Preconception to Participation

Young People's Experience of Public Library Architecture

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ABSTRACT

This research tests the role of architecture in the experience of young people's engagement with public libraries. It identifies interaction with both university students and non-students in the 16-25 age group as being of key importance to the library service, and hence to the built environments through which it is delivered.

Interrogation of relevant literature demonstrates that libraries exist at the boundary of multiple disciplines, and have been subject to study through various methodologies. Consequently, terms are identified that locate the experience of libraries appropriately within the architectural field. This is built upon by a second review phase that links the research to previous work in the thematic areas inductively generated from its extensive body of primary data.

The rationale for a qualitative and spatially-cued approach to data collection is established through an interpretivist framework, which posits that the meanings attached to reality are the product of social action and revision. This advances the initial premise that preconceptions as to the appearance, contents, occupants and functions that constitute a library pose challenges to young people's participation in new architectural experiences.

The findings reveal the complexity of library preconceptions that young people carry with them, as well as the social and spatial information they interact with and interpret when making the physical and mental journey from city to service interaction. Furthermore, due to the inclusion of a student participant group, what has emerged carries implications for the design of academic libraries in addition to public libraries.

The study concludes that lines of sight, noise transfer, and the expectations of young people create complex patterns of interpretation that prevent modern library architecture from being immutable: it is judged against the architectural experiences of memory, against media and fictional representations, and according to the socio-spatial interior conditions of any given moment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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List of Abbreviations

ALA		American Library Association
	AASL	American Association of School Librarians (ALA division)
	ACRL	Association of College and Research Libraries (ALA division)
	YALSA	Young Adult Library Services Association (ALA division)
CABE		Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CILIP		Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
FSM		Free School Meals
GIS		Geographic Information System
GPS		Global Positioning System
IFLA		International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
LJMU		Liverpool John Moores University
NLT		National Literacy Trust
OED		Oxford English Dictionary
OMA		Office for Metropolitan Architecture
ONS		Office for National Statistics
PFI		Private Finance Initiative
PPGIS		Public Participation Geographic Information Systems
PPM		Participatory Photo Mapping
RIBA		Royal Institute of British Architects
RICS		Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

SCONUL   Society of College, National and University Libraries

UNDESA   United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UX   User Experience

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXTUALISING LIBRARIES

Over the last century, conceptions of public libraries have changed dramatically in popular culture. In November 1913, C. W. Casson, the editor of the Ottawa Citizen, described the public library as "the temple of democracy… whose atmosphere compels reverence" (see Wiseman 1989 p.ii), and the democratic connection was made repeatedly during the early decades of the public libraries. Andrew Carnegie, the steel magnate and funder of several thousand library buildings mainly in the UK and US, proclaimed that "there is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library" (Hensley 2001 p.186).

One hundred years later however, in a lecture to the Reading Agency delivered in October 2013, Neil Gaiman (2013), the author and ambassador for children's literacy, did not evoke the term. Instead, he called libraries "gates to the future", a future he believes society has a responsibility towards: "to children, to the adults those children will become, to the world they will find themselves inhabiting".

These differing views starkly illustrate the transformation that libraries have undergone since the days of their proliferation, from being conceived of as sanctuaries that stood apart from their cities, to open, transparent environments that are fully embedded within them. Understanding the effect of this change on the accessibility of modern library buildings is crucial, perhaps more so now than ever before. As local councils continue to be faced with spending cuts, consolidating library services has become common practice, and often entails the closure of small branch libraries and the augmentation of central libraries with other services. Driven particularly by a changing information technology landscape since the 1990s, modern conceptions of library function have been simultaneously complexified as the traditional core association with storing and lending books has been undermined, adding both opportunity and threat to a complex problem.

In response to information technology advancements, there have been assertions a library needs to be no more than a collection of online distributed resources: "books" without a

building[1]. Others have suggested that it can be the inverse: a building without books (see Bell 2012 for a discussion of this potential). Consensus in most public library systems still very much favours a balance of physical and online media, services and spaces combined together while also accessible remotely. Cardiff Central Library is a pertinent example of a modern public library reasserting the point of balance; during renovations in 2015 Floor 5, formerly the local studies department, was transformed into a "digital floor", complete with "digital wall"[2], tablets and 3D printer.

Substantial literature has been created that proceeds (either implicitly or explicitly) from the problem of defining library value faced with the joint pressures of reduced public spending and the undermining of print media. This literature does not typically concern itself with design of buildings for library space (such activities being outside the realm of day-to-day library operation), and instead resides within a library management field (e.g. Crowley et al. 2002; Proctor et al. 1998; Clark 2010; Lilley 2000).

Conversely, literature that interrogates the library's built component often does so with a historical perspective (Mack and Al Sayyad 1991; Campbell 2013; Weeks 2005), or provides practical advice on the planning a library building (Thompson 1977; Khan 2009). Others provide guidance on outfitting spaces for children and young people (Maxwell 1993; Wing von Bredow 2006), for building-scale spatial strategies (Jochumsen et al. 2012), or for understanding how socioeconomic information is relevant to library location (Thorne-Wallington 2013).

A thesis on perceptions and expectations of the library service (Lilley 2000 pp.169–170) makes passing mention of the role of library buildings: although several quotations are presented highlighting both librarians' and users' view that the building is a representative of the service (ignoring, perhaps wisely, the possibility of space provision *being* a part of the service), these are swiftly moved over to frame the discussion in terms of how library staff are representatives of the service.

While much of the literature falls into two very broad and loosely-definable groups, in doing so it is susceptible to a risk. The library building is not a historical artefact to be

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[1] e.g. Google Books or the Digital Public Library of America (Guthro 2013)

[2] The purpose of this innovation is not mentioned on the library's website (as of November 2015), so any reminiscence of Raymond Bradbury's famous vision of the future must be withheld.

viewed in the context of a remote socio-cultural landscape, yet neither is it a modern invention: to treat contemporary library buildings as detached from one-and-a-half centuries of context is equally unrepresentative of the reality faced by today's young people when they interact with new library architecture. Yet no major work has been found that uses young people's conceptualisations of library function, purpose, occupancy, or content, as a lens in the analysis of modern library architecture's ability to give them access.

The literature probably least susceptible to this risk is that of *user experience in libraries*, a fairly nascent but growing field in which ethnographic research methods (i.e. those that observe and record the behaviour of in-situ users) are employed to more robustly justify decisions in the arrangement and delivery of services. Reflecting the above fact that building design is rarely encountered during day-to-day library operations, *user experience in libraries* is typically deployed in assessment, marketing, outreach work, and innovation (Doshi 2015).

Though this thesis is readily identifiable with a *user experience in libraries* approach, it goes beyond the majority of work published under that heading in two key areas. Firstly, it seeks to understand the entire journey taken by the young user in transitioning from the building's urban context to a personal space. Secondly, rather than describing specific "sticking points" in interaction between the user and the service and suggesting improvements, it offers explanation of the interactions that take place from both a social and historical context.

The reason for this is that architectural experience is not separate from wider experience of the world. This process of contextualisation in both spatial and temporal terms is necessary to properly respond to the interpretivist paradigm, which posits that the ways people make sense of the world must be understood in order to explain behaviour. *Interpretivism* is not a narrow term, nor defined in great detail, however sociologist Malcolm Williams (2000 p.210) usefully identifies it as "those strategies in sociology which interpret the meanings and actions of actors according to their own subjective frame of reference."

Evidently, this is not a sociology thesis, however, as public libraries exist for the public good, and are funded publically, and as the role of a library building is to allow members of the public to interact with one another, with members of staff, and with the service,

understanding users' behaviour in framing architectural success or failure is not merely appropriate in the case of the public library, but is in a certain sense necessary.

To refer again to the two key areas identified above, the focus on both spatial and temporal contextualisation results in the initial premise from which this research advances: Preconceptions as to the appearance, contents, occupants and functions that constitute a library pose challenges to young people's participation in new architectural experiences.

The term "young people" is common in both popular and academic literature, but its range is rarely delineated. For statistical purposes, the United Nations (UNDESA n.d. p.2) use the range of 15-24 years old, but concede that the precise definition can be changed according to circumstance. In this research the definition is slightly modified, being instead 16-25. This is because 16 years old is the age at which full-time education ends in the United Kingdom, and also the age at which participant consent for data collection becomes more accessible. As there is no statistical analysis performed in this thesis, and no side-by-side comparisons made between various cohorts, it is felt that the alteration carries benefits without risk to the value of the results.

1.2   Aim, Objectives, Research Questions, and Thesis Structure

To explain why the structure of the thesis is the way it is, it is necessary to briefly outline at the start what was felt by the researcher when first approaching the subject, and how this was methodically transformed into the response presented here.

There is no choice but to begin with assumptions: these are necessary to identify a subject worth investigating (in the case of a self-chosen subject, such as this), and also how to begin tackling the problem. Initially, therefore, the researcher's personal assumptions and interests were used to set a general area of research and to begin the literature review. This personal assumption is reiterated in concluding this thesis; it is that deeply rooted shifts in the role of public libraries would be accompanied by corresponding tectonic changes, and understanding these would be crucial in reasserting physicality in an age when emphasis appeared to be moving towards the digital and distributed.

To strategically focus this, the literature review was used to identify two very broad salient areas upon which to build: the contextualisation of public library buildings in both spatial terms (that is, against other places) and temporal terms (that is, against a history of

libraries). From this, the premise is advanced, as stated in the research abstract: Preconceptions as to the appearance, contents, occupants and functions that constitute a library pose challenges to young people's participation in new architectural experience.

This premise became a platform on which to begin designing the research methodology. The resulting data collection proceeded in accordance with the need to explore it, and from this process three thematic areas were identified through analysis of the data. These thematic areas are the areas of importance in the task of talking that premise, and therefore are used as the structure for the three major thematic chapters of this thesis (Five, Six and Seven). They were decided upon through higher level groupings of codes in the thematic analysis that was performed on the transcript data generated, which are visualised in Appendix 11.5

To reframe the premise and tie together the three themes, the overarching aim of the research was developed.

Research aim: to clarify how modern public library architecture allows young people to make the journey from city to service interaction

The aim of this thesis reflects a multidimensional approach to understanding library architecture, which begins with young people's memories, subsumes their experiences, and ends with service interaction, arguably the ultimate purpose of the library building. It is approached through complementary thematic objectives, which are prefaced by the introductory four chapters of this thesis, then laid out in detail in three major thematic chapters, before the findings are synthesized and conclusions drawn. The three major chapters are thematically determined by the results of primary data, and engage with the aim through three groups of objectives and research questions.

The first of these sets out to reveal what young people already collectively know about the physical characteristics of libraries (a sense that is referred to by certain writers as "libraryness") because this affects the expectations with which they approach new library experience, and therefore the response they make, explicitly or tacitly, to the rhetoric of new library architecture. This chapter, Chapter 5 (The Problem with "Libraryness"), is concerned with the external appearance of the building, the various scales at work in the interior, and how these build on the cultural and personal experiences of the participants.

Chapter 5 objective: to test young people's preconceptions of public library value and form against architectural experience

This objective will be approached through the following questions:

- What sources of expectation do young people report, in terms of public library buildings?
- How are their preconceptions challenged or reinforced by the three modern examples studied?
- How, therefore, do these buildings mount an argument about the value of the modern public library service?

Chapter 6 (Socio-Spatial Interpretations) carries the established line of thinking more fully to the interior by introducing social information to the young users' interpretation of space. This second strand of investigation reveals that the public library, intended as it is for any and all users without distinction, carries a complex range of socio-spatial implications, which are felt strongly by the subject group and accordingly affect their usage of the building. Moreover, whereas Chapter 5 explores how external physical appearance confirms or refutes the preconceptions the user inevitably carries with them, Chapter 6 strengthens the analysis of the rhetoric of modern library architecture by combining physical appearance with function. In other words, the experience of the library "in action" emerges as a stronger argument about the state of its evolution than its appearance, yet the two complement one another.

Chapter 6 objective: to determine how the library building responds to the need to be public, to establish how social structure and social relationships are manifested in library space use, and to assess how the interrelationships of multiple social groups help or hinder it from functioning as intended

The following questions will be addressed:

- The user's perception of their own socio-spatial agency is related, in the case of public libraries, to their perception of supervision. What liberty do they perceive in their use of the space?

- "Appropriate" use of a library: should it favour studying or socialising? How are the spaces arranged to permit either or both? What causes a space to be used in a particular way?

- How is the service represented by the building?

In the third theme, Chapter 7 (Wayfinding in the Library) serves to understand and extend how the young visitor makes use of the information examined in Chapters 5 and 6. They approach the library through city streets, find it among its neighbours, identify and enter the main doors, confront the interior with all its noise, people, space, pathways, signs, content, zones, materials and lights. Yet how do they convert this new information into action? How does the sense they make of it allow them to move through and interact with all that the library offers? This chapter uses wayfinding as the process that links the poetic sense of "wandering through knowledge" with the reality that is wandering through a neighbourhood of different spatial qualities, each of which has been designed and designated with the intention of allowing participation.

Chapter 7 objective: to understand how the young library visitor converts the information they receive from the building and its occupants into action, in order to wayfind in the interior

The following questions will be used:

- *What types of wayfinding do young people use inside the library?*
- *What sources of information guide their wayfinding?*
- *What do young people look for?*
- *In what ways can these sources of information conflict or be unclear?*

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 gather together the findings from these three thematic inquiries and resolve them so that they can usefully respond to the aim of clarifying the architectural logic of current library evolution in the experience of young people. Once this is done, it is hoped that decision-making in future library design exercises will find additional rationale, particularly with respect to this user group, by clarifying how each new library building is inextricably linked to the many thousands that currently exist in the UK, and the thousands more that have either been consigned to history, or have never found built form at all.

1.2 Aim, Objectives, Research Questions, and Thesis Structure

2   CONTEXTUAL LITERATURE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 jointly evidence the systematic engagement with a field of literature that is bounded by multiple vistas. In mapping and delineating this knowledge field, justification is given of the need for further work in the directions extended by the thesis.

Here, the contextual literature review substantiates the problem that underpins the thesis at its broadest level, namely, that UK public libraries struggle to project a clear and concise value, that there is a need for this value to be understood in the minds of young people, and that architecture plays an important role in mounting arguments about this value, whether in the past, present or future. This is approached initially through the lens of public literacy and the role public libraries take in its furtherance. The role of public libraries is not limited only to this, however, so other dimensions are considered as well, with the intention of working towards an overview of what might be considered the value of public libraries.

Public libraries can be studied in a huge variety of disciplines, lending difficulty to the job of identifying the limits of the literature. For example, this research could have been conducted from the perspectives of library science, psychology, engineering, sociology, history, anthropology, or public policy. This difficulty has been combated by focusing on how any particular body of knowledge can be used to understand the requirements of the building – thus informing building design.

The review makes use in part of quantitative information that is available on how public libraries are actually used in the UK. Once this initial section is complete, the review will explore literature that shows how the researcher has approached the problem, where certain areas have proven rewarding or been abandoned, and the associated reasoning. This will form evidence of the research journey, the set-up of the current areas of interest, and will also form a precursor to Chapter 3, which looks at literature relating specifically to the three main themes that comprise the backbone of the investigation, and Chapter 4, which details the methodology.

2.2 BRIEF BACKGROUND TO LIBRARY LITERATURE

Literature on very early libraries was felt to be essential in getting a grounding in the subject area that was more general than either *public* libraries or the requirements of young people. The following resources were informative in this area: Algaze (1986), Branner (1954), DeWald (1925), Duroselle-Melish (2011), Newton (1976), Power (1918), Raby (1983), Thiem (1979), Weeks (2005), and Wellisch (1981). These resources deal with ancient and monastic libraries that served as an origin both for library models that came afterwards and for certain cultural assumptions about the role of a library.

Literature dealing more specifically with the history of public libraries included the following: Black (1989), Black et al. (2009), Hewitt (2000), Prizeman (2012), and Van Slyck (1995), which began to contextualize the use of philanthropy in library building and the changing role of the library through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Literature was also examined that deals with the architecture of more recent library design. Ward (1969) evidences the relationship between library staff and the architects employed to design spaces, which are two parts of a triad involving the potential users. The interrelationship of these elements forms an important subtext of the consulting phase of most new public library projects. Literature relating to modern library architecture or practice was not limited to UK examples. The following is a broad mixture of literature and reports in this area, with content on Scandinavian and American cases, among others: ALA Youth Query Topline and Harris Interactive Inc. (2007), Booth (1993), Faulkner (2014), Finnish Ministry of Education/Culture Division (2009), Holmgaard Larson et al. (2010), Jochumsen et al. (2012), Kekki (2001), Kontiainen and Sulin (2006), Lawson (2004), Mack and Al Sayyad (1991), Pike and Bjorn (2010), and Thorhauge (2002).

Additionally, literature on academic libraries was investigated. This was not pursued further initially, but served as a preface to the incorporation of the student perspective that subsequently underlined the research. The majority of the following literature is aimed at library staff and educators: ALA Association of College and Research Libraries (2007), Crawford (1972), Law (2009), Nitecki (2011), Oakleaf (2011), Pinfield (2001).

2.3 LIBRARY VALUE, AND THE STATE OF MODERN UK PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A research report commissioned by the British Library and compiled by a team from the University of Sheffield (Proctor et al. 1998) explores the impact of public library closures and opening hours changes from the late 80s until 1997, when the Major government

ended. Local authorities were asked for reasons behind library closures during this time, and the responses show that by far the main motivation was financial (accounting for over two thirds of all reasons given). Another third of answers were related to low usage, and 10% to the identification of better alternatives. In cases where low usage was a problem, the "better alternative" was considered in many cases to be a larger branch, further away from its patrons. It could further be argued, Proctor et al. contend, that a lack of sufficient funds was also to blame for reasons given as "structural", i.e. relating to the upkeep of the building (1998 pp.12–13).

McKechnie et al. (2004) argue that public libraries function more successfully as public spaces than do book superstores. The advantage of a library free of private influence had earlier been touched upon by Leckie and Hopkins (2002 pp.359–360), who asserted that the threat to the public library's place in society was not technological (as evinced by the spread of digital media) but ideological, in the form of encroaching private interests that threatened the "sacred tenet" of neutrality[3].

2.4   LITERACY

Literacy is defined by The Oxford English Dictionary as "… the ability to read and write…", or more generally, "the ability to 'read' a specified subject or medium; competence or knowledge in a particular area" (OED Online 2015b).

Although the first, "classical" (i.e. reading and writing) definition of the word is more obviously relevant to the topic of public libraries, to focus entirely on it would be to deny the importance of other forms of literacy, such as information literacy, defined by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) as "knowing when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner" (CILIP 2013).

In a report entitled Learning Literacies in the Digital Age, Beetham, McGill and Littlejohn (2009) focus on "digital literacies" and a range of related forms of literacy in the context of the further and higher education sectors. They provide a "framework of frameworks" for

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[3] Additionally, they cite two further aspects in which public libraries constitute valuable public space: first, by providing "community gathering, work and study places that would be difficult to duplicate in any other manner"; and second, because they are augmented rather than diminished in the age of electronic information.

analysing the "capabilities leading to effective learning for a digital age" (Beetham et al. 2009 p.4).

According to this, study skills (or academic practice) and information literacy appear very closely linked, however the detail provided on each framework suggests that the former is more related to a student's ability to apprehend academic ideas, and the latter to their ability to manage information. It should also be noted that digital literacy and media literacy are sometimes considered subsets of information literacy (see, for example: ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force 2012; SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy 2011). These definitions show something of the multifaceted quality of literacy, and begin to suggest how public libraries, as physical spaces for the ordering of information – and, importantly, for the legible representation of that ordering to any member of the public – are intrinsically linked to it.

The National Literacy Trust[4] regularly publishes research reports examining various aspects of UK literacy. *Literacy: State of the Nation* is one of the most general of these and provides a "picture of literacy in the UK today" (Jama and Dugdale 2012) through summarising findings of other NLT reports, government departments such as the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and other charities such as the Book Trust. The two most recent versions date from 2012 and 2014 (Jama and Dugdale 2012; National Literacy Trust 2014) and serve as useful signposts to an overview of much of the recent literature.

The report highlights, for example, the discrepancy in literacy attainment between boys and girls from Early Years Foundation State (at age five) to Key Stage Four level equivalent (age sixteen). At all levels, girls outperformed boys consistently and significantly. Similarly, students eligible for the Free School Meals program (FSM[5]) tended to perform below their expected English level and achieve weaker GCSE results (Department for Children Schools and Families 2009 p.28; via Jama and Dugdale 2012).

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[4] The National Literacy Trust (NLT) is a national charity whose work promotes discussion of ("classical") literacy and aims to raise UK literacy levels. They claim to be "the only national charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK", and to produce research that makes them "the leading authority on literacy [in the UK]" (Clark 2014 sec.About the National Literacy Trust).

[5] A common measure for defining deprivation (Jama and Dugdale 2012 p.7)

2.5 YOUNG PEOPLE'S READING HABITS

The report, *Findings from the 2013 National Literacy Trust's Annual Survey* (Clark 2014) demonstrates that children and young people's engagement with reading and written materials has become increasingly characterised by enjoyment[6], that extra-curricular pursuit of reading materials has increased[7]. Also, that the types of media being consumed are undergoing change[8].

The attitudes reported by the survey are also particularly interesting. The children and young people surveyed agreed more strongly than in previous years that reading makes one a better person, and that reading is cool[9]. Yet at the same time there appear to have been similar increases in respondents who believe they don't read as well as other children in their class, and who cannot find things to read that interest them[10]. This seems contradictory, and it could be speculated that it's indicative of a growing rift between those who enjoy reading and are strong readers, and those who do not enjoy reading and struggle by comparison. In support of this, a table provided relating reading enjoyment and reading level attained shows a strong positive correlation, however, whether this is a case of ease facilitating enjoyment or vice versa is not clear. A discussion of learning models is outside the scope of this review, but it seems sensible to assume that enjoyment and ability are mutually reinforcing.

The approach libraries take in their literacy development is regularly addressed. The American Library Association (ALA) has provided a definition of information literate people for use by the librarianship profession: those who can "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (American Library Association 1989).

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[6] Surpassing a peak not reached since 2005

[7] This figure still lags behind the levels reported in 2005 and 2007

[8] Magazine and newspaper consumption both show a steady decline, but text message, website and eBook usage have increased year-on-year for the four years from 2010 to 2013

[9] Both of these assertions show a year-on-year increase over the period of 2010 to 2013

[10] The former statement showing a year-on-year increase over the period from 2010 to 2013, the latter an increase through 2010, 2011 and 2012 and then no change between 2012 and 2013

This document was revised in 1998, at which point the ALA's definition was expanded slightly:

> [The information literate] recognize when information is needed, but they are also able to identify, locate, evaluate, and use effectively information needed for the particular decision or issue at hand. The information literate person, therefore, is empowered for effective decision making, freedom of choice, and full participation in a democratic society (ALA Association of College and Research Libraries 1998).

2.6 ACADEMIC SUPPORT OF LITERACY

Through its division, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), the ALA provided a document on competency standards in 2000 with the aim of giving educators and librarians a framework by which to assess whether a student was information literate. This report references the ALA's above definition of information literacy, however, in the fifteen years since it was produced, a great deal has changed in the world of information access, and the report is currently undergoing extensive rewriting by a task force, which aims to respond to this changing scope. Aside from simply improving the structure and legibility of the document, they aim to do this by "acknowledging complementary literacies" and by moving "beyond an implicit focus on format" (i.e. by treating the various forms in conjunction with one another), as well as recognising the "student as a content curator [and creator]" (ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force 2012 pp.5, 6).

This, the task force acknowledges, has been a response partly to the revisions that two other bodies have made to their information literacy standards in recent years: the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), another division of the ALA, who released *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner* (ALA American Association of School Librarians 2007), and the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL), which represents all university libraries and national libraries in the UK, as well as many college libraries, and has released a core model for higher education called *Seven Pillars of Information Literacy* (SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy 2011).

The ACRL's revised report will be drawing on the former in an attempt to link higher education standards better with those for school children[11] in the United States educational library system, and drawing on the latter with regards to establishing a "simplified… readily understood model for greater adoption by audiences" (ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards Review Task Force 2012 p.4).

SCONUL's UK example, which the ACRL task force cites as being an illustration of simplicity, relies on a multifaceted definition of information literacy that considers information literate people to:

> …demonstrate an awareness of how they gather, use, manage, synthesise and create information and data in an ethical manner [and to have] the information skills to do so effectively (SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy 2011).

The "seven pillars" model had been introduced some years earlier as "information skills"[12] (see: SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy 1999), but is updated and expanded in the current version to reflect the same altered information literacy landscape as motivates the task force of the ACRL. The pillars show a vision of information literacy that is particularly relevant to students (they being a major area of SCONUL's remit). Consequently, they reflect the activities that a student's library ought to be able to facilitate. Although public libraries are not mandated to provide services for students in the same way that university libraries are, the historic association with scholarship, and the increase in student numbers in many central library catchment areas (not to mention the numbers of non-students also engaged in scholarship for a variety of reasons), causes this list to be relevant.

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[11] A group sometimes referred to as K-12 in the United States for the sum of primary and secondary school ages, referring to "kindergarten to twelfth grade"

[12] Identify (a personal need for information); scope (current knowledge and identify gaps); plan (strategies for locating information and data); gather (the information and data needed); evaluate (their research process); manage (information professionally and ethically), and; present (results of their research; synthesise, create and disseminate) (Summarised from: SCONUL Working Group on Information Literacy 2011)

2.7 Perception and Spatial Literacy

American architect Steven Holl (2006 p.41) talks of the perceptible qualities of architecture: "Architecture", he writes, "more than any other art form, engages the immediacy of our sensory perceptions…" Furthermore, important in the perception of architecture are the assumptions a person makes about its creators' intentions. "Questions of architectural perception underlie questions of intention… Here the logic of pre-existing concepts meets the contingency and particularity of experience".

The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word *perception* in two ways that are of particular relevance:

> *perception, n.* (OED Online 2015c)
>
> 1. The process of becoming aware of physical objects… through the senses
> 2. The process of becoming aware or conscious of a thing or things in general

This means perception can be both the process of imbibing a building through looking, touching, hearing etc., yet also an awareness that goes beyond sensory information, synonymous with a conceptualisation or fuller understanding. In his general psychology handbook, Douglas A. Bernstein offers clarification in the form of both "bottom-up" and "top-down" perception modes, in which stimuli are either interpreted spontaneously or according to a particular expectation (2011 pp.122–3). Concordance in terms of expectations might be seen to correspond with what Goffman (1971 pt.239) terms "normal appearances". In other words, a person's ability to feel at ease in their environment is dependent on the agreement between what they expect to perceive and what they actually perceive.

Bernstein further elaborates using the example of signage recognition. This brings a particularly helpful lens to Venturi et al.'s notion of message systems[13] (1972 p.73), which is an important concept used in Chapter 7 of this thesis, on wayfinding in public libraries. Bernstein's example questions why, when it is possible to recognise the lettering on a

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[13] Venturi et al. divided visual information sources on the Las Vegas strip into "heraldic", "physiognomic" and "locational" message systems, based on textual content, appearance, and relative position respectively. Assuming that specific textual content is not known in advance, this information, termed heraldic, corresponds more closely to a bottom-up mode of perception, whereas perception of general appearance and relative position constitutes more fully the top-down mode that is able to compensate for textual shortcomings.

particular sign, recognition becomes easier when the sign also appears in an expected location, and why, furthermore, it can be recognised even when it's missing a few letters. The answer is that although bottom-up perception enables recognition of the lettering, top-down perception enables the viewer to make inferences when presented with vague or ambiguous information.

The ability of a person to feel at ease in their surroundings depends on the relationship between the information they expect to perceive and that which they actually receive. Moreover, when they *are* attending to their surroundings closely, as might be the case while wayfinding in a large building, both specific textual and symbolic information, and the contexts in which it occurs, are important.

Modern public library buildings offer potentially intricate contexts for ordering, accessing and manipulating information, services and people. Literacies can be applied to them in many forms, however spatial literacy is of key importance in studying their perception and use. Spatial literacy (in the context of GIS education) has been defined as the ability to:

> [Capture] and communicate knowledge in the form of a map, understand and recognize the world as viewed from above, recognize and interpret patterns, know that geography is more than just a list of places on the earth's surface, see the value of geography as a basis for organizing and discovering information, and comprehend such basic concepts as scale and spatial resolution (Goodchild 2006; Bednarz and Kemp 2011 p.19).

In the same article, it is called for "maps, pictures, and spatial data… to rank with numbers, text, and logic as essential ways in which humans function, both on and off the job, as they reason, interact, and generally live their lives" (Goodchild 2006).

Similarly, spatial ability (which can be considered equivalent to spatial literacy, according to the above definition) is a concept termed by Linn and Petersen (1985 p.1482) as "skill in representing, transforming, generating, and recalling symbolic, nonlinguistic information". Following a review of various approaches that had been taken at the time of their study, Linn and Petersen propose three categories of spatial ability, the first of which is *spatial perception*. In this, participants are asked to "determine spatial relationships with respect to the orientation of their own bodies, in spite of distracting information." The two further categories are *mental rotation*, the ability to visualise a two- or three-dimensional object

from different angles, and *spatial visualisation*, in which more complex, multi-stage manipulations of spatial tasks are understandable to the participant. Linn and Peterson suggest that spatial perception and mental rotation may be two strategies employed within spatial visualisation.

UK academic Helen King (2006 p.26) draws attention to the multiplicity of definitions such as "spatial ability", "spatial literacy", "spatial reasoning", and "spacial thinking" in geography, earth and environmental sciences. She identifies maps and mapping as central to the subject, linking spatial literacy most obviously with the task of understanding relationships in three-dimensional space through their representation in two-dimensional space. The ordered and variously represented spaces of a public library building present an obvious arena for the testing of spatial literacy.

In a doctoral thesis on geological science education Glen Vallender (2010 pp.41–2) highlights the inherent difficulty in making sense of representations of complex spatial arrangements (in a similar geological context) without considerable skill and training. The importance of visualisation methods when it comes to reading complex spatial arrangements is readily apparent.

King also refers to the importance of understanding time in spatial literacy exercises like mapping (2006 p.27). Such representations can therefore be seen to make use of memory, of the user's personal familiarity with the prior state of a physical arrangement or its representation. This returns to the issue of relating an expected perception with the reality that is immediately perceived in an environment, discussed above. Applied more broadly, it suggests that an understanding of past physical arrangements in an environment, imbibed mostly through visual information, whether first hand or represented (again, see Venturi et al.'s 1972 p.73 message systems), is useable by the most spatially literate to allow them greater spatial understanding. It could therefore be expected that a library user with a more coherent understanding of library typological history would be better able to relate an immediate perception of a library building to their expectations because the elements that physically make up a library would appear more familiar, even when in new configurations or presented under different guises.

For example, the Picton Reading Room in Liverpool Central Library and the Silent Study Area in The Hive in Worcester appear vastly different architecturally, yet a user literate of

the continuity from one to the other would, logically, more readily understand that the two can be used in exactly the same way. Equally, where past experiences of libraries have not imparted a clear and reasoned set of expectations, the possibility is raised that absorbing new experiences of library buildings could become correspondingly more challenging. Returning this concept to the task of wayfinding, Arthur and Passini (1992 p.v) note in their early book on wayfinding in building design that the mental image of an environment is the product of both immediate sensory perception, and the memory of past experience, reflecting the dual forms of perception highlighted at the beginning of this section.

2.8 STUDENTIFICATION

Studentification forms a background theme of the discussion of the relationships between social groups and places in this thesis. It is not a mechanism that is directly interrogated here, as might be the case in a discussion of urban gentrification, but serves to contextualise the three studied central libraries, which are located in areas with significant student populations and provide services that can place students and members of the public in competition for the same finite physical space. This is particularly relevant to The Hive, Worcester, which is unprecedented in Europe as both a university library and a public library.

According to the ONS, in 2011 seven percent (3.7 million) of England and Wales's usual residents were 16-74 year old students. A decade earlier, this figure was five percent (2.6 million) (Office for National Statistics 2013). Student communities can be characterised by elevated proportions of highly educated residents in rented accommodation. These are less frequently detached properties than is average, and also tend to have fewer people in the 45-64 age bracket (Office for National Statistics 2001).

Darren Smith and Louise Holt assert that "since the mid-1990s increasing numbers of students have moved into distinct enclaves of university towns and cities". This, they claim, is partly because of the efforts of private and public sector institutions to create "student areas" and partly by the "wider model of urban renaissance and neoliberal agendas" (Smith and Holt 2007 p.147). Smith (2008) further suggests that the increase of student numbers and homes of multiple occupancy, and the loss of family homes, can work against social mixing and cohesion in "diverse and inclusive population structures".

2.9   SUMMARY

This review of the literature documents the paths explored over the course of the doctoral project. It is evidence of the critical approach that has led the researcher towards the current structure and questions.

Due to the uniquely multi-layered nature of public libraries, this research could have been conducted in a multitude of areas: a library science, management and policy approach would deal with the ways public money is used and how services are designed to meet the needs of the people; a psychology approach might consider the role of the library as a place of safety and security during childhood or adulthood; an engineering approach could investigate the control of noise transmission or the structural loading of book stocks; a sociology approach might apply itself to understanding how libraries support the social structures of their communities. The list could easily be extended, but this summary is sufficient to highlight the difficulty posed in marking the limits of the relevant literature. Where any of the above areas have been explored partially rather than in great depth, this has been because, in starting from an architectural basis, it has been necessary to maintain a position that informs study of the library building, space, place, and structure.

Chapter 3 will contextualise the research against the three main themes, and also introduce the three case study library buildings. Chapter 4 will review the methodology that has been used to collect the research's primary data. This shows how the structure of the thesis and hence the limits of the literature were derived from higher-level code groups generated from spatially-cued qualitative transcripts at each library. In this sense, it is felt that the literature topics reflect the architectural disciplinary approach, while retaining the freedom to go beyond the researcher's own assumptions about the relevant areas.

3   Settings and Themes

3.1   A Duality of Library Definition

library, n. (OED Online 2015a)

1. A place set apart to contain books for reading, study, or reference

2. The books contained in a 'library'

The literature available on public libraries, both academic and informal, has largely been created by people working in the librarianship profession, for the profession. This understandably gives emphasis to the half of the definition of "library" that refers to the service, to users and to policy. The other half of the definition – that of the library as a building, a physical place of some sort within a town or city – is by comparison rather thin. Attention has been drawn more clearly to this latter component in recent years by the creation of a number of new building schemes and the corresponding acknowledgement that much of the existing building stock is, or has been, inadequate. Producing a new library building elicits a discussion among staff members, communities and stakeholders about what a library should be, what it should do, and where the typology could be going in the future, which logically, rhetorically, brings the two halves of the definition towards one another.

In building new libraries, the implications of the physical building on the service, and vice versa[14], are questioned. However, due to the unavoidable separation of their professions, architects and librarians can never fully occupy the minds of one another; they can only study and consult. So, too, being in those respective professions is surely both an advantage and a hindrance when engaging in that discourse because although librarians and architects carry professionalised knowledge of service delivery and building design, at their heart, public libraries are not *for* them: they are for the public, even if it is also necessary for librarians to thrive in them. Consequently, to disregard hub buildings and

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[14] Abigail Van Slyck (1995 p.25) describes the relevance of this to Carnegie's library-building activities. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, it became more important for library buildings to simplify their structures to reflect public element of their funding (for stocking and maintenance). Similarly, as Carnegie's philanthropic activities established themselves properly, a move from closed to open-access buildings was taking place, meaning the numerous buildings the Corporation funded noticeably change at the turn of the century to reflect different ideas about the role of the library service.

focus on "pure" libraries, a triadic arrangement exists with library staff, library designers, and potential or actual library users, all communicating and attempting to understand one another.

Some large-scale works have approached the question of perception of public library buildings through taking a sociological approach, and therefore treating the discourse as dually rooted in librarianship and sociology. In other words, the focus of the "place" side of the library definition has largely been on its role within community.

An example of this type of approach is a major research project commissioned by Arts Council England and conducted by Ipsos MORI, Shared Intelligence, Dialogue by Design and Office for Public Management, called *Envisioning the Library of the Future* (Arts Council England, Ipsos MORI, et al. 2013; Arts Council England, Dialogue by Design, et al. 2013). Arts Council England has set out four priority areas in response to the challenges laid out by the above report (Davey 2013 p.5). These are:

1. Place the library as the hub of the community
2. Make the most of digital technology and creative media
3. Ensure that libraries are resilient and sustainable
4. Deliver the right skills for those who work in libraries

At the heart of Arts Council England's library priority areas are society/community, technology, policy and service. The discussion of space within this framework is concerned with balancing shared work with the individual's experience, integrating digital with physical space, and providing enough variation in space types to meet community demands. Words such as "democratic", "more flexible" and "integrated" are used, but it is not easy to deduce from the document precisely what they might mean in terms of the built environment.

The third phase of Arts Council England's (2013) research focuses on the aspects of public libraries that are valued by young people and children. The report features six conclusions, which are as follows in summary:

- Provide a natural and safe space
- Provide a space for community interaction
- Provide the quality and quantity of resources to allow reliable exploration

- Inspire and educate children and young people

- Provide a learning/study environment

- Be open to all and non-stigmatising

The report uses "the role of the library service" and "the role of public libraries" in the same breath, yet all of the above points carry implications for the library's role as a place. This highlights the connection between service, user and building. The tensions arising in "competing views on the purpose and value of public libraries" also identified (2013 p.6) further serve to make understanding the job of the building, *both* as a contemporary standalone solution, and as a response to a shared cultural awareness, particularly important.

3.2 PRIOR RESEARCH

3.2.1 STUDIES ON LIBRARY STEREOTYPES, PRECONCEPTIONS, AND CONCEPTUALISATION

The Association of College and Research libraries (2014), a division of the American Library Association, has produced a report dealing specifically with the stereotypes of *librarians*. This is characteristic of much of the literature available: it is generally concerned with perceptions of the library profession through its people rather than its places. A body of work arose particularly in the late 1990s and early 2000s that reflected a professional concern with the stereotyped image of librarians as middle-aged, female, and authoritarian (see Adams 2000; Radford and Radford 1997). This material could be seen as carrying the implication that a negative stereotype of the authority carries over into the spatial characteristics, but this link is less commonly the focus. Alistair Black has dealt specifically with attitudes towards library buildings in the UK. After finding a wide mix of opinions he concludes, "ideas about what a public library should look like are no longer predictable: the library architectural type has been diluted" (2011 p.42).

Romanian academic Maria Micle (2014 pp.95–96) found that whereas *silence* was considered a positive attribute of the academic library by university students (and could be called a library stereotype), it was considered a negative aspect of school libraries by school students. Similarly, school students rated the attribute of containing *printed books* more negatively than the university students. These findings

suggest that though stereotypes can be identified quite easily as recurrent of attributes, their implications for library design are potentially complex, even contradictory. This is of particular relevance to the new hub-type buildings that typically combine many types of user.

Additionally, though not approaching the topic of library stereotypes per se, there is a body of work that focuses on libraries (particularly public libraries) as a typology undergoing change. This generally entails some discussion of the tradition from which the current projects being built differ. These often have been inspired by the concept of opening access in light of the digital revolution (see, for example, Drabenstott 1994), in which technologies to provide access are seen as advancing the ideology of library value as that of "liberal democracy, open access to knowledge and equality" (Lees 1997 p.326; via Brewster 2014 p.94).

The importance of these acknowledgements is that the history of the library is long and complicated, extending millennia beyond the history of public libraries, which is itself a narrative containing tensions, particularly surrounding access. Consequently, one user does not approach a new library experience with the same expectations as another; the building must mediate and respond to this variety, while asserting itself as something stable in a time of rapid technological change. The ways in which it goes about this, is identifiable as a library, and thereby carries implications for use and purpose, are evaluated in Chapter 5.

3.2.2   STUDIES ON SOCIAL ROLE OF LIBRARIES

The ALA (ALA Association of College and Research Libraries 2007) released a report that focused on user-centred design (design referring to "technology, spaces, services", rather than exclusively architectural design) by employing ethnographic research techniques. Similarly, Given and Leckie (2003 p.383) identify the value of observational methods as a way of getting closer to the actual behaviour of users in library spaces. These are early in the librarianship context, but it is a type of research that has gained some traction since as the *user-experience in libraries* discipline.

While user experience (referred to as UX) is not always used to inform building design, it has a clear role in reconfiguring existing spaces[15].

While user experience in libraries tends to be carried out by library staff in their own libraries, using ethnographic techniques to understand how the space and services are actually used in practice, there is also a substantial body of literature that takes a broader look at the social contribution libraries make to society. This tends to lie in two areas: firstly, grey literature, survey-based reports commissioned by research bodies (see Arts Council England, Ipsos MORI, et al. 2013; Arts Council England, Dialogue by Design, et al. 2013; Audit Commission 2002; Culture Media and Sport Committee 2005; Ipsos MORI and Museums Libraries and Archives Council 2010; National Literacy Trust 2014). In these cases, the impetus behind such research is often strategic, relying on articulating the value of libraries to identify areas in which they could consolidate while defending themselves from public spending cuts.

Secondly, there is research conducted by university academics, who tend to be interested either in the social and developmental, or the library science and management disciplines. In this area, the following resources were found informative: Bamkin (2011), Black (2011), Brewster (2014), Broady-Preston and Cox (2000), Byrne (2003), Clark and Hawkins (2011), Glazer (1965), Johnson (2010), Lawson (2004), Rooney-Brown and McMenemy (2010), Sequeiros (2011), and Thorne-Wallington (2013).

3.2.3 *STUDIES ON WAYFINDING IN LIBRARIES*

There is research both on wayfinding generally, particularly stemming from Lynch's work (1960), which identified physical elements of the city that people can use for locating, orientating and finding their way about, and on wayfinding in libraries specifically. As central libraries in particular are large and spatially complex public buildings, and as the library book stock corresponds with physical locations on account of being physical (excluding online accessible material), wayfinding is of relevance to public libraries in a key way.

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[15] The area has recently benefitted from an online journal called Weave (http://weaveux.org/), which has published three issues, as of October 2015, mostly on aspects relating to libraries' web presences.

Some researchers have approached the topic of wayfinding in libraries as their central concern. Beecher (2004) has produced a doctoral thesis specifically on the subject. This takes a fairly pragmatic approach, involving success rates and timings in search tasks, as well as discussion of wayfinding tools such as maps and signage. Mandel (2010) takes an observational approach by unobtrusively watching the routes people take through the library, then makes use of Passini's conceptual framework of wayfinding. From this, she concludes, with caution, that library patrons tend to make use of Passini's *styles* (1981 p.28) (linear and spatial, meaning via a series of steps such as signage, or via cues from the surroundings, respectively) more than they do his *strategies* (1981 pp.25–26) (respectively: division of the task into manageable parts; narrowing choices; dealing with problems; accessing what is already known; updating based on the situation).

3.3 THEMES RELATING TO YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRECONCEPTIONS OF LIBRARIES

Section 3.2 shows gaps particularly in the area of understanding the building's role in articulating a particular concept and suggesting particular modes of usage. The topics introduced below in Sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 should be considered abbreviated forms of the themes used in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. These themes have been chosen to address the areas of research outlined in Section 3.2, with the aim of showing how library architecture is a common component in each.

3.3.1 MONUMENT AND MACHINE

J. W. Clark (1894 pp.5–7), the nineteenth and early twentieth century Cambridge academic and antiquarian, drew a division in conceptualisations of libraries according to the mode of access they permitted: as either workshop (serving expedience of knowledge acquisition, which he likened to travel by steam), or as museum (whereby, while utility remains, the affective quality of books is celebrated)[16].

Black, Pepper and Bagshaw (2009 chap.8) parallel this framing as a monument and machine, however assert that both characteristics have been present simultaneously

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[16] Hewitt (2000 p.64) talks of a historical "civic economy of the book", and describes how during the nineteenth century libraries were often "attached to coffee houses, newsrooms or bookshops, or associated with stationers, printers and publishers". This is suggestive of the printed word as a kind of bloodflow, permeating many connected institutions, rather than being a static collection whose value is somehow innate.

through library history. This moves beyond a simplified but often repeated view of history in which library buildings have progressed from the former to the latter in the course of becoming more sophisticated (Prizeman 2012 p.10). There is, Black et al. argue, no reason to associate either monument or machine with any particular time period of public library development.

3.3.2   DIGITAL AND PHYSICAL

Wallace Koehler has pointed out that it is tempting to speculate on what the future of the library as a place will be in light of the ongoing digital revolution, but that to do so is risky (2004 p.401). Vannevar Bush (1945) and F. Wilfrid Lancaster are two well known early predictors of the fundamental shift in our information consumption, the latter explicitly asking "Can libraries survive in a digital world?" (1978 p.356). There have been many other library future predictions made in this area more recently. Sapp (2002) deals with some examples made between the date of Lancaster's prediction of a "paperless society" and the end of the twentieth century.

A 2005 survey of over 3000 people drawn from several countries[17] suggests that online search engines and libraries are viewed as equally trustworthy sources of information by a majority of people (De Rosa et al. 2005 sec.3.3). Nijboer and Hammelburg (2010 p.37) assert that speed and ease are more important than reliability to information-searchers. The primacy of the internet as a source of information has, they suggest, undermined a key function of the library.

Pomeranz and Marchionini (2007 p.527) report that for a majority of users the library's digital component takes precedent in interactions over its physical component. They take the view that declines in interaction with physical libraries can be ascribed simply to the relative lack of convenience they offer in information-seeking tasks. As emphasis continues to be placed on the digital component of libraries, they claim, the role of the library building as a storage space will diminish and its role as a space for users, work and social activity will be emphasized.

Librarians' positive attitudes towards the value-addition of digital media: Maynard and McKnight (2001 p.415) surveyed a sample of public librarians at the start of the

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[17] USA, UK, Canada, Singapore, Australia and India

twenty-first century on the subject of digital books for children, and suggested as a result that librarians are "keen to embrace the new technology of electronic books"[18], and that electronic and printed books will exist alongside one another in the library.

The director of Kentucky University's law school library, James M. Donovan, concludes that "books alone do not make a library" (2012 p.104), yet Australian sociologist Vivienne Waller (2008 pp.381–2) points out that embracing digital technologies does not in itself constitute legitimacy in large public libraries. Rather, they should be critically assessed in how they are able to advance the library's purpose, purpose that should be renegotiated with respect to the public the library serves.

3.4   THEMES RELATING TO SOCIO-SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF LIBRARIES

Urbanist, geographer and planner Edward Soja provides a view of space that could be considered socio-spatial in an article entitled *The Socio-Spatial Dialectic*: "Space itself may be primordially given, but the organization, use, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience" (Soja 1980 p.210). Organisation of space, he asserts, is a social product, and it is therefore linked to the "wider social framework".

Irwin Altman (1977 p.82) has previously suggested that "the ability to regulate interaction is necessary for individual and cultural survival, and unless people have figured out ways to control interaction, their status as intact human beings can well be in jeopardy", pointing out that this requires more than physical strategies, but also "verbal, nonverbal, environmental and cultural mechanisms".

Within the realm of youth, American environmental psychologist Louise Chawla asserts that for children, when physical strength and dexterity become important measures of status, the "value of the local environment appears to be most directly determined by its opportunities for individual challenge and group play" (Chawla 1992 p.68). Low and Altman (1992 p.10) add that "…children's psychological development is dependent on experiences in places where they learn to role-play, explore, create, control, and relate to their physical and social worlds."

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[18] For reference, the first generation of Amazon's popular Kindle e-book reader wasn't launched until 2007.

As the child grows, they enter adolescence, a period of identity development in which youth are actively shaping their personal identity while being challenged to begin the process of forming their social identity (Strack et al. 2004 p.50). Richard Sennett writes about this period of life, stating that an adolescent's self-image can be defined in advance of difficult situations as a way of dealing with them. A fixed self-image or assumed self-identity can allow a person to make sense of the unexpected, rather than being overwhelmed (Sennett 1996 p.6).

Sennett goes on to explain how the jarring elements in social life can be purified out as unreal because they "don't fit that articulated object, that self-consciously spelled-out set of beliefs, likes and dislikes, and abilities that one takes to be oneself." He also believes that this process of "purifying" experience begins in adolescence, and that it is the only way of explaining certain puzzles of adolescent behaviour (Sennett 1996 p.13).

The trigger is taken to be the identity crisis, defined by psychologist Erik Erikson (1974 p.96) as connoting "not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential". In this, a discrepancy occurs between a young person's capacity for new experience and their ability or desire to cope with it. This can lead them to try and form a kind of unified theory, to explain in advance all things that could possibly occur, and thus be socially invulnerable[19].

Connecting young people's growing understanding of themselves and their society is the place in which growth occurs. In *Place Attachment*, Brown and Perkins (1992 p.280) refer to how "Physical settings and artefacts both reflect and shape people's understanding of who they are as individuals and as members of groups". Integral to a young person's understanding of themselves is an understanding of their place.

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[19] In Sennett's words:

If, in order to be free you have to show you are different, what happens to the child who has nothing of his own to set against the parents? How does he or she legitimate the desire to be free? (Sennett and Cobb 1972 p.64)

Studies of adolescent group life find… a recurrent striving for 'professionalized' expertise in all kinds of activities so that one will not be embarrassed, appear confused, or taken by surprise. But when the dangers of surprise are avoided, there can be no exploration, and so no inner growth. (Sennett 1996 p.15)

This raises the question of how the library building becomes a venue for individual and group activities, for groups of individuals and groups of groups, and what the appropriation of various interior spaces tells the young people visiting about their rights to use it. This area constitutes the aim that is unpicked in Chapter 6, in which the above argument is also expanded to include more detail. Below are introduced several themes that are used in this task.

3.4.1   SOCIAL AGENCY

The concept of social agency is expressed more fully at the beginning of Chapter 6, however, in the most summarised form it could be thought of as the ability of a person to act independently of others, whether this is because their agency overpowers that of those around them, or whether there are simply enough resources and space that competition can be avoided.

In *Agency, Structure*, (1979) the sociologist Anthony Giddens refers to the co-constitution of agency and structure in society, whereby the behaviour of people and the systems of social rules arise together and shape one another constantly. In this sense, Michel Foucault (1982 p.791) refers to power as "a mode of actions upon actions", e.g. the action of library staff upon library users – a sociological question in the first instance, but an architectural one when posed as the implications that building design has on bringing groups of people into contact, with the aim of being fully public and accessible. Foucault further makes the distinction between "power relations", which are fundamentally enacted by people upon people, and "capacity", which is posited as a person's power over the physical world: to "modify, use, consume or destroy" (1982 p.786).

3.4.2   YOUNG PEOPLE AND FORMAL EDUCATION

There has been a great deal written about the link between social and spatial characteristics of people, particularly young people in the context of alienation and disenchantment from school. This body of research is naturally of interest in a thesis that explores library function among young people.

Alienation and disenchantment with the school environment have been found to more strongly affect young people from deprived areas, particularly boys (Horgan 2007 pp.22–23; Steinkuehler and King 2009; Sutton et al. 2007 p.vii See; Greene and

Winters 2006 pp.3, 8; Rowan et al. 2001 pp.19–21; Hogeveen 2005 p.48). Similarly, based on a US sample, Gad Yair (2000 pp.262–263) found a positive correlation between the at-risk status of students and alienation from educational instruction, and Lee et al. (2007 p.3) found that girls outperformed boys academically.

Conversely, children from advantaged backgrounds were found by Kellet and Dar (2007) to have many more opportunities for improving their literacy confidence than their less advantaged peers, leading to positive self-labelling. In their report on links between education and poverty, the children in the research revealed that there was a need to "practice your private confidence" before developing "public confidence". Reading aloud and writing were identified as requiring a lot of confidence and hence too thorough prior practice. Failure to advance from private confidence to public confidence would foreseeably lead to a failure to perfect the aforementioned activities. Therefore pressures to advance too early (associated, perhaps, with the transition to adulthood) may lead the child to label themselves, or even to be labelled, as a person inherently unsuited to reading aloud or writing.

Clark and Hawkins (2011 p.5) note that of a large survey of 8 – 16 year olds, the non-library-users were roughly three times more likely to read only when obliged to do so by their teachers, to not find anything interesting when visiting the library, and, perhaps most importantly, to label themselves poor at reading. Sutton et al. (2007 p.vii) also observed negative labelling of extra-curricular academic activities among disadvantaged school students.

The tension between private and public confidence can be related to the design of public libraries, wherein the juxtaposition of private and public space creates architectural tension. The theme of private and public, individual and shared, spoken and tacit, is one that recurs in library design. Sutton et al. (2007 p.25) offer an intriguing insight by reporting that a "marked difference" they observed between two groups of children was "the importance that the private schoolchildren assigned to having their own personal space." These sources begin to suggest at a link between spatial preferences and socio-cultural self identity.

It is also interesting to note that Kellet and Dar (2007) suggest that homework clubs (safe, voluntary learning environments, outside regular school) are important to the

educational progression of disadvantaged young people. In one sense, the definition of a public library is exactly this.

From this selection of literature, it emerges that young people, (perhaps especially those who are disadvantaged or male, or particularly both), can be seen to be at risk of alienation from formalised education systems. This alienation is traceable not just to the school environment but to the young person's wider environment, including their home and external places (Yair 2000 p.251).

3.4.3 PLACE ATTACHMENT

Place attachment is a concept commonly used in environmental psychology, a branch that "deals with providing a systematic account of the relationship between a person and the environment" (Weinrach 2000 p.83), which emerged during the 1960s and grew in popularity during the end of the twentieth century (Aspinall 2001 p.34).

Livingston et al. (2008 p.7) define place attachment as the "emotional bond that a person has to a place". Louise Chawla (1992 p.64) defines place attachment of children in the following way: "If we borrow the criteria used to measure social attachments, we have the following provisional definition: children are attached to a place when they show happiness at being in it and regret or distress at leaving it, and when they value it not only for the satisfaction of physical needs but for its own intrinsic qualities"(Chawla 1992). As Brown and Perkins (1992 p.280) point out, "physical settings and artefacts both reflect and shape people's understanding of who they are as individuals and as members of groups."

People act in ways that are derived from and reflected in their connection with places (Werner et al. 1985 p.2). Places, in turn, (as distinct from spaces) are the "principal products of conceptual systems that tie together temporally and spatially disparate elements in moments of heightened communality" (Lawrence 1992 p.228). Gustafson (2001 p.668) talks of the "…quasi-natural bond …between the place …and its residents [which has] often been considered to be crucial for individual well-being and for social cohesion." Well-being and social cohesion are close to the heart of the public library's mandate, and seem in some ways necessary before the further ideals of education and broadened horizons can be properly considered.

Place attachment is a system of social reproduction that "constrain[s] as well as locate[s] human relations," say Altman and Low (1992 p.10), adding that "Place attachment may contribute to the formation, maintenance, and preservation of the identity of a person, group, or culture." They assert that "place-attachments are integral to self-definitions of individuals…" This may be important to an understanding of the conditions in which participation, productivity and open-mindedness thrive.

These place attachments can take the form of "memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, and meanings" (Altman and Low 1992 p.10). These are things that carry personal meaning, that a person feels in some way belong to them. Therefore a crucial aspect of place attachment is the sense not only that a person belongs to a place, but that the objects, artefacts and meanings of the place are also part of the person. On this topic Kintrea et al. (2008 p.49) write:

> However lacking their neighbourhoods are in attractive features… young people feel their estates or inner urban areas are the places that they belong to and, in turn, the places that belong to them. For young people who have few resources and are living in a stigmatised place, in the words of a respondent in one of our earlier studies in Scotland, territoriality is "having a sense of belonging, that no one can take away from you" (See Kintrea et al. 2008).

Childress (2004 p.196) asserts that "Teenagers have limited ability to manipulate private property. They can't own it, can't modify it, can't rent it. They can only choose, occupy and use the property of others." Hummon (1992 p.259) describes how "…research on community and identity illuminated the way various social identities can become embedded in and contributed through the local environment, reinforcing the sentimental bonds for people and places."

3.4.4   THE "SHADOW SIDE" OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

Chawla (1992 p.66) suggests that there exists:

> a shadow side [to place attachment]… composed of disrupted development within frustrating or frightening places. The importance of a stable home base, at a minimum, is suggested by high measures of

emotional disturbance among homeless children (Bassuk et al. 1986 p.1100). In severe cases of disturbance, the developmental sequence breaks down and people become trapped in an infantile confusion over the boundaries between their own identity and the external world (Searles 1960 p.51).

In a paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference, Kellett and Dar (2006) reported that children from less advantaged backgrounds stressed to them the importance of freedom from "smoking, banging, swearing, loud music, TV" while doing homework, which helps characterise the "frustrating or frightening" environments Chawla evokes.

The connection with territorial behaviour is generally derived from a desire to avoid conflict. In such cases, territoriality has been described as a kind of "super-place attachment", by Kintrea et al. (Kintrea et al. 2008 p.4), who also found that: "Young people often had positive motivations, such as developing their identity and friendships… but territorial identities were frequently expressed in violent conflict[20]…"

A tendency towards limited spatial and social mobility can be linked to lower performance in the education system: "If your horizons are limited to three streets, what is the point of you working really hard at school?" (Kintrea et al. 2008 p.35). Green and White (2007 p.48) describe how "Strong identification with place often involves an 'us' verses 'them' distinction[21] in which the other is devalued."

Kearns and Parkinson (Kearns and Parkinson 2001 p.2105) describe how a very strong sense of community may "contribute to a form of socio-spacial exclusion in which

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[20] *Conflict*, it should be clarified, does not need to manifest itself in violence. It does not need to be anything other than a simple suspicion or mistrust of people and places outside of the young person's familiarity. Limits on movement and social contact ultimately enhance fear and result in alienation: "Many of the young people who were interviewed felt unable to cross these [territorial] boundaries" (2008 p.23).

[21] Note Sennett and Cobb (1972 p.32): "Breaking the rules is an act 'nobodies' can share with each other. This counter-culture does not come to grips with the labels their teachers have imposed on these kids; it is rather an attempt to create among themselves badges of dignity that those in authority can't destroy."

familiarity and conventionality is favoured because of a preference for the comforting benefits of familiar neighbourhoods and/or people or fear of the unknown."

Robert David Sack defines territoriality as "the attempt to affect, influence, or control actions and interactions (of people, things, and relationships) by asserting and attempting to enforce control over a geographic area" (1983 p.55) and "a human strategy to affect, influence and control" (1986 p.3).

Raffestin suggests that Edward Soja and Robert David Sack are similar to one another in their definitions of territoriality, and adds that "territory… is the most material expression there is of the needs of humans", needs that "constrain humans to project their labor into the material… and to mobilize available sources of energy and accumulated information" (2012 p.136). Alexander B. Murphy (2012 p.159), a geographer at the University of Oregon, puts forward that Sack and Raffestin, "two of the most prolific contributors to the theoretical literature on territoriality" approach the subject in fundamentally different ways, the former considering it a spatial strategy and a means to social and political ends, the latter via a relational approach that is more useful in capturing the territoriality in everyday life. Murphy does not, however, treat these two as mutually exclusive.

It is suggested by the above that in order to capitalise on place attachment a place must be provided that is not intimidating in its architecture or functionality, and at the same time offers clear benefits to the user. It could be argued that the public library of today has the potential to be problematic – information literacy is rarely engaged with per se by those outside academia, and the values of general reading can seem thin and removed from reality. This problem, logically, is more serious for those people that have the greatest real-world pressures on their time and the narrowest reserves of experience to draw upon in negotiating unfamiliar situations.

3.5   THEMES RELATING TO WAYFINDING IN LIBRARIES

3.5.1   CITY-SCALE ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT

"Wayfinding" is a term that originates with Kevin Lynch (1960 pp.3, 4, 125), an urban planner. He referred to it as "the original function of the environmental image, and the basis on which its emotional associations may have been founded." There was a period of delay between Lynch's use of the term and its subsequent development,

which gained momentum towards the end of the 1970s. Prior to this reworking it existed in the form of the cognitive map, more commonly termed the "image" by planners. This was a slightly simplified notion compared with wayfinding, in which the building user is able to visualise the space and mentally orientate it to their body (Passini 1996 p.321). Wayfinding goes beyond this representative model and extends into the mental processes of people's purposeful movements through space (Passini 1996 p.322).

3.5.2   *Wayfinding as Applied to Buildings*

Arthur and Passini's (1992) book *People, Signs and Architecture* is considered to be the first major attempt to articulate wayfinding specifically in the context of building design. The book is a particular effort to unite the work of architects and graphic designers, so that applying signage to a building is not seen as an afterthought but as a united discipline. The authors even go so far as to propose the inception of a new profession of "Wayfinding Designers", whose purpose is to synergise the two (1992 p.vi).

To task of investigating people's wayfinding inside buildings (as opposed to in the urban environment, or environments more generally) has been undertaken by a broad range of researchers using a range of tools. Raubal et al. (1997) conducted a study on airport users with the concept of *image schemata*[22]. These had previously been proposed by Johnson (1987 p.xiv) as being "recurring, dynamic patterns of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that give coherence and structure to our experience." He cites the example of verticality as being a sense of "up-down" orientation that is learned, repeated and applicable consistently to vast amounts of everyday interaction, such as the act of climbing stairs. They are, he stresses, "more abstract and malleable" than mental images (1987 p.26).

Werner and Schindler (2004 p.461) assert that there has been little research to connect building geometry with wayfinding performance. Their study demonstrates that geometric relationships of various building elements do partly affect a user's

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[22] Raubal et al.'s use of image schemata is an attempt to bring towards one another the fields of cognitive science and engineering: image schemata, they claim, can be used as elements of a "common language" between user and engineer that can allow the formalization of users' spatial views (1997 p.86).

ability to wayfind successfully. Having reviewed the relevant literature, Mandel (2010 p.265) claims that it is uncommon in the literature on library building evaluation to see discussion of wayfinding needs, and furthermore, in agreement with Beecher (2004 p.40) that where wayfinding is addressed it is usually only in the relatively narrow context of signage use. As Passini (1996 p.326) has pointed out, signage is unable to compensate for a poor design of spatial information. Both Beecher (2004 pp.116–7) and Mandel (2010 p.117) have identified a need for a fuller understanding of wayfinding in the spatial information system of the library building typology.

Mattern (2007 p.81) has noted that the ability to redesign areas of high use should be an essential step in post-occupancy evaluation of libraries as "it is difficult to predict the public's navigational patterns or to know what directional cues visitors will need before the building is put to use". This renders pertinent some comments made by Barry Braverman (2000), one of Disney's Imagineers, during a speech on the lessons theme park design could teach library design. Braverman drew the attention of the librarians he was addressing to the very high levels of accuracy with which theme park designers can predict the wayfinding behaviour of visitors and design to exploit it. As Mandel (2013 p.265) and Beecher (2004 p.104) point out, when people struggle to orientate themselves within a built environment, or when they get lost, they can become frustrated, angry and self-blaming for the failure. The avoidance of this problem comes in the form of "sufficient, effective, and opportunely-located spatial information to solve wayfinding problems" (Mandel 2013 p.270).

"Space syntax" was developed for "describing the social role of spaces and capturing the movement patterns of groups of people" (Carlson et al. 2010 p.285). These tools have been applied to building design. Carlson et al. (2010 p.284) explore why people get lost in buildings, even those in which navigability has been a focus of the design. They discuss the impact of spatial structure of buildings, referring to an earlier study (Wiesman 1981) of wayfinding that posited legible space as depending upon visual connection between key points, the differentiation between architectural features, and the complexity of the overall arrangement.

