

Renewing for the future

- University of Bergen Library – The Arts and Humanities Library

by: Anne B. Åsmul and Ane Landøy

photos by: Pedro Vasquez

The University Library building at the University of Bergen, Norway was rehabilitated and reopened as the Arts and Humanities Library in August 2005. The building was built in 1961, when university libraries had closed stacks to which patrons had no access. The building itself is definitely an architectural success, and was awarded a prize for good architecture when it was completed. One part of the building has three floors; the "book-tower" has six floors, and is characteristic of the 1960s in both form and detail. The building is situated at the very centre of the university campus in Bergen, and only 5 minutes walk from the city centre. The university campus is a green area consisting of both old and new buildings. The area has a beautiful view to the mountains surrounding Bergen.

When the planning for the renewal of the library started, the architect was given a challenging task:

- to preserve the exterior architecture
- to reorganize the library from closed stacks to open shelving
- to open up and bring daylight into the library without changing the windows
- to create enough space for open collections, together with study desks, computer areas, study rooms.

The architects were Nikolai Alfsen in "Arkitektgruppen Lille Frøen" and Rambøll Norge A/S.

Some central features of the renovation were:

- a new entrance with outdoor terrace and a coffee bar
- a focus on providing a library with easy access to books and electronic resources, a place for studying, and also a meeting place
- the removal of walls to provide open spaces and bring light into the library
- provision of open space over two floors, surrounded by a mezzanine
- provision of flexible furnishing with lots of study desks and computers in the open areas
- good communication lines in the building through addition of new stairs and a lift
- the removal of many walls in the basement to create space for large open collections, study desks and computers
- the use of blonde wood and of glass to achieve an open and light atmosphere
- use of colours and new furniture matching the original 1960's style
- provision of new windows with heat and sun ray protection while still preserving the old window teak frames.

The library has also started using RFID (Radio frequency identification) for security and circulation. Today users help themselves to find books and use self issue machines for borrowing and return of material.

The library has turned out to be very popular as a study and meeting place. The students gather outside in the morning to get study places, and the coffee bar is crowded.



Editorial

by: Andrew Cranfield, Chair, Section for Library Buildings and Equipment

Once again the IFLA World Library and Information Congress will be upon us and the section for Library Buildings and Equipment will host its open session on Wednesday 22nd of August from 13.45 to 15.45, entitled "Toolkits for successful library design: guidelines and case studies".

Speaking at this session and on the following subjects are: Anders C. Dahlgren (Library Planning Associates, Madison, USA) on the "Guadalajara Public Library: evaluating competition entries and the role of the brief in the process", Olaf Eigenbrodt (Humboldt University Berlin, Berlin, Germany) on "National standardization put into practice: the German DIN-Fachbericht 13 as a tool in library planning and its impact on the construction of academic libraries and Richard Amrein (Valparaiso University, Indiana, USA) with a paper entitled "Build it and they will come: rethinking the design and scope of library facilities and how they serve their communities". Apart from our three knowledgeable speakers, Hellen Niegaard will present the guidelines for library buildings publication

which has been one of the main strategic goals of the section over the last few years. I would already here like to take the opportunity to thank Hellen Niegaard and Karen Latimer for all their supreme efforts in putting this book together.

Later in the year from October 3rd to October 5th 2007 the Section for Library Buildings, in cooperation with IFLA and the Royal Library in The Hague, will host a conference focusing on the architecture and buildings of National and Research Libraries of the world. This conference will coincide with the 25th anniversary of the National Library Building of The Hague and will also feature presentations about this and the new "reading room of the Netherlands". Information about the conference will be posted on the IFLA website and presented at IFLA in Durban.

We look forward to seeing you at the session in Durban and in the autumn in The Hague.

Dewe, Michael. Planning public library buildings

- concepts and issues for librarians. Adershot: Ashgate, 2007

by: Karen Latimer, Queen's University Belfast

Michael Dewe has a wealth of experience of public library design having written widely on the subject and been a member of the judging panel of the UK Public Library Building Awards scheme since its inception. He is also a past member of the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment section.

