THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY
with special reference to the redevelopment
of Lincoln Central Library

by

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ABSTRACT

This study identifies the role of the central library in
the current economic, social and professional climate. It
focuses particularly on the redevelopment of Lincoln Central
Library, which is currently in its early stages. It draws
on the experience of 13 other central libraries which were
built or refurbished during the past five years. The study
begins by defining the role of the central library. Other
topics covered include the background to the redevelopment
of Lincoln Central Library, planning and preparation, the
central library building, services and stock and the impact
of external events on the central library. All of these are
related to the role of the central library. The study concludes
that the most appropriate role for the central library is
to offer a selective range of services, tailored to local
needs, and that this is being done in the majority of recently
built central libraries. It also offers a series of recommendations
for Lincoln Central Library.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In January 1994, work will begin on the redevelopment of
Lincoln Central Library. In an ambitious £4 million project,
the present building, excluding the 1913 Carnegie frontage,
will be demolished, and a new library will be erected on
the site. The project is due to be completed in August 1996.
The development is obviously a significant one, for the city
of Lincoln, and for the county as a whole. Those in charge
of the project are eager to ensure that the redevelopment
progresses as smoothly as possible, and that the new building,
and the services it houses, can carry Lincoln Central Library
forward into the next century.

The aim of this dissertation is to identify the role of the
central library, now and in the future, focusing on the
development of the new Lincoln Central Library. It will examine
the design of the central library building, the services
and facilities it offers, the social context within which
it operates, and the perceptions of those who use and run
it. This sort of information will be of interest to anyone
involved in running a central library, but it should be of
particular significance for those, like the management of
Lincoln Central, who have the task of creating a totally
new library. It will provide helpful background information,
and give a number of suggestions, or points of interest,
which should help them to plan and implement an effective
and relevant service.

The investigation began with a survey of recent (approximately
the last 10 years) literature on library design and planning,
the political and financial issues affecting the library

service, and the role of the public and central library. This last issue in particular is currently the subject of much debate, as public libraries attempt to define their role into the year 2000 and beyond. In July 1992, the consultancy Comedia began a national research project, which aimed to produce 'a blueprint that will outline the role of the library in the 1990s' (1). The final report, entitled Borrowed time? The future of public libraries in the United Kingdom (2), was published on 23 June 1993.

The literature review provided a broad theoretical framework, within which a more detailed examination could develop. The starting point for this was a questionnaire survey, sent to central libraries, to investigate current attitudes about the role of the central library, and to review their planning successes and failures. The survey was limited to central libraries which have been built or rebuilt recently. The reasons for this were twofold. Firstly, whilst the issue of library purpose is important to all public libraries, those which have been able to start with a "clean slate" will have been forced to give particular consideration to what they want to achieve, and how they can achieve it. Secondly, the design of a building will, to a certain extent, embody its function. By looking at the appearance and layout of new central library buildings, by seeing what facilities they provide, and what prominence they are given, it should be possible to gain an idea of what the planners perceive as the purpose of that building, and the services it houses. Questionnaires were therefore sent to central libraries built or refurbished during the past 5 years (see Appendix 1). This cut-off date was decided upon to maximise the chance of the manager responsible for the project still being in his/her post.

Michael Dewe has commented on the difficulty of obtaining information about new library buildings, bemoaning the fact

that there is no comprehensive register of new buildings
or buildings in progress (3). There is an occasional series
on new library buildings, currently published by Library
Services, but the most recent issue only covers the period
1984 - 1989 (4). Dewe's own efforts to record all library
building projects are therefore particularly valuable, and
the information for the survey was based on the publication
of these details in Public Library Journal (5).

Questionnaires were sent to the Chief Librarian or equivalent
of 14 central libraries. Thirteen were returned, giving a
response rate of 93%. This would seem to indicate that there
is general interest in the subject, and a willingness to
share experiences for the benefit of all. The questionnaire
and a summary of responses can be found in Appendices 2 and
3. The results have not been subjected to statistical analysis,
since the numbers involved are small, and the intention was
to gauge attitudes and perceptions, rather than produce numerical
data. For this reason, responses have not been analysed
separately, but have been introduced throughout the text
at relevant points.

In addition to this, a visit was made to Peterborough Central
Library, to view the library building, and to discuss some
of the issues raised in the survey with Richard Hemmings,
the Library Manager. Peterborough was selected because the
building is generally acknowledged as being of high quality,
and because of its relative proximity to Lincoln. Information
from Peterborough Central Library has been used to give
illustrative examples of points throughout the text.

There has been close cooperation and consultation with Lincoln
Central Library throughout. This consisted of a meeting with
Maurice Nauta, the county's Assistant Director for Community
Services, who has overall responsibility for the project,

a series of meetings with the library's Principal Librarian,
Roger Hundleby, and discussions with library staff. Roger
Hundleby provided all factual information on Lincoln Central
Library, unless otherwise stated.

Originally, the intention was to consult library users at
Lincoln about their hopes for the future of the service,
but this proved not to be feasible, because of the timescales
involved. Similarly, constraints on time and money have prevented
visits being made to more than one library. The issues of
user consultation and library visits will be considered in
Chapter 3. Nevertheless, this study provides an insight into
current attitudes and opinions about the role of the central
library, and gives an indication the reality through the
eyes of 13 recently built libraries.

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Chapter 2

THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

2.1. Background and history

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to document the
history of the public library service. Its concern is with
the service's present and future. However, many of the debates
associated with the definition of public library purpose,
which will be discussed later in the chapter, have their
origins in the way the public library system developed in
the United Kingdom. As with so many of this country's
institutions, it owes its existence to the determination
and enthusiasm of a few individuals, each of whom had a different
vision of what libraries should achieve. The one point of
agreement was that public libraries should be provided for
the benefit of the working classes. Murison describes the
early development of the system thus:

> The early protagonists of public libraries were vague
> in their aims, being motivated mainly by a generosity
> towards the less-favoured sections of the community.
> It seemed unethical to them that library facilities
> were not universally available; it impressed them
> as a gap in the cultural structure of society. They
> saw it as a social duty that all should have free
> access to books (1).

Precisely what the 'less-favoured sections of the community'
should gain from this access was less clear, and individual
differences of opinion were highlighted in the progress of
the 1850 Public Libraries Act through parliament. Different
protagonists saw the role of public libraries lying in mass
education, the encouragement of culture and refinement of
taste, moral improvement, and recreation. Some of the more
extreme examples saw libraries as healthier alternatives
to public houses or, alternatively, as centres of sedition

and rebellion (2). These different viewpoints were not reconciled in any statement of purpose within the 1850 Act, and although many attempts were made in subsequent Acts and policy statements, the lack of surety over the exact role of the public library has remained.

2.2. The role of the public library

The public library system today has retained those "traditional" educational, cultural and, to a certain extent, moral roles which were so dear to the early campaigners. Libraries are still seen as places for self-improvement through study, although few would any longer claim that they provide a viable alternative to the lure of the public house. It has, in addition, acquired a number of new roles, notably those of leisure and recreation and, in the wake of developments in I.T., specialised information provision. It has also taken on, or had pressed upon it, a social role, which places it firmly at the centre of the local community, and which has little to do with books and reading. Lowell A. Martin has spoken of the library as struggling under 'an overload of good works, an encumbrance of responsibilities' (3). Certainly, many inches of column space have been devoted to identifying the role of the public library, and they have resulted in almost as many different visions of what the service should aim to achieve. These can, however, be simplified into a basic debate about public library purpose.

The main thrust of the current debate is ostensibly about the way in which libraries are managed. On the one hand, there is what may be termed the "traditional" approach, under which libraries are run as a kind of social service, providing free and equal access to all, and operating as an integral part of the local community. At the other extreme is the belief that the information which libraries hold, or to which they have access, is a commodity like any other, and that

the service should be run as a business. Under this model, access to information would depend on ability (or willingness) to pay.

In practice, of course, the division is not nearly so clear. Most libraries charge for at least some of their services, whilst others remain free at the point of delivery for all to use and enjoy. Every one of the central libraries who responded to the survey charged for at least some of its facilities or services. Generally speaking, the "core" of services, such as lending, reference, basic enquiries and study space, remained free of charge, whilst "extras", such as videos, audio material, online information and photocopying, incurred charges. It seems likely that this model will continue, with some services provided free and others charged, and that neither extreme will achieve dominance. However, this argument does raise some important issues, as debates over how public libraries should be run reflect a belief in what their role should be.

The basic principle underlying the belief that a library should be run, as far as possible, as a free and equitable service, is that the library has an educational and cultural role to fulfil. In short, the belief that the public library exists to do "good", either within the immediate community, or on a broader, more metaphorical, level. In an article in which he argues against importing private sector ethos and techniques into the public sector, Bob Usherwood states;

> In evaluating the role of the public library, we should
> not just ask how good is the library, but also what
> good does it do? (4)

He edges away from an absolute definition of what "goodness" entails, but he suggests that for a public librarian, 'the objective might be a better informed citizen' (5). In an article which appeared in The Guardian, Catherine Bennett regrets the lack of a 'didactic purpose' in the modern public

library service (6). Usherwood, Bennett, and others who share
their beliefs, see the role of the public library as contributing
something positive to society, whether that contribution
be the provision of specific services (literacy schemes,
community information, special collections etc.), or the
opportunities it offers for the broader acquisition of
"knowledge" and "culture". Taken to its extreme, this viewpoint
has the library as a panacea for all social ills, with its
role nothing less than 'preserving a democratic society' (7).

This view of the role of the library has given rise to a
subsidiary debate, concerning the stock it holds. If a library
is to do "good" in some moral or educational way, it must
provide material of a certain quality. Yet, increasingly,
libraries have tended to supply bestselling or "pulp" fiction,
popular music tapes or CDs and videos. The thinking behind
this is that libraries should provide what people want to
read or listen to. Bennett talks of a 'populist mission to
be "relevant" to the masses, to supply them with what they
already know' (8). Others, such as Rachel Van Riel argue
for the cultural value of leisure reading and popular fiction
(9). With so many libraries dependant on issue figures to
ensure funding, it is difficult to see popular fiction being
replaced by what might be considered worthier volumes, however
desirable this might be in the eyes of some. The question
of library stock is discussed at greater length in Chapter
6.

A radically different viewpoint has libraries not as "community
centres", dedicated to the public good, but as information
centres. In this scenario, the library is merely a point
of access to the wider world of information opened up by
developments in information technology. Libraries have, of
course, always fulfilled an information function, traditionally
in the form of printed material, and known as the reference
collection. It is only in recent years, when so much information

has become available more quickly, or in some cases only, in electronic form, that a real controversy has arisen. Access to electronic networks and CD-ROM is available only at a price, and those who see the library as information centre inevitably couple the vision with the application of the private sector ethos and techniques which Usherwood argues against (10). P. J. Th. Schoots, on the other hand, believes that libraries should concentrate on information delivery.

> Under worsening economic circumstances a flowering
> information enterprise might stand a better chance
> of survival than a topical and recreational book palace
> (11).

This vision raises the spectre of a two-tier information system, with libraries pouring resources into sophisticated sources, from which they can make a profit, at the expense of services offered to those who are unable to pay for their information needs. David Muddiman has spoken of the creation of an 'information poor' under this model (12), a concept directly at odds with the ideal of 'free and equal access to information and ideas' (13) envisaged by Usherwood and others who share his beliefs. The role of the library as information centre is to fulfil specific information needs as efficiently as possible, to levy the appropriate fee, and to move swiftly to the next customer.

2.3. The role of the central library

Much of the current debate refers primarily to large urban libraries, who have the option of providing different services, and thus undertaking different roles. They do not, however, refer directly to central libraries. There has been surprisingly little written specifically on the role of the central library. It has been a topic of discussion in library publications in the Scandinavian countries, but in both the United Kingdom and the United States, the discourses have centred on the wider issue of the public library service as a whole. This is understandable in one respect, since the issues affecting

the sevice as a whole will also be those affecting the central
library. However, this approach is an inadequate response
to the particular challenges faced by central libraries.
F. William Summers lists the unique tasks fulfiled by the
central library. It must: house the system's research
collections, house a children's collection and headquarters
for a children's programme; serve as a branch library for
the downtown community; house collections and specialised
staff; house the principal, or only, non-print materials
for the system; provide housing for the administrative,
operational and technical support functions of the system
(14). Thompson concurs, describing central libraries as
'extremely complex organisations' (15). They have the problem
of serving a shifting urban population, comprising local
residents, workers in the city centre, students, shoppers,
tourists etc., all of whom have different needs. They are
generally the largest library in the locality, with the best
stock and services, and provide backup for smaller libraries.
They will house any special collections, which may have national
or even international significance. All this is in addition
to the roles already discussed for public libraries in general.
In the light of these special circumstances, it seems reasonable
to consider the central library as a distinct entity within
the larger public library service, with its own particular
role to fulfil.

The most significant work undertaken in this area in recent
years is a study of the place of libraries in town and city
centres, undertaken by Comedia, a firm of independent
consultants. In May 1991, they launched a report entitled
Out of hours (16), later published in book form as Towns
for people (17). This report studied a number of town centres,
looking at who used which facilities, and at what time of
day. It discovered that the central library has a key role
to play, both as a cultural institution, and as a social
facility.

       Everywhere it was clear that the central library remained

the key public cultural institution of all, the one
place (the last place?) where one would find a genuine
cross-section of people (18).
It also discovered an impressive list of activities taking
place, including meeting people, browsing, reading papers,
storytelling and finding out about what was happening in
the town, all in a safe and unpressured environment (19).
The report concluded that:
The public library should be a flagship for cultural
choice and diversity in any revived civic culture,
as it was often both the heart and the brain of local
public life (20).
The importance of the library in an urban setting was felt
to be so important that a separate study was launched in
July 1992, to investigate further.

The final report was published on 23 June 1993, under the
title Borrowed time? The future of public libraries in the
United Kingdom (21). It confirmed the library's position
at the heart of the community, but also noted that, 'many
libraries were failing to exploit their potential or attract
new generations who want information by computer' (22). It
does not, however, recommend that libraries set out to embrace
the information function wholesale. Comedia agree with Martin's
vision of a service overburdened with different, and often
conflicting, roles (23), criticising libraries for 'trying
to offer too many services and spreading their resources
too thinly' (24). They do not, however, offer one simple
resolution to the debate. Their soloution is to abandon the
idea of settling on one definitive role for the central library,
and to recommend that they become more responsive to local
needs, and to select which services they should provide
accordingly: 'Every library should reassess its local audience
and offer an appropriate instead of comprehensive service' (25).

This idea seems to contradict the large number of articles

appearing in the recent literature which have been concerned
with identifying one role for the library. As stated previously,
the role envisaged has depended on the beliefs of the individual
writer. The one area of agreement is that the library service
cannot continue to fulfil all the functions it has acquired,
and that choices must be made. There is, however, no reason
why those choices should be ideology driven. Any library
exists basically to serve the needs of the community surrounding
it, and the best way to achieve this must be to base the
service on those needs. Libraries, even central libraries,
operate in very different climates, from small market towns
in rural areas, to major urban centres of population; from
prosperous county towns to deprived inner cities. Given that
current levels of funding make choices essential, it must
make sense to tailor the service to the locality, rather
than to a remote vision of what the central library should
achieve. Martin sees the adoption of this community-specific
role as the only hope for the future of the service.

> No specific function or any particular combination
> of them will be the salvation of the public library.
> Individual libraries and communities and cities will
> work out their own programs of service (26).

The role of the central library should be not to subscribe
to any particular ideology, but to provide a flexible, selective
service, responsive to the needs of its clients, and driven
by their requirements.

The responses received from the survey of central libraries
reinforce this idea. Twelve of the respondents replied to
the question, "What do you consider to be the primary role
of the central library?". Nine of these specifically mentioned
the provision of a service to the city, and seven coupled
this with either serving the surrounding area, or providing
back-up and support to branch libraries. There was an awareness
of a wider role, with the central library described as, 'the
"hub" of the town's literary and social life', a 'central
resource for the area' and a 'main reference/research centre'.