3.6   THE THREE CASE-STUDY LIBRARIES

To engage with these thematic areas, three case study public libraries were selected as the venues for data collection. The principle criteria for their selection are that they are

comparable in terms of size and budget: each is a central library in a UK city. Branch libraries were not considered as they are programmatically different from central libraries, and not the focus of this study. They are also modern examples of the field of public library designed, being completed in 2009, 2012, and 2013 respectively.

Cardiff, Liverpool and Worcester's central libraries were studied. Each allows exploration of the contemporary thinking from a different angle[23]. Cardiff is in many ways a typical example of a modern central library. At the time of the research being conducted, it was relatively uncomplicated in its programmatic requirements and occupied the whole interior with library functions (excluding several shop units that are only accessible from outside). In summer 2015, after completion of the research for this project, it reopened after a period of refurbishment as a council hub[24].

Liverpool Central is larger than Cardiff Central, and combines Victorian neo-classical elements with added modern interior spaces, creating a fascinating juxtaposition of monumental/museum-like, and mechanical/workshop-like qualities.

The Hive in Worcester is the first combined public and university library in Europe, and further adds various council functions, making it a reflection of the school of thought that says libraries must diversify in order to survive.

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[23] There are many other examples that could have been selected, such as Peckham Library, the Millennium Library in Norwich, or the Library of Birmingham, however they do not feature in the core list of case studies as they were felt to be too inaccessible to be practical within the remit of a project.

[24] An appendix describes the changes that were made in this process
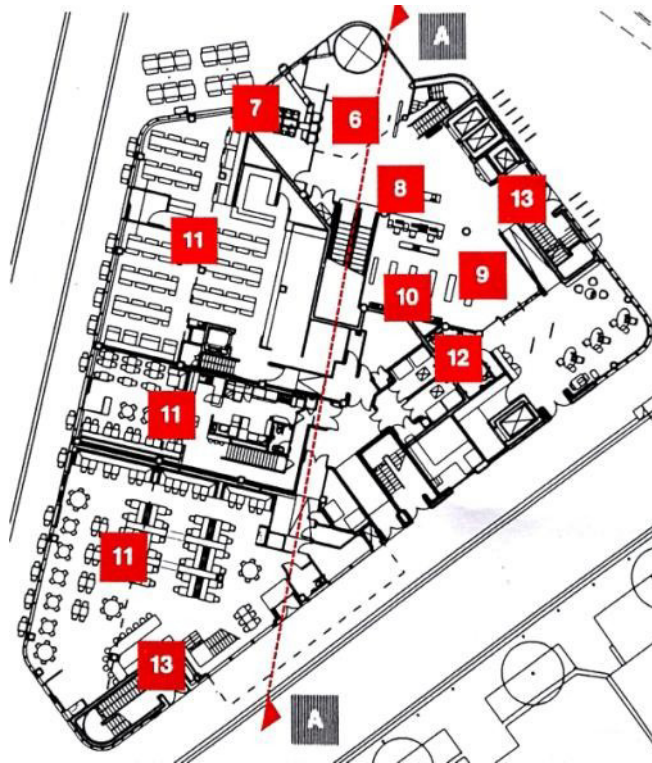
Figure 3.1 Cardiff Central Library Ground Floor Plan, BDP, 2009 (image from Pearman 2009 p.11) (Not to scale)

6. Library foyer

7. Electronic book sorter

8. Library reception

9. Quick picks

10. Quick access PCs

11. Restaurant units

12. WCs

13. Escape stairs
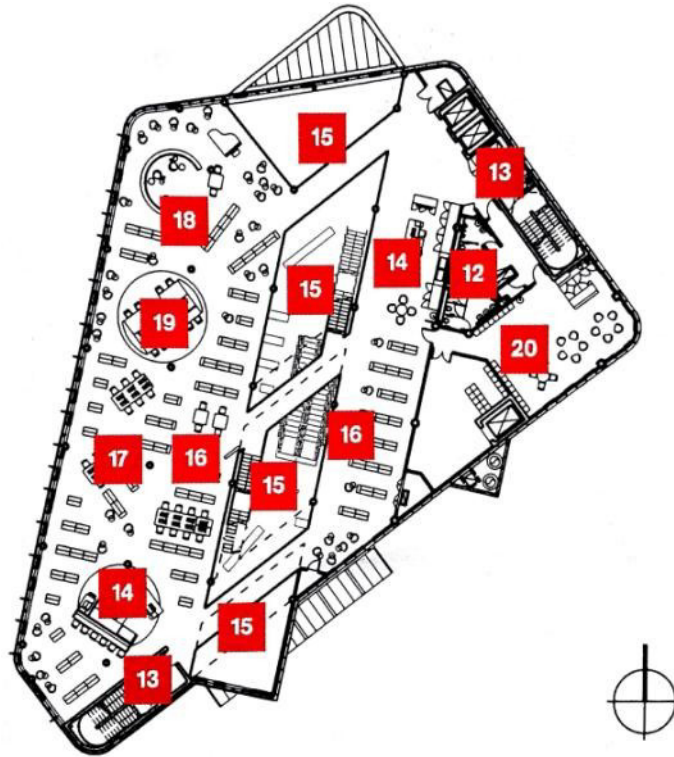
Figure 3.2 Cardiff Central Library Third Floor, BDP, 2009 (image from Pearman 2009 p.11) (not to scale)

14. Reception desks

15. Voids

16. Non-fiction stock

17. PCs

18. Music pod

19. Study pod

20. Offices/meeting
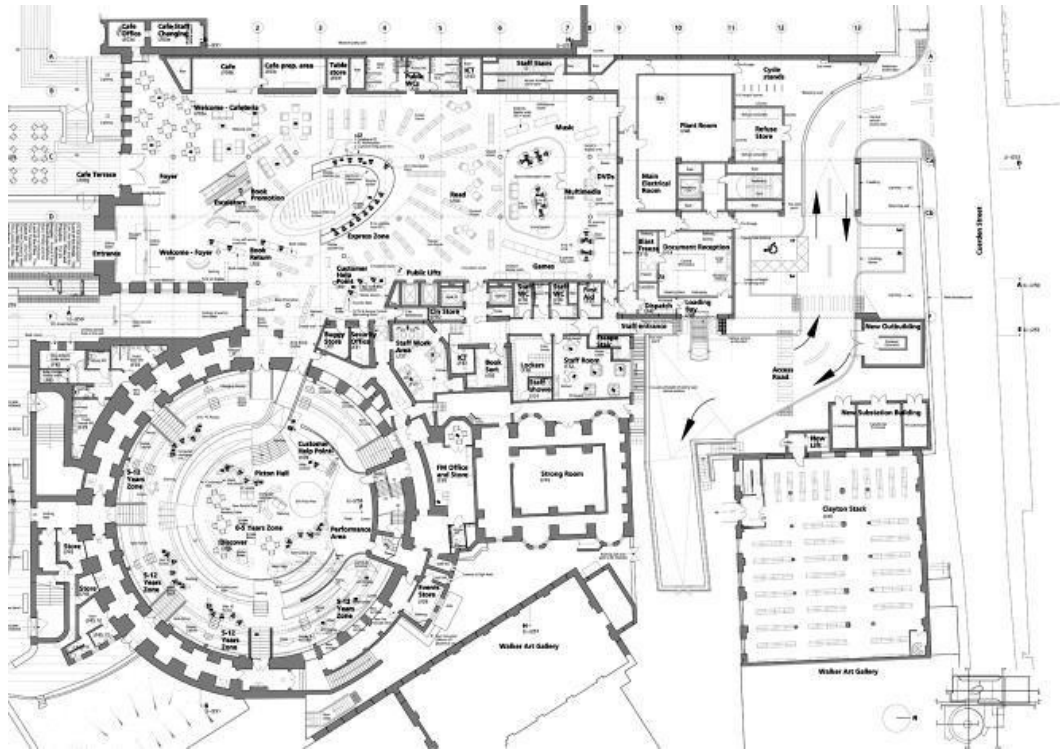
Figure 3.4 Liverpool Central Library, Austin Smith: Lord, 2013 (proposed ground floor plan, 2009) (Not to scale)
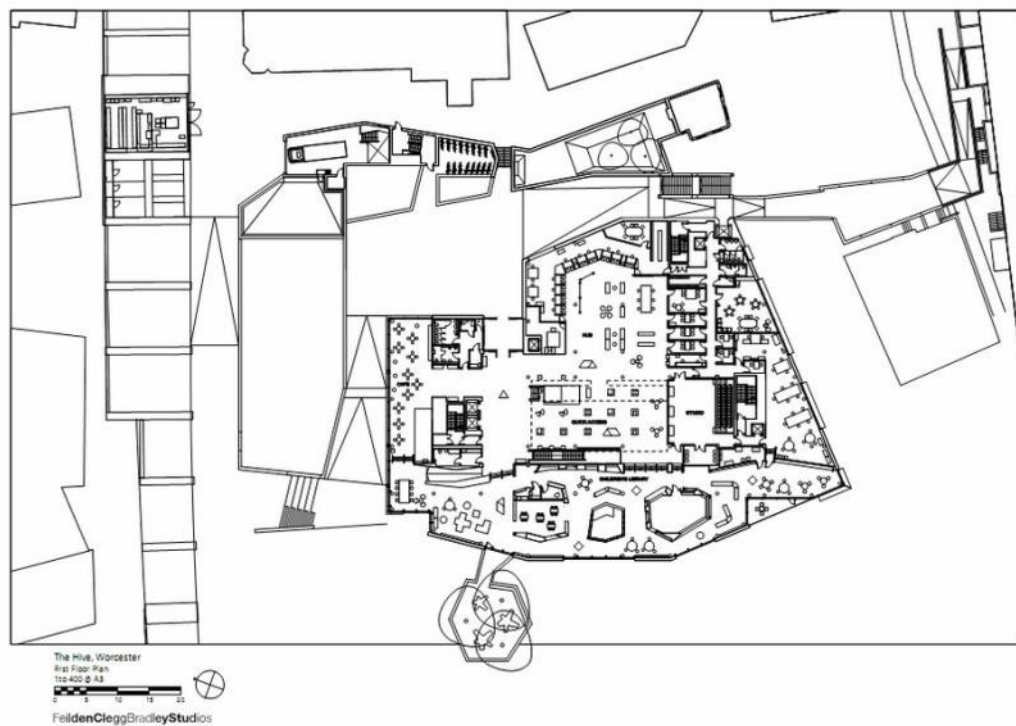
Figure 3.3 The Hive, Worcester, Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, 2012 (first floor plan, n.d.) (Not to scale)

3.6 The Three Case-Study Libraries

Figure 3.5 Cardiff Central Library viewed from Hayes Place (researcher image)

Figure 3.6 Liverpool Central Library (student image)

Figure 3.7 The Hive, Worcester (image courtesy of Sarah Cossar)

3.6 The Three Case-Study Libraries

Figure 3.8 Cardiff Central Library context map (Google 2016a)
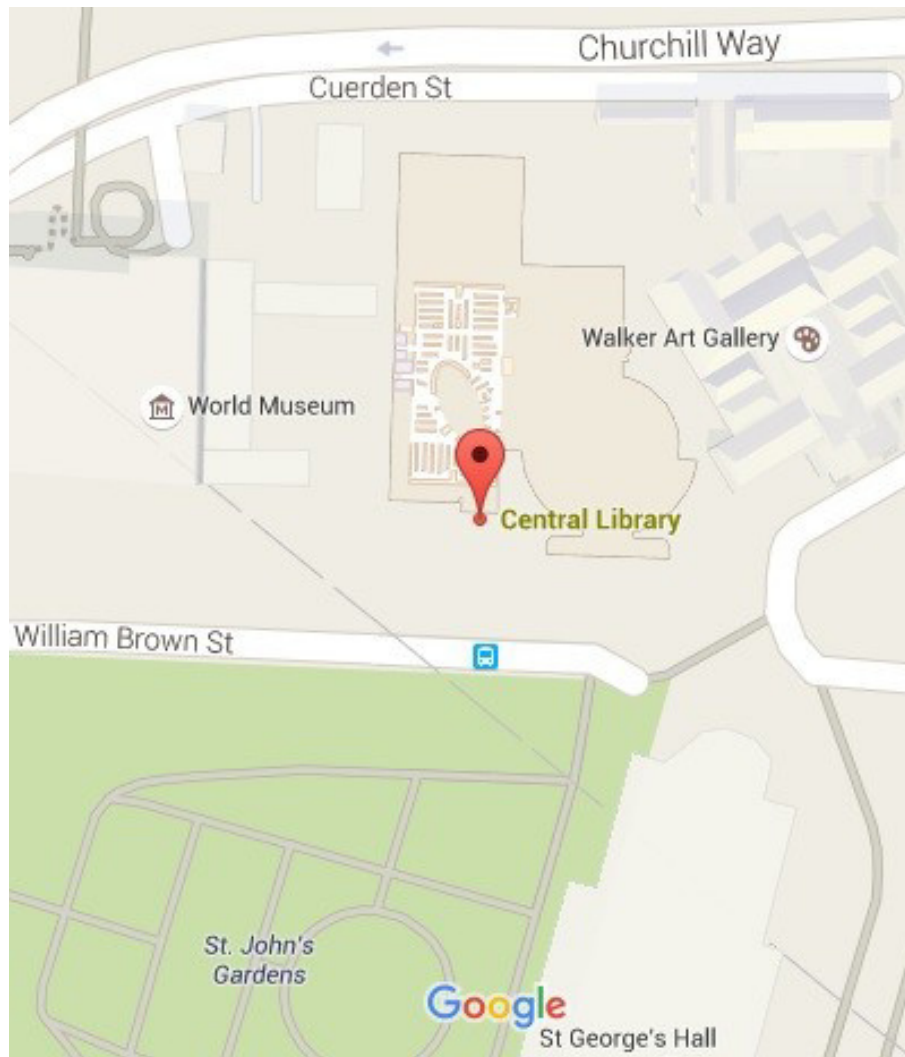
Figure 3.9 Liverpool Central Library context map (Google 2016b)
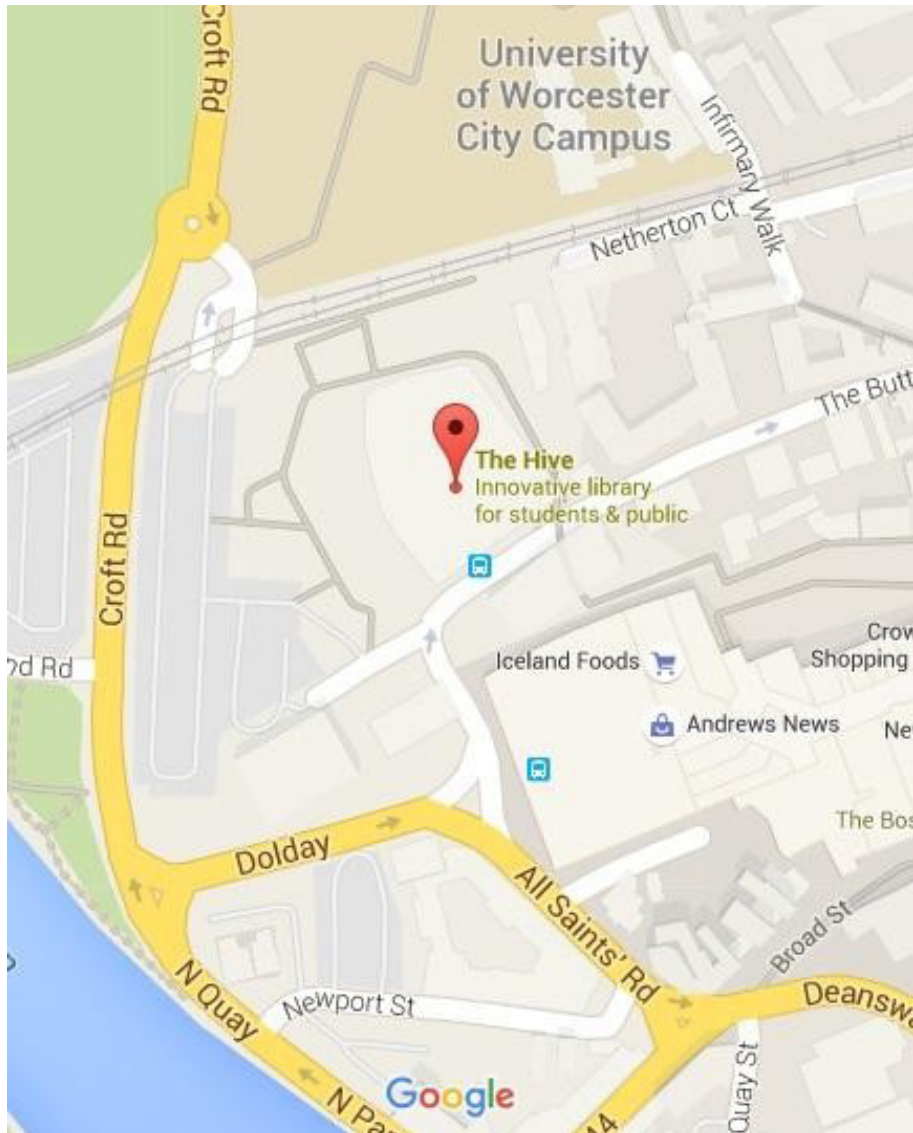
Figure 3.10 The Hive, Worcester context map (Google 2016c)

3.6.1   CARDIFF CENTRAL LIBRARY, CARDIFF, WALES

The current Central Library is an award-winning building, having received accolades from both the RIBA (for its exterior quality) and the RICS (for its environmental credentials) shortly after opening[25]. It was designed by BDP as part of the St David's 2 shopping-centre development as a replacement for the previous 1988 building, which by 2006 was outdated. The need for a new central library is a relatively rare

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[25] All six awards are as follows: RIBA Award 2010, RICS Regional Award (Sustainability) 2010, Concrete Society Award 2009, LABC South Wales Building Excellence Award (Sustainability Category) 2009, Constructing Excellence Wales Award (Sustainability Award & Project of the Year) 2009, Green Apple Bronze Award for the Built Environment and Architectural Heritage 2009. (Design Commission for Wales 2015)

occurrence in even the largest cities. Such moments are invariably accompanied by a period of considering both what is embodied generally in the concept of a library, and what a library might mean in particular for a certain city. This discussion is necessary to the formation of a suitable design brief and a robust design.

The new Cardiff client brief was to create a prominent and sustainable building that would symbolise "*the values of knowledge, learning and culture*" (Design Commission for Wales 2015). The plan of Cardiff Central Library is approximately kite-shaped, a form it derives from the street plan, being situated in the fork of Mill Lane and Hayes Bridge Road, and using The Hayes, an arterial shopping route through the town centre, as a visual axis to which the entrance and main façade aspect are orientated. This allows the building to be almost fully visible from some distance away along the Hayes, but to emerge more progressively when approached from other angles.

BDP (2015) claim that the tall and narrow proportions of the cladding elements are meant to evoke shelves of books; Hugh Pearman (2009 p.4), writing for the RIBA Journal when the building opened, suggested that the blue cladding units evoke paperbacks while the brass is more reminiscent of leather-bound volumes. However, given cladding similar to this is used in many buildings unrelated to books, this could be considered a particularly subtle advertisement. It is not one that was noted by any of the young people who visited the library with the researcher.

The treatment of the façade is reflected in the massing of the interior spaces too. Two interlocking elements have their own functions and aesthetic treatments, being respectively a transparent, open-plan volume for the public, and a more enclosed, compartmentalised volume, clad in the brass, which is used for administration space. These two volumes relate to one another via the central atrium, which acts to direct access, circulation, and views across the surrounding city.

The largely open rhomboidal plan is continued upwards from the modest ground floor, where the visitor almost immediately ascends via an escalator or lift in order to get up above the double-height ground level void that is filled by external retail units. The ground floor portion of the building devoted to the library entrance hall accounts for less than 10% of the gross library floor area (excluding plant and lift shafts), being $486m^2$ of $5085m^2$ (Design Commission for Wales 2005). This double-height space

allows both for the restaurant units to feature mezzanine floors and the library itself to incorporate a mezzanine at the same level. This is devoted to the children's library, and is accessible via its own separate flight of stairs from the entrance hall, allowing it to be monitored for security purposes.

The building plan is similar on each floor (of which there are six, including the mezzanine), but with variations in furniture layout and staircase locations, creating a somewhat winding path to the top, which acts to draw the visitor with striking vertical views and light through geometric concrete structures up to the canted timber roof joists.

The roof is topped with sedum, however this is too high to be visible from street level as the building itself is imposing in stature. Despite this, its height approximately divides the difference between the Victorian buildings on its west side and the rest of the St David's Two development to the east, ensuring a visual mass continuity with its surroundings. The Cardiff Central Library Design Brief (Design Commission for Wales 2004) asserts that "the height of the building is to be sensitively considered in relation to the proposed and existing urban building up retaining exposure to the street of direct sunlight." Conversely, the height is necessary in providing sufficient floor area against the dual constraints of a compact site plan and a substantial atrium that intersects the three upper public levels.

The appropriateness of a transparent façade appears to be a question that the architects have considered in their scheme, for the retail units occupy one long side of the kite-shaped plan, whereas the library's administration spaces are housed in a full-height block on the opposite side, and are clad in brass rather than glass, leading to a general transition from a highly open façade, intended to relate very dynamically with the street (and further opened by bringing furniture from the restaurants out onto the street during opening hours), to a much more closed one, dark in colour, metallic in surface and punctuated by small, irregular windows. This appears more like a bulwark than its passerby-courting opposite.

At the front of the building, the entrance divides the street plaza from the atrium that lies deeper into the plan and serves as the major access point between the two. Here the building is largely transparent, although more self-contained than the fronts

of the restaurants. This is mainly for security purposes, the entrance being monitorable by staff within the library and by security gates that trigger an alarm when a signed-in book is taken through, however, the doors are wide and transparent and the glass walls to either side have been applied with vinyl silhouettes of the intended library users and words of greeting in different languages. It may be said that the library entrance makes a very clear effort to relate to the street, to be transparent and to use visual motifs to suggest that the passerby is welcome. It does not, like the restaurants, use the street itself as an extension of its own space – those two are clearly divided – but neither does it seal itself away behind a stone wall as an older library might. At Cardiff Central, the façade spans this full spectrum of openness.

3.6.2   *Liverpool Central Library, Liverpool, England*

All honour to the generous heart, that gave without alloy,

To the tired and toil-worn Artizan – this resting place of joy!

A monument to future times, of glory and renown

That ever shall immortalize – the name of William Brown

These words are the final stanza of a poem, written by John Stuart Dalton, the first librarian of Liverpool's free public library, to mark the opening of the Brown Free Public Library and Museum in 1860 (Davis 2013 p.7). Sir William Brown was a banker and member of parliament who became the philanthropist responsible for funding the library as a gift "for the perpetual benefit of the public" (See Davis 2013 p.9; Faulkner 2014). There is clear evidence in the tone of Dalton's poem, and in the naming of the library and street itself, that Brown was considered a figurehead for the project. That he laid the foundation stone using a trowel decorated with the busts of "Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare and Brown himself" (Davis 2013 p.15) reinforces this notion.

The modern building that is descended from the Brown Free Public Library and Museum bears only partial resemblance to the original. During May 1941 the library was heavily damaged by Luftwaffe bombing (Davis 2013 p.23), which led to replacement sections being constructed over the following decades. By the start of the 21st Century the building was felt to be unsuitable and PFI funding was secured to

heavily revise it. This redesign, by Austin-Smith: Lord, involved demolishing the 1950s and 1970s sections that had replaced the bomb damage and inserting a completely new structure behind the original façade (designed by John Weightman). It also included the refurbishment of historic areas including the circular adjoining Picton Reading Room (designed by Cornelius Sherlock and opened as an extension nineteen years after the main building in 1879), and the alteration of the entrance's relationship to William Brown Street.

The new structure is six storeys high and prominently features a glass dome that provides a parallel to the oculus-topped dome of the Picton Reading Room. The architectural style of the new structure contrasts with that of the old, containing an elliptical atrium that is surrounded by slanting columns and illuminated from above. The writer and architectural historian Gavin Stamp has referred to it as a "tall and thrilling" space (2014 p.104), and from observation the researcher can attest to the striking effect it has on many visitors. The sudden reveal of this atrium when the visitor passes through the entrance departs from that which the building externally presents to the street. This also places a clear divide between the new section and the restored Victorian and Edwardian parts of the building (a literal divide, in the case of the façade, in the form of a four metre wide light well), which allows their functions to reflect their appearances: the Picton Reading Room is permitted to serve a dignified use commensurate with its appearance as the new section of the building supports noisier use. Indeed, as was evidenced by the remarks of several of the participants, atria result in sound transfer in all three of the studied libraries.

The following four lines of poetry are the start of the poem that was written by Levi Tefari for the re-opening of the library in 2013, which forms a large mural at the base of the new atrium that is visible from every floor. The different tone when compared with the above lines of poetry is clear.

> *If you come with me I'll be your guide*
> *to the city where I reside*
> *let's take a walk so we can talk*
> *about Liverpool the daughter of Merseyside*

3.6.3   THE HIVE, WORCESTER, ENGLAND

The Hive in Worcester is functionally unique among the three examples studied as it supports not only members of the public but also students at the nearby University of Worcester. This is a core part of the building's purpose, it being a replacement for the former university library, which has since been turned into a study centre. In this respect it is the first of its kind in Europe (Worcester City Council 2014).

The building is multi-functional, containing the county's record office archives, history centre, archaeology centre, business centre, and a hub for council services in addition to the library services for children, students and general public. It occupies five floors, the lowest of which occupies one side of the plan and is intended to permit higher noise levels for shared working and socialising. This area is popular among local young people. The highest floor is relatively small and enclosed, and is intended to be a silent study area for more focused scholarly work. The centre of the plan is occupied by a large atrium, which extends from the ground floor, at which the visitor enters, up to the roof level. This allows sound to travel between the three full-sized floors of the building, however the impact of this is lessened by its separation from the shared study and silent study levels.

The building experienced a period of some difficulty when it first opened, with complaints of unacceptable noise transfer, unruly young people and accusations that the design of the building was at fault. Worcester News reported on frustrations from students (Phillips 2012), from families (Sweetman 2013), and published letters from academics criticising the building's ability to support study (See, for example, Jones 2012). Speaking with staff members and students revealed a mixture of attitudes to the noise, as well as adjustments to staffing behaviour and the retrofitting of acoustically deadening panels, which counteracted the problem.

Unlike in Cardiff and Liverpool, the site is relatively unconstrained horizontally, which allows the library to both include a large floor area, being approximately 13,000m^2 (Worcester Library and History Centre 2014) compared to Cardiff Central's 5000m^2 (Design Commission for Wales 2005), achieved with the same number of floors, and to be comparatively unobscured by surrounding buildings. Several research participants expressed conflicting feelings about the exterior appearance (although positive opinions of the interior), but revealed that some the inhabitants of

Worcester find The Hive's appearance challenging given the town's historic architecture. The shape was chosen partly for the functionality offered in terms of space, and for lighting and ventilation reasons, but also to evoke the "kilns of the historic Royal Worcester works and the undulating ridge of the Malvern Hills" (FieldenClaggBradleyStudios n.d.)

3.7 SUMMARY

The themes in this chapter are subsequently expanded upon and framed in terms of original primary data gathered. Chapter 4 discusses strategies in the data collection process, the reasons why selected methods are appropriate for the aim of the thesis, and what alternatives could have been employed. This prepares the three main thematic chapters, which combine the principles outlined above with the data collected in order to tackle the aim and its component objectives and research questions.

4   METHOD APPROACH

This methodology critically evaluates the potential of a number of applicable data collection and analysis techniques with respect to the aim, discipline and subjects of the thesis.

This chapter documents a stage of the research between the reviewing of initial literature in response to the identified premise, and the thematic chapters and corresponding research objective, which arose out of the data collection process. This progressive creation of structure to bridge the divide between initial researcher assumptions and the finished thesis is outlined in Chapter 1, Section 1.2, and shows how methodology played a crucial step in moving beyond a purely theoretical understanding of library design and library use.

Architectural investigation of library experience must work within several broad brackets, which distinguish it from that of a librarianship, social science or psychology thesis. The need to address the significance of built and inhabited spaces is arguably the key aspect that differentiates the architectural library thesis from those that are located purely in other disciplines. It is therefore important to study the library using methods that are able to absorb and reflect on physical information in a built environment. Consequently, the methodology was developed initially by examining how a historical format of library representation could inform modern data collection.

4.1 THE PRECEDENT OF A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY EUROPEAN LIBRARY CATALOGUE

In taking an ethnomethodological[26] look at the ways in which people use library space when conducting search activities, Crabtree (2000) provides a useful framework for conceptualising space. This is useable as a stepping stone to move between the perception and spatial literacy themes introduced in the Contextual Literature review, and the act of gathering data necessary to this research project.

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[26] Ethnomethodology is a process of systematically describing a particular social group's everyday activities; "the study of practical action and practical reasoning" (Lynch 2001 p.131).

Adopting an interactionist[27] standpoint, Crabtree posits space and place as consisting of "intelligible or meaningful material arrangements which are tied to the performance of particular activities". There are several interconnecting aspects of space's intelligibility, which rely on space (and the sociality of spatial arrangements, such as bus stops or restaurants) being part of a "recognisable, observable, reportable, publicly available and accountable" world. The resultant "reciprocity of perspective is an integral feature of the social organisation of space and one engendered through the use of spatial arrangements". To illustrate this point, Crabtree refers to the mutual understanding that is essential to the complex, shared spatial act of driving in traffic; to behave appropriately, it must be assumed that other road users have a broadly comparable understanding of the task.

Crabtree's view on "intelligibility" of space, derived from a sociological framework, has a clear parallel, in terms of the ability to recognise spatial arrangements, with spatial literacy, although goes beyond it through stressing the *shared* aspect of space use. Spatial literacy was explored in the preceding Contextual Literature chapter and linked to the role of perception. A subject that unites these concepts under the example of library space use is that of signage, which attempts to render them intelligible to a range of users. The following example shows that library signage has a long tradition in disseminating information about library space to a readership, well predating the public libraries that are the specific concern of this thesis. It will now be described as it pertains to the perceptions and intelligibility of a library among a general public, and thereby also informs the method of this research, which could be considered an exercise in meta-perception[28].

Topographia Windhagiana Aucta (Merian et al. 1673) is a seventeenth century architectural descriptive text of Joachim von Enzmilner's Austrian library. This was a private library which he amassed during his social and financial rise, and was housed in a largely rebuilt and extended estate which he developed to reflect his adopted position as a member of the Austrian nobility.

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[27] Interactionism, according to Herbert Blumer, the American sociologist and proponent of the term, "symbolic interactionism", encapsulates three premises: firstly, that people act towards things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them; secondly, that the meanings are produced socially; and thirdly, that the use, or "dealing with" of the thing causes meaning to be revised by the person (Blumer 1986 p.2). It is more of a framework than a specific tool, and its use is normally in studying social phenomena, so it has not been explicitly adopted in this thesis, even if several of its principles are applicable.

[28] That is to say, in one sense, this research must be a perceptible overview of perceptible overviews

The description of the library in the *Topographia* is presented as a running monologue, in which the reader is guided through the spaces as though literally walking, a style that was common in collection catalogues of the time (Garberson 1993 p.111). According to Garberson's description of the German text (the title of which is in Latin), the narration even goes to the extent of gesturing left and right in order to draw the reader's attention to various salient exhibits and details. The text is punctuated at intervals by numbers (Figure 4.1) that correspond to particular views provided by the illustrated plates in the book (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 refer to the old library, which was one of three connected chambers (the old, the new and the modern), which dealt with three different age ranges of contents. As the buildings were demolished in the late seventeenth century and the books relocated, without this record there would be little sense of what the spaces looked like or how the entire composition of building and contents was arranged.
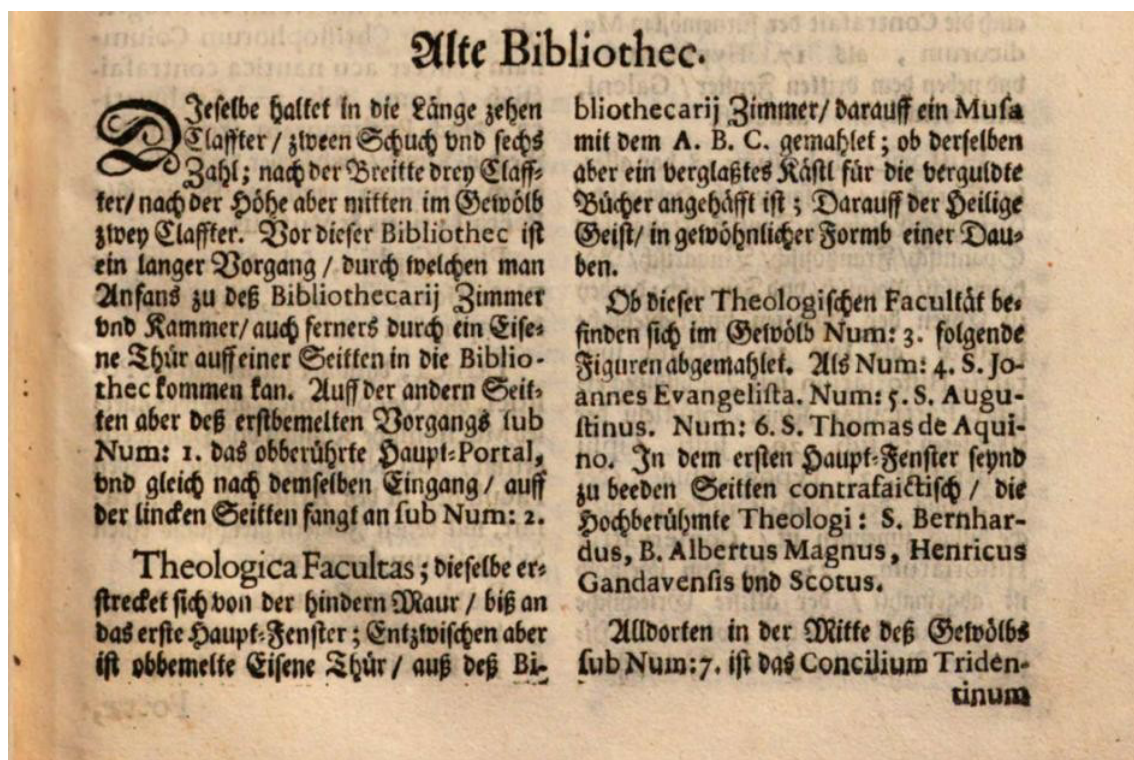
Figure 4.1 Numbered text in *Topographia Windhagiana Aucta* (Merian et al. 1673 p.89)

Figure 4.2 Illustration with numbers from *Topographia Windhagiana Aucta* (Merian et al. 1673 p.80)

It is possible to reconstruct a sense not just of the collection but of the long-since destroyed physical architecture through examining the *Topographia*. The catalogue is essentially the record of a particular walk through a set of spaces known to the author, and interspersed with views that serve to illustrate the points being made.

The following section examines the how mobile methods, specifically the walk-along interview, can capture some of the strengths set by this precedent, while also relating to a modern and established body of work.

4.2 THE WALK-ALONG INTERVIEW

Techniques in which researchers and interviewees walk together have become more popular in recent years, particularly among human geography and social science disciplines. These types of interview can produce richer data as participants are prompted by meanings held by the places and things that the walk passes, rather than trying to guess what the researcher might want to hear (Evans and Jones 2011 p.849). They are useful in the study of specific social, cultural or historical contexts and can go beyond some of the limitations of more traditional survey methods (Carpiano 2009 p.263).

Evans and Jones (2011 p.856) found that walk-along interviewees tend to talk about place with less prompting required by the researcher. They also seem to be better at dealing with place-specific details, which are less often touched upon during sedentary interviews. As they assert, "Walking interviews produce a decidedly spatial and locational discourse of place, which is structured geographically rather than historically" (Evans and Jones 2011 p.856). In this sense it is suitable for investigating the spatial understanding of young people in the urban landscape that libraries occupy. An example of this situational-cueing can be seen from an excerpt from a walk-along interview that was conducted during May 2014 between the researcher and two participants from a local youth centre:

> P1:   That's the library… Cardiff Library.

> P2:   Oh the big massive thing? [Laughs]

> R: It's the massive blue one with "library" written on it.

> P2:   Oh yeah [Laughs]. I don't look for the obvious things.

> R: Do you reckon it looks like a library then?

QUOTATION 4.1. TWO NON-STUDENTS, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 56)

In this exchange the second participant had not previously been to the Central Library, but approaching it on foot, the first was prompted to point it out to their friend, which in turn led the conversation onto what might constitute the stereotypical appearance of a library.

Kate Moles (2008, online) states that the walk-along helps the researcher and participant to become "a different part of the landscape", being walkers rather than dwellers. This is appropriate as the participants may be characterised by the establishing of territories, the boundaries of which paradoxically appear not only firmly fixed but existing only where they are interpreted. Accordingly, Law and Urry (2004 p.404) recognise a need for methods to be more "sensitive to the complex and elusive", and to deal with the "fleeting", "distributed", "multiple", "sensory", "emotional" and "kinaesthetic" aspects of our everyday lived experience. As Hall et al. (2006 p.3) note, the walk-along creates a three-way dialogue between participant, researcher and landscape. de Certeau (1984 p.115) has commented that stories "traverse and organise places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them".

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Kusenbach (2003 pp.466–477) identifies five capacities in which the walk-along is sensitive to needs of this type:

- perception;

- spatial practices (how one functionally engages with the world);

- biographies (the role of memories, anticipations, character, to the task at hand);

- social architecture (the structure of social relationships);

- social realms (social patterns that exist beyond structure, and give rise to it)

Considering the first of these points, Kusenbach suggests that perceptions are "filtered through a series of veils", and that the walk-along interview (which she refers to as a "go-along") is able to reveal two such perceptual filters: a person's practical knowledge, and their tastes/values (2003 p.466). Practical knowledge is closely linked with interests and dispositions, such that a walk-along interview enables a participant to demonstrate how this affects their view of the world. For example, where a student knows that a certain part of a library is noisy, they may negatively label it unsuitable for studying in, whereas a participant without this practical knowledge may perceive the same space in a more positive way. Similarly, tastes and values can be revealed in differing perceptions of the same essential set of perceivable traits, such as two participants' contrasting views on the external appearance of a library, despite the fact that its appearance is the same to both.

There are some drawbacks to the use of the walk-along as an interview practice and these are mainly to do with access, whether for reasons of legality, adverse weather or the mobility of the participants. In the case of investigating the practices of young people this latter consideration was expected to be insignificant.

Hall and Smith (2014 p.295) also make the further observation that "knowing where you are" (in both practical and epistemological senses) is a central issue here. Exploring this opens up analytical possibilities relating to movement and the degree to which different settings demand the question "Where am I?" of the person experiencing them[29].

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[29] In the case of the public library there are three co-existent realms, each asking the question in a different way: the spatial configuration of the building and environs, the social structures overlaying it, and the structure of information housed inside it, the provision of which still serves as the library's primary functional role.

Given that walk-alongs help to increase the participation of a respondent beyond purely sedentary methods they are useful to employ when there are questions of researcher-participant power imbalance to overcome, such as may be the case when working with young people. The walk-along demonstrates to the participant that the researcher is willing to reciprocate (Carpiano 2009), which may be particularly useful when there are also follow up activities planned. Similarly, the walk-along, or mobile methods in general, has the ability to "build bridges to, and rapport with, research participants who might not be as easy to recruit otherwise" (Kusenbach 2012 p.261).

The use of a walking interview introduces a dimension to the data collection beyond what would be expected with sedentary interviews, and that is the iteration of a spatial behaviour. In a sedentary interview the vast majority of information about the participant's use of the environment is communicated verbally. In a series of walk-alongs, however, the researcher is able to assemble and build up an understanding of the young people's experience of the city through partially-new, partially-repeated wayfinding. Although this iterative principle has the potential to reveal great depth, when it was put into practice the walk-along's natural variability did reveal a certain frustrating technical aspect. It was found that poor weather has the potential to mitigate walk-alongs altogether among a group of participants who have relatively little incentive. However, this is not only perfectly understandable, indeed obvious, upon reflection, but references the more general experiential point that when it is cold or raining people don't like to go outdoors and are far less likely, therefore, to engage with the range of casually adopted public spaces of the city.

That this is a question of wayfinding in theory (for example, see Mandel 2013) as well as practice is another reason for the selection of the walk-along interview technique as opposed to simply holding a sedentary session in the library or elsewhere. The walk-along allows a greater breadth of the young person's experience of using the library to be taken in and contextualised. It begins in the city, which is where the field of building environment wayfinding began with Lynch (1960), and then moves inwards, to take in the exterior of the library, the entrance hall, the interior and finally the finding of the resources themselves. Here it relates to the title of the thesis, "Preconception to Participation", which has been selected to denote the idea of library access being a physical journey.

By altering the walk-along route in light of the researcher's iteratively-expanding experience, the walk is able to take in destinations or waypoints that the researcher thinks

are interesting, that they have reason to believe need investigating or are part of the texture of the bigger picture, but it also includes ample opportunity for spontaneity on the part of the participant, alternative route-finding and the discovery of the unexpected. This is valuable when a balance must be struck between the purely naive journey of the participant and the potentially close-minded and preconceived notions of the researcher.

In that sense it may be seen to mirror the real social experience of a young person in a group, in that the route is neither governed entirely by the individual nor by the group but by both together. To this end it is conceivable that the partially guided nature of the walk mirrors the real relationship between the young person and their group, inasmuch as the group is generally responsible for the overarching destination while the individual is responsible for their personal wayfinding and their relationship to the other members of the group as they're walking along.

With a walk-along technique there are a number of complementary data collection methods that can be used to add richness to the sessions.

4.2.1 PHOTOGRAPHS

The precedent set by *Topographia Windhagiana Aucta* suggests that images of a walk taken through the library have long been used for disseminating information about a library building and its contents. This section discusses how photography can be incorporated as part of modern qualitative research.

Photographs are a natural extension to the walk-along method. In his discussion of walk-alongs, Carpiano (2009 p.267) suggests that they work best when combined with other forms of data gathering such as photography or sit-down interviews. Photographs can, as Allen (2012 p.243) points out, "...more convincingly display tangible forms that written and verbal texts can only reference… [and] can also reveal things that are elusive to articulate or write about". In addition the brief pause required to literally frame and focus a setting can encourage critical reflection on the part of both participant and researcher that makes for a more productive conversation (Allen 2012 p.247). During the later decades of the twentieth century, photographic elicitation has proven successful in engaging young people with urban planning, and environmental assessment or design processes (Dennis et al. 2009 p.468; Chawla and Heft 2002 p.207; Schiavo 1987 pp.4–12).

Photographic data is typically obtained by supplying the participant with a camera, either digital, phone-based or disposable with film and asking them to photograph things, people or places that are revealing of a certain issue (Jones et al. 2011 p.179). This is commonly followed by an interview, in which the photos are used as a sort of self-generated prompt. In cases where there may be barriers to participation in a focus group or interview, the use of user-generated material may help to emotionally invest the participants beforehand, resulting in a more productive session (Allen 2012 p.243).

Participatory Photo Mapping (PPM) has received mention occasionally in literature on health and place, GIS, human geography and the social sciences, but there appears to be little authoritative information on it apart from Dennis et al. (2009), to which most other discussions of it point, and which cites no other authoritative sources that use the precise term. Dennis et al. do cite a great many sources in theoretically justifying PPM, and in contextualising it against a tradition of participatory methods generally, and among those of "photovoice" and PPGIS[30], (Schlossberg and Shuford 2005; Ball 2002; Craig et al. 2002), both of which exhibit bodies of independent literature that use those exact terms.

On this understanding, it appears that the name PPM is one that has been given (or formalised) by Dennis et al. to a combination of already-existing protocols. PPM, by Dennis et al.'s definition, lies in combining multiple forms of qualitative data, such as images and narratives, with GPS data that enables an overlaid presentation of experiential and spatial information, the aim being to provide "the most complete picture of people's experience of health and place" (Dennis et al. 2009 p.467).

Photovoice is a photo elicitation technique that has its roots in Wang and Burris' *photo novella* technique, the goal of which was to put cameras in the hands of "children, rural women, grassroots workers, and other constituents with little access to those who make decisions over their lives", rather than the "health specialists, policymakers, or professional photographers". The aim of this was to include new voices in policy discussions (Wang and Burris 1994 pp.171–172). The technique has received growing interest in recent years in health education and similar fields

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[30] Public Participation Geographic Information Systems

(Catalani and Minkler 2010 p.424). Castleden and Garvin (2008 p.1401) suggest that modifying the approach in an iterative sense may allow for a greater sense of ownership to be taken, and greater trust built, among participants, which would make it a more effective tool in research of indigenous communities.

The use of participants' own images places groups discussions, and even presentation of the work in public places, more easily within the scope of a research project (Wang and Redwood-Jones 2001 p.562). Baker and Wang (2006 p.1411) highlight a potential difficulty (in the context of exploring perceptions of chronic pain among adults) in the increased complexity of the participants' involvement over a technique such as a questionnaire.

Photographs generated during the course of "framing" the discussion in walk-along interviews form an ideal elicitation tool in a follow-up focus group. While photovoice also has some value in reducing problems of recollection at a later time, incorporating it into sitting interviews as a replacement to the walk-along, in which the acts of photographing and experiencing the environment are taken together, may miss out on the richness that in situ interviewing can bring (Van Cauwenberg et al. 2012).

4.2.2   GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

The walk-along is useful for generating a narrative that is contextualised and complimented by other information. Evans and Jones (2011 p.850) suggest that the use of GPS tracking is a valuable strategy to employ when using walk-alongs as the data allows for the creation of "spatial transcripts", wherein audio data is transcribed and location can be accurately linked. The approach is clearly reminiscent of the "participatory photo mapping" described in Section 4.2.1 above. A specific advantage here is that "apparently ephemeral and trivial comments", which may go unnoted by the researcher ordinarily are located automatically, allowing for more complete and detailed spatial analysis to be performed (Evans and Jones 2011 p.852). It allows for the combining of qualitative narrative information and quantitative locational information that can be presented in maps. Such maps could conceivably become community resources to be used in a website, for example, allowing participants to see one another's stories in context, which helps the research to extend beyond the academic write-up.

As Hall and Smith (2014 p.296) assert, there are places where a person can be "unsure of your exact location as a cartographic certainty but never really needing to know that either". In this sense the representation of a GPS track on a map is irrelevant to the knowledge of the young person moving through the city, but has clear benefit as a representation tool for the translation of that knowledge. The mapping must be carefully considered: Maps are not movement, they are not knowledge and they can obscure the relationship between the two (Hall and Smith 2014 p.305).

Mapping also offers a natural basis for instigating a reflection of the city area surrounding the library. In the case of a Carnegie library this is especially important as they were not only funded for a particular community, but with the very active participation of the community, who were responsible for making the application, providing the plot and stocking the building once it was finished. It is appropriate, therefore, to go some way towards grounding the library building in its neighbourhood both when dealing with its past and its present.

4.3 FOCUS GROUPS

The chief rationale behind the selection of a focus group as a research technique lies in its ability to explore participants' collective, discursive responses, rather than data generated in isolation (Kitzinger 1995 p.299; Hyde et al. 2005 pp.2588–2589). Therefore, when combined with individual techniques such as a walk-along or sedentary interview, a new dimension can be added, which may be of particular value in situations where group dynamics are under investigation.

Group interviews, under the guise of the focus group, have frequently been associated with the field of marketing research, in which they are used to gather consumer opinions for a range of purposes (Fontana and Frey 2005 p.703). In a more academic field – that of health and medicine – Kitzinger (1995 p.299) introduces the focus group as an ideal method for approaching those who cannot read and write, or those who feel they have nothing to say. From the exposure the researcher gained to these issues it is felt that the mitigation effect in these cases can require qualification. Although a person who cannot fill out a survey would certainly be better served in a focus group, lack of reading and writing ability was found to be problematic when dealing with the information sheet and consent form.

Shyness, however, was found to be ameliorated considerably among young people who were unwilling to leave the company of their peers.

Sim (1998 p.345) raises three particular points for consideration in the use of focus groups: Firstly, that it may be misguided to attempt to infer attitudinal consensus; secondly, that inferring strength of opinion on topics is also problematic; and thirdly, that attempts to generalise focus group data pose methodological and theoretical problems. Furthermore, it should be considered that the moderator's personal skills have potentially considerable influence on the outcome of sessions.

The majority of literature that exists on the use of focus groups within libraries centres on academic or specialist libraries, while the small volume reporting on studies of public libraries tends to be grey literature that is published in the form of reports on the libraries' websites (e.g. Seattle Public Library 2010). This subject generally exists within the library and information science field, meaning that it is more concerned with technical issues for management, such as user's perspectives of online catalogues (Connaway et al. 1997) or web pages (Crowley et al. 2002). Where the *method* of the focus group, rather than the outcome, is under analysis, literature tends towards informing library staff of how they may use focus groups for evaluative purposes (Glitz 1997; Widdows et al. 1991).

4.4 THE SEDENTARY OR SITTING INTERVIEW

In SAGE's Handbook of Qualitative Methods, Fontana and Frey (2005) offer an extensive overview of interviews and interviewing. They claim that an interview cannot be a neutral tool, and consequently introduce the concept of "empathetic interviewing", which fully accepts the taking of a stance by the researcher. Empathetic interviewing posits that the interviewer should not see participants as a resource to be exploited, and instead take a more ameliorating approach by becoming in some sense a partner to and advocate of the interviewee (Fontana and Frey 2005 p.296). This should be seen as an attempt to reduce power imbalances between the interviewer and participant, but as Del Busso (2007 p.312) has noted, even a researcher's body image, over which they have little control in the moment, can influence the relationship in fundamental ways.

Riach discusses the comparatively recent turn towards reflexivity in interviewing, which views the "construction of knowledge and power as an inherently social process" (2009 p.357). The interview has been a central platform in the attempt to capture and convey the

"world-view" of another person. However, attempts at reflexivity, Riach warns, are often limited to either a commentary about the dynamics between the researcher and participant, or as warnings of bias deriving from the interviewer's disposition. The difference between "reflexivity" and "reflectivity" is also drawn to attention for the reason that it is rarely explored. Riach suggest, by way of Giddens (1991 p.76), that reflexivity is conducted "in the moment as well as after the moment has passed", while reflectivity *requires* time to have elapsed, but that the latter, entailing as it does a contemplation of one's world-view, can be considered an component of the former.

Most commonly in literature on interviewing it is assumed that there are three overlapping styles that are differentiated by the level of structure that the researcher imposes. Collins, writing of qualitative interviewing at the end of the twentieth century, asserts that interviews are normally categorised into either structured or unstructured types (1998 para.1.3). This overlooks the "semi-structured" interview, a mode that partially helps to rectify the criticism Collins levels at dyadic definitions. He begins to approach this third definition, however, in his assertion that even in unstructured interviews, some structure is often detectable. Collins' criticism goes beyond this point and extends to treating the very concept of interview "structure" as problematic on account of the "continual negotiation and re-negotiation of selves which characterises all social interaction" (1998 para.3.34).

Gibson (1998 p.476) reviews a comparison of unstructured and semi-structured interviews' effectiveness in gathering the experiences of patients from a psychiatric unit. He concludes that, for the purpose of gathering experiences, unstructured interviews were able to generate more detail and to make the participants feel more comfortable in discussing openly. Fylan (2005 p.67) points out that a semi-structured interview may be more appropriate than an unstructured one when discussing sensitive subjects. The less structured approach lends itself to social constructionist paradigms, however research that incorporates a coding frame for analysis may necessitate the use of a corresponding level of structure in interviews (Fylan 2005 p.66).

Grindsted (2005 p.1015) clarifies the difference in purpose between a structured and a semi-structured interview as being in their respective uses: on the one hand for verifying people's beliefs, opinions etc., and on the other for gaining insight into how people attribute meaning. The view was long held, she further contends, that interviewers were under an onus to be as neutral as possible in order to avoid response bias from their

participants. More recently this aim has not only come to be thought of as unattainable, due to the irreducible nature of human communication, but potentially a threat to validity through the communicative restrictions such an attempt would impose (Grindsted 2005 p.1033).

4.5 THE REPERTORY GRID AS A WAY OF EXPLORING "ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGE"

By considering what Lynch (1960) refers to as the "environmental image", or a person's generalised mental picture of the socio-spatial world around them, a link can be drawn to the Personal Construct Theory of George Kelly, in which each person carries an internal framework for interpreting situations. Lynch's environmental image is described as "the product both of immediate sensation, and of the memory of past experience [which] is used to interpret information and guide action" (1960 p.4). The fundamental postulate of Kelly's (1963 p.46) theory states: "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events."

These two models, Personal Construct Theory and the environmental image, were created for different reasons, but both carry the implication that mechanisms for interpreting the world are internalised syntheses of past and present experiences. This means that investigating them while they are in some sense immediate and ongoing could be expected to more accurately capture their essence.

Lynch's environmental image arose as a way of discussing the city, specifically the American city of the mid twentieth century. The particular visual quality he chose to focus on he termed *legibility*, referring to the ease with which a city's parts can be recognised and organised by an observer (1960 pp.2–3). This has strong parallels with the task faced by the user of a large public library, in which legibility is most immediately connected to the job of wayfinding (which was an interest of Lynch's), but furthermore in gaining an appreciation of the intended function of the library and how it physically relates to others that the user may have familiarity with. Lynch's discussion of it does not, however, make clear suggestions about how the issue could be studied, specifically with regard to public libraries as opposed to the macro urban environment.

The use of the repertory grid was originally intended by Kelly to be a component of his Personal Construct Theory, but has since found widespread use in areas outside of psychotherapy, which was its original purpose (e.g. software engineering: Tofan et al.

2011). An early attempt to link Personal Construct Theory with the goal of environmental analysis was made by Honkiman (1973). "Construing" was Kelly's term for scientist-like absorption of new experiences and their incorporation into a structure of prior experiences; hypotheses are formed and new experiences that invalidate prior ones give cause for revision. Invalidation can elicit various emotional responses such as anger, guilt or anxiety (Winter 1999 p.599). Honkiman's intention was to investigate how construing is applied to the environment to see which of its characteristics are most significant (1973 p.243). His approach made use of the repertory grid.

The repertory grid begins with the researcher identifying a range of elements that relate to the area under investigation. These are listed on cards and offered to the participant, who then, in a process of triadic or dyadic elicitation, attempts to give consistent reasons why the elements in a triad or dyad differ from one another or are similar. These differences and similarities are noted down in the form of bipolar constructs such as happy-sad or easy-difficult. Following the application of this method to all the elements, a set of constructs emerges that can be said to reveal something of how the participant perceives the research topic. The elements are then rated against each construct using a numerical scale of similarity, which builds up a picture not only of the constructs that a person uses to make sense of a situation (such as a built environment), but also how the constructs are applied to the elements of that situation. This numerical rating allows more complex analysis to be performed after the session (Faccio, Castiglioni, et al. 2012 p.180; Faccio, Belloni, et al. 2012 p.517).

Repertory grids have been used to study customer perceptions of built environments such as retail (Oppewal and Timmermans 1999 p.45). A study into perceptions of shopping centres in the Netherlands revealed two basic dimensions (size and accessibility) that were important to the participants, which were in turn related to several constructs such as atmosphere, number of shops, choice, or distance from home (Timmermans et al. 1982 pp.5–8). This suggests the types of constructs that arise from the use of repertory grids on built environments.

Rugg and McGeorge offer the alternative of card sorting methods, which are somewhat simpler and less time consuming than the repertory grid. They suggest that photographs can be a usefully used as elements for sorting. Making use of photographs previously taken during a walk-along interview would have the double benefit of using material in which the

participants were already emotionally invested, and avoiding the dangers of providing cards that bore names, images or concepts that had been imposed by the researcher. The risk there would lie in the requirement for information to be semantically on the same level in order for comparable features to be selectable by the participant (Rugg and McGeorge 2005 p.97), photographs being inherently polysemic.

4.6 ANALYSING THE DATA

Kracker and Pollio begin their discussion of library experience across time by asserting that efforts to understand the impact of the library on the patrons usually focus on questionnaires, focus groups, and use statistics, which reflect the researchers' preconceptions of libraries and library use. The alternative they suggest concerns first-person descriptions of the library's experiencing in everyday life. First-person meanings cannot be known at the outset; instead they emerge through conversation on an inductive basis: "Only in this way does it become possible to learn about the human meaning of the library experience as it is lived and described by ordinary users of the library" (Kracker and Pollio 2003 p.1104).

They perform both content analysis, in which the age of the participant and the type of library in each recorded experience are used, and thematic analysis, in which themes are generated as recurrences are noted. The use of both together allows not only the themes to be generated, but the extent to which these experiences are comparable across different ages to be gauged; in other words, whether what is relevant in one situation is more or less relevant in another. In order replicate this approach here, however, a larger and more homogenous participant base would be required than is used. Rather than relying on the short written reports of one hundred participants, the approach in this research is to get more in-depth – and, crucially, spatially-cued – information from fifty participants. This reflects a difference in intention for each study: whereas this thesis concerns the perceptions and use of library architecture, Kracker and Pollio's study is intended more directly for library management in an academic setting.

In the case of this particular piece of research, the group of interest is young people of varying backgrounds and habits, so it is quite reasonable that some may have no significant experience of their city's central library. In this lies an important point of the study: it is neither concerned only with people who have no experience of the library, nor with those who are regular library users. The study makes no assumptions about young people's

library experiences and usage in advance, save that it is likely to be a melange of different exposures, vicarious experiences based on those of family and friends, a mixture of both branch and central library usage (which, it must be remembered, are two very different things), as well as variable personal tastes and habits.

Phenomenological interpretation, which was touched upon in Kracker and Pollio's study (2003 p.1105), can be used to analyse dialogical interviews that run to some depth, potentially lasting one to two hours each. Such interviews typically cover certain experiences of the participant in detail. In Kracker and Pollio's study, salient "stand-out" events were requested of the participants because "phenomenological research seeks to capture the person's direct or prereflected experience of the topic of interest" (2003 p.1105), rather than an abstract description that may have little to do with direct experience.

Such a view seems to suggest that a walk-along interview would be inappropriate or unable to reveal a sufficient body of experience to make phenomenological analysis viable. It should be noted, however, that a key barrier to the range of the data may be the participant's trust in the researcher. As a walk-along interview is a good way of reducing the power imbalance between the participant and researcher, as well as a good way of sparking spatially-cued conversation, it may hold advantages over a sedentary interview in this particular case, though the question mark over quantity remains. Kracker and Pollio (2003 p.1105) also suggest that the experience should be something with personal significance to the participant. Here it must be acknowledged that the personal significance of participating in a walk-along interview is unclear at best.

Smith et al. posit that interpretive phenomenological analysis, in the context of healthcare psychology, receives its name because it is concerned with an "individual's personal perception or account of an object as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself". This goal can only be approached through the researcher's own conceptions, so the term also incorporates the interpretive element (1997 pp.69–70).

Burnard (1991 pp.462–464), in a grounded theory-based approach to analysing, suggests beginning with the creation of memos after each interview that can serve to capture the researcher's thoughts in the moment. This would be followed by a review of the transcripts

and making general notes about them in order to start identifying areas of interest. "Open coding" follows. Under a thematic analysis, this would be an emergent process in which the researcher can begin to appreciate the themes that lie within the transcripts. Software such as NVivo or Atlas.ti can allow the researcher to view all that has been coded, and the frequency with which each code has been used, which allows an inference about how central each code is, and how they relate to one another. Burnard then suggests focusing on the structure of the codes themselves, introducing higher-level codes to group and reduce the complexity of the map. This list can then be cleaned up by removing duplicate or similar codes so that each particular body of ideas is only directly represented by one (or one branch of a tree).

The SAGE Research Methods Platform[31] is an online service that provides tools to help researchers, lecturers, and students approach a variety of data collection and analysis situations. At the time of writing, the platform contained two resource descriptions under the topic of "thematic analysis" (Harding 2015a; Harding 2015b), which feature a sample qualitative dataset and overview of several ways to approach it. In a recent handbook of qualitative methodology that was also published by SAGE, Uwe Flick (2009 pp.318–323) gives a detailed outline for using thematic analysis, including coding generatively from the initial transcript, then expanding, adding to, and refining the coding practice. This is suitable when "theoretically based group comparisons are to be conducted in relation to a specific issue" (Flick 2009 p.323), as is the case in this study.

Thematic analysis is a fairly broad technique for the analysis of resources based on the themes that can be identified within them. For a large collection of methodologically similar resources, such as a collection of interview transcripts, such an analytical approach may be helpful in identifying particular themes that have been touched upon by a number of different people in a number of different contexts. This is useful as it relates to the style of academic writing commonly used to discuss findings, i.e. a discussion based on themes.

4.7   SUMMARY OF THE METHOD SELECTED

In summary, it was decided to use a walk-along interview method in which the setting of the city and library passed by the walk would serve as elicitation and inspiration for the conversation, focused by the use of participant photography. This had the additional

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[31] http://srmo.sagepub.com/datasets

benefit of producing material for use in follow-up focus groups, and for illustrating the thesis itself. This meant that the subjects of conversation were prompted primarily by the environment, rather than by the researcher, which also helped the researcher to distance his own preconceptions from the data collection process as far as was practically possible.

The walk-along method was used and deemed appropriate because it is easily graspable and does not necessarily carry the "academic" appearance of a sitting interview. These points were felt to be important in recruiting young people from potentially outside the education system. Furthermore, the connection with the built environment and affordance of photographic supplementary material allowed the data to constantly be referred back to the built environment, a crucial point in a subject area in which many disciplinary intersections and their own methodological implications could otherwise have moved the thesis away from its desired architectural frame of reference.

The walk-alongs were conducted, in the case of non-students in Cardiff, from the city centre youth group. The participant was asked to lead the researcher by a route of their choosing to the central library. Questions from the researcher would be posed to "break the ice". This was typically, "Is this an area of town you are familiar with?", which aimed to get the participant talking about their understanding of the city, places that were important to them, and their general use of its spaces. During the walks, opportunities for various broad questions were presented with some consistency, such as the participant's opinion of the exterior of the building, whether it felt welcoming, and whether it was like other libraries they had used. Thus the walk-alongs, through iteration, formed a familiar structure underpinning the main data collection process; from the transcripts, thematic analysis allowed repeating and salient areas to be identified, and to become the structure of the thesis' thematic section, subsuming Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

The focus groups were conducted using a free association process to generate preconceived notions of good library space, which were then used to sort the photos taken on the walk-alongs. This allowed the focus groups to avoid relying on images personally selected by the researcher, and instead to be fully participant-curated.

Sedentary interviews with library staff proceeded according to a mixture of ideas generated from the coding (hence they were performed somewhat later in the researcher) and ideas

emerging through reading about the history of the case study cities, and of public libraries in general.

4.8 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Recruitment of participants was accomplished in person at the Cardiff youth group, over a period of months, and via email sent through university course administrators for students. Ethical approval presented few problems as the participants were all over 16, and the research is not unusual in its method or the data being collected. The Welsh School of Architecture's research ethics committee approved the application, and this was delivered to the participants using an information sheet, a consent form and receipts for payment of the incentive. All names have been anonymised in the thesis so that precise opinions cannot be linked to specific participants.

A scanned copy of the ethics approval form, participant information sheet, and consent form are presented in Appendix 3.