This latest publication is aimed primarily at a UK audience but there are lessons to be learned here for everyone. Indeed one would have wished that the author hadn't been so quick off the starting blocks in beating the IFLA guidelines to the finishing line as he covers some of the same ground. It is, however, comforting that the same issues and themes discussed at IFLA meetings are tackled here thereby underlining their importance.

The book covers the context, both political and geographical, within which the library building will function. Library size,

shape and location are discussed as are alternatives to providing a new library building and a range of "green" issues. The role of the brief and its translation into the final physical library building are then considered. The final chapters deal with identity, communication, layout and interior design. The author concludes by airing the debate about the changing role of libraries and librarians. A number of case studies from around the world help to highlight trends and solutions and to stimulate thought and discussion.

Detailed notes and references at the end of each chapter and a select bibliography at the end of the book add to its usefulness. This will be a useful starting point for anyone involved in the process of designing public library buildings for the first time – and indeed for the more experienced library planner looking for ideas and up-to-date information.

From the editor

The Section is always looking to present new libraries and new innovative solutions in design, so we would urge members of the section to contribute to the newsletter if you feel that a library you know brings something exciting to the world of library buildings.

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Design and layout

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Makerere University [Kampala-Uganda] has received a \$2.5m grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to construct a modern library. Universities from all over Africa were asked to send in proposals and Makerere emerged as the winner.

The library, to be built at the university main campus, will have about 580 computers and will have 3,000 textbooks and 400 electronic books. Special facilities would also be provided for students with disabilities.

The Artis Library in Amsterdam

by: Ms H.G. Overbeeke, Public Library Nieuwerkerk, The Netherlands

Architecture

The library of the Dutch Royal Zoological Society "Natura Artis Magistra", also known as the Artis library, was founded in 1838.

The building in which Artis is situated was built in 1868 to the design of the Dutch architect Gerlof Bartholomeus Salm (1831 – 1897). Salm was an eclectic architect who drew together design elements from different historical building styles and re-used them in a new form of design. Adherents of eclecticism were not constrained by orthodox style principles, instead they used the rich arsenal of classical forms. Salm played an important role in establishing a new architecture as is evidenced by this library building which is beautiful and functional at the same time.

The building was significantly enlarged during two phases of renewal, in 1869 and in the 1870s, in order to accommodate the various collections of Natura Artis Magistra. In those days it was also called the Fauna building and included the Library which remained in the right wing.

Coloured marble stone tablets, depicting the names of 36 famous scientists engraved and painted in gold, adorn both sides of the building and form a name gallery. These scientists are also represented in the Library's collections and there is only one female - Maria Sibylla Merian. Strangely enough, the name of Darwin is absent from the name gallery, although the Library holds a substantial Darwinian collection.

In 1952 the Dutch Monument Commission gave permission for the decoration of the facade with Jan Groenestein's animal images in sgraffito-technique. These sgraffiti fit well with the building's eclectic style.

In 1972 the Fauna building (also called the "Plantagebibliothek") including its 19th century library interior was added to the list of the Monument Commission to be preserved for the future.

Interior

The building has an imposing 19th century interior, especially created for its library collections. It has a reading room with a gallery on the first floor with decorations in cast iron. The shelves are made of cast iron decorated with wood-marbling. Salm designed the interior in 1898.

Collection

The collections include more than 17,000 manuscripts and printed books and its completeness makes it one of the world's best libraries for natural history, zoology and evolution. An important part of the collection consists of books on Linnaeus. The Artis library has 72 chests of drawers in which atlases and large format books are stored. They also contain prints in various illustration techniques. The Iconographia Zoologica is a separate collection of old drawings and printed illustrations ordered by animal species and contains most groups of the animal kingdom, including Homo sapiens. In the 19th century T.G. van Lidth de Jeude started to collect these drawings and prints and his work was continued by R.T. Maitland. The collection of approximately 80,000 items was stored in 226 wooden book-boxes. Some books and atlases date back to 1600, but the main part of the collection was printed in the 19th century. All important books on natural history of that century are held by the library. The first Director of Artis, the Amsterdam bookseller, printer and publisher, G. F. Westerman, was particularly responsible for the further enlargement of the collection. In 1939 the library was legally transferred to the City of Amsterdam and thus became the property of the University of Amsterdam. Since 2005, the Artis Library has become part of the Special Collections of the University Library. The Artis Library has no lending function, only a reference function.

