



Toronto Public Library
Workers Union
Local 4948

Affiliated with
CUPE and the
Toronto & York Region
Labour Council

Maureen O'Reilly
President

Brendan Haley
Vice-President

Viveca Gretton
Recording Secretary

Carmela Corrado
Secretary-Treasurer

Brian Raymer
Toronto Reference Library

Brandon Haynes
North York Central Library

Jenna Liu
North Region

Karen Smith
South Region

John Puusa
East Region

Karen DeSimone
West Region

Fitzgerald Steele
Facilities

Steven Burdick
Support Services

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www.local4948.org

Via Regular Mail

December 12, 2016

Ron Carinci
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board
Toronto Public Library
789 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 2G8

Dear Mr. Carinci: *Ron*

RE: NORTH YORK CENTRAL LIBRARY RENOVATION AND CLOSURE

Toronto Public Library has a solid reputation of expending its capital budget and managing branch renovations and closures.

However, the closure of the North York Central Library has been very poorly managed both for the public and for the staff.

Staff were invited to share the architect's plan on October 15, 2015. They were told the project would take a number of years

No information was ever shared with the union executive.

The project began in August 2016. With the removal of the central staircase in the atrium, working conditions quickly plummeted. Indeed the union questions why the decision to close was not made from the outset (see slides).

Two (1) hour meetings were called on Wednesday November 23rd to inform staff of air quality testing which had been requested by staff via our Health & Safety Committee over their concerns as to the intensity of the construction. Staff were left with the impression that the building was suddenly closing due to health concerns precipitated by the air quality testing. Staff were told to pick new work locations by the Saturday as they would be moved within the week. There are over 200 plus staff working in this building and chaos ensued.



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The union executive was not officially informed of the meetings on Wednesday November 23rd. As concerns and confusion escalated, we did request an emergency meeting with the Director of Human Resources and the Senior Management group on Monday December 5th. Only the Director of Human Resources was able to attend.

The City Librarian agreed to attend Labour Management on December 1st to provide details of the closure to the union executive and answer any of their questions.

It was evident from the outset of the Monday meeting that there was no comprehensive plan in place to manage the closure and its impact on staff.

The union requested that:

- Information meetings with staff be organized immediately to address the health concerns and questions regarding staff relocation
- That senior management at NYCL take a more visible leadership role in the closure
- Email be sent to TPL as a whole informing them of the closure
- Communication plan for the public be developed beyond the 8 ½" x 11" flyers that had been posted
- The relocation lists of staff be shared
- Staffing model for the pop up branch and the details of the service be communicated
- Sunday work relocation lists of staff be shared
- A weekly update email to all NYCL staff be sent out during the relocation
- Daily update conference call with the union

The Employer did inform us that air quality testing would be done every two weeks and that health and safety meetings and inspections would be held on a more regular basis throughout the construction phase.

The union still remains concerned about:

- Continued open access to NYCL for all staff especially on the 6th floor
- Use of the sorter by public service assistants when the building is closed
- The staffing model for the pop up branch



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- The redesigned staircase and other elements where front line staff service concerns remain largely ignored

The redesigned staircase is a good case in point. The staircase is being widened to allow for reading terraces. This is a new trend in library services emanating from the academic sector. Much has been made about the reading terraces at the new student centre at Ryerson. (see slides) It should be noted that:

- The reading terraces at Ryerson exist on the main floor only including the exterior staircase on Yonge Street and are adjunct to the main staircase
- The reading terraces exist in the student centre apart from the library proper
- The reading terrace is confined to the 6th flr which is called "The Beach" but exists on its own separate and apart from everything else

The NYCL reading terraces are incorporated along with the main staircase, over several floors in an atrium style building with library patrons from birth to seniors. Decisions to cut collections, reduce shelving and lower bookcases have been made to "avoid blocking the view of staircase". Our patron's needs should be driving the redesign, not a staircase. Despite all of our new welcoming spaces and services, your own customer service survey by Forum Research in December 2015 showed that people come into our libraries for our collections. (see attached)

In addition, the service points are being redesigned as well which will have an impact on staffing and health and safety. This information has not been shared with the union either.

We are disappointed and frustrated that the Toronto Public Library continuously fails to see us as a stakeholder. The information found in the Urban Toronto article posted December 8th is the most information we have received on the renovation. (see attached).

It should also be noted that front line staff also unfairly shouldered the burden of the chaos of the renovation with little or no information. That has had a direct impact upon service delivery which should be of importance to both the TPLB and Senior Management.



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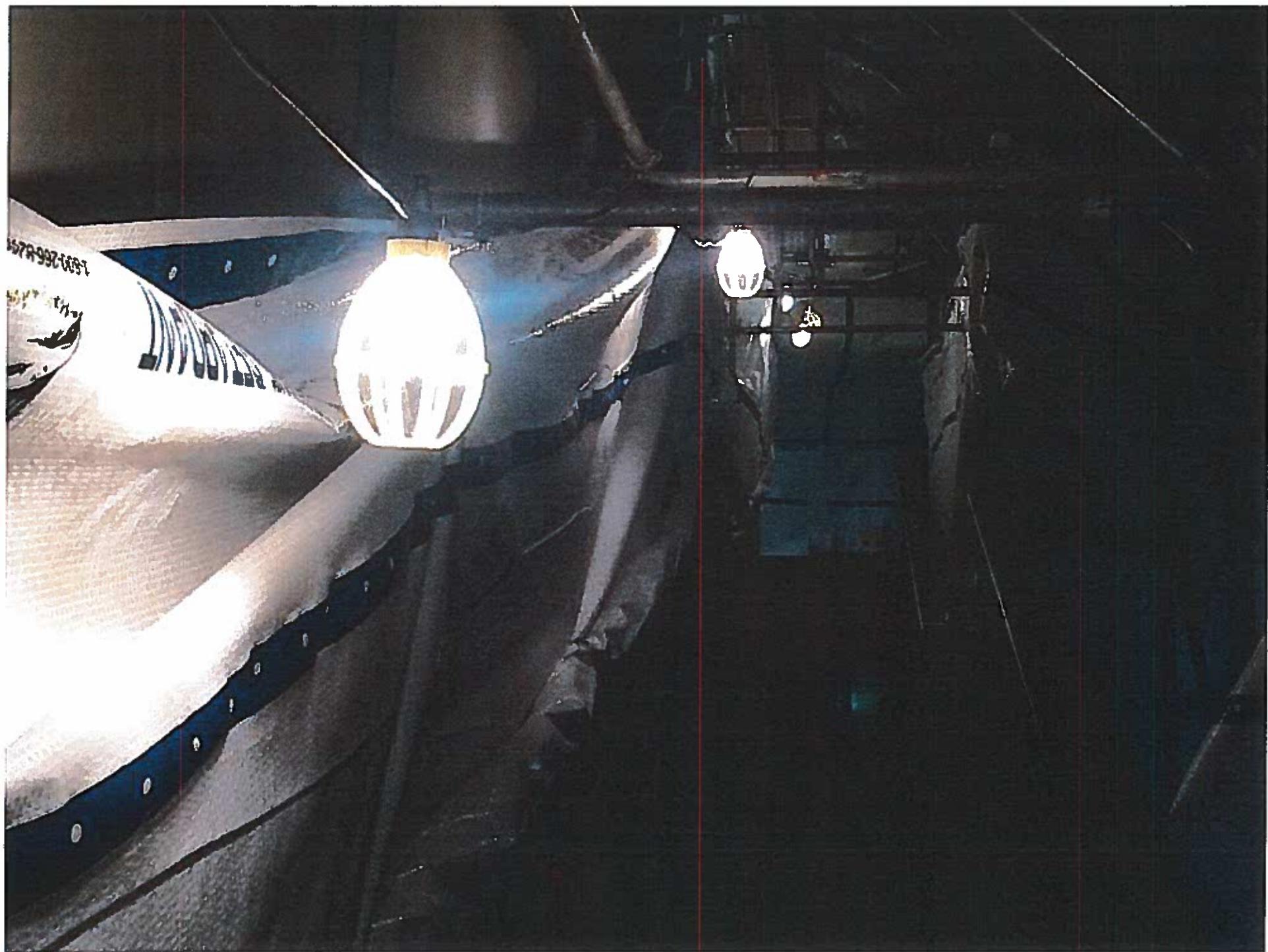
Yours sincerely,