4.9 GENERAL REFLECTIVE SUMMARY

This methodology is underpinned by an interpretivist framework, which posits reality as being socially constructed and hence not able to be understood independently of the actors involved (Orlikowski and Baroudi 1990 p.14; Rezgui et al. 2010 p.220)[32]. This is suitable for the type of study, and offers a rationale for inductive and experience-led approach to data collection. It therefore assumes a socially-constructed reality, particularly apposite in the case of public libraries, in which the researcher is seen as cooperative in the capturing of meanings. This makes the collection format of a walking discussion useful, but its focus on specific circumstances can undermine the ability of interpretivist studies to be generalised (discussed further in Chapter 9). For this reason, data was rigorously pursued in three geographic locations, with three choices of participant, and using three deployed techniques.

Three locations:

- Cardiff Central Library

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[32] Interpretivism is a broad term, and is related to *symbolic interactionism*, summarised above, which posits that people act towards things (e.g. their built environment) based on the meanings that they perceive, that meanings are created through social interaction, and that they are subject to revision based on interpretation (Boland 1979 p.260; Vrasidas 2001 p.5; Blumer 1986 p.2)

- Liverpool Central Library

- The Hive, Worcester

Three data collection techniques:

- Walk-along interview

- Focus group

- Sedentary interview

Three groups of participants; count in brackets, including focus group participants:

- University students (31)

- Non-students (20)

- Senior library staff (3)

All data collection techniques were deployed in all three locations. Walk-along interviews were conducted with both students and non-students; focus groups were conducted with students in all three locations and with non-students in Cardiff; sedentary interviews were conducted with members of staff to form a suggestion of how the thought processes that went into creating each particular building could be related to the perception of them. The walk-along method was considered viable because the libraries being studied are large central ones, which cover considerable floor area. Branch libraries may well have been too small for interesting journeys to have been possible.

It had initially been intended to gather three types of data while conducting each walk-along. These would be audio of the conversation between the researcher and the participant, photographs taken by the participant, and GPS data that would show the route taken by the walk through the urban area and around the library building. In practice, the collection of GPS data turned out not to be viable. It was trialled several times in Cardiff but the accuracy necessary for a relatively short walk could not be achieved among the high buildings in the city.

Additionally, there turned out to only be two or three possible paths that the participants could take between the start and end points, so this was felt to be unnecessary, even had it been accurate. Furthermore, had the GPS been viable, and each participant had taken photos, bearing the correct time stamp, it would also have been possible to create a richer

record of each walk-along. In fact, these did not occur, so if enrichment had been attempted the result would have been at best inconsistent.

There was inconsistency in the walk-along routes: some came through the urban context, others started at the library itself due to logistical differences between students and non-students (the non-students started at one location, whereas the students were arriving from multiple locations around each city). Some difficulties with sound quality were noted due to the cheapness of the microphone. It was felt during transcription that a higher quality microphone would have been worth the investment.

The photographs that were taken by the participants during the walk-along served three purposes. Their immediate purpose was to stimulate conversation, it being felt that some of the young people might be too shy to talk without prompting. The action of framing and photographing a pertinent scene in or around each library could therefore be taken as a prompt that could be made without the researcher's intervention. This was in most cases successful. Secondly, the stock of photographs became a source of elicitation in the subsequent focus groups. Thirdly, they could be used in the thesis to provide an illustration of the particular view that a participant is discussing in any relevant quotation, again, an illustration made without the intervention of the researcher, although the incorporated photos have been selected by the researcher and in some cases cropped or rotated to show details more clearly.

Photovoice was decided against as an approach as it was felt that this would require more input from participants that they would be prepared to make given that the research theme is not of great cultural importance to them. For this reason, it could be expected that if they were asked to document behaviours that were relevant, meaningful and habitual, as is normal with photovoice, this would have little bearing on library architecture. Although Participatory Photo Mapping has certain similarities to the methods that were ultimately employed, this cannot be called a PPM study as the GPS/GIS data is not present, and the focus is not on routine usage of neighbourhood areas.

The focus groups were conducted using, where possible, participants who had already taken part in walk-alongs in order that they were familiar with the library. Initially the participants were asked to create a kind of "affinity diagram" (Pyzdek 2003 p.264), clustering photos according to their similarity, but this was found to produce only

superficial categories (See Transcripts, 7.1), and was moved over in favour of a "free association" (Hollway and Jefferson 2000 p.37) technique to produce constructs of general library expectations, which were then used to sort the photos.

Many photographs were left out of the sorting activity as they were felt by the participants not to relate to the construct at hand (perhaps "useful-useless" or "beautiful-ugly"). This was done to tackle the polysemic nature of photographic information; participants could select the images that they felt contained relevant information. The purpose of this activity was not to produce quantitative data (the distance of each photograph from either pole of the construct, for example) that could be then used for statistical analysis, but rather to facilitate a conversation in which the researcher's assumptions bore as little impact as possible on the topics discussed.

From the researcher's initial experiences of this type of work, it became apparent that the success of a focus group has a number of determining factors, including, but not limited to the experience of the researcher, the willingness of the participants, and the employed structure intended to generate good conversation. Young people, particularly those in a social situation that is relatively unregulated by adults (as a youth group is when compared to a school, for example), are difficult to gather in the same place at the same time, and can have trouble grasping the purpose of a focus group. It would appear that in such situations strong leadership, clear instruction and a judicious choice of elicitation method are necessary on the part of the researcher if the session is to be a success. Without these three elements the participants can rapidly become disaffected, and those that do not are at increased risk of "guessing", giving information they think the researcher wants to hear, or talking about topics that are not the main focus of the activity.

Furthermore, the use of photographs proved problematic in some cases: when participants wish to put a photograph into more than one group, they cannot do so because the photograph is impossible to instantly duplicate, as is the case with a hand-written card. Secondly, it was found that there is a risk of the participants using the most superficial level of semantic information in the image (for example, whether walls or floors are shown, interiors or exteriors etc.) when given very little structure for the sorting. To remedy this, the free association technique was introduced at the start in order to partially structure the task in advance of sorting.

Sedentary interviews were conducted with a senior member of library staff in each of the three locations. These generally lasted longer than the walk-along interviews, being in the region of sixty to seventy minutes, however one was truncated owing to a misunderstanding about the intention, which resulted in the participant scheduling less time than expected. Fortunately the researcher had previously conducted three other staff interviews at the location, including an exhaustive two hour tour of the building when it first opened, a twenty minute technical talk about the purpose of the building, and a half hour tour and discussion about the archives. These were not recorded and there were no consent forms signed, so they do not fall within the body of data collected for the project, and instead contribute towards the researcher's background understanding of the building. This was subsequently felt to be a missed opportunity, although much good conversation seems to occur when bypassing the forms and microphone.

The repertory grid was not utilised. For gathering data from individuals, the walk-along appeared more appealing considering both the participant group and the type of data that was wanted. Furthermore, analysis of repertory grids typically uses factor analysis, a technique that lies fully outside the skill set of the researcher. For gathering data from groups, a repertory grid is unsuitable as it is designed to capture an individual's ways of construing (Kelly 1963 p.49).

Similarly, in the first year of the project a questionnaire was designed and distributed to members of the public in Cardiff Central Library. This was an exploratory exercise but the sample size was small (26 individuals) and the questions designed without proper understanding of questionnaire principles or of the analytical possibilities, so this was abandoned in favour of the approach described above.

Analysis was performed on transcripts generated by the walk-alongs, focus groups and sedentary interviews, with codes and code families being generated. Memo commentary was attached to quotations while this process was underway, meaning that the researcher's initial analysis was captured immediately, and could then be condensed into structured arguments using the coding system. Once the initial coding phase had been completed, it was noted that the codes could be grouped together into families, which enabled the chapter structure of the thesis to be developed.

Focus groups were transcribed in a mildly abridged form whereby, the transcriber also being the principle researcher and the conductor of all research sessions, sections irrelevant to the analysis (such as the relaying of instructions) were ignored (Krueger 1997 p.45; Cameron 2000 p.98). In order to achieve the clearest sense of analytical relevance, this process was conducted after that of the walk-alongs and sedentary interviews.

4.9 General Reflective Summary

Figure 5.1 Unused entrance to William Brown Library and Museum, now separately housing World Museum Liverpool to the left, and Liverpool Central Library to the right (Student image, cropped)

5 THE PROBLEM OF "LIBRARYNESS"

5.1 INTRODUCTION

"The location, design and services offered by public libraries are changing in unprecedented ways, and will continue to do so in the future."

So begins the introduction of CABE's[33] (2003 p.5) report on the increasing value of innovation in library building design. A year later, CABE and the RIBA jointly commissioned another report (Building Futures 2004) that starts from the question "What is a library?" in order to chart a path for library design for the upcoming twenty years (as it then stood).

Understanding how users use library buildings is important to both librarians and architects (Mckendry 1993 p.2). In a white paper presenting the results of a three year ethnographic study funded by the MacArthur Foundation, Ito et al. (2008 p.1) begin with two questions: "How are new media being integrated into youth practices and agendas?" and "How do

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[33] Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

these practices change the dynamics of youth-adult negotiations over literacy, learning, and authoritative knowledge?" These questions are prompted by both the rapidness of the changes that have occurred in the digital media landscape, and by the profoundness of the impact change has on "literacy, learning, and authoritative knowledge", and by extension, on libraries.

With the implications of ongoing media changes in mind, this chapter (the first of the three thematic analytical chapters of the thesis) seeks to determine the effect of young people's preconceptions of public library purpose and value, amounting to their sense of "libraryness". "Libraryness" is considered by Worpole (2013 pp.38–39), who had significant input into both the reports cited at the beginning of this chapter, and Greenhalgh et al. (1995 p.51) to be fundamentally related to the physical presence of large, ordered collections of books. This root is traced to the "religions of the book", Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which links "libraryness" to the process of exegesis. In this sense, the dialogue about media types is reflected in place as a dichotomy between exclusivity and accessibility – or the perception of those qualities in the eyes of young people.

This chapter interrogates assumptions that the participants expressed about the value and character of the three case study libraries, and how these have been translated into the 21st century. It will examine how Cardiff Central Library, Liverpool Central Library, and The Hive in Worcester make use of their nature as physical objects in cities to communicate to the potential visitor, and also discuss how the role and hence value of the library may change in the future, and what this might mean for the built form.

5.1.1   *What is meant by "Libraryness"?*

Greenhalgh et al. (1995 pt.3) make use of the term "libraryness" in their discussion of public libraries' shifting fortunes at the end of the twentieth century. Deriving initially from the physical presence of books, then extrapolated into the function of *lending* books, they mean "libraryness" to relate to "a number of unspoken rules and assumptions" that are tacitly put to use by any member of the public in their interactions with public libraries (1995 p.51). They provide a number of points to outline what they mean, which are as follows:

- The rule of silence (less frequently implemented nowadays, but still a recognisable aspect of library character)

- Freedom of knowledge, and human betterment

- Democratic and non-partisan

- Encouragement of early childhood literacy

- Being a "window on the world"

- Staffed from a non-judgemental frame of mind

- "Porous" in terms of materials and media provided

- Spatially regarded as a sanctuary in the city

- Occasionally accused of institutional "dullness"

These definitions are interesting as they do not distinguish between the library as a place in the city, and the library as a service, but mostly lie across both meanings, possibly reflecting a conflation of both in public perception. Characteristics of "libraryness" such as silence, richness of resources, and security are qualities that can be used to qualify space, but they also imply (or in the case of institutional "dullness", are derived from) the public's perception of the service.

The initial association with human interaction, and not merely with physical descriptions, makes the concept relevant to ethnographic and ethnomethodological study. A doctoral thesis (Bridges 2010) undertaking an ethnographic study of a typical branch library made extensive use of the concept of "libraryness", linking it to the ways in which people expect to behave when using a library. Naturally, even approaching the subject from a social science perspective, Bridges is obliged to discuss aspects of the space that underscore the activities he observes:

> [The] reassuring hum of activity in the library is indicative of the most positive conceptualisation of a branch's 'libraryness' – a welcoming, relaxing, public environment where anyone can walk in from the street and engage in leisure or learning, free of charge and free from restriction.

Alistair Black (2011 p.42) examines the written perceptions of "libraryness" held by members of the public, gathered through the Mass Observation Archive, and concludes that "['libraryness'] played down the importance of [building] style, whether old or new, [and] prioritized the importance of services and collections". There are, he reports, "a number of writers who had no critical awareness of their

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physical environment". In defining "libraryness", he believes that the quality of the building is considered mostly secondary to that of the service and collections (2011 p.36). Accounting for this apparent dissociation between interpretation of library character, and definitions of "libraryness", Bridges' thesis suggests behaviour that is tacit and embedded in the everyday, which might possibly not emerge in Black's consciously spelled-out written reports. Similarly, Greenhalgh et al. are also able to offer some explanation here.

They see a necessity in treating "libraryness" in a way that is more spatial, recognising the function of place in imparting library identity. Therefore their book, which is widely cited in this area, elaborates substantially on the link between "libraryness" and library space, through discussion of both the early philanthropically funded public libraries, and the effect during the twentieth century of building increasingly in concrete, steel and glass[34]. Taking this longitudinal viewpoint, they conclude that one of the characteristics that defines the public library building stock of the UK is that "Every public library is different" (1995 p.62).

The sense and meaning in which this term can be taken as problematic is not that it is theoretically unjustified, or that expression of it is found lacking among buildings, but rather in the problem it creates for those attempting to design library buildings sensitive to their cultural context as well as the needs of the future. This can be summarised in the following way: the "problem", as it is conveyed by this chapter, is that public library architecture must simultaneously present itself as stable and consistent at a time of uncertainty and scrutiny, yet also be sufficiently flexible and adaptable to avoid rapid obsolescence in the shifting world of information technology. It could further be argued that public libraries are especially required to advance our understanding of the interface between built and digital environments, this being an evolution of the traditional relationship between books and space that led to the concept of "libraryness" in the first place. The problem is therefore presented here as an indication of the researcher's view of the challenge presently faced by designers and builders of library architecture.

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[34] Worpole (2013) also revisits this topic in a later book, *Contemporary Library Architecture*, which prominently uses the term "libraryness", but is aimed at a more general audience, and relies more heavily on photography in its discussion of library character.

5.1.2   THE PROBLEM OF "LIBRARYNESS" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DIGITAL

A "libraryness" partly derived from the "large-scale presence of books" (Greenhalgh et al. 1995 p.51) carries the implication that the value of the library (of which "libraryness" is a representation) is in its storage of books (in its spatial aspect), and in the lending of books (in its service). The storage and lending of books is still very much a defining character of libraries – this holds true in media representations of libraries, it holds true in common sense definitions, and it holds true in the statements made by the participants of this research. Yet the function of public libraries is increasingly seen as going beyond that of book storage and lending, particularly as branch libraries (which have always focused more on these capacities) are closed, and services consolidated into multi-function central "hubs". Therefore a question is raised about the extent to which the presence of books is still needed to constitute a positive definition of "libraryness" and a positive reflection of library value.

Mecanoo Architecten's approach in designing the recent Library of Birmingham, which replaced Madin's 1970s "inverted ziggurat" in 2013, was to dismiss the idea that there is such a thing as a contemporary library typology (Watson 2010 p.143). Francine Houben, the director of Mecanoo Architecten has described the rationale as being to create a "people's palace", with the building not derived from the books but from the facility for meeting and welcoming. To cope with the academic requirements, there is a vertical ordering introduced, in which the spaces become more focused on study conditions as they ascend (Dezeen 2013, online).

5.1.3   OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The objective in this chapter is to test young people's preconceptions of public library value and form. This will be approached through the following questions:

- What sources of expectation do young people report in terms of public library buildings?
- How are their preconceptions challenged or reinforced by the three modern examples studied?
- How, therefore, do these buildings mount an argument about the value of the modern public library service?

This problem will initially be approached by outlining definitions of stereotype and preconception, these constituting the information that is held about library buildings in advance of new experiences. Then ways in which the value of libraries has been demonstrated will be considered. The purpose of this is to posit expectation as drawing on two areas: personal experience and cultural representation. The expression of these preconceptions in built form will then be laid out. Where it is possible to identify commonality, these will be said to approximate a "stereotypical" library for the participants. Even if shared expectations are not present, then the difference in opinion is itself a characteristic, reflecting the diversity of experiences and representations available to young people. The ways in which the three modern, central case study libraries reinforce or refute preconceptions will then be outlined, and these points of tension therefore used as an indicator of the evolution of the typology.

5.2 DEFINITIONS OF "STEREOTYPE" AND "PRECONCEPTION"

For there to be an expectation, there has to be a state of normality constituting, as Goffman (1971 p.239) put it, "normal appearances", in which the stimuli a person receives from their environment are sufficiently ordered for them to feel safe in withdrawing their attention from it. The state defined as "normal" must exist in advance of the moment of perception, thereby being a *preconception*.

The perception that monitoring the environment requires (whether it occurs occasionally or frequently) was said by Goethe originally in 1810 (1995 p.159) to involve a sequence of *looking, observation, reflection, and association*: "Every act of looking turns into observation, every act of observation into reflection, every act of reflection into the making of associations; thus it is evident that we theorize every time we look carefully at the world." The associations made are between new information and expected information.

The stereotype of a library, and the preconceived ideas that make it, will be discussed in this chapter through the following frameworks, which are introduced here but discussed in context within the body of the chapter.

Stereotype: a preconceived and oversimplified idea of the characteristics which typify a person, situation, etc.; an attitude based on such a preconception (OED Online 2015e)

Preconception: a conception or opinion formed and entertained prior to actual knowledge (OED Online 2015d)

When describing their stereotypical library, participants make use of comparative words, and these can be taken as comparing that preconception with the case study library in question. As all three case study libraries are new central libraries, a sense of parity can be assumed between them, without having to describe which library was being specifically referred to in each case when the participant made comparative comments about, for example size; therefore, when a participant refers to the preconception that libraries are small, they mean small in comparison to a modern central library.

Onuf suggests how rules for guiding behaviour can take on a life that seems independent from the actual act of stating the rule:

> If some speaker frequently repeats a particular speech act because it succeeds in getting what the speaker wants from hearers, everyone involved begins to think generally about the implications of this repetitive sequence. Convention results, and with it some sense that *the speech act itself, and not the speaker, accounts for the way hearers are inclined to respond* [italics added] (Onuf 1997 p.10).

In this sense, a rule such as "one must be quiet in a library" could become a general maxim. The speaker, as termed above (perhaps library staff, or signs conveying the speech act textually) place the demand on the user, "Be quiet in the library". Through repetition this gives rise to convention; behaviour is normalised and the rule appears to take on a generalisation that causes it to be enacted even when not stated explicitly.

During discussion with the participants of the study, several main groupable sets of opinion were revealed that existed prior to their knowledge of the case study library buildings. In some cases these were challenged by experiencing the case study buildings for the first time, in other cases the newer examples appeared to be assimilated alongside any "preconceived and oversimplified" ideas that were expressed. In this way, the suggestion was made across multiple interviews of a perception of libraries that is granular rather than homogenous. Some libraries were considered to conform more to stereotypes (commonly branch libraries) and be the source of the preconceptions that constitute them, whereas

others were understood by the participants to be deliberately contrary to the stereotype (principally larger, more modern libraries such as those focused on in this research).

5.3   VALUE AND UNIVERSALITY OF PROVISION

5.3.1   DEFINING LIBRARY VALUE

British public libraries derive from a "grand tradition", which Sharr (1978 p.123) describes as a "liberal, humane, rational tradition… an institution which will serve to open the mind of the rational, truth-seeking citizen to a whole range of opinion… It will provide the means for ordinary people to broaden their cultural vision and understanding, and thus enrich society as a whole." It is furthermore, he asserts, "the starting point for any study of library purpose."

As purpose is synonymous with value, the value being that *of* the purpose, we can consider that the grand tradition and its subsequent reconstitution over the past decades also serve as a starting point for the study for the concept of library stereotype used here. It is a starting point only and not the entire definition because it has been reconstituted too often since the time and place in which it originally had relevance, and now is not generally recognisable as a rounded concept to today's young people. Rather, it can be glimpsed through their assumptions and casual understandings of an "earlier age", which is felt to be both remote from, yet somehow connected to, the present.

McLellan (1973 p.112) provided an update to this grand tradition in the 60s, but he focused on the democratisation of culture, citing an increase in the gap between a "cultured educated class and… the mass-pressure anti-culture class", resulting in the majority being denied the liberty of discovering and capitalising on their own interests. This is reminiscent of the student experience's function in permitting a psychosocial moratorium, a delaying of adulthood responsibilities discussed further in Chapter 6.

Despite the increase in use of metrics for determining the value of public libraries over the last half century for justifying investment in them, they continue to close in a widely-reported trend that has been exacerbated by the recent financial crisis. A recent major review published by Arts Council England posits that their benefit to the UK is in "human capital formation, the maintenance of mental and physical

wellbeing, social inclusivity and the cohesion of communities", all of which are *long term* processes, too complex and multi-dimensional to be truly quantified (BOP Consulting 2014 pp.50–51). A recent report taking a cost-benefit approach to public library provision in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland suggests that a user-estimated value is multiple times higher than the cost of provision (ERS Research and Consultancy 2014 p.1). However, as Wavell et al. (2002 p.x) observe, "Economic impact of the sector is dependent upon data sources that are often incomplete, inaccurate or unavailable."

The usage of the public library is dependent on the value the public attaches to it. In a public institution where the articulation of value is an increasingly important tool in justifying existence, it is to the library's detriment that the most immediate, quantitative measures of value are the recording of lending figures, footfall and visitor satisfaction. These figures are of course only intended as representations of something broader and deeper, but the true value of a library to society is more commonly taken as implicit. The value of reading and of increased literacy is commonsensical, but cannot be defined in discreet units of cause and effect; the book cannot be used as a unit of intellectual or emotional enrichment, nor of a person's ability to contribute to the economy.

"Value" in the public library context is a vague term because there are many ways of defining it. Buschman (2005 pp.3–4) has noted that during the last decades of the twentieth century, the value of educational institutions, to which public libraries are closely related, was redefined to suit a more economy-driven purpose. He refers to an earlier paper by Giroux (1984 p.188), who had asserted that "schools become important only to the degree that they can provide the forms of knowledge, skills, and social practices necessary to produce the labor force for an increasingly complex, technological economy." More recently, as Jaeger et al. (2011) have pointed out, public libraries are not suited to quantifying their value to society, and discussions about public library value typically start from the assumption of value. For this reason, defining the value of public libraries is more multi-dimensional than that of academic libraries (see LibValue for example: http://www.libvalue.org) as the latter are embedded within educational institutions and far more concretely linked to an economy of education.

5.3.2   BUILDING CHARACTER AS A REFLECTION OF A LIBRARY'S VALUE

The library, as a building typology, has always been dictated by cultural understandings of "library value", even when these have been a compromise between civic empowerment and economic cost-benefit evaluation[35]. When library value was held to be a process of working class enlightenment, buildings tended towards the grandiose and ornate. This was most often the case in public libraries that were the result of philanthropic activity. On the other hand, community libraries such as the early working class subscription libraries were not called upon to deliver any overt message about the ideologies of their founders: the existence of the building itself was sufficient statement.

The library at Leadhills lead mine in south-west Scotland originated in 1741. It was a pioneering example of a working class library and was followed by similar models at the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. It was Britain's first subscription library and set a standard in working-class book use for the whole of Europe (Crawford 1997 p.539). The library was, in fact, generally referred to as a society (Leadhills Reading Society) which provides a striking contrast in terms of ideology and intended function when compared to the private libraries of wealthy, educated and worldly men such as Joachim von Enzmilner and Charles Townley.

Garberson (1993) gives an account of Enzmilner's library and its adjoining *kunstkammer* (or cupboard of curiosities, which was in fact a room), completed 1673, in his estate Schloß Windhag in Austria. Townley's private library in Westminster is recorded in a painting by eighteenth century German painter Johan Zoffany (exhibited in London in 1790). Art historian Viccy Coltman (2006 p.306) describes the painting as depicting "an exclusive, and exclusively masculine, culture of learned conversation". As modern public library collections can trace their origins to the paternalistic libraries of the mid nineteenth century, some with their philanthropist's portraits hanging above the fireplace (though they are architecturally unrelated to those precedents now), the association with a "learned luxury", as Seneca termed it following the burning of the Alexandrian library (1932 p.247), still remains.

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[35] This refers to the Carnegie Corporation's attempts to limit the amount of architectural extravagance lavished on their funded building designs, which were seen first as unnecessary expenses, and shortly after as ostentatious monuments to intellectualism (Black et al. 2009 pp.269–275).

Martyn Walker, at the University of Huddersfield, has written on the formation and role of the mechanics' institutes that were in existence throughout the nineteenth century. These were educational establishment that provided "technical, scientific, and industrial instruction for adults" (2012a p.142). Although historians have argued that they were mainly patronised by middle class users, and could therefore be considered "failures", or supplied mainly fiction (Papworth and Papworth 1853 p.22), Walker argues that this is not accurate (2012a pp.153–154). Indeed, several were founded by working class patrons, and either featured or grew out of libraries (2012b).

The extension of mechanics' institutes' offerings into the realms of public lectures and concerts (2015 p.193) is reflected in the "non-core"[36] features offered by the public library service from the late nineteenth century onwards. The debate that Walker addresses, specifically the extent to which mechanics' institutes offered services for the professional classes rather than the workers, is one that could, with modification, be applied to today's library service. Doing so raises the question of what spaces must be provided for the functions that fall within the modern definition of "library".

Beyond being an organised collection of physical reading materials, the conceptual link between the working-class library (or institute) and the private library is hard to establish. Correspondingly, the symbolic meanings of the buildings they occupy are quite different. The concept of the modern public library building cannot lay claim to one direct typological lineage as both the classical exclusiveness of the intellectual's library and the functional commonality of the worker's library have been present to varying degrees in subsequent building schemes[37].

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[36] Mainka et al. (2013 p.295), in a study of library services in a number of key international "information" cities, find two general groupings of "core" services: provision of digital and reference services, as well as social media communication; providing high quality, multi-purpose space in the city. MacDonald (2012 p.42) presents a list originally outlined in a DCMS consultation, which in its most condensed form is equivalent to the points made my Mainka et al.

[37] Nauratil (1985 p.9) suggests, from looking at American usage data from 1890, 1900, 1910 and 1920, that there was a general failure of the public libraries to reach the masses in what is perhaps erroneously considered to be a "golden age". Furthermore, Berelson's early study of the potential and actual contribution of libraries to the American public, *The Library's Public*, concluded that American library users of the mid twentieth century were generally young, educated and middle-class (see Nauratil 1985 p.9; Berelson 1949 p.49).

The link between Leadhills library and the grand private libraries is apparent, even if the buildings that housed them were fundamentally different. They share a belief in the power of written material; however the fundamental difference is that whereas the private library has a largely symbolic, even celebratory, relationship to the power of its collections, the miners' library exists far more as a practical structure in its community. It is a tool for civic development and exists alongside a wider welfare toolkit. The architectures of these two models reflect their different purposes: whereas the private library is grand in scale relative to its user, rich materially and in decoration, the miners' library at Leadhills was housed in a single-story stone building of a similar style to the miners' cottages in the area. Exotic materials such as marble could themselves serve as an expression of the owner's worldliness, wealth and intellect, allowing the building to convey a similar message to its contents.

How is this division of exclusivity and accessibility translated into the 21st century library architecture? In recent years, openness and transparency have become more commonly used as overarching library goals in architectural and social terms (Building Futures 2004 p.12). These characteristics are reflected in modern building projects, although this is obviously not the case for buildings that have outlived their original vision, as many of the nineteenth and twentieth century libraries now have. An exploration of building character as a reflection of library value must therefore be more than an exploration of the purely functional, on the argument that libraries are judged by their users symbolically, as well as functionally. The sense of library character from a user's perspective should in principle affect how they feel the library relates to them, and whether they would see themselves as resonating with the library concept. This brings the discussion of qualifying value from the realm of library management far more squarely into that of architecture, for it is architecture that carries the weight of the library's symbolism, architecture that forms the force of the library's rhetoric.

5.4   SOURCES OF PRECONCEPTION

Understandings of place are dependent not only on personal experience, but also on a host of secondary sources of information (Boland 2008 p.355). Speaking about cities, Bridge and Watson (2000 p.7) stress that meanings arise through both lived experience and a variety of imaginations, representations, and translations. Hall and Hubbard (1996 p.163) also point

out a divide between experience and representation in cities. In discussing conflict representations of nations, Frosh and Wolfsfeld (2007 p.132) describe how "nationhood" is a mediated concept because "the nation" is too large and abstract an entity to be understood directly, meaning that it must be "portrayed through the assembly of its constituent parts… via a collage of every-day social domains, populations and activities." The same terms are applicable to the public library network. It too is more extensive, distributed, multi-faceted and complex than can be directly encapsulated, and so can only be appreciated through the overlaying of narrow personal experiences onto generalised cultural preconceptions.

The use of remembered places is of particular relevance because public libraries are so numerous that a young person's library experiences are likely to have been informed to some extent by local branch library buildings. This would not in itself amount to any significant point were it not for the fact that branch libraries and central libraries are, in general, two very different types of building. It was found in a number of cases that walk-along participants contextualised central library experience, either wholly or in part, against the fundamentally different local branch library building stock (ignoring, for a moment, the library's place among the young person's sum architectural experience). In agreement, Sharr (1978 pp.138–139) states that it is the "numerical preponderance" of branch libraries that dictates the image of the public library[38].

Section 5.4 will now introduce evidence drawn from the primary data, which is appended for reference purposes.

5.4.1   BRANCH LIBRARIES

Sharr's (1978 p.139) assumption that branch libraries account for the main part of "library image" is supported by the comments of the participants in the study, but there were more dimensions in addition, which will be presented in Sections 5.4.1 to 5.4.3. It should also be considered that as central libraries have been rebranded and

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[38] Additionally, he suggests what might be termed "Temple of Learning syndrome", an image of scholarly enlightenment, produced architectural styles with atmospheres repellent to young people, a situation exacerbated by the demystifying of scholarly pursuits that accompanied widespread access to education. Considering the year in which these observations were made, they now seem especially prescient: students have access to all the scholarly materials they need via their universities, and budget cuts have particularly threatened the small branch libraries that Sharr predicted would be increasingly unable to meet the needs of a better educated public.

rebuilt as flagship hubs, their influence in terms of media coverage will have increased.

An example of the relationship between preconceptions and experience in Cardiff's Central Library can be approached in the following short exchanges between the researcher and some young people from a youth group in Cardiff. The first occurred inside the library:

R: When you think of a library, is this what you think of?

P: Not really.

R: What do you think of?

P: Like, just one floor full of books, like, not, like, six floors, five floors! Imagine how much it took to build it. All the books and stuff…

Quotation 5.1   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 53)

Similarly, see this discussion between the researcher and a pair of participants while approaching the Central Library via the angle shown in Figure 5.2:

R: When you say "library" do you think of something that stereotypically looks like that?

P1:   No.

P2:   No.

P1:   I'd never think it would look like that.

R: What type of building would you think of?

P1:   Like an old building, I would.

P2:   Hmmm, boring.

Quotation 5.2   TWO PARTICIPANTS, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 57)

Figure 5.2 Cardiff Central Library, as viewed from approach on Hayes Place (researcher's image)

The key issue here is that the young people, who have limited personal experience of Cardiff Central, are relying upon a stereotype ("one floor full of books"; "old"; "boring") for their assumptions of it. The stereotype use is observed in the following quotation, and placed squarely on the built forms of Cardiff's branch libraries:

P: I don't know, like, with libraries, like, you know the libraries outside of the central area, places like Canton, Ely[39], Fairwaters: their libraries look like libraries.

Quotation 5.3   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 64)

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[39] The building, purpose designed by members of the Welsh School of Architecture and opened in 1986, was demolished in early 2015.

Figure 5.3 Canton Library, Cardiff, Carnegie building by E. M. Bruce Vaughan 1907 (public domain image via Wikimedia Commons)

This tendency may be contributing to the library service's problem in projecting an image of modernity and relevance. If the branch library buildings can be considered the most accessible because of their numbers, it stands to reason that, where people's preconceptions of library identity have been corrupted by images of the dull, the tired, the old and outdated, it is an underperforming branch library stock that is mainly to blame. It is true that the trend for rejuvenation has recently favoured central libraries, leaving the question of whether a relatively under-funded and marginalised branch building stock is creating, or has created, a negative preconception in people's experiences, upon which they pre-emptively judge more recent builds.

Where the views of the Cardiff youth group participants are concerned, there is general consensus that the archetypal library is small, dull, and offers little besides books. This image seems to have been drawn from the branch libraries that surround Cardiff, in addition to from a generalised cultural library archetype.

Although the Audit Commission (2002 p.1) has reported that more than half the UK's library buildings are in poor condition, a general conception of library buildings as unattractive is not new: Black et al. (2009 pp.269–270) refer to various disparaging remarks made by influential individuals even before the second world war: the librarian of the Royal Institute of British Architects accused UK library buildings of

boasting "cliché, pompousness and… vile accoutrements of civic esteem". The reason given in Black et al. is fundamentally different from that given by the participants in this study; in fact, they are given for almost opposite reasons. Whereas one laments the ostentatiousness of a building stock that was characterised by pre-war philanthropy, the other laments the mundanity of buildings that suffered the austerity of the post-war era.

The Idea Stores in London are a notable example of a rebranding away from "Library", which marks the intention to break conceptually with tradition. This issue was examined in a librarianship dissertation (Hartley 2005 p.40), which concluded that for a minority of its visitors the Idea Store is still seen as a library, despite its different name. It should also be noted that at the time of these examples being built (2002 and 2004) the idea of a multi-functional or hub library was relatively early in its transition to the mainstream, compared with in 2015.

Figure 5.4 Idea Store, Whitechapel, London by Adjaye Associates 2005 (image courtesy of Edward Spratt)

5.4.2   PUBLIC LIBRARIES

In addition to the images of libraries that exist in popular culture, personal experience of public libraries in early childhood is the earliest opportunity that a person has to develop personal meanings. Furthermore, a report by BOP Consulting (2014 p.51) for Arts Council England shows that the only areas where studies have shown promise with regards to the value of libraries, is in the reading frequency and

literacy levels of children and young people[40]. One of the student participants in Liverpool describes their memory of a childhood library in the following quotation:

> P: Yeah, there's one library we went to when I was a child. It had a little playground. It was full of things but you could actually build things out of them.

Quotation 5.4   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 169)

This memory comes from a childhood in Germany, rather than the UK. Here, the participant doesn't mention books at all, but rather focuses on the library as a playground and space for relaxing. Clearly, associations of a grand literary tradition are entirely lacking in this instance. Another foreign experience, showing a broader conceptualisation, came from a Liverpool student who talked of Canadian libraries:

> P: Because with our libraries over there, it's usually a community centre, so we'll have either a gym or a swimming pool or other activities going on, so it's a lot bigger and it looks different.

Quotation 5.5   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 278)

Still another participant, this time in Cardiff, related the library to past libraries they had known in Bulgaria, where they were from. This highlights a key point about students, which is that they are commonly and increasingly international and as a result have experiences of libraries from outside the UK to inform their library understanding.

Understandings of library character are not only created in early childhood, although the special provision of children's services and special design of children's library spaces may help render them more positive. The current rate of closures of libraries is consigning buildings to memory at a relatively fast rate. Even a comment made by one of the Cardiff non-student participants about their feelings towards Ely Library, one of Cardiff's branches, changed meaning dramatically during the course of this

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[40] Other combinations of skill areas and population sectors were all rated either "Emerging", meaning that library value could tentatively be concluded, and "Limited", meaning there is some evidence but not enough to draw firm conclusions.

research project as the building was demolished in early 2015[41]. The following view on Liverpool Central shows a comparison with the earlier central library, which the current building largely replaced in 2013.

R: What was it actually like to use or to visit?

P: Oh, it was a lot harder to use. It didn't really have as defined areas inside and it didn't have the sophistication that it has now, which meant that the user experience wasn't… I don't know; you couldn't really engage with the building as well or the resources because everything was more, not exactly old technology, but it wasn't as modern as it could be.

Quotation 5.6 Student, Liverpool (Transcripts p. 188)

Here it is clear that the legacy of post-war alterations to the original Victorian building, which was largely destroyed during the Second World War by an incendiary bomb, had resulted in an architectural solution that reflected poorly on the value of a modern library, being the reflection of a concept that wasn't modern at all, having existed forty or more years beforehand. It is an example of a disjuncture occurring between the concept of the library service and the concept of a library building, and, furthermore, of how the latter is a reflection of the former. In discussion with one of the senior librarians it was confirmed that the old building had become unfit for purpose and was not a reflection of what the service was capable of delivering.

Childhood or home libraries were referred to as being "boring", "old", or "square", which goes some way towards supporting the idea that architecturally low-quality branch libraries, being prolific, are a major cause of poor associations with the library service and building stock as a whole. In conversation with the young participants this was found to largely be the case, however in one particular instance the participant's personal experience lay not with the typical Victorian or twentieth century building stock but with the Idea Stores in London. What was particularly interesting about this participant's response was that it was observed while they

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[41] The ability of Google Streetview (as of September 2015) to show the building not only still standing, but alive and illuminated, with members of the community visible through the open door and a child's bicycle parked in front, is a reminder of what can be lost when a library cannot quantify its value.

were in the process of experiencing Cardiff Central Library for the first time and talking about it at various stages. Therefore, the researcher could see how their preconceptions related to the Idea Store and how they were affected by visiting a new library. Initially the participant compares them in their external appearance, it being the first aspect of the building they encounter:

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library?

P: Yes it does, because I come from London and it's architecturally similar to the Idea Store.

Quotation 5.7   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 121)

They describe their associations with the Idea Store and then compare them to two other libraries near where they used to live: Paddington and Pimlico, which are quite different architecturally.

P: [The Idea Store] is quite jovial, very free-spirited. It's not as stern as some libraries. Like, I know I've been to Paddington Library or Pimlico Library, where it's very strict, very *shhh*. With Idea Store you're still allowed to communicate to a certain degree.

R: And what types of buildings are Paddington and Pimlico in?

P: Quite ancient. I'm not sure the exact history of it, but they look quite ancient.

R: So they're quite different from this?

P: Yes, completely. They're substantially different.

Quotation 5.8   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 121)
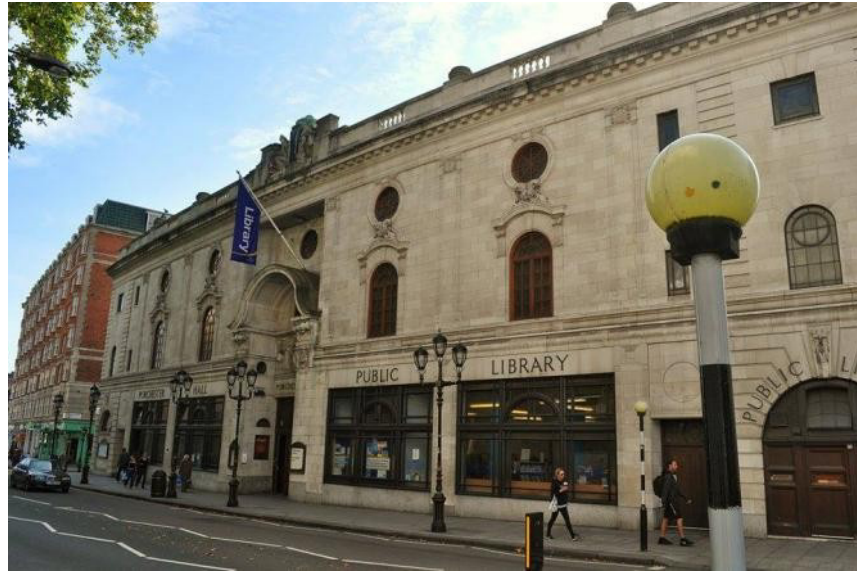
Figure 5.5 Paddington Library, London by H. A. Shepherd and H. A. Thomerson 1930 (image courtesy of Edward Spratt)

The researcher and participant then go inside and at this point there is a departure between the preconceptions of *Idea Store as library* and *Cardiff Central as library*. While they had initially associated Cardiff Central much more strongly with their past experiences of the Idea Store than Paddington or Pimlico Libraries, the sharpness of the distinction becomes less clear while moving around Cardiff Central's interior.

> R: Okay, so now you've come further inside, does that strike you as being similar to the Idea Store or different?

> P: That's a good question. I would say, subtly different from it 'cause this is actually much more structured than the Idea Store would typically be, although there is a similarity in the sense that they do have escalators in the Idea Store.

Quotation 5.9 STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 122)

The participant's interpretation of Cardiff Central clearly crystallises somewhat while they are walking around. To help explain what they are feeling, they introduce their experiences of another library, Aberconway Library, which belongs to the business school at Cardiff University.

P: On a scale of zero to ten, where ten is very accommodating, I would put it [Cardiff Central] at six.

        […]

P: Whereas I know at a place like Idea Store, or even Aberconway, because it's more vast and it's more open, I know I have this impression that I can speak to others. But this is a place where you really want to study, where you have to study. If I wanted to speak I'd have to walk out.

Quotation 5.10   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 125)

Figure 5.6 Aberconway Library, Business School, Cardiff University (researcher's image)

In this case, the participant groups the Idea Store and Aberconway Library together as being more open and less study-focused than Cardiff Central[42]. It is also particularly interesting as it defines a relationship between Cardiff Central and other libraries that seems to the researcher (and would seem to many of the other participants) inapplicable, namely that Cardiff Central is a place for serious study to

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[42] This suggests the kind of triad that could arise during a card sort such as a repertory grid. The researcher therefore feels that an investigation into people's personal constructs of library experiences and perceptions could be an interesting companion to this chapter. In this particular instance, the participant might be given three cards showing the elements "Idea Store", "Aberconway" and "Cardiff Central" and use them to define a construct called "study-centric" or similar. This could then be used by the participant to rate the proximity at which other elements lay to this construct (Faccio, Castiglioni, et al. 2012 pp.178–180; Faccio, Belloni, et al. 2012 p.3).

the extent that the participant would have to step outside in order to hold a conversation, whereas Aberconway Library (an academic library) supports a more gregarious atmosphere and is more like the Idea Store in this respect. Indeed, another Cardiff Business School student commented on this relationship as being exactly the reverse:

> P: [Libraries] are usually much more quiet, but this is more, like, kind of, you can hang out with your friends kind of thing. It's a lot different, like, the atmosphere, from what I would expect.

> R: Different from Aberconway or different from what you think of as just a generic library?

> P: Different from Aberconway, definitely. Both, I guess. Aberconway, we'd actually get told off.

Quotation 5.11   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 103)

As the researcher was able to accompany all of the participants in person, it is reasonable to say that Cardiff Central was quieter when visiting with the participant in Quotation 5.7 to Quotation 5.10 than the one in Quotation 5.11 (this is the researcher's opinion as no measurements were taken). It seems, therefore, that the conditions in a library at a particular time can have quite a drastic effect on a user's perception of the building (and arguably, by extension, the service), and serve to either reinforce or challenge the associations they make between it and their past experiences.

5.4.3   SCHOOL LIBRARIES

There is evidence to demonstrate how school can help to embed a cultural preconception of the relationship between the library institution and the individual. The following quotation shows how the experiences of library use in early childhood, in which a child would typically be accompanied by their parents, can find replacement in school libraries. This participant talks about their childhood public library and their school library and how they were related to each other.

> R: What kind of libraries did you have when you were growing up? Did you have a library when you were growing up?

P: We had quite a big school one, which was very similar to that in terms of… [The participant gestures to the dark wood shelving of the Picton Reading Room].

[…]

R: Was that quite a traditional school?

P: Yeah, yeah.

[The participant moves to talking about their old public library]

P: Yeah, we went to one when I was a lot younger and getting children's books and things, but I think after that the school sort of replaced it.

[…]

P: A lot of it was travel and the ease of getting to a school library. You're there and the school library's a lot more orientated towards what you need. It's not got everything, it's got the sort of subjects you're looking at and it's maybe laid out easier.

Quotation 5.12   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 155)

The participant talks about how, although they used to visit a public library a bit when they were little (presumably with family), after that the school library took over. Not having the mobility of an adult, they ended up using the school one always. Being a "traditional" school, it had a "traditional" library, which offers an explanation of why they so clearly associate scholarly pursuits with that architectural style.

They also comment on how there was little need for them to use the public library because their school library offered better resources at a location that was far more accessible[43]. It is quite clear that formal education had a strong impact on their continued use of libraries (firstly the school library and latterly Liverpool Central and their university academic library).

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[43] The effect of social agency on one's place attachment is discussed further in Chapter 6.

The Hive was reported to be enough of a departure architecturally from the precedents with which some of the participants were familiar as to elicit reactions of surprise. However, one of the of the participants was able to describe how he was not necessarily surprised by The Hive so much as he was eager to see it. Rather than having childhood preconception overturned by The Hive, the participant's experience had been more positive and participatory, which had given them a completely different set of expectations:

P: Um, I think through school, um, 'cause in school, in my first year I was always reading. I always read a lot, so I read books. In my school there was a reading club thing, and our local library got refurbished in my first year and we got involved with the refurbishment and we got to pick books for the library, and we got to see it redone, and I started to use the library from then on.

R: So that really invested you in the whole thing, having that renovation process and getting involved with it? And you were involved in choosing books?

P: They gave us a budget and we went on a trip and we all got to pick books and they were supposed to have a slip on them saying "Chosen by students" sort of thing.

Quotation 5.13   Student, Worcester (Transcripts p. 312)

This goes some way to showing how engaging children in participation and creating a connection to a library that is more graspable to a child than a nonspecific benefit such as reading can play a great part in setting up a young person for a particular set of preconceptions. Therefore, the question is raised of how experiences young people gain in branch libraries, in the public libraries of their childhood, and of their school libraries can be made more positive and supportive of participation later in life.

5.5 PRECONCEPTIONS IN BUILT FORM

Having revealed certain architectural experiences that serve as sources of preconception for the participants in the previous section, this section interrogates how the three case study libraries relate to those preconceptions.

A library stereotype can serve as a platform from which a young person derives expectations of new library experiences. For the majority of the existence of the library typology, the vision driving the socio-spatial form has been a relatively focused, single-minded and intellectual veneration of the written word. This was the case from the very beginning, in which written texts were both valuable, owing to the effort that was required to make them, and usable only by a literate minority (see Willis Clark 1901), until arguably the advent of the open-stack system towards the end of the nineteenth century. Edwards (1865 pp.15–19) notes, however, that this was not an absolute rule, citing Roman and Greek examples which, while not strictly *public* libraries, were at least more widely accessible than typical private libraries.

Gradually, a transition occurred away from tropes that might have been more recognisable in a church: the separation of the user and the book, the representation of enlightenment through lighting, the use of inscriptions and other symbols, and the reverential silence of the reading room. Black et al. (2009 p.163) refer to the increased importance attached to "Business efficiency and the role of science and technology" in a communication age that followed the First World War. Despite this transition, the rapidness of the spread of libraries in the late Victorian and Edwardian styles did much to standardise a particular group of buildings across the country, and, indeed, across the Atlantic (Prizeman 2012 p.3), well into the twentieth century. In addition, during the twentieth century, the persistence of books as the primary resource meant the function of the library evolved only incrementally, allowing the stereotype to remain largely unchallenged until relatively recently. Even in the current climate, in which architectural exploration is more expected in central public library schemes, the majority of the branch library building stock appears, at least externally (the view of most effect to anyone who rarely goes inside), little changed from the day it was built.

5.5.1 ARCHITECTURE OF THE PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL

Carlyle (1840 chap.5) wrote in his discussion of heroes and the heroic, "the place where we are to get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge, is the Books themselves!

[...] The true University of these days is a Collection of Books".

This sentiment predates the passing of the first Public Libraries Act by only a decade, and while in the past it almost went without saying, even in contemporary discussion the connection between the book and the role of libraries is rarely disputed. In the context of digital verses print collections, and the nature of the materials being stored and hence accessed, the role of books is in fact critical. It is not surprising therefore that one of the strongest associations made with libraries among the groups of participants was that of physical books. This reflects findings made by Smith (2014 p.221) who, in the case of architecture students' designs for a "book repository", found that "the cultural significance of the object [the book] was more important than the object itself". Jochumsen et al. (2012 p.588), in a widely-cited article on developments in library space design, posit a move from the "book repository" type of space to "an active space for experience and inspiration and a local meeting point".

Referring to the priority historically given to the book as a physical object, Rachel Begg (2009 p.631) states that "non-book spaces have always existed in many library buildings. However, although there have always been non-book uses of space, the actual uses have changed with social, technical and community needs." This is a view that may challenge the misconception[44] that earlier generations of library were exclusively for books, while also allaying fears that the majority of new libraries are compromising their book spaces altogether. Her analysis of book stock and floor areas revealed that, although there had been a slight reduction in book space overall (and bearing in mind the difference between new-builds and retrofits), this reduction is less dramatic than some commentators have suggested.

As suggested by the following quotation, rather than the participant's opinion contradicting the notion that that storing and accessing books is the defining role of a public library, instead it emerges that they simply don't think about the issue.

R: I guess you must have some sort of idea in your head of what a

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[44] Craig W. Hartman (2000 p.107) describes the burgeoning information age as creating "the need for libraries to have expanded functions", for example, "libraries that include museums, performing arts centers and other cultural resources".

library looks like. Is there such a thing as a stereotypical library?

P: I actually don't know. I've never really thought about it. I've never really thought of that question before. […] I don't know. I'd probably say books really.

Quotation 5.14   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 300)

This is not intended to be an attack on the participant's critical faculties, but rather a reflection that this question may be irrelevant to most people outside the library profession. If this is the case, and public libraries do not inspire critical thinking on the part of young people, it seems quite likely that the answer automatically resorted to in response to the question "What are libraries?" would be the traditional one.

Due to the rate of library reinvention that is currently taking place in the UK, primarily concerned with central libraries such as the three case-study examples examined in this thesis, it is further conceivable that it is too recent for a cultural conception of the library's role as extending radically beyond its traditional limits (i.e. physical books) to have taken hold. After all, the current trend towards architectural inventiveness appears to have its inception only as recently as the 1990s, with projects such as Alsop's Stirling Prize winning Peckham Library, Hampshire's Discovery Centres (see Hartley 2005), and others. The twentieth century was not without its experimentation, however: Bourne Hall Library in Sussex[45] and the former Birmingham Central Library[46] are two such examples of the willingness to explore new spatial options that began gathering momentum in the decades that followed the end of post-war austerity.

The association between libraries and print books has been made more relevant in recent years by the trend towards exploring alternative forms of media. This is not necessarily a new impulse; library staff have traditionally been interested in testing the remit of the services, but the recent, and now established and clearly irreversible, trend towards digital, online, transient forms of media surely makes pertinent the

[45] A "flying saucer" by A. G. Sheppard Fidler, built 1967-70, Grade II listed as of April 2015 (Historic England 2015)

[46] The famous "inverted ziggurat" brutalist design of John Madin, completed 1974, (Watson 2010) scheduled for demolition during mid to late 2015

stereotype of a library's defining role being the storage of and access to physical books[47].

A possible shortcoming inherent in "digital-only" libraries was raised by the following participant, on the question of digital verses physical access.

> R: Do you think it's odd, bearing in mind how in the last twenty years digital media have increased so rapidly, that this building is so stuffed with books?

> P: I think it's beautiful. I think it's great that they're holding onto the older stuff. Like, what we're seeing now is going to erase it all, all this new technology. I like the way it caters to the people that want to hold on, who want to hold on to a book. I think that's why I chose this uni anyway to start off with, just for this library, mainly.

> Quotation 5.15   Student, Worcester (Transcripts p. 290)

Their perception of The Hive in relation to the growing prevalence of digital media, refers to a common assumption, which has almost become a trope, which is that at an undefined point in the near future there will be no more physical books; everything will be digital. This view is countered by the assertion that there will always be a place for real books in public libraries and the broader consumption patterns of the public (Hartman 2000 p.121). It is however of particular interest to note that the participant claims the quality of the library, and specifically the fact that it is very much still a space for physical books, was a major attraction of the university to them, which cannot be underestimated as university choice is clearly a major life milestone.

The Hive has challenged the traditional role of a public library not only through the

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[47] As writer Nicholas Carr (2012) reiterates, even as far back as 1938 H.G. Wells' book *World Brain* portrayed a library of microfilm that would enable anyone to access "all that is thought or known" from the comfort of their own room. The DPLA, or Digital Public Library of America, is one such project. Journalist Megan Geuss (2012) has suggested that "The organization must be a bank of documents, and a vast sea of metadata; an advocate for the people, and a partner with publishing houses; a way to make location irrelevant to library access without giving neighbourhoods a reason to cut local library funding."

questioning the meaning of "library[48]" but of questioning the extent to which it should be "public". It is Europe's first joint university and public library, and therefore faces a particularly unusual set of demands.

R: Is it anything like other libraries you've seen or used before?

P: It is not, actually. I think it's a lot more technologically advanced, 'cause I come from quite a small place just south of Leeds, and we've got one library with four big, old computers.

      […]

R: So here it's technologically advanced in what way?

P: Well, it's much more a base for online research and using computers and stuff like that. I would rarely come in here more to look at the books, whereas with other libraries that would be my express intention […]

Quotation 5.16   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 321)

This view can be contrasted with the one expressed in Quotation 5.15 above. It is also interesting as it shows how The Hive is different from both academic libraries and public libraries that the participant has known, and how they try to relate it to them individually. It's a lot more technologically advanced than the public library they had growing up, but at the same time there's much less of an emphasis on "hardback" books than they might expect from a university library. This is perhaps an indication of the library's evolving role as an information accessing and processing interface.

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[48] By looking at the etymology of the word *library* one can begin to trace its roots and expose some of the legacy that is central to the contemporary debate over the identity of the library, both as a building and as a concept. The word *library* is late Middle English and comes to us via Old French from the Latin *libraria*, the feminine form of *librarius,* meaning "relating to books", which itself is derived from *liber*, meaning simply "book" (OED Online 2015a). It is therefore evident that the identity of the library, in whatever form it has historically taken, is related to the role of printed and written material in society. This historical perspective is of great importance to the contemporary debate on library identity, which is often framed as a debate on the role of printed material.

If the modern library is intended to support its community through all means possible, then perhaps such a varied amalgamation of functions is justified. If, on the other hand, the library is still fundamentally about physical books and access to specific information, are these extra functions merely diversions for attracting visitors who otherwise wouldn't have found their way in through the library doors?

P: I like that you've got the games at the back as well. [...] Because the one that I was from, like I said, it was quite a rubbish one. I don't even know if you could rent games from them at the time. You might be able to now. I'm not sure.

R: So this is when you were younger?

P: Yeah, but I like that they've got their own dedicated room. You can hide away from it.

R: So this appeals to you?

P: Yeah. I love playing games.

Quotation 5.17   Student, Liverpool (Transcripts p. 176)

The library the participant had when they were younger gave them the preconception that public libraries are not places for games or for gaming. They were pleasantly surprised to find that Liverpool Central features its own games room. The researcher personally felt a certain reservation about the way in which this had been implemented within the design scheme, being essentially a self-contained box, positioned at the rear of the ground floor, and orientated with the door on its further side (Figure 5.7). It is interesting, therefore, that the participant seems to find it appealing. It is unclear whether they are pleased simply because there is a space, which exceeds their expectations, or pleased particularly because it's clearly separated from the rest of the library.

Figure 5.7 Self-contained teen space, Liverpool Central Library (student image)

Hartman (2000 p.111) voiced the contentious question, "Does a library still need to be a place?", and after asserting that the electronic revolution (as it then stood) had increased the importance of human encounters, concluded that it did. He was, of course, not the first to raise this question. There are undeniable comparisons between the services the Internet offers people and the services the public library offers. Even the very simple comparison between book pages and web pages serves to illustrate this. In response the public library has been made aware of new options, new technologies to embrace in the pursuit of more effective service. Indeed, simply taking the words "public" to mean *free at point-of-use* and "library" to mean *a collection of information resources*, it is clear that the words can describe the Internet almost exactly.

In the large central libraries of today people visit the building for a number of different reasons, including making use of the physical library's capacity for accessing digital content. The question of whether they will continue to do so in the future, and consequently, the types of information-accessing behaviours the library building may need to justify competing with physically, is not possible to say. What is clear is that access to digital content – a digital form of wayfinding[49] – has both a digital and a physical component and is a challenge that the contemporary library building must

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[49] See Chapter 7 for discussion of wayfinding in public libraries

successfully overcome. Not only that, but it must do so in a way that offers greater utility to the user than they would find elsewhere.

If the spread of digital services progresses it would be possible for an incongruity to arise between the physical nature of the library and the nature of the programmes it supports. (This is arguably already the case in the UK's remaining un-modernised library buildings.) Logically, this incongruity would require resolution in the form of innovative architectural solutions, were it to become problematic. The nature of such solutions would, in that situation, be crucial to how people, and young people particularly, make use of the spaces offered.

The incongruity is largely one of timescales. If timescales might appear to be purely symbolic or representative concerns rather than functional ones, whereby permanence is representative of buildings and impermanence representative of raw information, when considered as a question of access by involving the human body, timescales become a key dimension of movement, activity and interaction with the physical environment, which are functional concerns of architecture, and libraries in particular.

Libraries, being buildings, have a certain static quality that is essential to most if not all physical architecture and this is compared to the inherent immediacy and dimensionlessness of information as it has come to be known to modern society (i.e. the rise in the proportion of people who receive most of their information digitally). Even a "temporary" structure exists for a certain period of time as a static and self-contained object.

The fundamental implication for buildings is that books are physical and have dimensions. En masse, they can be and have been treated almost as architecture in their own right (see Black et al. 2009 p.272): they are walls, columns, mass, shape, texture, pattern, even smell. Raw digital information, however, is not directly accessible to the human body in the way that architecture and books are. It is dimensionless and invisible, accessible only through the intermediary of the screen. In Cardiff Central this "incongruity" was evidenced on occasion by screens that were positioned so as to be prominent, in doing so taking up valuable signage board space, yet were switched off. The physical space had temporarily become useless, the sign

offered no information, and the screens were, if anything, counterproductive in evidencing the library's modernity.

If it becomes possible to fully unite the two, that is, to allow devices to become sufficiently embedded in the architecture as to be indistinguishable from it[50], from a user experience perspective, then it may be appropriate to raise questions over the functional lifetime of the building (as technological devices age notoriously quickly). The likelihood of this scenario occurring would seem both inevitable in time, judging from a tendency towards embedded digital systems in buildings, yet also dependent particularly on library-specific systems being developed. This development would itself be dependent on a debate about the value libraries would gain through such a process – their role as a physical presence within the city landscape. It is, furthermore, logical to expect that a library could be a denser locus for interactions between people and digital systems than other buildings in a digitally-embedded built environment as the storage, access, manipulation and sharing of ideas and information are so central to their value proposition.

Alternatively, if the interface of the library and the interface of the device remain clearly separated, then the former, in particular, will have a very different role to play in contributing to both the character and use of a particular building. This scenario seems more likely over a relatively short time, given the extent of the existing building stock; although new builds in the future may be able to fully unite architecture with embedded digital systems, Victorian buildings that are 150 years old at present may be impossible to practically update to such an extent. In such eventuality, an architectural approach that clearly separates the content of the building from the structure will probably be more appropriate. As with many dichotomous scenarios of this sort, they should not be viewed as absolute; neither is likely to be completely true, but the actual manifestation may well occupy a position somewhere between them, making discussion of both useful.

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[50] This section was written long before Cardiff Central reconfigured itself into a digital-rich hub; the appearance of a "digital floor" (displacing the former Local Studies department to an off-site location), complete with a peculiarly exact synthesis of architectural element and digital device, termed the "digital wall", serves to reinforce the argument here being made. The outcome of taking a device whose value is in its mobility, and transforming it into a larger-than-human-scale building element, remains to be determined.

5.5.2 APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING

The *Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (Calhoun 2002 p.488) defines tradition as having come to be seen by historians (for example, Eric Hobsbawm) as consciously elaborated, and having a particular value in "investing actors or social goals with legitimacy or as a means of resisting… social change". Among the participants, a general simplification of the history of public libraries is observable, and appears to follow three main ages: Victorian and Edwardian (i.e. "traditional"); twentieth century (often branch libraries); and modern, hi-tech, "architectural" libraries (the category of the three buildings studied in this thesis). To draw a simplification from the findings, a mixture of attraction and wariness around the first, apathy or negativity towards the second, and a sometimes qualified attraction to the third were observed. The earliest type seems to be most desirable when viewed in a romanticised way, and at its least when judged against its capacity as a study environment.

The following quotation focuses on the Picton Reading Room at Liverpool Central Library (a space that elicited a great deal of conversation from the participants on account of how striking its atmosphere is and how sudden the change is from the new section of the library).

> R: What is it about the place that makes it feel so different from in there?

> P: I think the design of the bookcases because they're much more old[51]. More old-style in their design.

> R: They're made of wood, they have brass lamps, that kind of thing?

> P: Yeah, the materials then, I guess is what makes it different.

> R: That's interesting. I wonder why that is, because they're about

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[51] The word "old" is used in this chapter in two senses: one refers to buildings that are *not new*, but are rather conceived of as shabby and tired; the other to the mental image of the "traditional" library with wood and brass, conforming to the grand tradition outlined above in Section 5.3.1. This is stated to avoid the risk of reducing library history to an "old" period followed by a "new" period. Rather, where such a division occurs, it is in the context of simplified stereotypes.

the same size, they're filled with books the same as those ones are.

P: Higher up books as well. There are volumes of things that are all the same colour, which I think I associate with more historical libraries because they contain, like, volumes of different texts, but when you look at each shelf, it's got, like, red books.

R: When you say "higher books" as well, you literally mean that they're a long way off the ground?

P: Yeah.

Quotation 5.18   Student, Liverpool (Transcripts p. 206)

The participant is here able to offer an association between an "old-style" stereotype and the actual qualities of the space. They refer to two main features that distinguish it: the materials used and the height of the stacks, which are in this case three-tiered. This shows how the participant is connecting the presence of materials such as wood and brass, and the equivalence of height with superiority, to construct an interpretation that reflects the same "traditional" character as is noted in Quotation 5.19. Although these characteristics could be associated with assumptions of a monumental early library style (the assumption, rather than the actuality, being the object of interest here), Black et al. (2009 chap.8) suggest that monumentality is not the preserve of an earlier time, just as "mechanical" systems of service delivery are not the preserve of the modern library.

During a walk-along in Liverpool Central Library, the participant interpreted the Picton Reading Room as being stereotypically "museum style", in other words, being of a style that connects in their mind more closely with the exhibition of objects rather than the allowance of access. In addition, they articulate this by bringing together the idea of a museum with the context of only the most "traditional" libraries specifically, suggesting an awareness of the privileged connotations that united the two typologies as far back as the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

P: That's quite decent. Wow. Yeah, this is, like, you know, proper museum style.

R: This is what you think of when you think of traditional libraries?

P: Yeah, definitely, but I mean very, very traditional.

Quotation 5.19   Student, Liverpool (Transcripts p. 251)

The arrangement derived from monastic precedent was often recreated in wealthy and empowered individuals' efforts to display learning and worldliness through the housing of books and artefacts. So too, in concordance with Greenhalgh et al.'s (1995 pt.3) definition of "libraryness", associations with religious texts are closely comparable: in an address to the Eastern Library Institute in Ottawa more than a century ago, the editor of the Ottawa Citizen noted that "The public library is the temple of democracy… It is the very temple whose atmosphere compels reverence. Not even a church compels it more, and frequently not as much" (Wiseman 1989 p.ii). Through observation of both the Picton Reading Room of Liverpool Central Library, and the two main Catholic and Anglican cathedrals in Liverpool, similarities were noted by the researcher in terms of visitors' lowered voices and the attention they paid visually to their surroundings, particularly to the ceilings of each space. In neither of these spaces, it should be added, is there a staff member or sign informing visitors of how they should speak or where they should direct their gaze.

