

Program Summary:

This renovation creates a modern, inclusive library with expanded, accessible spaces, fostering community while preserving historic charm and honoring local architectural character.

Program Statement:

This regional library has been transformed into a modern, multipurpose hub through a major renovation and 2,700-square-foot expansion, bringing the total space to 15,350 square feet. The updated facility now offers cutting-edge resources and dynamic learning environments for all ages. Key features include a state-of-the-art audiovisual recording studio and a virtual reality room, where users can create podcasts, videos, and immersive experiences. A fully equipped makerspace—with 3D printers, digital design tools, and a laser cutter—encourages hands-on learning and innovation. The expanded children's area and a dedicated teen space provide engaging, age-appropriate environments to inspire young minds. The library also debuts the Jeannette Jefferson Collection, highlighting African American history, culture, and contributions. Additionally, a professionally curated historical exhibit showcases Donaldsonville's rich past. The renovation positions the library as a vibrant community center that blends technology, creativity, and cultural heritage.

RR240.01

Building Area: (sf)
15,350

Cost per Square Foot:
\$374

Construction Cost
\$5,744,136

Date of Completion:
05/23/2024

RR240.02

Historic Context

Initially constructed in 1979, the existing library sits on the historic site of the former Hotel Donaldson—a four-story brick and stone landmark that once anchored the city's commercial district. The new design thoughtfully responds to this context, bringing forward a modern facility that honors the character of the neighborhood and the history beneath it.

Donaldsonville, Louisiana, founded in 1806, served briefly as the state capital in the 1830s and holds deep historical significance. After the Civil War, it became one of the first U.S. cities to elect a Black mayor, Pierre Caliste Landry, in 1868. Located at the intersection of the Mississippi River and Bayou Lafourche, Donaldsonville was a center for commerce and culture, particularly within Louisiana's African American community. The city has long been a symbol of resilience, progress, and civic leadership, with a legacy rooted in education, reform, and community empowerment.



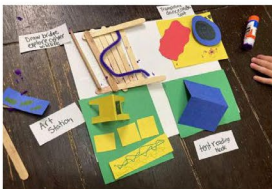
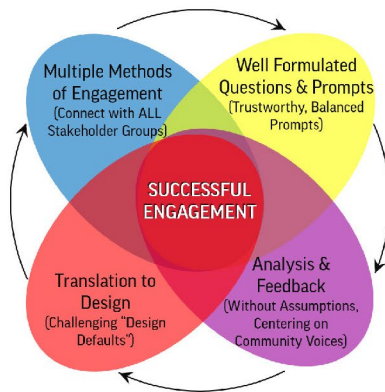
RR240.03

Translation to Design –
Past & Present

The newly renovated Library thoughtfully merges the city's historical context with contemporary architectural design. The building honors its setting in a community rich with cultural heritage.

Architecturally, the renovation introduces modern elements such as open, light-filled spaces, flexible layouts, and sustainable materials that support 21st-century learning and collaboration. Clean lines, natural textures, and integrated technology create a welcoming, future-ready environment. This fusion of past and present ensures the library remains both a tribute to history and a catalyst for progress.





RR240.04

Community Engagement

Establishing a strong library program in Donaldsonville requires inclusive engagement by involving all community voices, especially underrepresented groups. Prioritizing youth and family input through school partnerships and interactive activities ensures programs meet real needs. Sustainable partnerships with local organizations, educators, and service providers will support long-term success and keep the library responsive, vibrant, and connected to the community it serves.

By centering the voices and needs of Donaldsonville residents, the library has become a vibrant community hub—offering lifelong learning, cultural enrichment, and a shared space for innovation and connection.

