

CARNEGIE WHISKY LIBRARY PROJECT NARRATIVE

8/15/2025

The Carnegie Library, built in 1914, was designed by architect Joseph Wohleb of the former architectural firm Blackwell and Baker. Originally known as the Olympia Public Library, the building is listed on the local, state, and national historic registries, making it a designated historic property.

The project proposes transforming the use of the historic building into a whiskey library for the public to enjoy. The two-story facility will feature whiskey lounges and bars throughout the building. The lower level will include accessible entries, a conference room, and member-only lounge areas. The upper floor, with its impressive high ceilings, will be open to all guests. The scope of work includes restoring original wainscoting, flooring, and other preserved interior details. New additions will include interior finishes such as paint, wallpaper, and furniture—both built-in and freestanding. A contemporary addition on the upper level will feature an outdoor terrace, elevator, accessible restrooms, and an interior exit stair. These additions will be located on the north side of the building, above the 1950 addition, and will contrast with the original 1914 architecture.

Two options are proposed for outdoor dining:

- **Roof Deck:** This option includes adding a stairway to a new rooftop deck. The deck will be set back 9 feet from the existing building parapet and located in the northeast quadrant of the original 1914 structure to minimize visual impact.
- **Dining Terrace:** This option includes an upper-level terrace located on part of the roof space of the 1950 addition.

Exterior preservation work will retain original building elements, including the reintroduction of light post fixtures as seen in historic photos and the restoration of original windows—protected with storm windows if needed. Site improvements will include landscaping, pavement replacement or addition, restriping parking stalls (including a new van-accessible stall), grading for accessible access, installing a main entry waiting bench, adding wall-mounted signs on the west and south facades, and preserving the original “Public Library” sign in its existing location above the entry.