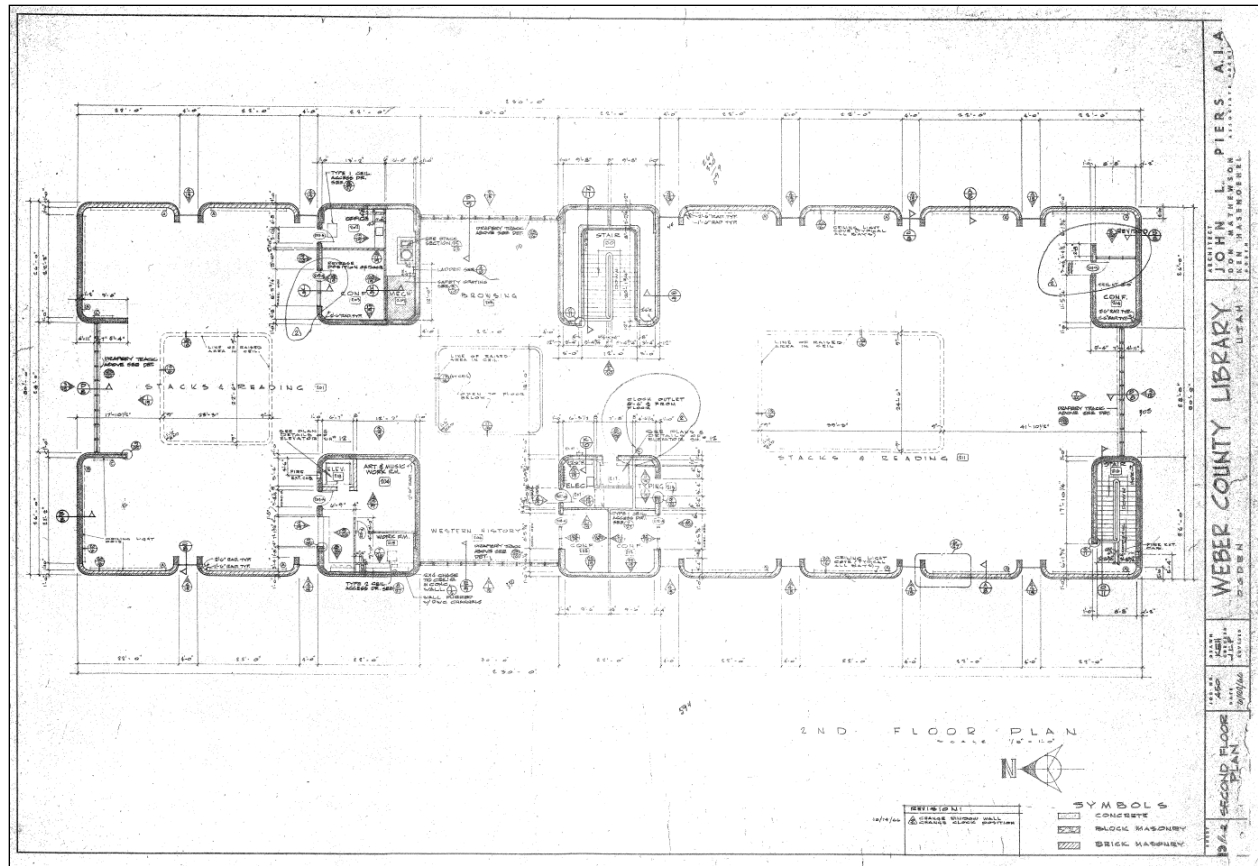


Figure 7. Second-floor plan, Weber County Main Library. John L. Piers, 1966.