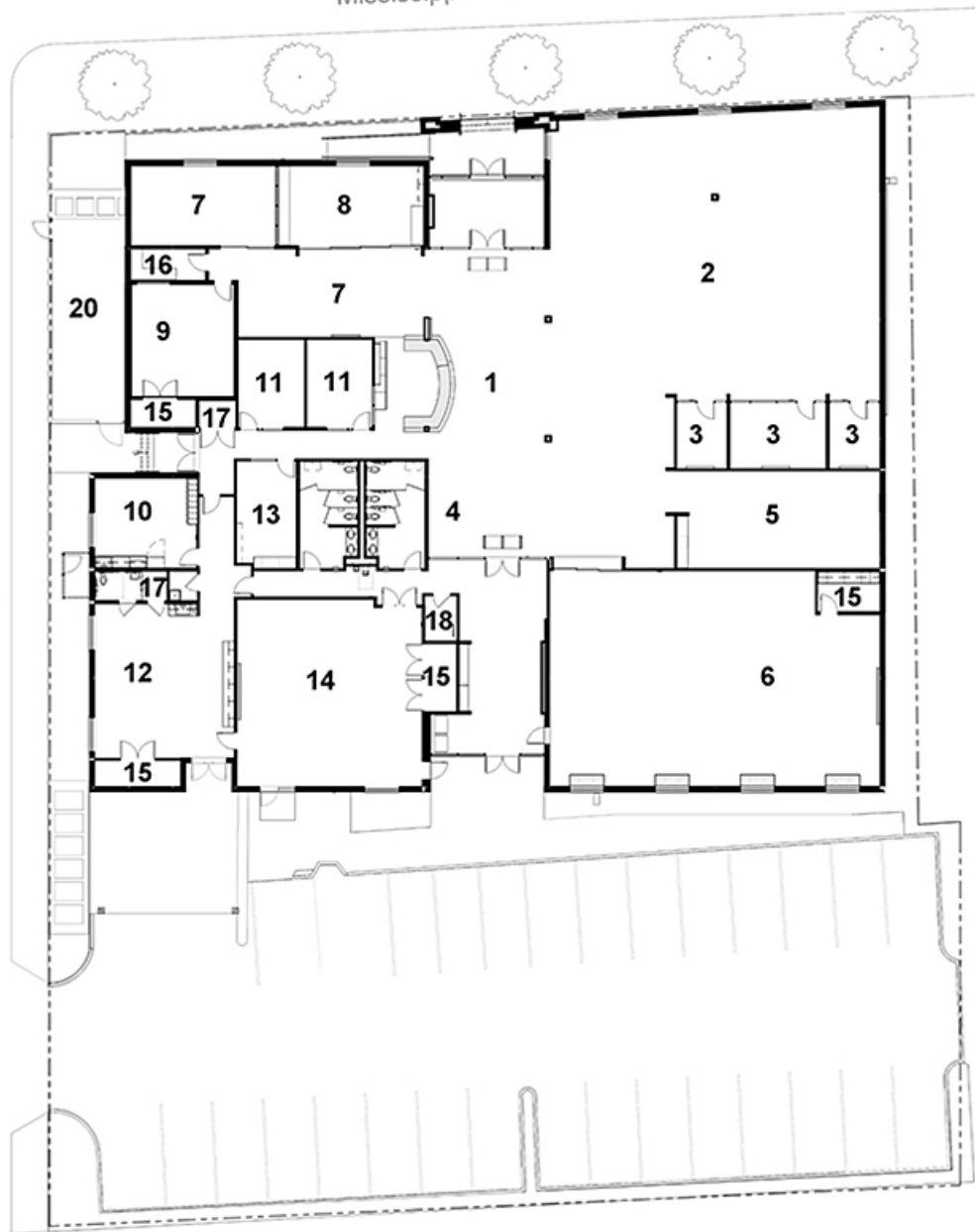
Mississippi Street

RR240.05

Floor Plan

1. Circulation
2. Adult Reading Area
3. Study Rooms
4. Exhibit + Display Area
5. Teen's Zone
6. Children's Area
7. Digital Lab
8. Makerspace
9. Recording Studio
10. Staff Lounge
11. Staff Office
12. Staff Work Room
13. Circulation Work Room
14. Public Meeting Room
15. Storage
16. Control Room
17. Electrical/ IT
18. Mechanical Roof Access
19. Roof Access
20. Outdoor Seating