The picture that emerges is one of concern with serving the
needs of the city and the immediate area, concentrating on
providing the best service possible to the local community.
The range of services provided reflects this. The basic range
of services is fairly standard, covering lending for adults
and children, reference, study space, enquiries, photocopying
etc. On top of this, there is a range of special collections
and additional services, which directly reflect the nature
of the community. These cover such areas as local history,
shipping information, local environmental information, prison
hospital and housebound services and collections in ethnic
minority languages. Eleven libraries also offered a meeting
or community room, for local people to use according to their
needs. These services reflect a belief at grass roots level
in the importance of the central library providing a
community-based service, tailored to meet local needs.

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26. Martin, ref. 3, p. 21.

Chapter 3

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY

3.1. Early history

Lincoln's central library was one of the thousands of library
buildings made possible by the charitable bequests of Andrew
Carnegie. The building took place between 1912 and 1913,
with the official opening ceremony, suitably attended by
three hundred dignitaries, taking place on Tuesday 26 April
1914 (1). It is interesting to note, whilst there seems to
have been some dissent in the planning stages, the building
work went according to plan.

> After a little inevitable controversy on the choice
> of the site, the erection of the new home of Lincoln
> literature has proceeded happily and without a hitch (2).

The present management must hope that the same will be said
of the re-building of the library. Andrew Carnegie donated
the then princely sum of £10,000 for the building work. Following
the pattern of early public library development, the central
library was largely the work of one determined personality,
Mr C. W. Pennell. He bought the site as Chairman of the Finance
Committee, and 'made it his business to secure the building,
and as soon as possible' whilst Chairman of the Library Committee
(3). The money bought a handsome facade, with a central domed
entrance hall, and accomadation in two wings, spreading on
either side. Significantly, Pennell warned that more money
would soon be needed for books (4), indicating that some
things never change.

The growth of the building since this auspicious beginning
has tended to be piecemeal. Buildings behind the original
library were gradually bought up and incorporated over the
years, as and when they became available. The most recent

addition was in the 1960s, with the creation of a teenage room. The net result of this gradual development is that the present building is something of a rabbit warren, consisting of a number of separate rooms. There is a lack of architectural unity in the building, as rooms or areas often reflect the style of the period in which they were added. The rigid physical structure also means that space cannot be used flexibly. Further expansion is impossible, as the building has now expanded to its physical limit. It is hemmed in by roads on two sides, by the City and County Museum on a third, and by a drill hall owned by the City Council on the fourth (see Appendix 4 for map).

3.2. Library service structure

The library service in Lincolnshire is divided in to six geographical areas (see Appendix 5 for map), each of which is headed by a Principal Librarian, who holds his/her own budget. Each Principal Librarian has a contract with the Assistant Director for Community Services to provide a service according to his specifications. Lincoln area covers the city of Lincoln and its immediate surroundings, and consists of the central library and ten branches (see Appendix 5 for map). Three of these are full-time computerised libraries, and the remaining seven are smaller branches, with restricted opening hours. The smaller libraries do not provide a full service, and would not hold copies of serious fiction, reference works etc. The majority of the services are concentrated on the central library. Professional staff form a team in the area, with each taking responsibility for one aspect of the service. The central library has its own staff, but there is an ethos of integration and co-operation between the two sets of professional staff.

The central library serves a population of approximately 100,000 people, but Roger Hundleby, the Principal Librarian,

points out that it is difficult to know exactly who uses
the library, how often, and where they travel from to do
so. To remedy this, staff recently undertook a survey of
users, to discover where their members come from. A total
of 3848 users with items on loan, and a postcode on their
membership file, was used. This revealed that the vast majority
of borrowers (73.38%) came from the Lincoln area. Interestingly,
of the total number surveyed, 65.82% of borrowers had access
to another library, either outside the county (0.83%), in
another area of Lincolnshire (64.99%), or within the Lincoln
area (39.31%) (5). The survey was designed to help plan an
interim service whilst the central library is closed, but
the results also illustrate that people use it as an alternative
or supplement to their local branch. Obviously, this covers
only those who use lending facilities. The central library
is currently undertaking a survey aimed at discovering how
often people use the library, which should catch those who
use it for reference and private study.

3.3. Stock

Stock for the Lincoln area is purchased centrally, on an
area basis, but with significant delegation to the central
library. There is a regular exchange programme between branches,
which sees approximately 1,000 items moved each month. The
central library would expect to hold single copies of serious
non-fiction, and to make them available for the county. It
is the only place in the county where resources can be brought
together to do so, and to provide services such as business
and health information. It is also the only place of
specialisation, and houses a significant local studies
collection, the Tennyson Collection and (in the new building)
the county's music and drama collection.

The library currently holds 32,593 items of lending stock,
including junior, talking books and CDs, on open shelf, with

a further 15,000 items in reserve. For the year 1992/3, issues totalled 439,233. Reference stock comprises the reference library, with a total of 23,000 items, and the local studies collection, with 19,000 items. The local studies collection also contains numbers of slides, microforms, newspapers, maps, and approximately 150,000 historic photographs of Lincoln and the county. A photographic index is currently being created on CD-ROM. It is hoped that the library will become busier across the board once the rebuilding is complete, and in particular that the lending collection will become more of a resource for the county, as is already the case with the reference and local studies collections.

3.4. The current project and the new building

There seems to have been a general feeling that, if Lincoln Central Library was to continue to provide the best possible service into the next century, action would have to be taken over the accommmodation. Serious discussions about redevelopment started in the 1980s. The current scheme was put on the county's capital programme in 1990, under the influence of Maurice Nauta, Lincolnshire's Assistant Director for Community Services. He has overall control of the project, including financial aspects, and has headed negotiations with the county council. It is worth noting that Lincolnshire has traditionally been a debt-free county, and looks set to remain so, despite a change of political control following the 1993 Local Government Elections. The £4 million for the building has come entirely from capital reserves.

The current project was not the only one to be considered for the new central library. Many different possibilities were discussed, including a joint venture with an out of town supermarket, a site which became available in the Brayford Pool area of Lincoln, and incorporation with the new Waterside Centre, which is a shopping precinct in the centre of the

city (see Appendix 4 for map). Factors influencing the eventual
rejection of these schemes included timing (the money for
the new library was not available at the right time), the
central location of the present site, and the extra cost
of moving to an entirely new site. There was a possibility
of a joint venture with the city council, which owns the
drill hall adjacent to the present site. This would have
created a combined library and arts centre on the site, with
a shared entrance. Sadly, this development, which would have
provided a real focus for the arts in the city, did not proceed
(6). Maurice Nauta is philosophical about the failure of
these plans, pointing out that whilst there are advantages
to being part of a larger project, there are problems too,
including access after hours, lack of community focus, and
the low chance of getting a prime location (7). Certainly,
the results of the central library survey suggest that it
is at best a mixed blessing, with complaints including high
noise levels, and lack of influence over space allocation
and design.

The plan eventually adopted has been to demolish the existing
building, excluding the original Carnegie section, which
is a grade two listed building, and which English Heritage
insisted had to be preserved intact. They also had a say
in the appearance of the new building. The library is in
a conservation area, and external changes had to be in keeping
with the surrounding buildings. This part of Lincoln is also
an area of archaeological importance, dating back to Roman
times. Archaeologists have made some initial investigations
on the site, and are to be allowed six months for a full
excavation once the current building has been demolished.

The internal layout of the new building has been subject
to as much controversy as the external appearance. The first
floor is to be a staff area, given over to workrooms and
administration. The two wings of the existing frontage will

house junior lending, including an activity area, and a community room, which will be available for use outside library hours, and must therefore have a separate entrance. The rest of the ground floor will be open plan, and will comprise a teenage section, adult lending, reference, local studies and the music and drama collection. The Tennyson Collection will continue to inhabit space in the dome (see Appendix 6 for plan). The chief concern has been to achieve flexibility, so that the available space can be used to its full potential, and new developments in I.T. etc. can be easily incorporated in the future. All central shelving will be on wheels, so that space can be created as desired, and the building will be wired to receive online information. The problem is to balance the desire for flexibility and the welcoming appearance of open plan design with the needs of different users. In particular, the question of achieving some sort of separation between lending and reference, possibly using tall shelving, is currently the subject of much debate, so that floor plans have not yet been finalised. The experience of other open plan central libraries, which had complaints about noise levels from people attempting to study, suggests that some distinction between the two areas could be advisable.

The overall feeling at Lincoln Central seems to be that the design for the new library will be successful. Roger Hundleby, Principal Librarian, believes that the building will be attractive and flexible, and that it will enable him and his staff to exploit their resources more successfully than at present (8). Maurice Nauta is convinced that, given that the frontage had to be preserved, the best possible use of the site has been achieved (9).

3.5. The role of Lincoln Central Library

The management at Lincoln Central Library have their own view of the role of the central library. Maurice Nauta sees

its role at present as threefold: it provides a local service
to one third of the present membership; it is a convenient
library for those who travel to Lincoln to work, shop or
study; it is a resource for the county, through such services
as business information, reference and local studies (10).
Roger Hundleby concurs, categorising lending as an area resource,
with the proviso that as the biggest library it has the largest
stock, and holds more single copy non-fiction, although he
emphasises that this is purchased in response to local demand.
Reference is a county resource; it is funded as such, and
other libraries adjust their stock in the light of this.
Local studies is a county and national resource, whilst the
Tennyson Collection is of national and international significance
(11). It is hoped that, after redevelopment, lending will
also take on more of a county role, making Lincoln Central
the centre of a network of resources reaching across the
county.

There is no suggestion that Lincoln Central should be run
according to any particular ideology. The emphasis is on
flexibility, not just in the actual building, but in the
approach taken to service delivery. Both Maurice Nauta (Assistant
Director - Community Resources) and Roger Hundleby (Principal
Librarian) see the role of the library in concrete terms,
in providing an efficient, relevant service to the people
of the city and surrounding area, and to the county as a
whole. Maurice Nauta is keen to stress that the concept of
community lies at the heart of the redevelopment, and of
the county's library service as a whole. He believes that
the library belongs to the local community, that its job
is to furnish the needs of its users, and that the new building
will facilitate that objective (12). This belief is represented
in physical terms by the inclusion of a community room, which
will be a focal point for local people, even when the library
is closed.

3.6. Staff feelings

Optimism over the future of the project seems to be running
fairly high at the time of writing. The Local Government
Elections in May 1993 saw the end of Conservative control
of the local council, and resulted in a hung council. This
has now formed itself into a Liberal Democrat/Labour pact,
which has committed itself to the project. The Local Government
Review published its findings for Lincolnshire on 21 June
1993. It recommended that, basically, the county should retain
its present structure of local government, and not adopt
the unitary authority model preferred elsewhere. With these
two potential headaches out of the way, Maurice Nauta sees
no reason why things should not go as expected (13). Roger
Hundleby is confident that the new building will be a success,
and is cautiously optimistic that he will be able to increase
the services on offer. He is concerned that money will not
be available to bring the bookstock up to standard (14),
and these fears over a lack of continuing finance are shared
by staff. The Lending Librarian points out that having a
new building will not change what is on the shelves, whilst
the Reference Librarian fears that her plans to develop the
business information service will run up against a lack of
funding (15). However, these fears lie some way in the future.
The staff are currently absorbed with more immediate challenges:
planning how to cope with the closure of the building, and
the provision of an interim service.

3.7. References to Chapter 3

1. Lincoln's new central library: opening ceremony. The
    Herald and Leader, March 3 1914.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Lincoln Central Library, Borrower analysis, May 1993.

6. Interview with Maurice Nauta (Assistant Director – Community
    Services), Lincolnshire County Council Offices, Newland,
    Lincoln, 21 June 1993.

7. Ibid.

8. Interview with Roger Hundleby (Principal Librarian),
    Lincoln Central Library, Free School Lane, Lincoln,
    20 May 1993.

9. Nauta, ref. 6.

10. Ibid.

11. Hundleby, ref. 8.

12. Nauta, ref. 6.

13. Ibid.

14. Hundleby, ref. 8.

15. Interview with library staff, Lincoln Central Library,
    Free School Lane, Lincoln, 13 July 1993.

Chapter 4

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

4.1. Timescale

The first thing to realise about planning a library building
project is that it is going to take a long time. The central
libraries in the survey were asked when the planning process
began, and when the building was actually opened. The timespans
in the responses varied from two to nine years, with five
years being the average length of time taken for planning.
And, as F. W. Ratcliffe points out, this is not the full
extent of the planning process. He identifies a period which
he defines as 'pre-planning', which takes place long before
the proposal receives any official blessing.

> Someone will have recognised the need, formulated
> proposals, sown the seeds of development which culminate
> in the formal planning process and eventually in a
> building itself (1).

It may take many years for this pre-planning process to be
transformed into a concrete proposal. One of the libraries
in the survey pointed out that, although formal planning
began in 1985, discussions had been going on since the early
1960s.

One obvious implication of this long time period is that
the situation is likely to change in some way. Most of the
projects covered in the survey were conceived in the
comparatively prosperous years of the mid 1980s, when the
political and financial climate was very different to that
of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when they actually opened.
A period of five years can see tremendous advances in I.T.
There may be changes in the law which affect the project,
such as stricter fire regulations. The population served

by the library may change, either in terms of numbers, or
of composition. Any one of these changes could have important
implications for the way the new library develops. The main
lesson to be learnt is to be flexible in planning. It is
necessary to have a clear idea of what is to be achieved,
and how, but these ideas need not be carved in tablets of
stone. As Billie J. Grey recommends, 'Prepare for the worst.
Expecting the worst won't cover it' (2). Taking a flexible
approach means that unforseen changes cause the minimum possible
disruption, and may even prove to bring unexpected benefits.
It is also important not to base plans too closely on the
situation as it exists. Some element of foresight is required.
This is obviously easier said than done, and errors are usually
only detected with the benefit of hindsight. Two libraries
in the survey admitted that they did not anticipate increases
in usage, and did not allow enough space in some areas. At
Peterborough Central Library, the reserve store was fitted
with fixed shelving, which was filled to capacity within
a few years. This had to be replaced at a later date by rolling
stacks, causing disruption and extra expense, which could
have been avoided if future requirements for storage had
been carefully calculated (3). By taking note of current
political, social and technological trends, and by looking
at the outcome of earlier projects, it should be possible
to avoid such mistakes, and to make plans that will stand
the test of time.

4.2. Consultation

Much of the preliminary planning will be fairly mechanical.
Committees will be formed, draft proposals submitted, the
case argued with the funder. There will be statutory obligations
to be fulfilled, such as obtaining planning permission. Whilst
the exact channels which have to be gone through may vary
from place to place, the overall procedure will be fairly
standard, and has little to do with the subject of this
dissertation. The real scope for creativity lies in the work

which goes on behind the scenes. The end of the process is
the building in its physical manifestation, and this will
be considered in Chapter 5. Before that stage is reached,
there must be a brief, which will outline for the architect
the requirements for the new building. This will probably
be a list of fairly specific points, many of them based on
simple physical needs. It is easy to identify, for example,
the need for more shelf space in the reference section, or
a less congested issue desk, and to instruct the architect,
via the brief, to build these requirements into the plan.

The value of input from library staff at this stage should
not be underestimated. They may be able to give a different
perspective to what appears to be a straightforward problem,
or to point out serious operational difficulties that may
not be evident to the management. Ratcliffe draws attention
to the vital importance of consulting staff. He advocates
the involvement of 'as many staff as possible', and goes
on to recommend that 'every member of staff at senior or
junior level should be...invited to express their views of
the library's needs' (4). In addition to making practical
suggestions, there are psychological benefits to be gained
from involving staff at an early stage. Any change is disturbing,
particularly if it is imposed from above. Consulting staff
at every point will ensure that they are aware of what is
happening, why, and what is to be achieved. This should help
to relieve anxiety about the process of change, and to ensure
that staff are committed to, and involved with, the project.
Keith Weyman of Hereford and Worcester Libraries recommends
that the design team and library staff communicate at every
opportunity. The county is currently building libraries at
the rate of one a year, so he has extensive experience of
planning and implementing projects. He suggests that library
staff are taken into the new building at every stage, to
get the feel of it before they have to use it (5).