Maureen

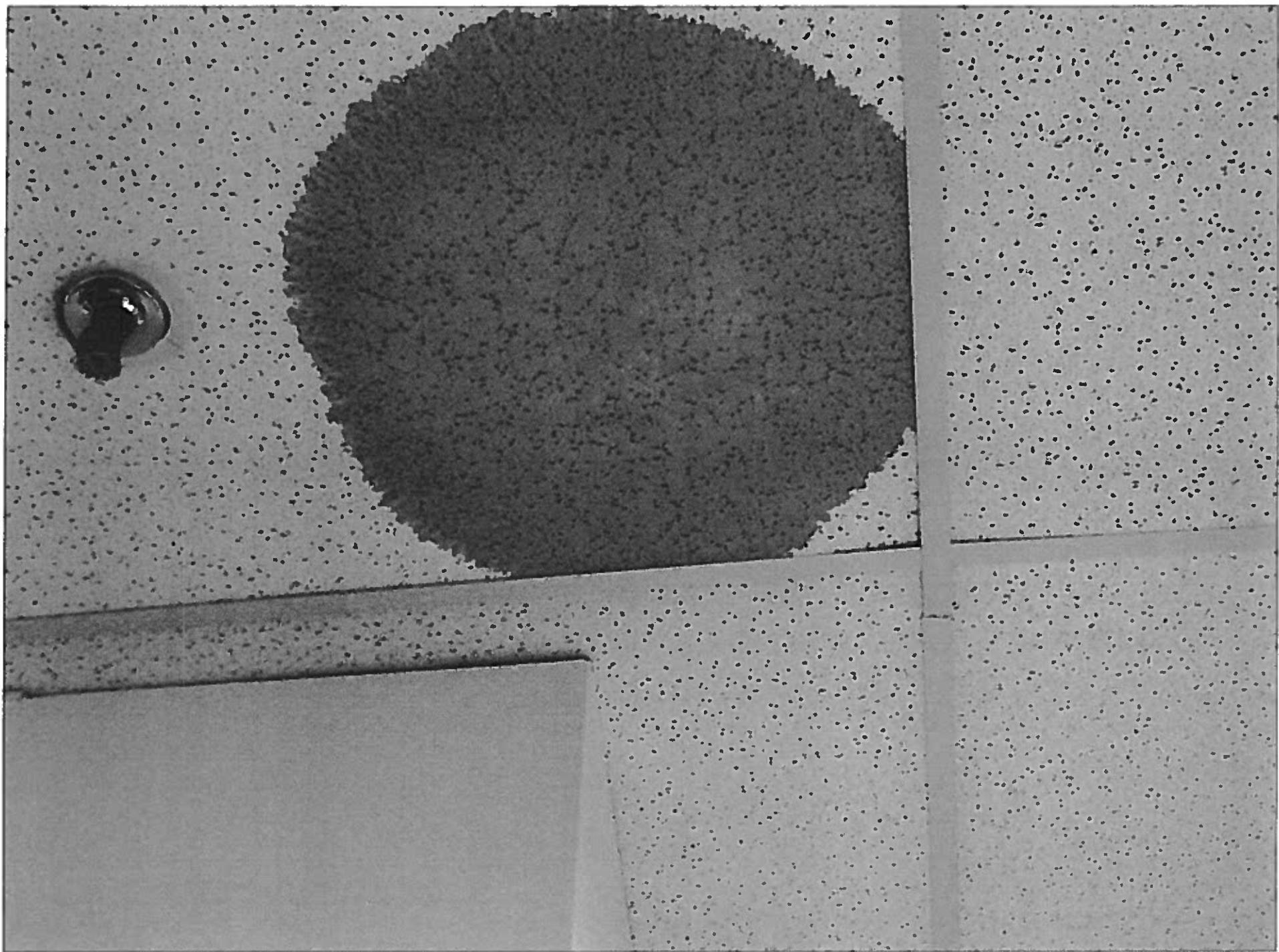
Maureen O'Reilly
President
TPLWU Local 4948

cc. TPLWU Executive Board

Attach.

