



CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT



CITY CENTRAL LIBRARY BETHESDA STREET HANLEY

CITY OF STOKE-ON-TRENT LIBRARIES DEPARTMENT

Official Opening of CITY CENTRAL LIBRARY

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BARONESS LEE OF ASHERIDGE

10th DECEMBER, 1970

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CITY LIBRARIAN

K. D. MILLER, D.P.A., F.L.A.

CITY ARCHITECT, PLANNING AND RECONSTRUCTION OFFICER

J. W. PLANT, F.R.I.B.A., M.T.P.I.

TOWN CLERK

L. K. ROBINSON, LL.B.

MAIN CONTRACTORS

SEDDON (STOKE) LIMITED

Some facts about the New Library

The new building replaces old and inadequate premises in Pall Mall, which consisted of two adjacent buildings. One, rented from the Potteries Mechanics' Institute, was extensively affected by dry rot and had had its upper storey removed in the interests of safety. The other building was erected in 1818 as a British School and has also come to the end of its life.

Both buildings together were not adequate to provide all the services of a modern central library and, in effect, the City Library Service, serving 270,000 people, has been functioning in a central headquarters adapted from the old public library which served the pre-federation town of Hanley which had a population of only 75,000.

The new building provides modern facilities for the general library service and also serves to centralise ancillary services such as the bindery, the schools library and the reserve stacks, which have been scattered throughout the city.

The library is sited on the south-west side of Bethesda Street between the museum and the police headquarters. Piccadilly is only a few yards away, as is the old library in Pall Mall. The bus station is within three hundred yards and a major car park is adjacent.

The first planning concept was of a library incorporating a Civil Defence control centre and offices for several technical departments of the Corporation. In the event, due to loan sanction procedures, the library has gone ahead as a free-standing project.

The building consists of six storeys and public access is directly to the second storey.

The arrangement of the library is purposely traditional and conventional. Libraries nowadays are the subject of experiments with new ideas, particularly with integrated or subject department forms. The city is too big for the incorporation of lending and reference services into one area and not big enough to justify the formation of separate subject departments to any great degree. The traditional distinction between lending and reference departments has been maintained as the degree of availability of reading material is widely recognised and accepted by the reading public. The only separate department provided is that in the field of local studies. It is a reference department but has its own suite, deemed to be desirable in a district with so high an industrial specialisation. Administratively, the staff structure takes care of the need for subject treatment.

FLOOR A

This is a semi-basement, incorporating a duty car park; a fumigation chamber for old documents; a conference room with a T.V. point, to accommodate up to twenty-four people, to be used for group study, training, professional meetings etc.; staff lavatories; a general store for books in transit and equipment; a caretaker's room and cleaners' mess room. The remainder of this floor is allocated for use as a Civil Defence control centre.

FLOOR B

The public entrance hall faces directly on to the Bethesda Street level. The lending departments are sited on this floor.

The adult lending library has a registration point within the entrance hall and the book receipt point leads into the library proper. The issuing point is directly across the way and is equipped to take three photocharging cameras, dealing with both adult and junior traffic. Behind the book receipt point is a staff work room holding the visual index for reservations and the transaction slip sorting stand. Storage for gramophone records is provided for future use when circumstances allow for the introduction of such facilities into the service.

The lending library proper comprises a series of alcoves accommodating the books which, with the music in a separate room, comprises approximately 30,000 volumes on open display. The large central area holds display stands, a combined readers' adviser/display kiosk, the public catalogues and a lounge area. The offices of the Chief and Senior Lending Librarians are immediately adjacent to the library. Allowance has been made for the accommodation of first-aid cases.

The children's section has space for 5,000 volumes; a study area for twenty readers; group activity space, equipped with screen and T.V. point; an office for the Children's Librarian and lavatories for boys and girls.

FLOOR C

This has a lecture-cum-exhibition hall. Its lecture capacity is 100 and it is equipped with a T.V. point, screen and blackboard. A large mezzanine area accommodates a lending accessions office, the whole of the central lending reserve stock, approximately 40,000 volumes, and part of the central reference library reserve, approximately 45,000 volumes, in compact shelving. Public lavatories are on this floor.

FLOOR D

The general reference library is sited here. In it will be found newspapers, periodicals and 15,000 volumes on open display. It seats 153 people at three levels of intensity—in open plan, 88 seats, in private study areas, 44 seats (two for artists, water point provided), and individual carrels, 21 seats. Of the individual carrels five are sound-proofed for tape or typewriters and at least three will be available for microfilm, etc.

Part of the North Staffs. Field Club Library is housed in a separate room and there are offices for the Chief Bibliographer and typists. There is a bibliographical services staff room which houses the union catalogues and bibliographies and book aids.

A tea room equipped with vending machine is also sited on this floor.

FLOOR E

This takes in the remainder of the reference reserve stock, approximately 85,000 volumes, in compact shelving; the reference accessions office; the general map store and dark room, together with the local studies suite.