Lessard Street



RR240.06

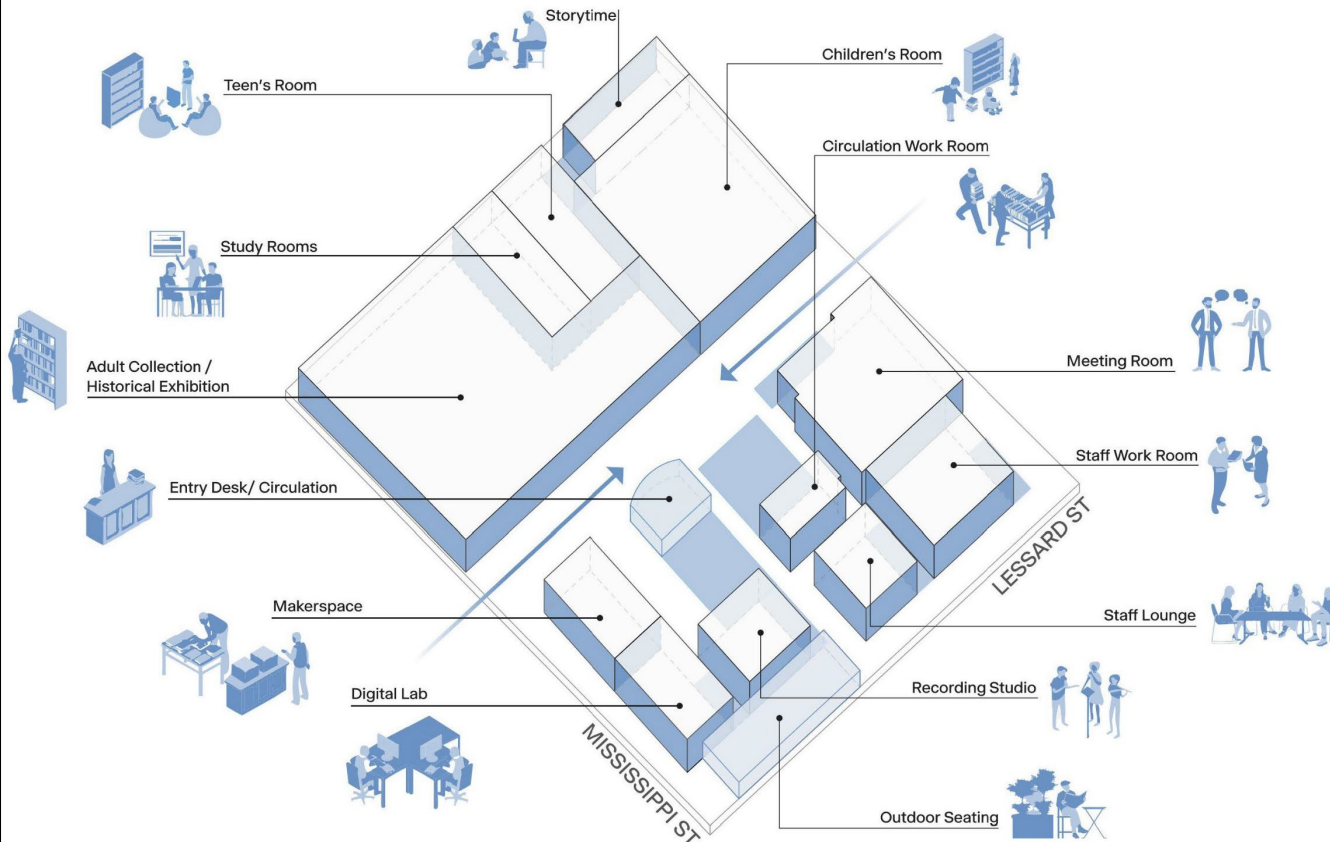
Programming + Resources

Circulation is centrally located between the North pedestrian entrance at Mississippi Street and South parking lot entrance.