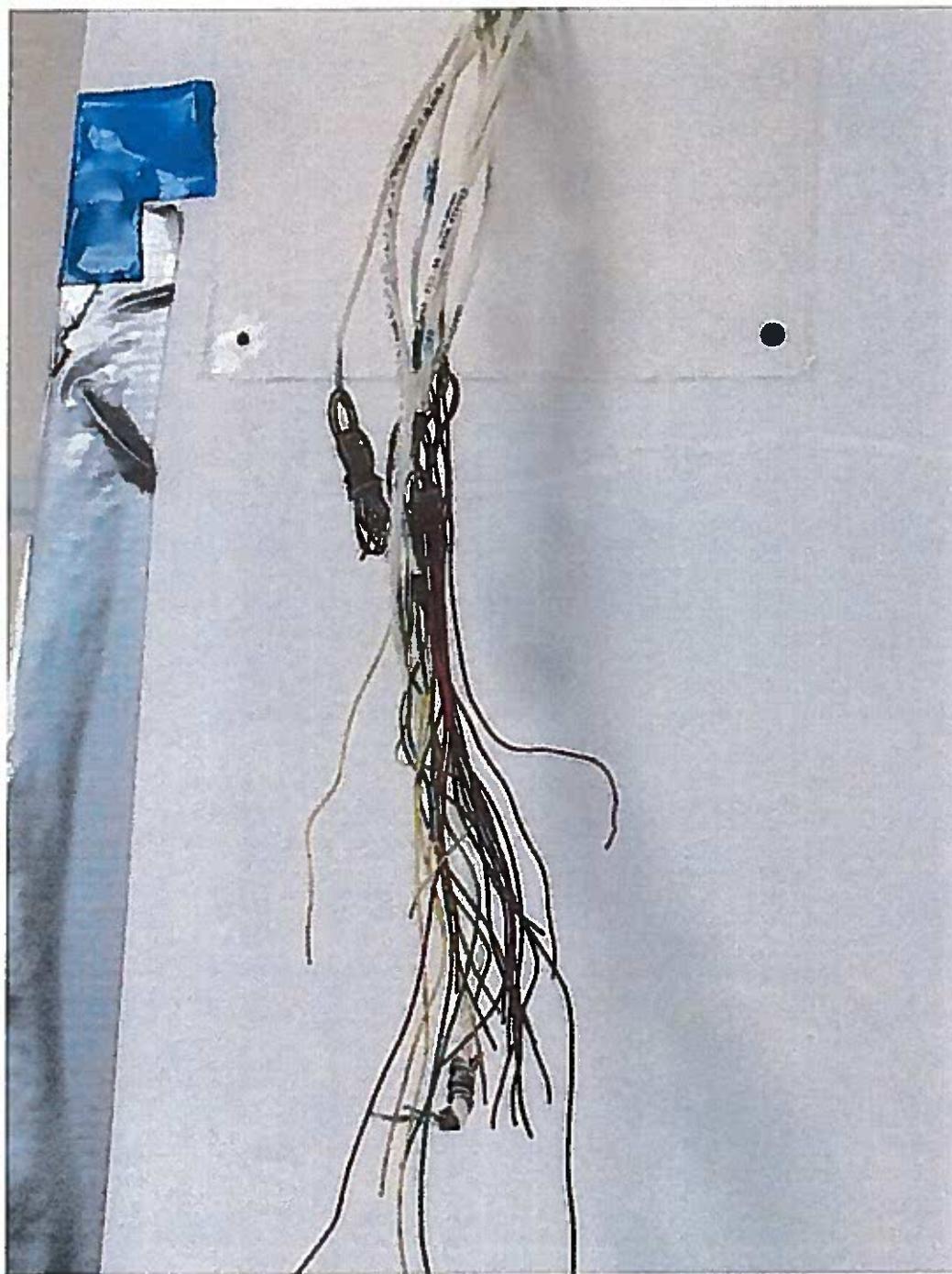






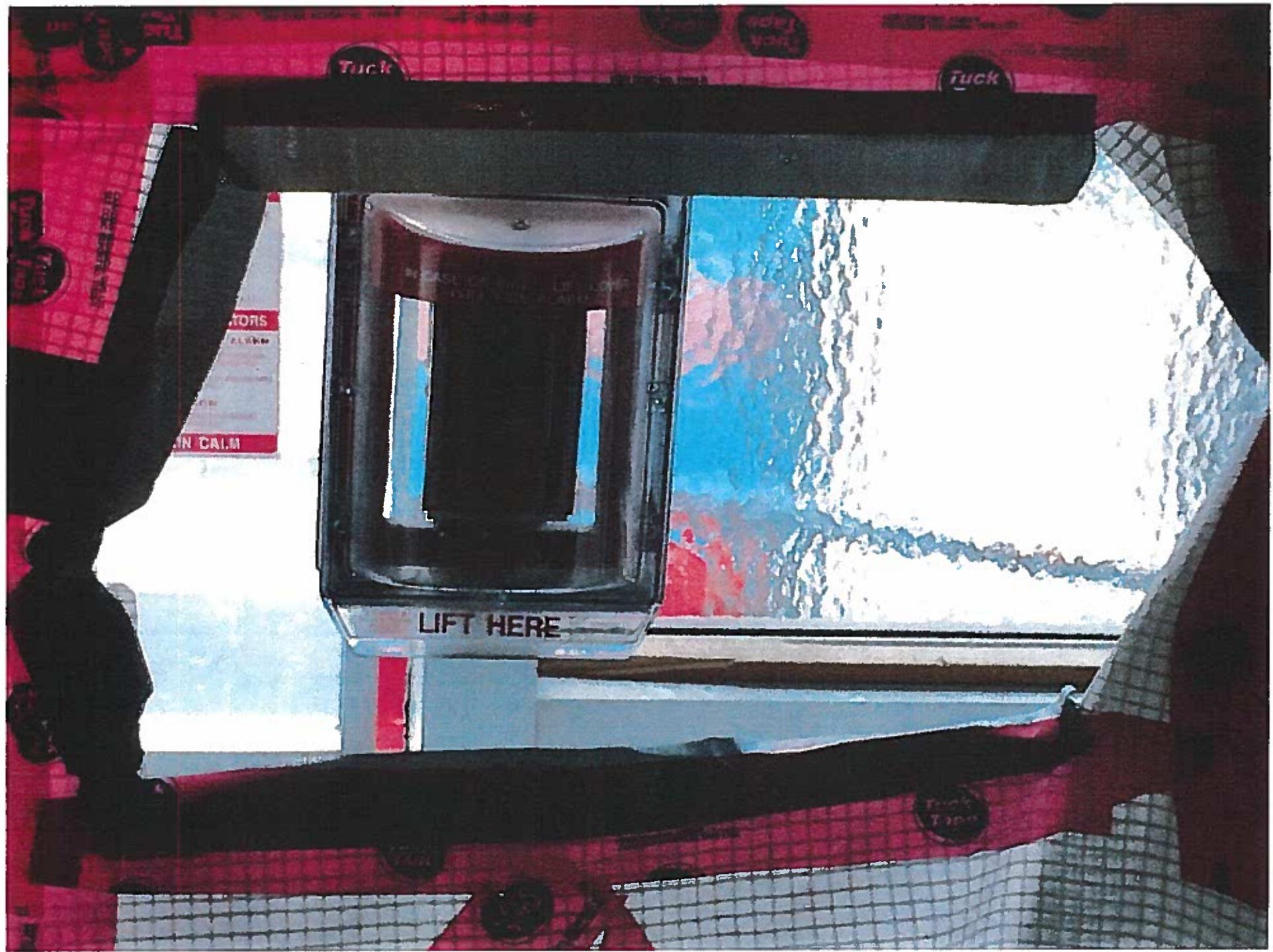




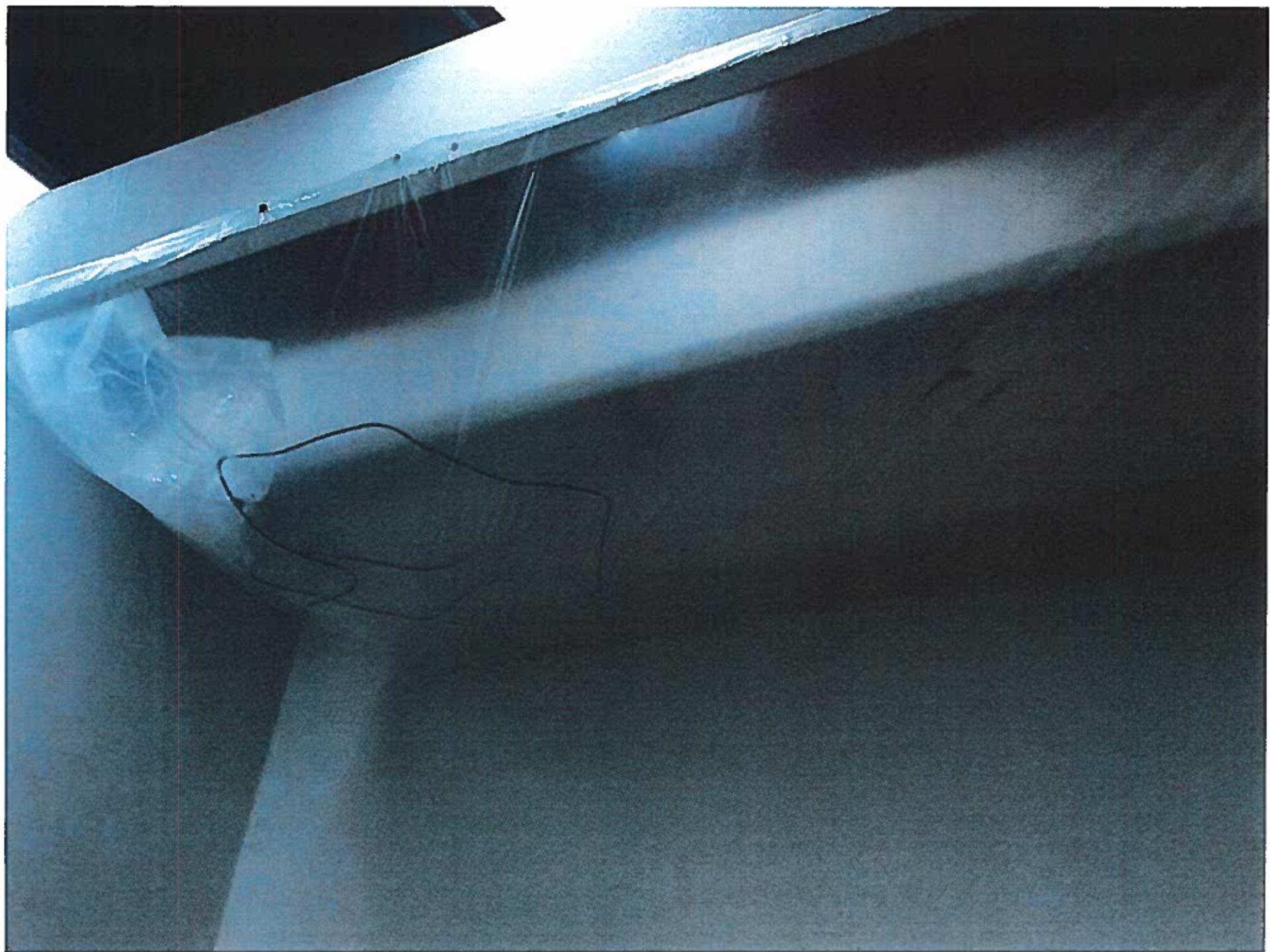


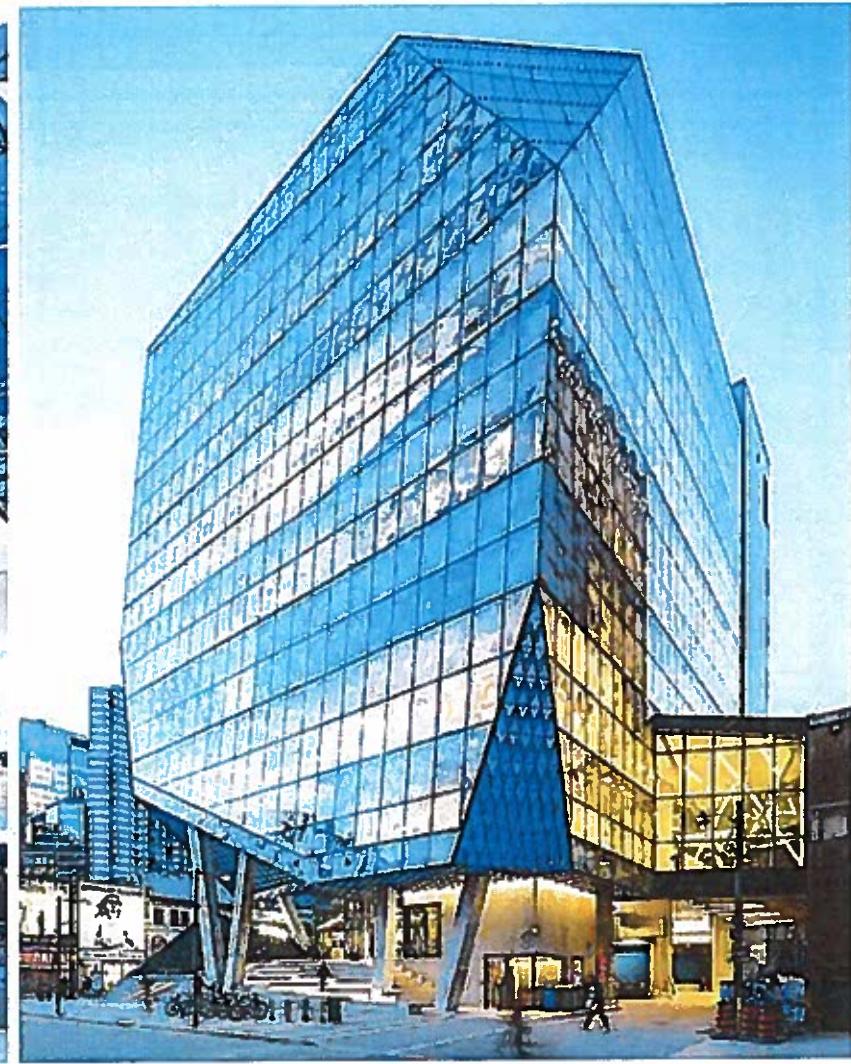




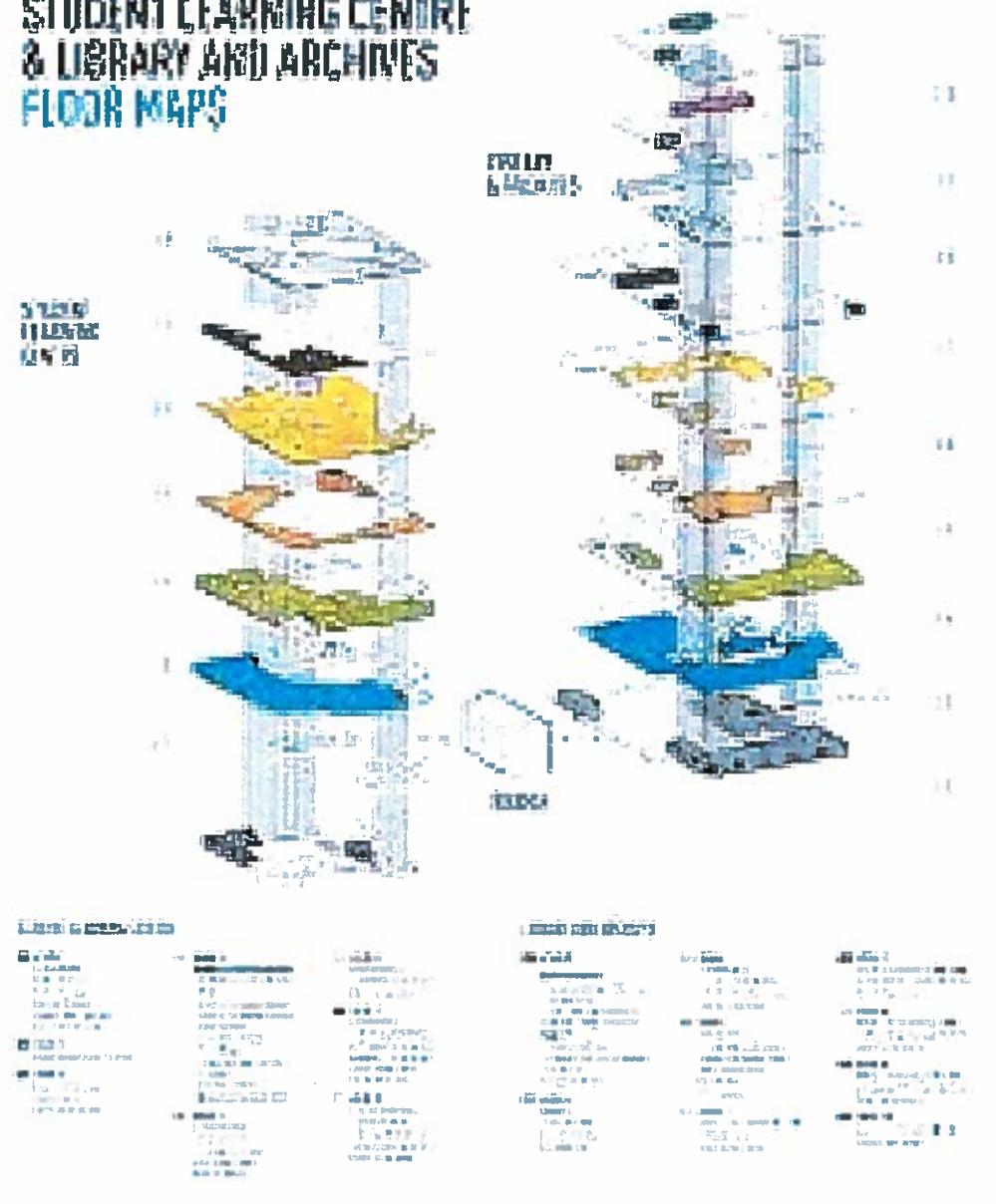




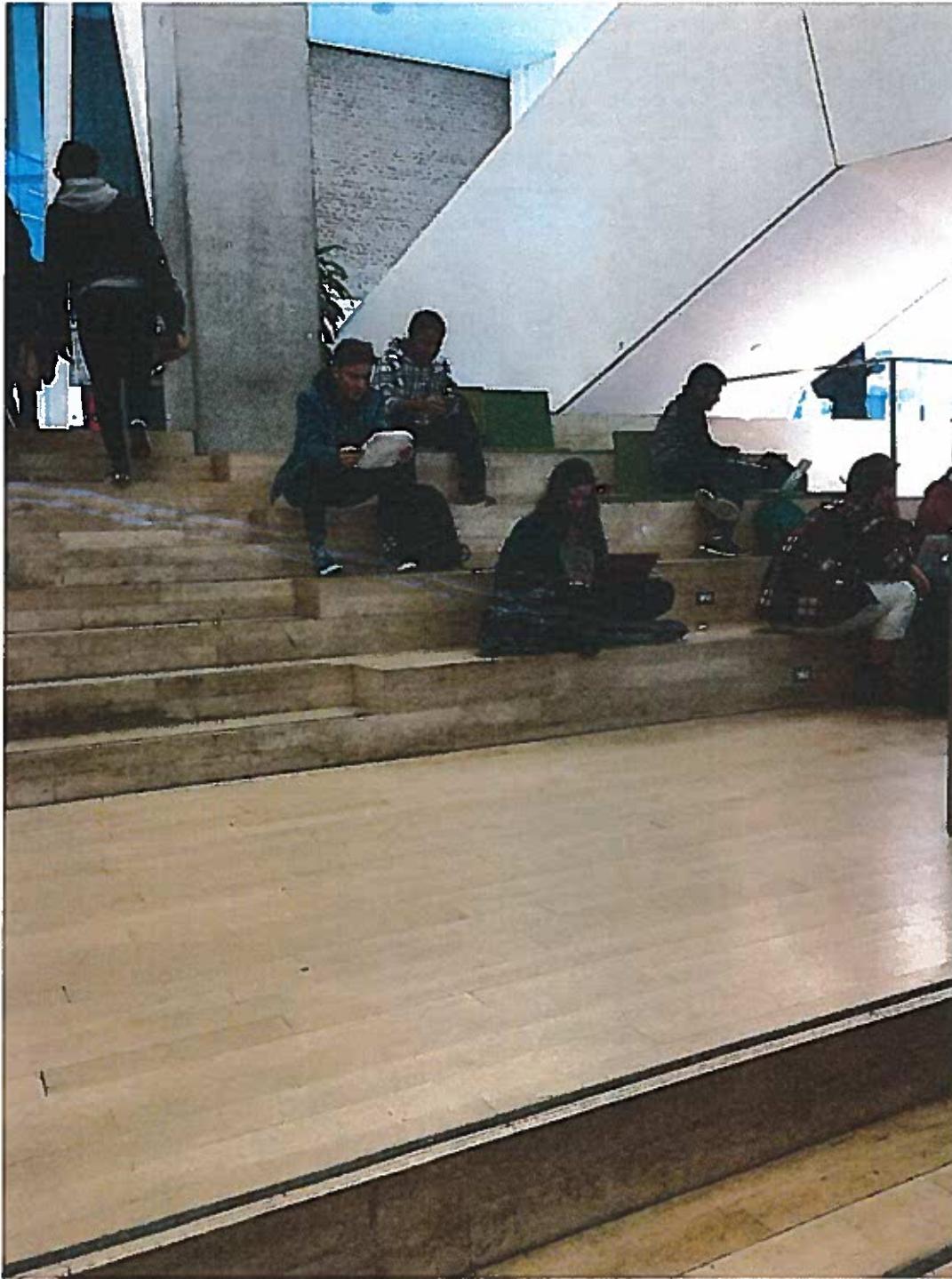




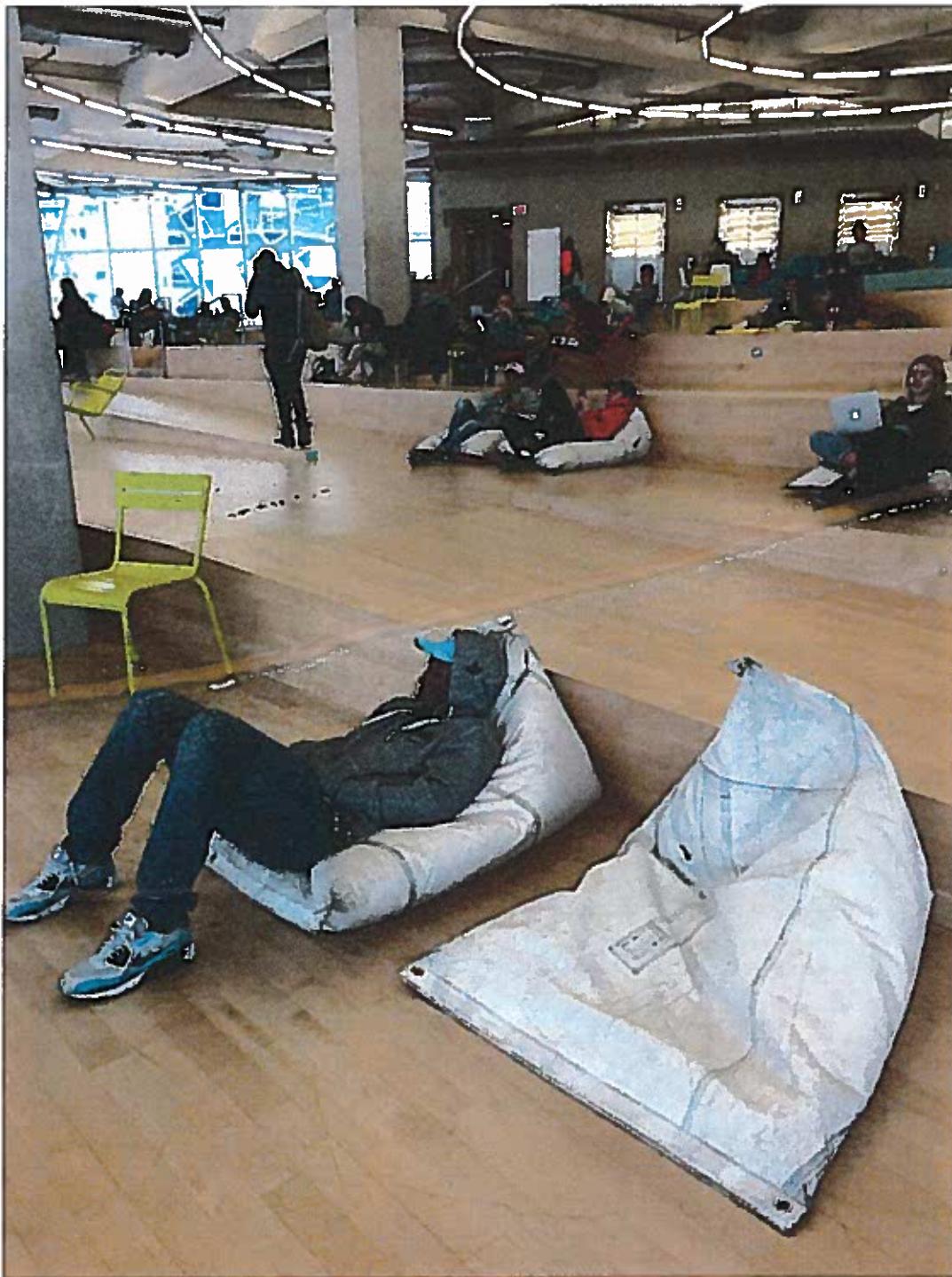
STUDENT LEARNING CENTRE & LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES FLOOR MAPS











PLEASE KEEP
Accessibility
Ramps CLEAR