The experience of Hereford and Worcester Libraries also
illustrates the importance of close liaison between the library
manager and the architect. Keith Weyman and Iain Paul, of
Hereford and Worcester Architects, have worked together on
several library buildings, and have developed a close working
relationship. This ensures that the interests of both parties
are represented in the design, and can help to prevent
disagreements (6). Not all library managers will have the
opportunity to build up an understanding with an architect
over a number of projects, but they should try to ensure
that they work together, and communicate as often as possible.

The results of the central library survey seem to suggest
that the importance of consulting staff about changes is
widely recognised. Of the 13 responses received, 12 of them
confirmed that they had consulted library staff during the
planning stages. However, the questionnaires were completed
by library managers, and it is possible that the staff themselves
would have a different view of the extent to which they were
consulted, and the value placed on their contributions. For
example, Richard Hemmings, the Library Manager at Peterborough
Central Library, admits that staff consultation, which took
place before he joined the service, took place at a fairly
high level. Library staff were not consulted about things
such as the design of the library counter, with the result
that it was built too low, and many began to suffer from
back problems. This was rectified later, but it could have
been right the first time if the staff who had to use the
counter had been involved in its design (7).

It is not only library staff who can make a contribution
to the planning process. Although each library building project
will be different, it is still possible to learn from the
successes and failures of others. The Office of Arts and
Libraries identifies visiting other libraries as a vital
stage in the planning process (8), to look at facilities

and services, and talk to staff. The purpose of such visits
is twofold. Firstly, it can generate new ideas. There may
be a service, piece of equipment, or method of arrangement
that had not been considered before, but which would be ideal
in the new library. Secondly, it can alert the planners to
potential benefits and pitfalls. If some sort of innovation
is proposed in the new building, it is useful to see it in
operation elsewhere, and to speak to people who have to use
it from day to day. This could prevent large sums of money
from being spent on something which would prove unsatisfactory.

With regard to layout, furniture and equipment, it may also
be worth approaching professional library suppliers. It is
their job to fit out library buildings, and they will have
extensive experience and specialist knowledge to offer. They
should provide plans of suggested layouts, and even if they
do not meet exactly with the planner's vision, they may suggest
ideas or identify possible problems which had not previously
been identified.

The survey of central libraries demonstrates that the value
of visiting other libraries is well known. Of the 13 responses
received, only three had not consulted with the managers
of previous projects. The expertise of library suppliers
was less well used. Only five of the respondents had taken
advice from suppliers during the planning stages. Keith Weyman
of Hereford and Worcester Libraries suggests that this may
be because, in the past, library suppliers have not taken
a flexible approach, but have adopted a "take it or leave
it" attitude. He adds that this is no longer necessarily
the case, and that most firms are happy to respond to individual
needs (9). Other individuals or groups had been consulted
by six libraries. These ranged from architects and specialist
construction firms, to development corporations, disabled
groups and local library committees. These last two raise
the question of user consultation, which will be dealt with

as a separate issue later in the chapter.

4.3. Constraints on planning

Whilst the project manager has an opportunity to outline
his/her vision of the new library, and to incorporate the
views of staff and experience of other libraries and specialists,
it is by no means certain that this vision will actually
come to pass. There are any number of special factors which
have to be taken into account during planning, and which
can have a major influence on the eventual appearance of
the building. The most important of these are fire regulations.
Thompson describes fire regulations as 'one of the most
constricting factors on the freedom of design' (10). Initially,
they will have a major impact on the construction and appearance
of the building. Regulations cover the structural materials
used, the floor thicknesses, and the interior materials (11).
Secondly, there are regulations which cover the intervals
at which fire barriers should be positioned, and the distance
a person should have to travel to reach a fire exit from
any point in the building (12). Evidently, this restricts
the extent to which a building can be open plan, and imposes
a physical pattern of barriers and exits, which must be worked
around. There is, in addition, a plethora of standard building
regulations, which it is the job of the architect to adhere
to in his/her plan, but which may affect the extent to which
the library will meet the ideal of the library manager.

In addition to these legal requirements, there are a large
number of recommendations which can influence the design
and layout of the new library. There are accepted standards
for lighting levels, and these vary depending on the activity
which they illuminate. A compromise must be sought between
the need to allow reading and browsing to take place, and
the problems of creating excessive glare or heat. Thompson
describes this apparently simple matter of choosing a method

of lighting as a 'complex matter', to the extent that specialist
lighting consultants exist to advise on the question (13).
Similarly, an apparently straightforward task like providing
study space is fraught with difficulty. I.F.L.A. produce
a set of standards which recommend, amongst other things,
the number of reader spaces to be provided per head of the
population (14). There are are a host of figures related
to how much space is needed to comfortably accommodate a
reader in various situations and positions (15). Adhering
to recommendations such as these can have a major impact
on the plans for the building.

It is sad to reflect that in any new library building, attention
must be paid to the question of security. Theft of materials
from public libraries is a growing problem, and none can
afford to sustain heavy losses from their stock. The solution
is to limit points of exit from the building, and to exert
control over those exits which do exist. The practicalities
of staffing mean that this usually means one exit, controlled
by the service counter. Likewise, since few libraries could
realistically hope to employ full-time security attendants,
there will often also be a security system of some sort,
so that any materials being removed from the building illegally
will set off an alarm. The problem can also be countered
to a certain extent by arranging furniture so that clear
sight lines are created, and all areas can be overlooked
by staff. These solutions are fair enough in themselves,
if expensive in the case of security systems. The main problem
is the conflict with fire regulations, which demand a number
of easily accessible exits. There is also the problem of
access after hours, if some parts of the library, such as
meeting rooms, are to be available in the evenings. As with
so many other issues, a balance must be achieved between
conflicting needs.

Any architect will want the building he/she designs to be

as striking and distinctive as possible, and the library
manager will want a building which is obvious from a distance,
and easily recognisable. However, as the Office of Arts and
Libraries notes, 'aesthetic considerations may sometimes
require the sacrifice of self-advertisement' (16). If the
library is to be refurbished, there may be historic sections,
which have to be retained because of their architectural
significance. In the case of a new building, it may be positioned
in a historic or particularly beautiful area, and have to
reflect the style of existing buildings. In any case, it
is likely that the new building will be required to 'fit
harmoniously into its surroundings' (17). If the library
is to form part of a larger development, such as a shopping
centre, it will probably be allocated a set space, and will
have to conform to the design of the development as a whole.

The results of the central library survey confirm that the
factors discussed above can have a major impact on the planning
process. Libraries were asked, "Were there any special factors
which had to be taken into consideration?". Two libraries
indicated that the need for a security system was a special
consideration, and one of these, Peterborough Central, mentioned
a conflict between this and fire regulations. Public areas
had to be made secure, and this conflicted with a need for
easily accessible fire exits. Eventually, the fire doors
were fitted with an alarm system, so that staff would be
alerted if anyone tried to enter or leave illegally, and
the service counter is the only regular means of access (18).
Six formed part of larger projects, and each of them stated,
either here or in later questions, that this fact had limited
their chance for input during planning. Four respondents
stated that the need to integrate with existing buildings,
or preserve some aspect of historical importance, had influenced
design at the planning stage.

4.4. User consultation

So far, the planning process has been discussed as a fairly
mechanical process. The influence which factors such as physical
needs, the ideas and experience of others, and guidelines
and laws can have during planning has been explored. However,
there is a less obvious, but equally important influence,
which can make itself felt at this stage, and this is the
project manager's idea of the role of the central library.
This will inevitably make itself felt from the outset, when
the brief outlining the requirements for the new building
is produced. If the library is seen as a social facility,
the emphasis will be placed on providing space for people,
with meeting rooms, dedicated enquiry desks, inviting and
comfortable seating areas, and possibly an integrated coffee
area. If the library is seen as an information centre, there
will be less open-access shelving, and more computer terminals.
Likewise, opinions about the correct composition of stock
will be reflected in the comparative space given to fiction
and non-fiction, and books and audio-visual material.

This expression of the library's role in its physical appearance
is perhaps inevitable, given that it is built to fulfil a
specific set of functions. However, as discussed in Chapter 2,
there is no reason why the decision as to what those functions
are should be based on an ideological vision of the central
library's role. Comedia recommended that 'every library should
reassess its local audience and offer an appropriate...service'
(19). The building of a new central library building is the
ideal opportunity to do this. The only way to ensure that
the new building reflects the needs of the community it serves
is to discover what that community wants of its central library
at an early stage.

The library manager may feel that he/she already has a clear
idea of the needs of the library's customers, and is able

to incorporate them into the plan. Many libraries keep comments
and complaints books, or have community profiles, which indicate
which services and facilities are needed. However, a new
central library building is an extremely visible capital
outlay, and however smooth the transition period, customers
are likely to be put to some inconvenience during building
or transfer to new premises. If they understand what is
happening, and feel that their views have been taken into
account, it could appease potential critics. On a more positive
note, it may reveal fairly simple needs, such as a wider
entrance for pushchairs or larger signs, which can easily
be incorporated into the plans, and which will make a great
deal of difference to people. Consulting users could prevent
a massive investment in a new facility for which there is
no real demand. Consultation can take a number of different
forms. At one extreme, simple surveys or questionnaires can
be used, asking users to suggest improvements. Ratcliffe
suggests the creation of a formal user committee at an early
stage in the planning process (20). At the other extreme,
Patrick D. Gee describes how a full market research project
can be used to assess user needs (21). This method, although
time-consuming and possibly expensive, has the benefit of
including those who are not currently library users. Whatever
approach is taken, it is vital that the needs of users are
taken into account during planning, so that the building
and services will be useful and relevant, and so that they
have some investment in the future of the project.

The question of user consultation was not discussed in the
same context as that of staff and other consultation, because
the results of the central library survey illustrate that
the need to gather the views of customers at the outset is
not widely acknowledged. Consultation with staff and other
libraries seems to be done almost as a matter of course.
This does not seem to be the case with user consultation.
Of the libraries who responded, only four had consulted users

during the planning stages, despite the fact that the ultimate purpose of the library is to meet their needs.

4.5. Planning an interim service

If the project is to be a completely new building, the provision of an interim service should not cause too many problems. In most cases, it will be a case of closing for a few days or weeks, whilst equipment and materials are transferred to the new building. The real headache is ensuring that the move goes smoothly, and that things get put in the right place. Obviously, this will have to be planned carefully, and will involve a good deal of hard work on the part of staff. The central library survey asked libraries to describe the arrangements made for removal to new premises. Eleven of the 13 respondents were in the situation of moving to a new building, and all closed for a period whilst the move took place. The period of closure ranges from the phenomenally short three days, to a comparatively leisurely six weeks. The average is 18 days. Peterborough Central Library was closed for 10 days, Richard Hemmings, the Library Manager, believes that this was only possible because of the good will of staff, who put in many extra hours. He also points out that there were teething troubles with the computer system, and that staff would probably have preferred a longer period of closure (22). Most libraries made some arrangements for customers during this time, such as directing them to other libraries, or providing a "drop box" for returns.

The remaining two respondents were in the situation of having their existing library building rebuilt or refurbished. They had all the problems of moving stock and equipment not once, but twice; the first time into temporary accommodation, then back to the refurbished building. On top of this, there is the challenge of providing a service from a temporary, and possibly unsuitable, location or locations. There may be

insufficient room to provide a full range of services, or
to make all of the library's stock available. In this case,
careful decisions have to be made as to the mixture of stock
to provide; whether to concentrate on reference or lending,
fiction or non-fiction, adult or junior. The outcome will
depend on the situation of the particular library, and decisions
should be made in close consultation with specialist staff
and users.

One of the refurbished libraries in the survey was lucky
enough to be housed in one pre-fabricated building close
to the existing building. The other was less fortunate. It
was split over three different locations, and access was
given to only one third of lending stock, and one quarter
of reference stock. Disaster struck when one of the locations
was declared unsafe, and everything had to be moved again,
to an even smaller site, and reference stock was further
reduced to one eighth of normal levels. Later, the building
contractor went into receivership, delaying completion of
the new library by nearly one year. This experience recalls
the advice of Billie J. Grey: 'Prepare for the worst. Expecting
the unexpected won't cover it' (23). Happily, staff and users
remained stoical throughout. Use continued to be high, and
customers behaved with 'patience and fortitude' (24). The
building eventually reopened, complete with a number of new
facilities, to an excellent response. It is perhaps instructive
to note that these faithful users were amongst those who
were consulted at an early stage of the planning process.

It is not unusual to get a positive response from customers
on the re-opening of the library. Eight of the respondents
in the central library survey stated that the public response
to the new building had been favourable. Four of these went
on to say that the success of the project had been reflected
in increased use, with issues rising by as much as 300% in
one case. At Peterborough Central Library, issues rose by

28% in the first year, and have risen by a further 39% since
then. The Library Manager estimates that use of the building
has at least doubled (25). This is obviously a positive factor,
but it can be a problem if increased use is not anticipated
at the planning stage, and incorporated in the plans. It
is important that management have a reasonable idea of how
much they expect use to rise, and provide extra accommodation,
stock and staff accordingly.

4.6. Implications for Lincoln Central Library

The rebuilding of Lincoln Central Library looks set to conform
to the pattern of a lengthy planning process. There has been
vague talk of the need to improve facilities at the library
for some years, and serious discussions since the early 1980s.
The current project has been headed by Maurice Nauta, who
joined the srevice as Assistant Director - Community Services
five years ago. It received official blessing when it was
put on the capital programme in 1990. Demolition of the present
building will begin in January 1994, and the new building
is due to be completed in August 1996, giving a total of
six years between the official start of the project and
completion.

The management of Lincoln Central Library is using this time
to consider their plans for the new building very carefully.
They are planning with an eye to the future. The building
will be fully wired with computer cables. A close watch is
being kept on developments such as self-issue, and methods
of income generation are being carefully explored. Recent
events have brought home to the management the need to take
a flexible approach to planning. In the past few months,
they have had to face Local Government Elections, the publication
of the Local Government Review for the county, and the
announcement of proposals for a university in the city. Any
one of these could have serious implications for the project.

They will need to ensure that any future changes can be
accommodated within the plans.

The initial stages of planning have been more or less completed.
The plans have been accepted by the local council, the money
has been allocated, and planning permission granted. Library
staff have been fully involved in all stages of the project
so far, from early drafts of the proposal, to the writing
up of the building specification. Visits have been made to
a number of other central libraries, to view the buildings
and the services within. Now that the basic plan has received
official approval, the Principal Librarian is beginning to
get sample layout plans from library suppliers. The value
of consultation seems to have been fully appreciated by the
management of the library.

The serious constraints placed on the plans by architectural
and environmental factors have been fully discussed in Chapter 2.
Portions of the original building have to be retained, and
the new sections have to blend with existing buildings. Factors
which have influenced the interior have included the desire
to install a security system, the need to allocate enough
space for seating and study carrells, and allowing out of
hours access to the planned community room.

The emphasis in the new development is on community involvement.
Maurice Nauta believes that Lincolnshire is providing, 'libraries
for the people' (26). This belief has been reflected so far
in the planning process. A community room is being provided,
with the intention that local people will adopt it for their
own uses. The initial plans for the new building were placed
in the foyer of the library, and in the new Waterside shopping
centre, and local people were invited to make comments. Eighty
nine comments were recorded, and carefully analysed by the
Principal Librarian. Concerns over issues such as disabled

access, the composition of the bookstock and the interim
service have been addressed as a result. Further surveys
are planned in the future, to assess what facilities people
want to see in the new library, and to discover what balance
people want between fiction and non-fiction. A community
profile is currently being prepared. The new library will
provide more accommodation for stock, and there will be more
study space. Lincolnshire Library Service has a staffing
formula based on use, so as the new library grows busier,
extra staff should be recruited (27).

