

Hunt Library

201 S. Basque Avenue

1962

International Style

**Status: Local Landmark;
Listed on the National Register**



As a companion to the Hunt-Wesson, Inc. Headquarters Building, this building was also designed by the acclaimed architect, William Periera. It features the same International Style architecture, composed of rectangular forms, glass panels, and a repeated module pattern. The flat portico roof with its “T”-shaped columns at the front façade mimic the design of the multi-story Hunt-Wesson, Inc. Headquarters Building. Also, like that building, it is slightly elevated above its wide, front walkway to give the appearance of a buoyant, floating structure situated within a campus setting of landscaped open space. The interior is largely column-free and expansive clerestory windows provide an inviting light-filled space, appropriate for the building’s original use as a library. The glass walls and clerestory windows infuse the building with light and do not overwhelm the interior.

The 10,500-sq.-ft. library building, together with its 2.2-acre parcel, was a gift to the city by Hunt-Wesson as part of its development of a 20.5-acre property as its headquarters. From the start, the Hunt Library was viewed as a cultural center for Fullerton, and over its first 12 years, many artists and collections were exhibited in the well-lit building. Users of the library were treated to a rotating display of paintings, artwork and art books from the collection of Norton Simon, the president of the Hunt-Wesson, Inc. Company. The art continued to be kept and displayed in the building until 1974, when Simon began making plans to open the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena.

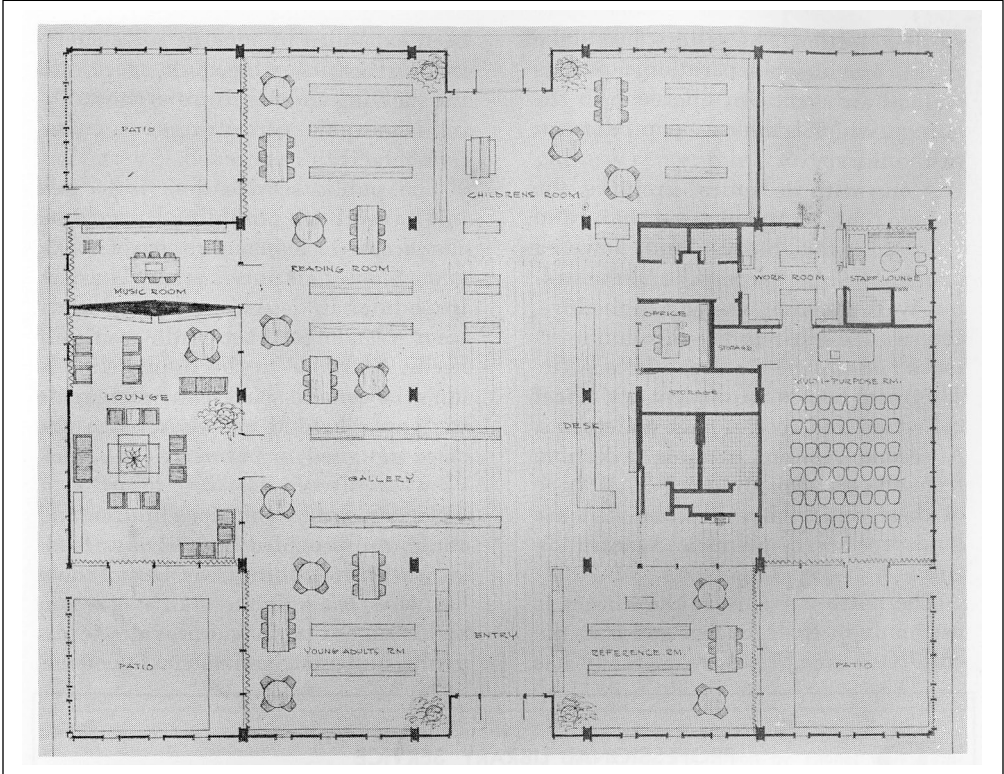
As a branch library to the larger Fullerton Main Library – and its poor, inaccessible location for residents – the facility was lightly used over its 50 years of service. The city of Fullerton closed the library in 2014, and the building’s future was uncertain.

In 2019, the Hunt Library was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, as part of a district application called Hunt Center and Library. The district encompasses a 10.1-acre site that includes the Hunt Library, the Hunt-Wesson Inc. Headquarters Building, and the extensive landscaped grounds between the two buildings. With the building’s listing on the National Register, the city was able to secure two grants from the state of California totaling \$5.25 million in 2020 and 2021, which has made

possible a complete restoration of the building for a new use; the improvements to the building are on-going as of spring 2023, and a full restoration is expected to be finished in the fall of 2023. The reuse of the building is currently being studied.



1962 photo by Jules Shulman



Original Floor Plan of Hunt Library