Another helpful quotation repeats the idea of materials (wood and gold) creating a museum-like quality (this time in the neighbouring Oak Room, rather than the Picton Reading Room), and clarifies the link between this quality, as expressed in Quotation 5.19 and the arrangement of the space and its associated use for exhibition rather than for access:

P: [They're] all in cabinets, aren't they? It's so ornate, like, all the gold and that dark kind of blue grey, isn't it? I think everywhere, like, if you go into old places like museums, there is that theme of gold, isn't there? I think when you picture something as something else, you automatically kind of go into that place, so if you look at this, I think there's gold and there's wood, I think it's a museum.

Comparing with this view, the following quotation reflects a participant's belief that public libraries are, and have always been, places for people to perform more "serious", scholarly work. It is interesting to consider Quotation 5.19 and Quotation 5.20 in tandem with Quotation 5.21 as the idea of intellectual veneration giving spaces such as an oak-clad reading room to a modern library design is anachronistic, yet the closely related idea of the library being a place for learning and discovery is still very relevant.

The idea of distractions being introduced in response to the well-reported crisis of identity in the service (and consequently the demands placed on the building stock) is one the following participant appears to view negatively in their preconception of library character. Of course, their comments are not based upon any market research or in-depth knowledge of the library management profession, but do indicate the level on which their stereotypical library affects their judgement on Liverpool Central.

P: Libraries are for those who want to learn and want to discover things, and part of our history is from what we have learnt previously. I don't think we should make it all modern and shiny because people want to see lights, I guess. I mean, what this all is is just very shiny things, but it's still a library. It still has everything in it. It doesn't need all this stuff.

Another comment, which focused on the same area and was made in the same library, took quite a different approach, in which the participant asserted their belief that libraries are not (or should not be) the preserve of scholars:

P: A lot of people don't like reading.

R: So you think the library's for more than scholarship?

P: Yeah, yeah [as though the idea was silly]. I think it should be for anybody.

Quotation 5.22   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 250)

This section has demonstrated examples of how the architectural tradition that library buildings derive from is present in conflicting ways in the participants' assumptions of propriety. The dual and seemingly contradictory nature of space that is both suggestive of scholarly behaviour, yet is an open and accessible tool for those who have no scholarly ambitions places demands on building design. There is a need, therefore, for libraries to encapsulate a range of private assumptions about space priorities, but also to be clear about purpose and navigable to users.

5.6   CHALLENGES TO PRECONCEPTIONS

The chapter has so far established a number of key ways in which modern library buildings derive from traditions that are variously incorporated into the expectations of young people. In other words, library expectation is not dependent on a single, simple narrative, but is rather a cocktail of many ingredients that have shifted throughout history.

Section 5.6 investigates how the three case study libraries challenge, through appearance and arrangement, the preconceptions that the participants carry with them. The section closes with discussion of how the difference between expectation and experience reflect evolution in our public library buildings. Implications for the future are then discussed.

5.6.1   THE CHALLENGE POSED BY THE EXTERIOR

Liverpool Central Library is unique among the three case study libraries in that it is not entirely a new build but rather an extensive renovation of a historical building. This led to a number of the participants who were not previously familiar with the building to make certain assumptions about its character based on its appearance, only to have those challenged in a variety of ways, some of which are quite dramatic. Perhaps the simplest of these, and most obvious, is that fact that the initial interior space does not bear up the promise of the exterior.

There is not the opportunity in Cardiff or in Worcester (a city that prominently features historical architecture) for Victorian architecture to be reconfigured into the current structures because the original period libraries in those cities are too small, and have been appropriated by other functions, whereas the structure occupied by Liverpool Central Library was extensive enough to allow for a building of the required

specification to be implemented. The cause of the preconception and its subsequent challenging comes about through the separation of the Victorian façade from the new building behind: structurally they are not integrated, and are joined only by a narrow light well. This perhaps makes Liverpool Central one of the most surprising examples of what Venturi et al. (1972) might have called a "decorated shed", in which the decoration is not merely an elaborate sign, but the actual face of another building, and a pre-existing one at that.

Liverpool is unique inasmuch as its façade is a sign for the "temple of democracy" type of civic building that is no longer built. It is labelled "Library" and so makes a link between the concept of the library and the familiar late Victorian neo-classical shape, but the link between the "bookish" connotations of that architecture, and the word "library", exist even where the architecture is completely different. The following quotation shows the association at work even when the participants are presented, not with stone columns and steps, but with the glass façade of Cardiff Central.

> P1:   I think just the word "library" puts me off.
>
> P2   Just, yeah, if I thought, like, I didn't know what it was, I didn't know it was a library, I'd go in to see what it was, but because it's a library it's just like "Oh yeah, full of books and stuff; why would I want to go in there?"

Quotation 5.23   Two non-students, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 57)

Where the physiognomic messages conveyed by the building are not particularly assertive, in other words where the participant approaching for the first time is reliant on the content of the sign saying "Library", then they naturally defer to their preconceptions of "libraryness" for an expectation of what they will find inside.

> R: It's the massive blue one with "library" written on it.
>
> P: Oh yeah. [Laughs] I don't look for the obvious things.

Quotation 5.24   Two non-students, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 56)

A number of the participants visiting Cardiff Central commented on how little it gives away about its identity apart from via the sign bearing its name. The above comment is possibly a reflection that the signage on the front of the library isn't obvious enough to satisfy someone approaching the library from a distance, as was the case on this occasion. Combined with an appearance that is relatively unobtrusive, and was referred to as similar to office blocks, it may not be enough.

> R: Do you feel it looks like a library? Is it something you can identify as a library from a distance? I mean, think back to the first time you came and visited it, how did you know it was a library?
>
> P: Purely based off the word "Cardiff Library".
>
> R: That's it?
>
> P: That was the only thing that gave it away, otherwise I would have thought it was an office building or another mall.

Quotation 5.25   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 94)

In opposition to the above possibility is the opinion that the exterior appearance of a library is not important, at least in a communicative sense; the sign is sufficient to communicate a purpose that is widely understood, and therefore the building exterior merely needs to be attractive and provide the necessary conditions for the interior.

> R: Do you think there is such a thing as a "library look"?
>
> P: No, no. I don't think it matters what it looks like from the outside really.
>
> […]
>
> R: Would you say the character of the library is mostly expressed by the interior?

P: Yeah, yes, I would say so. I don't think the outside is as important as what's on the inside.

Quotation 5.26   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 132)

Logically speaking, such an arrangement, in which the visitor is reliant on signage (possibly on their mobile phone or tablet in the form of wayfinding software) to locate the building, assumes that the first-time visitor has planned in advance to visit. In other words, their architectural preconceptions should be largely discounted when it comes to their usage of the building, and that by extension, the prior identification (perhaps via a website) of the library service is all that's needed for a potential user to engage with the building.

The use of transparent façades in many recent library buildings, such as Cardiff Central, is a major structural departure from those libraries that were built during the period of Victorian and Edwardian philanthropy. The expression of this departure in the central and branch library buildings of Cardiff was commented upon by a participant who expressed the opinion that the more opaque façades inherent in older buildings serve to heighten the sense of intrigue when viewed from outside, a potential that they believe the current Cardiff Central squanders thanks to its comparatively transparent façade:

P: [Where] you've got all these places, they don't attract me, like, all the glass windows and that. If it had brickwork… you'd think, like, "What's inside here?", and then you'd go inside.

R: How come they [passersby] don't? Is it because you can already see inside?

P: Yeah, so there's no point. So if you have a surprise behind it, people'd be more attracted to come in and see, to have a look what it's like inside. But when people walks past the window they think, "There's no point going in there; I seen what's in there".

Quotation 5.27   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 83)

In comparison, the relatively opaque façade of Liverpool Central Library, punctuated by confined areas of glazing, allowed the following participant glimpses of the architecturally contrasting interior, which resulted in them feeling a greater intrigue.

> R: Does it invite you in, do you think? Does it make you want to explore?

> P: Um, seeing through the glass it does, because you can see it's totally different [on the inside compared to on the outside].

Quotation 5.28   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 203)

From this, it might be claimed that a wholly transparent approach is more suited to a retail application than that of a library as the latter is not engaged in selling a product and instead serves an inherently more scholarly function. The fact that the brief for Cardiff Central Library called for the majority of the double-height ground floor to be devoted to retail functions (separated internally from the library) raises the question of whether façade transparency is equally beneficial to both cases. Following this, the questions of interior treatments is still left; this cautious hypothesis is only relevant to the exterior of a building, and would require further work.

5.6.2   THE CHALLENGE POSED BY TRANSPARENCY AND OPENNESS

If it may seem that early public libraries communicated their intended value relatively strongly, it may by contrast appear that Cardiff Central Library does not. Reverence is not a characteristic that initially appears to have been celebrated and ingrained into the structure. Users are not expected to communicate in whispers; the building is not designed in such a way as to suggest the top-down impartment of knowledge. Still, however, the library expresses verticality, which is in harmony with the quality of its light. Both serve to draw the visitor upwards, obliging them to make an ascent that may be read as a symbolic gesture as well as the simple organisation of space on a limited site.

When the user has reached the upper levels, views become apparent over the city to the countryside that surrounds it on the landward sides. This transparency can also be taken as a gesture towards the expansive qualities of learning and knowledge, the ability to see further and more clearly. Views out, lines of sight to, from and within

the building, and the light quality, are important in the architectural character of the building.

Architect and academic Mary Ann Steane (2011 p.101) has noted that many early public libraries took a Panopticon form, with stacks arranged radially from a service desk inside the entrance. "In time," she writes, "it was decided that views out from such rooms should be denied", the reason being that high level windows removed the distraction of an outside view, while also giving more room for shelving. Pevsner (1976 p.102) reports an earlier precedent: Wren's Trinity College Library in Cambridge features a hybrid of stall system (in which the stacks project into the room) and wall system (in which the windows at the end of each stall are high enough to allow the shelving to continue uninterrupted beneath (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Wren Library, Cambridge, by Christopher Wren 1695, showing high level of windows to permit shelving underneath (image © Andrew Dunn[52])

Considering the interior qualities that arise from the inclusion of transparency to the building, improved light quality is a clear and immediate benefit, both in stopping spaces from becoming oppressive and reducing the load on artificial lighting systems. There is another important outcome of transparency, one that is just as closely linked to the history of library design, and that is the ability to see, especially to see other people. This was particularly notable in Cardiff Central Library, where discussion of the shelving often focussed on the lines of sight it is able to reveal.

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[52] Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike licence

P: Oh yeah. It does feel a lot cosier. It feels a lot nicer as well. Like, here you've got the wide windows with no shelves blocking it. Libraries with so many shelves, it kind of feels a little bit claustrophobic sometimes, especially if they didn't do it how Cardiff did it, but they did it just row after row. It feels quite intimidating or, like, there's just too much to look at.

Quotation 5.29   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 99)

The above participant is referring to the children's story time area, which features floor-to-ceiling glazing, uninterrupted by shelves. This is appealing to the participant, who feels that if there are lots of tall shelves in a space it can make it feel claustrophobic and intimidating. Naturally, this entails finding a balance between the physical storage capacity of the building's public areas, and the ability to see unimpeded. The following participant also talks about the children's area at Cardiff Central, making a similar point to the above inasmuch as it has a more pleasing, cosy feel to it than the main part of the library. When prompted for justification here, however, this participant's comment seems to oppose that of the previous one.

P: Yeah, it feels more homey, for sure, and more comfortable […]

R: I couldn't put my finger quite on what exactly makes it cosy and modern.

P: Like, even putting the book cases that high, I think it makes it feel a lot better, but I don't know why it does, but them being this low, it makes you think there's not much to offer.

R: It makes it more interesting, perhaps. There's more going on here.

Quotation 5.30   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 108)

In the children's library, a short corridor leading to the main story area is flanked by shelving that is, paradoxically, higher than the units used in the main library. In Quotation 5.30 the view is presented that this higher shelving serves to lend more spatial complexity at head height. It should be pointed out that in the children's

library, the rear of the space is split into two very distinct zones: the relatively tall, narrow corridor, which is lined with little doors, shelves and coloured children's books, and the story time area, in which it is intended to sit on the floor. It is conceivable that the combination of these two spatial qualities working together, the stimulation of high shelves and the following expansion afforded by a shelf-less and largely wall-less space, results in the participant's more positive feelings there.

Returning to the Panopticon precedent, the ability to see others makes the building easier to police, which was the main reason that some earlier buildings were designed with the lending desk at the centre of radiating spaces, to permit the librarian to see through the whole building and detect miscreants. As Foucault (1987 p.200) explains in *Discipline and Punish*, "The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and recognize immediately."

A comparable principle has been adopted in Cardiff Central Library too, although not in the form of a Panopticon. Instead, relatively low shelving (mainly 1500mm) brings the combined benefits of a less oppressive space, suitable for wayfinding and orientation, with the affordance of a clear view for librarians from the service points across the entirety of each floor. This was an early design requirement of the librarians because the library is intended to be open to any member of the public who cares to come inside, and therefore requires a certain degree of surveillance to maintain pleasant conditions. The feeling of being under watch that this can engender is one way in which non-student participants reported feeling uncomfortable in the library: this relationship is explored more in the next chapter, *Socio-Spatial Interpretations*.

The participants seemed predominantly aware of this. Being under surveillance is something they conceivably resent, yet view as a regular aspect of their lives. The understanding of surveillance as having both desirable and undesirable elements is reflected in the somewhat contradictory statement of a non-student participant:

> P: This is basically, like, myself in here now, I feels a bit paranoid, I
>   feel like people are watching me. But that's me, do you know
>   what I mean? That's because of problems I've had in my life
>   and my mental health. But I do feel a bit insecure in the library,

> but it is a good place to come and you can just sit in a corner and no one'll see you.

<div align="center">Quotation 5.31   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 11)</div>

It may be possible to explain the above contradiction by assuming that the participant is referring not only to a *general* sense of being monitored, whether by librarians, the council, or simply the cameras themselves (i.e. "people are watching me"), but simultaneously, and more *specifically*, to a freedom from disturbance by one's own social group (i.e. "no one'll see you"). Other participants share this understanding of being watched, but adopt a more practical perspective on it:

> R: Do you feel like you're being watched when you're in here? Or do you feel like you can hide away and it's quite secluded?

> P: I don't feel like, I don't know, depends how you mean by "watched". Obviously, I know you're being watched by cameras, that's logic, but I don't feel that I'm being watched by any other particular person.

<div align="center">Quotation 5.32   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 65)</div>

The participant in this example points out that it's perfectly natural to have CCTV in a public building and that they're not worried about someone in particular watching them. Additionally, they explain that they believe none of the users in the library are particularly concerned with anyone else's activities, unless these become obtrusive, implying that users mainly come to the library individually and with a specific purpose in mind, and are unlikely to take an interest in those around them unless prompted. The way in which participants understand surveillance as apparently being distinct from the ability to see other users suggests a fundamental divide between their conception of the library administration and their conception of the general library-using populace.

In addition to facilitating easier surveillance, the ability to see other people allows a greater commonality of experience. Whether this is desirable depends on the relationship of the various users who can see one another. The scale of the interior's viewing distances has a relationship to the scale of the groups it can support (if,

indeed, it is not conducive solely to individual pursuits). As with any building interior that is more spatially complex than a single volume, different scales can be found in various interior locations and orientations, meaning that the experience of the building can be shared by certain groups in certain locations, and made separate from groups in other locations.

The use of sound travel distances is also cautiously advanced as a predicator of the size of group that can share the building experience, and divide that experience from those of others. In an environment where the members of the group are able to talk and be heard (i.e. where there is a reasonable sound travel distance) it may be possible to rely mainly on this distance for structuring the "in-group" and to rely on visual distances for locating it within the building, a division of the micro- and macro-relationships. In situations where it is not possible to talk and be heard (perhaps where there is either a stern silence policy, such as in certain more "traditional" libraries, or where the ambient sound level is too high, as in a nightclub) then the supportable scale of the in-group would logically either have to be reduced correspondingly or derive instead from distances within visible contact.

5.6.3 CONCEPTIONS OF THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LIBRARY

This section asks the question, "Having realised that modern libraries are capable of challenging preconceptions, how do young people express their corresponding awareness of the changing *role* of the library building?"

Conceptions of the future are by definition *pre*-conceptions. The assumptions made by the young people about the future of the library were not merely limited to the relationship of digital to physical media and digital or physical architecture. In some cases there were reflections of the broader socio-economic situation:

> P: We, as youth, we're kind of being pushed away, even with the economy as well as with libraries, schools and stuff like that, but what they don't realise is that youth, we are the future. D'you know? We are the next.
>
> […]
>
> P: I think they probably won't [design libraries in twenty years'

time] to be perfectly fair with you 'cause they're cancelling

them, getting rid of so much. Like, three-quarters of the youth

centres in Cardiff have been closed for budgeting cuts.

Quotation 5.33   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 73)

Here, the participant views the library as part of a broader educating system ("libraries, schools and stuff like that"), from which they feel alienated and "pushed away". Yet the participant acknowledges in the same breath that without this system they and their peers are left without the means to make the best of the future. They report that their social group is not taken into proper consideration when this system is offered, and that thanks to council budget cuts, there may well be few public libraries left in the future. It is clear from their last comment here that they personally feel a sense of unease in particular about the closure of youth groups, indicating that they feel a certain reliance on or attachment to these facilities, which is not so much the case with libraries or schools.

Moving closer to the design of library buildings, rather than the role of the library as part of a broader array of public services, another youth group participant referred to the use of the library as a "fashion statement". The following participant relates the evolution of Cardiff Central Library to a broader city-centre redevelopment, which has largely missed out the more outlying branch libraries. The resulting difference between a central library and a branch library is one that has been commented upon (Sharr 1978 p.139).

P: [The branch libraries] look almost like community centres, or

        they got that library look about them. They're cosier, whereas, I

        don't know, this library has gone from, compared from the old

        library to this library, it's got more of a fashion statement.

Quotation 5.34   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 64)

When discussing the library as a monument constructed (as is the participant's perception here) as a civic fashion statement, it is appropriate to recall the opinion of American library consultant Charles Carroll Soule, referring near the start of the twentieth century to a frustrating trend for loveliness over convenience in public

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library design, a practice that Black et al. (2009 p.269) refer to as an "overindulgence in civic pride" bought by taxes and philanthropy.

The following participant, a student in Worcester rather than a non-student in Cardiff, reported that for them the opportunities offered by the new building extended beyond an interest in its potential to act as an asset to Worcester's image. The value they attach to the building in the following quotation is functional and related to their degree course. The fact that The Hive is the first joint public and university library in Europe allows it to occupy a unique relationship to the participant, and allows the building to demonstrate a unique value, namely that the great personal investments a person makes in their university can be played out through the programmatic possibilities of a major public building. In this case, the possibility is in public exhibition space.

P: But this is something our course has started up. The International Lemniscate illustration competition and basically one of the authors that helped with this has donated a load of books and these are some of the books that have been donated. […] But they've created a research collection for picture books.

R: Really, as a resource?

P: Yeah. On the other side there it's got information about it. It kind of tells you more about what they do on these here […]

R: I guess that's an interesting part of the library's function. It's providing books but in a totally different way.

Quotation 5.35   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 303)

If the library were not public, and existed only for the students, the value of the exhibition space would be greatly diminished, and if it were a public library only,

disconnected from the university, it would be more difficult for the university to make use of it with such freedom[53].

5.6.4 *"GATES TO THE FUTURE"*

The title of this section comes from Neil Gaiman, when he was referring to the job of libraries to strengthen and invigorate the society that will come into being over the coming years. Chapter 5 has so far revealed sources of participants' library preconceptions, their expression in the three case study buildings, and aspects of those buildings that are departures or refutations of stereotype.

To reiterate the question posed at the start of the chapter, by asking "What is a library?", how are suggestions made about what a library ought to be in the future? In the 1972 version of UNESCO's public library manifesto, which was a revision to the original 1949 version made for International Book Year, the mission of the public library was described in the following way:

> The public library is a practical demonstration of democracy's faith in universal education as a continuing and lifelong process, in the appreciation of the achievement of humanity in knowledge and culture. [It is] the principle means whereby the record of man's thoughts and ideals, and the expression of his creative imagination, are made freely available (Kent et al. 1978 p.459).

Encapsulated here is the notion that the public library is intended to be a long-term investment in culture and education, that it is for the society of tomorrow. It is, therefore, implicitly an affirmation of the value of young people to society as the citizens of tomorrow. To design for young people is to design for a society that exists in a state of permanent semi-definition. This is a sentiment echoed in the Finnish Ministry of Education's (2009) strategic areas of focus document, in which young people are identified as the citizens of tomorrow and therefore a valuable asset to the current library network.

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[53] It may also be the case that without the connection to academia, a public library would consider a "research collection for picture books" of overly specialist interest, however this is speculation.

By the time of the 1994 UNESCO revision, which is the current version, the ideal library purpose is couched in slightly less temporal terms, being "the local gateway to knowledge", providing "a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development". While there is still recognition of the library's role in fostering lifelong learning, it is now primarily "a living force for education, culture and information" and "an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women." (UNESCO 1994, online)

There is, furthermore, a stipulation that the material available (the medium is not specified) must "reflect *current trends* and the evolution of society, as well as the *memory* of human endeavour and imagination [my italics]" (UNESCO 1994, online). This demonstrates an urge to reflect on the current socio-cultural landscape in addition to that which has passed, yet a lack of specification of a future scenario. If this were read in sceptical terms it could perhaps be taken as a sign of unconfidence, or at least irresolution.

While Godfrey Thompson, then president of the Library Association (now CILIP since 2002), reflects on the obviousness of the fact that a new library must "operate with the materials and techniques of the future rather than of the past", he readily acknowledges that to plan for future resource materials is a nearly impossible task (1977 p.14). His book, *Planning and Design of Library Buildings*, is perhaps notable as it was meant to be accessible to both architects and librarians. It differs from another key text of the time, Keyes D. Metcalf's (1965) *Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings,* (as the name suggests) by broadening its scope to include public libraries.

The differences in the 1972 and 1994 versions of UNESCO's manifesto may seem subtle, but they do reflect two key changes in the role of the library as a physical space catering to the needs of the future's society:

- The *increase of information in digital as opposed to print formats* brought non-physical resources en masse, meaning that the physical spaces of the library became more difficult to justify in the same terms as before. It was young people who tended to be the early adopters of digital information;

indeed, any children born since the advent of practical digital information sharing have even been termed "digital natives"[54].

- The *rapidness of the change* meant that the library's physicality, its historically ingrained sense of permanence, immutability and exemption from any need to justify itself, was suddenly a hindrance rather than a raison d'être. The whole landscape of the physical medium upon which the library has been based through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has changed drastically in the last twenty years, meaning that to produce a building, which is, by the nature of construction, permanent and predefined, requires a highly advanced sense of foresight. On this point, library professional Ayub Khan (2009 p.1) notes that planning a new library may take five years, meaning that the day it opens, some of the original ideas and motivating factors that went into it already represent yesterday's thinking to an extent.

It was commonly understood among the participants that libraries are changing and that this is largely to do with changing media consumption patterns. The fact that this is widely understood is perhaps a reflection of the extent to which the fate of public libraries is viewed as nationally important, and of specific interest, furthermore, to students, who are invested financially and temporally in their ability to process information academically.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Library buildings are continually affected by contemporary discussion of the value of libraries to society. From a user's perspective, personal feelings about what a library building represents and what it can offer them and society have an effect on whether they see themselves as resonating with the library concept. Therefore the question of a library's value to society is one that can be responded to by architecture, because it is by creating and projecting a certain atmosphere that libraries present the strongest and most immediate challenge to preconceptions about their value.

Correspondingly, there is evidence from the participants' reactions that good quality architecture has a certain effect in overturning negative preconceptions of new library experiences that are drawn from poor quality past experience. This appeared to be expressed more strongly among the students, although it could be argued that they are

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[54] A term coined by American education consultant Marc Prensky (2001)

more likely to be impressed as they are already more strongly associated with academia. It could also be argued that this academic association could equate not so much as willingness to speak out in favour of libraries on the part of students, but rather shyness towards the researcher on the part of the non-students. The fact that the non-students did express strong opinions, both positive and negative, in certain situations argues against this, however. The loyalty-inspiring effect of good library architecture on different social groups is an area that could benefit from further research.

Participants gave, either explicitly or via allusion, a number of preconceptions that serve to characterise what might be considered their "stereotypical" library. During walk-along interviews in the three case studied libraries, when asked about the building's appearance, the participant would contextualise it with a comparison to an "other". This other could be either an actual library that they had known, or a generalised stereotypical library, although the distinction between these two was sometimes blurred, implying that the libraries from their experience, in these cases, reinforced what they held to be a stereotype.

It was revealed that some UK public libraries conform more to stereotype, more typically branch libraries, while others were interpreted as being designed deliberately to oppose the stereotype. Interestingly, this in itself implies that the young people assumed the notion of a stereotypical library is fairly widespread and not peculiar to them as individuals: widespread enough to serve as the basis for architectural decision-making. Where buildings were interpreted as departing from the stereotype, they tended to be large, modern central libraries of the type focused upon in this research.

Preconceptions tended to fall within a relatively small set, which is understandable given that they are necessarily quite general. That libraries are places for books is a major association, and was reported in both a positive and a negative light by various participants, depending on their inclination. Thematically, it is relevant to the debate about digital verses physical media (or "alternative" verses "traditional" media) in libraries, a debate which gathered momentum in the years following the Second World War, when the potential of computers in information storage and retrieval was first being understood.

The "old" appearance of many libraries relative to the three modern case-study libraries was also evinced, and detectable in two main forms: one in which participants talked about the structural, architectural and technological lack of modernity of libraries they had

known, and one in which they referred to the "traditional" styles of architecture they associated typically with Victorian and Edwardian libraries. The former was generally mentioned in a negative light, the latter more positively.

One of the major ways in which many modern public library designs differ from their antecedents is in their façade treatments, which tend to be more transparent. There was evidence that the external appearance either challenges or reinforces preconceptions about what the viewer holds a library's purpose to be. In cases where there was greater transparency something of the relationship of the interior to the exterior could be grasped immediately by the observer. The relevance of this perception seemed to depend on how it affected their preconceptions, and what those preconceptions were. For example, where a participant was not expecting to find anything interesting inside Cardiff Central, the ability to see the interior from the street reinforced this negative preconception; however, where another could glimpse that the interior of Liverpool Central is different from its façade, the challenge to their preconception resulted in intrigue.

Though beginning from "libraryness", and its associated concepts, as far as they are understood and used by young people, a view of the library building in its spatial, historical, and cultural aspects was constructed. However, in revealing both change and consistency in conceptions of transparency's role, the question was raised of the purpose of this fundamental tectonic property. In allowing users to see each other, and to see staff, the social relationships between people *in* a building are revealed to be important. These *socio-spatial* relationships are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.7 Conclusion

Figure 6.1 Computer space, book space, and exhibition space in The Hive (Researcher image)

6 Socio-Spatial Interpretations

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 initially examined purely spatial qualities of library buildings, inasmuch as they contribute to or modify preconceived ideas about library design, layout or purpose. Towards the end of the chapter it was revealed that the sense of openness and lines of sight allowed by increasingly transparent building designs serve to reinforce the connection among users, and between users and staff[55]. This introduces to the study of modern public library architecture the importance of the social element of spatial experience. Chapter 6 builds on the previous by treating physical appearance and function together. Colouring the image of space with human interactions strengthens discussion of its architecture, but raises questions at the outset about how best to frame their effect on one another.

Public libraries serve people, but what approach should be taken in understanding the public's impact on library design? Should the public be thought of as a kind of framework that determines the behaviour of its people, or should it be thought of as a collection of

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[55] Furthermore, it facilitates wayfinding in the building, the subject of the next chapter

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individuals whose behaviour is entirely their own? This is a problem that has existed at the heart of sociology for a number of decades, one that can form a starting point for a deeper understanding of the relationship between library user and library building.

6.1.1 RECONSTITUTING RULES

Anthony Giddens approached the problem in a 1979 essay called *Agency, Structure*, in which "agent" refers to the individual, and "structure" to the mixture of rules and accidents that allows social reproduction to occur. The agency and structure problem, he asserts, is that established approaches in social sciences, particularly social interactionism on the one hand and structural-functionalism on the other, do not adequately take into account both the agent and the structure together. These should be seen to "presuppose one another" (1979 p.53), rather than be separate. Whereas agent-centric approaches emphasise the role of "purposive, knowledgeable actors" in creating social life, they are unable to properly analyse institutions (1979 p.54); whereas structural approaches aim to define both the "'pattern' of social relationships" and their operation (1979 p.60), they reduce the agent to a puppet.

Giddens' version of a resolution between a structuralist and an action-based approach was termed *structuration*, and lay in the assumption that social structure is fundamentally dual in nature: the rules underpinning society are both made use of in social interaction, and are thereby also reconstituted at the same moment (1979 pp.69–71). This concept, as Giddens stated it, has remained influential in the years since it was propounded, albeit subject to revision by other theorists.

While it is not controversial to suggest that agents and structure constitute one another simultaneously, Giddens' version of their relationship lacks the means to fully explain how this constitution occurs (Gould 1998 p.80). Onuf tackles this deficit by focusing on the rules specifically, which leads "simultaneously in two directions – towards agents and their choices, and towards social arrangements that eventuate from agents' choices" (1997 p.8). This is important here because it makes people active participants; it gives them agency (1997 p.7; quoted in Gould 1998 p.80).

The role of the agent is emphasised by Gould, who points out that the perceivable regularities in patterns of rules that make them coherent, termed "institutions", only have function so far as it can be ascribed by agents. Rules are only useful when they are used, and the act of using or reconstituting them, of enacting *agency* through

them, can only take place when they are legible. "We perceive a world or regularities upon which the mind seeks to impose order," writes Gould (1998 p.82), stressing the constitutive role of the agent, a point that aims to locate the discussion within a constructivist standpoint and avoid a possible structuralist pitfall in which agents are seen as cogs in a rule-reconstituting machine.

How can the above views be applied to the study of young people's perceptions of library buildings? The application here lies in the agent's ascription of function to the rule-based patterns of socio-spatial interaction. If rules offer choice (to obey or not to obey, most simply), the ability of a person to interact socio-spatially with an environment (their agency) is dependent on the view they take of the consequences of obeying or not obeying rules, their willingness to conform to the socio-spatial norms of the environment.

Public libraries are *free* in the sense that they cost nothing at the point of use, meaning in theory that any member of the public can enter and make use of the spaces and services irrespective of their financial situation. But the term free also has a meaning broader than simply "without cost"; it implies freedom in the sense of agency, or the ability to reconstitute socio-spatial institutions. Onuf (1997 p.9) defines agency as depending on people's "ability to recognize material and social limits and to evaluate the consequences of ignoring or defying those limits." *Material and social limits* are a reflection of the socio-spatial qualities of the world we live in and can interact with – in this case the spaces and contents of a library, and its staff and other occupants.

This research addresses the period of life during which the agent's relationship to the rules of socio-spatial behaviour are subject to a particular set of circumstances. The sociologist Erik Erikson termed this period the *psychosocial moratorium*, meaning a period of deferring the responsibilities of adulthood. The relevance of Gould and Onuf's stressing of the constitutive role of the agent in rule-making and remaking becomes clearer if the psychosocial moratorium is considered in the following two ways:

- as a cultural phenomenon that affects the public generally and the younger element of the public specifically, and;

- as a period of time that exists in order to alter the agent's relationship with rules, which are reconstituted in socio-spatial behaviour.

6.1.2 *PSYCHOSOCIAL MORATORIUM*

The term "psychosocial moratorium" was coined by the psychologist Erik Erikson and applied in his work on identity development in youths. It is a period of delay in a young person's adoption of adulthood responsibilities, and is mandated by a society to allow young people the freedom to explore their own identity. It is characterised by "a selective permissiveness on the part of society and of provocative playfulness on the part of youth…" (Erikson 1974 p.157), suggesting the creation of special conditions, in which the consequences of abiding by or transgressing rules (the rules that reconstitute the socio-spatial environment) are altered. This appears to connect Erikson's process of identity development with the concept of agency expressed by Onuf:

> Although agency does not require the degree of self-consciousness that identity implies, agents are normally sufficiently aware of their identities, singular and collective, that considerations of identity motivate some of their actions (Onuf 1997 p.9).

Onuf's observation implies that issues of identity are expressed through a person's agency. In the case of young people undergoing a moratorium, this means that the unresolved or revisable nature of their identities provides motivation for their actions. Moratoria can be "sensitive or anxiety-ridden, highly ethical or self-righteous, flexible or vacillating" (Marcia 1980 pt.161)

The identity crisis can be seen as relating to periods where a person is hoping to "find" themselves, or is exploring different options in life. According to Adams and Fitch (1983 p.1267) Erikson's work has been supported by a number of longitudinal studies that show the importance of the "college years", or the student experience, as it has come to be known, in continuing or extending the process of personality formation.

6.1.3 *STUDENTIFICATION*

It is difficult to ascertain exactly when the term "studentification" was first used, but a Times article from 2002 (Millen 2002) refers to the word, and its inception does not

appear to have predated this by more than a few years. It is used to refer to the establishment of student enclaves in many of the cities in the UK due to the presence of higher education institutions. This is not just a reflection of the evolving living arrangements of a fixed number of students, but also of a nationwide increase in total student numbers since the 1990s. Smith and Holt (2007 p.148) suggest that the phenomenon is driven both by public and private sector projects that have created student areas, but also by "wider urban renaissance and neoliberal agendas".

Munro and Adams (1977 p.524) found that a sample of college students showed less identity commitment (i.e. understanding of identity following a period of uncommitted exploration) than a similar group that were in work. They hypothesised that this could be because college provides the opportunity for a lifestyle that offers enough flexibility and variety that a person does not need to cement their self-conceptions, leading to the further hypothesis that such an environment proves attractive to the type of person who wishes to remain uncommitted.

6.1.4   USER EXPERIENCE IN LIBRARIES

As student populations have increased in number over the last two to three decades, and the economies driven by higher education establishments have become correspondingly larger, so conducting research into the ways students engage with information literacy has become more widespread.

An early example of the use of ethnographic techniques to study the working patterns of undergraduates in a university library was published in 2007. The study, conducted between a group of librarians and the University of Rochester (New York State) River Campus Libraries' Lead Anthroplogist, who co-edited the report, was aimed at improving three areas, one being the facilities of the library itself (ALA Association of College and Research Libraries 2007 p.v). Andy Priestner (2014, online), a consultant who applies similar techniques in library evaluation, suggests that this is the first case of ethnographic methods being used among librarians in a way that is concerted and self-aware, although Given and Leckie (2003 p.323) made use of observational techniques four years earlier to reject survey-derived preconceptions of how users actually make use of library space.

In approaching this topic, the River Campus Libraries report refers to *user-centred design*, meaning an approach to designing technology, space or services that will

"meet the demands of the people who will use them and… perform well in real-life situations" (2007 p.81). The concept of user-centred design evidently has a great deal of overlap with that of *user experience* in libraries: while user experience (commonly known as UX) is not always used to inform design, user-centred design very obviously relies on an understanding of UX. The application of UX to library evaluation and design is a relatively recent practice. An online journal, called Weave[56], now exists and is preparing its fourth issue (due spring 2016). Due to the nature of buildings as less revisable than service practices, most library UX work tends to direct effort towards library management more than library building design. It is clear from the establishment of many user experience librarian posts in libraries over the past five to eight years that there is a modern socio-spatial precedent in library study, which takes the form of ethnographic techniques such as interviews, observation, mobile methods, and drawing, *in situ*, to better understand the requirements of real-world users.

While many of these posts have been created by higher education institutions, this research does not focus on university libraries, but on public libraries. These lie outside the direct cash-flows of universities, being funded publically, and so are susceptible to closure in a way that studentification-fed university libraries are not. Furthermore, they include a broader range of young people as the characteristics of students do not exactly mirror those of the general population. It would also be quite incorrect to suggest that only students have access to a psychosocial moratorium, even if it might be viewed as characteristic of the student experience.

The broadness of the concept of "public", and its relationship to the institutions we live in and among, was the point on which this introduction started. The above discussion relates this to the design of libraries by using the intersection between psycho-social development among young users, and the systemic demands that have been placed on libraries by the advent of studentification. Consequently, there arise a series of broad objectives and more specific questions for the chapter to resolve.

6.1.5   OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS
The overarching objective of this chapter can be posed in the following three ways:

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[56] http://weaveux.org/

- To determine how the library building responds to the need to be *public*

- To establish how social structure and social relationships are manifested in library space use

- As the building is intended to be used by multiple social groups, to assess how their interrelationships help or hinder it from functioning as intended

The following questions will be addressed:

- The user's perception of their own socio-spatial agency is related, in the case of public libraries, to their perception of supervision. What liberty do they perceive in their use of the space?

- "Appropriate" use of a library. Should it favour studying or socialising? How are the spaces arranged to permit either or both? What causes a space to be used in a particular way?

- How is the service represented by the building?

6.2 PLACE ATTACHMENT

To summarise the argument introduced above, it is posited that among young people, agency (the ability to act towards surrounding people and environments) and identity are related in that agency allows exploration of socio-spatial strategies that contribute to the resolution of the identity crisis, and elements of certainty about identity provide a basis on which to act. The moratorium, in both Erikson's and Marcia's writing, is the period of time that is generally set aside by society to allow young people the freedom to resolve their identity crises. In contemporary UK society, and much of society beyond the UK, for a large proportion of young people this takes the form of a student experience of some kind.

The increasing prevalence and establishment of university attendance over the last few decades has brought substantial changes to many of the country's urban areas, and has placed great importance on the use of information literacy during this time (bringing to mind what Hewitt (2000 p.64) termed the "civic economy of the book", referring to the roles of Victorian public libraries). In fact, the nature of student life as being dictated by academic work may allow information literacy to be seen as a key constituent of this particular moratorium. In the field of user experience evaluation, ethnographic methods are used to understand how space and services (particularly, but not exclusively, in academic libraries) are used by real people in real-world situations.

At all stages outlined here, place provides a context: it is a focus of user experience studies because it is understood as greatly impacting upon users' experiences of institutions; it contributes to student life, and is reconfigured by studentification; it can provide the environment necessary to permit identity exploration, or conversely drive premature resolution, termed foreclosure; it is a component of identity, and it provides a medium for the enactment of agency. Understanding the attachment of young people to the places in which they develop, whether they are students or not, is therefore crucial in understanding how the public library plays a role in the socio-spatial environment of the city.

As Soja (1980 p.210) claims, "…the organization, use, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience". Young people experience place attachment, which "deals with providing a systematic account of the relationship between a person and the environment" (Weinrach 2000 p.83). Place attachments are complex and multi-faceted, but can take different forms related to the experiences that a young person has while growing up. Themes of place attachment were noted during the primary research, in which the researcher discussed the perceptions of public library and city with various young people. This was observed most often among a cohort of non-students who made use of a youth group in Cardiff. Place attachment, defined by Chawla (1992 p.64) as when a young person talks about the "intrinsic qualities" of a place rather than its quality purely as an amenity, can be observed in the following exchange:

P: [The library is] so open that you just feel like you're being stared at all the time, like, you always feel like someone's looking at you. There's never… There's, like, not somewhere where you can sit in a corner by yourself kind of thing.

R: But [the youth group] is different though?

P: Yeah, I think it's 'cause it's smaller. Everyone kind of gets to know each other, and I think we're all in kind of like the same boat, like. So, no one gets judged for, like, the way they dress or anything, like, 'cause we're all, like, similar… I don't know, I guess… Yeah. I guess 'cause, like, we're comfortable in there. We're comfortable in [the youth group].

Quotation 6.1   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 41)

The participant refers to the comfort of intimacy afforded by the relatively small scale of their youth group space in comparison to the open plan floors of the library. They then link this in the same breath to the social arrangement that is thereby supported: on the one hand a sense of vulnerability, possibly isolation, on the other a sense of commonality and acceptance. In this example, the participant shows place attachment for the youth group that is linked to a conflation of social and spatial information.

Figure 6.2 Cardiff youth group frontage showing area appropriated socially (left); Cardiff Central Library frontage showing seating reserved for customers of nearby Italian restaurant (right; non-student images, cropped)

The blurring together of social groups and the places they occupy was observed on several occasions, but perhaps most clearly in the following extract, which occurred during a walk-along with two of the non-students from Cardiff.

R: Do you tend to just hang out at [the youth group] if you're here or are there lots of different places?

P1:   There's, like, loads of different areas, like, and different groups we hang out with, like your [youth group] group, you've got, like, your moshers and your emos and you've got your chavs and like…

P2:   They're all down by, like, Blue Banana…

P1:   Yeah, Blue Banana, down by TGI Fridays on the comfortable seats and all of that. Like, everyone's like spread round, really.

R: So do you know, then, where different groups of people are going to
        be?

P1:   Yeah

P2:   Yeah, pretty much.

Quotation 6.2   TWO NON-STUDENTS, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 32)

The public library's potential role in youth development, as a place among a range of other urban places, requires the introduction of terms that can portray different types of public place. This chapter has so far introduced a basis for discussing the people of the library; now the material side of the library can be framed in a way that relates to place attachment and the agency of its users.

6.3   DEFINING A PUBLIC LIBRARY PLACE

Social environment is a term that arose in public health research around the turn of the millennium, most commonly cited, in part, as "[the] immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact" (Barnett and Casper 2001 p.465). As a young person's space use is linked to their understanding of their social relationships to others, this definition will be useful as it subsumes elements of both the physical and the social worlds; it is the physical world that is built or acted upon by society, especially in its relationship to the individual (Dictionary.com 2015).

In the context of this investigation the physical refers to the built form of the library and its relationship to the surrounding urban fabric, the social refers to the library patrons and potential patrons, as well as the designers of the library and the librarians who staff it. The cultural refers to the framework of perceptions that the library fits into and supports.

In order to bring some order to the possibility of an infinite collage of social environments, Oldenburg's (1999 p.16) division of urban lived places into three classes will also be helpful. The three classes are the home (first place), the workplace/school (second place), and a range of informal places called third places. Public libraries are typically viewed as third places, but all three are briefly summarised below and suggestions of a possible expansion to this view also made.

6.3.1 THE "FIRST PLACE" SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (HOME)

In this environment the young person typically has their own personal territory (their bedroom) but day to day activities are generally in the hands of adult parents and guardians. The young person associates control of the home and of money, and the general ability to manipulate the world, with adulthood and positions of higher social agency. A deprived home environment has been found to link with poor educational outcomes (Department for Children Schools and Families 2009 p.57).

Clark and Akerman (2006 p.3) suggest that Free School Meals eligibility and lower numbers of books in the home positively correlate, and that among FSM eligibility, those with fewer books at home report lower enjoyment of reading. Similarly, Bernard Berelson (1949 p.15), in his review of the social role played by mid-twentieth century American libraries, reports a positive correlation between numbers of books found in the home, and library usage. Sociologist Annette Lareau (1987 p.81) has found that parents in a working class environment rely on their children's teachers to provide education, whereas parents in a middle class environment tend more to view their children's education as a shared enterprise, in which behaviour outside the school is as important as what takes place within it.

6.3.2 THE "SECOND PLACE" SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT (SCHOOL OR WORKPLACE)

The school (or workplace) is considered the second place. Like the home, it often has mandated powers over the young person. A teenager's social position and performance at school may lead them to form conclusions about themselves, or even to have definitions imposed upon them. In the case of public libraries, this may be particularly relevant to their identification with, or alienation from, various types of literacy, and so too the places that celebrate such things. A recent report by the National Literacy Trust (Clark 2014 p.7) has found that children and young people (aged 8-16) increasingly read outside of their classrooms.

6.3.3 THE "THIRD PLACE" SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT ("OTHER" PLACES)

Third places are social arenas that were first described by Oldenburg and Brissett as follows:

> A third place is a public setting accessible to its inhabitants and appropriated by them as their own (1982 p.271).

Being informal, even incidental, third places differ from the other two in a number of key ways as far as young people are concerned. The third place cannot exert the same mandated influence over a young person's socio-spatial behaviour as the school/college/university or home can (consider, for example, compulsory education or the rights of a parent/guardian, particularly where they are also homeowner). To that extent, they are less institutionalizing and can be spatially appropriated in ways that first and second places cannot.

Streets, parks and woods are examples of third places, as are public libraries. Lawson (2004 p.125) goes so far as to assert that libraries' "long tradition of connectedness and community… has put them in the forefront of traditional third places." This being the case, it is the incidental places mentioned above, and the cafés, coffee shops and general "hangouts" Oldenburg (1999 p.15) cites besides, that the library must compete with. Yet it does so under normal conditions without the mandated powers of the first and second places (home and school), and neither does it offer the immediate commodity that a café or shop does, unless cafes, shops and the like are absorbed into its plan to supplement its more "traditional" functions. The degree to which this can happen obviously depends on the size of the building in question and the budget available, both quantities that tend to be smallest among branch libraries.

A crucial aspect of the third place, therefore, and where it differs perhaps most profoundly from the first two, is that it is used voluntarily. There is never an obligation to participate in any third place. Where finding information is a genuine need that can only be met by a public library, and not through any other type of access, it is not then a third place role that the library is performing, but rather one more akin to that of a second place. If, while visiting out of need, the user unexpectedly meets a friend who is also there, then the third place function has the opportunity to take over.

6.3.4 PUBLIC LIBRARIES AS SECOND PLACES, OR AS THIRD PLACES

Because public libraries are accessible to a broad range of people and can exhibit, particularly in the case of central libraries, considerable spatial, architectural and programmatic complexity, they can be used as both second places (as workplaces where space use is driven by the need to accomplish some task) and as third places (in which the library becomes a platform for adventitious incorporation into the young person's life)[57].

Public libraries have been frequently conceptualised as third places (e.g. Lawson 2004; Waxman et al. 2007; Vårheim 2007; Johnson 1999), though the term second place is less commonly used. As rises in student populations have brought greater numbers of young people engaged in scholarly work into public library catchment areas, the use of these terms is beneficial. This is particularly highlighted by The Hive, which must, by definition, give attention to both scholarly and casual space.

The following quotation offers a preferential link between the role as either a study space or leisure space (which perhaps has more similarity with the private qualities of the home than of public social areas). In Quotation 6.3, a student compares the interiors of Cardiff Central and a typical branch of Waterstone's bookshop:

> R: Do you think brightness is important, how much light you're getting in there, 'cause I think this is definitely brighter, isn't it [than a bookshop]?
>
> P: Yeah, I think that's much better for studying; that's good. I probably wouldn't like to study in Waterstone's, for sure… but if I wanted to just sit down and read a book that I liked, it would be, probably, Waterstone's, 'cause it feels more homey.

Quotation 6.3   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 105)

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[57] It may even be that the library could be considered a first place, a home or substitute for the home, in the lives of some of the less advantaged or even homeless patrons, who, provided they conform to basic behaviour and hygiene standards, are admitted freely and without restriction. This may be a rewarding avenue for research, but lies outside the boundaries of this particular thesis. The definition of libraries as both second and third places, by extension, entails different conceptions of the same building in the minds and habits of each particular group.

Cardiff Central is felt to be a better place for studying than the participant's hypothetical bookshop. The reasons they cite include the lack of a smell of books in Cardiff Central, the use of bright, flat colours and glass as opposed to wood, and the higher overall light level. They suggest that their university library, however, already provides them with a modern working environment, so the ability of Cardiff Central to provide one model as opposed to another is related to whether it is intended to function as a sensory experience (even an escape from working environments), or as a place of work in its own right. Here, evidence favours the latter assumption, which carries the further implication that students (or anyone with dedicated study facilities already at their disposal) are not the focus of the library's activities, perhaps understandably so.

6.4 SOCIAL INFORMATION REFLECTED IN MATERIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Within library social environments, there exist social groups who interact with physical locations via strategies that are functions of their agency, and are thus socio-spatial. To repeat Onuf's observation, quoted above, agency and identity are connected:

> Although agency does not require the degree of self-consciousness that identity implies, agents are normally sufficiently aware of their identities, singular and collective, that considerations of identity motivate some of their actions (Onuf 1997 p.9).

Their identities can often subsume elements of both the physical and social surroundings together in a state of being *people* of *place*, e.g. see Kintrea et al. (2008 p.27): "'If you grow up around here, you're a [place name] boy.'" This relationship is illustrated by the following quotation, which shows how a non-student participant in Cardiff was prepared to defer making their own decision about the library, even while walking through it, in favour of relying on what they knew about their peers' behaviour:

R: Do you reckon it's inviting?

P: Um, a few people go here, yes, so, must be. Um, yeah, I don't feel, like, not comfortable, but, like, it's too quiet. Too quiet.

Quotation 6.4   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 51)

Their immediate response is to assume that they find it inviting because they know other people who use it. Upon reflecting for a few seconds, they admit that they find it too quiet to be properly inviting. The order in which they made those two responses, relying on group knowledge as an automatic response and then allowing their own interpretation to come through, evidences that they draw on socio-spatial information.

In libraries, the relationship between the users and the rules that constitute the institution is naturally manifested in the users' relationship with the librarians. It is the library staff that most directly represent the authority in the building, through which socio-spatial behaviour is permitted or inhibited. As has been shown above, the agency of the user is dependent on the repercussions they perceive in breaking the rules, a status that is judged on the degree of match they see between their own intentions and those of the library staff (in other words, if the user suspects that their intended behaviour will conflict with the desires of the staff, they will feel less able to act freely).

Further than this, according to the autonomy that social rules such as "No talking" gain through repetition, and hence through which socio-spatial relationships become embedded, it is not necessarily the figure of authority (the librarian), but rather what they are seen as standing for (what Worpole (2013 p.53) terms "libraryness"), that is used as a basis for the judgement (Onuf 1997 p.10). This is the reason that Chapter 5 establishes preconceptions that constitute "libraryness" in the minds of the participants. When those preconceptions are translated into socio-spatial behaviour the users' perception of the authority influences the manner in which the library's spaces find use.

The relationship between library users and staff is most immediately appreciated at the service desk, a place that has traditionally been associated with librarian-controlled space, stemming from the early pre-public access designs of library and subsequent gradual relinquishing of control. Even in modern libraries, however, where staff wish to be seen as more friendly and active, there is evidence that their role is still associated with this particular element of the building's interior. Whether this association was made in a positive or a negative context was based on the participant's perceived ability and desire to reconstitute the rules of the library.

> P: There's a help desk over there.

> R: Is it a good place to ask for help?

P: Yeah, 'cause you can basically go there and it's a help centre. They'll help you with information and stuff like that.

Quotation 6.5   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 47)

The participant is able to identify where to get help because of the help desk. Therefore they conflate that area of the library (behind the desk) with a particular type of person (library staff), which in their case stands for assistance rather than alienation. It is interesting to also note that this particular participant reported using the library as a way of escaping from the rest of their social group, of being by themselves in a place where it was hard to find them.

This positive view of library staff as helpers was least prevalent among those participants who reported visiting the library as a group, which provides weak evidence for Cardiff Central being more ameliorating to individual non-student young people than groups. This opinion relates more typically with that of the students, who almost unanimously held a positive view of the library staff, based on an understanding of the role of such staff, and an understanding of the co-constitutive aspects of that relationship.

R: If you were wanting to find out, how would you go about it?

P: I'd probably just go to enquiry and ask them.

R: Go to the desk?

P: Go to the front desk, yeah. They'd probably be able to help with that.

Quotation 6.6   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 217)

Figure 6.3 The ground floor help desk at Liverpool Central Library (Student image)

This quotation from a student in Liverpool evidences that they know to go to the front desk automatically in case of a problem. There is no need for them to think beyond this step, which shows a level of trust in the abilities and attitudes of the staff. In that sense the front desk, for them, is the location where those people with a valuable overview understanding of the library's systems, i.e. library professionals, are located. This undoubtedly reflects their intention to use the library as a second place rather than as a third place: in doing so they have a personal interest in the systems of the library that allow one to find and manage information (of use to their university work) and therefore they have identified those ways in which they can most efficiently interact with them[58].

The combination of architectural openness and relative quiet on occasion led to the participants feeling uncertain of their actual rights to pass through a certain part of the building, as in the following statement made by one participant upon ascending the top flight of stairs to the fifth floor of Cardiff Central:

> P: Are we allowed to be here? This looks like a place we weren't allowed
>   to be.

> Quotation 6.7   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 26)

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[58] It is interesting to speculate whether the service desk would retain this authority association in a library that had been given over to volunteers.

Among the four full-sized floors of the library (Numbered 2 to 5), the first three appear visually similar to each other, while the fifth is identifiably different on account of it being beneath the roof, which is timber as opposed to the concrete used throughout the rest of the building, and containing microfilm readers and archives as opposed to book shelving. This visual difference between the fifth floor and its lower counterparts was apparently sufficient to cause the participant confusion over whether they had strayed into a staff territory. This shows that they were alert for areas they could safely inhabit without suffering encroachment.

Figure 6.4 Floor 5 at Cardiff Central (2014), prior to reconfiguration into a "digital floor". It is distinguished from those below by its timber roof (Non-student image)

A number of participants made associations between the physical conditions in the library and the presence of social outgroups (staff or other young people). In a relatively general example, a relationship is made between the presence of the library staff and the desirability of the space via the noise level experienced in the building. Here, a student in Liverpool Central talks about how their academic library differs from the public library.

P: Big surprises. But I guess I probably will come here at some point, probably when I'm doing my revision. It seems like a nicer library than my student library, obviously; it would be.

R: Is it?

P: Yeah. If I wanted quietness I'd go to the old rooms and if I wanted to talk to someone I'd come to the new bits, whereas there are just people screaming and playing music in my one.

R: Really?

P: Yeah, but the librarians don't care.

R: So there's no really silent study there?

P: Ask anyone from LJMU. Ask them about the library. They'll be, like, don't even bother.

Quotation 6.8   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 273)

The participant associates the interior qualities of a library with the presence of the librarians. They say that the university library is too noisy for studying, even though studying should be the main focus. This makes them feel that the departmental library is not for them, but the older spaces of the public one are. Supporting the view that the social relationships in the space are a key component of the manner in which it's used, the ethnographic study edited by Fried Foster and Gibbons (ALA Association of College and Research Libraries 2007 p.21) found that "a scowl or glare" from a fellow classmate is far more effective at ensuring silence than any amount of signage.

Figure 6.5 The Picton Reading Room, Liverpool Central, which is largely self-policing in terms of restricted noise levels (Student image)

A participant from the youth group in Cardiff refers to the same effect, but experiences it in the inverse:

P: Um, I don't know, like, it's calming in here but it's just like, it's an atmosphere in here, like, you have to be quiet, and everyone's just, like, you have to be quiet and everything.

R: Are you worried you're going to get shushed?

P: Yeah.

<div align="center">Quotation 6.9   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 52)</div>

The participant conflates the quiet with the presence of someone who might shush them. Although they find it calming, they expect some kind of non-specific control, dictating the way they can use the space. By comparison, they find the youth group a lively and vivacious space because the authority in it allows exactly the kind of behaviour that makes the Liverpool student reject their academic library. Similarly, comments were made by a pair of youth group participants from Cardiff about Cardiff Central's permissive attitude towards noise, even sponsorship of it in some cases:

R: Is that something you think of usually when you think of a library?

P1:   Not really.

P2:   No, 'cause you think it's all quiet, like everyone wants you to shut up and all of that but like then you come into this one and , like, they don't mind as long as like it's not too loud, and then you've got your music, obviously, which is loud, but it's nothing like people hate it…

P1:   They do little performances in the newspaper area by there.

P2:   Or they'll have a little choir up by the piano, which I've seen a couple of times, and they've had choirs singing and all of that.

<div align="center">Quotation 6.10   Two non-students, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 36)</div>

Figure 6.6 Cardiff Central's white baby grand piano, which can be played using headphones so as not to disturb others (Non-student image)

These comments suggest, in agreement with Quotation 6.9, that the presence of noise serves as a reassurance that the participants have not been identified and negatively labelled by the library staff, whereas in the example from the abovementioned Liverpool student, the fact that the librarians allowed noisy behaviour served to make them feel alienated instead. The difference here may well lie in the distinction already noted between students using the library as a second place, and non-students using it as a third place.

6.5 TERRITORIALITY AS A "SHADOW SIDE OF PLACE ATTACHMENT

In certain cases, place attachment takes a positive form, characterised by openness to new experiences, tolerance of change and a discursive relationship between the person and the rules around them. In others it can reveal a "shadow side" (Chawla 1992 p.66), more characterised by frustration, a desire to be isolated by and protected from frightening experiences. The importance of place and identity in balancing place attachment is put as follows:

> Children's and adolescents' success in coordinating these inward and outward
> pulls [the "intimate, familiar centre" verses the "outward attractions of an
> expanding world"] depends upon the quality of their social relationships, their
> sense of identity, and their places. (Chawla 1992 p.66)

Territoriality can be considered a response to and propagator of a particular type of environment, a mode of place attachment that is "the most material expression there is of

the needs of humans" (Raffestin 2012 p.136). It is a socio-spatial strategy (Murphy 2012 pt.159): a way of increasing personal socio-spatial agency while diminishing that of others. Two variants of it are used in this chapter to understand how different groups of young people introduce socio-spatial tension to the rules that constitute public libraries. The first use concerns that "shadow side" of place attachment mentioned by Chawla, in which the territory is a device to protect the identity, and hence agency, of a group and its members. The second use involves maintaining conditions suitable for academic work.

Whereas the first variation emphasises social interaction of an in-group, the second is more about minimising distractions in an area. The socio-spatial control aspects of this search for suitable working conditions are discussed in Section 6.6 below, and the practical aspects of it are discussed in Chapter 7, which deals with the task of finding one's way around the library building.

The difference between the two variations is reflected in Oldenberg's distinction between the second place (for work or study) and the third place (for social activities and adventitious interaction), which locates the source of the first variation, discussed here and below, in the realm of the third place social environment. This posits the places against which the library must compete as including pavements to nowhere, unplanned areas of woodland and any ambiguous zones that seem to lack either name or function.

6.5.1 ENVIRONMENTS OF LIMITED OR CONFLICTING AGENCY

Children and younger teenagers are generally at the command of figures of authority when in the first and the second places (parents while at home; teachers when at school). This means that third places away from these influences can take on particular significance as platforms upon which behaviour can be dictated in more individual terms. Brice Heath and McLaughlin (1993 p.3) put forward the view that for young people self-esteem, feeling good about oneself (and by extension the propensity to feel supported or threatened by a place), operated through "highly specific ways of speaking, using space, and forming relationships in the work and play of organizations."

In a report by Kellett and Dar (2007 p.17), children from a less advantaged background emphasised the importance of freedom from "smoking, banging, swearing, loud music, TV" while doing their homework. These are environments where the mechanisms by which adults make decisions are obscured from the

observing child, where the patterns of regularities in socio-spatial rules, termed "institutions" by Gould (1998 p.82) are not open to reconstitution as the child develops. Home or school environments where the adults struggle to retain control, especially when the cause for their difficulties does not lie with the young person (e.g. loss of a house, or even the death of a parent) are undoubtedly more extreme examples. As has been documented, a troubled home life can lead to problems with authority in the education environment (Yair 2000 p.247), in which the agencies of different social groups (e.g. students and teachers) are pitted against one another in a bid to dictate conditions.

Here the key feature is a lack of readability of the intentions of the social agency responsible for the environment, which are manifest physically in it and can be interpreted in a number of ways. This relates to Goffman's work on the "normal appearances" of environments. According to Goffman (1971 p.310), the person who is not sure of what to expect, not sure of the rules in use around them or the penalty of transgressing them, must at least feel safe in withdrawing their immediate attention from the surroundings in order to be at ease.

With its long and varied history, multitude of architectural styles, scales, contents and customer bases, the UK public library building stock could be described as hard to interpret for someone not already familiar with it. The problem is almost certainly compounded by a tradition and perceived function that has its origins in academic pursuits[59], yet equally, the ability of the library to function as an escape from such environments should not be forgotten.

6.5.2   THE IDENTITY CRISIS

The preoccupation with an incomprehensible adult world, one that seems just close enough to be threatening yet just far enough to be out of reach, causes the young person a feeling of instability, which was termed the "identity crisis" by Erikson. He intended that the word crisis should not connote the threat of a catastrophe but "a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential…" (1974 p.96). This is caused by the discrepancy between the young person's burgeoning ability to acquire new experience, and their ability or desire to cope with

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[59] Boys tend to produce more reasons why the library is "not for them" and appear more anxious than girls to be seen there only in the company of friends (Clark and Hawkins 2011).

it. It is commonly experienced during the adolescent years, as it is here that the young person experiences an increase in their agency.

Sennett (1996 p.15) describes how "Studies of adolescent group life find… a recurrent striving for 'professionalized' expertise in all kinds of activities so that one will not be embarrassed, appear confused, or taken by surprise." The crisis can lead to shyness and the avoidance of new experiences, even when these might be positive, because there is always a risk of proving inept or unremarkable (Sennett and Cobb 1972 p.65). Where this is the case, a strategy is often to seek out patterns of behaviour that are understandable, which entails a search for a group of people whose behaviour and properties to share. This means that the concept of a social environment in which there is pressure to "professionalise" experience, to be tough and "streetwise" (Sutton et al. 2007 p.31) is of great importance when considering the architectural character of our libraries, because there are paradoxes at work.

Firstly, as the young person seeks for things, people and ideas to have faith in, they fear an "all too trusting commitment" and express their need for faith in "loud and cynical mistrust". The second paradox is related to social agency: as the young person defines themselves in terms of their free will they seek to assert that will, yet simultaneously fear exposure to both their own negative judgments and that of others (Erikson 1974 p.128).

These paradoxes may account for "certain puzzles in ordinary adolescent behaviour" (Sennett 1996 p.13), such as those that emerged within the public consultation for The Hive in Worcester:

> The distinction between groups who are, "not like us but OK" and those who are, "no go" is *difficult to predict and seems to lack any systematic method. This "tribalism" amongst teenagers may make it difficult to ensure that all groups of teenagers are attracted to the new centre* [My italics]. (BMG Research 2007 p.81)

When The Hive first opened it experienced difficulty from unruly groups of local young people, whose behaviour was not felt to be acceptable by the other social groups using the space (See Chapter 3, Section 6.3). This was widely reported in the local news, and was confined to a specific area of the building, the sub-ground-floor

level set aside for more social usage. Its usage was less structured than what was expected in the rest of the building (discounting the children's library). The problem was subsequently resolved through an increase in the agency of the library staff: positioning security guards so as to be visible and reiterating the point at which the rules of the space were being contravened resulted in mutual understanding.

6.5.3   *THE AGENCY OF THE GROUP*

To reiterate: the strategic appropriation of areas of space can be considered territoriality. Sack (1986) defines territoriality as a "powerful geographical strategy to control people and things by controlling area…" and says that it is "the key geographical component in understanding how society and space are interconnected." The territory serves as a highly visible status marker of the young group's identity, highly visible because, as Roose (2012 p.186) points out, social conspicuousness is necessary for activities or commodities to function as status markers. Kintrea et al. (2008 p.5) offer insights on the connection between the environment, the group and possessive displays of power:

> Territorial affiliations were a source of friendship and group solidarity…
>
> Young people sought recognition and "respect"… sometimes motivated
>
> by a sense of ownership over place, and the desire to protect the area…"

Labovitz and Hagedorn (1975 p.445) further clarify the use of the territory by defining the social power upon which the effectiveness of its status marker function is based: "Social power is defined as a capacity to control the outcomes of social relations. The control of scarce resources is the basis for social power."

