

# The New York Public Library

The Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, commonly known as the Main Branch or the New York Public Library, is the flagship building in the New York Public Library system and a landmark in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. The branch, one of four research libraries in the library system, contains nine separate divisions. The structure contains four stories open to the public. As of 2015, the branch contains an estimated 2.5 million volumes in its stacks. The building was declared a National Historic Landmark, a National Register of Historic Places site, and a New York City designated landmark in the 1960s.

The Main Branch was built after the New York Public Library was formed as a combination of two libraries in the late 1890s. The site is located along Fifth Avenue between 40th and 42nd Streets. The architectural firm Carrère and Hastings constructed the structure in the Beaux-Arts style, and the structure opened on May 23, 1911. The marble facade of the building contains ornate detailing, and the Fifth Avenue entrance is flanked by a pair of stone lions that serve as the library's icon. The interior of the building contains the Main Reading Room, a space measuring 78 by 297 feet with a 52-foot-high ceiling; a Public Catalog Room; and various reading rooms, offices, and art exhibitions.

The Main Branch became popular after its opening, and saw 4 million annual visitors by the 1920s. It formerly contained a circulating library, though the circulating division of the Main Branch moved to the nearby Mid-Manhattan Library in 1970. Additional space for the library's stacks was constructed under adjacent Bryant Park in 1991, and the branch's Main Reading Room was restored in 1998. A major restoration from 2007 to 2011 was underwritten by a \$100 million gift from philanthropist Stephen A. Schwarzman, for whom the branch was subsequently renamed. Since 2018, the branch has been undergoing an additional expansion that is expected to be completed this year.

The Main Branch has been featured in many television shows, including *Seinfeld* and *Sex and the City*, as well as films such as *The Wiz* in 1978, *Ghostbusters* in 1984, and *The Day After Tomorrow* in 2004.

