

JOHN V. VAN PELT,
ARCHITECT,
333 FOURTH AVENUE,
NEW YORK CITY.

March 3, 1908.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie,
2 East 91st Street,
City.

Dear Sir:-

Last Spring I became interested in some work at Patchogue, Long Island, and thus learned of the gift you had made for a Library in that place. Designs had been produced by a local draughtsman or architect which were of inferior quality. Although these embodied what, in the estimation of the Trustees, were the strict practical needs of such a building in Patchogue, the bids of contractors were \$16,000.00, \$6000.00 more than your appropriation. I became interested in the matter and finally agreed to make plans for the building and to make some attempt to build the same for the amount of your appropriation and some few hundred dollars more than the Trustees had on hand from fines, etc. My first connection with Patchogue had been to design some houses for a Company in which a friend of mine was interested. To further the construction of the houses, this gentleman and some other Cornell University college mates had formed a Construction Company. I myself was Professor of Architecture and Professor in Charge of that College at Cornell between 1897 and 1904. By using this Company, and thus having no expenses other than bare cost, I hoped to build the Library within the limits above stated, my intention being to contribute my personal services without remuneration, in the hopes of giving the

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Town a good building. In following the plan of building through the Construction Company, I necessarily became responsible for the cost of the building.

We were employing a local superintendent who has proved conscientious, but who was unaccustomed to the better class of work required and who, therefore, figured his labor and a few materials too low. We were confronted by an unlooked for rise in the cost of labor. Masons who had locally charged \$4.25 demanded \$4.50 and even \$4.75. The Town commenced the erection of a large school which strained the resources of the market and delayed our supplies from the mill, etc. so that the building has been delayed three or four months, materially increasing the cost. Moreover, as the building proceeded, it became apparent that a number of extras were really needed. At that time it was impossible to foretell the exact final cost and I therefore incorporated these extras in the building, still hoping that it might be possible to nearly keep the expenses within contemplated bounds.

In the actual purchase of our materials for the Library, we have done well, buying lumber, etc. at a low price and discounting our bills. I personally advanced from \$3000.00 to \$5000.00 for the purpose of financing the work and only failed to discount a few of the last bills when I felt unable to advance further sums.

Over the entrance of the Library is a piece of sculpture modeled by Mr. Charles R. Harley. I had taken up the matter

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of this sculpture with one of the sculptors whom I had known in Paris, explaining that we had little money even to defray expenses, thinking that he might be willing to give his services. He sent me a proposition to do the work for \$1500.00. I then took up the matter with Mr. Harley, whom I had also known intimately in Paris, and he agreed to contribute his services practically for nothing, I paying him from \$75.00 to \$100.00 to cover incidental studio expenses, etc. and we devised a scheme of modelling the sculpture directly in one of the materials which is used for composition floors. I had hoped that this final modelling, after the studies, might take only three or four days, but Mr. Harley generously spent three weeks at Patchogue doing the work, after bringing the half size studies from his studio in New York. He has succeeded in creating a really fine work of art. Mr. Canfield, President of the Board of Trustees, was able to secure a gift of \$150.00 from a Mrs. Litt who has become a resident of Patchogue to cover the expenses of this sculpture. These total expenses have run up to \$200.51, counting Mr. Harley's share \$75.00. The latter leaves him out of pocket. I consider the sculpture a matter entirely apart from the Library and it is possible Mrs. Litt may be willing to pay the remaining actual expenses. I have mentioned it as an evidence of our sincere effort to keep down the expenses of the building.

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For your information, I am appending a list of the actual cost to date of the Library. The architectural expenses noted do not include my own work on the plans and specifications, (I made all of the original quarter scale drawings and three-quarter scales), but only exhibiting draughtsmen's expenses, etc. that I paid out. My further personal services, very heavy ones, have been the buying of material, directing the work, etc. and the financing of the building. You will note that the total cost of construction is \$14,174.16, exclusive of the sculpture. Your appropriation was \$10,000.00. The Trustees, by straining their resources, have contributed \$929.00. This leaves a deficit of \$3,245.16. It is the intention of the Trustees to open the building tomorrow, March 4th.

In a general way I understand that you have certain percentage rules for determining the amount of your appropriations for Libraries. Nevertheless, I have hoped that there might be some heading of extenuating circumstances under which you might feel willing to give the Trustees the money to pay for the actual cost of the building. I have taken up with the Trustees the matter of charging the Town with the cost, but they do not believe they could succeed in securing further sums or that it would be right for them to attempt to load the School Board more heavily at the present juncture when they have to meet the cost of a new school that is much

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more expensive than they originally felt they could pay for. The Town is peculiarly situated in that, through the large number of summer visitors that increase the request for books, and who yet pay no taxes, the demands made upon it are heavy and out of proportion to its resources. The Town is rapidly growing and the Trustees felt that the Library should be built in such a manner that it could be increased in size in the future. For this reason it was decided to build the reading room, which cannot be changed, to meet those future needs, keeping the stack, etc. which can easily be increased at small expense down to the minimum. The Trustees also felt the need of a meeting room or auditorium somewhere in the building to permit the men of the Town to gather for discussion and for lectures. The Town has no such meeting-place.

Lastly, the Trustees agreed with me in a strong feeling that the architecture of the building should be as far as we could make it of good style and a concrete and enlightening example of good architecture. In general, the artistic sense of the Town's people has not been cultivated.

Reference to the plans of the building will show you what steps were taken to satisfy the requirements of the problem from the point of view of arrangement. I regret that the accompanying photographs give a very inadequate and to my mind, unfortunate expression of the architectural effect. I have

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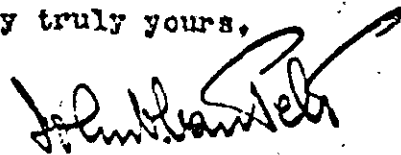
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tried to make the building an example of pure Colonial as the style most in harmony with the place.

The Trustees have expressed themselves as satisfied with the building in every respect.

To sum up my request, I have hoped that since the Trustees have procured, over and above the original \$10,000.00. the sum above stated, as I have contributed my personal services and have incurred a very appreciable number of minor personal expenses that I have not enumerated and as the sculpture has been secured from an outside source, you may feel justified in defraying those other expenses amounting to \$3,245.18. that have been incurred by us or forced upon us beyond our intention and resources.

Very truly yours,



Enclosure: List of expenses.

Accompanying package contains set of plans and photographs of completed building.