One of the participants from the Cardiff youth group observed that Tremorfa Library, one of the branches of the Cardiff system, was rendered unusable after being appropriated by young people. This group subverted the system of rules that constituted the institution, in doing so establishing their agency over that of the library staff and obliging all other users of the space to either alter their behaviour to suit or to avoid the library from then on.

> P: Um, Whitchurch Library I used to use all the time and I used to
>
>   go to church when I was younger, when I lived in Whitchurch.

> Now I live in Tremorfa now, um, they haven't got a library in
> Tremorfa.
>
> R: Haven't they?
>
> P: No, the kids ruined it. The lot of them, they're all monsters.
> They just go in there, and there's this old people's home and
> they terrorise everyone.

Quotation 6.11   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 10)

There are few other ways that a group of adolescents can express their desires and inter-group relationships socio-spatially whereby those around will recognize their agency and apportion their social structure a certain amount of legitimacy. The territory comes about therefore as a direct and necessary response to the identity assimilation and "purification" of experience (Sennett 1996 p.9) that sweeps up both the group and the individuals within it[60].

Territories are intended to protect the identity of the group, allowing them the freedom to either sustain their own moratorium or to protect a foreclosure (when an identity has been latched onto as a self-defence mechanism, before it's truly discovered). By fixing a socio-spatial area, contact with agencies outside the group can be controlled, which is particularly valuable in environments when the young person's agency would be otherwise subjugated. The territory is therefore a structure of defence, of artificial socio-spatial stability.

Rules, known in advance of social situations, "present agents with opportunities for clear, calculable choice far more often than interaction with other agents does" (Onuf 1997 p.9). If agency is dependent on perceived rules, then systems of rules that offer little threat allow greater agency. Rules offer more predictability than interaction with other agents, therefore social interaction carries greater risks, therefore less agency unless the risks can be minimised. This can be achieved if the

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[60] At extremes, the social group and their spatial context can appear to become totally integrated, as in the case of "postcode gangs" (See Kintrea et al. (2008 p.31): "'Like [postcode A] don't like [postcode B].'"). Postcode gangs show the extreme lengths to which apparently innocuous and arbitrary physical boundaries such as the curb of a road or the edge of a postcode can become towering ramparts to certain groups of people.

child learns to manage and negotiate socio-spatial interactions as they grow up, or, failing this, by constructing rules that serve as stand-ins during interaction such that uncertainty can be reduced.

Watkins, Larson and Sullivan (2007 p.396) begin their discussion of bridging intergroup difference in a youth program with an observation of the paradox noted above by Erikson: while young people are gaining the ability to broaden their minds to difference, some will in fact become more prejudiced and reliant on one close group. They then use a phrase which captures almost perfectly the thing that a library ideologically offers, perhaps above all other things, the thing that a library building *must* be built to provide: "new abilities for sophisticated thinking about difference" (2007 p.396). At once encapsulated in this ideal are the concepts of democracy, of the individual becoming distinct in order to relate to others, of thought and intellect, and of germination and growth. These concepts will be familiar to anyone who has ever been asked to briefly explain the purpose of libraries. Yet the sentence is not complete: "For the majority of youth, new abilities for sophisticated thinking about difference appear to be trumped by their experience and investment as members of peer groups, families, and neighbourhoods".

This is caused by the foreclosure of the identity crisis. As Sennett (1996 p.6) explains, "the threat of being overwhelmed by difficult social interactions is dealt with by fixing self-image *in advance* [original italics], by making oneself a fixed object rather than an open person liable to be touched by social situation". Thus, moments when "acquired competencies break down and the individual is thrown back momentarily on inadequate mastery…" (Goffman 1971 p.249) can be avoided.

The process takes a fundamentally spatial nature. Where young people have a clear understanding of the mechanisms at work in their surroundings, when they identify with that place, an environment which communicates different or obscured mechanisms, such as a public library, may prove problematic: "[The young person] has also learned to avoid times, places, activities and objects that could not be mastered in this way, or at least, not mastered without more effort than he is willing to make" (Goffman 1971 p.250).

The group must empower the individual who in joining adopts it otherwise it would be of little use. It accomplishes this in various ways, which may be summarised by two broad and complimentary areas: the provision of agency through the physical that relieves the young person of material dependency on others, and the provision of power through "knowledge", i.e. an accepted "way things are", a sharing of the rules of an in-group (Giddens 1986 p.31). Goffman (1971 p.311) asserts that agency over the surroundings is a factor contributing to feeling at ease in those surroundings, so here the ability to manipulate a social and physical environment serves as a validation of the assimilated identity. This need for validation may be played out socio-spatially in games such as "den" building, which was a favourite amongst the younger estate boys in the study by Sutton et al. (2007 p.28).

The following quotation shows how a participant felt their social group was treated with a certain amount of wariness by another (the staff), when the use of a library building obliged them to overlap in the same space:

R: Do you think the Central Library is the kind of place it's better to go in by yourself or with a group of friends?

P: I think by yourself. Like, the way it is now, 'cause I think if you went in by yourself, like, if I… I used to go there when I was doing my exams and if you went in in a group, like, everyone would stare at us, we'd get looks from the staff. The staff would tell us to be quiet, and… Like, [we were] not making loads of noise, not, like, massive amounts or anything. It just seems like they don't like big groups of people.

Quotation 6.12   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 42)

This comment shows how, when the group is used to increase the agency of its members, this can place it in conflict with the agency of the staff in a library, which is to say that the staff feel they have to take special measures to ensure the rules of the space are maintained. This again relates to Goffman's *normal appearances*: the group brings tension to the process of interpreting and using rules, which means neither the young people nor the staff can disattend to the situation in case it requires their intervention.

In this case, therefore, it is difficult for a territory to be established by the young people in the library (unless provided with special "teen spaces" in which staff control is reduced, but compensated for by design, e.g. seclusion), which makes the social group an unviable source of empowerment. This means that in order to engage with the library the group must be abandoned. This can be a hurdle to library use, particular because behaviour cannot always easily be abandoned (as in a particular style of clothing, for example).

The social nature of the agency in command of a space is readable socio-spatially: the territory includes both an interpretive aspect (i.e. Whose territory is this?), and a defensive aspect (allowing it to be held against rival social groups). There are three main facets that carry this information: a designated area (and therefore a boundary that is identifiable), and some form of communication (Sack 1986 p.21). Once the territory exists it affects the behaviour of those in and around it, it communicates a status quo, and it requires defence.

6.5.4 DEFENSIVENESS

It is important to understand what "shadow side" territoriality would entail for the subjects of this research if it is to be used as a way of explaining their interaction with library architecture. Hypothetically, faced with disruptive and unpredictable home lives, physical strength, the desire to prove one can fend for oneself, is an obvious choice of strategy for facing the world's uncertainties. As the ability to look out for one's friends, it enhances the social bonding within a group. Part of this involves the feeling of freedom from encroachment by more powerful agencies. As Eubanks-Owens (1988 p.17) points out, part of the appeal of outdoor places to young people is that they can look out without being seen (indicative of the defensive role of a particular environmental configuration), and also get away from other people and be with their friends (reinforcing the group agency).

Socio-spatial defence allows the group of young people to maintain the status quo of their territory. This means that socio-spatial relationships the group permits can be tokens of how agency is not dependent on any higher authority. The successful defence of the territory serves to vindicate the world view that governs the integrity of the group and imparts agency to its members. In the library context, this immediately raises the question of how territorial young people can relate to a

building that is permeable, accessible, under surveillance and filled with objects that are not only academic status symbols but are functionally un-ownable as well.

The following quotation suggests that the incorporation of outdoors qualities in an interior space (see above: remoteness from other people, ability to hide and look out) makes the library feel more approachable to the participant:

> P: I would genuinely go to the library a lot if they did a grass thing on the top, like a little field on top. I would, like, I would go there on my own as well.

Quotation 6.13   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 75)

The participant had previously referred to the library as an unsuitable place for their social group to hang out, the result being that they would choose other third places around the city to socialise. However, the introduction to the conversation of a hypothetical outdoor-type space at the top of the building changed the user's perception. Their connection with their group becomes less important when the space allows them a sense of freedom. This comment may indicate a belief that there aren't enough spaces in the library to support their ability to be properly alone, yet at the same time that the library is not socially ameliorating enough for their group, whose behaviour would naturally tend to subvert the rules that are held up as suitable for libraries (i.e. the group has the potential to disrupt other users who are engaged in more "proper" library usage).

The question of whether the group can be supported by the space appears to depend on the purpose for which the group is assembled. This returns to the distinction between use of the library as a second place or as a third place.

> R: Do you think this is a place to hang out with people?

> P: You could. It's different, what I'd say, not different eras, not different generations, but different profiling. Say I was in university and I was studying a course, yeah? And I was to come here with a load of my university friends and we was all sitting around the table, we was all studying, having a quiet natter about our course, then, yeah, I probably would. But with the

people who I actually do chill out, they're what you'd call
chavved out. So they're not the type of people who you would,
could, hang around with in a place like this 'cause they'd then
end up making noise, making trouble and obviously a library is
somewhere, it's not for youths to chill out, but it's a place for
somebody to come and study, maybe, and relax, or maybe do
something with the library, read a book. So you can hang
around here, but it depends on your frame of mind and it
depends what you're coming to hang around here for, if you
understand that terminology, like.

<div align="center">

Quotation 6.14   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 66)

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The quotation above highlights that what is held to be the identity of the group
("chavved out", noisy, troublemakers, etc.) is fundamentally contrary to what is held
to be the identity for the library (see Chapter 5). As the participant points out, "it's
not different eras, different generations, but different profiling". In other words, it's a
matter of identity. This raises problems for their use of the library socially, but if the
group was instead a group of college students then that would be concordant with
the rules of the library. Comments made by other participants show that even in
advance of this "chavved out" social group appropriating public space or asserting
their agency, they are viewed with suspicion.

6.6   TERRITORIALITY A WAY OF GETTING WORK DONE

A young person's desire to control an area of library space is not restricted to providing
them with a social setting beyond the reach of agencies bent on what they perceive to be
"proper" library use; it also takes place among those young people who wish to study.
These may appear to be the same thing: young people controlling conditions in space for
their own purposes. However, the distinction is that territoriality as a "shadow side" of
place attachment, as explored above, exists to protect a mutually-dependent group of
young people from feeling like outsiders. The purpose of territoriality to get work done is
largely concerned with maximising convenience and filtering out unwanted distractions.

It has emerged from the findings that the system of rules a young person wishes to apply to
the library, the agenda they approach it with, has a bearing on the manner in which the
spaces are used and the expressions of agency that take place. The university students, for

example, are more likely to see the library as a second place social environment (almost guaranteed to in the case of The Hive, it being their academic library), while the non-students are more likely to see the library as a third place social environment. This is, of course, a generalisation, but one that can be supported and one that may help to explain some of the preconceptions explored in Chapter 5. Staff, by comparison, have traditionally viewed the library in a way that favours second-place scholarly pursuit rather than third place casual or social use, but have in recent years re-examined the point of balance: part of the move towards libraries as urban "destinations", rather than as resources in and of themselves.

From the perspective of the students of the University of Worcester, the groups enclosed within the library space are much more varied than would be the case if it were purely a university library. The building was designed from the start to accommodate such variation; however, despite this a clear level of socio-spatial interpretation is applied in their use of the space.

Young people who have embraced academic tasks as part of daily life, and are under external pressure to complete them, may develop space-controlling strategies for getting work done. Rather than establishing a defensible area of a library as a means of supporting group social dynamics, the support is for study conditions.

R: I can tell you haven't been down here before [See Figure 6.7].

P: Err, kind of. I've had a look in before from outside, but people [i.e. students] were just like, "Don't go down here" because it's just full of school kids.

R: Really?

P: Yeah. Like, students are mainly on the third floor and then with some, like, other people.

R: So is it that certain parts of the building are only used and frequented by certain groups of people?

P: Yeah, definitely.

Quotation 6.15   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 345)

Figure 6.7 Shared study area, Level 0, The Hive (Student image)

Here, the participant talks about how they prefer to have a space that is isolated from other people when studying. This is similar to views that were conveyed in Cardiff:

R: If you were studying in here, or reading in here, for that matter, what kind of place would you like to sit? Is there anything you'd look for?

P: I personally don't like to study around people, because sometimes, you know, they, like, tap their pens on the table and it's just like, oh my gosh, like shut up, basically.

R: So you like a bit of isolation?

P: Yeah, basically isolation, so to me it's better if, like, you know, some places they have a little cubicle thing, so they might have a long desk but each person has their own little cubicle…

Quotation 6.16   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 105)
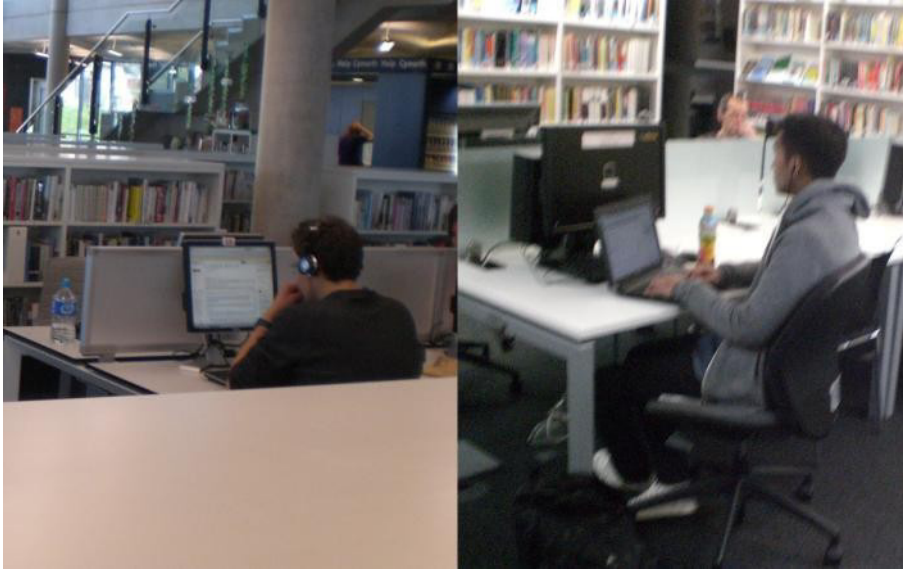
Figure 6.8 Users wearing headphones while working at desks with privacy screens, Cardiff Central (left) and The Hive (right; student images, cropped)

A student at the University of Worcester revealed that there is socio-spatial knowledge held about The Hive among the students that serves to dictate expectations about how the building can be used, even in advance of personal experience actually taking place:

R: What attracted you to this place, this particular corner of the library?

P: Me and my books, out of the way, difficult for people to find me.

R: You can just get on with work, off the grid, as it were?

P: Yeah, yeah. I think [the study desks are] one of the only spaces that you can actually study without getting disturbed, 'cause the confined walls as well.

Quotation 6.17   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 297)

The area in question is an open-plan sub-ground floor level known as Level 0 or the "shared study area". The negative opinion of it is reflected by another female student, who observes that the occupants are "usually people who aren't students. They just come here to mess around." However, later on in the walk-along with the second student it became clear that there is not an antagonistic consensus among the students, but rather a conflicted opinion that relates to the basic definition of what a library should be, and who it should be for:

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R: Does the fact that it's [the building as a whole] got so many different groups of people combined together make it better or worse in your opinion?

P: Um, I think it makes it worse in my opinion. I kind of have that debate with some of my friends and they're like, "Yes, but it's a public library; you can't restrict access to it!" Yeah, but it would be more efficient if the access was a bit restricted.

<div align="center">Quotation 6.18   Student, Worcester (Transcripts p. 334)</div>

The conflict here stems chiefly from the students' belief that they should have a right to dictate the interior qualities of The Hive because they are engaged in more "serious" scholarship and therefore are relying on the library to function more "as a library" [See Chapter 5 for discussion of preconceptions and precedents in public library conceptions]. Consequently, the young people who are "just here to mess around" should not take precedence and instead should use the space in a way that is dictated by the students. Contrasting uses of territoriality are highly interesting when linked to socio-spatial concepts of library appeal because they highlight differences in conceptions of scholarship, or "serious study", and more casual uses of a library's facilities.

Figure 6.9 Teenagers using the games consoles, Level 0, The Hive (Student image, cropped)

In order to tackle the issue of prioritising spaces for particular levels of scholarly "seriousness" (in which not enough affordance of agency leads to alienation, and too much

to conflict), a relatively recent trend has been the inclusion of some kind of youth-specific area of the library. This can take many forms, but is typically underpinned by a logic of isolation, in which young people who feel the need to exist in groups are given the space they need to feel unthreatened, while noise transmission can be more carefully controlled.

6.7 THE "TEEN SPACE" AS A TERRITORY WITHIN THE LIBRARY

Chawla (1992 p.66), in charting sources of developing place attachments through childhood and adolescence, refers to a darker aspect, composed of "disrupted development within frustrating or frightening places". She makes a distinction between inward pulls of the familiar and the outward attraction of an expanding world, between which is a healthy balance. Place attachment therefore can be taken to imply a wide spectrum of relationships that may vary from the formative effects of new experiences in new places to the reliance upon a familiar place as a means of reminding the person or group who they are.

It would not be right to try to fully generalise and assume that a "typical" character of young person applies to any specific individual. Although some will be happy at school, home and elsewhere, and their friendships will shift naturally over time as needs and circumstances change, others may find themselves iteratively rejecting education and relying instead on a closed group, relying on a closed mode of place attachment to rationalise the world. The more closed the group, by definition, the more limited its horizons.

To summarise from Section 6.4: a young person's socio-spatial identity is subject to adaptation over a period of time, which can be towards a "shadow side" of place attachment, i.e. territoriality. Adaptation in this direction may be a response to a problematic home or school environment, and a set of strategies for dealing with it. The alternative, in which a young person adapts to a discursive home or school environment by embracing formative influences upon them, is equally conceivable as an essentially corresponding series of stages.

6.7.1 THE "TEEN SPACE"

A key question in planning a library space is the position that planners and designers wish to take on young people as users. How separately should they be considered from adult users, or very young children? To what extent are their needs different? Any set of guidelines or predictions of potential young users that a design team works from is inevitably a set of definitions, even where thorough public consultation

has been conducted with the aim of reducing reliance on assumptions. Consequently, the way the finished library relates to and can be used by young people is the product of a pre-existing pool of knowledge of "what young people are". If a public library design makes no concession to the existence of such a demographic then it is likely a reflection of the designers' and planners' beliefs that young people should be treated in the same way as adults. Alternatively, if a unique and fully-fledged facility is provided, in addition to spaces for children and adults, then it is a reflection that the designers and planners believed young people should be defined more separately.

Where the latter mode of thinking has been implemented, and designers and planners have identified young people as having distinct requirements in a library (and where resources have been available for catering to those requirements), schemes typically feature some form of zoning within the interior in order to at least partially separate a space, functionally and visually from the rest. Such spaces are referred to in literature as "teen spaces".

It has been pointed out that when the idea of specific provision for young people in libraries began to gain ground in the UK in the 1890s (Van Slyck 1995 p.25) it was usually as a separate children's room (Maxwell 1993). Such facilities were essentially scaled-down versions of the library proper and were designed to be used in broadly the same way as their adult counterparts.

More recently in the USA, YALSA, a division of the ALA, assembled a taskforce in 2011 and published a guide the following year called "National Teen Space Requirements" (Trouern-Trend et al. 2012), which aimed to be an evaluation tool for assessing overall levels of success in both physical and virtual space provision for young people aged twelve to eighteen[61].

The document begins by stating that young people ought to be viewed as different from adults in as much as they "experience rapid physical, emotional and social changes while developing their intellectual capabilities and personal values, understanding and accepting their sexuality, and identifying their educational and

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[61] It was intended that this document be revised every five years, and so will be due for review again during 2016

occupational options" (Trouern-Trend et al. 2012 p.3), which strongly implies that architectural facilitators of these processes should be at the very least tailored for them, or even created especially where resources permit. The document then asserts the taskforce's view that libraries' role as architectural facilitators is vital to this process, and takes the position that young people are "tomorrow's adults". This sentiment in itself is quite indicative of an answer to the question posed at the beginning of Section 6.7.1, of a general approach to designing spaces that YALSA would consider appropriate for teenagers. To banish any possible ambiguity, the document then states that library spaces should be distinct, both physically and virtually.

The following quotation details one participant's interpretation of the children's library at Cardiff Central:

> P: Oh yeah. It does feel a lot cosier. It feels a lot nicer as well. Like, here you've got the wide windows with no shelves blocking it. Libraries with so many shelves, it kind of feels a little bit claustrophobic sometimes, especially if they didn't do it how Cardiff did it, but they did it just row after row. It feels quite intimidating or, like, there's just too much to look at.

Quotation 6.19   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 99)

There is no enclosed "teen space" at Cardiff Central, other than a decorated shelving unit located near some comfortable seating[62]. This is quite exposed, being in a high-footfall area on an open plan floor. The children's library, by comparison, is almost completely enclosed, being a cul-de-sac that is accessible from its own staircase, and almost completely hidden from the rest of the building. Despite being intended for children in the pre-school and primary school age range, the young adults interviewed generally found it more attractive that the rest of the space.

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[62] Present at the time of data collection; removed during refurbishment during 2015

Figure 6.10 The children's library at Cardiff Central (Student image)

6.7.2 OWNERSHIP OF THE TEEN SPACE BY YOUNG PEOPLE

A concept evident in much of the literature on teen spaces is that young people should be able to take ownership of it and participate in certain decisions that affect it (See, for example, Trouern-Trend et al. 2012; Bolan 2006; Bolan and Nelson 2008; Jones 2001; Jones 1997; Braun 2001). The word ownership here is not meant in a legal sense, but one that nonetheless implies a degree of agency. This principle relates clearly to territoriality and the conditions under which young people are able to manipulate their environment and use it without feeling that they are under surveillance by the true owners of the space.

This raises the possibility of a contradiction. Is the idea of a young person "taking ownership" of a designated space self-defeating? In an environment such as a public library, where no aspect of the building can be truly owned by the young users, or acted upon by them without restriction, is the gesture of allowing them certain organisational rights enough to overcome any reservations they may have? In other words, can a space *for* teens (or young people more generally) be the same as a teen space?

The potential for a cursory implementation to be interpreted with cynicism by its intended users is generally considered to be minimised by conducting public engagement activities and public consultations, which can act as a countermeasure to those reservations even in advance of design actually starting. By involving young

people in the planning of the space, even at a non-technical level, a sense of attachment can be fostered that may be helpful in articulating the relevance of the library to an individual. The acceptance of this premise is not universal, however. Anthony Bernier, a librarian, academic and designer of Los Angeles Public Library's Teen'Scape, has drawn attention to a phenomenon that he has referred to as an "uninformed triangle".

Bernier suggests that, even where librarians, architects and young people have been brought together to inform a project, the results are "seldom distinguishable from conventional institutional designs" (2009 p.34). The "uninformed triangle" he evokes is described as being the result of architects knowing little about libraries or young people, librarians not having sufficient knowledge of space design or of young people's interaction with space, and young people being uninformed on both librarianship and architectural issues. The resulting "triangulated ignorance", he concludes, would seem to tend towards design mediocrity, even in the best situations.

Bernier's view is outnumbered by those that oppose it, which suggests that there is value in involving young people, that their involvement in the planning process (perhaps especially in the context of a smaller, more "local" library) would have a benefit in personal investment that goes beyond merely improving the quality of the design[63]. Moreover, involving young people in the management of the space during the lifetime of the building has, over the last twenty years, become increasingly common practice, with many libraries that feature any kind of youth agenda operating "youth councils" or "teen advisory boards". It should be remembered that Bernier's warning serves specifically in design instances, whereas the majority of youth involvement proponents are writing from a librarianship and service perspective.

During the proposal and planning of a new library building or renovation there are many steps that have to be worked through, particularly with a larger project, of which only a very small proportion (potentially none) involve the input of young

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[63] This is supported, in a similar instance, by the comments made by a student about the positive attitude they were left with after being involved in a school project to select books for their library. This is found in Chapter 5, Section 4.3.

people. This is perfectly expectable and reasonable considering the technical nature of the majority of tasks. What is becoming more popular, as library projects continue to push for accessibility, is community engagement from an early stage. This engagement may take many forms such as community meetings, posters, a website etc. and, where children and young people are concerned, may involve tie-in work with their school[64].

6.7.3   QUALITIES OF THE TEEN SPACE

IFLA considers that library services for young people should "provide transition from children's services to adult services" (Quinones et al. 2008 p.3). This implies that the teen space should support a transition process, or support those who are in transition, and if young people are to be considered as a partially delineated group from both children and adults, their spatial requirements will logically differ too.

Discourses on the interior qualities of teen spaces, such as YALSA's, appear to contain two main elements: support of the social experience, and the provision of mental or emotional stimulus. The logic of these two elements makes relatively clear implications about YALSA's vision for an ideal youth library experience. By supporting a social experience, the teen space is in direct opposition to much of what might be considered a "traditional" library experience, in which silence and solitude are seen as the only suitable attitudes.

A reversal to this attitude is quite evident in the suggestion that a library space should actively support sitting around and talking, and carries more general implications about the role that a modern public library is expected to fulfil. This theme receives further expansion in the assertion that teen spaces should be rich in mental stimulus. A library space in which mental stimulus is required is not one in which the books are intended to be the only source of stimulus, in other words, in which the space exists only to facilitate access to knowledge. Here is evidence that the library building, which has before reflected scholarly qualities (the Old Library in Cardiff, its first central library building, bears an inscription reading, in Welsh, "He will not be wise who will not read", as shown in Figure 6.11), is not merely expected to

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[64] For the Junction 3 development in Bristol a pair of local artists named Davis & Jones were enlisted by the Council to act as "public engagement artists". Their activities began before building work commenced and continued during construction, culminating in an installation and book after the completion of the project (see Davis and Jones 2014).

facilitate an intellectual consumption of information, but must reflect more diverse modes of information transition[65].

Figure 6.11 Welsh inscription on Old Library, Cardiff (researcher's image)

"Furniture, fixtures and technology should be multifunctional and flexible so that as needs and activities change the area can be adapted accordingly" (Trouern-Trend et al. 2012 p.7). In this recommendation, the role of furniture as a facilitator for activities is highlighted, with the implication that a teen space is likely to require more frequent reconfiguration than other areas of the library. This may be read as a reflection of a certain changeability in the area of service provision for young people, although whether it's more the result of librarians' uncertainty over appropriate programmes, or of a natural tendency among young people to require a broad range of particular functions that must, by the nature of the teen space, be housed in one area, is not clear.

6.7.4   *THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE TEEN SPACE TO THE WHOLE LIBRARY*
A key aspect of the teen space that must be reflected upon is that it in order to exist it must be definable and therefore, to a certain extent, separate physically, symbolically, functionally and aesthetically from the rest of the library. The establishment of a semi-autonomous territory within a library's interior, into which a

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[65] "Transition" is used here in place of "consumption" as this is no longer an adequate description of a library's purpose. It is hoped that "transition" implies meaningful exchange between people, from one form to another, or from inputs to outputs.

specific subgroup of the total user profile is admitted, allows certain conditions to be controlled in finer detail than otherwise, which can be of benefit to both young patrons and staff.

Figure 6.12 "Sound box", Liverpool Central (Student image)

Figure 6.12 shows the "teen space" inside Liverpool Central, bearing the word "Game". It is described on the library's website as a "sound box", the purpose of which is to be a space "where teenagers can meet friends, access free computers for e-mail and Internet or just chill out" (Liverpool City Council 2015). As can be seen from Figure 6.13, this approach differs quite drastically from those taken to teenager provision in The Hive and in Cardiff Central[66], in terms of openness.

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[66] This shelving display has since been removed.

Figure 6.13 Games console area, open to Floor 0 (Shared Study), The Hive (Left; student image, cropped); "Chill out" area, open to Floor 1, Cardiff Central (Right; non-student image)

To the young people who may frequent a teen space, its separateness has a number of related benefits. It indicates to them that the library staff have taken their needs into account and care about their experience. It can help to contain noise levels, if the space is truly partitioned, which may be of benefit if the library is intended to house both "traditional" core activities such as quiet study alongside more boisterous youth gatherings. Although Trouern-Trend et al. (2012) provide a number of teen space recommendations that should logically apply to the whole library, it is not disputed that a successful teen space can also contribute to the users' feeling of safety or wellbeing by reducing the need to conform to an imposed social behaviour[67].

A spatial design that engenders feelings of security can raise a problem of its own, however, which is related to the fact that social and spatial aspects of an environment are never completely separate. In setting aside a space exclusively for use by young people, surveillance is required to ensure that the rules are adhered to and that no potentially harmful situations can arise. In requiring surveillance by librarians, it is conceivable that the ethos of the "space for teens" is undermined and,

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[67] Separation theoretically allows the space to feel safe to young people, partly thanks to it being able to have its own clearly defined set of rules. If uncertainty can be considered a likely predicator for closed modes of place attachment, controlling and understanding uncertainty (whether in space use and general policy, and not necessarily minimising it as uncertainty can be a creative or productive force in the right setting) should be seen as a priority for teen space designers.

as such, policies intended to make the space more welcoming to young people – necessary policies – may have a contrary effect.

6.7.5   THE WHOLE LIBRARY AS A SPACE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Here, the logic of whether to set space aside for the use of teenagers is set against that of making the whole library a place in which teens can participate. The question is whether to separate spaces or to mingle them.

Liverpool Central is the only one of the three case studies to provide a fully separated space designated for use by teenagers, however its function is quite specific (to allow teenagers to be separate from the other users) and the lower three levels (ground floor of the atrium, café, PCs, fiction and non-fiction: see Figure 6.14) of the new section of the building is also popular with young people.

Figure 6.14 Less formal space at the edge of more formal space, Liverpool Central (researcher image)

In The Hive, large areas are designed with students in mind, but non-student young people generally also use these areas (See Figure 6.15). The exception would be the fourth floor reading room, which is more typically used by students only due to its silence policy, which suits scholarly work. Figure 6.15 shows PCs on Level 3 of The Hive that are used by both students and members of the public. To encourage study use and social use to be separated, The Hive features a large social study area on Level 0, which is more commonly the preserve of local teenagers. The presence of games consoles and screens at one end helps to suggest a more casual use.

Figure 6.15 Young people using PCs on the Level 3, The Hive (student image)

In Cardiff Central, separate space is allocated for young children, and while some of the scale and transparency qualities of this space were well received by participants who visited with the researcher, there is no equivalent provision for teenagers. Instead, the building is designed to be open plan and navigable by all, barring some enclosed rooms for specific services[68].

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[68] The recent transition to a hub facility, which occurred during 2015, in theory allows young people to identify spaces that are not for them more easily, as they are now given over to more specific purposes, such as a public advice centre. This change occurred after the collection of data, so this precise detail cannot be comment upon authoritatively.

Figure 6.16 Open plan floor in Cardiff Central, showing mixture of seating, tables and low shelving (non-student image; rotated and cropped)

When Anthony Bernier (2009 p.36) conducted the first assessment of small teen spaces in a sample of American libraries, he found that the floor area set aside for them was on average only 2.2 percent of the library's total floor area. Even taking into account the imprecision of the metrics available, this is an exceptionally small proportion. If this is a reflection of the perceived relationship of young people to the aims and ideals of librarianship (in this particular sample, at least), then it suggests the assumption on the part of library policy- and space-makers of an essential incompatibility. If the benefits of wider engagement with literacy and self-directed learning among young people are core values of librarians, and there is no good evidence to the contrary, the question is raised of why so few of the library's resources seem to be put to engaging with them.

It follows that if unique provision for young people is considered to be incompatible with the goals of a particular library, it may not be for reasons of differing ideals, but more simply for reasons of cost. The idea of a dedicated teen space may be desirable in principle, but to appoint it to the optimal level may prove impossible for many smaller libraries. This should not be taken in any way as an endorsement of the "doing nothing because one can only do a little" excuse, but rather a consideration of the potential for the entire library to function as a space for young people.

While it is certainly not necessary for a young person to find unique spatial and service provision before they will consider a library useable, there is noteworthy

literature asserting the relative benefit of such spaces. What appears to be less frequently questioned is whether this benefit is a fundamental complement of spatial subdivision, or whether it occurs through an inherent architectural and service disinterest from the rest of the library. This line of thought further raises the question of whether, in dividing a library into a teen space and an alternative, "non-teen" space, the result might be to unnecessarily alienate young people from the major part of the library, while also reducing the space available for other patrons[69].

6.7.6 *A CORRESPONDING VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT*

The question of appropriateness with regards to virtual space provision as part of a library is one that has been touched upon above in Section 6.7.1. YALSA's taskforce assert that "Many teens have self- structured identities and social environments online and exist in a rapidly converging virtual and physical world" (2012 p.8). This is generally well known and understood, however the relevance to library virtual spaces becomes stronger in the context of the creative and social capacities of digital platforms, rather than purely in their capacity for providing information.

Due to the nature of the library as a meeting place between individuals, social groups and a wide variety of different types of information, its ability to capitalise on a range of information-sharing technologies, and successfully incorporate them within a physical environment, is not merely incidental to its main function, but essential to it.

Consequently, although National Teen Space Guidelines is right to draw attention to the need for virtual library spaces to be designed with young people in mind (Additionally, input from young users may conceivably work better in this context, being less likely than participatory building design to suffer from what Bernier refers to as an "uninformed triangle"), the creation of a virtual space should be comprehensive and should aim to avoid any "teen" clichés or marginalise itself from

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[69] The educationalist Ken Robinson (for example, see Al Jazeera America 2015) has commented on the absurdity in attempting to teach young people in groups that isolate them from other members of society. The logic of the age-group striation of formal education systems would appear to be echoed in the logic of the teen space, but if the former has long been a target for educational reformers, should the latter not be also? Considering the paucity of youth experiences that take place in library teen spaces, as compared to within the classrooms of schools, the lack of specific discourses in this area is understandable, and so a critique of teen spaces should be taken as implicit within the wider critiques of age-specific learning groups.

broader use through being overly teen-orientated (even if it's not intended to be used by other demographics, there is no such thing as a "normalised" teenager).

While the culture of young people that currently exists has embraced digital behaviours, in a relatively short number of years such tendencies will be more evenly spread across the entire populace (indeed, to a large extent, they already are), and, furthermore, evolved digital behaviours will have been adopted by the subsequent young person culture. It should never be assumed, therefore, that a digital space, or the relationship between the digital and the physical space, is static; they should be subjected to a continual process of critique.

6.8 THE SOCIALISING EFFECT OF NOISE

The significance of noise emerged in Section 6.4 through exploration of the tensions between groups. The presence of verbal noise in a specific area alerts nearby users that the source is some kind of socialising transaction. Information such as tone and content allow other users of the library to identify a group of teenagers quite readily. For this reason, the noisiness of a group appears to be viewed by those within the group, as well as by those without, as a measure of the challenge its members are making to the socio-spatial rules of the library. Boisterous behaviour is seen as indicative of a wish to reconstitute these rules, to exert agency.

> R: Do you think the library's a place you'd come more often by yourself
>   of with friends?
>
> P: By myself.
>
> R: Why's that?
>
> P: Because if I was with my friends I'd be dead noisy. We'd get kicked
>   out.

<div align="center">Quotation 6.20   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 144)</div>

The participant wouldn't come to the library with friends because the group would be too noisy. This is presented as a certainty, as though no attempt at negotiating would be made internally. This also reflects the stereotyped view that libraries are places where one must be quiet, therefore, for this particular participant, where one must be alone.

The same participant here presents a slightly different aspect of the defensive use of noise:

P: It's too quiet.

R: What sort of thing would you be interested in?

P: Like, if they had music on in the background.

    […]

R: Does it make you feel as though you're being watched?

P: Like everyone's listening to you, like, if you're talking.

<div align="center">Quotation 6.21 NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 147)</div>

The interest here lies not only in the use of background noise to "hide" the participant's conversations, but also in their response to the question posed by the researcher: "Does it make you feel as though you're being watched?" Their answer shows conflation between being heard and being watched by those who might pass judgement. They feel that by acting naturally (i.e. making noise) they will be identifying themselves as someone who doesn't belong in the building. This status would be broadcast through their being audible, and everyone around them would then interpret their status as not belonging, owing to an assumption they are making about what constitutes belonging in a library. As they would be outnumbered, and their agency subjugated, this would cause discomfort.

In the case of one of the students from Liverpool, the observation was made that a pressure, even as a student, was felt when entering the Picton Reading Room, to conform to a more stringent silence:

R: Yeah. You said you didn't feel particularly comfortable. Do you feel as though you're being watched?

P: I felt suddenly walking in there [the Picton] and having a conversation that you were being watched. People turned round and watched you. What are you doing in there not working? Whereas in the other space, that's a lot less so.

<div align="center">Quotation 6.22 STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 154)</div>

This quotation makes more explicit the same conflation between being heard and being watched as noted in Quotation 6.21. The same link is drawn between the ability to be heard and the ability to be seen, and immediately identified as a member of an out-group. This is quite clearly different from the type of response expectable in another public setting, even one that was relatively quiet. It also goes some way to demonstrating the very strong division that exists within Liverpool Central Library in terms of the aesthetic – or even atmospheric – quality of the refurbished Victorian spaces as compared to the new spaces. As the participant observed, it was almost enough to make one pause for breath upon going from one to the other.

The following participant generalises the undesirable noisiness of the social group, going beyond making the assumption that their own group's noisiness is non-negotiable, as was the case in Quotation 6.21, and stereotyping an entire social category: the "chav", with which they had previously self-identified. This shows a level of adherence to a group identity that was particularly strong among the cohort interviewed.

> P: I dunno, 'cause, if you go in there and you see loads of chavs, you know, you're kind of like "Ooh, not a very nice place to chill, is it?" or a very nice place to sit down in, if there's teenagers shouting and screaming and messing about and that. It's not really good, is it? If you go in, you see, you know, people dressed nice, casual, smart, you know, nice chairs, nice building, you know, you see nice windows, nice flooring, you're like, yeah, it's a nicer place, you get me?

> Quotation 6.23   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 69)

The participant then goes on to explain how their own social circles affect the types of place in which they feel able to socialise.

> R: Do you think it depends who you're hanging out with?

> P: Yes. Yeah, that is a big, very big point as well. Yeah, 'cause, like, I've got different groups of friends, like, if I'm with my boys then we won't go to the library, 'cause, you know, we're loud, we're, you know, just, like, bunch of trouble-makers, really, but if I'm with family and they're, like "Shall we go to the library?", I'm like "Yeah, of course".

> Quotation 6.24 NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 70)

The impression the participant conveys is almost one of becoming a completely different person, with a completely different usage of and interaction with the environment that is dependent on the makeup of their social group. It appears that, for this participant, their social group has the power to affect their persona, respectively that of a "trouble-maker" (and proud of it), or a family member. One is happy to be a library patron, the other is not.

The participant refers to "being loud" as a reason that they avoid the library when they're with their "boys". Whether they are distinguishing between what they perceive as a particularly stern no-noise policy, or whether by loudness they are referring more broadly to a confrontational or anti-social attitude is not clear. In practice, it seems that these two aspects are very closely connected: either case is an attempt to reconstitute the socio-spatial rules of the library.

Where noisiness was linked to the social group, it was always in the context of the group being too noisy for the library. This was by no means a rule that applied to all participants, even the students who could be expected to view extraneous noise more strictly.

> P: And it's a nice atmosphere as well.
>
> R: In what way?
>
> P: It's very quiet and relaxed

> Quotation 6.25 NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 34)

The above quotation is one example that shows how the peaceful qualities of the library were equally appealing to some non-student participants as they were offputting to others.

6.9 CONCLUSION TO SOCIO-SPATIAL INTERPRETATIONS

Two overlapping ways of describing the overall environment of the public library have been presented:

- The social-environment, which posits that libraries are not merely built environment but socio-spatial, and existing within a broader cultural framework.
- The second place or third place, which set the library either within a user's places of work/study or into the places in which they informally socialise.

The library can be seen as an everyday public setting, distinct from the home or school, which is used for socialising by some young people, and for study/work by others. This reflects the interrelationship of physical and socio-cultural worlds, and allows the same library to be viewed in two different ways by two different young people, depending on whether they judge it for its capacity to support socialising, or for its suitability as a study space. The increase in numbers of students since the 1990s has resulted in many central libraries being considered alongside college and university libraries as much as the third places of the city.

A number of the participants showed evidence of including information about place in their definitions of other people. This was most apparent among the non-students of Cardiff, who sometimes made the connection explicitly by referring to what groups among their associates would be in what locations around the city, using physical qualities of Cardiff Central to make assumptions about the staff or other patrons. It was found among some of the non-students in Cardiff that the small scale of the local youth group at which the participants regularly socialised afforded them the comfort of intimacy, which was something they found lacking in Cardiff Central.

Some participants associated quietness in the library with the presence of library staff, and a general sense of being under surveillance. There was a connection made several times, not only among the non-students but among the students too, between quietness and the sense of being conspicuous. A non-student in Cardiff claimed that although the quiet was calming in a sense, the expectation of a kind of non-specific control (whether the judgement of staff or of other users) limited the way they could use the space. This contrasted with their interpretation of the youth group frequented by them and their friends, whose atmosphere was permitted to be more vivacious by the authority in control (the youth group staff and users).

This compares with comments made by a student in Liverpool, who found that the inverse suited them: poor control of their academic library by members of staff allowed its noise level to be unsuitable for working, whereas certain spaces in Liverpool Central Library were much quieter. It is particularly interesting to note in this case that the space they referred to, the Picton Reading Room, is largely lacking in staff control, but that quiet is maintained because everyone entering the space instinctively knows from its physical appearance that they should not disturb it. The silencing effect of this space was commented upon by the

majority of the participants who entered it. The distinction in these interpretations appears to stem from the distinction between the library as a second place and as a third place.

Whereas staff members were sometimes viewed with suspicion for the quiet atmosphere in the library, particularly among non-students, the students tended to view the staff in a more flattering light as they were seen as facilitators of the library's second place capacities. One student in Liverpool referred to an alternative, positive version of the socio-spatial connection between the library and its staff by treating the reception desk as their first option for dealing with problems. When asked, this was their only solution, suggesting a level of trust in the staff that is enacted through going to a specific location in the building.

The socio-spatial connection was also observed in the context of library users, in addition to library staff. For example, a student at The Hive revealed that there is socio-spatial knowledge about the building that is held by the student population, such as the connection between the Shared Study area on Floor Zero and the presence of noisy teenagers. This can serve to guide expectations of how the building can be used prior to an actual evaluation taking place.

The conflict in this case appears to relate to a belief among some students that through engagement with more "serious" scholarship they should have the right to dictate how the building is used. This is leant weight by the fact that the local teenagers are not using the building as part of a student package that costs multiple thousands of pounds per year, and are therefore less invested in an "appropriate" library use. This relates to two versions of territorial library use, one in which the Shared Study area is appropriated by the teenagers as a third place for their own developmental needs (what Erik Erikson refers to as the "psychosocial moratorium"), and one in which the students desire the same space to be a second place as they are invested together in the successful outcomes of their degrees.

There was little agreement among the participants on whether a more traditional (perhaps Victorian or Edwardian) style of architecture was preferable to a more modern style (of the type reflected by Cardiff Central, Liverpool Central and The Hive). There was, however, some evidence that more traditional spaces are preferable when a "romantic" engagement with books is desired, or when the purpose of using the library is for a sensory experience.

Conversely, some students felt that as they more commonly use the library for study support, a more functional spatial quality is generally deemed preferable.

6.9 Conclusion to Socio-Spatial Interpretations

Figure 7.1 Signs showing Cardiff Central Library and John Lewis department store (non-student image, cropped)

7 WAYFINDING IN THE LIBRARY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates how the young people in libraries use both social and physical information to find their way about successfully. Just as users' preconceptions of how transparent or enclosing a library building should be led to an understanding of the connections experienced between different agencies in the space, from Chapter 5 to Chapter 6, so these connections serve as a starting point in Chapter 7 (see Section 7.5). The study of wayfinding is a logical conclusion to the aim of this thesis, which could, in brief, be seen as the plotting of a course from preconception to service interaction: perhaps the truest sense of what a library building ought to achieve.

This chapter therefore deals with the ways young people move around a library building and thereby make use of what it can offer. The fact that books, along with other media and increasingly diverse service elements, are still delivered physically means there is space to traverse in participating in this aspect of the service.

This chapter interrogates how young people using the library convert the information they receive from the building and its occupants into action, in order to wayfind in the interior. To answer this, the following questions will be addressed:

- What types of wayfinding do young people use inside the library?

- What sources of information guide their wayfinding?

- In what ways can these sources of information conflict or be unclear?

7.2 DEFINITIONS OF WAYFINDING

The term "wayfinding"[70] was coined by American urban planner Kevin Lynch (1960 pp.3, 4, 125), who termed it "the original function of the environmental image, and the basis on which its emotional associations may have been founded."

Information science academic Myke Gluck (1991 p.117) defines wayfinding as "the process humans use to orientate and navigate". Gluck's assertion places orientation as a component of successful wayfinding; in other words, wayfinding relates to an understanding of the body's position within an environment (which may or may not be fully visualisable in any one moment), rather than purely its movement from one place to another.

The external arrangement and illumination of Alsop and Störmer's Peckham Library was to create a *visible*, and hence secure and navigable, thoroughfare through the urban area opposite, an important role given the status of Southwark as one of the UK's more deprived areas (Olsen 1997 p.16). Though this example concerns the exterior of the building, it is included here to reassert that perceptions of a library are not based on static moments of architectural appreciation, but are journeys in which the building is effective even before the user sets foot inside[71].

The tradition of library buildings arranging architectural information to support and contribute to an understanding of the resources extends virtually from the origins of the

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[70] Danish designer Per Mollerup has offered the related term "wayshowing", intended to relate "to wayfinding as writing relates to reading" (Mollerup 2005 p.11). The true value of this amendment seems debatable however, as facilitating people's ability to find their way about is the main concern in either case, as far as designers are concerned.

[71] The use of the building as a beacon has parallels with the buildings of nineteenth and early twentieth century libraries, which served as sanctuaries from the harsh conditions of industrial cities (Van Slyck 1995 p.214; Prizeman 2012 p.7). In this sense, the industrial pollution (both literal and figurative) could be reframed as a discussion of urban security.

library concept to the present day, in more or less formalised ways. Consider OMA's "Book Spiral" of Seattle Central Public Library, in which the physical arrangement is influenced by the progression of the Dewey Decimal System of book classification. By comparison, in many older libraries the architectural information makes different claims about the nature of the resources, which have less to do with navigation and more to do with symbolism. For example, in a mid-Victorian library (especially one designed to use the closed-stack system) the role of the architecture is less to facilitate effective navigation of the materials than it is to mount a symbolic argument about their value.

7.3   YOUNG PEOPLE WAYFINDING

The young person, in using the library, can be considered a wayfinder. As the library building serves as a physical manifestation of the service, in order to use the service and interact with its resources the user must also interact with the building successfully.

It is most often the case in wayfinding tasks that a user has a destination in mind in advance and a familiar route in order to get to it (Allen 1999 p.554). This seems rather limiting however in the sense of a public library, where it could be argued that not only are many patrons lacking either knowledge of the building layout or even a particular aim in visiting, but that the ability to browse and wander at leisure is an advantage and justification for the existence of a building over a journey through a purely electronic set of resources.

This being the case, two modes of wayfinding are anticipated, one in which the young person has a clear destination in mind (which includes the further presupposition that they know what the library has to offer in the way of destinations), and one where they are wandering without any clear destination and are acted upon in a more suggestive way by the building. Reflecting this dichotomy, Passini (1981 p.28) observes a division of observed wayfinding strategies into either a linear series of place-to-place steps, as might be the case when following a signage system, or a working out of where to go based on spatial comprehension of the surroundings.

As with other examples, it is potentially problematic to take these two as mutually exclusive, and probably more helpful to imagine them as two ends of a spectrum, between which a young person may have less of a specific destination, service or resource in mind than a certain quality of space, a certain mood, a certain sense of "rightness" (see Section 7.7 below). This nebulous centre region would therefore exist between a single-minded purposefulness and a complete lack of purpose, as far as wayfinding was concerned.

It may also seem that there should be another dimension, considered in the context of a young library patron, and that is whether they *want* to find anything at all. This would appear to be necessary in order to take into account situations where the young person is not in the library out of choice. Consider this in terms of the socio-spatial discussion of Chapter 6: The state of wanting to discover the new requires territoriality to be overcome. To achieve this, the young person must not feel that they have anything to lose by immersing themselves in a different socio-spatial environment, and nothing to gain through isolation from it. In other words, they must not fear being "thrown back… on inadequate mastery", to quote Goffman (1971 p.249).

Even a young person who does not wish to integrate socio-spatially with the library will have preferences for a certain type of space. In this case, the option of not wanting to find any destination at all only applies to those young people who stay away from the library altogether. A young person could conceivably be obliged to use the library and navigate it as part of a group, when they personally didn't wish to. Then it would be the group making the decision and performing the wayfinding, so a spectrum of preference in wayfinding would be negotiated among the group, rather than the preserve of a particular individual[72].

Depending on whether a young person enters the library nearer the purposeful or the suggestible poles of the spectrum has implications for the design of the library as it calls into question whether the building needs to be playful and suggestive, or give clear directions.

7.4 "MESSAGE SYSTEMS"

Although a person who enters the library in a more suggestible frame of mind, ready to browse or take a walk without any particular goal, may well make use of signage within the building to guide them towards a section of interest, it seems likely that they will rely less specifically on these forms of information than might a person who enters with the aim of locating a particular resource.

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[72] Were this thesis more concerned with a specifically analytical study of wayfinding tasks among groups of young people in public libraries, or public space more generally (such as, for example, Beecher 2004), it would have been considered appropriate to further study individual verses group decision-making dynamics in such tasks. However, as the role of this chapter is to consider the interplay between their perception and wayfinding ability, this was felt to lie beyond the scope of the project.

Venturi et al.'s (1972 p.73) "message systems", developed while analysing the Las Vegas Strip in 1968 in *Learning from Las Vegas*, form a useful way of assessing how these two hypothetical library users navigate[73].

The message systems are of three types: "heraldic" (explicit information, signs); "physiognomic" (messages interpretable from the physical makeup of the environment); and "locational" (information gleaned from objects' relative positions to one another). These can be related, either individually or in combinations, to the various parts of a library environment, perhaps at their simplest being the signage and collection data, the interpretation of the appearance of the building and contents, and the information that location gives, such as the area behind a service desk being reserved for staff, even in the absence of signs or barriers to public access. Physiognomy tends to refer to outward appearance, specifically visual appearance, which is appropriate in the car-centric (and consequently ocularcentric) environment of Las Vegas, but requires a slight extension into the realm of sound quality when applied to this context.

If Venturi et al.'s principle is considered in conjunction with the possible range of wayfinding modes (whether more purposeful or suggestible), the question is raised of whether a young person is more likely to expect and respond to explicit sources of information in order to make sense of the library, or if their relationship with it will be constructed more via architectural suggestion.

The differences in the interpretation of Venturi et al.'s three message systems was particularly exhibited on a walk-along in Liverpool Central Library, in which the student participating became confused in the Picton Reading Room owing to conflicting messages from a staircase that had a "No Entry" sign on it leading between the second and third level of the stacks. The staircase, which was physically similar to the one the participant and researcher had just ascended to reach the second level of the stacks, physiognomically imparted that it too could be used for the purpose of ascending. Locationally, it was close to the one that had just been ascended from the reading room floor, the only significant

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[73] Bernstein's (2011 pp.122–123) description of perception modes, in which the "bottom-up" corresponds to spontaneous perception, while the "top-down" refers to perception guided by expectation, helps substantiate the use of Venturi's systems. The bottom-up mode of perception allows the viewer to recognise patterns; the top-down to make inferences about what ought to exist in order for the message to be coherent and fit into a structure. This makes Venturi's et al.'s message systems particularly useful: they include the material needed for both modes of perception.

locational difference being its higher vertical position. The researcher privately interpreted this locationally to mean that it couldn't be used because it led to the location of the third level, an interpretation that relied on prior experience of the space[74], whereas the participant simply saw it as being close to the one that had already been used and existing within the same volume of space.

It was only when examined closely that the staircase revealed a sign saying "No Entry", and thus conveyed a different message in heraldic terms than it had in physiognomic or possibly locational terms. The uncertainty over this latter point demonstrates how, in the absence of explicit heraldic information, locational information can be interpreted differently by different people: the researcher believed the third level of the reading room to be out of bounds, and therefore did not read the staircase in the same way as the one used to go between first and second levels; the participant however did not initially make this assumption, leading them to plan a different route through the building.

7.5 TRANSPARENCY AND THE ABILITY TO SEE THROUGH THE SPACE

Transparency of the building was first discussed in Chapter 5, when it was used in commenting on what participants expected from a library building. The ability of transparency to visually connect people was returned to in Chapter 6, which explored the effect of connections between agencies in the building, but also introduced the importance of sound transfer in allowing users to know how and by whom the spaces around them were being used. This necessarily questions the degree to which users feel their surroundings are accessible to them, and, although it was not the subject of Chapter 6, asks how they wayfind. Chapter 7 exists to pursue that question, as wayfinding could be seen as the final hurdle to cross in allowing users to engage with the service.

A key feature of all three case study buildings is their use of large central atria. Atria are popular in current design of large public libraries because they allow light and visual connection, as well as sound connection, to be made between areas that would otherwise be distant and separated. Additionally, they are usually implemented in such a way as to create a visually exciting heart to the building, simultaneously projecting an image of

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[74] It is very important to note here that the researcher did not *know* that the third level was inaccessible until the "No Entry" sign was seen, which occurred at the same time that the participant saw it. Researcher and participant were therefore both making an assumption about its accessibility drawn from disparate experiences.

dedication to library values, and providing the visitor with a striking architectural experience.

In wayfinding tasks, the atrium can form a useful tool in both identifying a possible destination (for example, a higher floor) and in plotting a mental route to it. The following quotation from a walk-along in Liverpool shows how the participant is able to use the visual connection across the open space to construct a mental map in which they orientate themselves relative to areas of interest (See Figure 7.2).

P: The way it's organised right now, it's easy for me to remember where I can find everything, so I can keep going and when I know what I can find in this library, I can just go back and get what I want.

R: What makes it easy to remember?

P: Well, it's just like most of the other libraries we have here. It's kind of empty [the atrium void] so we can look at the other floors, so while we were walking in there I was a little bit checking out everything, so it's kind of like preparing my brain to put names and where I can find everything, like a mind map, if you see what I mean.

Quotation 7.1   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 227)

Figure 7.2 Atrium, Liverpool Central, showing long view distances (Student image)

On the other hand, it is also possible that the reveal offered by open space can have a

distancing effect. This is reminiscent of a comment made by one of the non-students in a Cardiff walk-along, in which they argued that the transparency of the façade serves to disinterest the passerby on the pavement as there is no mystery to uncover in entering. Of course, this also relies on the assumption that neither participant had a specific need to visit the library and was instead relying on intrigue to draw them in (See Section 7.6 below).

R: Does this make you want to go up?

P: No, not really. I can see it fine from here.

Quotation 7.2   Non-student, Liverpool (Transcripts p. 143)

By comparison, when the participant appears to be of a mindset for exploration, the atrium can assist them in this by allowing multiple different routes and destinations to be tested rapidly (See Figure 7.3).

R: Is it the type of building that inclines you to wander about, do you think?

P: Err, I think it does at first, because you have the central… *this.*

R: This atrium?

P: Yeah, and it's like, "Oh, I can stop here", and, "What's on here", and you go around and then you realise that it's not really for you or you find out whether it is or not.

Quotation 7.3   Student, Worcester (Transcripts p. 314)

Figure 7.3 Multiple routes visible and accessible from The Hive atrium (Researcher photo)

Again, evidence is presented that wayfinding in the library is largely accomplished, at least at a macro level in the initial stages of building use, by using the openness of the central atrium to establish sight lines and corresponding routes to areas of interest.

In a diffused mode of looking, in which multiple types of content and levels of information are simultaneously visible, the ability to orientate oneself and wayfind is both enhanced through the wide range of information and threatened through a lack of hierarchy. The building's message systems must be carefully designed where possible in order to permit sense to be made quickly from a broad range of information at various distances from the user. For this reason, the ability to see is an important issue for wayfinding in libraries. (Though this is true of public buildings generally, public libraries have a special relationship to wayfinding, it being an activity that must be actively supported by the building, rather than an incidental necessity in achieving any higher-level primary function, as might be the case in a hospital, for example.)

The question of whether Cardiff Central Library succeeds in creating an interior environment that is conducive to wayfinding was one upon which the local young people interviewed were divided. Some expressed opinions strongly in favour of the openness of the interior, others criticised it, and still others seemed ambivalent. It is remarkable the extent to which they differed in their interpretations of the building, such that this one sample space, largely open-plan and mono-volume, appears to take on a host of different

personalities. In the following excerpt the library is interpreted as dark, labyrinthine and threatening:

P: I likes the inside but I'd have it all bright. I'd have it inviting, cause it doesn't feel inviting to me. It feels like a labyrinth.

Quotation 7.4   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 12)
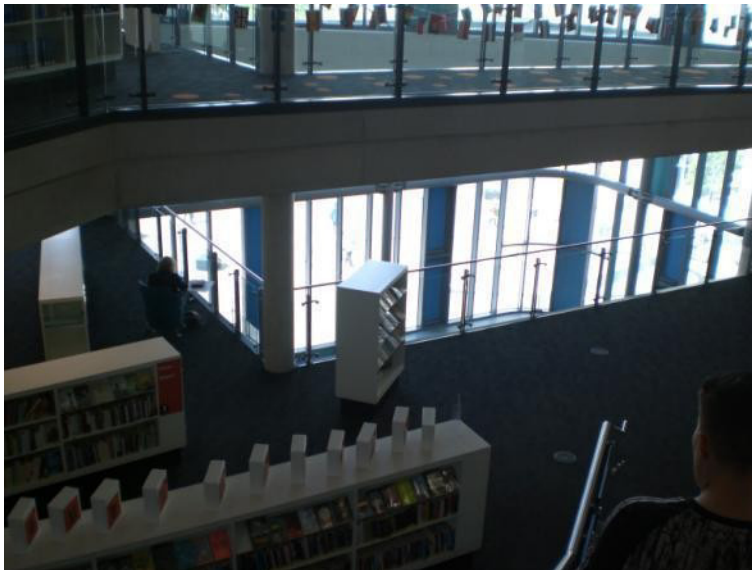
Figure 7.4 Overlapping floors and walkways in Cardiff Central (Non-student image)

However, during another conversation the library is interpreted differently:

R: Do you think it's a safe, comfortable sort of space?

P: Yeah I would say so, especially when there's seats if you want to sit down and read… and you've got different areas that tell you if it's art or media, music, poems, anything like that.

Quotation 7.5   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 19)

In this instance, when the researcher mentions feelings of safeness and comfort, the participant links the feeling of safety with knowing where one is within the library, in other words, they cite the division of subjects into legible areas as an element of why the library is a safe, comfortable space to them. This theme of an almost therapeutic link between knowing where you are physically and a feeling reassurance mentally was expounded upon by a different participant:

P: Yeah, it makes you wander round, 'cause, like, where it's quiet you can do, like, what you want. You can have a look at all the different types of book. You know, you can go round, picking up information. 'Cause you know where certain things are [...]

R: You know where you are with it?

P: Yeah. So, like, you... It's like a place where you know where things are, so, like, you've got all the crime ones there along this side, and then you've got a couple of computers around.

Quotation 7.6   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 47)

Figure 7.5 Signage and discrete shelving units allow subject areas to be understood spatially (Student image)

The same participant later commented positively on the size of the library in comparison to the branches, saying that the increased size allowed the book shelving [See Section 7.9.2 below] to be placed in a lower density configuration:

P: That's what I mean, I do like this place. It's a good library, I'll tell you that, compared to nearly every single one of them [the branches].

R: How is it better?

P: It's bigger, you know, there's more books, they're all... Instead of being crammed in one room they're all spaced out like they should

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be.

For this participant, space and order seem to be where the main appeal of the building lies, and together form a spatial quality that they seem able to appreciate fully only when by themselves. Their interpretation of the building as being navigationally strengthened by having lower density stocks is one apparently shared by the librarians, an arrangement that not only helps staff monitor the floors from specific locations but is intended to help users navigate the space easily. The fact that the space was considered "labyrinthine" by a different participant may appear to undermine this interpretation, however, there is a danger of confusing interpretations of one part of the building with those of another, for although the chosen book storage solution was intended to permit each floor to be navigable, it has relatively little impact on the navigability of all floors when considered together. The relative ease of navigating each individual floor is largely thanks to the legibility of the furniture and fittings (primarily the shelves), whereas the circulation between floors, an element of the library's architectural character, is less easily read.

One of the participants, when asked to summarise their opinion of the library, felt that both the layout and the size of the building were problematic, creating a wayfinding context in which, not only is it hard for them to locate what they want, but the building itself is not conducive to reaching it quickly on account of the pathways through it.

P: Too big. Two words: too big.

R: Physically, you mean, it's too large?

P: Too big, yeah. It's too many escalators, and too many floors… But it's all too far, like, um, I went in there before and I was looking for fiction, and fiction, I think, was on the second floor, and then I was looking for science-fiction and it was up on the third floor, and I was thinking, well, no; all fiction should be in one module, whether it be science-fiction, whether it be fairytales, whether it be any type of fictions…

R: You think there's too much walking about?

P: It is, too much. Sections are there… And it could have a better layout, but it is too big.

<div align="center">Quotation 7.8   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 66)</div>

This response could be countered by arguing that the height of the building is inevitable when housing 5085m^2 of floor area on a fairly constricted site, while accommodating a sizeable atrium (see Chapter 4 for comparison overviews of all three buildings), however the real value of this extract is in its acknowledgement that the participant does not have ready access to such data and is unlikely to have based their interpretation of the building (a principle motivator for their use of it) on methodical reasoning.

Indeed, for some participants it was their first visit to the building, and the walk-along interview method was able to capture their most impulsive responses. While the majority of the participants who were at least passingly familiar with the building made comments about its impressive size (either to praise or criticise it), for others, the ability to see a large amount in one moment resulted in an "information overload", in which little useful order among the visible information was available. Such moments would undoubtedly have served as immediate, albeit temporary, barriers to effective wayfinding. The following was the response of one participant on ascending the escalators for the first time and finding themselves at the base of the atrium, where four floors and their projecting staircases rise up on both sides (See Figure 7.6):

P: God, it's massive!

R: I think it's quite interesting the way it comes up like this [referring to the escalators entering above the retail units].

P: It's massive! I didn't realise there was this many books to fill up a building. Wow, there's loads of computers.

<div align="center">Quotation 7.9   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 25)</div>

Figure 7.6 View upwards from arrival point, giving impression of floors overhead, Cardiff Central (Non-student image, rotated)

Figure 7.7 Equivalent view upwards from arrival point, Liverpool Central (Student image)

A similar situation was noted in both the other case study libraries, whereby the participants' reactions suggested a moment (or several minutes, in the case of one Liverpool participant – See Figure 7.7 for comparison with Cardiff) of mingled admiration and confusion. Frequently this was connected to the presence of extensive staircases, which are of course necessary in multi-story buildings, but which, when combined with the centrality of an atrium common to all three, produce large and dramatic volumes of potential destinations and routes to approach them.