TAKE *Pride of Place*

PUT ALL *Garbage & Recycling*
IN RECEPTICLES

THIS IS
YOUR *SLC*



North York Central Library Undergoing Extensive Renovations

December 8, 2016 4:27 pm | by Julian Mirabelli | [9 Comments](#) | [news/2016/12/north-york-central-library-undergoing-extensive-renovations-thread](#)

One of North York's most significant buildings is undergoing major renovations over the winter months, as the 30-year-old North York Central Library is being upgraded to the 21st century. The monument to Postmodernism was designed by renowned local firm [Moriyama & Teshima Architects](#) (<http://urbantoronto.ca/database/profiles/moriyama-teshima>) and completed in 1987, and has since become the busiest branch of the Toronto Public Library system, hosting roughly 1.5 million visitors and circulating nearly 1.6 million items annually.

The renovations are being undertaken by [Diamond Schmitt Architects](#) (<http://urbantoronto.ca/database/profiles/diamond-schmitt-architects>), and will see the library temporarily close for three months beginning on December 5, with a pop-up location opening on December 12 on the concourse level of the North York Centre Mall.



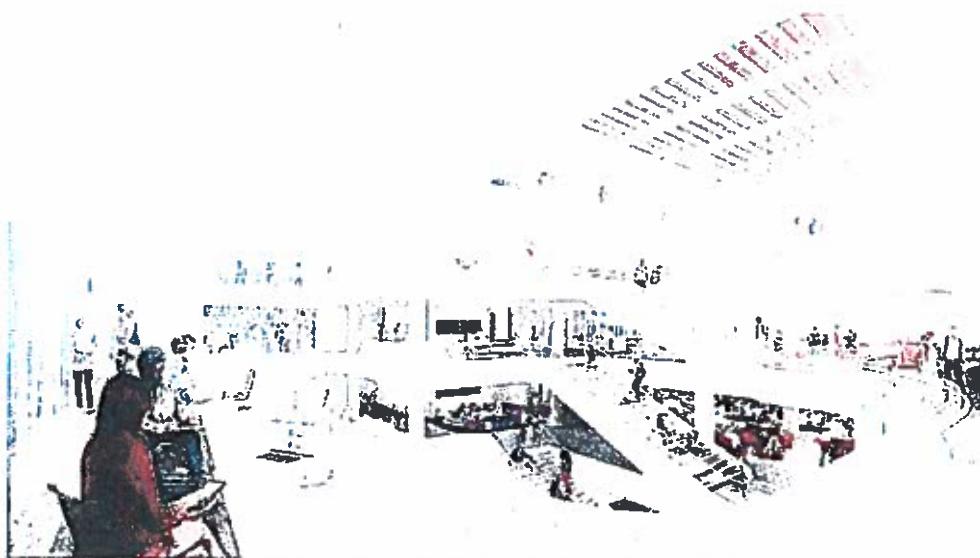
[/sites/default/files/imagecache/display-slideshow/images/articles/2016/12/24014/24014-83465.jpg](#)

Exterior view of the library, Image by Craig White.