The staff at the central library are currently absorbed in
planning the provision of an interim service. As the building
is to be closed for a period of two years, this is a major
consideration. The situation at the moment is that lending
and reference services are to be housed in the City and County
Museum, in the Greyfriars building next to the present site
(see Appendix 4 for map). This building should house the
entire reference stock, minus the reserve, on the first floor
(with the proviso that the floor proves to be strong enough),
and 30 - 40% of lending stock on the ground floor. Branch
libraries in the surrounding area will have extra opening
hours, and some of the central library's staff will be
redeployed. The local studies collection will be moved to
Lincoln Castle, which is close to the present site, but at
the top of a steep hill (see Appendix 4 for map). Accommodation
should be sufficient to house all of the stack material.
The functions of the area H.Q. will be transferred to the
existing support services building in the city. These
arrangements have all been made in close consultation with
specialist staff and users. The postcode survey, to establish
where users come from, and what interim arrangements would
suit them best, has already been mentioned in Chapter 2.
In addition to this, a user survey is being conducted, to
discover at which times people want their library to be open.
Users of the local studies collection were given the chance
to state where they would prefer the materials to be housed

during closure, and the preferred option was that eventually adopted. If thorough planning results in a successful building, the new Lincoln Central Library should be a success.

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Chapter 5

THE CENTRAL LIBRARY BUILDING

5.1. Location

One of the first decisions that has to be made concerns the
location of the new library building. This should be a
consideration even where the hope is to refurbish an existing
building. The current location may have been ideal when the
library was first built, but cities grow and change over
the years, and the centre of activity can move, leaving the
library stranded in a little used backwater. If this is the
case, it may be worth considering a change of location. This
is not a decision which should be taken lightly. The potential
benefits, in terms of a higher profile and increased use,
should be carefully weighed against the potentially higher
costs of taking over a new site. Eleven of the 13 libraries
in the central library survey moved to completely new buildings.

The ideal location for a central library building will depend
on what its role is to be. If it is to function as an information
centre, it would need to be sited in a commercial district,
where businesses can have easy access. However, if it is
assumed that the central library exists to serve a local
community, then the ideal location can be described as follows:

> One which would be preferred by any major chain store
> for one of its branches: a point passed by the greatest
> number of people either in a main shopping street
> or market square and well served by public transport
> and car parks (1).

It is desirable that a central library is located close to
the heart of the city, to encourage use by as many members
of the community as possible. If people can visit without
having to make a special journey, they will begin to see

library use as an integral part of their routine. But, as
with so many ideals, this is often difficult to achieve./
City centre locations are rarely available, and when they
are, premium prices put them out of reach of most local
authorities. When deciding on a location, therefore, compromises
frequently have to be made. The library may be positioned
in a side street, or just out of the city centre, but in
a place where a constant flow of passers-by is guaranteed //
Jan van der Wateren praises the location of Sutton Central
Library, which is cunningly sited between the town's car
parks and bus stops, and the pedestrianised high street,
so that people must pass it going to and from the shops (2).
Other examples include being located with out-of-town retail
developments or leisure complexes. In general terms though,
the central library should be within easy walking distance
of, and visible or clearly signposted from, the town centre./

In recent years, some central libraries have obtained prime
city centre locations by taking units in new developments
such as community centres or shopping precincts. There are
obvious advantages to this approach. Any new development
will arouse a good deal of initial interest, and the library
should be able to capitalise on this, and attract new customers.
People should find it convenient to combine their shopping
or leisure trips with a visit to the library. Planning permission
for such developments may be granted on the condition that
space is made available for a library, giving a central location
on very reasonable terms. Such developments can be valuable
in placing the library at the heart of city centre activity,
and cancelling prejudices about the elitist nature of libraries.

Six libraries in the survey formed part of a larger development;
one in an extension to County Hall, one adjoining a community
centre, four as part of new shopping precincts. Three mentioned
that space had been provided by the developers, and one of
these was paid for entirely by a development corporation.

One library had experienced a 100% increase in issues and usage since the move. However, their experiences were not all positive. Problems mentioned include lack of influence over the position, design and layout of the building, lack of consultation between the developers and the library, and trouble with noise. Being part of a major commercial development can be a mixed blessing, and the benefits of a prime location must be weighed against an inevitable loss of control over planning.

5.2. External factors

The Office of Arts and Libraries states that a library building should be 'sufficiently obvious to be noticed and recognised from a distance', and recommends that this can be achieved by 'a prominent position or by the distinctive design of the building' (3). The constraints on the design of the central library building have been discussed in Chapter 4. However, even if the library is in an extremely sensitive area, it should be possible to produce a design which complements the buildings around it, but which still retains its own identity. Even where planning restrictions preclude any distinctive features which will mark the building, features such as windows can be used to great effect. People are more likely to recognise an otherwise unremarkable building as a library, and be attracted in, if they can see the activities going on inside. Peterborough Central Library is an extremely attractive building, designed by the architect who worked on the city's Queensgate shopping centre. It is not, however, easily identifiable as a library, and the incorporation of large windows into the design allows a clear view of activity inside, and plays an important part in proclaiming the building's function (4).

Peterborough Central Library also makes good use of external signs. These are vital if the building is to be easily

identified, particularly if the library forms part of a larger development, and has to conform to the overall design of that development. Equally important for libraries located out of the town centre are directional signs. If the central library is to fulfil its role of serving the community, then that community must be able to find the building without difficulty. Ideally, the library should be signposted as a matter of course, with facilities such as tourist information offices, public conveniences and leisure centres, from the city centre, from main car-parking areas.

5.3. Internal design and layout

The first part of the Library's interior to be encountered by the customer is the entrance area. It is therefore important that this area is not dismissed as a mere gateway to the library proper, but is treated as a resource in its own right. The design of something as basic as doors can make a great deal of difference to the way people perceive the library. Poorly designed doors can act as a barrier for people with pushchairs, the disabled, the elderly, or even those heavily laden with shopping, and make the library seem a hostile and unwelcoming place (5). At Peterborough Central Library, the doors were not initially wide enough for pushchairs, and this had to be rectified later (6). Keith Weyman of Hereford and Worcester Libraries recommends that automatic doors are used wherever possible, since in his experience conventional doors can be too heavy for many people. In the future, he is hoping that all new libraries in the county will be fitted with automatic doors, even if the money to make this possible has to be cut from elsewhere (7). The entrance area itself need not be wasted space. It can be effectively be used as an exhibition or display area, since everyone entering or leaving the library will need to pass through. If the entrance area is made visually interesting and welcoming, it can attract people in, and they can then be tempted into the library beyond.

Once inside, the visitor is next likely to be struck by the
layout of the building. There is no correct formula for layout,
and each library should be slightly different, as it reflects
patterns of local use. However, there is one quality which
all libraries should strive to achieve, and this is flexibility.
The interior design of the library should be able to accommodate
changes of use from day to day, major re-arrangements, and
future developments in I.T. Increasingly this flexibility
is achieved through the use of an open plan design. It is
not easy to move things around when physical barriers such
as alcoves and internal walls intrude. If the library consists
basically of one large area of space, with the only divisions
being created by bookshelves, it should be fairly easy to
arrange and re-arrange things as required, providing that
furniture is mobile, and enough power points are available.
Thompson highlights the advantages of the open plan approach
to library design:

> Open plan designs, as well as offering infinite
> flexibility, give unity to space and lead readers
> to notice and perhaps be drawn to books on all subjects.
> Such a layout produces a feeling of space and of colour
> (8).

The fact that many newly-built libraries are choosing to
adopt open plan layouts suggests that the advantages of
flexibility which it provides are well understood. This,
in turn, implies that the managers of central libraries are
letting the needs of the local community positively influence
the role of their libraries. If the functions of the library
are predetermined according to the views of the manager,
then there is no need to build flexibility into the design.

The main drawback to this arrangement is that different
activities within the library generate different levels of
movement and noise. Reference and private study are essentially
quiet, stationary occupations, whilst browsing involves

considerably more movement, and some discussion. Children's
areas are likely to be noisy, and to produce a good deal
of activity. Facilities such as photocopiers, toilets and
enquiry desks are likely to generate a constant flow of traffic.
If the library building is one more than one floor, this
problem can be overcome by separating activities onto different
levels according to the amount of noise and movement generated.
In the case of a single storey building, areas which are
likely to clash can be positioned away from each other, and
shelving can be used to create distinct areas, but it is
still difficult to prevent 'aural and visual distraction'
(9), and the floor plan has to be worked out extremely carefully.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the choice of library shelving
and furniture will reflect the role of the library, whether
it be comfortable and inviting, or more severely functional.
In a central library which serves a variety of community
needs, such items should reflect the function of the area
which they serve. Lending sections will probably be best
served by traditional shelving, which allows both browsing,
and the quick location of a specific book. Face out displays
and "spinners" for paperbacks are now a regular feature of
most fiction areas. Seating in the lending section can be
minimal, although some should be provided. Reference areas
are used for longer periods of time, and should be provided
with both seating and work surfaces. Ideally, both individual
desks and communal tables should be provided, so that people
can work as suits them best. Children's areas should be provided
with appropriately sized shelving and furniture, and should
be bright and stimulating. Newspaper and periodical areas
need careful thought as to the best method of display. The
options include placing them face out on narrow ledges, placing
the folded papers in a shelving rack, or using a suspended
filing system (10). This seems to work well at Peterborough
Central Library (11). The furniture serving the area should
be comfortable and inviting; low tables and cushioned chairs,
reflecting the fact that the area will be used for long periods

at a time, but that use will be more casual than that of
the reference area. Like newspapers, audio materials and
videos can present difficulties in terms of display. However,
library suppliers are increasingly providing specialised
shelving for non-book materials. Keith Weyman (Hereford and
Worcester Libraries) believes that quality is an important
consideration. If a library is to occupy a prime site, its
fittings must be on a par with those of the best shops which
surround it (12).

The importance of lighting and colour should not be
underestimated in creating a welcoming atmosphere in the
library building. This is clearly important, since in a recent
MORI survey, users rated 'an inviting atmosphere' as the
second most important criterion for judging libraries (13).
Harsh fluorescent lighting and stark colours can create an
extremely unpleasant ambience, which will not attract people
into the building, or encourage them to visit again. Generally
speaking, lighting should be 'efficient but discreet' (14).
The colour scheme should be light where possible, and in
neutral tones, to create an impression of airiness and space.
It should be continued throughout the building, and reflected
in wallcoverings, furnishings and shelving. One possible
exception is the children's area, where bright colours can
be used to create a more lively atmosphere.

Signs and guiding are as important within the library as
they are outside, particularly in a new or redesigned building,
where even regular customers will be initially unfamiliar
with the layout. Very few people are familiar with library
classification schemes, and subject guides on the shelves
themselves can be extremely useful. Signs should also be
used to highlight special facilities or areas, such as
photocopiers, enquiry desks and toilets. Library suppliers
provide a range of different signs, from shelving guides
attached to the shelves themselves, to large directional

signs suspended from the ceiling. It is worth investing in
a set of well-designed and attractive signs, as they contribute
enormously to the overall appearance of the library, and
enable customers to make more effective use of the services
provided.

5.4. Other facilities

Many central libraries do not stop at providing "traditional"
library services. Increasingly, they also provide facilities
for use by local groups and individuals, and these help to
make the library more of a focus for the community, encouraging
use by a wider range of customers. One of the most basic
of these is the use of notice boards, where local community
information can be displayed. The positioning of such notice
boards needs to be carefully thought out, so that the area
does not become congested with people looking at the notices,
and lighting must be adequate (15). It will probably be necessary
to exert some sort of control over the placing and content
of notices, to ensure that the boards remain tidy, that no
offensive material is displayed, and that obsolete notices
are removed. This control may extend to charging a small
fee for notices, although some would argue that 'dissemination
of information about local activities and facilities is a
valuable part of the library's service' (16), and as such
should be available free of charge.

On a larger scale, most central libraries provide exhibition
space of some description. All 13 of the respondents in the
central library survey did so. This may range from a permanent
display area, with fixed boards and cabinets, to a set of
portable screens, which can be erected in different areas
of the library as required (17). The latter is sufficient
if exhibition space is to used on an occasional basis by
local groups and societies. During the visit to Peterborough
Central Library, a local martial arts group were mounting

a small display on free-standing boards (18). If something
more ambitious, such as the ability to accept large touring
exhibitions, is envisaged, the exhibition area will need
to be a more permanent feature, with specially designed fixtures
and lighting. Exhibition space is another candidate for
attracting a fee. Three of the libraries in the survey did
so, and where a major financial outlay has been involved
in providing the facility, this would seem to be fair enough.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, one of the benefits
of providing a flexible layout inside the library is that
space can easily be cleared so that other activities can
take place. There is, however, a limit to the sort of activities
that can take place in such a space. It would not be suitable
for formal meetings, or for any large gatherings during opening
hours, and use of the main library building after hours presents
obvious difficulties in terms of security. Most newly built
central libraries (all of those in the survey) have chosen
to give a more permanent focus to community activity by providing
a meeting or community room. The use to which such areas
are put will vary from place to place. A charge will normally
be made for the use of such rooms, but this should not be
so high as to exclude small groups. For security reasons,
meeting rooms should be capable of being sealed off from
the rest of the library, and should have their own entrances
and toilet facilities. The size of such areas will depend
on the size of the community served, and the availability
of other facilities locally. In some cases, the library may
be the only place where rooms are available for public use,
and whole suites may be provided.

The Office of Arts and Libraries states that it is 'particularly
important to provide lavatories for public use' (19). Despite
this, there has been some reluctance in recent years to provide
public toilets in libraries. They can be subject to vandalism
and covered in obscene graffiti, leading to heavy expenses

in repairs and cleaning. They also provide an unsupervised
area, where potential miscreants could deface or secrete
materials. However, the evidence is that the public themselves
want to have toilet facilities provided, particularly when
they are using the library for long periods of time. Moreover,
if the central library is to be a community resource, and
to provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, the provision
of such facilities is important. Two libraries in the survey
did not provide public toilets as a matter of policy. One
received criticism from the public as a result. At Peterborough
Central Library, complaints from users about the lack of
toilets were picked up by the city council and local politicians,
and public toilets were added as a result (20). The potential
difficulties caused by public lavatories can be mitigated
to a certain extent by careful siting. They should be far
enough into the library to discourage casual use (21), and
reasonably close to the counter or an enquiry desk, so that
some form of control can be exerted.

The facilities described so far are common ones, to be found ·
in the vast majority of central libraries. It is by no means
an exhaustive list of the possibilities available. Some libraries
provide coffee areas, or have a coffee shop integrated within
the building. Others have bookshops, tourist information
offices or citizens' advice bureaus on the site. Yet more
provide fully equipped theatres or projection rooms. Peterborough
Central Library has a range of facilities, and boasts a
shop, a fully equipped theatre, meeting rooms of various
sizes and a Learning Centre, which is run in conjunction
with the local Training and Enterprise Council (22). Each
of these enterprises obviously contributes in its own way
to the central library's involvement in the local community.
It is important that they are tailored to meet the needs
of local people, and that they do not double up on specialist
services already available. Failure to investige these critical
factors could result in the library being stuck with an expensive
white elephant.

5.5. The central library as a workplace

The library building is not just a facility for the public
to use. It is also a workplace for library staff. The comfort
of staff is just as important as that of users, since they
spend a good deal of time in the building. If desks, counters
and workrooms are poorly designed, it can have a major effect
on the physical and psychological well-being of library staff.