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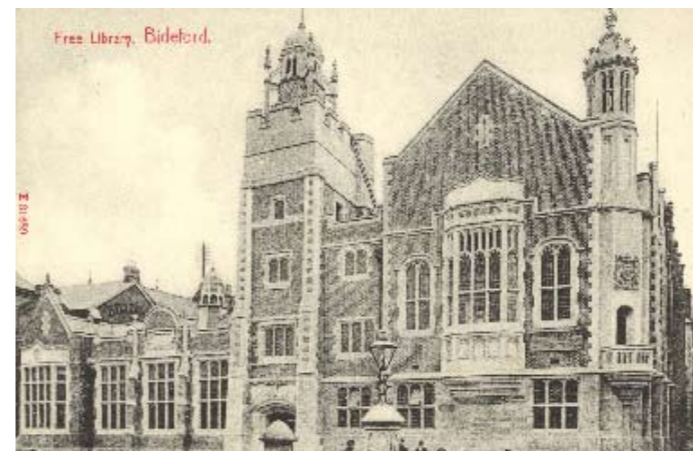
My library postcards collection

by: Sjoerd Koopman

I own a large collection of libraries on postcards. It consists of approximately 8,000 antique and modern (1900 - 2006) postcards depicting library buildings - exteriors as well as interiors - from approximately 80 different countries.

After having been fascinated by postcards almost all of my life and having worked in the library field for more than half of my life, I only started collecting postcards of libraries just six years ago! In 2001 I decided to stop buying books – one can borrow any book from libraries, as we all know – and fully concentrate on library postcards. They take up much less space: 8,000 cards fit in 10 old catalogue drawers. Fortunately I have a couple of spare drawers (from the former Dutch Union Catalogue) so there is plenty of growth space.

The collection consists of postcards of buildings: black and white and colour, old and new, used and unused, exterior and interior views of libraries from potentially all countries of the world. It will be no surprise that by far the most of the cards are from "Western" countries: in my collection, cards from US libraries (arranged by state, of course) number more than 3,400 followed by cards from European countries: 1,000 from the UK, 750 from France, 750 from Germany, 450 from The Netherlands, 360 from Belgium.



As a true librarian I am considering plans to make the cards available as a searchable database. The only hindering factor so far is lack of time to scan the cards, provide decent object descriptions and to devise a set of proper search criteria. It is most likely that this enormous job will have to wait until my retirement.

In the meantime the collection is available for colleagues who would like to make use of the cards for research, publicity or educational purposes. If you are a student of library architecture, you research library history, you need illustrations for publications or you design exhibitions, my collection may serve as a rich source of pictures. I can give cards on loan, make scans or photocopies etc. Those who are seriously interested can receive a list of what is available upon request.

Needless to say I am also very much interested in acquiring more cards to add to the collection. Please think of me when you come across any library postcards.

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Classical Library Buildings of the World. Edited by Wu Jianzhong.

by: Andrew Cranfield, EBLIDA, The Hague

After having edited "New Library Buildings of the World" Wu Jianzhong has turned his sights on the classical library buildings of the world and produced yet another valuable reference work for those who wish to explore the world of libraries and the spaces they inhabit. Some of these buildings will of course be familiar to readers of a publication such as this, but personally I was struck by the reading rooms of the Library of the University Pompeu Fabra, the David Sassoon Library in Mumbai and the Library of Parliament in Ottawa, Canada – all of which were new to me. And of course old friends such

as the beautiful neoclassicism of the National Library of Finland designed by C.L. Engel in the 1830's.

The large format of the book with excellent and well chosen colour photographs and short texts in Chinese and English makes for an excellent read and gives those of us interested in library buildings something of a check list when visiting abroad. Looking through these pages one is reminded of the how wonderful a library really can be.