

From Sarah Brown McCulloch's *Guilford: A Walking Guide* (2012):

Guilford Free Library, 67 Park Street, Colonial Revival, 1933; Architect: G. Archer Quick.

Early in the twentieth century this was the site of a busy feed, grain, and coal store, but Mrs. Frederick Spencer, who lived in the grand house across the corner at 122 Broad Street, was so bothered by the noise that her husband obligingly bought the property, removed the feed and grain store, and in due course gave the land to the town for a library—a quiet neighbor indeed! The new building was designed to blend in with the traditional architecture and residential scale of its neighborhood. The library outgrew its facilities and in 1970 plans were announced to demolish the building and replace it with a flat, one-story modern structure covering the whole lot. A furor immediately erupted and at a packed town meeting, remembered to this day, hundreds of traditionalists and modernists fought it out with the traditionalists winning, giving the first intimation that townspeople intended to preserve the historic character of the Green and the town center. Ten years later when the library again proposed a plan for growth, it took the form of the present modern, two-story building, carefully preserving the old building and harmonizing with it in scale and color. (Gilbert Switzer and John Matthew of New Haven, architects). The front door was moved to the addition and the garden next door was turned into a charming entrance court. A tall window and balcony mark the site of the original door. A more recent expansion was accomplished in 2008. The Guilford Free Library has come a long way from its beginning in 1737, in one room that held books principally on divinity.