The latter consists of a stack accommodating 12,000 books, 35,000 documents and 1,500 maps in compact shelving, and a work room. There is also seating for 31 in open area plus four individual carrels, which will be made available for public use as and when pressure of demand justifies it.

FLOOR F

The top floor houses the offices and staff quarters. There is accommodation for the City Librarian, his Deputy and the clerical sections. The bindery, the schools library reserve, holding approximately 10,000 volumes, and the part-time centres headquarters, occupy the remaining accommodation on this level.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SYSTEMS

There are two public lifts, a continuous book hoist and a small goods hoist, covering all levels; a staff lift covering floors C, D and E; a G.P.O. telephone system, including two direct lines each to the central lending and central reference libraries, public telephones, and a telex installation; and a staff intercom system.

The building has fire alarm, emergency lighting, burglar alarm and master clock systems. It is not air-conditioned except in the archives and documents store in the local studies suite, which is also temperature-controlled.



Lecture/Exhibition Room. Floor C



Adult Lending Library. Floor B



Children's Library, incorporating Group Activity Area. Floor B



Home Bindery. Floor F

CONSTRUCTION

The building is of reinforced concrete and the whole is sub-divided into three separate but apparently continuous blocks with a bridged gap between to minimise the possible effects of mining subsidence. The external windows are anodized aluminium, each window being double-glazed. The two long elevations (those to Bethesda Street and Warner Street) are clad in green Westmorland slate and the sculptured panels to the rear elevation are of fibre-glass.

It is centrally heated from a separate solid fuel installation, also serving the police headquarters, by means of hot water coils embedded within the structural floor slabs at each level.

The lighting to the library is a mixture of tungsten and fluorescent fittings to produce a blend of comfort and efficiency. The general areas have two-tube prismatic reflector fluorescents. The lecture-cum-exhibition hall has low brightness fittings with reflectalite fluorescents. In the entrance hall, adult lending library and reference library there are chandeliers comprising eighteen adjustable pendants and, in addition, the latter has fluorescent tubes fitted to book cases and study tables. The children's section has multi-coloured lighting to provide an interesting and varied interior with random spots, forming highlights.

The floor finishes in the building include half-inch thick quartzite in the entrance hall, sponge-backed PVC sheet flooring with carpeted areas in the adult lending library, cork tiles in the reference library and lecture-cum-exhibition hall, linoleum tiles and granwood blocks in the local studies suite and vinyl tiles in the children's section. The stairs are finished in black Brathay natural slate.

Wall finishes include paint, wallpaper, Laconite ply boarding, polished fossil limestone slabs, simulated leather, acoustic tile and natural timbers. The building is fitted with vertical fabric louvre blinds. Seddon (Stoke) Ltd. are the general contractors at the tender price of £433,615.

SIZE

The total floor area is 56,000 square feet. This building falls within the medium range of British Central Libraries and does not reach the size of several Central Libraries recently completed or projected. This is not a conventional city, however, in that it comprises an amalgamation of six towns, and it is envisaged that future expansion will take the form of extended provision of suburban branch libraries and the development of larger district branches.

This Central Library will, however, appear very large by comparison with the previous premises where the degree of congestion has been disguising the amount of accommodation needed for the library service to perform its duties satisfactorily.

DESIGN

The building was designed, in consultation with the City Librarian, by the City Architect, Planning and Reconstruction Officer, who has also advised on the style of furniture, fittings and equipment and to whom acknowledgment is made for the supply of the technical information noted herein. The furniture, fittings and equipment will cost £40,000.

BOOK SHELF CAPACITY

| Level | | Vols. | Maps | Docs. |
|--------------|---------------------------|---------|--------|--------|
| B | Adult lending library | 30,000 | | |
| | Junior library | 5,000 | | |
| C | Lending stack | 40,000 | | |
| | Reference stack | 45,000 | | |
| | Room for expansion | 5,000 | | |
| D | Main reference library | 15,000 | | |
| E | Reference stack | 85,000 | 800 | |
| | Room for expansion | 5,000 | | |
| | Local studies suite | | | |
| | 1. Books | 12,000 | | |
| 2. Documents | | | 35,000 | |
| 3. Maps | | 1,500 | | |
| F | Junior stack (schools) | 10,000 | | |
| | Part-time centres reserve | 5,000 | | |
| TOTALS | | 257,000 | 2,300 | 35,000 |

PUBLIC SEATING CAPACITY

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Reference library | | | | | |
| Carrels | ... | ... | ... | 21 | |
| Open plan study area | ... | ... | ... | 88 | |
| Study rooms | ... | ... | ... | 44 | |
| Local studies suite | ... | ... | ... | 35 | 188 |
| Adult lending library | ... | ... | ... | | 30 |
| Junior lending library | ... | ... | ... | | 26 |
| Lecture and exhibition room | ... | ... | ... | | 100 |
| Conference room | ... | ... | ... | | 24 |
| | | | | | --- |
| TOTAL | | | | 368 | |