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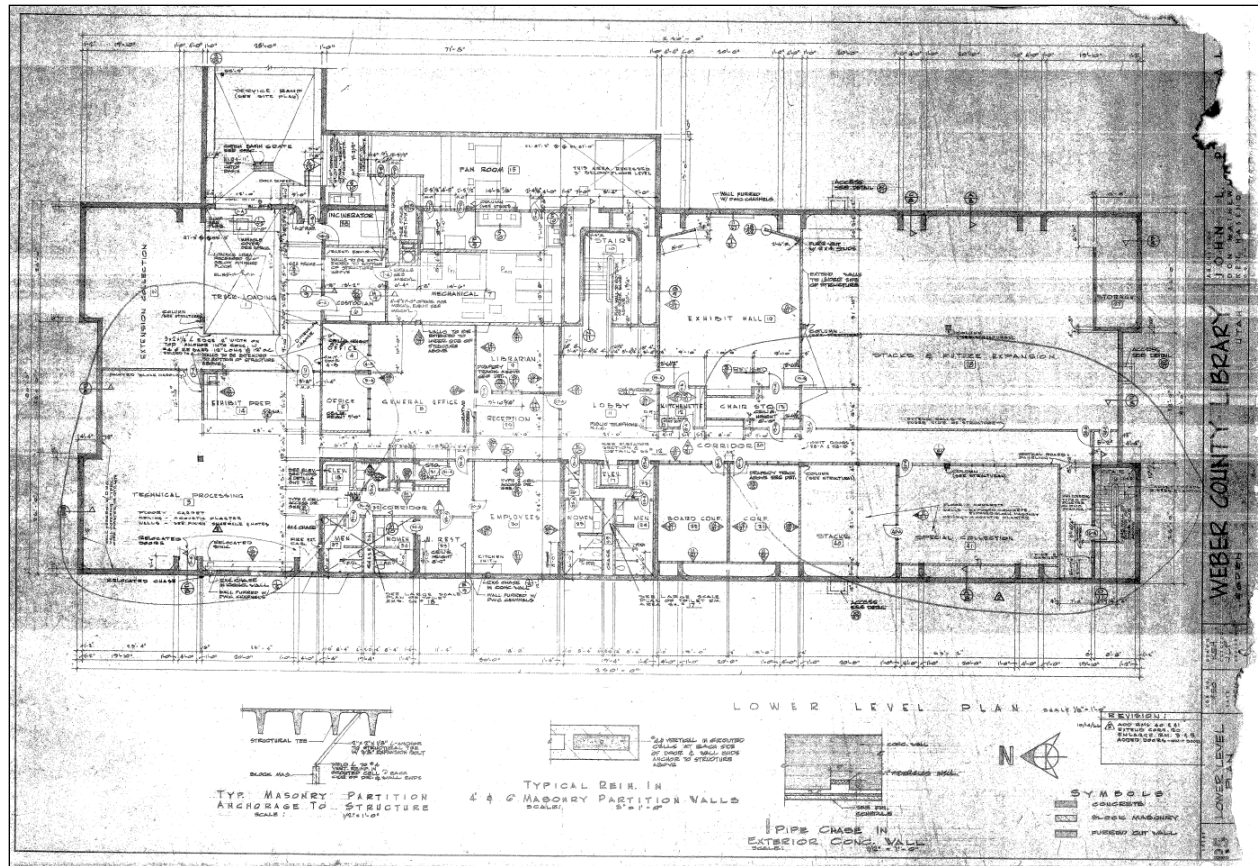


Figure 8. Lower-level plan, Weber County Main Library. John L. Piers, 1966.