Community resources include a state for the art digital lab, makerspace and recording studio. A public meeting room is accessed from the South entry lounge and available for patrons to reserve, including after hour community events.

A new children's room includes storefront seating nooks, activity zone and computer area. Teen's area includes a gaming station and lounge, adjacent to study rooms.

Administrative areas include offices, work room and lounge.

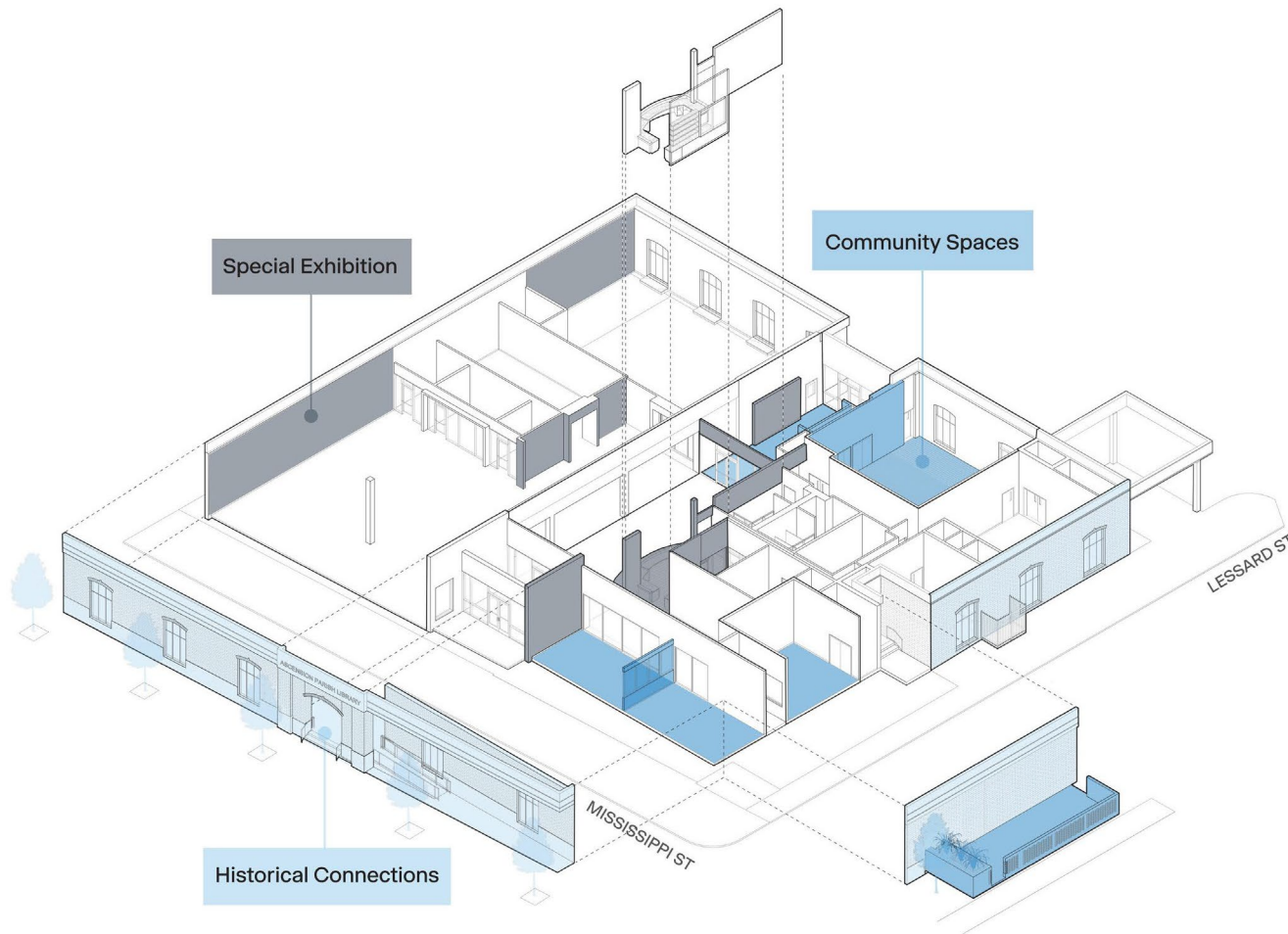


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Context + Connection

The building honors its setting in a community rich with cultural heritage—reflected in dedicated spaces like the Jeannette Jefferson Collection and a professionally curated exhibit showcasing Donaldsonville's African American history and civic milestones.

The library becomes a living museum that reflects its history while offering state of the art resources and community spaces.





Before



After

RR240.08

Exterior View from Mississippi & Lessard Streets

The new library facade, visible from Mississippi Street, enhances the civic presence at the intersection of Mississippi and Lessard Streets. The addition features a porte cochere entry for clarity and ADA access. Arched windows and materials reflect the historic district's character, while clean lines, natural textures, and integrated technology create a welcoming, modern environment. This design balances heritage with innovation, ensuring the library serves as both a tribute to the past and a catalyst for the future. The former mechanical yard is transformed into a new outdoor reading area, and efficient air handling units are placed on the central roof, preserving space and exterior views.



RR240.09

Exterior View – South Entrance

The new south façade showcases expansive storefront windows and prominent signage. Outdoor amenities include musical instruments, bike racks, and a bike repair station for community use.

Through the entrance, the newly added south vestibule features custom millwork, a coffee station, vending machines, and a cozy seating area, creating a welcoming space that offers residents a warm, hospitable atmosphere.





Before



After

RR240.10

A New Community Resource Hub

With its recent renovation and expansion, the Library becomes more than just a place to access books—it's a dynamic hub for learning, creativity, and cultural celebration. Offering free access to tools like 3D printers, a recording studio, and a virtual reality lab, the library helps bridge the digital divide and provides resources many may not have at home.