The need for the renovations stemmed from the necessity for repairs, given that parts of the 30-year-old building are nearing the end of their life cycle. More importantly, however, it stemmed from the changing uses and role of the library within the community. The North York Central Library is a hub of activity in the area, and given that it sees more people walk through its doors annually than the ROM or the AGO, the renovations will add new community-oriented and socially-minded spaces, while upgrading the library's facilities with state-of-the-art digital fabrication studios, computer stations, and even music rehearsal rooms.

The neighbourhood around the library is composed mainly of condo towers, explains North York Central Library manager Kim Huntley, and is home to many newcomers to the city and country. These demographics are often in search of what is known as a 'third space'—the social spaces in our everyday lives that

complement our living and working spaces and the library is increasingly becoming the go-to community hub in the area. The library has accommodated this need with more community events, children's programs, and increased access to technology, and is now looking to improve and expand upon these uses with the ambitious renovations.



http://urbantoronto.ca/files/imagecache/display_slideshow/images/articles/2016/12/24014/24014-83786.jpg

View of the atrium from the third floor, Image courtesy of Diamond Schmitt Architects.

The floor layout of the library will be redesigned to create a more social atmosphere, explains Gary McCluskie, principal in charge at Diamond Schmitt Architects. "Wherever we saw an opportunity to put more reading areas, we included them", he remarked. The redesign will incorporate a greatly expanded supply of both group study and quiet individual study areas, including increased seating capacity circling the central atrium.

The atrium was key to the connectivity of the spaces, McCluskie explained. Previously, visitors to the library often remarked that they were unaware that the upper floors existed, and the designers aimed to change that by increasing visibility between floor levels. The solid balustrades around the atrium will be replaced by contemporary glass railings, while reading tables will be located along the perimeter, which, as McCluskie claimed, will encourage people to move upward through the building by making visible the various functions and programs on each floor.



http://urbantoronto.ca/files/imagecache/display_slideshow/images/articles/2016/12/24014/24014-83787.jpg

Expanded staircase with reading terraces on the first floor, image courtesy of Diamond Schmitt Architects.

A notable change to the central atrium will be the widening of the staircases to accommodate reading terraces. In an effort to increase connectivity between floor levels, the staircases will be transformed into destinations and social spaces, rather than simply circulation. The grand staircase, as the project team calls it, will be the prominent central feature of the revamped atrium.

Technology plays a significant role in the renovations, with the installation of a new digital innovation hub and creation space. The facility will offer access to digital media technologies that include 3D printing, laser cutting, and sound and video recording studios. As well, there will be increased capacity for computer and internet access throughout the building.



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View of the the second floor, Image courtesy of Diamond Schmitt Architects.

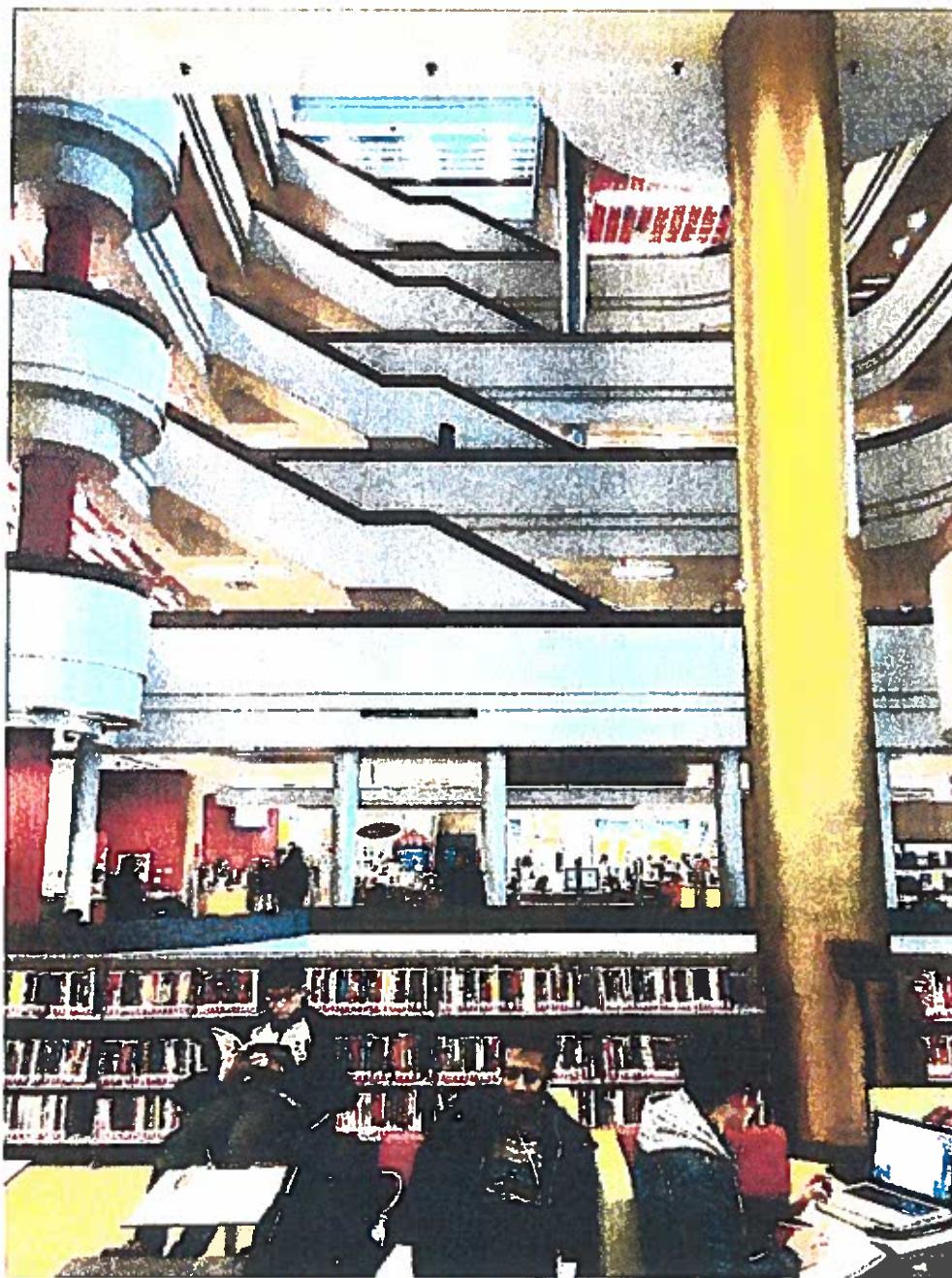
The library will also now feature zoned areas for adults, teens, and children, including a new KidsStop early literacy centre that will be themed around transportation. In addition, flexible program and meeting room spaces will be renovated and expanded, and a new event space will be installed on the main floor. The library will also sport a new look, with new flooring, ceilings, furniture, seating, and millwork installed throughout.



<http://sites/default/files/imagecache/display-slideshow/images/articles/2016/12/24014/24014-83464.png>

Rendering of the new KidsStop, Image courtesy of Toronto Public Library.

While the majority of the interventions are concentrated in the interior of the building, some minor repair work will take place on the exterior, with a rehabilitation of the stone cladding and a re-roofing of the structure. A notable new feature will be an exterior reading garden on the top floor, making use of the available roof space.