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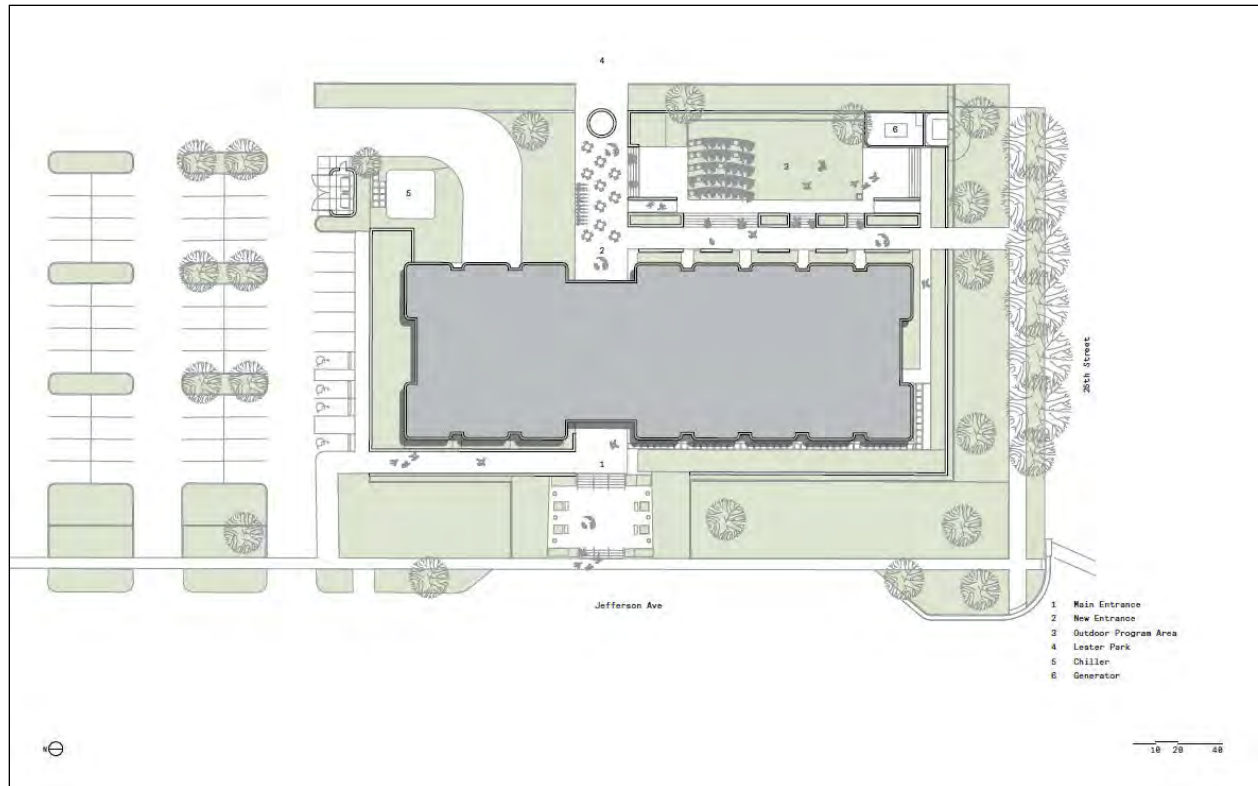


Figure 9. Site plan, Weber County Main Library. EDA Architects, 2018.