R: Do you think this building encourages you to explore?

> P: It does but it's so huge. There's so many stairs as well, all the way up there.

<div align="center">Quotation 7.10   S<small>TUDENT</small>, W<small>ORCESTER</small> (T<small>RANSCRIPTS P.</small> 304)</div>

It is also interesting that in all three libraries the concept of being "too large" was expressed; the size of the building was expressed negatively. A sense of information overload was approached with several of the participants, in which the initial high-impact view of an atrium with multiple paths going through it and away from it, dramatic lighting and numerous floors resulted in uncertainty about how to best prioritise. Most of the participants were able to move past this state (which was largely restricted to those participants who were not already familiar with the layout and contents) by treating their ultimate destination as essentially unimportant. Certainly, in the case of the walk-along interviews, none of the participants had given themselves a particularly urgent wayfinding task of the sort that might be deployed when there is a need to find a particular resource quickly.

The use of some simple general rules, such as an initial tendency to head upwards, was noted by the researcher, possibly for the purposes of getting a better view or finding a more secluded location from which to wayfind. It is largely true in the three case studied libraries that there is a positive correlation between one's height in the building and the scholarly content of one's surroundings, where the most popular fiction is found nearer the front doors while study rooms and non-fiction collections are above, and this seemed to be recognised by some of the participants when justifying their initial choices of movement[75]. For users who lack an urgent, predefined need that drives them along a particular path, it is perhaps more likely to be intrigue alone that lures them, the desire see the view from the top of the building, for example[76].

7.6 INTRIGUE

Various comments made by the young participants in the Cardiff series of interviews gradually began to throw light on a concept that might be best expressed as *intrigue.* This

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[75] Whether this is because placing spaces for casual visitors near the access and spaces for scholars in the remote areas is recognisable because there is an inherent logic to it or whether instead because the participants had experienced similar arrangements in other libraries is not clear.

[76] See also Section 7.8.5

concept as a definable, discussable aspect of the building was most discernible when the conversation turned to aspects of the theatrical, the otherworldly, and the unusual (in the participant's experience).

> R: I notice we're still going up. Do you think the building encourages you to go up?

> P: Yeah, because you can see, like, I don't know, there's so many different books, different categories, different areas, so just to see what's here.

Quotation 7.11   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 26)

The participant comments how (it being their first time in the building) the views through it encourage them to explore, they lend the building a sense of intrigue – the desire to make discoveries, the desire to be surprised, the desire to make connections. There is clearly a parallel between such a mood engendered by a building and the open frame of mind that leads a user to seek out information.

The following excerpt refers to intrigue being generated specifically by a machine within the library (See Figure 7.8):

> P: It's mad like, what's this, a printer?

> R: Maybe it's the same thing… "Newspaper 2000 project"…

> P: See, I sees a machine, I'm like, let's go look at it! It looks like a photocopier as well, don't it?

Quotation 7.12   Non-student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 27)

Figure 7.8 Microfilm reader in Cardiff Central, a source of intrigue (Non-student image)

Intrigue in the mechanical systems of the library is further evident in a discussion between two participants about the automated return system for books (See Figure 7.9):

P1:   I like the way you can return your book.

P2:   And it all sorts it out.

P1:   All sorts it out and you can use the machine there to just place the book… I don't know how.

Quotation 7.13   Two non-students, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 36)

Figure 7.9 Automated book return system, Cardiff Central (Non-student image)

The ability of these mechanical systems to capture the imagination of the young people in question may stem from the fact that they are essentially outside their normal experiences; they are part of a different world, which lends them a certain imaginative quality. The attraction of such situations may stem from their marrying the potential for expanded prospects with a relative lack of risk of exposing personal weakness on the part of the user. Furthermore, intriguing loci do not seem to be limited to self-contained mechanical systems of the library.

Intrigue was also linked with spatial connections to the outside in one form or another. For example, when a participant was told about the sedum roof surface to the building, their immediate response suggested a desire to encapsulate the natural environment within the building.

> R: Well, it's made of sedum, which is a type of grass[77]. It's meant to stop surface runoff from the rain and makes a bio-diversity, like a little field, basically on the roof.

> P: Cool. That is cool. Ah, they should do a garden up top. Get some safety barriers up there.

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[77] This was an error on the part of the researcher. Sedum is a type of succulent plant, not a grass, and would technically be unsuitable if the roof were intended to be walked on by large numbers of people.

The potential of a high-up, secluded garden as a desirable environment for library users was considered, albeit briefly, in the very earliest stages of the design brief, where there was the suggestion to make use of the roof by adding a rooftop café, or a rooftop reading area and garden (Design Commission for Wales 2004 sec.4.6). When informed of this, the participant's response was still more enthusiastic.

> P: Yeah, yeah, with the nice little grass… You could look out on the whole town. Get some safety barriers, some chairs.
>
> R: I guess they didn't have enough money.
>
> P: Yeah, but it's projects like that are more expensive when you think about it, 'cause there's more safety issues you've got to do, like, but that would be a wicked idea. I would genuinely go to the library a lot if they did a grass thing on the top, like a little field on top. I would, like, I would go there on my own as well.

This response is revealing for its admittance that such a space would allow the participant to attend the library alone, rather than feeling the need to go with friends or family, which was a stipulation previously made. The pseudo-outdoors quality of such a space (isolation, affordance of a good view, being surrounded by vegetation) hypothetically lends it enough of the private and defensible as to be attractive to the individual in a sense unlike that of other library spaces.

Intrigue at the natural and the outdoors (here embodying the potential for defensibility) may share the quality of "otherworldliness" (referring to that which lies outside the user's everyday experience) with intrigue at the mechanical, but it also calls into question the role of sightlines, vision and transparency in the building, these being constituents of defensibility.

In addition to the above forms, it was noted that certain architectural qualities had the power to arouse intrigue in certain cases, particularly on the walk-alongs conducted in Liverpool and Worcester. The following quotation was produced during the transition from

old to new architecture in the Picton Reading Room in Liverpool.

> P: I think it's quite interesting, the sudden change [see Figure 7.10]. The
>   ambience as well, the atmosphere is much more serious, in a way. I
>   guess that's partially created by the more traditional nature of it. Can
>   we get down from here [the second level of the Picton's stacks]?

Quotation 7.16   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 153)

Figure 7.10 Juxtaposition of old and new, Liverpool Central (Student image)

The answer to the participant's question, at its simplest, is yes, via the Victorian spiral staircases (Figure 7.11). However, Section 7.4 above shows that, while they can be used to descend or ascend between the reading room floor and the second level of the stacks, the third level, which can be seen from anywhere in the room and plotted to mentally, is not accessible to members of the public, leading to possible confusion and confounding of wayfinding efforts.

Figure 7.11 Iron spiral stairs link the floor of the Picton Reading Room, Liverpool Central, with its stacks (Non-student image)

The participant reveals their architectural background in discussion of the library. It may seem that their opinion is less relevant because they are specifically educated, but this is not the case because "studentification" of urban areas has brought large populations of educated, media-hungry people into libraries' catchment areas. The participant understands some of what the architects intended in the scheme and seems to derive pleasure or interest from the architectural treatment of the building. They acknowledge that the result does have some strange aspects about its interfaces between new and old.

Later on in the walk-along, they realise that there are parts of the library that are not publically accessible. They feel that the older part of the library does not signpost (whether directly, physiognomically or locationally) the accessibility of its spaces very clearly, with the result that they end up in the Hornby Library (Figure 7.12) unintentionally. Perhaps this would have upset some of the more "directed" participants, but they find the discursive nature of moving through this part of the building rather engaging:

> P: I think the older nature, you don't quite read it so easily. It wasn't signposted, the fact that there's an exhibition in here. You just sort of end up. It's rather nice.

Quotation 7.17   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 153)

Figure 7.12 Hornby Library, Liverpool Central (Student image)

Similarly, the participant in the following quotation likens the act of moving through a space that does not give clear lines of sight (as is the case among the shelving away from the vicinity of Liverpool Central's atrium – See Figure 7.13) to an act of exploring, an act which they feel befits reading fiction.

> P: I like how here there's kind of tables and things revealed as you move around the bookcases.
>
> R: Why do you like that?
>
> P: It's kind of like it feels like you're exploring. I mean, this is my first time here so in future I might know where the tables are.
>
> R: But obviously if you came in and you could see the entire thing, that wouldn't be the same.
>
> P: No, it wouldn't be as good I think. It's good to find little pockets, especially in the library, 'cause when you've got a book you want to settle down and hide away.

Quotation 7.18   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 209)

Figure 7.13 Views are obstructed by shelving in the upper levels of Liverpool Central (Student image)

They refer to being an individual and finding a place of one's own within the landscape of the interior. The arrangement wouldn't be as effective, they assert, if it could be entirely seen in advance because the mood of discovery, that open and discursive mode of place attachment, couldn't take place. A similar sentiment was echoed in the same library by another participant, who talked of needing to be in the right mood to explore the library.

During one of the Liverpool walk-alongs, wayfinding cues allowed a participant and the researcher to access an area of the library in which the distinction between public and private space was unclear. This was reached by following a curved corridor that had the initial appearance of leading to a private space, and which was unoccupied by members of the public, but which contained no barriers to the progress of the participant, nor any clear signage designating privacy.

> P: I'm just wondering what's behind here.
>
> R: I think this must be card entry. I expect it won't open. Oh, it does. So at the moment we're now at round the back of the children's library.
>
> P: Oh right, so this is the original entrance way at the top.

Quotation 7.19   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 194)

The above quotation reveals the arrival of the participant and researcher at a door that appeared to divide the private and public areas of the building. However, when tried, the

door opened into a corridor, following an arc around part of the edge of the children's library. Illustrated in Figure 7.14, the participant comments that they can see the "original entrance way" [A], showing their understanding that the children's library, which occupies the lower half of a cylindrical volume below the Picton Reading Room, used to be a public lecture theatre that was accessed via its own doors from the street at the front of the building. These doors have now been permanently locked, but the hallway that allowed access to the old lecture theatre remains as a corridor [B] that no longer leads to anywhere except an emergency exit [C].

The ambiguous section of building is derived from the combination of new building elements and repurposed, refurbished historical elements, which makes it unique among the three case studies examined. This situation was in many respects similar to another that occurred in the same building with one of the participants, who expressed intrigue at finding old sash window frames without any glass in them while at the same moment becoming disorientated.
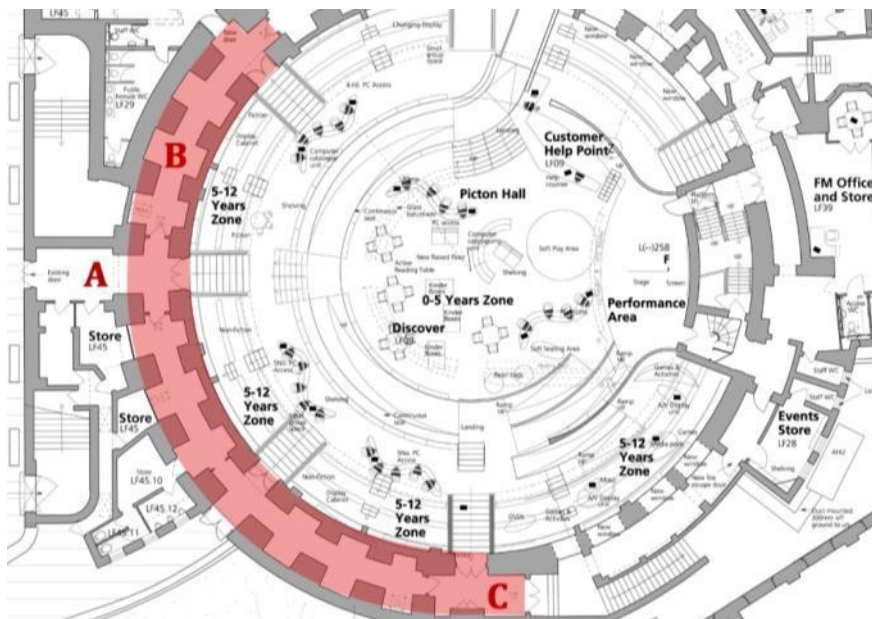
Figure 7.14 Ground floor plan showing repurposed space, formerly lecture theatre, now children's library (Austin-Smith: Lord 2009)

Reflecting on the above reasserts the postulation of Sections 7.3 and 7.4: that a mode of wayfinding could take the form of a directed search for a specific destination, or it could take the form of a moment-by-moment wander, in which new information is absorbed progressively, perhaps characterised by browsing (described by Massis (2011 p.179) as a

"leisurely activity"), if the user is engaged with the collections, or some kind of dérive-like state[78] when they are preoccupied with the building itself.

From the researcher's experience of walking and talking with a number of young library users, it is debatable whether their level of criticism elevates their activity from the stroll to the dérive. The researcher does not feel able to claim assertively the extent to which their criticism is of a tacit and responsive level, or instead a more active and creative force. If such users go beyond the initial question of whether a route is available to them, and ignore any consequent discourse on why it is so or how it could be different, it is not clear.

This moment-by-moment possibility was reported to the researcher more often by those users who had little prior experience in the building, possibly on account of the remainder of the cohort having already done their exploring and come to view the library as a repository of useful information rather than an experience to be imbibed. It seems likely that the part of the difference between these two hypothetical users and their respective modes of wayfinding lies in their perception of the atria, which all three libraries feature. It is in this nexus that each building offers itself up for evaluation: signage, destinations, staff, users and the beginnings of pathways are all perceptible at once. Therefore the distinction in approach, whether following intrigue or searching for something specific, may be based on a user's desire to sort the information.

7.6.1   INTRIGUE AND ATRIA

In all three of the case studies (Liverpool and Cardiff to a slightly greater extent that Worcester), suspended staircases are used as a way of lending a certain theatricality and visual flair to their respective atria. The degree to which these assist or hinder ease of movement around the library was discussed in a number of cases. In Liverpool the atrium follows a series of elliptical cut-outs in each floor slab, which are surrounded by angled columns and illuminated by rings of spotlights. The effect is

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[78] A translation of an article by the writer and theorist Guy Debord (2006 pp.62–66), originally published in French in the Belgian satirical magazine Les Lèvres Neue in 1956, describes a process called the dérive (literally "drifting"), in which users of the urban environment allow themselves to move in a way that is directed by their interest in the surroundings. It may seem that this is a reflection of the activity mentioned above, in which library users follow intrigue to wayfind in a library, however Debord asserts that the dérive is distinct from a mere stroll in that it entails a critical approach to what he calls "psychogeographical effects". The enactors of the dérive are subject to "constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones", and must therefore both let go of an overarching purpose yet also remain critical of these "psychogeographical contours".

extremely dramatic, as any prolonged observation of visitors' reactions as they first step inside amply demonstrates, and is added to by the staircases, which cross the space at a variety of angles, each one supported only at its ends (Figure 7.15).

Figure 7.15 Crossing staircases, with floor slabs, columns and spotlights all visible from the entrance, Liverpool Central (Student image)

The following quotation relates to the role of these staircases in Liverpool Central Library.

> P: I really like when you're standing right at the bottom and you look up you can see all the stairs criss-crossing, and I don't think it's that much of an annoyance to walk around here to get to another staircase to be honest.

Quotation 7.20   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 210)

The participant feels it is worth the longer trip for the sake of having such a magnificent aesthetic centrepiece to the new section of the library, a sentiment that perhaps echoes that of the participant in Quotation 7.17 above, who comments on the nicety of "just sort of end[ing] up" at your destination. When the researcher suggests that this discursive, wandering form of wayfinding might not appeal to those in a hurry, the participant suggests that using the colour of the carpet to mark out a path might ease wayfinding tasks for library users while still allowing the

incorporation of spatial arrangements that are convoluted for the sake of aesthetic drama.

In The Hive in Worcester, the relationship between the staircase and the atrium is slightly different, the staircase being a single run of flights that occupies one wall of the atrium and takes the user from the ground floor (Level 1), up past Level 2, to Level 3, which is where the majority of the students head to do their work (See Figure 7.16). The staircase therefore overlooks the atrium, which is used as a small exhibition space. One of the participants commented on the options this allows:

R: Okay, and do you think the design of the building is conducive to that, that discursive approach to spending time?

P: I do because if I wanted to ignore this [exhibition], if I had something to do, I could easily just go straight up the staircase, not bother. I don't have to pay any attention to it; I can just get straight on with my work, leave.

Quotation 7.21   Student, Worcester (Transcripts p. 322)

Figure 7.16 Staircase overlooking atrium exhibition area (bottom left), The Hive (Student image)

It was observed by a small number of the students in Liverpool that the design of the library begets a certain discursive frame of mind, in which gradual discovery of the spaces and the potential on offer is in itself a pleasurable activity. This mood, it was

claimed by one participant, relied on not being able to see the entirety of the interior immediately, but rather being offered circuitous routes that do not necessarily take the quickest way to their conclusion. It was, however, acknowledged by the same participant that there is a limit to this discursiveness, which is largely dependent on whether the library is seen as a sensory experience to be engaged with, as might be the case for a historically interesting building (which central libraries often are), or as a very large information-accessing device.

While the researcher and participant were engaged with this particular question, the latter was able to offer a personal experience of using the new Library of Birmingham designed by Mecanoo, which opened in 2013. By their account, the Library of Birmingham was problematic to wayfind on account of various architectural features. These included visually identifying the drum-shaped arrangement of books above the entryway escalators as a destination but being unable to get to it, and finding dead-ends while attempting to access a roof garden, which instead directed them towards toilets.

It could be tentatively suggested that this hints at a logic in modern large-scale library design in which spatial complexity is seen as connoting conceptual sophistication, but without more comprehensive study this could certainly not be asserted. An alternative explanation was indicated by at least two other participants, which was that Liverpool Central had incorporated ideas from more commercial designs to encourage the visitor to navigate as much of the building as possible, as this would afford more opportunities for the service to be used.

To summarise the above, there have been two modes of wayfinding revealed: one in which the user wanders as the mood takes them and discovers the building as it is encountered (wayfinding led by intrigue, discussed here in Section 7.6); the other in which a user searches for a desired destination. (This is discussed below in Sections 7.7 to 7.9.) This second mode must obviously require the user to be aware of *multiple options at the same time* in order to take a critical approach, and that dictates that either:

- They must have recent prior knowledge of the options (in other words, they are extremely familiar with all that is on offer in a particular library);

- Various options are directly visually available to the user; they can envisage different paths to different destinations; the building offers transparency, or;

- Information is presented via signs, maps etc. that accurately and succinctly convey all that the user needs in situ to make a decision

7.7   TOWARDS A DIRECTED MODE OF WAYFINDING

Signs would, in Venturi et al.'s (1972) terminology, constitute heraldic information. It is also conceivable that a library user could make use of physiognomic and locational information, i.e. visual appearance and relative position, to locate other specific destinations, although logically this would vary according to specific circumstance. For example, in The Hive in Worcester a participant commented on how the partitions arranged around a cluster of printers announced their presence (Figure 7.17).

Figure 7.17 Partitions mark out a printer area in The Hive (Student image)

Therefore, had they been searching the building specifically for printers, they could have used this information to wayfind more effectively than if they had been relying entirely on signs saying "Printers". Locationally, printing services might be anticipated in areas near to PCs, which is also the case in The Hive. By contrast, when searching for a particular book in a shelving stack, unless the user knows the exact appearance of the spine and has uncommonly keen eyesight, it would not be conceivable to rely on physiognomic information.

In essence, all books look very much alike, which is why it is necessary, particularly among non-fiction books where often only a very particular result counts as a successful search, to

implement sophisticated heraldic-locational systems. In the case of library shelving, these work in parallel: the heraldic information of the classmark coincides with particular locations of shelving within the library, particular locations of books on those shelves, and finally the particular location of the specific book that the user has previously identified. For this reason, the user's ability to effectively wayfind across the whole range of scales is particularly important in these most directed of wayfinding tasks. A student on one of the Liverpool walk-alongs commented how they were able to use the signage in this scaling way to home in on their destination:

P: [When] you're on the ground floor there's a good indication of where your nonfiction and your fiction, where all your books are, but then when you kind of go up, like from here, all I know is that enquiry is on the second floor, but not really about what's on this floor itself.

       […]

P: Yeah, so usually when I come here I kind of check out at the ground floor where I want to go in terms of what book I need, where I'll find it, and then I go straight there. I don't usually, like, look around. I'll know why I'm coming here.

Quotation 7.22   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 217)

Initially they consult the overview sign in the ground floor entrance area, and after that head up to the correct area of shelving. They suggest that their usage of the library in this highly directed way (i.e. as a second place social environment to search for specific books for work purposes) has resulted in their being familiar with certain areas of it, but quite unfamiliar with others, even when these are only a floor away. A directed mode of wayfinding is explored more in the following two sections.

7.8   IDENTIFYING DESTINATIONS

Section 7.8 is intended to be an overview of the destinations the participants identified in their library wayfinding processes. Intrigue forms an important part of it, however the means by which they found particular library spaces are more extensive, and rely on more justifications. Whereas intrigue might best characterise a mode of wayfinding that is discursive and perhaps even lacks a clear destination, urgency or impatience can often

oblige a more directed mode. The main body of the justifications expressed by the young people in discussion with the researcher in the Cardiff, Liverpool and Worcester libraries will be discussed in this section.

When considering the question of what young users may look for in terms of specific spaces when they are in a library (whether a quality of architectural space or the specific region of three-dimensional space occupied by a book), it appears that two preliminary questions must be considered at a very general level:

- Is the user alone or with a group?
- Is the user intending to find a second or a third place social environment?

Considering the group first, among the young people interviewed, plurality seemed to entail an increased tolerance of ambient noise, or even a desire for it. Irrespective of whether the group is intending to use the library for a group project as part of their degree, or as a social setting to pass a rainy afternoon, it appears to be taken for granted that verbal communication will be necessary. This requires the group to occupy a space that is both physically large enough as well as loud enough for their conversation not to draw attention or disturb other users. The students and non-students spoken to reflected comparable attitudes on this particular issue[79].

If, instead, the user approaches the library as an individual, the second question may make relatively little difference (if, for example, someone playing browser games and someone writing an essay were equally happy using adjacent PCs at the same desk in some quiet corner of a hypothetical library), or it might make a larger difference (perhaps where one user reads the newspaper in the middle of a café, while the other prefers a silent study area, free from distractions). Perhaps for most young individuals though the degree of difference lies somewhere in the middle, leading the researcher to suggest that the status of being alone or with a group is the more important as far as determining desirable qualities of interior space. Among those young people interviewed, where they talked of

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[79] It is tempting to speculate that groups of students conducting work together would feel this pressure owing to a desire not to disturb the work of other people in the library, being in an empathetic mode of work with them, whereas groups of non-students socialising together may feel pressure to find noisier spaces owing to a desire not to attract the attention of the library staff, towards whom several mistrusting opinions were expressed during the walk-alongs, however the researcher does not feel able to give this substance.

using the library as an individual they generally also implied or explicitly stated a desire for tranquillity when alone. One slight variation on this was a student in Cardiff, who expressed both a great irritation at people tapping their pens nearby, yet also a preference for listening to music while studying.

The above two questions manifested themselves in the walk-along interviews in a range of themes connected with the physicality of the building. These broadly comprised:

1. Connection with the outside (dually beneficial in comfort terms as a view out and as a source of natural light);
2. Monitorable surroundings, for the purpose of maintaining "normal appearances" (See Goffman 1971 p.239) rather than for aesthetic reasons;
3. Visual attractiveness of surroundings. (There was little or no agreement on whether these should be especially modern in appearance or more traditional, open and spacious or relatively enclosed.)
4. Particular noise qualities or levels;
5. Access to library resources, chiefly books and PCs;

There is a difference between the pragmatic concerns such as access to resources and freedom from excessive noise (which serve to facilitate the library's use more heavily as a second place social environment, i.e. a place for work), and less pragmatic, more subjective concerns such as what the quality of the noise imparts about other user groups in or near the space, freedom from feeling overlooked, and architectural qualities (perhaps arrangements of furniture or colour schemes, for example) that communicate a particular value to a user. This latter group of concerns perhaps serves more to facilitate the library's use as a third place social environment (i.e. a place for socialising or being informal): an important issue in the young people's socio-spatial perception of the building, which is the subject of Chapter 6. The above five points are addressed in more detail below in Sections 7.8.1 to 7.8.5.

7.8.1 CONNECTION WITH THE OUTSIDE

In the following quotation, the roof terrace of Liverpool Central Library (which was commented upon favourably by virtually all of the Liverpool participants, but most often in the sense of being intrigued by the possibility a library having a roof terrace – See Figure 7.18) was considered a valuable asset to the building as a second place

social environment because it offers a chance to take a multi-sensory break from studying without needing to leave the building.

Figure 7.18 Roof terrace at Liverpool Central, looking towards St George's Hall, which was referred to by Nikolaus Pevsner as one of the finest neo-Grecian buildings in the World (Sharples and Pollard 2004 p.13) (Student image)

In this aspect, the central library offers a distinct advantage to students over many of their alternative study venues.

> P: It's quiet; not many people. [Either] they don't know about it. You get fresh air, you're not, kind of, inside a building, you can be a bit louder and it's okay, so if you're with friends, it's okay, you can kind of talk out loud and no one's going to say anything, so you don't have to worry about other people, and it's just being outside in the fresh air, you don't feel like you're in a library, studying or doing something. So the terrace is a good place.

> Quotation 7.23   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 218)

The following quotation refers to the visual connection with the outside that can be received in The Hive (Figure 7.19).

> P: I quite like that window there. It lets even more light in. […] It's quite nice if you're working and you can have a bit of greenery

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that you can see.

R: Do you think that's important, having greenery that you can
        see?

P: I don't know. I would say so. Like, subconsciously I always think
        having trees about and having some plants always helps. But I
        really like nature.

Quotation 7.24   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 340)

Figure 7.19 View out from The Hive showing historic viaduct and greenery (Non-student image)

Quotation 7.24 and Quotation 7.25 demonstrate that in The Hive (which does feature a small balcony) visual connection with external spaces is enough to qualify a location as desirable, even if the full immersion of the external environment offered in Liverpool is lacking. This suggests that the connections to the outside function in two different ways in the two libraries. Whereas in Liverpool the roof terrace functions as a break from the normal usage of the interior, The Hive's connection with the outside complements its normal usage. The user does not have to take a break from their activities to confront the outside, yet the degree of immersion in The Hive is also lower. This is further reflected in the fact that Liverpool Central features very few windows in its elevations (as it occupies a constricted urban site). The majority of its

natural light, and the view out that most users have access to, comes from directly above through oculi and roof lights. The Hive also makes extensive use of sky light, as shown in Figure 7.20, but is able to use more glazing in its facades than is possible in Liverpool.

Figure 7.20 Roof lights in The Hive (left, researcher image) and Liverpool Central atrium (right, student image)

> P: Have to say, my favourite place [to study] in the library is over in this corner. First thing in the morning, first computer on the end, no one sat behind you, all the windows looking out.

> Quotation 7.25   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 297)

This opinion is repeated almost exactly in a quotation from a student in Cardiff:

> P: I want to find my own little space where, if I could not see that many people around me, that would probably be the best place to sit down and read.

> R: Okay, a quiet part of the library. Is there anything else that makes an ideal personal space?

> P: Definitely one with a view, 'cause, yeah, that would make it the perfect space, but otherwise as long as I'm by myself and if there's one or two extra people by me I'm fine.

Quotation 7.26   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 95)

Quotation 7.25 and Quotation 7.26 both show how the participant's identification of a desirable particular destination is based on several factors. In Quotation 7.25, there is a PC with a desk, which is needed in order to effectively use the library for work; secondly, in both there is a view out mentioned, which is beneficial from a comfort perspective; thirdly, there is "no one sat behind you" or "not many people around", which are reflections of the participants' desire for monitorable surroundings.
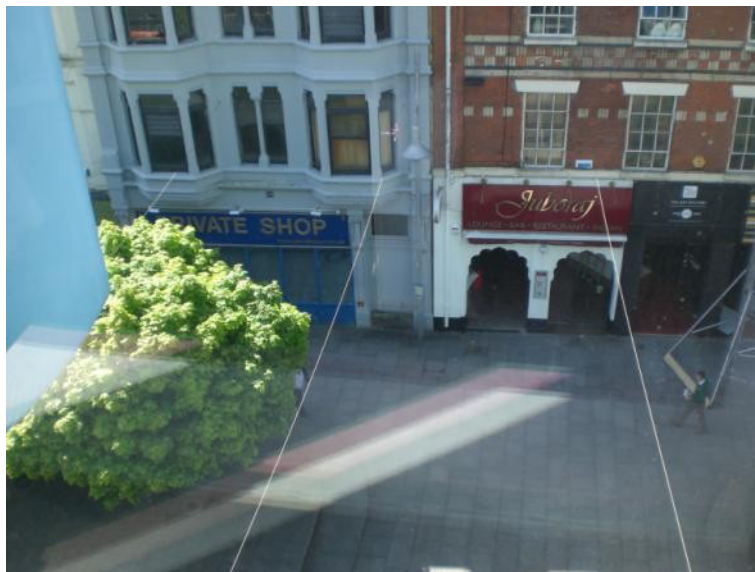
Figure 7.21 View down to surroundings from Cardiff Central through floor-to-ceiling glazing (Non-student image)

7.8.2   MONITORABLE SURROUNDINGS

A participant familiar with the Brewery Quarter building that stands near to Cardiff Central Library pointed out that the balconies it features make for a more diverse spatial palette, appropriate for a personal activity such as reading or working. The following discussion took place while viewing the Brewery Quarter through the library's transparent front façade.

P: They could have done the same [in the design of Cardiff Central Library] with what they've got up on there, like, the balcony areas. Exactly the same up here, 'cause, like, more people can come in then, and like, relax reading a book in the weather instead of being stuck inside [**A1**], so more people could have been attracted to it, compared to that. More open plan.

R: Do you feel like, when you come into a place like this, it's better to have somewhere you can see out or somewhere where you can, like, hide away?

P: Yeah, a view, like. So it could have been better if they'd had, like, the open things so you can see everything then [**A2**], instead of being stuck in one place.

R: Yeah.

P: 'Cause, like, in here, you feel, like, you're okay, but then you'd like your own space at the same time [**B**]. But you can't.

Quotation 7.27   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 81)

This extract illustrates several points about the user's spatial preferences simultaneously. Initially, it may appear that they have contradicted themselves, arguing both for more expansive and for more private space at the same time, however, they are referring to two slightly different aspects. The first (A) is that openness is desirable as a connection to the outdoor environment (A1) and as an ability to clearly see the surroundings (A2). The second aspect they refer to is that privacy is desirable in the physical arrangement of the space (B). In other words, the participant wants to be able to occupy their own private part of the building, and at the same time have a commanding view of the entire surroundings.

When asked to elaborate on this interpretation of Cardiff Central's interior according to this second aspect, the participant says that the floors are too similar. This is a problem when attempting to find a particular area of the interior in which to take up position. The participant again makes two points here. Firstly they refer to the openness making it difficult for them to find a spatial quality that is sufficiently enclosed, and secondly they refer to the homogeneity of floors as being a wayfinding issue:

R: Do   you   reckon   this   library's   too   open   or   too compartmentalised?

P: I reckon it is too open [**B**], but it's, like, fair enough if you've got all flights of stairs with different stuff on, but every single floor's got the same stuff. Like, if they had different changes of flooring, like, different books, but they've all got the same books in each one[80].

Quotation 7.28   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 81)

Being higher is consonant with the idea of a defensible space. Up high a user can see yet not be seen so easily, and is more likely to find themselves alone because the majority of users are less likely to venture to the more outlying areas of the building.

7.8.3   VISUAL ATTRACTIVENESS OF INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT

The visual attractiveness of the library interior is one of the hardest concepts to discuss distinctly as both a response to intrigue and as a condition that a user might pre-emptively identify and seek out for functional purposes. Clearly an interior environment that a user finds attractive constitutes an assistance to whatever function they might call upon it to provide, and so by extension it clearly has a place in both the discussions of wayfinding by intrigue and directed wayfinding, but the subjectivity of it, combined with the potentially tacit nature of its appeal, means that is it often bound up with the other points raised in Section 7.8. A good view out may increase the attractiveness of a particular aspect of the library; so too might a comfortable quality of light, or a pleasant quietness, however it would be remiss to ignore the contribution that formally attractive architecture can make in this area. The following participant draws a link between the sense that can be made visually of an overview of the library interior and its degree of attractiveness. For them, variation is simultaneously attractive and beneficial to wayfinding.

P: [You've] got four floors, four flights of stairs, all exactly the same. If they changed them one by one, the stairs, and, like, the inside, it'd be more attractive…

Quotation 7.29   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 85)

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[80] It is not clear from the participant's comment whether they are referring to the content of the books (which would be factually incorrect), the physical appearance of their covers on the shelves, or whether he is implying that the books should be housed in more distinctive shelving.

Quotation 7.30 and Quotation 7.31 below show how one participant's interpretations of beauty in Liverpool Central were not attached to specific elements of architecture or particular small details, but to the atmospheres belonging to whole spaces.

P: [Referring to the modern atrium]: It's the staircases. It's beautiful. It's huge.

Quotation 7.30   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 266)

P: [Referring to the Picton Reading Room]: This is gorgeous. It's absolutely gorgeous. Ah, this is beautiful. Very quiet.

Quotation 7.31   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 268)

Figure 7.22 The Picton Reading Room, Liverpool Central (Student image)

It can be seen from these examples, and was felt from the discussions with the participants, that visual attractiveness tends to be difficult to define as a standalone property of an object or an area, but rather is felt from many sources at once. In the Picton Reading Room, shown in Figure 7.22, which was judged as beautiful by a number of the participants, the appeal is not purely due to one element, but the combination of scale, shape, material usage and light that suggest abstract notions the participant finds appealing, whether they be tradition, wealth, reverence, or education.

7.8.4 *NOISE QUALITIES OR LEVELS*

The ambient noise levels experienced within a library appear to be used by young people in two distinct ways during wayfinding in search of a place to stay for a period of time (as opposed to simply retrieving a book, for example, and then leaving). These are quite clearly connected to the dichotomy of space use that was explored in Chapter 6, particularly in Section 6.3.4, in which some young people appear to view the library as a "second place" social environment, and others as a "third place" (See Oldenburg 1999 p.271). As was discussed in that chapter, this division affects how a young person may feel they relate to other library users and staff. Here it appears that part of the distinction made between the two when a young person is moving through the library spaces, and hence how they may feel they can make use of them, lies in the ambient sound level.

Figure 7.23 Division of space by noise level at The Hive: Level Zero social study area (left); Level Four silent study area (right) (student images)

Among the participants, the students, who were more commonly engaged in "serious" scholarship preferred quieter spaces that could be used for work. This allows them to concentrate and feel the satisfaction of performing more effectively as students. By contrast, the non-students expressed more views favouring louder spaces as these let them feel they had more privacy, that their voices were less likely to be identified as undesirable by other user groups. This is not a rule, but an observation that was noted across the majority of cases. Naturally, some students prefer not to work in an absence of sound, and some non-students were attracted to the library for its peace and quiet. An important distinction to be made here is in

whether the young person in question is planning to use the space for an individual activity or in the company of a group.

> R: Do you tend to sit anywhere at all in the library?

> P: Basically anywhere.

> R: Higher up or lower down, or does it not matter really?

> P: It doesn't matter really.

> R: I guess in terms of noise levels it's all about the same really.

> P: As you can tell it's quite quiet in here.

Quotation 7.32   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 19)

Here, the participant's attempt to locate a suitable destination is independent of the noise level or height within the building. They express little preference as the library is quiet (during the particular time of the walk-along). The sound transmission effect of the atrium means that when there are special events such as Japan Day, the whole library is equally noisy

In Quotation 7.33, the participant talks about how the openness of the new central structure of Liverpool Central means it's impossible to find a quiet area without going into the Picton Reading Room or elsewhere.

> P: [Because] the library's so open both on the centre of the plan and the outsides, the extremities, because you get a lot of noise and light pollution, it doesn't really help anyone trying to work there silently, which is why that's an awesome space [The Picton Reading Room], but it's just underutilised, so it doesn't have that many, for example, if you look and see, there's not that many tables or chairs and things like that, so it means you can't really get that many people working productively in that space.

Quotation 7.33   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 196)

The participant talks about how the enclosedness of the Picton Reading Room makes it suitable for silent reading in a way that the newer section of the building never can be owing to its being too open. There is always noise and light transfer in the new section. Therefore, for them, the Picton Reading Room forms a more viable destination for quiet study. This preference was reflected by several of the students, who appreciated the more scholarly atmosphere it suggested to them.

7.8.5 ACCESS TO RESOURCES

There is less of a physical impediment to walking around one large floor in terms of energy expended than there is in travelling between several smaller floors. This is felt by the researcher to be a key difference between The Hive in Worcester and the other two case study libraries: whereas Cardiff and Liverpool spread a range of useful destinations across several floors, the relative openness of the Worcester site allows the building to be more horizontally expansive (See Figure 7.24).

Figure 7.24 The large footprint of The Hive allows the majority of books for both students and the general public to be housed on Level Three (Student image)

This might not initially appear obvious; there are five levels in The Hive, compared with five in Cardiff Central and six in Liverpool Central. The difference lies in the grouping of functions on particular floors. The Hive takes the role of a council hub to a greater extent than the other two (prior to 2015, when Cardiff Central became a hub library), meaning that the majority of the "core" library functions (fiction, non-fiction, PCs, printing, comfortable seating) are all to be found on Level Three.

At least from the point of view of the undergraduate students who participated, the other levels in the building can be largely discounted: Level Zero is a shared study area that has some value for group projects, but requires co-existence with groups of non-student young people; Level One contains council hub services, the children's library and a café which the students generally feel is too expensive to be regularly used by them; Level Two contains the archive search room and archaeology services, and Level Four is deliberately designed for the minority of users who wish to work in complete silence.

7.9   WAYFINDING TO DESTINATIONS

This section interrogates users' wayfinding processes as they move through the library to the destinations they have identified. Because in real-world wayfinding tasks it would be naïve to assume that intrigue and destination-led trips are mutually exclusive, the emphasis placed here is not on separating the physiognomic from heraldic information. In libraries these types of information tend to exist in combinations, and the users tend to make use of multiple methods to move through the building, whether they are searching for a good place to settle down to study, or whether they're simply exploring.

In the case of shelving, for example, the height of the stack might physiognomically impart information about the contents, as too might its location on a particular floor or at a particular distance from the main entrance. If the stack carried signage then it could also function as a source of heraldic information to the user. Depending on what the user is looking for, however, different elements of this information will be pertinent to them. If they want to find somewhere sheltered to study, tall shelving might appeal to them; if they want to find a particular textbook, the signage or location within a particular section might attract them to it for completely different reasons.

7.9.1   SIGNAGE

Firstly, the use of signage inside the library will be assessed. This includes standalone signs that are intended to be sources of information in themselves, and signs that have a particular context that adds to their meaning. It will not include signage on the outside of the library as this was discussed in Chapter 5 on the way the appearance of the building relates to the user's preconceptions about what they believe a library to be.

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Cardiff Central Library has a system of signs in place intended to guide the user swiftly and effortlessly to their chosen destination, and, furthermore, to educate them about what is on offer in the library as knowledge of this is logically required before any user can make an informed choice. It may, therefore, be unexpected to find the following opinion expressed by one of the participants:

P: The simple fact is everything's all over the place instead of in sections.

Quotation 7.34   NON-STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 80)

In one sense, the participant is mistaken; Cardiff Central is arranged on a floor-by-floor basis, with fiction, music, and non-fiction taking up the three full-sized floors Two, Three and Four respectively. Within these floors there is further subdivision: fiction alphabetically and non-fiction according to the Dewey System, for example. Additionally, there are signs on each floor and at the entrance atrium that attempt to provide an overview of these arrangements. In a different sense, however, the participant is referring not to the actual library but to their knowledge of it, prompting the question of why their knowledge is "all over the place", when the strategy outlined above appears on paper so straightforward.

Had the researcher experienced this view as an isolated event it would have been plausible to consign it to the realm of a misunderstanding, however this was not the case, as difficulties absorbing the content of signage systems in the case study libraries were reported by both students and non-students.

The cause of this is possibly related to a curious detail of the design which emerged when conducting a sedentary interview with one of Cardiff's longest-serving librarians (who had also worked in the previous central library and the original Victorian building that closed in the 1980s before that). They described how the floors in the current building are deliberately designed to be similar in terms of their layouts for the benefit of visually impaired people, who reported difficulties, when asked by library staff during preparatory focus groups for the design of the current building, in orientating themselves in buildings generally. The following quotation contains many valuable insights, so it is reproduced at length.

P: So one of the things we did from the focus group for people with visual impairments was that they said they do find it quite difficult to orientate within buildings, full stop. So one of the things we tried to do was, apart from this floor [Floor Five], which is kind of unique because of the nature of the stock, but certainly on Two, Three and Four, we tried to stack the services together in the same place, so when you come out of the lifts you always know the toilets are in a corridor on your left hand side, the main enquiry desk is always just in front of you on the left hand side. You know that the other enquiry desk is at the bottom of the floor. So we have stacked those above each other. Um, it does mean that the floors can look the same, hence the very large numerals we have painted. […] [We] used orange for signage and for certain wayfinding, so whenever you see orange in the building, it either means "information board", or "you can get information here", or "this is telling you where things are", things like that [See Figure 7.25]. So in the end, we were kind of limited in the number of colours we had left […] It's quite difficult knowing how to change, how to give each floor its personality […] [We've] tried highlighting colours on the walls; we've tried to use that. We could possibly have looked at doing more with the furniture. We did try to do it with the furniture, but chairs seem to migrate between floors by themselves […]

Quotation 7.35   Library staff, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 360)

Figure 7.25 Orange highlights the locations of signage boards, Cardiff Central (Non-student image, cropped)

To offset the structural similarity of each floor, a colour scheme was used to attempt to differentiate them again. Here is what appears to be a sophisticated wayfinding methodology, in which locational information is favoured to assist the partially-sighted in wayfinding tasks, and heraldic information to assist those who are fully sighted and relying more heavily on vision. In fact, there are difficulties posed by this approach as the heraldic information is perhaps less obvious than the locational to those who are able to use both fully. This may have been exacerbated by the application of carpets and shelving of the same colours (black and white, respectively) throughout the building (Figure 7.26).
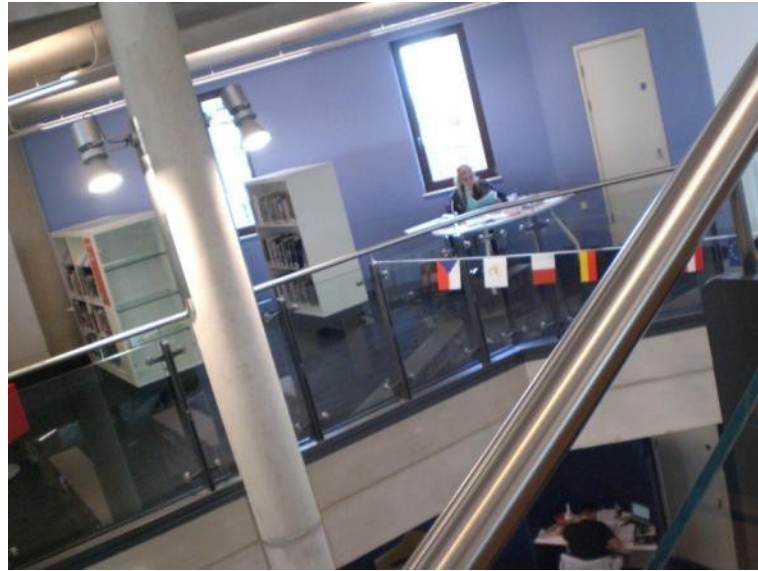
Figure 7.26 View showing level-specific blue colour scheme, but also black carpet and white shelving, which are found throughout, Cardiff Central (Non-student image)

In Liverpool, the rationale behind the signage design appears to have been slightly different. Whereas Cardiff made use of colour schemes to differentiate one floor from another, in Liverpool this strategy is reduced (although still present) in favour of a clean, white design that serves to make the signage graphics stand out.

> P: [We] liked the scheme where we've got these white walls. Again, it feels bright and clean, crisp, and then the big graphics stand out extremely well. We paid a lot of attention to signage and getting that right, and getting it clear and getting it easy to find your own way around, so that more people can help themselves. […] And I think part of the image, as opposed to the old fashioned clutter, which we had, which sometimes libraries have been guilty of, a whole clutter of signs and notices, and don't do this and don't do that. We swept that all away and had this much cleaner look with big, bold signage and no posters and things everywhere. And certainly no "be quiet", "don't do this, don't do that" notices.

Quotation 7.36   LIBRARY STAFF, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 382)

In the above quotation, which was conducted in a sedentary interview with a senior member of the library staff as with Cardiff and Worcester, the researcher's attention

was drawn not only to the use of a plain white background to make signs easier to see, but also how extremely different this bold, graphical approach is to what went before. As the participant admits, the older Liverpool Central Library was filled with "a whole clutter of signs and notices", which presumably made wayfinding more difficult. A second issue here becomes apparent however, which is that visibility alone is insufficient for wayfinding by heraldic messages: the content must also be useful.

> P: I think every time you hit a floor, you don't know necessarily what's on it. You don't know, other than the one you arrive at. [...] You've got signs and they just say "Enquire". What's that mean? [...] And you've got the one sign at the lift and at the bottom that tells you what's on each floor, but why not have a sign here saying "You've arrived at…"?

Quotation 7.37   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 159)

The above participant reports confusion when confronting the signs that name each major area. These names are not confined only to the walls as a sort of slogan, but also feature prominently in the main signs that exist throughout the library, as well as the website, suggesting that they are intended to be important to the user's wayfinding processes. "Enquire" seems relatively simple to decipher, however it refers not to the enquiry desk but to the non-fiction books and PCs, which are spread over quite a large area of the library, including both new and Victorian parts. "Read" (See Figure 7.27), "Imagine" and "Discover", referring respectively to the popular fiction, the audiovisual media (but not audio books, which are within "Read"), and the children's library, are too general to be particularly useful in isolation.

Figure 7.27 Bright colour and clear text make this message in Liverpool Central visually obvious, although its usefulness is less obvious (Student image)

The signage system in Liverpool Central does of course extend beyond these area headings, featuring both a large overview signage board inside the main front doors and also signage next to the lifts on each floor. There is further signage on the shelving which informs the user what they can expect to find there.
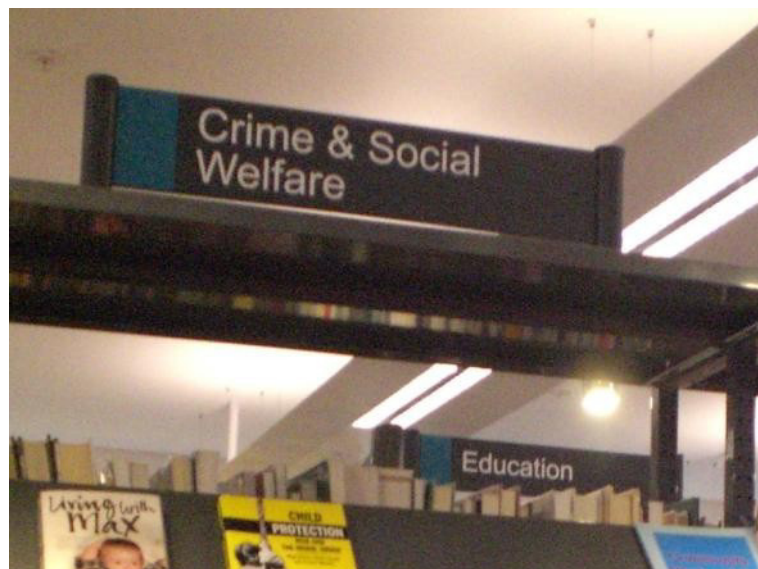
Figure 7.28 Subject heading signs on non-fiction shelving, Liverpool Central (Student image, cropped)

P: Like, you kind of know where to go 'cause of all the signs and everything, but at the same time, if it's your first time, I think you'd want to explore it.

> R: Do you find the signs quite handy? Is it a good system?
>
> P: Yeah, yeah.
>
> R: So you can get around without needing to use a map?
>
> P: Yeah, the signs are especially good 'cause the first time I came, it was school-related, so I knew exactly what I wanted to go to, but, looking at the signs, that's how I got there.

<div align="center">

Quotation 7.38   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 279)

</div>

This above participant reports that it is relatively easy to locate a resource that they had identified before entering the library, however while they apparently had all the information needed to perform the wayfinding, a different participant in the following quotation was not familiar with the concept of classmarks when they were mentioned by the researcher. This came as a surprise and raises possible questions about the extent to which users do actually understand the division of non-fiction subjects into groups of numbers and their corresponding position in the library, even where signs exist.

> P: How do you know about the number? […] I didn't notice the reference number thing.
>
> R: The classmarks? All the books should be sorted with a number that refers to the type of subject. […]
>
> P: That's interesting.

<div align="center">

Quotation 7.39   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 230)

</div>

What is particularly hard to understand in this case is that elsewhere in the walk-along the participant not only appeared preoccupied with getting a good overview of the library's contents (suggesting a general interest in information finding), but was also apparently familiar with finding books in the university library, which would logically necessitate the use of classmarks.

The task of wayfinding in libraries must naturally make use of different scales. The most exaggerated example of this is conceivably when a user has not made use of the library before (perhaps they are a new student in the city) and must locate a specific resource like a textbook.

The scales subsume the following in order: the urban context leading to the specific building; the exterior leading to the entrance; the atrium leading to the correct floor; the correct stack on that floor; the correct book on the shelf. This pattern applies similarly to other cases, the search for a PC, or a comfortable seat, for example. Consequently, the task of wayfinding in a public library involves moving among highly ordered information, and is therefore learnable as a set of principles (principles such as a familiarity with the Dewey Classification System).

Speaking on a Worcester walk-along, one of the students pointed out that they found The Hive extremely easy to wayfind once they had become familiar with the classmarks system (See Figure 7.29 and Figure 7.30). This would seem to be of most relevance to students, as they tend to be engaged with academic collections more frequently than members of the public, and therefore also of most relevance to The Hive, as this is the only public library is Europe that is also intended to serve students. Here, too, it could be speculated (as above in Section 7.8.5) that the arrangement of all the non-fiction (barring some locked collections available on Level 4, and the Archive services on Level 2) on a single floor allows for an easier mental image of what's available.

> P: It's so easy to just walk round. You don't get lost easily. Once
>   you know, sort of, where it all goes, where the numbers are, it's
>   easy.
>
> R: Yeah, yeah. Do you mean the classmarks?
>
> P: Yeah.

Quotation 7.40   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 289)
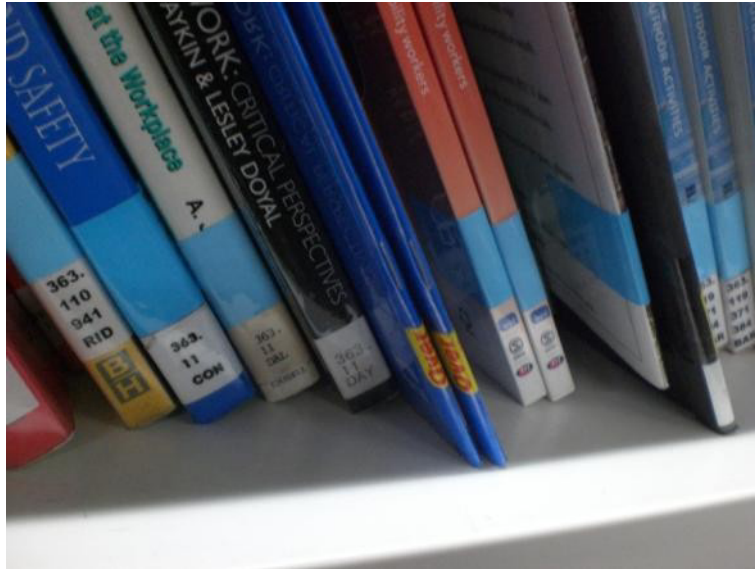
Figure 7.29 Classmarks allowing wayfinding among non-fiction books, The Hive (Student image)

Figure 7.30 The sign explains the grouping of subject areas under classmarks, linking content with physical space in The Hive (Student image)

In Cardiff Central the non-fiction is also arranged on a single floor. However, the difficulty that some participants reported in distinguishing the floors for fiction, non-fiction, and music in Cardiff Central may make forming this clear mental picture problematic. In Liverpool Central, the non-fiction (again, ignoring reference and local history) is located over two floors, with the lower half of the Dewey numbers on the lower floor and the remainder on the upper. In this case, familiarity with the relationship between classmark and physical space would clearly be an advantage.

In the following quotation, it is apparent that the participant's familiarity with Czech Republic libraries has caused a slight disjuncture between their expectations and the reality they find:

> P: What I don't like about this library, and it's where I've found it very different from libraries we have in the Czech Republic, you don't have letters saying, "This section is from A to B"; "This is where authors beginning with C start". You don't have it here, so when you're looking for a book it's a nightmare finding the correct shelf.

Quotation 7.41   STUDENT, LIVERPOOL (TRANSCRIPTS P. 239)

The participant points out, as have several others, that there is not enough information about where things are in the library. This begins to reveal a pattern of confusion among people who are intelligent enough to be critical about what they want but have not necessarily made the investment to engage fully with the signage possibilities and systems used. Generally speaking, the books in public libraries are arranged alphabetically and by genre for fiction (by author) and by classmark for non-fiction, usually separated into progressively more fine-grain groupings of subjects according to the Dewey System or Library of Congress System. The participant clearly has the capacity to understand this, yet is frustrated by the distinction between different treatments of fiction and non-fiction.

In Worcester, one of the participants reported difficulty in understanding the classification system, which sometimes led to their finding it hard to locate particular books. This was, they reported, due to the fact that not everything they needed was to be found in the same section, and hence the same part of The Hive. In this situation, asking a member of library staff was often necessary.

The student participants in Cardiff Central reported a heavy reliance on the signage to find their way about, possibly because the physiognomic and locational information (appearance of shelves and floor, location of major objects on each floor) are somewhat similar, particularly on Floors 2, 3 and 4 (as discussed above).

> R: Do you feel as you are wandering around here that you're

getting any sort of picture of where stuff is?

P: Um, slowly, bit-by-bit, I would say so, 'cause they have all the
        stuff at the side of the shelves [there are signs on each shelving
        unit – See Figure 7.25, above], so you don't have to go to, like,
        one notice board to be like, okay, I want this kind of book, I
        gotta go here, then here, but this one's more or less I'm in the
        right area.

R: So you feel you already known quite well what's on the first
        floor, third floor?

P: Yeah, I would say so.

R: Is it purely the signs you're using to be able to tell?

P: Yeah, actually. I'm, purely using the signs. I don't think there's
        anything else that I would look at.

Quotation 7.42   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 96)

In contrast to this view, however, the following quotations show that the signage is
difficult to interpret in one or two aspects:

R: As we were coming up, did you get a feeling for what's on each
        floor, what's in each section?

        […]

P: To be honest, no… I don't know if it would be better- I'm not
        sure if that has it, like, the "2" thing [whether there is detailed
        information near a main Floor "2" sign], but you know when
        you're, like, in a mall and then you have, like, "Floor Two", and
        it's, oh, this is what's on this floor: that would be helpful. I think
        they might have it there but I'm not sure.

Quotation 7.43   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 102)

The participant demonstrates that they have the suspicion that the information they

need is available somewhere in the library, but that they've "fallen off the map" inasmuch as they have found themselves in a position where they need more information, and not only don't have it to hand, but don't have the means of telling where to find it.

The following quotation deals with the arrangement of the information on a double-sided signage board, featuring a television screen on one side (See Figure 7.31) and detailed wayfinding information on the other (Figure 7.32).
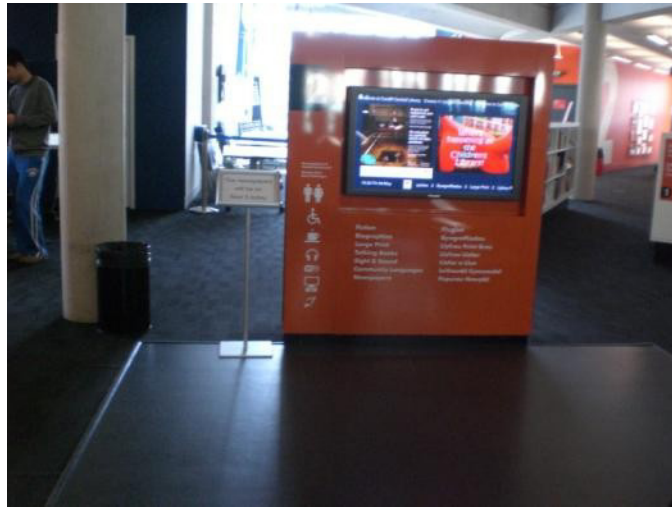
Figure 7.31 Cardiff Central Floor 2 signage and display unit, side facing new visitors at top of escalators; area redesigned during 2015 (student image)

P: Yeah, that's probably not the right side, though. Like, nobody would know, coming up, that it's there.

Quotation 7.44   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 103)

The participant refers to the lettering that informs users what's on each floor, which is on the reverse side of the orange sign at the top of the escalators. These signage boards seem to be a standard unit and a mainstay of the library's wayfinding strategy, and are used elsewhere in the building as well. The participant and researcher discovered another one on a higher floor, which had the face with more detailed information presented to the side of a staircase and the outward face reserved for a television screen that was not displaying at the time.

Figure 7.32 Cardiff Central signage and display unit, side facing footfall (left) and side facing stair balustrade (right) (Researcher images)

Clearly here the strategy has been to prioritise the television screen built into the sign as it is more eye-catching and can be updated more easily. However, during the above walk-along all the screens were temporarily switched off, leading to the information that the participant believed was more helpful being hidden from the main approach angles that a user might take.

Confusion between different information sources is not limited only to cases of dynamic signage use (such as a screen), or is not even necessarily accidental in all cases. The following quotation exemplifies the effect of introducing a disjuncture between heraldic and physiognomic information types. In this case, the information is signage on a door that leads towards The Hive's silent study room, Level 4, and the appearance of the door itself.

P: "Level Four". This kind of just looks like a cleaner's entrance.

Quotation 7.45   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 343)

Figure 7.33 Innocuous door leading to Level Four silent study area, The Hive (Student image, cropped)

This was not the only participant to have difficulty in locating this door (which is shown in Figure 7.33). Indeed, even after the user passes through it, the small concrete staircase one finds continues the promise offered by its initial appearance all the way up to the study room. It is more in the aesthetic tradition of "behind the scenes", and more closely resembles many of the publically inaccessible spaces in The Hive. This is probably deliberate: the study room is intended to be used only by the most dedicated scholars. It is a consequence of the decision to make The Hive both a public and an academic library, and shows one area in which the physiognomic elements of the route have been subverted by the designers in order to put off all but the most determined users.

The use of distinct decoration or appearance from what is used generally, as a technique to suggest the priority of particular groups in particular areas, can also be observed in the children's library in Cardiff Central. This takes a slightly different, albeit related, form from that of the entrance to The Hive's silent study area, but serves the same purpose: to inform general users that an area has been designated for more specific activities. This shows how the lessons learnt in Chapter 6 on the relationships between people and places (socio-spatial information) in libraries can be used to allow a user to find their way about. The example from Cardiff's children's library concerns the use of decoration, as suggested in the following quotation:

R: Does this [the children's library] strike you as being any different at all [from the rest of the library]?

P: Yes, yes, a lot, substantially. This is completely different. You have things hanging down. You have common things like Harry Potter, you have the cobweb [i.e. it's a decorated space].

R: It's a very decorated place.

P: It's very decorated.

R: Does it make you feel any different, when coming into this space?

P: Yes, I get the impression that this is very set apart from the rest of the library, so whereas the rest of the library, the floors weren't really distinct, so you couldn't really tell which is from which, this one, you know you're in a children's place, in a children's library.

R: Is there anything apart from the hanging stuff that lets you know that?

P: Um… well… No, not really.

> Quotation 7.46   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 128)

Figure 7.34 Decorated children's library, Cardiff Central (Student image)

The decorations serve to let the participant know they are in an area for a particular social group, whereas the seating and PC area attached to the front of it at the edge of the entrance void seems more generic. The decorations have clearly been made by young people in the space (under supervision, of course, rather than voluntarily), but there is a key distinction to be made here both between the rest of the library, which is generally undecorated, and between the idea of decorations being put there by library staff on behalf of the users. Crucially, here the space is heavily decorated with the users' own handiwork.

7.9.2   SHELVING

Books have been used as decoration since well before the inception of the public libraries. Architectural Historian James Campbell (2013 p.206) points out in The Library: A World History that 19th Century English country house owners were in the habit of purchasing books "by the yard" to decorate their grand libraries, showing a greater interest in the bindings than the contents.

A mass of books has more than a purely aesthetic value however. The following participant describes how it is important to them to be able to browse, and that this is part of their process of academic working. Clearly, this being the case, the benefit of browsing physically is only possible where a certain physical area has been arranged to correspond with a subject area. In this way movement is a part of the learning process as it enables the participant to discover connections between lines

of interest that weren't immediately apparent.

> P   It's better for me to browse around the whole section of topics
>   and find interesting things.

> R: It's interesting then that it's important that you can't have a
>   computer screen; you have to have a whole shelf.

<div align="center">Quotation 7.47   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 112)</div>

The attempt has been made by certain digital catalogues to replicate the ability to browse on screen, by arranging icons for the books as they would appear on a shelf. It is not clear whether the participant would find a feature of this sort a suitable replacement for physical browsing, or whether the attempt to combine a benefit of physicality with a system whose benefit is the negation of physicality is inherently a contradiction. See also the following quotation.

> P: I may just look around to see if there are any books that pique
>   my interest.

> R: So the action of actually wandering past books is a useful thing
>   to do?

> P: Yeah.

<div align="center">Quotation 7.48   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 124)</div>

Shelving, or arrays of books presented together more generally, can be seen to constitute a hybrid form of wayfinding, in which both modes of wayfinding are supported: to browse a shelf for relevant material is at once directed and discursive. The browser is interested in finding a range of destinations simultaneously. Due to the correlation between subject area and building area, this is a different type of wayfinding than that which guides a user to a particular desk or seat, or allows them to find the entrance on a busy street.

The following quotation discusses the role of shelving height.

> P: Even the shelves are pretty low, most of them, so it's easy to

see above them to the other side.

R: Is that a help?

P: It's not much of a help. I feel it just gives a very open-plan feel, which is good. [It's] just different.

R: Does "different" make you feel more comfortable? Do you have certain expectations of what you're hoping to get out of the place?

P: Just to have a good working environment, to get the books that I need really, easy to navigate, and I think having an open space concept allows that. I think sometimes that when I go to a traditional library… I feel very suffocated and kind of overwhelmed because the books are so close to you. It's very narrow lanes to walk in. Different is good.

Quotation 7.49   Student, Cardiff (Transcripts p. 117)

The role of the shelving as an assistance in wayfinding is not limited to the locational or heraldic information that constitutes a classification system. Here, the ability to see is returned to, both in its practical affordance of maintaining a broad view of the building, and in the feelings it engenders among users. A comparison is made between the model of a typical academic library, in which space pressures and large book stocks oblige the fitment of tall shelves, closely spaced, with that of a modern public library, in which a conscious effort has been made to reduce the density of shelving for the sake of broadening appeal.