For children and teens, the expanded dedicated areas offer safe, engaging spaces to explore ideas, develop skills, and build community outside of school. For adults, it serves as a quiet refuge, a creative lab, or a community meeting point.



RR240.11

Adult + Senior Resources

The north reading area evokes the charm of a traditional front porch, creating a cozy, favorite spot for Donaldsonville's seniors. Large storefront windows offer views of historic Mississippi Street while flooding the space with natural light. The design features a beadboard ceiling with ceiling fans and includes locally crafted cypress rocking chairs, commissioned from a local carpenter, adding a personalized, community touch to the space.

RR240.12

Children's Area

The children's room design offers a versatile, engaging, and safe environment for children to learn, play, and grow. By blending creative design with functional spaces like storytime area, window seating nooks, and a tech area, the library can foster a love of reading and exploration while also nurturing social, cognitive, and emotional development.





RR240.13

Digital Lab + Makerspace for All Ages

The new Digital Lab features a Recording Studio and Makerspace. The recording studio is a state-of-the-art facility designed for a variety of audio production needs. It features high-quality microphones, soundproofing, mixing boards, and digital audio workstations (DAWs) for podcasting, music recording, voiceovers, and more. The acoustically treated room ensures clear, high-quality sound without external interference. The studio is versatile, supporting solo or group projects and workshops, and is accessible to both beginners and experienced creators.

The Makerspace is a dynamic, creative hub designed to inspire innovation and hands-on learning for all ages. The space features a wide range of tools and resources, from 3D printers, laser cutters, and robotics kits to sewing machines and woodworking tools. It also includes high-tech equipment like digital drawing tablets and video production gear for multimedia projects.

The Makerspace empowers residents to explore their creativity, develop new skills, and collaborate on projects, making it a central feature of the library's commitment to education, innovation, and community building.