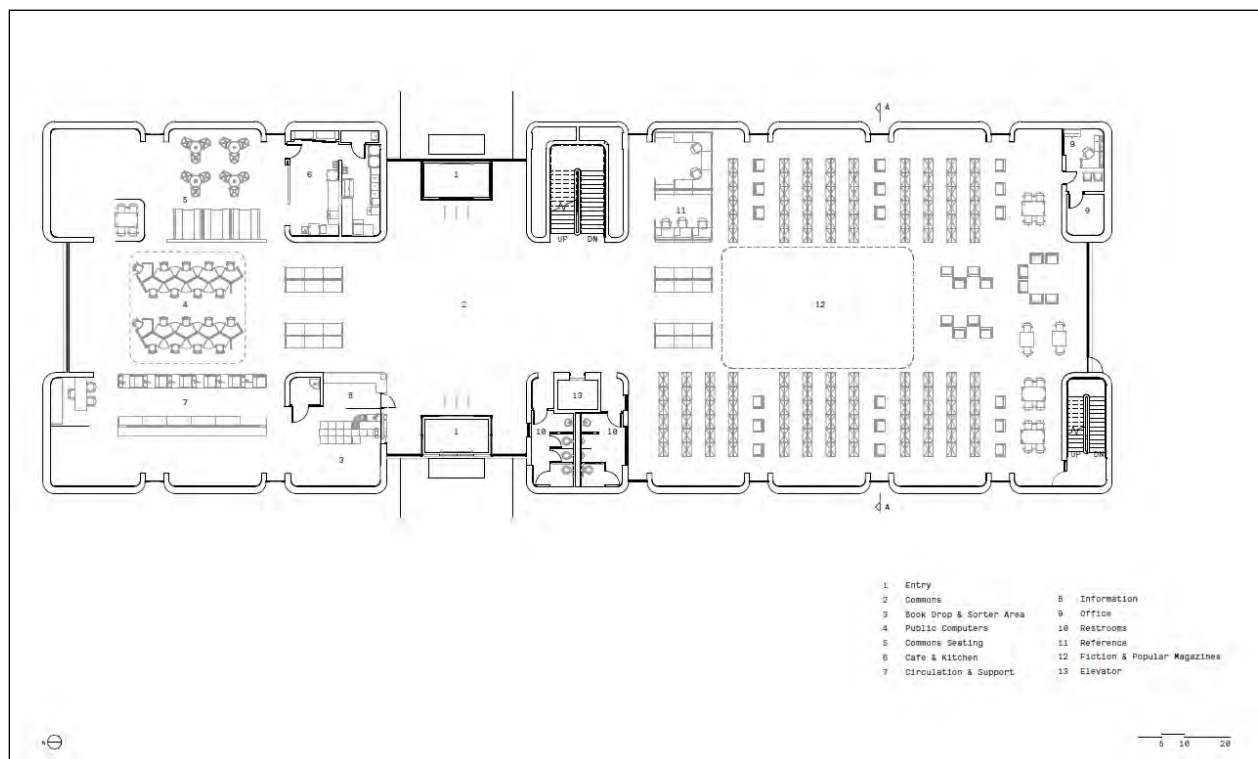


Figure 10. Level 1 plan, Weber County Main Library. EDA Architects, 2018.

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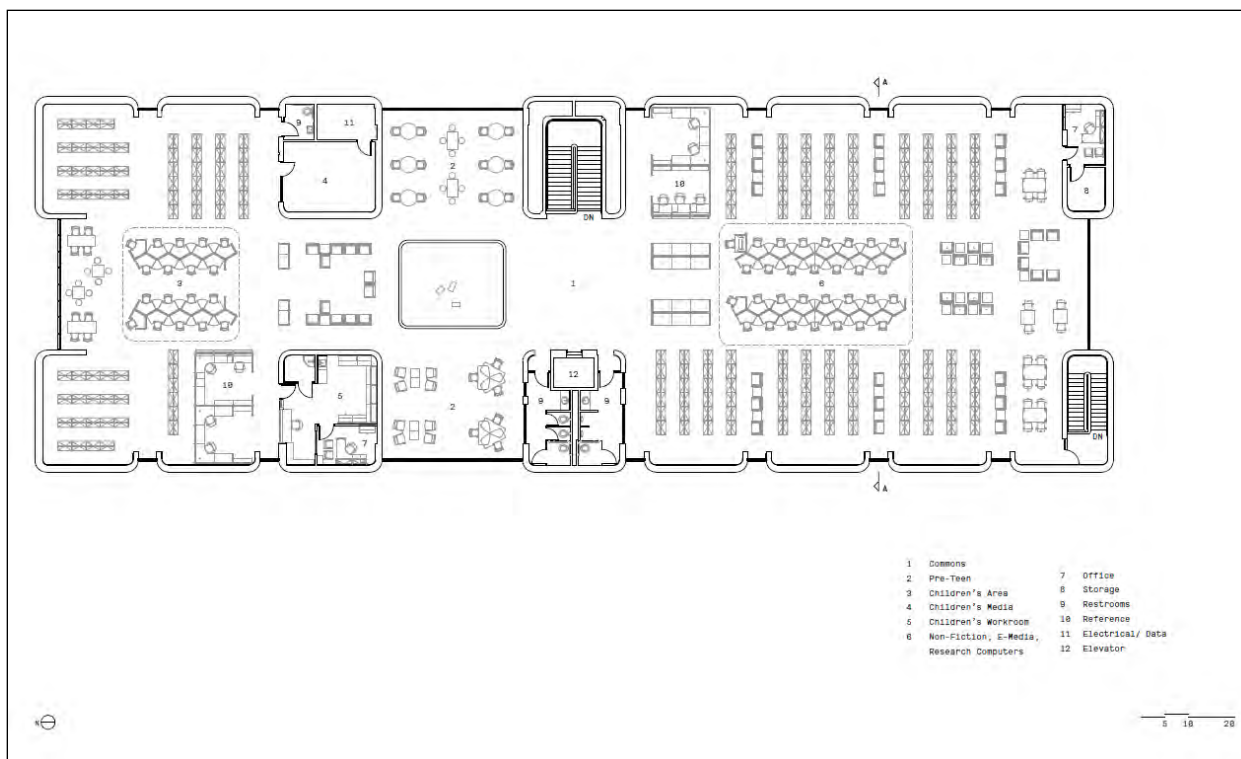


