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Long-Awaited New Library in Shaw to Open August 2; New Building Design Hailed

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[Note: Photographs accompanying this news story can be viewed in the current issue PDF.]

The new 22,000 square-foot, three-story Watha T. Daniel Branch Library in the 1600 block of 7th Street, NW, across from the Shaw Metro station has been designed to accommodate 80,000 books, DVDs, CDs and other library materials, 32 public access computers with free Wi-Fi Internet access; comfortable seating for 200 patrons and separate reading areas for adults, teens and children. There is also a children's program room and a large meeting room that will hold up to 100 persons, as well as two small conference rooms for upwards of 12 persons, and a food vending area.

(For background on this major project, see, "Shaw and Mt. Vernon Neighborhoods Finally to See Actual Ground-breaking for Long-Awaited, New Watha T. Daniel Branch Library Building," *InTowner*, September 2008, page 1; available in Current & Back Issues Archive.)

Unlike the original library building constructed on this site in the 1970s, the new building boasts numerous green design elements for which LEED certification of at least Silver is expected to be granted following application. Among the energy-efficient features are raised floors for optimized air circulation, a vegetative green roof, sun screens on south-facing windows, materials with high recycled content, and low-flow and "smart" plumbing fixtures.

On the plaza outside, prominent DC sculptor Craig Kraft's large work, titled *Vivace*, will engage passersby and those coming to the library. "Like jazz," Kraft explains, his creation ""embodies freedom and inspiration as well as a carefully crafted composition of form and color. Both are characterized by an absolute focus and relaxation of a rigid structure or standard. *Vivace* was inspired by the innate and evolutionary power and perseverance of the art of Jazz. This inspiration is based on a keen sense of the power of public sculpture, yet can be characterized as fresh and original. There is a sense of the simultaneous pleasure of vivid, colorful form and open space. Like jazz, *Vivace* strives to push our sensory limits into new arenas and new context, such as in front of a public library.