The interest lies in the participant's judging of the public library by the standards of an academic library, in which they feel "different is good", not because the reduced stock is more or less useful, but because the sense of light and space free them from feelings of being "suffocated and overwhelmed". The psychological benefit this may bring in an environment where students are often under stress is obvious, although the penalty wrought by less accessible resources is not.

An alternative practical consideration is expressed in Quotation 7.50. The participant notes that the lowest shelf in Cardiff Central requires the user to reach down almost to the floor to access, which is a problem from a body mechanics point of view.

> P: I think these are a bit low, to be honest. I wouldn't want to be kneeling down, and that is what I'd have to do. Do you know what I mean? This is nice to have them at eye level, not too high, obviously.

Quotation 7.50   STUDENT, CARDIFF (TRANSCRIPTS P. 133)

A height in the range of both the hand and eye when standing is seen as preferable, although the problem also applies to academic libraries, where the lowest shelf is generally just above floor level (See Figure 7.35). The above two quotations suggest two opposing considerations that should be balanced when implementing shelving for various purposes, respectively expansive-feeling space set against the storage capacity, and ease of access to the hand and eye, of shelves at chest and shoulder height. The question of storage capacity is therefore important as it impacts both the ability of the user to see through the space (to effectively wayfind in the building, and to feel comfortable), and their ability to access the books (to effectively browse or work comfortably).

Figure 7.35 Low shelving at Cardiff Central permits easy views across the space, as well as browsing, yet also moves many of the books out of easy reach of the hand and eye (Non-student image, cropped)

This finding is leant weight by a student at The Hive:

> P: Personally, sitting next to a big window freaks me out. But I do

see what you mean.

R: Is that a little bit too open for you?

P: Um, personally, I tend to go towards, like, that's why I like the third floor. There's some bits of the computers that are surrounded by books, and there's only a few computers there and they tend to be more deserted, and you can go for a bit more private without having to go to the silent area.

<div align="center">Quotation 7.51   STUDENT, WORCESTER (TRANSCRIPTS P. 323)</div>

Here, the participant asserts that they do not find the open, expansive quality of space touched upon above desirable when studying. They like to feel they are in a more enclosed, private and secluded area to study, yet they also reveal that the private study area provided at The Hive does not suit them. They explain that this is because the silence in the private study area is too intense and lends the space a feeling of scholarly over-seriousness that is offputting.

When discussing the way the library interior challenged participants' preconceptions in Chapter 5, it was found that the children's library at Cardiff Central was appealing in a way that appeared contradictory, some participants referring to the ability to see out, others to the intimacy of the closer, higher contents. It was theorised from this that the combination of both intricate, intimate interior spaces with a careful use of transparency created a feeling of security.

Here, too, when reviewing the conflicting views of participants on the shelving, it may be that the most attractive space is one that can be secure without inducing claustrophobia, and resource-filled without being obstructive. The use of shelving in The Hive to divide space is the source of the participant's comfort in using the computers there: they provide resources close to hand, and they bound the space into a manageable enclosure that permits concentration without a feeling of entrapment, as depicted in Figure 7.36.

Figure 7.36 Shelving enclosing space in The Hive (student image)

7.10 Conclusion

The data reveals two forms of wayfinding: one where participants have a destination pre-identified and one in which they are moving according to what intrigues or attract them. Venturi et al.'s (1972) three "message systems" form a useful way of describing how wayfinding in these two ways is accomplished, although conflicts in their interpretation, where they coexist, were noted on occasion to cause some confusion among the participants. An example of this would be where the appearance of a building element such as a staircase initially suggests access, but on closer inspection is revealed to carry a "No Entry" sign.

Key to the participants' wayfinding processes is the ability to see through the spaces. Construction of sight lines is assisted through the use of atria in each of the three libraries examined. These serve as useful tools both in identifying destinations and in visualising routes to them, however, where large amounts of visual information are simultaneously visible, wayfinding tasks were found to be both enhanced through the sense of an overview and threatened due to a lack of hierarchy.

The large sizes of the three library buildings, relative to those of branch libraries, were commented on both positively and negatively. Building size was found to positively impact wayfinding as with increased floor area the density and height of shelving can be lower. This interpretation was reported in Cardiff Central and found to be shared by the library staff, who value the visual range afforded as it aids their ability to manage the building.

Other participants reported it to be problematic however, creating an environment in which it is hard to identify both destinations and the possible routes to them. Several participants, particularly in Cardiff Central and Liverpool Central reported or demonstrated suggestions of an "information overload" upon initially being confronted with the atria and their multiple staircases, although this state generally passed quickly, allowing them to begin wayfinding.

By contrast, when confronted with a space that did not give clear lines of sight, such as among high shelving units, wayfinding was likened to a process of exploration. This was not limited to searches for particular resources, but for areas of space in which the user felt comfortable. A small number of the Liverpool students observed that the arrangement of modern and Victorian or Edwardian building elements and their corresponding contrasts in atmosphere stimulate a discursive frame of mind. In this, gradual discovery of the building's character and potential is a pleasurable activity that relies on not being able to see the entirety of the interior at once.

In addition to wayfinding by intrigue, participants (particularly students) reported using the library in a more structured way. Interestingly, this resulted, as one participant noted in Worcester, in certain areas of the building becoming very familiar while others remained relatively unfamiliar, even when they lay as little as a floor away from the participant's usual routes. The following characteristics were identified in determining a young person's choice of destination in a library building. Further research would probably increase the number of items:

1. Connection with the outside;
2. Monitorable surroundings;
3. Visual attractiveness of surroundings;
4. Noise qualities or levels;
5. Access to resources;

When discerning between these characteristics there are two broad questions that appear to differentiate participants:

- Is the user alone or with a group?
- Is the user intending to find a second or a third place social environment (i.e. a place for work, or for leisure)?

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Among the participants, plurality seemed to increase tolerance of background noise, or even to make it desirable. Regardless of the intended function of a group's visit (whether work or leisure), verbal communication appeared to be necessary. Equally, the participants who talked about using the library alone tended to desire relative quiet while doing do.

Both students and non-students reported difficulty in properly understanding the signage systems in the three studied libraries. Signage can be said to constitute heraldic information, by Venturi et al.'s (1972) system, yet it is occasionally lost amid the physiognomic and locational information given by the building and its contents. Furthermore, visibility of signage alone is insufficient for successful wayfinding: the content of signs must also be useful.

The shelving in any particular library is felt to be highly important in many wayfinding tasks as it can contain all three types of message system. Additionally it is physically massive enough to contribute to the character of interior spaces, while being possible to reconfigure after occupancy. In this sense, shelving might be considered to inhabit a uniquely flexible position as having both architectural character and the ability to be reconfigured after occupancy.

8 SYNTHESIS

8.1 PURPOSE OF SYNTHESIS

The purpose of this chapter is to review the primary findings drawn from the walk-alongs, interviews, and focus groups, which are presented thematically in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. The research methodology relies on capturing young people's subjective experiences of library buildings, therefore this chapter responds by reflecting the user's journey from preconception to critical engagement that underpins the three major chapters, and reasserting it as a spatial and sequential framing of the results. In doing so, it evokes the walk-alongs taken by participants, from the urban context, through the building, to intimate personal space, a process that is accomplished in every successful interaction with a library building, and confounded in every unsuccessful attempt.

The synthesised chapters are as follows:

- *Chapter 5: The Problem of "Libraryness"*

  This chapter investigated the implications of a library character that is derived from books by examining the ways in which it relates to the preconceptions of young people. From this, it was revealed how they interpreted the exterior and the interior of the building in relation to their own personal experiences of library buildings, and to a generalised cultural sense of the library. The key findings were that preconceptions are derived from a wide variety of sources, that they are not necessarily consistent (i.e. that people disagree with one another about their preconceptions, for example, the extent to which libraries should be for scholarly work), and that the size, transparency and multi-functionality of modern library buildings posed challenges to the participants' sense of "libraryness".

- *Chapter 6: Socio-Spatial Interpretations*

  Chapter 6 introduced social information as a characteristic of public library space, demonstrating among the spaces of the interior that the participant group based their experience of the building on a joint analysis of physical and social stimuli. The chapter found that supervision can be perceived very differently depending on the intentions of the participant, and that territorial behaviour can be observed both to

isolate social young people as well as studying students. In the absence of a compartmentalised library, this is a strategy used by young people to render the interior more legible and usable. Noise transfer is an important dimension in achieving this.

- *Chapter 7: Wayfinding the Library*

  The final of the three major chapters consolidated the first two by investigating how the information gained through socio-spatial experience was used in wayfinding, a process that in the case of libraries means not only moving through areas of a building, but moving through areas of ordered knowledge too, as presented by the classification of books.

  It demonstrated that young people wayfind both according to identified needs and to a sense of intrigue. Wayfinding was found to reflect the "message systems" identified by Venturi et al. in *Learning from Las Vegas*, and to use aural information, which imparts information about socio-spatial properties, as outlined above.

The common spatial encounters of the library, and their implications, are now discussed in sequence in relation to the findings from Chapter 5, 6, and 7.

8.2   BEFORE REACHING THE LIBRARY

Participants frequently related their expectations of the case study libraries to their knowledge of branch libraries. The non-students tended to evoke the other branch libraries in the city's library system, whereas the students tended to talk about libraries that existed in other cities, or that they had known as children. In Cardiff, this usage of a branch library-derived expectation against which to measure the central library consisted generally of concepts such as "one floor full of books", "old", and "boring" (See Chapter 5, 4.1), but the association with books was drawn from both student and non-student participants. It is therefore likely that, where public library experience does not cause young people to actively recalibrate their assumptions of library function and structure, the answer to the question "What is a library?" will be the traditional one, and given automatically, i.e. libraries are places for books.

In Chapter 5 (Section 5.1 and 5.2) and Chapter 6 (Section 5), disagreement was observed in the views of students about the degree to which public library buildings should prioritise

"serious" scholarly work, or whether instead they should aim to be fully accessible. Favour for a scholarly environment was expressed by a student who made use of the central library to work, rather than using their own academic library, which they felt to be too noisy and uncontrolled. This may be evidence of a weighting effect caused by the student-rich populations that increasingly surround many central public libraries, including all three of the case studied libraries: Cardiff, Liverpool, and Worcester.

Findings highlighted the link between the role of the library and the role of the education system, albeit in the inverse by a Cardiff non-student, and implied by several of the non-student members. One non-student's response exemplified their view of the library as part of the broader education system (in their words, "libraries, schools and stuff like that"), from which they feel alienated (Chapter 5, Section 6.3). This suggests that even for those not actively pursuing their education, the library can be assumed to be a place for those who are, and made less approachable as a result in certain situations. Whether it is appropriate for public libraries to be presumed scholarly in nature, and so less inviting to the scholastically disengaged, is a topic for library policy makers.

Potentially reinforcing this scholarly connection is the replacement, or displacement, of public library use experiences in early childhood by those that occur at the school library. This point, established in Chapter 5, Sections 4.3 and 6.3, supports a view of young people becoming alienated from both the library and school in the same span of years, yet also how school can be a platform for developing positive associations with libraries that persist beyond childhood.

8.3   EXTERIOR OF THE LIBRARY

The data demonstrates that the exterior of the building has less impact than was expected in challenging the preconceptions that the participants carried. Most participant experiences were derived from branch libraries built during the twentieth century, characterised for the most part by modesty in scale and decoration (See Chapter 5, Section 4.1). This may be the reason that participants tended to consider the interior of the building to have the greater effect in challenging their expectations.

In the case of Liverpool Central, the disjuncture between a 19th century façade and 21st century atrium caused the greatest sense of surprise to participants (Chapter 5, Section 6.1). This surprise in itself has the potential to become a rhetorical device whereby the building draws attention to its juxtaposition of styles, in doing so encouraging the visitor to

think actively about the typological changes that have occurred over time. This playfulness is further encouraged by the façade itself as it contains relatively little glazing, meaning that what glazing there is offers an intriguing glimpse of the interior, while saving the full impression only for those who go inside.

By comparison, the façade of Cardiff Central was felt by one participant to be too revealing of the interior; yet other participants commented that the exterior of the building gives away little about its identity, apart from the sign bearing its name (Chapter 5, Section 6.1). The difference between these views is evidence of the effect that distance has on appearance: the participant felt the façade was too revealing when walking by right outside, looking through; the comments about the unreadable nature of the building concerned the whole composition, from a distance, such as when approaching down The Hayes. (See Section 3.6 for maps of the urban context surrounding each library.)

It can be asserted, then, that the multifarious exteriors public libraries have presented throughout history deny any one new scheme the potential of stating its function architecturally, without recourse to signage. The example of Liverpool Central, which hides its true identity behind a Victorian façade, suggests that it is not the character of a library that is alluded to either in modern buildings or otherwise, but the character more generally of a public building. It is simply that, whereas the Victorian neo-classical public buildings surrounding Liverpool Central suggest grandeur and elevation, the public buildings to which Cardiff Central (for example) responds are models of transparency and service.

8.4 ENTRANCE OF THE LIBRARY

Atria are popular devices in many modern library schemes. When participants are in an exploratory frame of mind, atria can help by revealing multiple destinations, routes, and sources of information at once. In such cases, wayfinding is both assisted by the volume of information on offer, yet also threatened due to a possible lack of hierarchy (See Chapter 7, Section 5). Therefore the visitor must be able to prioritise from the information on hand, so the signage and more general message systems of the library must be designed carefully in order to allow them to make sense of diverse stimuli at a range of distances.

Difficulties in making full use of signage systems were reported in all three libraries by students or non-students (Chapter 7, Section 4). Visible signage is not sufficient in itself to guarantee wayfinding success (Chapter 7, Section 9.1): the content of signs must also be both descriptive and clearly linked to the space it represents. This highlights a difficulty,

which is that to make signs more visible they must be simplified and enlarged, yet to do so can reduce the content of individual signs and imbalance the system by over-prioritising certain elements.

Lack of hierarchy, combined with a large quantity of stimuli at once, were found to have the potential for an "information overload" situation, in which the participant is unable to prioritise information and finds their wayfinding processes ineffective for a period of time (Chapter 7, Section 5). This was connected particularly with the presence of multiple flights of stairs ascending overhead, as are found in Cardiff and Liverpool Central. These are necessary in circulating multi-story buildings, but can, in tandem with large, dramatic volumes of space, lighting, and content, cause the visitor temporary confusion.

The impression given by these spaces was noted to vary widely from one participant to another. Some characterised Cardiff Central's atrium, for example, as complex and confusing, others as a safe, readable refuge (Chapter 7, Section 5). Similarly, the impression it gave varied according to the activity level at the time of visiting. While some students felt Cardiff Central seemed far more relaxed and sociable than their academic library, when visiting at a particularly quiet time, another reported that it felt oppressive in comparison to the same academic library (Chapter 5, Section 4.2).

8.5　Interior of the Library

The distinction of an "old style" stereotype of library interior is characterised by some participants as related to the presence of certain materials (e.g. dark wood and brass) and the greater height of shelving stacks; to others it has to do with books and silence (Chapter 5, Section 5.2). Constant in participants' conceptions is the storage of books, which to some non-students made the library functionally offputting (e.g. Chapter 6, Section 5), while to the students – who generally require books, reducing the possibility of large amounts of them being *functionally* offputting – it is the aesthetic qualities of book storage that hold particular appeal (Chapter 5, Section 5.1).

Shelving was found to have further importance than in its functional or aesthetic capacities only, however; the lines of sight that particular shelving arrangements either permit or limit through a library interior were of equal, if not greater emphasis. For example, some participants reported that dense, tall shelving can make space induce claustrophobia, yet tall shelves are also able to enclose secluded areas of an interior to create working space (Chapter 5, Section 6.2; Chapter 7, Section 9.2).

The opinion was reported by a senior staff member at Cardiff Central whereby relatively low units allow whole floors to be monitored from fixed positions, while also allowing users to more easily navigate the space. The assessment of the interior as "like a labyrinth" by one non-student may appear to undermine this strategy, but the interpretation of the building at different scales must be treated sensitively: whereas the shelving-height strategy for permitting easy navigation is designed to work on each floor individually, the above comment refers to the interior taken as a whole. While each floor is indeed quite navigable, the ordering of all floors together is less easily read by some participants. A countering opinion is presented by another of the Cardiff non-students, who refers to the library as "a place where you know where things are", and draws a therapeutic link between their familiarity with the ordering of the interior and their sense of wellbeing (Chapter 7, Section 5).

The main stock shelving units in Liverpool Central are taller than in Cardiff Central. Although this does not permit the same "overview" quality on each floor, certain participants in Liverpool referred to an exploratory frame of mind that suits moving through a space lacking clear lines of sight. In this sense, the gradual discovery of spaces and contents is a pleasurable activity, akin to "browsing" the building. This in effect relies on obstructed views and circuitous paths, according to one participant in Liverpool, however it is also reliant on the user being in the frame of mind in advance where they wish to engage progressively with the building (Chapter 7, Section 5). This may be why tall, dense book stocks in academic libraries seemed to be viewed in a less positive light than those in Liverpool Central; in the former, users are engaged in a directed wayfinding task for resources they need to study, whereas in the public library the possibilities for leisurely engagement are greater.

8.6 AREAS WITHIN THE LIBRARY

The data demonstrated that use of noise, both within library areas and between them, tells young people something of the people using those spaces, and the type of use to which they are being put, thereby contributing to their ability to wayfind (Chapter 7, Section 8.4).

Groups can seek to assert control over a particular area of the library, a phenomenon that is sometimes observed among young people, particularly teenagers. One non-student participant demonstrated that the associations they use to characterise their group ("chavved out", here meaning noisy and boisterous) are contrary to those they use to

characterise the library, meaning that were the friend group to use the library together, they would be placed at odds with the staff. This is as much a factor of the space design as it is the staffing principles: in space that would put the participant into contact with staff or other members of the public, the participant feels they would be uncomfortable and fail to fit in, and therefore require their group to allow them to be themselves. However, when offered a hypothetical semi-external space at the top of the building, they respond quite differently, asserting that they would be able to use that alone (i.e. unassisted by their group). This is because the qualities of that hypothetical area would diminish the perceived risk of being placed at odds with other users of the library. This line of thought is supported by the increasing presence of youth-specific "teen spaces" spaces in modern libraries (Chapter 6, Section 4.4).

Students reported similar tendencies to control areas of the library interior, although less to permit group interaction as to establish conditions for working. This attitude was noted most strongly in The Hive, which is different from other public libraries as it is also an academic library. This means that the students have more of a right to dictate conditions in certain parts of the building than they otherwise might. To prepare for this, The Hive was designed with a self-contained area on the fourth floor that separates "serious" scholars entirely from the noise of local young people, who gather on the basement floor to socialise. In this sense, the areas within The Hive are the widest-ranging in terms of the conditions they facilitate (Chapter 6, Section 5).

Conditions within library areas are commonly associated with some form of authority. In the case of a participant in Liverpool, the authority is held to be the library staff, who are associated with the help desk. Therefore, when faced with a need for assistance, the participant does not look for a librarian, but rather looks for the help desk as the two are conflated. Being immovable, the help desk can be found repeatedly without difficulty (Chapter 6, Section 7). Similarly, in The Hive, the presence of partitions near the PC area serves to inform a participant that printers can be found there; rather than looking for printers thereafter, they look for the partitions (Chapter 7, Section 7).

At The Hive, the fourth floor silent study room is accessed via a small, almost-unmarked door, then a plain concrete stairwell that is quite unlike any of the public circulation in the rest of the building. This informs unfamiliar users who wander into the area that it operates under different conditions from the rest of the building, which helps maintain the silence in

the space (Chapter 7, Section 9.1). The example of the building architecture being used to imply a certain authority and thus maintain conditions is also apparent in the Picton Reading Room at Liverpool Central: although the space is usually unstaffed, it is also invariably silent, though the adjoining atrium of the new build is constantly noisy and active (Chapter 6, Section 7).

8.7 PERSONAL SPACE

The question of appropriate design for working conditions was presented by students in Cardiff as a dichotomy of "new" verses "old", which can be said to correspond to Black, Pepper and Bagshaw's false dichotomy of "monument and machine". Here, the question of study space is presented as a balance between the assumed qualities of an "old style" library (characterised by quiet, dark, heavy architecture, and resources arranged more for display than access), and those of "new style" architecture that distances itself from that "grand tradition" and instead focuses on access and utility (Chapter 6, Section 3.4).

Five characteristics of desirable destinations emerged, applicable similarly to both individuals and groups (Chapter 7, Section 8):

1. Connection with the outside, as a view out and as a source of natural light
2. Monitorable surroundings that allow young people to feel free from encroachment
3. Visual attractiveness of surroundings
4. Particular noise qualities or levels
5. Access to resources, books, PCs, desk space etc.

Noise qualities are not included as part of the attractiveness of the surroundings because they have their own significance, which is that they impart information about how the space and its neighbours are being used, and by whom. These five points would be weighted differently by each user in any given situation, and they are not presented in any particular order. They are concordant with the findings of Lisa M. Given (2007 p.180), a Canadian library and information sciences academic, who describes "'Comfortable' spaces, filled with 'bright, natural light'… Soft chairs, spacious tables, ergonomic workstations, clean surfaces, and aesthetic details (e.g. paintings)…" It is likely that further work could identify more points or refine those that are stated.

The children's library at Cardiff Central provoked notably positive responses from the student participants. Their views sometimes appeared contradictory, with some referring

to the comforting intimacy afforded by closer, taller shelving and walls, and others citing the ability to see out and down at the surroundings. In synthesising these views, the explanation emerges that the attractiveness of the space is the result of a combination of intricate, intimate spaces with carefully deployed transparency that creates a feeling of security (Chapter 5, Section 6.2). Furthermore, in relating this to comments made by participants at The Hive, it may be that the most attractive space offers security without claustrophobia, and plentiful amenities without obstruction (Chapter 7, Section 9.2). In The Hive, the use of tall shelving units, as well as corners in walls, and windows onto attractive surroundings, provide a good balance of seclusion, prospect, and convenience.

8.8 Journey in Summary

The sense of a journey has been conveyed in this Synthesis, evolving the walk-alongs that were the backbone of the data collection process, and also contextualising the main findings that are presented in the Conclusion chapter. The main findings that relate to each of the three research objectives are presented in Section 9.2, summarised in Section 9.2.4, and reflect the journey from preconception, to social dynamics, to spatial preferences, which are prefaced above in this chapter. In doing this, they refer back to the underlying structural principle of the project, which is the sense of a journey that library architecture must mediate and facilitate in order to be considered successful.

This chapter has drawn together a number of the key findings and presented them in a spatially sequential form to reflect the intentions of the thesis. Chapter 9 will now conclude by specifically addressing the key objectives stated at the outset in order to demonstrate the way the findings answer the research questions. Chapter 9 also takes a reflective approach, commenting on the areas in which there were unexploited opportunities or alternatives, and suggesting further avenues that would complement the work.

9 Conclusions

The purpose of this concluding chapter is to relate the findings of the thesis to the aims, objectives and research questions stated in the Introduction. This shows how well the project has achieved its task, the extent of its original knowledge contribution, and the opportunities that are apparent in retrospect.

9.1 Knowledge Contribution with Respect to Aim

9.1.1 Overarching Aim of Thesis

The research set out to clarify how modern public library architecture allows young people to make the journey from city to service interaction, from preconception to participation.

It has demonstrated through first hand evidence that the architecture of a modern central public library contains many paths of complex interaction that can affect how young people are able to access the service. It reflects a physical and mental journey: the concept of a "visit to the library" is embedded within culture, and requires the young person to identify a need, overcome negative preconceptions, locate, and socio-spatially understand the interior.

9.2 Response to Objectives and Research Questions through Primary Findings

This section presents the findings that have been produced through the research process in terms of the research questions stated at the outset. They are grouped thematically, reflecting the three objectives that were addressed in the three major thematic chapters, and provide evidence of the new knowledge generated through rigorous original research.

9.2.1 Objective 1

To test young people's preconceptions of public library value and form

- **Sources of public library architecture expectation reported by young people**

   Young people were found to show a range of sources from which they get their particular ideas about what and who a library is for, what it looks like,

how it's arranged, and the uses it can be put to. Initially, a broad division can be drawn between cultural sources, and experienced or remembered sources. The former of these would be accounts of libraries in popular media such as news, film, television, or books.

The latter group is derived from library buildings that the young people have directly experienced, and these can vary greatly, leaving them with disparate expectations when approaching new library architecture. Some young people may report positive experiences in school libraries that lead them to make accordingly positive assumptions. Others may refer to the relative lack of stimulation that a previously known branch library provided, or the conditions in a public library they were taken to by their parents.

The use of remembered library places is important because rapid changes in library architecture have occurred over the last fifteen years, while memories remain relatively persistent, particularly when they are also reinforced by cultural stereotypes.

- **The effect of the three modern case studies on the preconceptions of the participants**

  Liverpool Central is unique among the three case study libraries in that it plays on both old and new elements: the façade, most obviously, is Victorian whereas much of the interior dates from 2013. The Cardiff and Worcester libraries differ from each other and from Liverpool, and could not be mistaken for anything other than modern buildings. Cardiff's façade is largely transparent, and even The Hive, which is extensively clad in metal panels, features sizeable areas of glazing particularly around its entrance. This is a departure from the neo-gothic or neo-classical types that feature strongly in young people's stereotypes.

  The library interiors also challenged preconceptions drawn from more recent branch library experience. If the increased use of transparency is seen as a departure from early public libraries, the large size of the three case study buildings departs from ubiquitous mid- and late-twentieth century branch library designs. This was a source of surprise for some

participants. Similarly, the open-plan quality of floor layouts allows long view distances that contrast with the stereotypical image of being surrounded by walls of books.

Inasmuch as there exists an assumption that at some unspecified point in the future there will be no more print books, the fact that all three libraries are conspicuously book-filled could be taken as stereotypical. Although it was expressed, the commonality of this assumption is unclear however, so the strength of the conclusion is correspondingly reduced.

There is evidence to suggest that the presence of gaming facilities is not universally expected by young people. The Hive and Liverpool Central both feature gaming facilities, and so challenged the preconceptions of several participants.

- **The argument mounted by the three case study libraries about the value of the modern public library service**

  There is some suggestion from discussion of the restored spaces in Liverpool Central that the presence there of such "stereotypical" design is in itself surprising, and therefore that there is some expectation in visiting a modern central library that it will belong to a "new chapter" of public library architecture. This reflects a general understanding that the purpose of the library service is greater than the storage and lending of books, and now focuses more on customer service than it does on facilitating scholarship. This view, however, was not a consensus. Among the non-students it was particularly common to view the service as having an essentially scholarly or bookish purpose, one from which they sometimes felt alienated.

9.2.2 OBJECTIVE 2

To determine how the library building responds to the need to be public, to establish how social structure and social relationships are manifested in library space use, and to assess how the interrelationships of multiple social groups help or hinder it from functioning as intended

- **The liberty the participants perceive in their use of the space**

  Liberty to behave freely depends on the perceived match between the intentions of the user and the "rules" of the space, which are reflected in physical conditions and indicative of the intentions of the dominant agency. In certain cases, the dominant agency can be the library staff. This was noted particularly among the non-students, who sometimes felt that their appearance and behaviour would be at odds with the intentions of the staff, a discrepancy that frequently related to noise levels.

  The Hive serves as a useful example of this principle. Some undergraduate students felt reduced freedom to use The Hive's silent study room because the silence was too strictly maintained, an attribute that reflects the perceived desires of its users to focus their full attention on scholarly work. Equally, the shared study level was sometimes seen as too noisy and crowded for student work on account of it being appropriated by local non-student young people from the town. The arrangement of these two spaces at the top and bottom of The Hive respectively sets up a familiar hierarchy in large library design, which is that noise level decreases with height, corresponding to a progressively greater focus on "serious" work.

  The undergraduates in the study typically preferred the middle ground of The Hive's spaces, which occasionally placed them in tension with members of the public who also make use of those floors, particularly for the PCs.

- **"Appropriate" use of a library for studying or socialising; arrangement of spaces to permit either or both; causes of a space being used in a particular way**

  As noise in a space is identifiably an indicator of the way in which it is being used, and hence of the way in which the people in it predominantly wish it to be used, the presence of atria that transfer sound between spaces is important. In The Hive, as shown above, the most silent work is isolated from the atrium physically (it is a separate room) and designated for those people who are engaged in the most scholarly pursuit. It holds true however in both Cardiff and Liverpool too that the atria permeate the majority of the space with a hum of public activity.

In Liverpool, the Picton Reading Room is largely self-contained. Its design encourages quiet from those using it, and in turn infects those passing through with the urge to be quiet too, so as to avoid identifying themselves as subversive. This effect is strong enough for the room to serve as a refuge for students who find their university department's library too noisy. Cardiff features no comparable space either to the Picton or to The Hive's silent study level, although, as has been shown in the response to the first question, this does not preclude its use for scholarly work.

- **Representation of the library service by the building**

  The staff represent the authority in the building at the most general level, and they are seen as representing the goals of the service, although individual spaces can fall under the immediate influence of the users in them.

  The main service desk was found to have value in identifying members of staff in Liverpool Central because it is visually distinctive and fixed in position. The assumption was made by some participants that they should look for the service desk, rather than look for the staff who represent the service, if they required assistance. Similarly, in Cardiff Central, low shelving and a repeating template of service points on each main floor was intended to assist users in finding their way to members of staff.

9.2.3 OBJECTIVE 3

To understand how the young library visitor converts the information they receive from the building and its occupants into action, in order to wayfind in the interior

- **Types of wayfinding used by the participants inside the library**

  Directed, or by intrigue (or a combination). In the first, the user has a destination in mind (perhaps a book or a favourite workspace), and they use information available to them to construct a path to it. In the second, a user does not have a clear destination. Rather, they move according to what interests them in a short-term or moment-by-moment basis. When entering the library, they might not have any clear sense of where they want to go, choosing to remain uncommitted until they are faced with the

choice. Directed wayfinding is more typical of library use as a "second place" (i.e. for work or study), and wayfinding by intrigue when using the library as a "third place" (i.e. as an informal social realm).

- **Sources of information that guide participants' wayfinding**

  Visually, Venturi's message systems were found applicable. These are *heraldic* (referring to signage), *physiognomic* (relating to the appearance of elements), and *locational* (referring to the relative positions of objects, arrangements, and spaces).

  Heraldic information could refer to the word "Library" on the façade, the sign inside the door saying "Café", or the sticker on a book sign bearing a classmark.

  Physiognomic information refers to appearance. A door is a recognisable self-contained object, useful to the user because its appearance suggests it can be used to access an adjoining space.

  Locational information is particularly useful to understand zoning. Higher areas are generally (not always) quieter. Private areas for staff will tend to be grouped. Printers are usually near PCs.

  The nature of a library as an arrangement of classified resources in a specific physical arrangement means that finding a book is a process of "homing in", using various scales of information: first the library itself, then the right floor, the correct stack, the particular shelf on the stack, and finally the exact book. This particular example constitutes a directed form of wayfinding, and would make use of all three categories of message system.

  Additionally, noise is useful as it informs users about the activities in various areas of the library around them. If the user wishes to study, they may head for a quieter area. If they are trying to find the café, the sound of clinking knives on plates can help them wayfind to it just as effectively as a sign saying "Café" (heraldic), the principle that a café should be near the main

entrance (locational), or the fact that most people recognise a café when they see one (physiognomic)[81].

- **Destinations sought by the participants**

  There is a general preference among young people for spaces where they can control the socio-spatial conditions. This means that non-students who come in together to socialise may want a relatively enclosed space where they can make noise without disturbing other users. This is the logic that underpins "teen spaces", such as the "sound box" found in Liverpool Central or the shared study level of The Hive. Students typically wish to study, either individually or in groups. In their case, space where they can be near their resources and relatively free from disturbance is favoured.

  In addition, the option of a view out (for visual comfort and natural light), and the ability to remain unobserved by other users of the library while able to see out over a large area was found to be desirable. The reason for this latter point is felt to be that this gives users the feeling of freedom from being impinged upon by other users, which allows them to take their attention more fully off the surroundings.

- **Ways in which sources of information can conflict or be unclear**

  Venturi's message systems become particularly useful in showing how various information sources can contradict and cause confusion, and how this effect can vary with visual range, and hence movement through the space. The example of a spiral staircase adorned with a "No entry" sign makes this point. From a greater distance, only the staircase is visible. In both appearance and location it suggests that it can be used for circulation. Upon closer inspection, however, the sign becomes visible, leading the user to perform part of their wayfinding task under one impression, before being forced to modify their strategy.

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[81] In the case of a coffee shop, smell may also have a role to play, although this seems to be a fairly one-off possibility. In all cases in the study, the café or coffee shop was easy enough to find that olfactory information was never brought into play.

9.2.4 *SUMMARY*

With respect to Objective 1, the research has presented a view of a "problem of 'libraryness'", which emphasizes an important aspect of library architecture that has received little attention, namely, the presence of a potentially growing challenge in simultaneously asserting the value and need for built structures that have longevity and consistency with one another, yet also are adapting to rapid change in information technology fields, which, by the nature of libraries as information-handling centres, must be treated by architects in more than a cursory way, just as the changes from closed to open access brought fundamental changes to library architecture a century ago.

With respect to Objective 2, the capacity for particular spatial qualities to support social behaviour that is essentially self-policing has emerged. This is evidenced, in the case of the three case studies used for this research, on page 153, in which the Picton Reading Room was shown to have a quietening effect on participants as well as those already using the space, despite it being unstaffed, in contrast to an academic library referred to by one participant, which was noisy despite being staffed, suggesting the capacity space design has in setting up certain conditions within a library that could help the staff if capitalised upon. Similarly, the section about The Hive's Level Four study room, and the link it establishes between architecture and occupant behaviour, is presented on page 247.

With respect to Objective 3, five attributes of desirable space were identified through conversation with participants. These have obvious implications for library design as they deal with architectural parameters such as noise, light, view etc., however, it is not clear in precisely what situations these attributes maybe become more or less dominant relative to one another. The question of personal preference is likely to depend on the makeup of a participant's social group on any given day, the weather outside, their purpose in visiting the library, and the past experiences they have already had in the building.

9.3 VALIDATION OF FINDINGS

Prior to addressing specific details of the research process and outcomes, it is necessary to take a wide view in reflection. To do this, the research will now be evaluated for consistency with its paradigm. Interpretivism, in the words of sociologist Malcolm Williams (2000 p.210), refers to "those strategies… which interpret the meanings and actions of actors according to their own subjective frame of reference."

Psychologist Maureen Angen (2000 p.378) has highlighted the importance in interpretivist research of establishing validity in findings. This, she stresses, should be seen as an ongoing process of finding *validation*, rather than attaining a state at which results become *validated*, because it "more aptly expresses the process of intersubjective agreement" (Angen 2000 p.392; Mishler 1990 p.419) inherent in the process. In reviewing assumptions in literature of what constitutes good practice, she provides some suggestions of ways in which interpretive inquiries can be evaluated, which will now briefly be used as a framework for critiquing this thesis.

9.3.1 ETHICAL VALIDATION

Firstly, the research can be examined for what Angen refers to as "ethical validation" because "interpretive human science inquiry… [is] a moral issue, with its aim of more fully understanding the meanings involved in our everyday existence" (2000 p.388). In this regard, feminist, social scientist, and educationalist Patti Lather (2003 p.685) has identified the need for methodology to be aware of the shaping of inquiry by power. In this research, the use of the walk-along interview was an attempt to assess the views of young people in a way that placed participant and researcher on an even footing, allowing movement and conversation topics to be guided by either party in the moment. This met with varying levels of success; in the case of the students who were interviewed, the socio-cultural relationship with the researcher was naturally closer than was the case with the non-students, who attended an inner city youth group in Cardiff.

In the latter cases, some caution was encountered from virtually all members. Initial attempts to conduct walk-alongs without any financial incentive failed. To gain access, it was first necessary to travel to an academic at another university to secure a recommendation for the leader of the youth group, who then became an ally in the research. Sufficient data could not be collected immediately, and more than six

months was eventually required. The youth group members were found to be easily able to identify an outsider, even one relatively close in age, so it was encouraging that walking together with each young person was able to reveal much in the way of personally important and anecdotal information relating to Cardiff's libraries.

Cleo Cherryholms (1988 p.421), emeritus professor of teacher education and political science at the University of Michigan State, has asserted that divisions cannot be made between social research and social practice, which is of relevance due to this thesis's use of social research principles to study library architecture. As Angen (2000 p.388) states, "claims to valid interpretations are inextricable from issues of usefulness".

Usefulness can, in a certain highly important sense, only be determined by acceptance: the researcher does not necessarily have the authority to say whether their research is useful, and hence ethically valid (Madison 1988 p.30) (and in the sense of generating knowledge, so too is there an onus to open up new "horizons of meaning" (Madison 1988 p.15)). Therefore, it can only be acknowledged that this research was initiated and has been conducted in the hope that it will be of use in a way that is consonant with the researcher's values. It arose from an assumption that deeply rooted shifts in the role of public libraries would be accompanied by corresponding tectonic changes, and understanding these would be crucial in reasserting physicality in an age when emphasis appeared to be moving towards the digital and distributed.

At the beginning of the project, the usefulness of outputs was intended to benefit male young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, they being relatively likely to disengage from formal education, and literacy more generally, and to develop territorial behaviour, potentially in the service of an alternative, educationally-disengaged personal narrative. In practice, this was not found to be possible, both due to access reasons, and through reflexively posing the question "Why not also female participants?" No satisfactory answer could be found. Participation was subsequently extended further to include students, as failures over a period of months to secure the assistance of youth groups in cities other than Cardiff resulted in a perceived risk to the schedule of the project.

Unexpectedly, the inclusion of students in the participant cohort was met with the most immediate interest from outside the Welsh School of Architecture, which highlights the difference between the researcher's own initial assumptions of usefulness, and those defined by the wider community. This was felt to be important, reflecting references made by Lather (2003 p.685), and ethnographer John Van Maanen (2011 p.53), to the "demands of an academic career": "blue-sky" projects, in which the researcher is essentially permitted to act according to their own definitions of usefulness, are rare in academic work.

Although this is not a sociology thesis, a key element of the initial assumption of usefulness remains untested. This research is predicated on the hope that it will serve not merely a design application, but by reflecting a wider interest in promoting better library design, will align itself on principle with the aims of the public library service: promoting literacy, information access, self-empowerment. Any success in this regard could however only be attributed through reinterpretation by other people.

9.3.2 *Substantive Validation*

The interpretive role of the researcher must also be satisfactorily accounted for (Walsham 2006 p.326). A key aspect of the majority of the primary data collection in this thesis was the pairing of participant and researcher during walk-along interviews. This did not merely entail the researcher being on hand to explain the purpose of the activity and provide the participant with the camera and audio recorder, but to be an active agent in the process, which was typically discursive (as opposed to a one-sided set of questions and answers; in a small number of walk-alongs participant shyness had initially to be overcome).

As a result, though the primary data is presented as textual transcription accompanied by photographs, the means by which the participants' words were generated were necessarily participative. This is because the conversations featured communication in many more dimensions than vocal (the medium of the recorded data, from which the transcribing, coding, thematic grouping, and hence chapter structures were derived), subsuming also subtle changes in facial expression, inclinations of the head and body, direction of the gaze, etc. These elements ensured that the actual conversations were more complex than could possibly be recorded in

situ. Although it was felt by the researcher that a retrospective noting-down of these non-verbal subtleties would have little analytical use, they did ensure that the verbal information ultimately gathered was a product of two people interacting.

The intersubjective nature of the data presented entails a need for substantiation as to the extent of the researcher's influence in the written arguments. To this end, the addition of the "Transcripts" volume to the thesis is intended to allow any quotation to be seen in the context in which it was made, so that the extent of any reconstitution can be gauged. It is a shortcoming of the research that, due to the nature of the PhD process, the coding and analysis of data were conducted by one person. While the framework of the data collection was designed to provide a level of thematic parity to each conversation, the inevitability of multiple interpretive viewpoints means that alternative analyses could not be generated.

Anthropologist Roger Sanjek (1990 pp.395–396) argues (in the case of ethnographic research) that "theoretical candor" entails transparency on the choices that have been made *following* exposure to the field. It is therefore necessary to briefly further explain the effect of shifting focus from disadvantaged young males to young people generally (retaining the original 16-25 age group).

The reasons for the change were twofold, and both reflect the naivety with which the researcher initially approached the research design: firstly obtaining sufficient data from a very socio-culturally different participant group was found to be unrealistic given the constraints of the project and the experience of the researcher; secondly, the reasons initially set out in the research design for selecting only male participants, and for defining them as "disadvantaged", were found to be untenable. In response, the participant base was broadened, which allowed a more pluralistic discussion to be held in what was found to be a highly multi-dimensional field of enquiry.

Evidence of the shortcomings and dead-ends encountered in the data collection process are provided in more detail at the end of Chapter 4.

9.4   GENERALISATION OF FINDINGS

The generalisation of qualitative research findings is subject to two main criticisms: firstly, that they are generally derived from a small number of cases; secondly, that when a larger

number of participants have been involved, their selection is only rarely in accordance with statistical sampling practices (Gobo 2008 p.193). In the context of this thesis, generalisation would refer to the assumption that what was found to be applicable in one, two, or all three of the case studies could also reasonably be expected, wholly or partially, with young people in another modern central UK public library.

Educationalists Guba and Lincoln (1982 p.238) posit generalisation as impossible since "phenomena are neither time- nor context-free". Williams (2000 p.215) rejects this limitation by defining what he refers to as "moderatum generalisations", whereby aspects of a situation "can be seen as instances of a broader recognisable set of features".

Following this, in considering geographic variations between what is sampled and the situations to which corresponding findings can and cannot be generalised, it emerges that the findings generated from the student cohort are more generalisable as regards location (i.e. to libraries that were not case studied) than those from the non-students. The reason for this is that the geographic distribution of members of the student group was much higher than that of the non-students. Almost all the non-students were from South Wales, the majority from Cardiff itself, whereas, due to the nature of student life, the majority of the students were studying (and hence were interviewed) in cities remote from the places of their upbringing.

Williams (2000 pp.221–222) concludes that in interpretivist research, generalisation is possible and indeed desirable in a "moderatum" sense, but that such cases can only be moderate. To go further requires openness to other methodologies. As this research is intended to function as a standalone contribution, the representative value added by alternative research strategies cannot be assumed, and therefore it must be acknowledged that generalisation of the findings presented here must be moderate only.

9.5 FUTURE RESEARCH POTENTIAL

A promising direction is towards academic library design. This was not expected at the outset, when the intent was to study the accessibility of public library architecture to disadvantaged young males (framed through masculine identity, literacy, territoriality etc.). The emergence of "studentification" as an effective and contemporary property of many central library catchment areas (and its relationship to popular scholarship) resulted in the experience of academic libraries being used comparatively with the case studies. It would be logical to invert this relationship, or even to move it wholly into the realm of students'

interpretation of their academic library spaces. This applies both to the parties for whom the findings may prove interesting, and to the subject matter of potential follow-up work.

The implications of past experience of library buildings also emerged as a salient feature, because it carries the implication that modern schemes that present themselves as a new take, or a reimagining, or rejection of "libraryness" tropes, are never fully detached from the cultural context with which people are familiar; such schemes will always to a certain extent be judged against the totality of a person's understanding of "libraryness".

The potential of vegetation and visual or physical connection with the outside, in combination with a certain level of seclusion from other library spaces, to contribute to the functioning and acceptance of "teen spaces" would be of interest. Furthermore, the general question of appropriateness of façade transparency, with respect to looking in from outside, was raised. The findings subtly suggest a special degree of attraction on the part of young people with regards to externally-connected spaces that are otherwise secluded: space in which to hide and look out from. There is potential for work here to contribute to the literature on successful provision for young people and teenagers in library design.

9.6 AFTERWORD

A consistent critical process throughout this research, and particularly during its first year, has been to delineate the literature and parties that it should address. The reason for this is that library buildings exist at the heart of a nexus of social, cultural, technological, historical and geographical inflections. Yet in representing a national service they are also meant to be seen as in some way consistent with one another.

It is hoped that in being aware of this nexus, firstly, the nature of each public library building as inherently polysemic and "greater than the sum of its parts" can be identified. Secondly, it is hoped that in focusing not solely on the social or psychological aspects of library users, nor on the professional needs of library staff, nor on the physical parameters of architectural description, the user-architect-librarian triad responsible for creating modern central library buildings can be properly accounted for.

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11 APPENDICES

11.1 SHORTLIST OF CASE STUDY BUILDINGS

Library of Birmingham

The Mecanoo-designed Library of Birmingham was felt to be unsuitable as its size and budget make it something of an outlier. Being the largest public library in Europe, it is not representative of the majority of situations faced by authorities in the UK, and so the decision was made to focus instead on buildings that, while architecturally and programmatically complex, achieve relative parity with one another.

Discovery Centres & Idea Stores

Three Discovery Centres exist in Hampshire, in addition to the 45 conventional libraries of the county service. Like the Idea Stores (of which there are now five, in London), they are rebranded and expanded variations of the familiar library, offering events, activities, and formalised adult learning opportunities in addition to the library services.

It was felt that it would be most sensible to focus for this particular project on public libraries per se (albeit modern, advanced public libraries), rather than beginning with rebranded facilities, potentially missing the groundwork necessary to properly understand them.

Millennium Library

Prior to the opening of the Library of Birmingham in 2013, the Millennium Library in Norwich was the most visited public library in the country. It opened in late 2001, inside a centre called The Forum, which contains a mixture of exhibition, food and drink, and shopping venues in addition to the library. Unfortunately its distance from Cardiff made it impractical to visit within a single day (a task that was at least possible with Liverpool, the furthest afield of the chosen buildings), so for the purposes of project management, nearer libraries were prioritised. Fortunately, it was not necessary to compromise on the buildings ultimately selected.

Peckham Library

Peckham Library, designed by Will Alsop, was opened in early 2000. It won the Stirling Prize that year, meaning that it has received a great deal of analysis in the subsequent sixteen

years. In addition, it was felt by the researcher that more recent library buildings should be prioritised as an important element of the research context is the speed of change in library design and management principles, and of our collective understanding of them. The three buildings selected were opened in 2009, 2012 and 2013 respectively, meaning they are among the most recent examples of large public library building projects in the UK.

11.2 CHANGES MADE AT CARDIFF CENTRAL

In 2015, Cardiff Central underwent a series of extensive modifications. These substantially altered the interior layout of the spaces, and created several new enclosed spaces through the insertion of walls.

The building now functions as a hub service, rather than a dedicated library, with the addition of a council advice centre and meeting spaces. Primarily Floors 2 and 5 have been reconfigured (the lowest and the highest of the full-sized floors). Where Floor 2 was formally occupied by a newspaper reading space and fiction collections, it is now mostly occupied by the advice centre and associated services.

Floor 5 formally housed the local histories department. This is now accessible at an offsite location on Newport Road, and the space turned into a digital floor, complete with tablets and a "digital wall".

Additionally, there has been a teen space introduced at the ground floor, near the main entrance, which suggests an increased focus on this area over what was previously offered.

11.3 ETHICS APPROVAL FORM, PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET, CONSENT FORM, AND RECEIPT

EC1310.166

WELSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
ETHICS APPROVAL FORM FOR STAFF AND PHD/MPHIL PROJECTS

Tick one box:	☐ STAFF	☑ PHD/MPHIL
Title of project:	"Not for Us": The Design of Public Libraries for Male Youths (Piloting)	

Name of researcher(s):	Samuel Woodford
Name of principal investigator	Oriel Prizeman (Supervisor)
Contact e-mail address:	woodfords@cardiff.ac.uk
Date:	30/10/13

Participants		YES	NO	N/A
Does the research involve participants from any of the following groups?	• Children (under 16 years of age)		X	
	• People with learning difficulties		X	
	• Patients (NHS approval is required)		X	
	• People in custody		X	
	• People engaged in illegal activities		X	
	• Vulnerable elderly people		X	
	• Any other vulnerable group not listed here		X	
• When working with children: I have read the Interim Guidance for Researchers Working with Children and Young People (http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/archi/ethics_committee.php)				X

Consent Procedure	YES	NO	N/A
• Will you describe the research process to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	X		
• Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	X		
• Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	X		
• Will you obtain valid consent from participants? (specify how consent will be obtained in Box A)[1]	X		
• Will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	X		
• If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?			X
• If the research involves photography or other audio-visual recording, will you ask participants for their consent to being photographed / recorded and for its use/publication?	X		

Possible Harm to Participants	YES	NO	N/A
• Is there any realistic risk of any participants experiencing either physical or psychological distress or discomfort?		X	
• Is there any realistic risk of any participants experience a detriment to their interests as a result of participation?		X	

Data Protection		YES	NO	N/A
• Will any non-anonymous and/or personalised data be generated or stored?			X	
• If the research involves non-anonymous and/or personalised data, will you:	• gain written consent from the participants			X
	• allow the participants the option of anonymity for all or part of the information they provide			X

Health and Safety	YES	
Does the research meet the requirements of the University's Health & Safety policies? (http://www.cf.ac.uk/osheu/index.html)	X	

Research Governance	YES	NO	N/A
Does your study include the use of a drug? You need to contact Research Governance before submission (resgov@cf.ac.uk)		X	
Does the study involve the collection or use of human tissue? You need to contact the Human Tissue Act team before submission (hta@cf.ac.uk)		X	

[1] If any non-anonymous and/or personalised data be generated or stored, *written consent* is required.

11.3 Ethics Approval Form, Participant Information Sheet, Consent Form, and Receipt

If any of the shaded boxes have been ticked, you must explain in Box A how the ethical issues are addressed. The list of ethical issues on this form is not exhaustive; if you are aware of any other ethical issues you need to make the SREC aware of them.

Box A	The Project (provide all the information listed below in a separate attachment)
	Please see attached document

Researcher's declaration (tick as appropriate)

• I consider this project to have **negligible ethical implications** (can only be used if none of the grey areas of the checklist have been ticked).	X
• I consider this project research to have **some ethical implications**.	
• I consider this project to have **significant ethical implications**	

Signature _[signature]_   Name Samuel Woodford   Date 31/10/13
Researcher or MPhil/PhD student

Signature _[signature]_   Name ORIEL PRIZEMAN   Date 30.10.13
Lead investigator or supervisor

Advice from the School Research Ethics Committee

The Research Requires written consent for the photography, walk-alongs and focus groups. The research can go ahead as soon as you submit the consent form to Katrina Lewis and/or Wouter Poortinga. The Consent form needs to clearly state the name and purpose of the research, and how the data is going to be used. Each element of the research (photography, voice recording, GPS, and focus groups) needs to be clearly stated

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

This project had been considered using agreed Departmental procedures and is now approved

Signature _[signature]_   Name WOUTER POORTINGA   Date 03/11/13
Chair, School Research Ethics Committee

Neighbourhood Places Walk-Along Study

Participant Information Sheet, Ver. 3F

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you agree to participate, please familiarise yourself with the nature of the study so you know what to expect, why the research is being done and what will be involved. Discuss any questions you have about the study with others if you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?

We are trying to understand how young people see their public libraries in order that they can be better designed. To do this it is important to get a feel for the places that are important to young people, why they are important, and how they fit together.

This information will be helpful in getting a feel for where public library buildings are unsuitable for young people, where their architecture is unwelcoming or where they could be better arranged.

Who are the researchers and who is funding the research?

This study is part of a doctoral thesis. The researcher is Samuel Woodford, who is supervised by Dr Oriel Prizeman and Prof Wouter Poortinga at the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University. The research has been approved by the school's Research Ethics Committee and is being funded by the researcher.

Why have I been chosen?

We are speaking with communities of young people so as to find participants who can offer their experiences of local neighbourhoods and libraries.

What do I have to do?

An interview is held while you and the researcher go on a walk to and through the library. The idea is to talk about the places that are passed, and this discussion will be audio recorded. In addition you will be provided with a digital camera for the walk so as to take photos of interesting or important things along the way.

There will also be a focus group arranged as a follow-up, which will involve a small group of participants discussing the photos taken during the walk-alongs.

You do not have to be familiar with the library prior to the walk-along taking place.

What happens to the information that I give?

None of the information that is gathered will be accessible to anyone outside the research team, nor will it be used for any purpose other than the research. The data will be included in write-ups that may be published in academic journals or the University's own thesis repository. You are welcome to see a copy of these before publication if you wish.

Will my taking part be confidential?

No participant will be named or identifiable in any way in the write-ups and reports of the study. Participants are able to supply as much or as little information as they wish.

What if I wish to withdraw?

Your participation is voluntary and you are able to leave the study at any time, without giving a reason. If you do withdraw we reserve the right to use any information that you supply before leaving.

Will I receive anything in return?

Yes, you will receive a £5 note for participating in a walk-along and another £5 note for talking part in a follow up focus group. Each activity should take approx. 20–30 minutes.

Contact Information

If you would like more information about the research please don't hesitate to contact the researcher using the following address:

Samuel Woodford

WoodfordS@cardiff.ac.uk

Neighbourhood Places Walk-Along Study

Details and Consent Form

	Please state below (optional)
Age	
Gender	

	Please initial below
1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet (Version 3f: 3/11/14) for the above study, have had the opportunity to consider the information and have had my questions answered satisfactorily.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
3. I agree to take part in a walk-along.	
4. I agree to take part in a focus group.	

Participant

Name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Researcher

Name of person taking consent:	
Date:	
Signature:	

Two copies[82]: one for participant, one for research file

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[82] The second copy is excluded for the reproduction appearing here

Neighbourhood Places Walk-Along Study

Receipt of Payment for Participation

I have received £5 for participating in a walk-along	
Name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

I have received £5 for participating in a walk-along	
Name:	
Date:	
Signature:	

11.4 CODE LIST

A list of every code generated from analysis of the walk-along, interview, and focus group transcripts, in alphabetical order.

Book as physical object

Building interpretation

Building knowledge (Academic library)

Building knowledge (Branches)

Building knowledge (Central Library)

Computers

External environment

Future of the library speculation

Initial impression

Intrigue in the library environment

Librarians relationship

Library function opinion

Library function recommendation

Lighting

Method for study

Noise levels

Ocularcentrism

Opening Hours

Preconceptions/Precedents

Relationship to other library user groups

Route to library

Seating/Tables

Shelving

Signage on or in library

Standard question: "Does it feel welcoming to you?"

Standard question: "Does it look like a library?"

Standard question: "Does it make you want to explore?"

Standard question: "Is this a bit of town you use a lot?"

Standard question: "Sum up library in three words"

Symbolism to represent "libraryness"

Teen space (dedicated)

Territoriality

Thermal Comfort

Third place opinion/experience/knowledge

Urban context knowledge

Urban context opinion

Urban context usage

Use of library drivers

Use of library frequency

Use of library manner

Use of library socially

Wayfinding in library

Youth group opinion

11.5 FAMILIES OF CODES

Family 1: This family informed the researcher that library preconceptions are important to young people, and therefore derived the structure of Chapter 5.
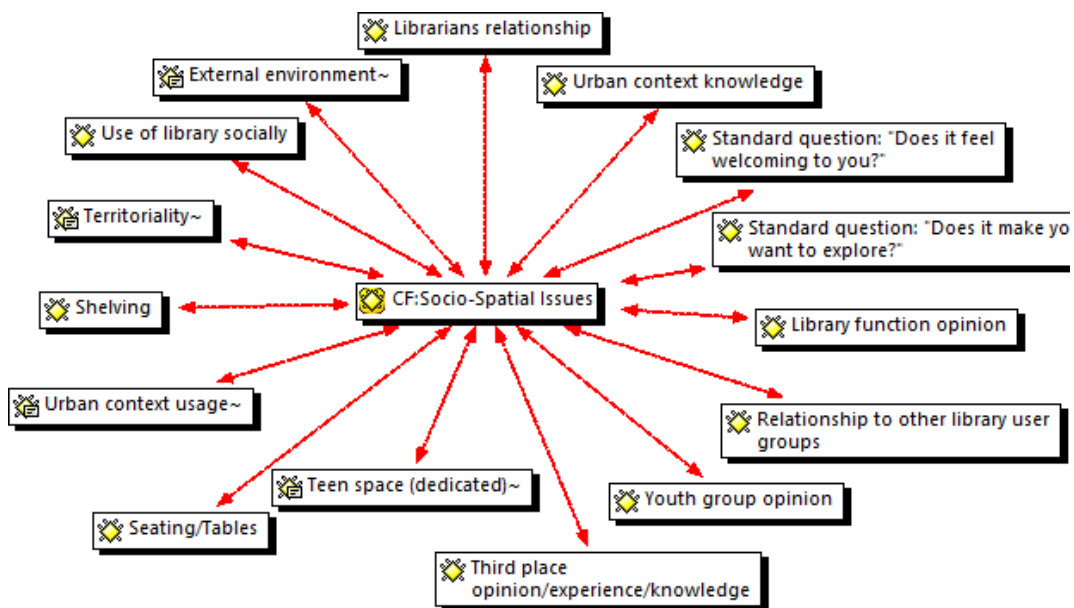
Family 4: A large family. Many issues were found to be united by the topic of the socio-spatial. In this sense "Shelving", for example, might apply to its ability to divide spaces from one another, or its ability to demark an area of the library for books. This provided the initial structure for Chapter 6.
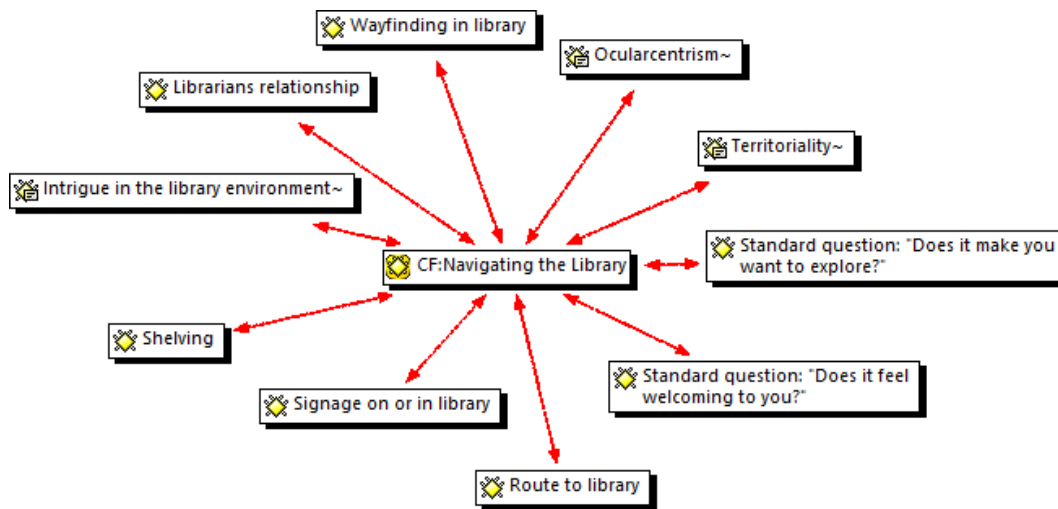
Family 3: The third significant group of codes, in which themes relating to the ease with which participants find the library and the things in it. This allowed the researcher to structure the third and final analysis chapter of the thesis, Chapter 7.

Transcripts

Samuel Woodford

Welsh School of Architecture

Cardiff University

May 2016

This document contains complete transcripts for all walk-along interviews, sedentary interviews, and focus groups conducted during the research.

Where photographic data was created, this is included at the end of each transcript.

As the walk-along data generated during this research is spatially-cued and located, the extraction of quotations for analysis in the thesis (although thematically necessary) does not reflect the character of the "journeys" that actually took place.

It is hoped, therefore, that in presenting them here in their full format, a level of spatial and temporal context can be accessed that compliments the thematic discussion.

Contents

1   WALK-ALONGS – CARDIFF

1.1   NON-STUDENT 1, 9TH DECEMBER 2013

00:00

Researcher: Start that going, put it on lock. There's the microphone.

Participant: Put that in my coat pocket facing out?

R: I guess so, yeah. Probably the best way to do it.

P: Okay then.

R: That's the first bit. Second bit is, I give you a camera.

P: Okay.

R: …Temporarily. It's only a very old thing, just a digital camera. This is basically, um, for you to take photos of anything you find interesting as we're going along, anything that means anything to you, that you think might be good to talk about, so it's really a normal camera.

P: Okay, so basically just take photos of anything which I find interesting?

R: Yeah, and then we can just talk about what we're passing.

P: Okay then, okay then.

R: If you want to take that…

P: Okay then.

R: Thanks for doing this, by the way.

P: It's okay, well I've got some spare time so why not, isn't it?

R: Yeah it's really helpful

P: It's better than just sitting on my bum all day like them lot, isn't it?

R: Yeah.

P: [Loudly] Let me take a photo of you [Name]

01:00

R: Then the last bit is the GPS.

P: I'll take a photo of [Youthgroup name], shall I?

R: Yeah, yeah, you do that.

[Short pause]

P: There you are.

Bystander: I've got to pose.

P: Oh, you've got to pose, have you?

B: Hang on a minute.

P: I'm not doing anything. Tell me when.

P and B: [Laughing]

B: Look at me.

P: Ready? Look at the face. Yes, that's a nice one.

B: Let's have a look.

P: Thank you, um, I don't know how you do it. How do you have a look?

R: Oh, you press the little play button.

P: Oh, is it? This is what I find interesting to me.

B: You need to take it at a longer shot.

P: What's a longer shot?

B: So you can get my boots in as well.

02:00

R: Oh, it always seems to be really zoomed-in. If you tilt it portrait though that should probably work. You just press the little camera button.

P: Okay then. Do it longways, shall I?

B: [Laughing] [Inaudible]

P: Ready, steady? There you are. Nice smile.

R: Brilliant.

B: That's better; you can see my boots.

P: That's better. Brilliant. Thank you.

Passerby: [Inaudible]

P: Yes, we are, we're posing. You alright darling?

R: I think that should all be working. Shall we go?

P: Yes. Let's do this then, let's do it. Right.

[Pause]

P: Well at least it's not raining, isn't it?

R: Yes I was, I was glad it was such a nice day, I guess it means it's just a bit nicer out in town, isn't it?

03:00

P: Yeah and it's a lot easier. That's a good thing about the library as well. If it's raining you can always just go in the library, sit down and read a book, or if you've got to wait for something in the job centre you can always go to the library and wait there and it's quite good and I reckon that libraries are important to us, obviously, because of the books and things, isn't it, and the information from the past and stuff like that.

R: Yeah. Is this a bit of town you use a lot?

P: Yeah. This side, I'm always on this side. The only bad thing I think about these parts is like the construction and that. It's like the middle of town, you don't really want to be coming to town and seeing people doing construction work. I'm going to take a photo.

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Passerby: [Inaudible]

P: [To passerby] I'll be back in a minute. Just taking photos of everything. Things which are important to me.

R: [Referring to partially constructed building opposite cinema] How long has thing building been here?

P: Um, well it used to be a carpark and it's taken them a good couple of months to build.

04:00

I don't know what it's going to be.

Passerby: New offices

P: Oh, new offices, is it?

Passerby: Yeah.

P: Imagine sitting up there on that blue thing putting glass windows in. That'd be a job and a half, wouldn't it?

R: You'd be able to see a long way though, I should think.

P: How long did it take them to build the library? It wasn't that long, was it?

R: I don't know. When did it open?

P: Oh, I think it was about two years ago now, it's opened.

R: I suppose there's a plaque or something inside it that says when.

P: Yeah, most probably. Like, I like, don't get me wrong, I like the library, isn't it, but, it's like there's load of information there and it's just…

R: Do you ever just go there to hang out with people?