Most staff will spend at least some of their time working
on a service counter or enquiry desk. These areas are highly
visible to the public, and the main concern is usually that
they look tidy and well organised. However, their real importance
is as a place of work for staff, and the priority should
be to ensure their comfort. Service counters should be large
enough to comfortably accommodate the maximum number of staff
required at busy periods. Much of the routine work of issuing
and returning books is now done via an automated system,
which involves little physical movement, so the service counter
should be at a comfortable height for a seated person. It
is possible to answer customer enquiries at the service counter,
but it is usually preferable to have separate enquiry desks.
This reduces traffic at the counter, and allows staff to
exert control over a greater area of the building. In both
cases, the staff who actually have to run the service should
be closely consulted over location, layout and design, since
they will have practical experience of what is needed.

The other area where staff will spend much of their time
is behind the scenes, in the library's workroom and
administration area. These areas can sometimes be forgotten,
as they are not on view to the public. Staff are commonly
hidden away in a dark corner of the building. Yet some staff
will spend a good portion of their working day here, performing

functions which are vital to the running of the library.
Given the importance of such areas, and the amount of time
staff spend there, they should be given careful consideration.
They should be spacious enough to accommodate the necessary
number of staff comfortably, and the furniture should be
suited to the tasks being undertaken. Staff workrooms should
not be added as an afterthought, but incorporated as a vital
part of the design, and the same care over lighting, colour
and furnishings should be taken as with public areas. Closed
stacks and reserve stacks are not so vital, since staff will
visit them briefly, but will not be working in them for any
length of time. They should be sited carefully, and some
thought will have to be given to the load placed on the floor,
particularly if a compact shelving system is to be used to
maximise the space available. A staffroom should also be
provided, with kitchen facilities and comfortable seating,
so that staff can relax when off duty.

A decision will have to be made at an early stage as to whether
air-conditioning will be necessary in the new building. An
air-conditioning system has obvious advantages. Still air
will become stale and unhealthy, for both people and the
materials kept in the library. It ensures a stable atmosphere,
regardless of external weather conditions. On the other hand,
it is expensive, needs maintenance, can be noisy, and the
mechanics require a good deal of space (23). Cheaper air-exchange
systems are available, and may appear to provide a more
attractive option. Certainly, they are probably adequate
from the point of view of most users, who will not be in
the building for long periods of time. However, staff have
to be in the building for eight hours a day or more, and
atmospheric conditions within the library will have a major
impact on them. Three libraries in the survey mentioned that
ventilation was a major problem in the new building, and
two of these referred to an inadequate air-exchange system.
Where the budget allows, and space is available, it is worth
incorporating an air-conditioning system into the design,

if only to provide a reasonable working atmosphere for staff.
This is particularly true of a central library, which may
be positioned in an area of high pollution from surrounding
roads. One staff member at Peterborough Central Library
complained that the lack of a proper air-conditioning made
an otherwise attractive building difficult to work in (24).

5.6. Implications for Lincoln Central Library

Although the final decision was to rebuild the library on
the present site, other locations were considered for the
new Lincoln Central Library, and these are outlined in Chapter
3. It was only after weighing up the pros and cons of alternative
sites that the current project was settled upon. The present
location is a good one. It is in the city centre, within
easy walking distance of public transport, car parks, local
businesses and shops, including a new shopping centre (see
Appendix 4 for map).

The frontage of the library has to be retained intact, because
of its architectural significance, but the rest of the
development has been imaginatively designed, whilst complementing
surrounding buildings. The design incorporates 'large window
areas...at strategic points' (24). The building backs onto
a busy road, and the new design will provide a unity that
is missing in the present jumble of buildings. Overall, the
new central library should have a much stronger visual identity
identity.

The existing frontage of the library features a stone sign,
and it is probable that this will have to be retained. It
would, however, be a good thing if a larger identifying sign
could be added, to make the building more obvious from a
distance. Directional signs to the library also need to be
improved. Although the building is in the city centre, it

is not visible from the main shopping street. At present,
it does not appear on signs either in the shopping centre,
or on signs by the castle and cathedral. This needs to be
rectified if maximum use is to be made of the new building.

The library's existing entrance lobby is to be retained.
It is quite a large area, with a high domed ceiling, and
it has a lot of potential. It currently houses a photocopier,
notice boards and display boards. This use should be increased
and developed, so that the lobby serves to attract people
into the building.

As discussed in Chapter 3, flexibility is the keynote of
the approach to interior layout. The public areas of the
library, excluding the Tennyson Collection, which is used
only for research purposes, will be on the ground floor.
An open plan design is to be adopted, possibly with divisions
between areas to be created using shelving, although this
is currently the subject of much debate. The children's section
is to be housed in one wing of the Carnegie section of the
building, and will thus be completely self-contained. This
will reduce possible problems of noise and visual distraction.

The present shelving and furniture in the library is beginning
to look well worn, and the building of the new library is
a good opportunity to obtain new, co-ordinating furnishings.
Similarly, the library is fairly dark and drab at the moment,
and the most should be made of colour and light in the new
building, to create a more spacious and airy feeling.

Serious consideration is currently being given to the question
of signs and guiding in the new library. Staff are keen to
use the opportunity of starting from scratch to create a
useful and cohesive system. They are aware of the benefits

in terms of staff time of enabling people to find material
for themselves (26).

The new Lincoln Central Library will continue to provide
notice boards and exhibition space. It will also feature
a community room and interview room, which could be used
by other bodies. The provision of these purpose built facilities
should ensure that the library is used by a wide section
of the local community. Charges are being considered for
all of the above facilities, although nothing has yet been
settled. Any charges should not put the facilities out of
the reach of smaller groups of people. Public toilets are
to be provided, after some debate.

Staff at Lincoln Central have been consulted at every stage
of the project so far, and this should continue with regard
to the design and position of the counter and enquiry desks.
Most of the first floor of the new building will be given
over to workrooms and administration, and the area will be
lit by a light well, so accommodation should be spacious
and bright. A staffroom, with kitchen and staff lockers is
also to be provided on this level. Another bonus for the
staff is that air-conditioning is to be incorporated in the
new building. For both users and staff, the new Lincoln Central
Library should provide a pleasant and welcoming environment.

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Chapter 6

SERVICES AND STOCK

6.1. The provision of library services

Thompson argues that, whilst the library building is important
in its own right, its primary function is to, 'provide the
framework for a service' (1). It is true that, whilst people
will have ideas about what the library should look like,
it is the services provided within which will determine how
people feel about their library. To most customers, the library
is the services it provides. Despite this, there are no real
guidelines which cover the type and range of services which
libraries should provide. The statutory obligations for the
public library service were laid down in the 1964 British
Public Libraries Act, which states that it should ensure
that:

> Facilities are available for the borrowing of, or
> reference to, books...and other materials sufficient
> in number, range and quality to meet general requirements,
> and any special requirements, of both adults and children
> (2).

IFLA produce a set of guidelines for public libraries, which
offer helpful recommendations, but which are designed to
'suggest what might be done' rather than to offer soloutions
(3). The Library Association produces a guide entitled The
public library service, but this concentrates on broader
issues, and does not mention specific services (4). Neither
the Library Association, nor any other body, seem to produce
a set of guidelines aimed specifically at central libraries.
As long as a library provides 'books and other materials
...sufficient in number, range and quality' (5), it is reasonably
free to offer services at its own discretion.

A vast range of services are currently provided by libraries,
ranging from the conventional book-based lending services,
to the more unusual and unexpected. Comedia published a list
of the services and activities they found in a range of public
libraries (6), and although these are numerous, they basically
fall into five categories. The first of these is the traditional
library function of book provision, encompassing adult and
children's fiction and non-fiction lending, and reference.
Then there are more modern additions to this, such as video,
CD, records and tapes, and talking books, all of which are
offered for loan. Increasingly, there are also electronic
information sources, both online and on CD-ROM. The fourth
group of services is formed by special collections, unique
to each library, and covering topics such as information
for school governors, environmental information, or material
in languages other than English. Finally, there are
activity-based services, such as children's holiday programmes,
literacy schemes, lectures and coffee shops. All of these
services could be provided by any library, given the support
and financial backing.

This latter commodity, however, is in very short supply.
The Library and Information Statistics Unit (LISU) annual
library statistics for 1992 reveal that, whilst total expenditure
on public libraries increased in real terms from 1980 to
1985, since 1985 it has, 'on average simply kept pace with
inflation' (7). This average conceals a wide range of experiences
in individual authorities, with two that doubled their
expenditure over the last five years, and two that reported
losses in cash terms (8). These figures have to be offset
against the fact that, 'for much of the decade, book prices
certainly rose faster than inflation' (9). The result is
that libraries are generally able to buy fewer books, and
books still form the largest single item of materials expenditure
(10). On top of this, audio-visual materials, and particularly
electronic information, are very expensive to provide. There
is generally a lack of money in public libraries, and it

is becoming increasingly unlikely that any single library
will be able to provide all of the services described above,
however much they may wish to. Quite simply, choices have
to be made, with the library perhaps providing a focused
range of services to a high standard, rather than struggling
to do everything.

The central library is likely to be under more pressure than
most to provide a wide range of services, because it occupies
a unique place in the community. Central libraries have a
much more diverse range of users than most, all of whom place
a different priority on services. Some use the central library
as their local lending library, others use it as a place
of study and research, or a source of information, whilst
yet others see it as a meeting place, either formally or
informally. The central library also has a role as a county
resource to fulfil, providing a backup to less well-stocked
branches, and acting as a central location for specialist
services, collections and staff. Yet, despite fulfilling
these crucial functions, it is extremely unlikely that any
central library will be sufficiently well-funded to be able
to provide every possible service.

The choice of which services should be provided is an obvious
reflection of how managers view the role of the central library.
If it concentrates heavily on electronic information or community
information; non-fiction and serious fiction or popular titles,
it is obvious that the library is viewed either as information
or community centre; educational and cultural institution
or recreational facility. As discussed in Chapter 2, however,
the role of the central library should not be to conform
to an ideal, but to respond flexibly to its environment,
and to fulfil local needs. The services it provides should
reflect this role. If they do not, the central library may
well be providing a range of services which are totally
inappropriate to the area served.

There are certain services that the central library will
be expected to provide as a matter of course. The most vital
of these are the book-based lending and reference services.
An investigation into library services conducted by MORI
discovered that, 'the range of books that the library holds
emerged as probably the most important aspect of a library's
service' (11). The same survey reported on library facilities
used, with the top activities being returning and borrowing
books, and using the reference section. Other popular activities
included asking staff for advice, renewing books, looking
for local information, using photocopiers, reading newspapers
and borrowing audio-visual material (12). These types of
service are ones which the public have come to expect of
a library. They are perceived as being what the library is
about, and to remove them would be to create a different
institution entirely. In addition to these "core" services,
a central library will usually be expected to provide a local
studies collection, by virtue of the fact that it is a convenient
central location for artefacts relating to the area. For
the same reason, it will probably need to house any special
collections in the possession of the county. Beyond this,
it is up to the central library to assess the demands of
the community it serves, to prioritise needs, and to provide
a relevant range of services accordingly.

The survey of central libraries suggests that this model
of service provision is being adopted, at least by newly
built central libraries. Twelve of the services named in
the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) were provided by all 13
of the respondents, and a further four were provided by 11
or 12 respondents. These covered services such as adult and
children's lending, local studies, talking books, audio
materials, newspapers and photocopying. Fewer provided video
lending (nine), CD-ROM (five) and online information (six),
and computer facilities (six). This possibly reflects the

fact that these are expensive to set up and maintain, and
priority was given to other services, which were considered
more appropriate. Whilst the basic range of services is fairly
standard, there is an array of special collections and other
services, including community and special needs collections,
prison, hospital and housebound services, a shipping information
collection, Kurzweil reading machines and ethnic minorities
and Welsh language collections. Such services are
community-specific, and can only have been initiated in response
to the needs of the local population. It is perhaps worth
noting that 10 of the respondents had introduced new services
in the rebuilt library, and although some of these were as
a result of structural changes (study carrells, meeting rooms,
exhibition space), others were services such as video lending,
talking books, facilities for the visually impaired and special
collections, suggesting that rebuilding was seen as an
opportunity to assess and respond to local needs.

As a postscript, it is worth mentioning that libraries,
particularly central libraries, often provide a further service,
in supplying people with a place of refuge and shelter. This
is acceptable if the library is to be a part of the local
community, and Worpole, in Towns for people, stressed the
importance of the library in providing an unthreatening space
in the city centre (13). However, as Worpole notes, the
government's policy of "care in the community" has created
a new clientele who use the library as, 'somewhere to sit
out of the cold' (14). The library finds itself providing
a social service to members of the public who are less able
to cope, and library staff, who are not trained for such
tasks, are left to cope with 'dramas and incidents', and
occasionally with violence and abuse (15).

6.2. Library stock

These debates do not stop at the question of which services

the library should provide. During the past few years, there has been a good deal of argument about the composition of library stock. As discussed in Chapter 2, these have centred largely on the question of the provision of fiction. Fiction accounts for 72% of total issues in British public libraries (16). Issue figures can, of course, be misleading. Non-fiction books are more likely to be consulted within the library, so the fact that comparatively few are issued does not necessarily mean that they are not well-used. However, MORI's survey concludes that, 'the borrowing of books is the dominant reason for using libraries' (17), and the majority of those books will be fiction. Despite this, adult fiction comprises only 45% of the total adult bookstock (18), and Comedia notes that there is, 'continuing unease and professional guilt about fiction of all kinds' (19). There seems to be a disparity between what people expect from their library, and what libraries feel they ought to be providing.

Whatever guilt is felt about fiction, it is extremely unlikely that any library would not provide any works of fiction. The debate has therefore expanded, to include what type of fiction libraries should be providing. Usherwood declares that, 'it is the business of the public library service to bring people into contact with the best' (20), and he speaks for a number of commentators, who believe that libraries should remain true to their "improving" educational role. Such writers are dismissive of light or "pulp" fiction, despite the fact that books which could be described as recreational account for 79% of fiction loans, with thriller/mystery and historical romance proving the most popular genres (21). Recently, figures such as these have started to raise questions about the wisdom of dismissing popular fiction out of hand. Rachel Van Riel believes that it has a place in public libraries, noting how Asian teenagers in Birmingham improved their English through reading teenage paperbacks (22). Comedia recommend further research into what reading means to people, particularly the responses and pleasures generated by fiction. They conclude

that:

>To condemn genre fiction without understanding why
>people read it and what it means to their lives (and
>it clearly means a lot) is to condemn it in advance
>of the evidence (23).

The obvious public demand for popular fiction should not
be ignored totally, as to so means imposing upon people a
vision of the library with which they may not necessarily
agree.

The increasing prominence of non-book materials in libraries
is another cause for concern on the part of many people.
Libraries were traditionally about books, but the past decade
has seen a huge increase in the number of audio-visual materials
available in libraries. Many now provide videos, talking
books, records, tapes and CDs for loan, alongside printed
material. Developments such as these in her local library
prompted the author Beryl Bainbridge to comment in a recent
newspaper article that, 'in the main, libraries are no longer
proper libraries' (24). Yet audio-visual material seems to
have become an accepted part of the library's stock. All
13 respondents in the central library survey provided records
or CDs, and talking books, for loan, whilst nine loaned videos.
Nor should the value of such materials be underestimated.
Talking books can provide a lifeline for the visually impaired,
and for the lonely. CDs are still beyond the pocket of many
people, and the public library can provide people with access
to a world of music which would otherwise be beyond their
reach. And video does not necessarily mean feature films.
There are a range of instructional, educational and self-help
videos, which could provide a valuable addition to library
stock. All but two of the libraries in the survey also charged
for their audio-visual material (usually with exemptions
for the visually impaired), so such items can help to generate
income, which can in turn be reinvested in library stock.