<http://urbantoronto.ca/files/imagecache/display-slideshow/images/article/2016/12/24014/24014-83446.jpg>

View of the atrium, image by Craig White.

The North York Central Library is one of a trio of notable Moriyama and Teshima-designed buildings in Toronto that feature a captivating atrium and rather stunning architectural details. Scarborough Civic Centre (1973) and Toronto Reference Library (1977) are the other two civic monuments that are focused around a central atrium with curving balconies and stairs, but neither quite measure up to the complexity and height of North York Library's towering seven-storey chasm. Perhaps the most impressive of the three, it is remarkable for its thrill-inducing cascade of floor levels lit by its Postmodernist stained glass window.

McCluskie is excited by the fact that they get to "in a way, collaborate with Raymond Moriyama" by participating in the careful alteration of the building as it evolves to meet the needs of contemporary society. Enamoured by the spectacular atrium, McCluskie worked to improve the existing building while still maintaining its integrity as an iconic architectural landmark and legacy of Moriyama. The bones of the building are still the same, he explained, but the way the space is used will be adjusted, and the library will be presented with a new and expanding identity to carry with it into the future.

The Huffington Post

A Library Without Books

06/27/2016 01:46 pm ET | Updated Jun 27, 2016

Michael Rosenblum Founder of Current TV, Past President NY Times TV



Three years ago, I wrote a piece in the Huffington Post entitled "[What Is a Library?](#)"

It engendered a wave of hate mail from librarians all across the country.

Who knew?

The basis of the piece was that a New York City library that used to be across the street from me on 53rd Street was being closed down so that the new Baccarat Hotel could be built on its spot.

I opined then that in the world of the Internet, libraries were probabaly a remanant of the past. After all, I wrote, with the web everyone has access to everything all the time. Who needs a library?

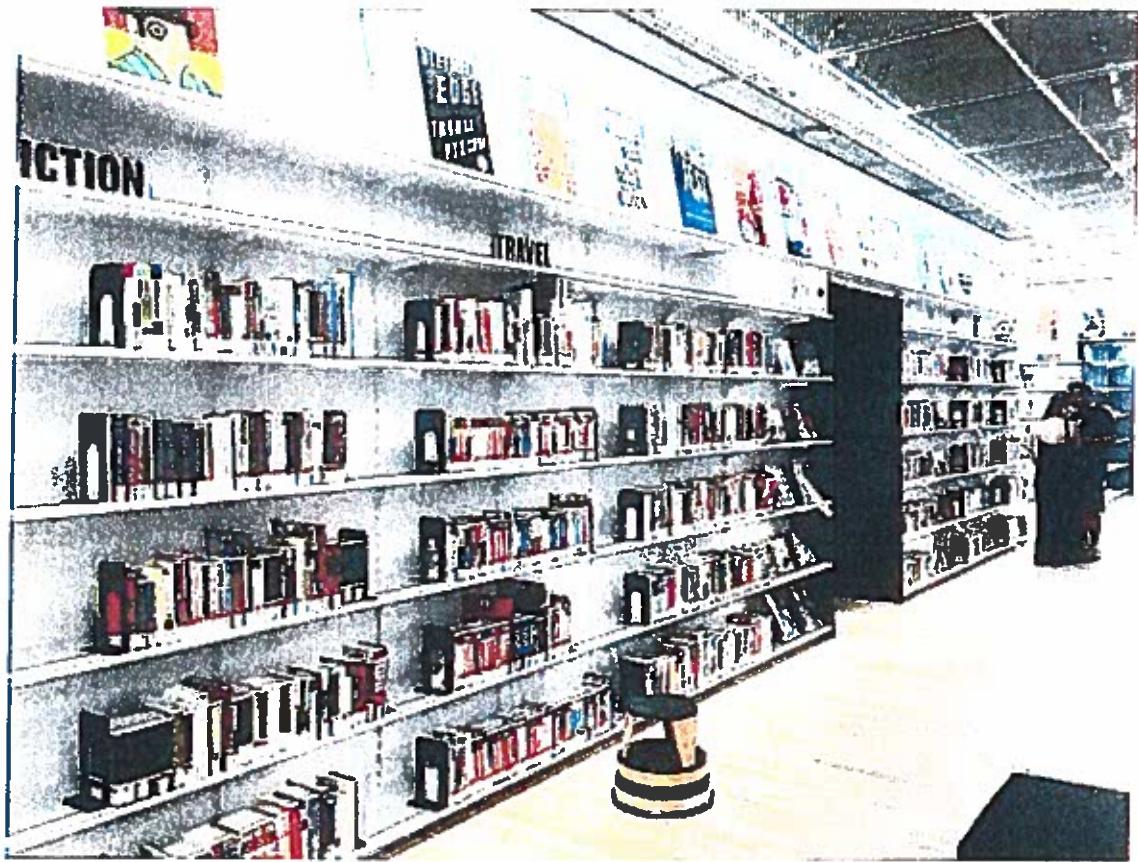
What had been the Donnell Library with its vast collection of books and reading rooms was torn down. The new Baccarat Hotel (and condominium complex) went up in its place.

But part of the deal with Baccarat had been that they would have to leave room in the hotel for a new library.

It opened last week.

It is a library unlike any library I have ever seen or visited before. The old Donnell library was shelf after shelf, row after row, floor after floor of books.

The new library has almost no books at all. A few shelves at best, and they are very spread out.



What it does have is a giant video screen.

While we may talk about The Library of Alexandria, what really kicked off libraries was the invention of the printing press in 1452.

Prior to Gutenberg, hardly anyone had a library, and a good one might contain no more than 100 hand written tomes. The printing press kicked off not just a revolution in print, it also kicked off a revolution in libraries. Library collections went from minuscule to 15,000 - 20,000 volumes. By 1550 more than 150 million copies of some 150,000 titles had been printed.

When I was a student at Williams in the 1970s, we all had assigned seats (carrels) in the stacks (where the books were kept) in the library. We were quite literally buried in the thousands and thousands of volumes that stretched from wall to wall, floor to ceiling, floor after floor after floor.

Yesterday, the only thing that stretched from floor to ceiling in the new 53rd Street Library was the video screen.

It was enormous.

The biggest single collection of 'books' (and I use the term loosely), was not history or art or science or travel, it was DVDs.



Quite strange, a library without books, (or with hardly any). This is now how I traditionally think of a library. But maybe this is? Maybe this is the library of the future? The library in the world where books are little more than window-dressing?

What the library does have is a row of computers and a massive video screen.

For better or worse, we are now in an era of video.

Video is our lingua franca.

It is the way we communicate with one another.

As the printing press fill librariies with printed materials 500 years ago, so now the Internet and the iPhone have stripped libraries of books and replaced them with... video and screens.

It was, quite frankly, a startling thing to behold.

Whath happened to all the books that were once in the Donnelly Library?

I have no idea.

But the giant video screen in the new library speaks volumes.

Originally published in TheVJ.com