Figure 11. Level 2 plan, Weber County Main Library. EDA Architects, 2018.

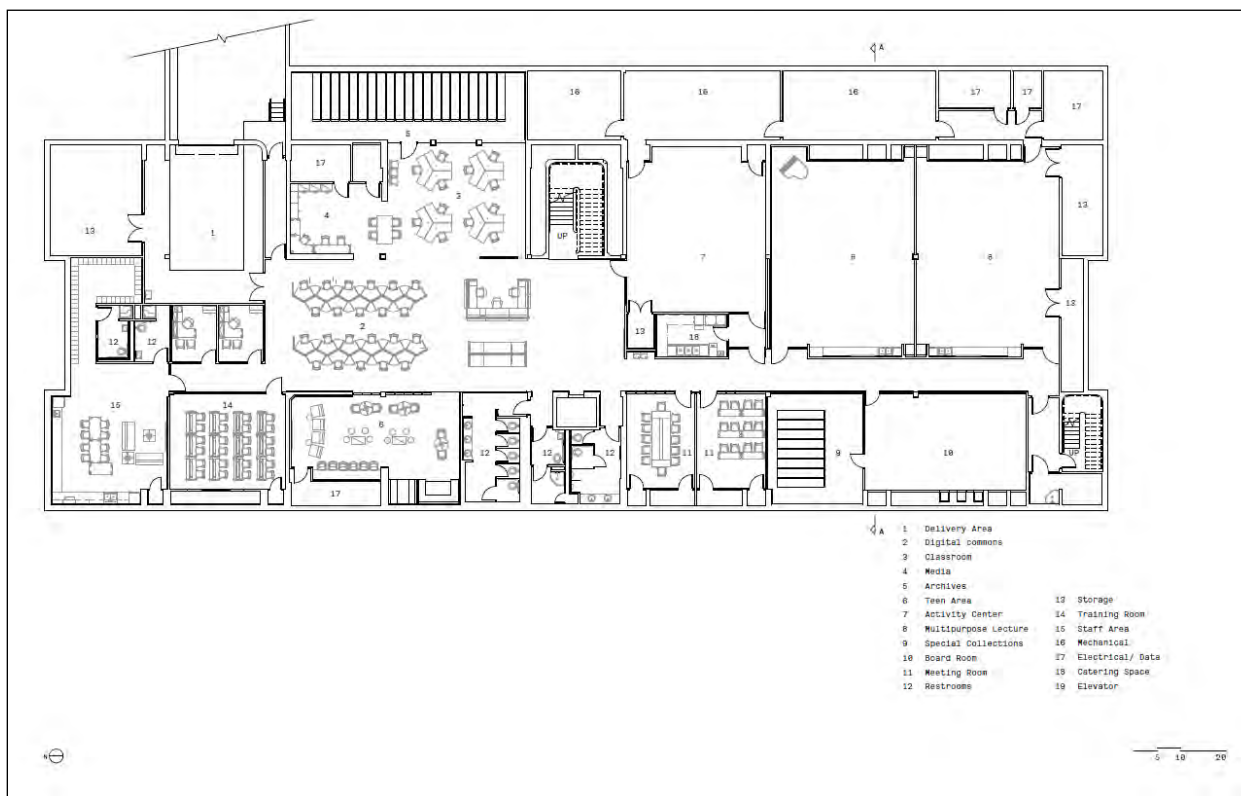


Figure 12. Basement plan, Weber County Main Library. EDA Architects, 2018.

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.