At the root of these arguments is the debate over the role
of the library; whether it should attempt to be a populist
institution, supplying materials in direct response to public
demand, or occupy the high moral ground, and provide "better
quality" books. On the face of it, libraries are faced with
a simple decision. In reality, of course, there is no reason
why they should choose to go down either route. It is the
duty of libraries to provide people with what they want to
a certain extent, since everybody pays for them through taxation.
Particularly in times of financial cutbacks, the library
must be seen to be providing a relevant and well-used service.
On the other hand, as Van Riel points out, 'people want many
things but it does not follow that the state should freely
provide them' (25). The public library should cater for the
tastes of all the community, not just those of the majority.
On the question of popular versus serious fiction, Usherwood
hits on the truth when he states, 'there is room or at least
a need for both' (26).

The public library should provide a balance, and this is
particularly true of the central library. It is important
that a selection of popular fiction is available, to satisfy
the immediate demand for borrowers for whom it acts as a
local library. Equally, there should be a good number of
more "serious" works, for local users, and for the use of
the rest of the area. Smaller branches may not have the capacity
to hold copies of less well-used works, and it is vital that
the central library acts as a safety net, making such items
available to all. Equally, the central library will probably
be the only place where some reference materials are available,
so more emphasis should be placed on the reference collection
than would be the case with smaller libraries. Some audio-visual
materials may also be available only in the central library.
The central library should provide a diverse and balanced
range of stock, to meet the needs of as many users as possible,
both in the city, and in the wider community beyond.

The findings of MORI's survey confirm this. They asked about
the composition of stock, and discovered that, 'the balance
appears to be in favour of an extensive coverage of subjects.'
The survey also confirms the place of the central library:
'Those within easy reach of a main library felt that a library
should cater for all tastes, however diverse', whilst those
served by a smaller branch believed that they should focus
on popular material, 'as long as the main library held the
more "obscure" titles' (27).

6.3. Implications for Lincoln Central Library

The county's major services are concentrated on Lincoln Central
Library. Branches in the Lincoln area do not provide a full
range of services, and whilst large libraries in other areas
will have a more comprehensive range, the central library
is the only place where the resources are available to provide
some specialised services (28).

At present, Lincoln Central Library provides all of the services
listed in the central library survey (see Appendix 2), except
for video lending, online information, and computer facilities.
The present meeting room is described as unsatisfactory by
the Principal Librarian, and CD-ROM is being used to create
a photographic index. In addition to these services, the
library provides a photographic collection, the Tennyson
Collection, foreign language and governor resource collections,
talks and lectures, and offers items for sale. The county's
music and drama collection will also be housed in the new
building.

Roger Hundleby, the Principal Librarian, would like to be
able to provide video lending in the new library, to develop
the business information service and make information available

online, and to make greater use of CD-ROM. However, he is
not optimistic about the chances of being able to do so,
as there is no money being made available for extra services
at the present time. He is anxious that the existing service
is not simply transferred wholesale to the new building,
believing that this would be an opportunity wasted (29).

The Lending and Reference Librarians at the central library
see the service in terms of "core" and "extras". They believe
that the library currently provides a good core lending and
reference service, and that this will be enhanced by the
availability of more space and more attractive surroundings
in the new building. They are convinced of the importance
of protecting these core services, and not getting caught
in the trap of providing peripherals which will not be used.
Staff have learnt from their experience in creating a CD
collection. The service was set up using money from the bookfund,
and the intention was that it would generate income, so that
the money could be "repaid". However, the CDs were not as
well used as was anticipated, and they are not yet paying
for themselves. The management is determined not to repeat
this experience, and any extra services introduced into the
new building must not be at the expense of core services (30).

Lincoln Central Library has started to develop locally-based
services. It provides children's activities and meeting and
exhibition space at present, and all of these will be improved
and extended in the new building. Lincolnshire has a high
number of grant-maintained schools, and the central library
provides a governor resource collection, to help parent governors
with their responsibilities. Staff hope to provide more of
such services in the future, and would like to develop closer
links with other organisations locally, such as local business
groups, departments of the city and county councils, the
city's art college, and the projected Lincoln University (31).

Library stock is currently purchased centrally for the whole
Lincoln area. The lending stock for the central library is
bought in response to local demand. It holds more single
copies of non-fiction and serious fiction than other libraries
simply because it is the largest library, and has the biggest
readership, so it does provide a backup to branches. However,
it is not financed as a county service, and does not presently
have the space to operate as such. The Lending Librarian
hopes that lending will become more of a county resource,
providing an extensive range of materials and subject coverage,
following redevelopment (32). Reference stock is currently
purchased on behalf of the county, and this will continue
in the new building.

One of the problems in the present building is that accommodation
for stock is not adequate. This should be resolved in the
new building, and there will be more room to develop the
collection, and to provide greater diversity in the stock.
The major problem with this is that of lack of money. A proposal
has been submitted, outlining the financial needs of the
new library, but this has not yet been accepted, and may
not be. The Principal Librarian estimates that £200,000 will
be needed to meet new shelf targets, and he is by no means
certain that the money will be made available (33). There
is no extra money to create new services, or to cover the
interim period.

As far as the interim period is concerned, reference and
local studies stock is to be moved in its entirety to its
temporary home in Lincoln Castle. For lending stock, shelf
targets will be applied to the available shelf space. These
will be category proportions, based on stock use analysis.
Stock will be transferred, leaving a large number of shelves
empty, to accommodate the return of material on loan. A weeding
programme is underway. New stock for the central library

will be purchased throughout the period of closure, and the
bookfund will be maintained, regardless of issue figures.
Development money may be available in addition to this, but
this is not certain. New stock will be made available in
the temporary building according to demand. The rest will
be stored, probably by the suppliers (34).

The Reference Librarian believes that books are still the
most important component of library stock, pointing out that
moans in the media about libraries are usually because of
a lack of books (35). The provision of printed material is
therefore a priority at the central library. They do loan
talking books and CDs, and are considering the idea of lending
videos. These would probably not be popular feature films,
and would be provided as an alternative or supplement to
printed matter. Suggested titles include cookery and excercise
videos, where seeing a demonstration would be prefereble
to reading instructions in a book. The extent to which
audio-visual materials should feature in the new library
is currently under discussion, but staff are adamant that
any new developments will not detract from the basic stock
(36).

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Chapter 7

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

Although the public library service is a unique organisation
in the United Kingdom, it does not operate in isolation.
Events in any number of different areas can have repercussions
for libraries. British public libraries operate as a department
of local government, so any reforms will have implications
for libraries, as will changes in central government policy.
As a prime user of information technology, the library service
will be affected by developments in this area. What follows
is by no means a comprehensive catalogue of external influences
on the public library service, but it does examine some specific
issues which have been prominent recently, and investigates
their influence on central libraries in general, and on Lincoln
Central Library in particular.

7.1. Local Government Elections 1993

The political map of the United Kingdom underwent an enormous
change at local government level on the night of 6 May 1993,
as the results of the county council elections were declared.
The Conservative Party retained control of only one county,
and lost a total of 490 seats. Labour and the Liberal Democrats
both gained seats, and a record 27 councils were hung, with
no party in overall control (1).

Eleven of the respondents in the central library survey are
in counties which took part in the county council elections,
and seven of these underwent a change of political control.
One of these was Peterborough. Cambridgeshire passed from
Conservative control to a hung council, controlled by Labour
and the Liberal Democrats working together. This has had

an effect at mundane levels, increasing the number of people
who have to be canvassed about changes, and making the
decision-making process longer (2). For Lincoln, the results
could have been more serious. Like Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire's
resident Conservative council was replaced by a hung council,
with a Labour chair and Liberal Democrat vice-chair. This
change could have had implications for the Central Library
project, if the Labour and Liberal Democrat members had objected
to any part of the plans, or the finances involved. Fortunately,
the new members are happy with the arrangements as they stand,
but the situation was potentially problematical. This illustrates
how vulnerable libraries are to the vagaries of local politics,
particularly in the planning stages.

The results of the elections have had a further implications
for Lincoln Central Library. The 1991 Local Government Bill
launched a consultation paper entitled Competing for quality,
which proposed the extension of competitive tendering within
local government to cover professional support services (3).
These included library services. Concepts such as competition,
client/contractor splits and trading accounts began to occupy
public librarians, and debates raged in the pages of The
Library Association Record. Despite widespread objections,
which centred on the compulsory nature of competition, and
the problems of fragmentation, conflicts of interest and
complexity (4), many library services recognised the inevitable,
and began to adopt the principles of competitive tendering.
Lincolnshire Library Service was one of these. However, in
the wake of the county council elections, plans for the
externalisation of services have been cancelled (5).

7.2. The Local Government Review

Following the Conservative Party leadership challenge in
1990, Michael Heseltine was made Secretary of State for the
Environment, and one of his first actions was to launch a

review of local government. A consultation paper, <u>The structure</u>
<u>of local government in England</u>, was published early in 1991,
and this outlined the government's preference for replacing
the existing two-tier structures with unitary authorities
(6). The reviews were divided into five "tranches", with
the first, which included Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset,
Cleveland and Durham, and Humberside, Lincolnshire and North
Yorkshire, beginning in July 1992 (7). The findings of the
commission were always going to have implications for libraries,
with the possible disintegration of large county-wide services,
and their dispersal to smaller councils (8).

The Local Government Commission began publishing its findings
in the summer of 1993. As expected, these have centred on
the creation of unitary authorities, and have addressed the
unpopularity of areas such as Avon, Cleveland and Humberside,
which were created in the last review of local government
in 1974. Two of the central libraries in the survey, Bath
(Avon) and Hartlepool (Cleveland) are currently in authorities
which were in the first tranche of the reviews. If the findings
of the commission are accepted, both Avon and Cleveland will
ba abolished, and the cities will form part of unitary
administrative areas (9). What will happen to local services,
including libraries, currently provided by these authorities
is unclear, but it will evidently involve a change of control,
and probably a period of profound disorganisation, which
the central libraries involved will not escape. They will
be serving different areas, and the number and composition
of their pool of users may change.

Lincolnshire was also in the first tranche of reviews, and
the commission's recommendations were published, along with
those for North Yorkshire and Humberside, on 21 June 1993.
The announcement was eagerly awaited by campaigners who were
hoping to see Humberside abolished. They were not disappointed.
The commission recommended that North Humberside be returned

to Yorkshire, and that South Humberside should revert back
to Lincolnshire, forming two new unitary authorities (10).
Uniquely so far, the commission elected to leave the present
two-tier structure in place in the rest of Lincolnshire.
This decision was a great relief to the management of Lincoln
Central Library. Roger Hundleby, the principal librarian,
had envisaged a scenario whereby the historic county of
Lincolnshire would be split into unitary authorities. This
would have had implications for the new central library.
A smaller authority may have objected to providing funds
for services such as local studies and reference, when they
are largely county resources, and would be used by people
from other authorities, without making a contribution (11).

7.3. Charging for services

In an article published in <u>Assistant Librarian</u> in 1987, Gerry
Burns stated that:

> For some time now, the idea that Public Libraries
> should be, to some degree at least, self-financing,
> has been gaining ground (12).

He went on to list some of the services that libraries were
charging for, in an effort to raise money (13). The results
of the central library survey suggest that, in the six years
since that article was written, the concept of charging for
services has become even more widespread. All 13 of the
respondents charged for some of their services, including
the loan of audio-visual material, inter-library loans and
the reproduction of microform and photographs. Many of these
charges can be seen as cost recovery exercises. It costs
the library money to request an inter-library loan or produce
a print, and to invest in new services, such as audio-visual
collections and online information. And, as the LISU annual
library statistics for 1992 prove, 'total expenditure on
public libraries has, since 1985, simply kept pace with
inflation' (14). For most libraries, charging is the only
way that they can introduce new services. This has a particular

impact on central libraries, who will be under greater pressure
to provide such services than smaller branches.

The concept of charging for services in libraries has gone
beyond simply recouping expenditure. Funding for libraries
is decided by local authorities, who have increasingly insisted
that libraries make a positive contribution to their upkeep.
Most libraries are expected to raise a portion of their budget
for themselves, through income generation. This can be achieved
through a variety of methods, including the sale of discarded
books, fines, profits from photocopying, and the sale of
stationary and novelties. The survey of central libraries
shows that they have not been slow to exploit their unique
facilities to generate income, with meeting rooms and display
or exhibition space routinely attracting a charge. Charging
for the loan of audio-visual material can also generate income,
since after a certain number of loans the item will have
paid for itself, but this must be set against the fact that
such material can deteriorate quickly, and few libraries
could afford to provide them without levying a fee. Despite
all this, the majority of services, and certainly the core
ones, remain free at the point of delivery, and there are
exemptions for certain groups on those that are charged.
There is not, as yet, any sign of libraries following the
advice of The Times, and charging a fee for the loan of popular
fiction and bestsellers, to subsidise more serious works
(15).

Lincoln Central Library currently charges for a fairly standard
range of services, including CDs, photocopying, some children's
activities and exhibitions, meeting room space, and reproductions
from the photographic collection. Any new services introduced
in the new building would have to be charged, since no money
is being made available to cover their introduction. Library
staff are currently discussing the possibility of charging
for inter-library loans, talking books and some enquiries,

which commonly attract a charge in other libraries. Increases
in current charges are another possibility, but nothing definite
has been decided yet (16).

The question of income generation is also being carefully
considered. In common with most libraries, Lincoln Central
has to make a certain amount of money each year, although
the target is usually based on the previous year's total,
and is therefore not too daunting. Staff at the library believe
that income generation is most sucessful when it is related
to the basic work of the library, naming activities such
as book sales, photocopying and the reproduction of photographs.
Staff are keen to put income generation on a proper footing
in the new building, believing that, as it has to be done,
it is best done in a systematic way. Possibilities for the
new building include agreements with booksellers to sell
books in the library, and an extended range of items for
sale, possibly based on the sucessful gift shops at Lincoln
Castle and Museum. Whatever is decided, staff are determined
to exploit the potential offered by the new building in an
organised way (17).

7.4. The Citizen's Charter

The need to set objectives for the public library service
has long been recognised. In times of financial constraint
and cuts in public spending, the service must be able to
justify its funding, and its existence. One way to do this
is to set clear objectives, and to be seen to meet them.
In 1971, the Public Libraries Research Group published a
statement of public library aims and objectives in The Library
Association Record (18), and followed this 10 years later
with the publication of a document bearing the same title
(19). This proved to be an extremely influential document,
and in the suceeding years many other books and articles
have been published on the subject. In 1991, the Office of

Arts and Libraries produced a self-help for guide for library managers faced with objective setting (20). Despite all this activity, or perhaps because of it, the adoption of a standard set of aims and objectives has never been achieved.

This process has been given a new impetus by the creation in 1991 of The Citizen's Charter. This document sets out the standard of service that people can expect from public bodies, focusing on the themes of quality, choice, standards and value, and aims to, 'increase community interest and involvement in local government' (21). The Charter encourages the pursuit of excellence in service delivery through the development of a Charter Standard for each area of local government. Where that excellence is achieved, the department will have the right to use a Charter Mark on their publicity (22).

The public library service has, on the whole, embraced the concept of The Citizen's Charter. The Library Association, 'welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion' (23), and 'would like to see the Charter Mark developed as a system of accreditation' (24). MORI recently undertook research into library services on behalf of the Audit Commission, the purpose of which was to, 'decide on appropriate performance indicators for the library service under the Citizen's Charter legislation (25). If adopted, the Citizen's Charter could provide a universal set of performance indicators for libraries.

Eight of the respondents in the central library survey have customer charters, setting out the standards of service that users can expect. Two more have charters in preparation. This would seem to indicate that the charter approach has been more widely adopted than previous attempts at objective setting. These documents set out what the customer can expect in the way of basic rights, services, access and materials.

Customers often have the right to raise issues with a named
staff member, and to expect an answer within a certain time.
Only three library authorities (Kent, Bromley and Wandsworth)
currently hold Charter Marks (26), but it seems likely that
others will follow. Cambridgeshire County Council Libraries,
which covers Peterborough Central Library, is currently in
the process of applying for the Charter Mark (27). Lincolnshire
Recreation Services has produced a statement of customer
services for libraries, which is currently awaiting official
approval by the local council.

7.5. "Library 2000"

The year 2000 is no longer a distant date from the pages
of science fiction. It is only seven years away, and libraries
who operate long-term strategic plans will already be faced
with carrying library provision into the next century. However
unsure that future may be from some points of view, one certainty
is that information technology will play an ever-increasing
role in libraries. The pace of development over the past
decade has been phenomenal, and there is no reason to suppose
that this will change during the next 10 years. If public
libraries are not to be left floundering in the wake of
technological advances, they must attempt to keep pace with
developments. This is particularly true of central libraries,
which will be under more pressure than smaller branches to
provide state-of-the-art technology.

The Fourth Library Resources Exhibition was held at the NEC,
Birmingham from 15 - 17 June 1993. Amongst the attractions
was "Library 2000", a reconstruction of a public library
featuring the latest developments in I.T. and library equipment.
It was advertised as providing, 'a unique preview of the
resources that will change the face of libraries over the
next decade' (28). These included the latest release of Geac's
library system software (29), an advanced security system,

a Kurzweil Reader, Linguaphone Minilab language laboratory,
and CD-ROM jukebox (30). All of these point to the increasing
dominance of technology in libraries. The feature which caused
the most interest and comment was a self-issue system, which
allowed customers to issue, renew and return their own books,
and even pay off fines, without the intervention of a library
worker. If adopted, such systems could have a major impact
on the face of public libraries. On a negative note, there
is the fear that they could remove the element of human contact
from libraries. More positively, they could free staff from
routine tasks, allowing them to concentrate more on customer
enquiries. This is the line taken by the systems' sales material.
Such systems are well established in Australia, and a
representative of a company which manufactures them there
explained that they have typically been installed in addition
to existing service points, and that customers are quick
to adapt to their use, so that they account for up to 50%
of loan transactions in one library (31). If developments
such as these are to be adopted in UK libraries, it is likely
to be the larger central libraries who will pioneer their
use in the public sector. The managers of central libraries,
particularly those which are undergoing redevelopment, need
to be aware of developments such as these.

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Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. General

8.1.1. The role of the central library

The most appropriate role for the central library is to provide,
'an appropriate instead of comprehensive service' (1). The
public library service has accumulated so many functions
over the years that, in these times of financial stringency,
it can no longer hope to fulfil them all effectively. The
central library in particular should resist the temptation
to be all things to all people, and should provide facilities
in response to local need. This is a particular challenge
for central libraries, as their unique position makes it
difficult for them to know exaclty what "local" means. This
would appear to be happening in recently built central libraries,
with managers identifying the role of the central library
as providing a local service to the people of the city, and
a backup to the county as a whole.

8.1.2. Customer profile

This concentration on local need should begin in the planning
stages of the project. This will be a lengthy process, but
it should not be wasted time. Managers should take the
opportunity to re-assess their customer profile, and decide
how the new library can best meet the needs of the population
it serves. It should also be a period of consultation. The
managers of recently built central libraries seem to have
been less than willing to consult users directly about their
ideas and opinions. Users should be told about the plans
at an early stage, and given a chance to express their thoughts.
Keeping staff and users informed and involved will ensure
that the building is shaped to the needs of those who will

use it, and help to keep goodwill during the potentially
difficult interim period.

8.1.3. Location and design

The role of the central library should be expressed in its
location and structure. The building should be sited in the
heart of the city, where it will attract the maximum number
of users. This can be achieved by forming part of a commercial
development, such as a shopping centre. There are benefits
and drawbacks to this arrangement. On the plus side, the
library gets a prime location in a new development, which
will naturally attract large numbers of people, and the site
will frequently be provided at a reasonable price. However,
being part of a larger development can mean that the library
has little influence over location and design. The central
libraries who took this option complained of lack of input
and consultation during planning, and problems with noise.
In general terms, it is desirable that the library should
occupy its own site (2). There is also the problem of a lack
of identity, both in this situation, and in locations where
the library has to blend architecturally with its surroundings.
The role played by windows and signs in combatting this
difficulty should not be underestimated.

8.1.4. Internal layout

Inside the building, the aim should be to achieve flexibility,
so that the central library can be re-arranged as future
developments demand, and so that it can be put to a variety
of uses. The best way of achieving this is through an open
plan layout, but there are inherent problems with this approach.
Some open plan central libraries had experienced difficulties
with noise from lending and children's areas disturbing those
wishing to study quietly. Some separation of such areas,
either through siting them on different floors, or separating
them with some sort of partition, is desirable.

8.1.5. Furniture and shelving

The importance of apparent peripherals, such as furniture,
lighting and colour schemes, should not be underestimated.
They may not be vital to the essential work of the library,
but, if used well, can create an attractive and welcoming
space, which people will want to use. A MORI survey on library
use discovered that customers rated 'an inviting atmosphere',
'comfortable seating', 'good lighting' and 'attractive
appearance' as important criteria for judging libraries (3).
The use of signing within the library can also enhance its
appearance, and enable users to make better use of the facilities
available.

8.1.6. Facilities

The range of facilities provided by recently built central
libraries illustrates that they fulfil a role as part of
the community they serve. As well as traditional library
functions, most also provide meeting rooms, exhibition space,
display areas, and other resources for local individuals
and groups. These are valuable additions to basic library
functions, and can help to encourage use by a wider range
of people, who may not otherwise use the library. Care should
be taken not to double up with existing purpose-built facilities
in the area. Public lavatories should be provided, since
users seem to want them, and not to provide them can create
an unwelcoming impression.

8.1.7. Library staff

The interests of library staff should not be overlooked.
They should be involved throughout the planning and building
process, and visits should be made to other library buildings.
The managers of recently built central libraries seem to
have recognised this. Staff areas should be built and equipped
to the same standards as those used by the public. Staff
should be consulted over the layout and design of furniture.

Air-conditioning should be installed if possible, as this
greatly enhances working conditions for library staff. MORI
discovered that users rated 'helpful staff' as the third
most important criteria for judging libraries (4). Staff
are more likely to deal with customers in a friendly and
efficient manner if their working conditions are comfortable.

8.1.8. Library services

The range of services provided by the central library should
be tailored to meet local needs. There will be a range of
"core" services which the library will be generally expected
to provide, such as lending and reference. In addition to
this, libraries can choose to provide a variety of extra
services, which should be community-based. This seems to
be the approach taken by recently built central libraries,
and at Lincoln Central Library.

8.1.9. Library stock

It is not the place of the central library to be judgmental
about the stock it provides. So-called pulp fiction and
audio-visual materials should not be dismissed out of hand,
when they obviously play an important part in the lives of
many people. Nor should they be allowed to dominate stock,
to the exclusion of material which is less popular, but which
is still used by a significant minority of people. The role
of the central library is to provide a balanced range of
stock for local use, and to make it available to smaller
libraries, who may only be able to accommodate material which
is in constant demand.

8.1.10. External influences

Once the planning and building of the new library is underway,
it is easy to focus solely on the project, and to disregard
broader issues. This temptation should be resisted. Events
in the worlds of local and national politics, the information

profession, and information technology, can have implications
for the central library, particularly in the planning stages.

8.2. Lincoln Central Library

8.2.1. The interim service

The immediate task at Lincoln Central Library is to put in
place an interim service, to cover the two year closure period.
Staff are currently unsure about how successful this service
will be (5), but they are doing their best with the facilities
and resources available. In their favour, lending and reference
services will be housed adjacent to the current site, and
other services are to be relocated in accordance with the
wishes of users.

8.2.2. Library staff

Library staff have so far been consulted regularly, from
the drafting of the initial proposals, to the submission
of the building specification. They have also been involved
in planning the interim service.

8.2.3. Location and design

The early stages of planning have been completed. The location
of the building is a good one, being in the city centre.
The design of the building itself was subject to many
restrictions, in terms of size and shape, and appearance,
and good use has been made of the site available. The design
is both functional and attractive, making better use of the
available space than the present building, and improving
access.

8.2.4. Internal layout

The public area is open plan, and is designed to be flexible.
The exception is the children's area, which is to be housed

in one wing of the original Carnegie building, but given
the noise and disturbance which junior sections often create,
this is not necessarily a bad thing.

8.2.5. Furniture and shelving

The new library will provide a good range of facilities,
which will encourage broader use of the building. After some
debate, public lavatories are to be included, which will
also help to create a welcoming ambience. Matters such as
the arrangement and design of furniture and shelving, and
colour schemes, have not yet been decided.

8.2.6. Services and stock

Library staff see their services and stock in terms of "core"
and "extras", and are concerned to achieve excellence in
core services (6). The provision of new services will rightly
be approached cautiously. Both the range and quantity of
stock will be improved in the new building.

8.2.7. External influences

Staff at the library have already had to face county council
elections and the recommendations of the Local Government
Review in recent months. They are therefore well aware of
the implications which external events could have on the
project. Other developments which they will need to consider
include the creation of a University of Lincolnshire, and
the building of a University College, which will form part
of Nottingham Trent University (7). There is also the possibility
that the favourable outcome of the Local Government Review
will not be accepted. The consultation process is currently
underway (8), and alternative options are being debated (9).

8.3. Recommendations

These recommendations relate specifically to the redevelopment
of Lincoln Central Library. It is very difficult to make
general recommendations, which will apply to all central
library buildings, since each project will have its own local
difficulties and issues to address. It should be noted that
the situation at Lincoln is changing all the time. Much has
happened during the past six months, and the pace of change
is likely to increase as the move to temporary accommodation
is made, and work on the building begins. Some of the points
raised will therefore be under discussion already at Lincoln,
or are on the agenda for the future.

Consultation with users of Lincoln Central Library should
continue throughout the interim, as new services and facilities
are planned.

Staff consultation should continue, particularly with regard
to the layout of staff areas and design of furniture. They
should be given as much information about decisions which
affect them as possible, since the successful transfer of
the service to temporary accommodation, the provision of
an interim service, and eventual move to the new building,
will depend largely on staff goodwill.

Directional signs to Lincoln Central Library need to be improved,
since it is not visible from the main shopping area. It should
also be signed from the tourist area by the castle and cathedral.

The adoption of an open plan layout is ideal in terms of
flexibility, but, given the experience of some other central
libraries, some sort of separation, such as a row of higher
shelving, should be considered between lending and reference

areas.

The selection of furniture, shelving and colour schemes for
the new building should be made carefully, since comfortable
furnishings, easily accessible shelves and soft colours go
a long way to creating the 'inviting atmosphere' which library
users rate so highly (10). Similar care should be taken in
the staff areas. The use of signs and guiding within the
library should be throughly reviewed, and a comprehensive
system put in place in the new building.

Local demand should be assessed before any extra services
are introduced in the new library. Reference and lending
stock should aim to provide a broad range of subject coverage,
both for local use, and to provide a backup for smaller libraries
throughout the county.

A change in the recommendations of the Local Government Review
for Lincolnshire could still have implications for the central
library, and this should not be forgotten. A close watch
should also be kept on the progress of the city's two projected
universities. If possible, contact should be made with the
authorities concerned, to assess the possible impact on the
central library. These issues, and others such as income
generation and developments in information technology, should
occupy the attention of the managers of Lincoln Central Library
during the lengthy planning and building process.

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Appendix 1

CENTRAL LIBRARIES BUILT OR REFURBISHED SINCE 1988

1988 - Chelmsford Central Library
New building. In County Hall.

Fleetwood Central Library
New building.

St. Albans Central Library
New building. In shopping precinct.

Shrewsbury Central Library
Refurbishment. Extension to Lending Library.

South Glamorgan Central Library
New building. In shopping centre.

Telford Town Centre Library
New building.

1989 - Bexleyheath Central Library
Phase two of redevelopment.

East Kilbride Central Library
New building. In shopping centre.

Jersey Central Library
New building.

1990 - Bath Central Library
        New building. Above supermarket.

        Peterborough Central Library
        New building.

        Weymouth Central Library
        New building.

1991 - Hartlepool Central Library
        New building.

1992 - Hastings Central Library
        Refurbishment.

Appendix 2

CENTRAL LIBRARY SURVEY

1. Please identify the nature of the project.

> New building   ( )
> Rebuilding   ( )
> Refurbishment   ( )
> Other (please   ( )
> specify)

2. When did planning for the building/refurbishment begin?

   On what date was the new building opened/re-opened?

3. During the planning stages, did you consult:

> a) Library users   YES ( )   NO ( )
> b) Library staff   YES ( )   NO ( )
> c) Other libraries   YES ( )   NO ( )
> d) Library suppliers   YES ( )   NO ( )
> e) Other (please   YES ( )   NO ( )
> specify)

4. Were there any special factors which had to be taken into consideration, eg.planning restrictions, security arrangements etc.?

5. What arrangements were made for the continuation of the service during alterations/removal to new premises?

6. Which of these services does the library currently provide?

Adult lending	( )
Children's lending	( )
Reference	( )
Enquiry desk	( )
Local studies	( )
Talking Books	( )
Record/CD lending	( )
Video lending	( )
Book sales	( )
Study space	( )
Local/national newspapers	( )
Inter-library loans	( )
Children's activities	( )
CD-ROM	( )
Online information	( )
Business information	( )
Meetings room	( )
Exhibition space	( )
Photocopying	( )
Computer facilities	( )
Special collection (specify)	( )
Other (specify)	( )

7. Do you charge for any of these services?

YES ( )   NO ( )

Please specify service(s) and charge(s)

8. Were any new services introduced at the time of building/
   refurbishment?

                   YES ( )   NO ( )

   Please specify.

9. Does the library have a mission statement/customer charter?

                   YES ( )   NO ( )

   If so, I would be grateful if you could include a copy
   with your reply.

10.Have there been follow-up studies, to assess the popularity
   of the new facilities/services with:

              a) Library users   YES ( )   NO ( )
              b) Library staff   YES ( )   NO ( )
              c) Other (please   YES ( )   NO ( )
                 specify)

   If so, what form did these studies take?
   How have the changes been received?

11.What do you believe to be the primary role of the central
   library? Eg. county resource, service to the city, part
   of a larger service etc.

12.With the benefit of hindsight, is there anything connected
   with the building/refurbishment that you wish you had
   not done, or anything that you did not do, and wish you
   had?

Appendix 3

CENTRAL LIBRARY SURVEY - SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. Please identify the nature of the project.

New building   11

Rebuilding

Refurbishment   2

Other (please
specify)

2. When did planning for the building/refurbishment begin?
   On what date was the new building opened/re-opened?

1) 1980s- 1/10/93
2) 1984 - 1/8/88
3) 1986 - 19/5/88
4) 1989 - 29/7/91
5) 1987 - 2/3/92
6) 1985 - 5/89
7) 1985 - 7/90
8) 1985 - 5/88 (discussions since 1960s)
9) 1976 - 1984
10) 1980 - 6/12/88
11)   8/2/88
12) 1989 - 9/11/90
13) 1980s- 11/89

3. During the planning stages, did you consult:

a) Library users   YES 4   NO 9
b) Library staff   YES 12   NO 1
c) Other libraries   YES 10   NO 3

d) Library suppliers   YES   5   NO   8

e) Other (please   YES   6   NO   7
    specify)

Others: Architects

        Architects, specialist construction firms

        Disabled groups

        Development Corporation, County Council Property

        Department

        Local Development Corporation

        Local library committee

4. Were there any special factors which had to be taken into consideration, eg.planning restrictions, security arrangements etc.?

1) The building was available as the result of an agreement between the District Council and a developer, to make available a space for library purposes in a commercial development. The library is on the first floor above a supermarket.

2) Library on first floor of major 5 storey extension to County Hall. Originally planned to link with new library for polytechnic, but this did not proceed.

4) Built-in book security system.

5) Listed Grade 2 Victorian "edifice".

6) Facade to fit with existing buildings. Frontage went through 3 re-drafts. Access for the disabled a priority.

7) Conflict between fire regulation requirements and security needs.

8) Part of shopping precinct development. Size of space available for library predetermined.

9) Grade 1 listed building. Materials had to be of the highest quality.

10) Library was to be housed on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors of a large commercial development.

11) Need to fit in with the ongoing development of the

Town Shopping Centre and the desires of the Development Corporation.

12) Site works difficult - needed piling. Elongated site. Borough Council was difficult at times over design. Changes only made as a sop and gesture, since County Council could have given itself planning permission.

13) Library placed within new shopping centre operated by private concern. Situated above ice-rink - factors such as sound-proofing had to be considered. Disabled access.

5. What arrangements were made for the continuation of the service during alterations/removal to new premises?

1) None. The service was discontinued for six weeks for the move to take place.

2) Closed for ten days during removal of items and equipment. Public directed to 5 community libraries in the area.

3) Service was broken for only 3 days during transfer from one building to another.

4) Users were directed to 6 branch libraries and a mobile during the 3 week closure of the old building.

5) Service continued using 3 different locations, 2 in vicinity of Central, 1 (mainly for storage) 1 - 1½ miles from town centre. Lending staff operated with less than ⅓ of stock. Reference supplied approx. ¼ of stock, concentrating on reference enquiry, community information, local studies and genealogy.

6) Library closed for 5 weeks whilst stock was moved.

7) Closed for 10 days for removals and restocking. "Drop box" for returned books.

8) Closed for 2 weeks, with provision for return of books, plus publicity for neighbouring libraries which could be used.

9) A pre-fabricated building on another site nearby.

10) The old library remained open for the whole of the move, with the exception of a three week period.

12) The public were without a service for only 6 working days - a much longer closure would have been beneficial in hindsight.

13) Library moved to a temporary location within the Civic Centre for the duration of the building of the new library.

6. Which of these services does the library currently provide?

Adult lending	13
Children's lending	13
Reference	12
Enquiry desk	13
Local studies	13
Talking Books	13
Record/CD lending	13
Video lending	8
Book sales	13
Study space	13
Local/national newspapers	12
Inter-library loans	13
Children's activities	13
CD-ROM	5
Online information	6
Business information	11
Meetings room	11
Exhibition space	13
Photocopying	13
Computer facilities	6
Special collection (specify)	4
Other (specify)	6

Special collections: Health information point
County social sciences
County science and technology
Local history
Shipping

Community needs/special needs

Environment

Other Services: Reservation service

Family history - Parish records/census
dating back to 1841

International Genealogical Index

Mobile library service

Prison/hospital/housebound service

CCTV (2)

OPACs

Microfilm reader/printer

Fax (2)

Kurzweil machine (2)

Materials in etnic minority languages (2)

Welsh

Playgroup collection

Travel and tourism

Children's activity room

Reserve store

7. Do you charge for any of these services?

        YES   13   NO

Please specify service(s) and charge(s).

Reservations: 40p - 45p

Videos: 50p - £2.00 per loan

Audio material: £14.00 annual subscription
                25p - 50p per loan

CD's: 50p - 60p per item
      70p per week

Music cassettes: 25p - 70p per loan

Talking books: 25p - £1.00 per loan

Language tapes: 50p per week

Online searches: £10.00 minimum - full cost

Photocopying: 10p - 15p per sheet (A4 black and white)
              £1.00 - £1.50 (colour)

Reader printer: 12p - 20p per print

Inter-library loans: £1.50 - £5.00

Meetings room: £1.50 per hour - £50.00 per session

Exhibition space: £32.00 per week

Display case: £2.50 per week

% of sales on exhibitions

8. Were any new services introduced at the time of building/
   refurbishment?

                 YES   9   NO   4

   Please specify: Recorded music library
                   Meetings room   (3)
                   Exhibition space (3)
                   Study carrels
                   CD's (4)
                   Videos
                   CD-ROM
                   Computer facilities
                   Special collections

Music cassettes (2)

Talking books

Kurzweil machine

CCTV

Business information

Holiday planning

Online

Prestel

British standards

National newspapers

9. Does the library have a mission statement/customer charter?

YES   8   NO   5

Comments : Currently in preparation (2).
           For the service as a whole.
           For the Council as a whole.

10. Have there been follow-up studies, to assess the popularity
    of the new facilities/services with:

    a) Library users   YES   8   NO   5
    b) Library staff   YES   4   NO   9
    c) Other (please   YES   NO   13
       specify)

If so, what form did these studies take?

a) Library users:

    1) Informal discussion with local library committee.
    2) Questionnaires handed out to readers over a specified
        time.
    4) A survey of 600 users using a 4 page questionnaire.
    5) Customers are given the opportunity to complete
        "comments, compliments and complaints" forms. Many

have done so.

  6) Discussion groups at all levels.

  7) Surveys of A/V users and Business Library users. Customer complaints and comments forms.

  8) Review of opening hours from issue/head count statistics.

  9) Part of a county-wide questionnaire survey on customer satisfaction.

10) Questionnaires and personal interviews.

13) Survey of users (questionnaire).

b)Library staff:

  1) Informal discussion with staff.

  5) Two staff meetings have been held to discuss the refurbished building.

10) Questionnaires and personal interviews.

How have the changes been received?

1) Generally well. Most people prefer the ambience of the new building. Some preferred the cloistered silence of the previously separate reference library, and do not like the open plan of the new.

2) Initial public reaction has been very favourable.

3) If usage is a guide, the changes have been very popular. Issues increased from 100,000 - 400,000 p.a.

4) 98% satisfied or very satisfied with new services/ facilities. 300% increase in issues maintained up to present.

5) Very well by the public - issues up 32%
Staff are less happy - more business than before refurbishment, but the same staff levels.

6) Very well.

7) Mixed. New attractive building popular with staff and customers. Usage and issues sharply increased. But expectations also raised of variety and quality of service.

8) Open plan design has caused most adverse comment.

Noise, especially from children, cannot be contained,
and those browsing and studying are disturbed.

10) Very well - 100% increase in issues and usage.

12) Public mostly happy with new facilities. Some initial
criticism since public toilets were not provided (as
a conscious policy).

13) Generally well. Problems of noise from the shopping
centre and poor lighting/heating/ventilation have
been commented on.

11. What do you believe to be the primary role of the central
library? Eg. county resource, service to the city, part
of a larger service etc.

1) To serve the city and its surrounding area. To act
as a gateway to the wider resources of the county.
To contribute to the resources of the county.

2) Fulfils all 3 roles mentioned. Houses 3 major county
collections; it serves residents, workers and students
in the county town, and is the Group HQ for the West
Group of the County Library Service, ie approx. ⅓
of the County - around 32 libraries.

3) Service to the city and surrounding area, as part
of a larger service.

5) To act as the central resource for the area, whilst
playing a wider role as part of the larger county
service.

6) To provide the best lending and reference services
possible from the resources available.

7) All of the above.

8) As a local community facility and backup to smaller
outlying libraries. Countywide role has diminished
since a Central Resources Library has been established
(Oct 1991).

9) All of these.

10) Primary role is that of a city library, although it
does fulfil the other functions also.

11) This is not a "Central Library" as such. It is the
largest library in the area, based at the Town Centre.

12) It expects to serve the library and information needs
of the area and to be a back-up to five other libraries
in the Group.

13) Principal role is to provide a wide range of specialist
services for the town. Main reference/research centre.
Also acts as a "local library" for geographically
close residents. The "hub" of the town's cultural
and literary life

12. With the benefit of hindsight, is there anything connected
with the building/refurbishment that you wish you had
not done, or anything that you did not do, and wish you
had?

1) Not in general. After 2½ years I am still very satisfied
with the outcome. Main regrets relate to the poor
level of funding for equipment, staffing, and particularly
new book stock. We have also had to make alterations
to counters and enquiry desks as a result of experience
in use, but these are not major.

2) Given the limitations of the space provided (this
was not a purpose-built library), I feel we have made
the best use of what was available.

3) Provided more room for the music library.

6) In the light of increased usage, would probably double
the size of the reference library and totally reorganise
the workroom and bibliographic services department.

7) Needs: car park, coffee bar, private PC facilities.
Needed: toilets, wide entrance for buggies (rectified
later). Counter/enquiry desk layout improved. Theatre
projection room poorly planned. Full air conditioning
- not present air circulation.

8) Insufficient influence over design - large exterior
balcony is wasted space; lack of any sound baffling
or partitioning to public areas. Also, poor ventilation,

inadequate roof space design; poor quality/choice of carpet.

9) Greater flexibility in arrangement and furnishings. Solid counters made-to-measure with dividers soon became inadequate and had to be adapted to new formats.

10) Exhibition area is on the 3rd floor within part of the library that is largely a staff administration area. It is too far from the "mainstream" of the library and should have been built somewhere in the core. The issue/return area should have been twice the size. It becomes too congested.

11) The building is hexagonal and award-winning. It is attached to another community building "Meeting Point House", and the original intention was that these two buildings operated together. In practice, the building time went out of synchronisation and the buildings were built separately. This is a source of regret for total community use. It also precludes further major library development.

12) We were pressured into taking over the building without architect's department being on hand. Need proper continuing presence to iron out problems. Air exchange system not adequate - need proper air-conditioning. Service contracts for certain systems and equipment should have been taken out from the beginning of service. Not enough consultation between architects and staff actually working in the library over certain aspects, eg. automatic doors, window design.

13) The chance of input at the planning stage was severely constrained by the fact that it was paid for entirely by a Development Corporation - but lighting and the position of the building itself are major problems.

<u>Further comments:</u>

1) Hopes for a new library for the city had been raised
    many times before the eventual agreement between the
    City Council, the county, and a developer to provide
    a new library as part of a commercial development.
    Planning began in the mid 1980s, by which time it
    had been decided (almost by default) to transfer the
    existing services as they were to the new building,
    with little review of the future needs of the city
    and the development of the service. In particular,
    the large open shelf stock of the reference library
    was to be accomadated without change. The proposed
    staffing structure reflected this policy of little
    change. At this point it was too late to influence
    the layout of the library to any great degree, but
    its appearence and in particular the staffing structure,
    could be altered, and are now radically different
    to that originally proposed, with an integrated team
    that breaks down the barriers between lending and
    reference sections.
    Our main problem has been the lack of funds to properly
    revise and develop the stock and to ensure staffing
    levels have been appropriate for the service demanded.
4) Project completed in utmost haste. Usage up by 300%,
    staffing up by 18%.
11) The library was the first in the country to use the
    Point 8 shelving system, previously best known as
    shopfitters for the retail trade rather than for
    libraries. This was a deliberate intention to get
    away from the traditional library look so that our
    clients who use the retail shopping in the Town Centre
    would not notice a major difference when they used
    the library. The concept has been sucessful and Point
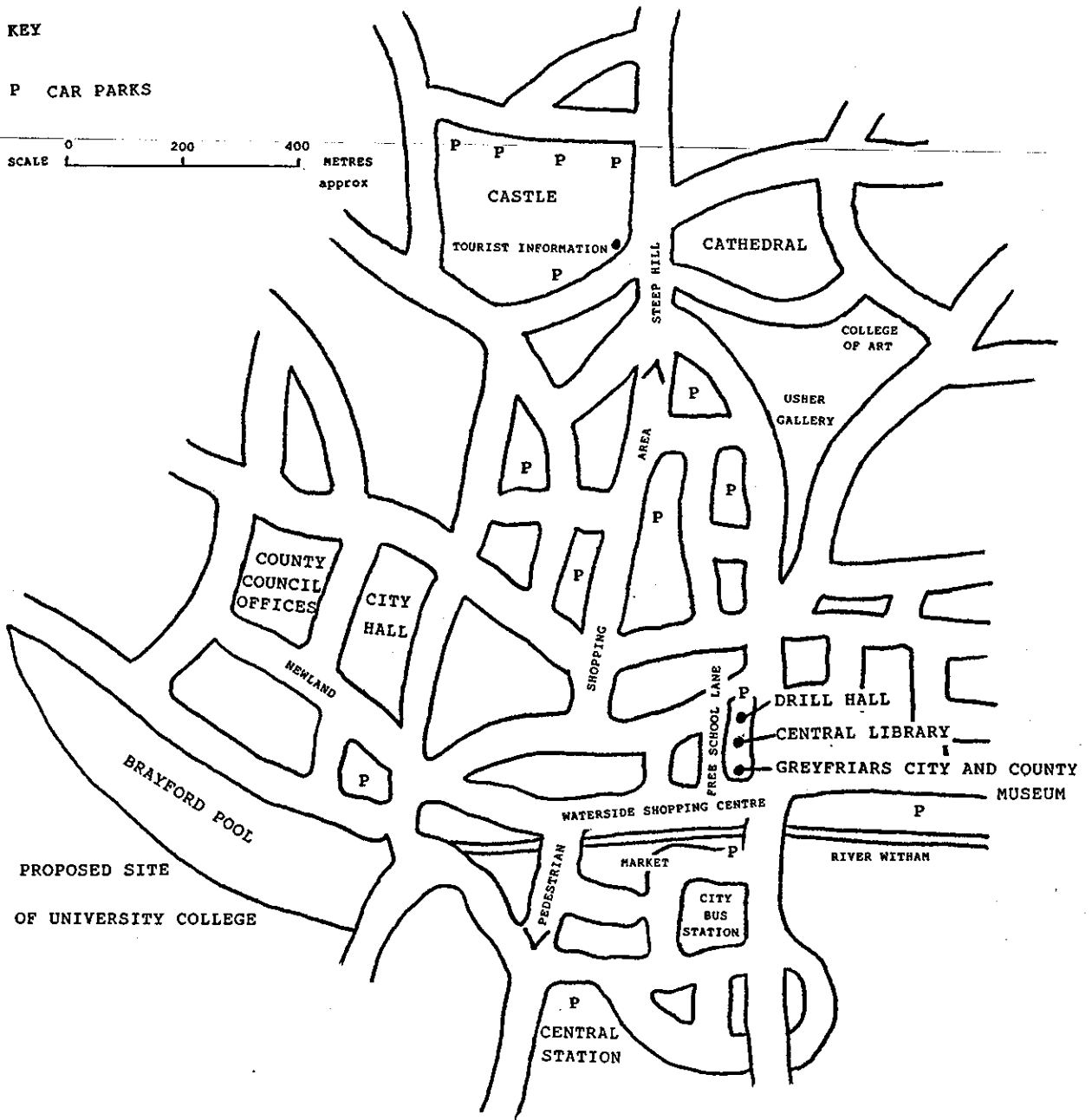   8 have fitted out other libraries within the county.

MAP OF LINCOLN CITY CENTRE

KEY

P   CAR PARKS

SCALE 0 200 400 METRES approx

P P P P

CASTLE

TOURIST INFORMATION ●

P

STEEP HILL

CATHEDRAL

COLLEGE OF ART

USHER GALLERY

P

AREA

P

P

P

P

COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICES

CITY HALL

NEWLAND

SHOPPING

P

P

FREE SCHOOL LANE

P

DRILL HALL

CENTRAL LIBRARY

GREYFRIARS CITY AND COUNTY MUSEUM

BRAYFORD POOL

P

WATERSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE

P

RIVER WITHAM

PROPOSED SITE

OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

PEDESTRIAN

MARKET

P

CITY BUS STATION

P

CENTRAL STATION

Appendix 5

MAP OF LINCOLNSHIRE, SHOWING LIBRARY SERVICE AREAS, AND BRANCH LIBRARIES IN THE LINCOLN AREA
(courtesy of Lincoln Central Library)

Appendix 6

FLOOR PLAN OF THE NEW LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY

GROUND FLOOR

(courtesy of Lincoln Central Library)

FLOOR PLAN OF THE NEW LINCOLN CENTRAL LIBRARY - FIRST FLOOR
(courtesy of Lincoln Central Library)