

Chapter 1

Introduction

There is at least one thing that is certain about libraries. It is the uncertainty of what they will become in the future.

(Moshe Safdie, architect)

The planning of a new library can take as long as five years - so on the day it opens, a library already represents yesterday's thinking to some extent. Therefore, consideration of future needs - 'future thinking' - is very important. In the last 20 years, the library as a building type has seen many changes as it has adapted to accommodate digital information systems. This chapter notes some of the current features of different types of library.

Libraries today are facing the dual challenge of accommodating rapidly changing populations, and keeping pace with information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is altering notions of library space as well as communication links. Chapter 2 explores some of the recent trends in library development and the factors that have an impact on them.

Success is ultimately measured against a project's objectives, so these must be understood and shared by all the senior people in the organization. It is best to set down the vision for the project at the start and to refer back

to it throughout the project. Chapter 3 looks at the development of a business case for a library project and suggests some strategies for ensuring success.

The creation of a new library requires the co-operation of a whole team, each member with his or her individual contribution to make. The constituents of the team, their relationships with each other and the way the project could be managed are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 6 looks at the appointment of an architect. Both the librarian and architect will need to contribute unique skills to ensure that a project is successful, so a positive relationship between the two is vital.

Increasingly, library services are offered in dual or multi-purpose settings, for example within a school or other community building. At the same time, new funding streams are opening up to libraries, especially in the public sector and particularly where there is evidence of partnership work or community engagement. Chapter 7 explores these issues and their impact on library design and building.

Chapter 8 describes the design brief, the single most important document in the design process, and Chapter 9 looks at design quality, exploring the elements of urban, building and interior design.

As library use changes, so does the allocation of space within the building. Chapter 10 looks in some detail at space planning and accessibility.

Finally, Chapter 11 considers occupancy - moving in - and post occupancy evaluation - learning from the experience and gaining evidence to support the development of further projects.

Reference is made throughout the book to different types of library and much of what is discussed applies to any library. All will have varying amounts of public space, available to all, and back-room space where staff work to service the needs of the visible part of the building. The main types of library and their key features are listed in Table 1.1.

Different types of library have different emphases and relationships between them. For example, university libraries need to balance the needs of the teaching, learning and research communities. The Director of the OCLC Network encourages library managers to question why libraries exist: 'The constant questioning of a library's reason for existing

Table 1.1 Types of library and their key features (adapted from Edwards with Khan, 2008)	
Main types of library	Key features
National library	National collections of books, journals, maps etc. Research focused Conservation element Specialist readership
Public library	Collections – books and other media – primarily for loan, but also reference Computers for public use (People’s Network) Family history material Local and community information Often integrated with other ‘cultural’ buildings Wide range of customer base
Academic library	Study support for teaching and learning Research collections Large computer areas Often 24-hour access
Professional and special libraries	Specialist collection of books and professional journals Often contain rare material Limited access facilities Conservation element Closed community of users

is a very good thing. Libraries have continued to evolve to find their appropriate function - their core service. They will continue to get funded and continue to exist’ (OCLC, 2003).