

BYERS BRANCH LIBRARY

675 Santa Fe Drive, Denver, Colorado 80204



Architect: Varian & Varian

Year Built: 1918

Situated at West 7th Avenue and Santa Fe Drive, directly in the path of the First Friday Art Walk, is the Byers Branch Library. It's a Carnegie library, drawing funding for its construction from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, and named after founding editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*, William Newton Byers.

The long, mostly rectangular building is done in a Spanish eclectic style. The father-son team of Varian & Varian used brick and stone for the structure and finished it in painted concrete. Two blind arcades of semicircular arches and Corinthian pilasters flank the main entrance on the east façade, each holding three windows with protruding sills above plasterwork panels. The entrance sits centered in the building face between fluted Ionic pilasters that rise to support a dentiled cornice and a semicircular dentiled arch. Underneath are square basement windows on stone sills and above, a gabled tile roof with faux chimneys at the gable peaks. The north façade features large glass block openings and bracketed cornices. The inside is a finely crafted single room where one finds a fireplace under vaulted ceilings. A mural over the front desk titled *Pasado, Presente, Futuro* was painted by Denver artist Carlota Espinoza. Offices, storage and meeting space are relegated to the basement.

The Byers Branch Library has become a center for English as a second language programs and other forms of community support in the distinctly Latino neighborhood of La Alma/Lincoln Park. It was restored in 1992 by Colorado firm Stanley Pouw Associates, now Pouw & Associates, Inc.

References

Noel, Thomas J. & Wharton, Nicholas J. (2016). *Denver Landmarks and Historic Districts Second Edition*. Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado.