

# Charlotte Mecklenburg Library selects Clark Nexsen and Snøhetta as architects for new Main Library

MON, OCT 23, 2017 14:00 CET



Library will serve entire community as “public commons,” catalyst for North Tryon corridor  
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Charlotte, NC – October 23, 2017** – The Charlotte Mecklenburg community is taking one step closer to a new Main Library and further redevelopment of the North Tryon corridor in Uptown

Charlotte. After an extensive process led by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Mecklenburg County Asset & Facility Management, the team of Clark Nexsen, Snøhetta and brightspot strategy have been selected to design the new Main Library.

"The Clark Nexsen/Snøhetta/brightspot team brings strength in design, execution and community input and engagement, along with their prior experience working together," says Library CEO Lee Keesler. "We believe they are a great fit for our unique design opportunity."

Snøhetta will serve as the design architect, working collaboratively with Clark Nexsen as the architect-of-record, and brightspot will lead the community engagement and space programming efforts.

Planning for a new Main Library has been underway for several years, and has included broad community input. The creative vision for the new Main Library – the "public commons" – will inform design, programs, partnerships and more. This vision was developed with community input during visioning sessions led by consulting firm MACHINE, funded by the Knight Foundation. Selection of the architectural team will begin a new phase of community input, through Town Hall meetings, surveys and workshops.

"The Main Library has the potential to be the hub of culture, education and community connection in Charlotte," says Library Board Chair Jennifer Appleby. "This design team can help us realize that."

The Main Library site has been identified as a "catalyst" site in the North Tryon Vision Plan. The new Main Library, which will remain on its historic site at the corner of Sixth and Tryon streets, will be a destination for the entire community.

"Libraries are more popular today than they have ever been, serving a wider range of needs than access to books only," says Craig Dykers, founding partner of Snøhetta. "The architecture of libraries is also changing and Charlotte's new library will lead the way in showing how a city and its core of knowledge can be open, welcoming and intriguing for decades to come."

"Our team will start with the vision of creating the 21st century library – a 'public commons' where residents and visitors can gather to learn and share in a new knowledge nexus for the Charlotte community," says Kevin Utsey, FAIA, Clark Nexsen principal. "This ties back to the original vision of Andrew Carnegie, who called libraries 'universities of the people' when he founded Charlotte's first Main Library in 1901."

"We have the opportunity to engage the community in the process so that we're not just designing the Library for the community, but with them. Together, we can create a place where everyone is welcome and where people are connected to information, programs, opportunities, and each other," says Elliot Felix, founder and CEO of brightspot.

The Clark Nexsen/Snøhetta/brightspot team collaborated on the James B. Hunt Jr. Library on the Centennial Campus of NC State University, which opened in 2013, and has since served as a model for new directions in libraries.

The Main Library has been located at 310 N. Tryon St. since 1903, with a building replacement in the 1950s and a significant expansion/renovation in 1988.

Funding for the project will come from both private and public sources. The FY 2019 Mecklenburg County Capital Improvement Program earmarked \$65 million in public funding, and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation will engage with the community to raise private funds.

#### *About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library:*

The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America's leading urban public libraries, serving a community of more than one million citizens in Mecklenburg County, N.C. Through 20 locations, targeted outreach and online, the Library delivers exceptional services and programs, with a mission to improve lives and build a stronger community. For more, visit [cmlibrary.org](http://cmlibrary.org).

#### *About Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation:*

Created as a non-profit 501(c)(3) in September 2012 in partnership with Foundation For The Carolinas, the Foundation supports the Library's programs and services through advocacy, fundraising and building relationships with others who share a passion for the Library's work. The Library

Foundation supports library services, expands the Library's collection of print and digital books and materials, enhances programming for all ages, and strives to grow its endowment for future generations.

*About Snøhetta:*

For nearly 30 years, Snøhetta has explored spaces dedicated to cultivating knowledge with the design of new libraries, museums and educational buildings. They aspire to create places that enliven, activate and diversify. Snøhetta kick-started its career in 1989 with the competition-winning entry for the new library of Alexandria, Egypt. This was later followed by the commission for the Norwegian National Opera in Oslo, the National September 11 Memorial Museum Pavilion at the World Trade Center in New York City, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Expansion in California, among many others. Since its inception, the practice has maintained its original trans-disciplinary approach, integrating architectural, landscape, interior and brand design in all of its projects. Recent library projects include the James B. Hunt Library in Raleigh, N.C. completed in collaboration with Clark Nexsen, as well as the Ryerson University Student Learning Centre in Toronto and the ongoing construction of Calgary's New Central Library.

*About Clark Nexsen:*

Clark Nexsen is an ideas-based architecture and engineering firm focused on creating spaces and experiences that positively impact people's lives. With nearly a century of design practice, the firm is ranked by Building Design + Construction as a Top 10 firm for both university and government work. Clark Nexsen was honored as Firm of the Year by the American Institute of Architects' North Carolina chapter in 2017. With 10 U.S. locations, the firm has offices in Charlotte, Asheville and Raleigh, N.C. Locally, they have designed numerous new and renovated buildings for UNC Charlotte and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Recently completed library experience includes the James B. Hunt Library at NC State University, in collaboration with Snøhetta, and Semans Library at the UNC School of the Arts in Winston-Salem.

*About brightspot:*

brightspot designs engaging experiences that use learning to connect people to a purpose, a brand, information, and each other. brightspot partners with leading cultural institutions, universities, and corporations to rethink services and operations, reimagine spaces, redesign organizations and develop people. Our work creates engaging experiences that improve productivity, recruitment, and retention; support new ways of learning and working; and help organizations and people thrive. Recent library experience includes the New York Public Library, Temple University Main Library, James B. Hunt Library at NC State University, Forsyth Public Library and University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Davis Library.

**Media Contact:** Cordelia Anderson

Director of Marketing, Communications & Advocacy

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library 704-416-0712 [canderson@cmlibrary.org](mailto:canderson@cmlibrary.org)

**Media Resources:**

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library newsroom: <http://news.cision.com/charlotte-mecklenburg-library>

Images:

[Current Main Library](#)

[Clark Nexsen press images contact sheet](#)

[Snøhetta press images contact sheet](#)

High resolution images available upon request

**Social Sharing:**

Hashtags: #publiccommons @cmlibrary @cmlibfoundation, @clarknexsen ?@snohetta ?@brightspotter

Facebook: [facebook.com/cmlibrary](https://facebook.com/cmlibrary); [facebook.com/charmeccklibraryfoundation](https://facebook.com/charmeccklibraryfoundation); [facebook.com/ClarkNexsen](https://facebook.com/ClarkNexsen); [facebook.com/snohetta](https://facebook.com/snohetta)

Twitter: [@cmlibrary](https://twitter.com/cmlibrary) [www.twitter.com/cmlibrary](https://www.twitter.com/cmlibrary)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/cmlibrary](https://www.instagram.com/cmlibrary)

**Tags:**

**Main Library , CMLibrary , Mecklenburg County , snohetta , clark nexsen , brightspot**