P: Yeah. And [Youthgroup name]. Like…

Passerby: [Greeting]

P: [To passerby] Yeah, you cool? Yeah I'm alright love.

P: [To researcher] Like, if we get chucked out of [Youthgroup name] we all go over to the library, sit on the chairs, look out the windows, have a little chat and all that.

05:00

Um, basically, we just have a laugh, like.

R: So is it those to place then, mainly?

P: Yeah, the library and [Youthgroup name] and there's the Huggard Centre as well but that's got older people. That's for over twenty-five year olds.

R: Where was that, sorry?

P: The Huggard Centre. It's behind Central Stations. It's for homeless people. Basically, it's people which are on drugs, got problems going on, um, just basically, you know, every, like, the ones who've hit rock bottom, basically, that's what it is. That's what the Huggard Centre is, and then you've got [Youthgroup name]. Like, I lived in the Huggard with loads of druggies and then I've become an alcoholic, um, when I was eighteen, come off the drink, um, and then like I've been going to [Youthgroup name] and I've been volunteer working

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basically, just, for the last ten years I've been doing that. And it's just basically trying to get them all away from going there.

06:00

I don't want them to go down there, so it's basically trying to get them into work, get them to do things, and a few of them have done it, like, 'cause, like, I'm on the sick, basically, I've got mental health problems. But, like, I go to the library and it'll help me with certain things like I can read up on problems with me and my health and situations and how I could get out of that situation. That's how the library helps me, but obviously, gives you information about going to the doctor and things like that, isn't it. So there is a lot of information that the library can give you but I reckon they should have another one because there's only one and basically what's one going to do, isn't it, it's like, you've got…

R: Yeah, I mean you've got other little ones about the place, aren't there?

P: Yeah, like in certain places like St Mellons, Llandaff, Whitchurch, Ely. You've got little libraries, don't get me wrong, but, like, there's only one in town and if you think about it, how many people go into town?

07:00

Use our library… I'm going to take a photo of that.

[Pause]

R: What's this?

P: That used to be the old Hooters bar.

R: Oh really?

P: Yeah, yeah, but, um, it's rugby on there, isn't it. I like my rugby, see, my rugby, my football, so I'll take a photo of it. Like, but, with myself, right, I think the library should have a section where it can help with various things like with the gym or if you've got problems it can help you get into certain things, like, if you want to, I don't know, if you want to work, or if you want to volunteer, right, I think they should raise concerns with things like that with the library. So say, like, with myself, say someone want to like, I don't know, go swimming and they don't know where to go swimming, they go to the library and they go swimming three times a week

08:00

and they get a free book like, you know what I'm saying? Gives them a little bit of like a boost, like you're doing it, you're doing it and then you're going to get something out of it, it gives you a positive reaction. That's what I think.

R: Yeah, do you ever speak to the staff in the library?

P: Yeah, I speak to them quite a bit. The ones, not downstairs, the ones upstairs. The only things I don't like are where you got to do the appointments with the computers. I think that's a bit stupid.

R: When did that start?

P: The last couple of weeks. You've got to book an appointment to use a computer to go on Facebook.

R: Oh, it wasn't like that when I was there last.

P: It is, it's like that now. It's all changed.

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R: Is this always the way you come to the library if you're over this side?

P: Yeah, or I'll walk straight through the arcade and then down this way. Like, there's not really any signs outside saying "Library this way". You know what I mean? It is quite hard to find.

R: It says it ["Library"] up there but I guess…

09:00

P: Say you're on the other side of town and you're not from Cardiff it is quite hard to find I reckon.

R: Do you think it looks like a library?

P: No. No. I'd have a giant book outside, I would. Then you'd know it's a library, wouldn't you?

R: You know, there's a library in Kansas in America and the whole front of it is massive books.

P: Is it?

R: Yeah it's just massive books down the whole street. It's amazing. It's Kansas City Library, I think.

P: That's what I'd do. I'd put a giant book out the front.

[Pause]

R: Is that what's it's about for you, then, books?

P: Yeah, I like the books. Like, I've got a three year old son, so sometimes it's the DVDs, like, if I can't afford the DVDs they'll do that for me, so it's like, basically, they give you input, you give them input, like, I like the library, don't get me wrong, I don't like it, but it's not like a library, if you get me.

R: The building, you mean?

P: Yeah

10:00

The outside, on the outside I'd have a big open book so when you're walking down the street you can see that that's the library. That's what I'd do, 'cause what happens if someone can't read?

R: That's a good point actually. I think the first time I came was from that way [face-on to the library] so I probably saw the sign reasonably. If you came from that side [towards [Youthgroup name]] you wouldn't see would you?

P: And that side down there [from behind the library] you can't see nothing.

R: Do you ever hang out in this kind of plazary bit?

P: Yeah, in the summer we do, when it's really warm and all that. We come by here or go behind, down by there where there's water fountains and we'll sit down by the water fountains.

R: Oh yeah, down that way.

P: Right behind here. It's really nice down there in the summer. Then you get the dirty people that go, you know, peeing in the water and all that.

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R: Really?

P: Yeah.

R: Shall we go inside?

P: Um, yeah if you want. I'm fine with that.

R: I see no reason to stop now.

P: But yeah, if it was me and I was building this building I'd have a giant book on the front of it.

11:00

On the top of that so you know it's a library cause if you can't read and you're coming here to use a computer to find information or to help you with your reading and your writing and that, then obviously it'll stand out to you, won't it, it'll make you like "There's the library". Like, that's what you want, isn't it?

[Entering the doors]

Oh, that was lovely and warm. [Pause] Let's take a photo.

R: Does it feel welcoming to you?

P: By here? No, no. It don't really feel welcoming. Like, you walk in and, to me, it's like being on the spot because you've got all these spotlights on you, like, don't get me wrong, you've got the information desk but it's not really inviting is it? Like, myself, I'd go crazy I would, I'd have loads of books along here like a desk, I'd have, um, you know, just things that stand out and make it more inviting to you… Here's a police officer.

12:00

[Pause]

R: Shall we go up?

P: Yeah, we can go upstairs if you want. Yeah, that's fine.

[To police officer] Caught on candied-camera! [Laughs]

Like, don't get me wrong, I likes the library but it's not really inviting as you want it to be, is it?

R: Have you used many other libraries?

P: Um, Whitchurch Library I used to use all the time and I used to go to church when I was younger, when I lived in Whitchurch. Now I live in Tremorfa now, um, they haven't got a library in Tremorfa.

R: Haven't they?

P: No, the kids ruined it. The lot of them, they're all monsters. They just go in there, and there's this old people's home and they terrorise everyone. It's just like, the people today, they, I don't know. Like, I reckon in about a hundred years' time there's not going to be any libraries. That's what I reckon myself.

R: You mean they'll all get shut down?

P: Yeah, shut down. No one's reading, like, everyone's on their, like, computers now, things like that, isn't it?

13:00

10

R: There's certainly more computers than there used to be.

[Pause]

P: I'll just turn this off a minute… There we are. I likes the library but you've got to book appointments to use the computer and, just basically like, there's not many people, like, you go up to someone and ask like "Where's this?" or "what can I find out this and that?" and they don't really give you the information you want.

R: Really? How do you mean?

P: Like with my mental health, I've gone up to people and said "I want to find out about this" and all they've done is taken me to the books.

R: Right…

P: And I've got to go through all these books and find out what's what, and I've told them the information and they just take you to the books; they don't try to help you. So, say don't know and you need a bit more information, I'd have someone from, I don't know, the hospital downstairs. If someone's got problems, mental health problems and they want to find information,

14:00

they can come in to talk to them. And, you know what I mean? Like, he's just had to book an appointment to use the computer, he came up [the escalators] behind us.

R: I see. DO you ever just wander around looking for book?

P: Yeah, I have a little look, like.

R: Do you sit here with your friends?

P: Yeah, like, sit round by here in the winter mainly, but in the summer we're all round behind and we don't really use the library, to tell you the truth, it's like only if we needed to make sure, like we can't get what we want from the job centre or [Youthgroup name] or the Huggard Centre, like if they don't give us no information there's always here, basically, the library that can give you the library, bi=ut you don't get as much help as you need, as you want.

R: Do you feel comfortable here is this building?

P: I do feel comfortable, but at the same time I don't, like say if you're on the computers and you've got a problem and someone sees you, do you get what I mean?

R: Is it different to [Youthgroup name] then?

P: Yeah, yeah, cause [Youthgroup name] you've got staff 24-7

15:00

and basically that's open from ten till five. You've got staff there which will talk, to give you information, um, I'd say [Youthgroup name] is brilliant, like, they are brilliant. They'll tell you straight if you needs this, you needs that, that's where you go. Myself, if I didn't have [Youthgroup name] I don't know what I'd be doing with myself, I don't.

R: Do you think it'd because [Youthgroup name] is about young people specifically?

P: Yeah, yeah. This is basically, like, myself in here now, I feels a bit paranoid, I feel like people are watching me. But that's me, do you know what I mean? That's because of problems I've had in my like and my mental health. But I do feel a bit insecure in the library,

but it is a good place to come and you can just sit in a corner and no one'll see you. Do you know what I mean?

R: Yeah, do you think it's good to have quiet corners?

P: Yeah, it is but it's not. Like, say you're in a corner, something happens…

16:00

no one knows. You know what I mean? Like, if you've got a problem and something happens. Like, yeah, I think they need someone from Heath Hospital here just in case something happens, a police officer on the stairs just in case there's a fight or something. Just basically… someone there. That's what they need cause there's enough information, like, don't get me wrong, there's loads of books and that, but the people on the desk they don't really talk to you. Like, you can talk to them but they don't really explain things.

R: Would you say you feel a bit lost because there's so much of it?

P: Yeah, it is, it's all compressed and you go and ask them and they're like "It's on the fourth floor" and you go upstairs all the way to the top and it's like "Oh my god", and it's like, yeah, like a maze in here isn't it?

R: Yeah. What do you think of it?

P: I likes the inside but I'd have it all bright. I'd have it inviting, cause it doesn't feel inviting to me. It feel like the labyrinth.

17:00

R: Do you reckon? What with all these…?

P: Yeah with the stairs. I feel it's like the labyrinth. Like, myself I wouldn't go to the top floor.

R: Because it's so high?

P: Mmm. I wouldn't go to the top floor. I'd feel a bit insecure. Like, it feels a bit insecure now here on this floor. I'd rather stay on the ground to tell you the truth.

R: We can go down again if you want.

P: Yeah? Brilliant.

[Pause; on escalator]

P: [Referring to camera] Would you like this back?

R: If you're done taking photos.

P: Yeah, I'm done taking photos.

R: That's brilliant. Thanks ever so much.

P: All the things on there, they're important to me. Like, the main thing at the moment… [Noticing children's section through glass partition] Oh, I didn't notice that little section for kids.

R: It seems to be a half section actually between… How do we get there?

P: Yeah I think you have to go up in a lift or something.

R: There must be stairs.

12

P: Like me, do you know with all this, the scientific stuff with the signs, books and all that, I'd have signs and that,

18:00

like pictures of, I don't know, tepees and little boxes with chemicals. Like that just then [the view of the children's library], that's inviting and that's for the children. I'd say this is more inviting.

[Pause]

Cause it's more standout, isn't it. There's more things… Yeah, this is for the children. It's more inviting for the children, it's like, yeah, I likes it. This is brilliant for children. Nice.

R: Is it the colours?

P: Yeah they stand out for you and there's things hanging from the ceiling. It's inviting. And that's what you need, something that invites you and says "Come in, come and read a book, come and chill out".

R: What do you reckon makes it inviting?

P: Colours, like things like that, that chair [a climbable piece of padded furniture]

19:00

all different things, design, with English I'd have pictures of certain things like that, of history, knights and things like that. Like, say you got, like myself, people with mental health problems, you'd have a certain floor for that and you'd have information and people that knew about it, but this here is inviting cause you've got toys for the kids, you've got sections where you can sit down, read books. I think this is more inviting than the rest of the library. The children's section, bright colours, that's inviting.

R: Yeah.

P: If I come and sit down in here, say if it's freezing outside you've got the yellow and the red and that, so I come and sit down inside where it's nice and warm. You know, this is inviting.

R: Are you a fan of concrete?

P: No, not really.

R: Not really?

P: Not really. I've got lost of bruises on me from concrete.

[Pause]

Like I'd have more bright colours in here to be honest.

20:00

I'd have a giant book up there so you know it's a library, and each floor'd have a different section and they'd have all things like this, like elephant to show that it's animals and this, you get what I mean? Like that's inviting, you go up to that, play with that and you're like "What's this" and it's and you see it's an elephant and you want to read a book.

[Pause]

Like I'd say the children's part is more inviting than the adults' part. I'd sit down in here and read a book, I would.

R: It's cosier, isn't it?

P: Yeah, definitely. And there's things where the children can play and all that. And even the staff are all inviting and they're got things on their heads and all that. I'd definitely come up here and read a book. Definitely.

[Pause]

R: Have we looked at everything you want to look at?

P: Yeah I think so.

21:00

R: Brilliant, thanks very much.

1.2 NON-STUDENT 2, 10ᵀᴴ MARCH 2014

Researcher: Is this a bit of town you're quite familiar with then?

Participant: No. Not at all.

R: No? You come to [Youthgroup name] very often then?

P: Yeah, I've been coming here for around a year and a half now.

R: I came here last December and did the piloting with [NAME] but I didn't see you then I don't think.

P: Probably not. There's, like, certain times I come in and then there's certain days I don't. It depends how I feel.

R: Right. Do you live in Cardiff?

P: Yeah, I like in Tremorfa.

R: Ah. I'm not really familiar with the areas around here 'cause I've only been here for about eight months.

P: Ah right…

R: It's great that we've got a bit of nice weather. It's been so horrible I haven't been able to do any of these.

Is the central library a building you use much at all?

P: Err, yeah, I do use it quite a bit to be fair.

R: What type of thing do you use it for?

R: Err, basically, if I want to read, 'cause I'm a person for books and poems, 'cause with my family my nan does poems.

2:00

R: Oh really?

P: Yeah, so I basically look in there and get an idea of doing poems.

R: Right. Do you write your own poems as well?

P: Yeah, like, I have written my own before, and they're at home, I haven't had a chance to publish them and see what people think of them.

R: No, I've written a few in my time but they're secret, you know, nobody sees them.

P: Like, mine are mostly about relationships and that.

R: Yeah. Is that something you couldn't do without the library do you think, or would it just be harder?

P: It'd probably be harder more than anything.

R: Do you tend to come to the library on your own or with other people?

P: Err, sometimes I come on my own and then sometimes I take friends with me.

R: INAUDIBLE

P: Err, yes, I've taken the bus quite a few times.

R: Well I guess it's the sort of thing you'd have to go... to... If you know you've got to go to the library it's not the sort of thing you'd just by walking past is it?

P: No.

R: Have you been using it for very long, because it's only been open for about four years, hasn't it?

P: Yeah, basically I've lived here for about three, four years now, because where I used to live up in England, so I've basically come down here and I've been using the library ever since.

R: Is it just the central one...

P: Yeah.

R:... because there are a load of others aren't there, apparently, somewhere about the place?

P: Yeah, 'cause there's one in Splott, but I'd rarely use that one because of all the children that go in there, so I prefer to go into the one in town.

R: Are the kids off-putting?

4:00

P: Like, if it's this time and there's some people who aren't in school they'll go to the library and just mess around, so I go to central to get a bit of peace and then I can just read a book in quiet.

R: Yeah. Do you think that's something that the building is well-suited to, reading in peace?

P: Yeah, 'cause I've always known libraries to be quiet. So I basically go to libraries that are quiet.

R: I think I was only in here last year and someone started playing the drums on the second floor and 'cause it's all open the sound just goes right through the whole thing.

P: Yeah, 'cause it is a big building so the sound just echoes through the whole building.

R: Where abouts are you usually coming from? Is this the way you'd normally get to the library?

P: Yeah, I'd chose the bus that goes round the back of the library.

R: Oh, to the bus station?

P: Yeah, you've got the bus station that's by there and then you've got a couple of stops that's behind it.

R: What do you think of this kind of plaza in front of it?

P: Err, at first I was like a bit confused, 'cause I didn't know what it was for. And still I don't know if it's a good design.

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library?

P: Errm, I would say so because I've seen so many libraries and it's a different design of building, so I'd say so, yeah.

R: It's difficult to tell what makes a building look like a library isn't it?

P: Yeah.

17

6:00

R: What do you reckon? What do you reckon makes it look like a library?

P: Erm, basically, there's pictures outside the doors?

R: What these [points to people silhouettes on front doors]?

P: Yeah.

R: You could take a photo of those maybe.

P: Yeah, yeah… There we go.

R: Shall we go in?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you reckon it feels welcoming?

P: Yeah, I would say so, 'cause you've got a reception at the front, could tell you what floor you want, if you're looking for a certain area it could find, they'll tell you which floor it's on.

R: So it's welcoming, do you think, to see people?

P: Yeah.

R: What do you think about going up like this [up the escalators]?

7:00

P: It feels quite scary 'cause I've always been afraid of escalators but after a while I got used it it; you just kept on going up.

R: Do you tend to go to the same place each time?

P: I just wonder around the whole building and look for whatever book I want to look at.

R: Yeah.

P: Like, if there's, like, some stories I want to read, and I've got an idea in my head, so I can read it to the younger children.

R: So if you were looking for a book, what would you do?

P: I'd basically wander around and look for whatever book I was looking for.

R: And do you know where the different books are.

8:00

P: Erm, not really.

R: Well I guess it's nice to be able to wander.

P: Yeah, where you can see different books and you're wondering which one you want to look at. I just basically look at books I find interesting.

R: INAUDIBLE

P: Yeah, 'cause I basically look at the cover first and decide if I like the cover and the nread the back. I'd read the back to find some of the information about the book and then…

R: Do you feel like you can just wander round here by yourself, that you're free to move about as you want?

P: Yeah, basically.

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R: What do you think of this interior?

P: I like it, but at times it'll get in the way if you're trying to look for one certain book.

R: What do you mean?

P: Basically, with shelves that have books on, and the pole's in the way.

9:00

R: Oh do you mean these [concrete structural columns]?

P: Yeah.

R: You mean you can't see right the way through the building?

P: Yeah.

R: You can certainly see upwards…

Do you think it's a safe, comfortable sort of space?

P: Yeah I would say so, especially when there's seats if you want to sit down and read… and you've got different areas that tell you if it's art or media, music, poems, anything like that.

R: You should take some photos of those too actually… INAUDIBLE

Do you tend to sit anywhere at all in the library?

P: Basically anywhere.

R: Higher up or lower down, or does it not matter really?

P: It doesn't matter really.

R: I guess in terms of noise levels it's all about the same really.

P: As you can tell it's quite quiet in here.

R: Yeah, do you tend to come in different days of the week?

P: Yeah, I comes in different days of the week if I want to read then I'll come in here and read.

R: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

P: Not reall.

R: Ok. Have you seen the children's area?

P: Yeah, I have seen the children's area and I find it's quite good because you can read stories to the younger ones if you want to, so I really do enjoy doing that.

R: Do you think it feels the same as the rest of the library or different?

P: Err, I'd say different, because with children's books you can actually… like, the children can understand the words better but in these books that are downstairs the children wouldn't be able to understand the words.

R: Why is it, do you think, that the children like INAUDIBLE like that?

P: Um, basically, because it's INAUDIBLE… like, school they'd have the teacher read the book to them, here they'd be able to read it themselves.

R: So it empowers them, to do their own reading?

P: Yeah, like it builds their confidence to learn to read.

R: And that's important?

P: Yeah.

12:00

R: Quite interesting isn't it, how you can see it through that hole [referring to the window onto the children's library], but you can't actually get to it?

R: Do you think the architects made it separate for a reason?

P: Err, to be honest I'm not quite sure.

R: Do you think some libraries are better than other sorts, 'cause you know some have tall, dark wooden bookcases?

P: Err, I wouldn't say so, 'cause you know a book's a book at the end of the day, and as long as you get to understand what the story's about then any book you read is anything; it doesn't matter what it looks like.

R: So as you can get to the right book that's the important thing?

P: Yeah, basically.

R: Do you ever just go to the library to hang out and kill some time?

P: Yeah sometimes I do. It depends the way I'm feel. If I'm feeling to read then I'll read, but at times then I'll spend time on the computer with friends. Like, normally I'll like to be reading the book on my own.

R: INAUDIBLE

P: Yeah.

R: Do you speak to the librarians much?

P: Err, not really. I just speak to them if I'm trying to look for a book and I can't find it nowhere.

14:00

R: Do they feel approachable to you?

P: They're very nice to people when you as them for a certain book, they'll look it up for you and find it to tell you if it's been taken out or not.

R: If you were running the library, if you were put in charge of the whole place, would you do anything differently?

P: I wouldn't change anything, I don't think.

R: Everything works perfectly for you?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you ever get hungry in the library, need a bite to eat?

P: I'll just pop out, get myself Greg's and eat my food and then go back in and continue reading the book.

20

1.3 NON-STUDENT 3, 11ᵀᴴ MARCH 2014

Researcher: Is this a part of town you're familiar with, go out in a lot?

Participant: Every day.

R: Every day, huh?

P: Yeah. I'll take a picture of [Youthgroup name] actually, 'cause I'm here every day. That's a good idea, isn't it?

R: So you're in there quite a lot, are you?

P: Yeah, I go, like, every Monday to Friday.

R: How come you go there so much? Do you really like it?

P: Yeah, um, I do, like, I volunteer there some days and I'm going to Bolivia for three months.

R: To where, sorry?

P: Bolivia, for three months.

R: Oh really?

P: So, like, they help me do my fundraising and that.

02:00

R: What are you going to do out there?

P: Um, I dunno yet; it's volunteering abroad.

R: Oh right, so they tell you?

P: Yeah, basically.

R: I suppose you must know this part of town quite well.

P: Yeah, really well.

R: Do you tend to go around with the other guys from [Youthgroup name] or not?

P: Um not…

R: Or do you come and go as you please?

P: I don't really go out of my way. If I see them I see them. There are some people in there that are, like, my friends before I started going there, so, like, I help out with them, but, that's about it really.

R: [In response to participant shivering] Chilly today, isn't it?

P: I know.

R: It was nicer yesterday.

P: I know, it was nice and summery yesterday.

R: I was down at the barrage on Sunday in a t-shirt. Couldn't believe it.

P: Err… right I'll take a picture of St David's 'cause I'm always going in there.

R: Is this another place you use a lot?

3:00

P: Yeah. I used to work in there as well.

R: Did you?

P: Yeah, in Mothercare.

R: Is the library a place you ever go to much?

P: No. I used to when I was younger 'cause I used to live in Cathays, you know, by the library.

R: You mean Cathays Library?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah. Was Cathays Library a library you used to use a lot?

P: Yeah, I used to go there, like, every day.

R: Really?

P: Yeah.

R: Just to hang out or to actually…

P: No, just to use the computers, do my homework, when I was in school. Just, me and my sister would always go there.

R: So it was useful to you?

P: Yeah.

R: Did you tend to go there with friends as well?

R: Yeah, I used to, um, like, it was weird. We'd all go there but I'd take my niece there so she could get some books, and the cinema, we'd go there a lot

4:00

Um, I'd take my niece there a lot to get – oh god…! To get, um…

R: I thought you were going to get run over.

P: Yeah, I know, I didn't even notice!… To get a lot of books, 'cause she'd only ten, she's into reading.

R: Right.

P: And I get some books but I'm not really a reader. I don't really like reading.

R: You prefer DVDs and TV shows and stuff like that?

P: Yeah. And the CIA's [Motorpoint Arena, formally Cardiff International Arena] a big place for me 'cause I'm going there next week and then four days after that.

R: INAUDIBLE

P: Yeah. I'm going to see Jason Derulo and then X-Factor. Live tours…

R: INAUDIBLE

P: You've never been in there?

R: No. I've only been in Cardiff for, like, a year and a half.

P: Oh. I've been to see X-Factor, Little Mix, um, Union J.

R: You go there with friends?

5:00

P: I went there with my sister, um, my niece and my sister, and then my niece. It's like a family thing with Christmas presents and birthday presents, sort of thing.

R: Oh right, that's quite good actually.

You know that the library here is quite new, isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: It opened about four years ago.

P: INAUDIBLE

R: It used to be, I think, where St David's Two is, before.

P: Yeah.

R: As far as I'm aware.

P: I dunno. I've only been back here for about four years now.

R: Have you?

P: Yeah, 'cause I was born here but I moved abroad with my parents and my sister.

R: Right. Where were you?

P: Tenerife and then Canada, so I was away for, like, eight years.

R: I was away for a while when my folk moved to Lancashire, so it wasn't quite Tenerife.

6:00

R: What do you think about this, this sort of public area here?

P: I dunno, I don't really come down here. The only time I come down would be to go down that way, really.

R: So I suppose this is almost first impressions for you.

P: Yeah.

R: I still haven't quite got what that sculpture's about yet.

P: Or me. I don't get it either. I never have.

R: It must symbolise something.

Do you reckon the library looks like a library?

P: No.

R: You don't think you'd know [that is a library just from the building]?

P: No. I didn't know it was a library until somebody told me. It looks too, like, posh.

R: What do you think makes a library look like a library?

P: I don't know. That's a, like, I don't know actually. [Said as though an interesting point she'd not thought of before].

7:00

Um, I don't know, like, it's different, isn't it, 'cause it's all glass, isn't it, like, I think of a library as being the old bricks, sort of thing.

24

R: It's all dark bookshelves, that type of thing?

P: Yeah. And here we are. First time for everything. It's massive!

R: How do you feel? Do feel welcomed, or…

P: Yeah, it's nice and warm in here. They've got computers here that the public can use? [Referring to the computers behind the information desk].

R: Yeah, looks like it. I guess they're for looking up… well I was going to say that it…

P: But he's on Facebook!

R:… I guess not.

P: God, it's massive!

R: I think it's quite interesting the way it come up like this [referring to the escalators].

P: It's massive! I didn't realise there was this many books to fill up a building.

8:00

Wow, there's loads of computers.

R: Is this the first time you've been in here?

P: Yeah.

R: How would you go about finding your way around?

P: I dunno, just have a look around.

R: If you were looking for something, or maybe just wandering…

P: Just wandering or asking. They've got the things down there.

R: The signs you mean?

P: Yeah, like the, what do you call them, no signs, the, um… categories, sort of thing.

R: Yeah, and you could speak to a librarian as well.

P: Yeah, if I couldn't find them myself I'd ask someone that works here.

It's a nice quiet place isn't it?

R: How do you feel about the building?

P: I don't know, it's very, like, it's very neat and very calm as well, I'd say. I think I'd be able to sit here to work if I had to, and I don't think I'd get distracted really.

R: Does it make you want to explore, to wander around?

P: To wander around, yeah. I'm just not really interested in books, to be honest with you.

R: Is it just books that the library offers?

P: No. They have, like, you can see where they have the table and chairs and that so you can just sit down and do something over there on a laptop, if you've brought your own laptop there.

10:00

And there's, like, chairs by there, so you can…

R: So different spaces for different things?

25

P: Yeah. So it's not just, 'I'm coming here to pick a book and then I'm going to go'. They can, like, pick a book and read it here or bring work here or something.

I think I'd have books here if I was doing an English exam. I'd get books from here if I was doing an English exam. Language and literature.

R: That would be quite helpful. INAUDIBLE… services as well to get information about council services… INAUDIBLE

P: Yeah.

11:00

P: Up again? These stairs are going to kills me! They could have escalators going all the way up!

So I never, ever thought I'd go out of my way to come in here and have a look around.

R: You wouldn't

P: No, I don't think so. I've never been in here before, ever.

R: The only times I've ever used this library as a library was when my internet at home was broken and I had nowhere else to go.

P: That's what a lot of people do, like, my friends, we come here, 'cause they've got no internet or they haven't got a laptop, so they just come in here to go on Facebook… INAUDIBLE.

R: I notice we're still going up. Do you think the building encourages you to go up?

P: Yeah, because you can see, like, I don't know, there's so many different books, different categories, different areas, so just to see what's here.

It's a good thing I'm not scared of heights; look at that [referring to the view from the top floor through the glass front of the building]. That's crazy! Are we allowed to be here? This looks like a place we weren't allowed to be.

13:00

Librarian: INAUDIBLE [Seeing us looking at a machine in confusion]… old newspapers…

P: I was wondering what it was.

R: Yeah.

L: Right ok. Do you want me to put one on, or…?

P: Yeah, see how it works.

L: Have either of you got a data of birth near the start of the month?

P: No, mine's the 20th

R: 24th…

L: INAUDIBLE [Setting up microfilm viewer] It's kept in this drawer and people can help themselves to the reels.

P: Ok.

R: So just like the books?

L: Yeah, yeah, just help yourself. It starts at the back… INAUDIBLE [Begins winding handle]. It's just a matter of winding on till… eventually… Seems like a bad example. There doesn't seem to be anything at all on this reel, very bizarre. There must be something somewhere…

R: January 1981 must have been a slow month I guess.

L: Yes. So it's just the paper page by page then.

P: That's cool, that is.

R: I guess if you were researching what had been in the news it would be really handy.

L: Yeah, or, you know, we've had a lot of people doing the First World War because of the anniversary

15:00

They want, say, their grandfather's 80th birthday they'll take a copy of the page of the day he was born.

P: Ah, so do you have the ones that, recent. How recent would they be?

L: Well we keep them all, but I think the ones on film are about two years. It's a continuous process… INAUDIBLE

P: Ok.

L: INAUDIBLE… if ever you wanted to have a look through.

P: That's cool.

R: Thanks very much.

P: Thank you. It's mad that. Glad I came up here now.

16:00

R: Yeah. I guess that whole chest must be full of newspapers, just tiny.

P: It's mad like, what's this, a printer?

R: Maybe it's the same thing… 'Newspaper 2000 project' INAUDIBLE.

P: See I sees a machine I'm like, let's go look at it! It looks like a photocopier as well, don't it.

R: Yeah, I think you can do photocopying and printing in the library as well, probably for a small fee I guess.

P: Yeah.

R: INAUDIBLE

17:00

P: Yeah, I'm gonna take one [a photo]. I'm gonna go to that one; that's different.

R: What do you think of the roof INAUDIBLE?

P: I know, it's different, isn't it. It makes the place look warmer, sort of thing, if that makes sense. This machine just amazes me. There we go.

R: Makes you wonder what else in on those little rolls of film.

P: I know, so old as well.

R: Yeah, I remember we had an old bathroom that hadn't been linoed for decades.

27

18:00

Under the lino it had been lined with newspapers underneath from the 50s, so all these bits from the 1950s had gone down when they were new and then they were sixty years old.

P: Oh my gosh.

R: So weird, they were just like flakes.

P: It's mad how, like, the buildings are different nowadays, compared to a hundred years ago, even fifty years ago.

R: All buildings?

P: Not all buildings, 'cause some of them are still quite old aren't they?

R: Yeah.

P: But, like, the newer buildings that have been redone or are just built, they're different, you know. Same with libraries though, isn't it, like, older libraries, compared to this library…

R: It's quite different isn't it?

P: It's a lot different!

19:00

I've always know a library to be, like, one floor sort of thing. That's what amazes me about this one, 'cause I didn't realise there was this many books to fill it up.

R: Yeah.

P: One, Two, three, four, five floors!

R: Have you ever been inside the British Library in London?

P: No.

R: There's a ridiculous number of things in there.

P: Is there?

R: It's, you know, in the tens of millions. There's literally miles and miles of shelving, although a lot of it you can't actually get to so they have machines that bring machines to you, they have conveyor belts.

P: I think that's a better thing to do. Like, say if you're looking for a book, I dunno, say if you were looking for a history book or something and you couldn't find it on the shelf, like, have the machine and the conveyor belt, type the book in and then it brings the book to you sort of thing.

R: Yeah, so it would always find you. Although, on the other hand, you wouldn't be able to do so much browsing.

20:00

P: That's true. I'm lazy though, so I wouldn't be bothered. I'd rather do, like, know that I wanted a book.

R: It depends what you'd want to use it for.

What do you think of the concrete, all this concrete, masses of concrete?

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P: I know, it's different, isn't it? It's mad how you've got all this concrete and then you've got a wooden roof. I think it should've all been the same sort of thing. But it still looks nice. I like the tiling.

R: See that up there?

P: By the glass?

R: Yeah, it's a kids' area.

P: Oh, it's a kids' area is it? I didn't notice that.

21:00

R: It's separate. See this as well?

P: What are they?

R: It's like conveyor belts to put the books back into.

P: Ah, right.

R: So you can put them back and they go along and then they go into the bins.

OK, just finally, if you had to sum up that building in three words, what would you pick?

P: Um, educational. Appealing.

R: Appealing?

P: Yeah, like it's not a building I'd normally walk into but because I've been in there now I was interesting in looking around sort of thing, so like, it's not a building that I'd think 'Oh yeah, let's go to the library', but because I've walked in there now and seen what's there I reckon another time I'd be like, 'Why don't I just go to the library and have a look around'. Um, I don't know what else…

R: Blue.

P: Blue!

R: I don't know… So, educational and appealing.

P: Yeah.

R: How educational?

P: It was very actually, 'cause you've got all the different categories of book. And it's historical as well.

R: Historical? There you go, that's three then.

P: 'cause of the newspaper machine thingy. Obviously, you got that to look at, you've got all the different types of books, and it's telling you on the stands what types of books are in that stand sort of thing,

23:00

So like I'm pretty sure you could go in there and find anything you were looking for, and find other stuff as well that maybe you wouldn't think of.

R: Do you know about inter-library loans as well?

P: No.

R: Any library can get a book from any other library, so if they don't have it in the library you can still do an interlibrary loan and get it from a library, delivered to you in the library.

P: Oh, didn't know that.

R: Not for everything, of course, but for quite a lot of things… INAUDIBLE… as long as you're prepared to wait a few days.

P: Well, I didn't know that. You learn something new every day.

R: Yeah, it depends if you need the books or not. If you don't need them…

1.4 NON-STUDENT 4 & NON-STUDENT 5, 6TH MAY 2014

Researcher: Do you guys hang around often at [Youthgroup name] then?

Participant A: Yeah man, like, I'm there pretty much every day.

R: Because I've been down there a few times and I don't think I've ever seen you

Participant A: Like, obviously yesterday was a bank holiday, so we weren't down there.

R: Yeah, I was on the phone three times thinking "Why the hell's nobody answering?"

PA: Yeah, it was a bank holiday. Like, I even forgot it was a bank holiday yesterday, like, I woke up next to my misses and I was like "I might go [Youthgroup name]", and then I had to be reminded that it was a bank holiday, then she forgot it was a bank holiday; she was like "Shall we go [Youthgroup name]?" and then I had to remind her it was a bank holiday.

02:00

R: So whereabouts did you hang out yesterday, if not [Youthgroup name]?

PA: I just stayed in, had a lazy day.

Participant B: Stayed in till about five.

PA: I got my mum to give me dinner yesterday, that's what I did, I was like "Mum, I need a tenner for food", which I genuinely needed a tenner for food and tobacco, but instead my mum buys my food, buys me tobacco and gives me a tenner 'cause she knew I was going to by a inaudible [sounds like drawer] with it!

R: Is this a part of town you're quite familiar with then?

PB: Yeah, definitely.

R: Do you tend to just hang out at [Youthgroup name] if you're here or are there lots of different places?

PA: There's, like, loads of different areas, like, and different groups we hang out with, like your [Youthgroup name] group, you've got, like, your moshers and your emos and you've got your chavs and like…

PB: They're all down by, like, Blue Bannana…

03:00

PA: Yeah, Blue Banana, down by TGI Fridays on the comfortable seats and all of that. Like, everyone's like spread round, really.

R: So do you know, then, where different groups of people are going to be?

PA: Yeah

PB: Yeah, pretty much.

PA: Like, we…

PB: If we leave [Youthgroup name] we know that everyone will be by Blue Banana now, so…

PA: Or they'll be under the subway or in Copper's Field, so if they're not in one place they'll be in one of the others.

R: Why is it they go to those places?

PB: It's more to stay, like, stay out of trouble really, 'cause certain places we go, even if we're not doing anything…

32

PA: Yeah, like, even if we're just sitting there doing nothing, like, apparently we're in the wrong, and they're like "What you're doing here's wrong, you've got to leave", all of that, so…"

R: What kind of place is that?

PA: Like, up in there, for one like…

R: St David's [Two]?

PA: Yeah, where you've…

PB: We'd get kicked out of there in about ten minutes even if we're just sitting there.

PA: Yeah, if we're just sitting there, having a talk with our mates we'll get kicked out, even though it's a public place. Obviously, that's why everyone now, like, well the groups I chill with, they're all like all mostly all out in *inaudible* [sounds like yoping] 'cause there's nothing else to do. They're the only places where we can chill.

04:00

R: Why is it that people kick you out do you think?

PB: They see us as trouble, I think.

PA: They do, like, it's where we hang and how we dress, isn't it? They see…

PB: One of my mates is a cleaner and she told me that even as soon as we walk in because we all hang out in quite a big group, as soon as we walk in the cameras are turned straight onto us and straight away they think…

PA: They think we're going to do something 'cause we're all in one group, they think go into a shop and, like, rob the shop, which, like we wouldn't do 'cause, like, none of us is like that, like, I'm not gonna lie, I used to be like that. Like, I remember times when, especially when I was homeless and I needed money I would wait out my the carphone warehouse and when, like, the delivery truck came I would, like, jump on the truck, get a couple of phones and then go sell them, but, like…

05:00

PB: Mine was aftershave from, like, Boots and Debenhams…

PA: Yeah, like, aftershave's good money, like…

PB: It's a tenner, each one, sold straight away, go to a pub.

PA: See, I didn't go to pubs, I tended to go to dealers and all of that, and they'd be like "How much do you want for it?" and I'm like "Thirty quid".

PB: Inaudible… but like it depends if it's birthdays and Christmases they're sold easier

PA: Yeah, but like birthdays and Christmases they're all like, "Can you go into Boots and get me these hair straighteners?", it's like, these straighteners are, like, a hundred and seventy pounds from John Lewis and they've got, like, a big tag somewhere, like, they're connected or round and, like, I've had people asking me if I can walk into John Lewis pick a couple up and walk out. *Laughs.* It's like, "No!". Like, there are certain things, like, I would steal if I knew I wasn't gonna get caught for it, but, like, now I just wouldn't do it 'cause…

06:00

PB: I used to never have any fears about doing it, but now, I couldn't even rob chocolate *inaudible…*

PA: Now, since I got banned from Poundland I can't even walk into Poundland any more, where no one can see you, and pick up the smallest thing like that and put it in my pocket, when I used to like go into phone shops and all of that and pick up a phone and walk out.

R: Is this a bit of town you both come through much?

PA: Yeah man, like…

PB: Sometimes I'll have a little skate by here…

PA: In there, like, obviously where me and Participant 5 are both skaters, like, you've got your little ledged and all of that by there so you can like just come round and chill in all of the places, isn't it? *Inaudible.*

R: *Inaudible* [Possible asking if the entrance to the library feels welcoming]

PA: It is. Like, it is a welcoming place, I'm not gonna lie.

PB: Nice and cozy in here as well, like the little seating areas you've got on the second and fourth floor

07:00

PA: And how they've separated out the kids' section from, like, all the like… you can't get into the kids' section from going up the escalator, you've got to get a lift.

PB: I've done that before, I've got up the lift and walked into the kids' section and thought "I'm not supposed to be here".

PA: Walking out on the wrong floor…

PB: But even if I had young kids, say about six, seven, I'd definitely bring them there.

PA: Yeah it's good isn't it, like, learning curve for…

PB: And it's a nice atmosphere as well.

R: In what way?

PB: It's very quiet and relaxed, like… Like when we were both homeless… Do you know the Huggard Centre?

R: Yeah.

PB: They kick you out at, like, eight, nine in the morning…

PA: And, like, this is the only place you can come…

PB: *Inaudible* come here, pick a book up or something and then go to the seating areas and have a little…*inaudible*.

R: The seating here?

PA: Yeah.

08:00

R: You could take a photo of that, so I can remember.

PB: *Inaudible*

[Taking photo]

PB: You know where I mean, don't you? The little bit by here with the…?

PA: Yeah.

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PA: And then, obviously, you've got all your computers and the different levels. If you do need to do your research, like, you can come up here or go up onto any other floor and then you've got, like, computers and then also on the top floor, like, if there are, like, proper welsh people all talking, you've got your like welsh level for welsh speaking.

09:00

R: Top bit?

PA: Yeah, like, the top floor, it's all for Welsh.

PB: And research as well; you can get old archive newspapers up there as well.

R: Yeah, actually we discovered those when we went up there, the microfilm things…

PB: Yeah.

PA: You've got, like, three of four of them now, haven't you?

PB: I was trying to find out, I know it's silly, but, what the headlines were on the day of my birth… in 18th of May eighty-nine. I was trying to find out and I still haven't found out. I know you can buy them on line, but being able to come here and look for them and see it like that…

PA: Yeah and, like, seeing an original, like, in there like, basically the original copies and all…

R: So do you guys, do you think you come here more to check out the books or more when you need a place to sit?

10:00

PA: Personally, like, I don't like reading, but, like, say if I had nothing else to do, like my mind's of a change where I'll actually come up here to read something or go on the computers…

PB: I do enjoy the comic, I won't lie, I pick up a couple of comic and I sit in the chair and I have a read of them.

R: I was in Bristol once waiting for a train and I went straight to the library and picked up a couple of comic; it was an easy way to kill a few hours.

PA: It is, like, you don't realise how much time passes through reading two, three pages on a book, and then you can down an hour or something for you to read three pages and it feels like five, ten minutes.

R: What do you reckon about of the building, 'cause I think it only opened quite recently, didn't it?

PB: About a year ago, something like that? A year, two years ago, something like that.

PA: The architecture behind it is unbelievable, like…

PB: When you're up on the top floor you can look out and you can see so much as well.

R: *inaudible* [something about whether there are other places in Cardiff where you can get that]

11:00

PA: No, like unless you pay to go into the Castle, like, personally I would say if you go to the top floor of here and look out of the windows it's one of the best views you'll get, unless you go up to the Valleys or…

PB: On top of car parks of something…

PA: Yeah, like it's one of the best views you can get without doing something illegal or going a far way.

PB: Even the… I like the way you can return your back

PA: And it all sorts it out

PB: All sorts it out and you can use the machine there to just place the book… I don't know how.

PA: You just scan your barcode and your library card and you can check it out simply through that machine. And when you bring it back you've got a, like, a little post-box sort of thing. You put it in and it'll just sort of come through and it all sorts out into them, there [The hoppers].

12:00

PB: I love the piano up there, as well.

PA: Yeah, like you actually have people here sometimes and they're, like, playing music and all of that, like.

R: Is that something you think of usually when you think of a library?

PB: Not really.

PA: No, 'cause you think it's all quiet, like everyone wants you to shut up and all of that but like then you come into this one and , like, they don't mind as long as like it's not too loud, and then you've got your music, obviously, which is loud, but it's nothing like people hate it…

PB: They do little performances in the newspaper area by there.

PA: Or they'll have a little choir up by the piano, which I've seen a couple of times, and they've had choirs singing and all of that.

R: Shall we find somewhere to sit to do these papers?

Inaudible

13:00

R: It's amazing how busy it is.

PA: It is, isn't it? Like, surprisingly in the morning it tends to be more busy.

Inaudible

PA: Like, instead of it just being, like, books and comic, it's actually, I can get DVDs, CDs and I can get free posters.

R: Posters?

PA: Yeah. I've got A3 posters before simply 'cause when I was, like, homeless I wanted something to draw, so I'd get the poster and, like, I'd use the other side of it to draw on and then, like, if I hang it up somewhere I could switch it around. If I got bored of looking at the same thing, like, switch them around.

1.5   NON-STUDENT 6 & NON-STUDENT 7, 9ᵀᴴ MAY 2014

Researcher: So, I guess this is a bit of town that you guys are quite familiar with then?

Participant A: Yeah. Take a picture then?

R: You tend to hang out round here a lot?

PA: Um, yeah, in [youthgroup name] quite a lot.

R: Yeah. Are there other places you hang out around here too then?

PA: Um, when the weather's nice by the castle.

R: Yeah.

PA: Um, that's nice; play football by the castle.

R: Does it depend on who you're hanging out with that day, where you go?

PA: Um, not really. Think it depends on the weather.

R: What about the Central Library? Is that a place you guys go much?

PA: Um, I did when I was in college, um, and when I was in school, but I haven't been since then.

R: What were you doing then?

03:00

PA: Um, just revision and stuff 'cause I could use the computers, and they have some textbooks and stuff in there. So that was quite good.

R: It only opened quite recently didn't it?

PA: Hmmm

R: It's quite a new building isn't it, I think.

PA: Yeah, [inaudible]

R: Why do you guys hang around at [youthgroup name] then, is it because it's a place that's welcoming, a place that's familiar?

PA: Everyone's kind of… there. It's, well, everyone lives all over so that's where we kind of all meet.

Participant B: [Inaudible]

PA: Yeah.

R: So you go there because you know the guys there?

PB: Yeah.

PA: Yeah it's where everyone meets and then we'll go off and do, like, whatever. So, yeah…

04:00

R: How do you decide where you're going to hang out for the day?

PA: Depending on the weather.

R: [Inaudible] Do you think the Central Library is a welcoming kind of library?

PB: Yeah, like, it depends on [inaudible] they kick me out now and then.

R: Freaks you out?

PB: No, kicked me out…

R: Oh, out of the library?

PA: [inaudible]

R: Is it a place you feel like you're being watched then?

PA: Yeah.

PB: It's the way you dress as well; they look at what we're doing all the time, whatever we do, where we go, like, when we walk round they just keep looking at us, like.

R: With the cameras?

PA: And all the staff, like, the security just, like, yeah…

05:00

R: Why do you reckon that is?

PA: Because people are judgemental.

R: So you think it makes you quite recognisable?

PA: Yeah. But I think it's stupid. You shouldn't have to dress a certain way to go into a library.

R: When you think of a stereotypical library, what do you think of?

PA: Quiet places.

PB: Yeah, like stuff you see on TV, isn't it?

R: Is that like this one? Or is this one like that, I should say?

PA: They're still, oh, I don't know. I don't know, sometimes it's uncomfortable because you feel like you have to be completely silent.

R: Right

PA: Um, but well, I don't know.

06:00

R: Do you think it encourages you to go inside, from the outside?

PB: [Inaudible]

PA: Yeah, it looks better than some libraries.

R: That what, sorry?

PA: It looks better than some other libraries.

R: How do you mean?

PA: I don't know, it just looks, like, more modern kind of thing…

R: Do you think it's odd to come into a building and then immediately go straight up?

PA: Um…

R: Does it makes you wonder what's underneath?

PA: No, not really, like… Never really thought about it before.

07:00

R: I notice everybody's staring upwards; is that something you think… I mean when you come in here it's quite…

PA: There are just so many levels.

R: We'll just have a wander round if you want.

PA: There's never any computers free in here.

R: Never any computers?

PA: Never any computers free, no.

PB: Shall we go up another floor?

PA: Yeah.

R: Can if you want to.

PB: That's lovely, isn't it?

R: Is this the sort of place you feel you could, like, just hang out for a while?

PB: Pardon?

R: Is this the sort of place you could hang out for an afternoon?

08:00

PB: Not really [inaudible]

PA: Not really, 'cause you have to be so quiet.

Reminds me of two years ago, when I was here…

PB: [Inaudible]

PA: It's so quiet.

PB: It's really quiet, isn't it?

09:00

PA: I don't like it.

R: We can sit in the chairs here.

PB: Oh, I'll sit there [inaudible]

R: [inaudible]

PB: Not in the library, like, it's not…

R: Not a place to chat?

PB: No, there's eyes and ears watching everywhere you go.

PA: And people just look at you like, if you talk they just look at you as if to say "shut up".

R: Do you think the design of the building has anything to do with that? The way it's built and laid out?

PA: Um… I don't know.

R: I mean, do you feel like there are little places round here where you could hide away if you wanted?

40

PA: Not really. I think it's all quite open, so you're kind of… on display all the time.

10:00

PB: [Inaudible]

R: What's this?

PA: It's like a youth thing.

R: Well, there we go. I think that'll do us. Thanks for that.

If you had to sum the place up in three words, what do you think you'd pick?

PB: Three words?

PA: Quiet…

PB: Relaxing?

PA: No, I don't feel relaxed in there, I feel a bit on edge.

PB: Yeah, so you've always got eyes, have you noticed? Everyone at, like, the counters…?

PA: … Follows you with their eyes

PB: The only thing that … the way we're dressed and the way we come across [inaudible]

PA: Yeah, I don't get why you should get judged for going in a library.

12:00

R: It is odd that. You wonder what they're looking for.

PA: Yeah, what's the perfect library person?

R: Exactly. Well, we've had quiet and possibly relaxing, possibly not relaxing. What else?

PA: Um…

R: Or is there nothing else? It's basically you're abiding memory of the place.

PB: [Inaudible]

PA: Spacious. It's really big and open, kind of thing.

R: Yeah.

PA: But, I think it's not like too open, but, everything's so open, kind of thing… But everything's so open that you just feel like you're being stared at all the time, like, you always feel like someone's looking at you. There's never… There's, like, not somewhere where you can sit in a corner by yourself kind of thing.

13:00

R: But [youthgroup name] is different though?

PA: Yeah, I think it's 'cause it's smaller. Everyone kind of gets to know each other, and I think we're all in kind of like the same boat, like. So, no one gets judged for, like, the way they dress or anything, like, 'cause we're all, like, similar… I don't know, I guess… Yeah. I guess 'cause, like, we're comfortable in there. We're comfortable in [youthgroup name].

R: Yeah. Do you think the Central Library is the kind of place it's better to go in by yourself or with a group of friends?

14:00

PA: I think by yourself. Like, the way it is now, 'cause I think if you went in by yourself, like, if I… I used to go there when I was doing my exams and if you went in in a group, like, everyone would stare at us, we'd get looks from the staff. The staff would tell us to be quiet, and… Like, [we were] not making loads of noise, not, like, massive amounts or anything. It just seems like they don't like big groups of people.

R: Yeah. I guess it's interesting the building has to be designed with a particular group in mind, but obviously the point of a library is that it's for everyone.

PA: Yeah.

1.5 Non-student 6 & Non-student 7, 9th May 2014
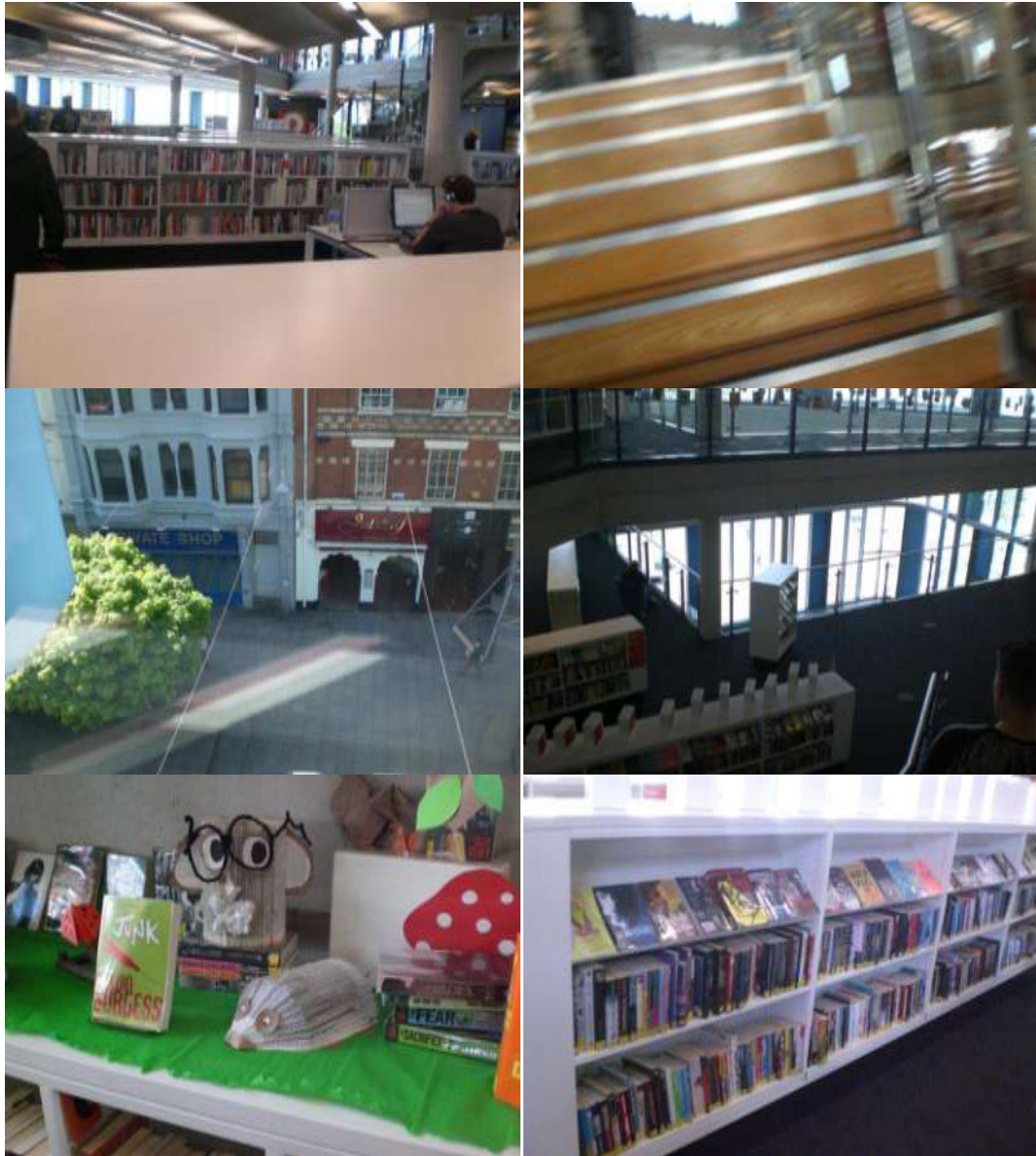
1.6 NON-STUDENT 8, 9TH MAY 2014

Researcher: So, this a bit of town you come to quite a bit, is it?

Participant: Yeah.

R: [Inaudible, presumably do you usually hang out at [youthgroup name]?]

P: Yeah, I hang out there most times, most times. You know, it's just something I've done, like, because I was, I ended up a year out of college, so, err, situation being that it was just where I went, just where I found, and I thought, well, it's somewhere where I can hang out and that'd allow me to try and find a place to go, like a college or something.

04:00

R: Yeah.

P: 'cause, you know, they help, like. And Careers Wales is across the way, so…

R: Yeah.

P: Somewhere where I could have waited for an appointment or, you know. But then, [I'm] like, just getting more and more into the place, like. I just…

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah. So that's what I do, I just spend most of my time around [youthgroup name].

    We can cross quick.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, they're funny. As long as they know, they know.

05:00

R: Do you come to the Central Library much?

P: Well, I go there now and again, if I haven't got internet or nothing. Or if I just want peace-out time.

R: What do you mean?

P: Like, I get a bit stressed sometimes, so, like, I go to the library to either read a book or go on the internet or to do something.

R: Is it a good place to get away from something, do you reckon?

P: Yeah. It's quiet, it's just a quiet place to be, like. And you think more about it, that you just, like, forget things and you just focus and you just… It helps me out with my stress, it just calms me down as well.

R: Is that, do you think, because you don't know so many people there as you do at [youthgroup name]?

06:00

P: Yeah, so it's not like people know me so, you know, they don't judge me or nothing, do you get me? So, like, I just, like to go there so I know the people don't know me, so I'm just like, hey, I'm on my own; gives me time to breathe, so I don't have people coming up to me saying "what's wrong, what's wrong?". Instead of them asking me I'd like to be… just peaceful and be to myself, like.

R: Do you reckon the building is relaxing itself?

P: Yeah, it's a nice building, like.

R: It's quite new isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you know the building, the Central Library that was there before?

P: Yeah, it was at the other end of town, the old library. Was at the other end of town, in the Hays. So, yeah…

07:00

R: [Inaudible]

You reckon it looks like a library?

P: Well… It don't look like a library, it looks too nice to be a library.

R: What do you mean?

P: Well, I library's usually just an old brick building with a load of books. Nowadays it's computers and there's art stuff in there, so it's changed hell of a lot, like really hell of a lot, like.

R: Why do you think it has changed?

P: I don't know. 'cause it's getting more and more up to grade with things, isn't it? 'cause the years go by.

08:00

R: Do you think libraries were out of date before?

P: Yeah, Yeah. All the times are catching up.

R: Sorry I couldn't give you the camera to take photos.

P: That's alright.

R: It shouldn't matter too much. I was going to use them in the focus groups [inaudible].

P: Yeah, well where will it be done?

09:00

R: [Inaudible; probably "Not sure yet"]. Not sure if [youthgroup name]…

P: 'cause I was going to say, I'd be quite happy to attend.

R: [Inaudible; something about possibly using the library] I don't know, it might be quite a good place to do it actually.

P: Yeah.

R: [Inaudible]

P: So, what're we doing then?

R: Shall we go in?

P: Right, yeah.

R: Go in, have a wander around?

[Inaudible]

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Do you think it's odd to come into a building and immediate do upwards as soon as you're in through the door? Makes you wonder what's underneath.

P: I know.

10:00

R: I think it must be all the shops that are round the outside. 'cause there's Wagamama's there right outside…

P: Yeah, some of them are all built in together.

R: I think the rent from the shops is meant to offset the cost of the building. I wonder how much it did cost.

[Inaudible]

P: Yeah, it makes you wander round, 'cause, like, where it's quiet you can do, like, what you want. You can have a look at all the different types of book. You know, you can go round, picking up information. 'cause you know where certain things are, like they'll either be in alphabetical or they'll be on, like, the novel, of, like, the story, like, if it's a fact, umm. And things like, then science, you know, look, there's crime there, fiction.

11:00

R: You know where you are with it.

P: Yeah. So, like, you… It's like a place where you know where things are, so, like, you've got all the crime ones there along this side, and then you've got a couple of computers around.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, just looks around. I've always got a seat for one of these computers on this row by here.

R: What about [inaudible]?

P: I always sit on one of these computers by here, 'cause most of them have their headphones in, I've got mine in, just listening to things. Got all sorts of books everywhere. There's a help desk over there.

R: Is it a good place to ask for help?

P: Yeah, 'cause you can basically go there and it's a help centre. They'll help you with information and stuff like that. There's, like, there's also another floor.

12:00

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah. Wander round, if you like. People have quiet things by here [?], you know. Well, it is quite big. It's like the biggest library I've ever seen. 'cause there's one down by in Splott, in the Star Centre, so it's only a little library and this one's just a big one. Got all sorts. Just a load of books, places to sit. It's pretty much like that on every floor. But… See, headphones in. People concentrate with headphones in. It's a quiet place. You don't get done for having your music, if it's in your headphones. That's what I mean, I do like this place. It's a good library, I'll tell you that. Compared to nearly every single one of them [the branches].

R: How is it better?

14:00

47

P: It's bigger, you know, there's more books, they're all… Instead of being crammed in one room they're all spaced out like they should be.

R: So you think the space is a good thing?

P: Yeah, 'cause then you can get more books and go back down. So, yeah. You just get a load of things.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Well, yeah. I like it 'cause it's just quiet and it keeps me going. Once in a while, you know when you get those problems and you just want to run away and you just want to get away from loud noises and stuff like that, so basically, yeah. You know, it's everything, like. But it is a big a big building; you can get as much information as you can out of it all, like. You know?

15:00

R: Yeah. It makes me wonder how anyone could possible get around the British Library in London, 'cause it's so much bigger than this one. It's the biggest library in the world.

P: But this one – I know it might not be the biggest – but it is the nicest I've seen.

R: In Cardiff?

P: Yeah, it's got to be the nicest one in Cardiff by far.

R: Yeah I like the one in Cathays, but it's so noisy in there 'cause you've got main roads both sides.

P: And this is… Even though the buses are going past you don't hear them as much.

R: 'cause it's double glazing.

P: Yeah, good double glazing. I'm telling you that.

R: I guess we've just got to find a cash point now.

16:00

48

1.7 Non-student 9, 9th May 2014

Participant: Where've we got to walk to?

Researcher: Central Library.

P: Central Library!

R: I say we can go anywhere like that there's pretty much only one way…

P: It is close isn't it?

R: So is [youthgroup name] a place you hang around much then?

P: Um, yeah, like when you come into town and stuff there's people there if you want to talk to them and stuff. And, like, they help you out and everything and you can meet your friends there, like, meet new people and stuff. It's good.

R: Are there other places around here you tend to hang out too?

01:00

P: Um, only, like, fields and stuff, like Cooper's Field and by the Castle or some place.

R: Does it depend who you're with?

P: Huh?

R: Does it depend who you're with, where you go?

P: When we usually come into Cardiff, like, when I usually come into town I usually see the same people anyway, and then we'll, like discuss from there what we do and stuff.

R: I guess this must be a bit of town you're quite familiar with then?

P: Huh?

R: I guess this must be a bit of town you're quite familiar with?

P: Yeah. We could go through this way and go out [Divert through the St David's Two when it becomes apparent the path past the building site is blocked]. Go through this way and go out. Are you from round here then?

R: Err, not really, no.

P: Where you from originally?

R: Herefordshire.

P: Oh yeah. That's not too far.

R: Are you from round here too?

P: Um, I lived in Barry Island all my life and my dad lives in Barry, but my mum lives in Neath.

02:00

R: Oh right.

P: But, I'm always in Cardiff, like.

R: So you're Welsh then, born and bred?

P: Born and bred, yeah.

R: Do you come through here much?

P: Yeah, It's just quicker just to walk through here and stuff.

R: When I came down on Tuesday the path was open, but I guess they're still doing stuff on the building site.

P: Yeah, they are. We can go out this way and walk left or we can walk left and then out.

R: Yeah, either way really.

P: And walk that way and then straight up. Do you do this much then, your research and stuff?

R: Um, yeah, it's kind of… I'm doing a Phd, so it's kind of a job, effectively, just one I don't get paid for. I'm self-funded so I have to work two part-time jobs to cover it, so it's quite busy.

03:00

P: Getting somewhere though.

R: Exactly. I have to talk to a lot of people.

P: People skills, like.

R: Do you use the Central Library much?

P: Um, if I need to find out something if, like, Roots isn't open, the library, like, it'd be the only place to go really. But, like, you go into Roots and they have computers in there if you want to do research and stuff anyway, but, um, yeah.

R: Do you prefer Roots to the Central Library then?

P: Yeah.

R: Why is that?

P: Um, I don't know, it's just like it's more easier in there because you can speak to the staff in there, like, see your friends, you can go on the computers and do things in there. I don't know, it's just, I find it better myself.

R: Because there are people there you know?

P: Like, in the library you have to be quiet as well. Like, and you don't have to be quiet in Roots, like, you can speak and stuff, but in the library you have to be proper quiet.

04:00

R: Do you use many of the other libraries around here as well?

P: Um, no. I used to use the library in Barry but I don't really, like, use the libraries around here really.

R: Yeah. Take photos of anything you find interesting.

P: Might take a photo of that, isn't it?

R: The sculpture?

P: Yeah. I loves photography myself.

R: Do you? You got a camera?

P: Um, I used to, and then I broke it, but I want to go on to college and study either photography or catering.

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R: Yeah.

P: Windy, mind, isn't it?

R: Ridiculous. I'm just hoping we can hear each other on the microphone and it won't be just wind noise.

05:00

P: I know. Just take a photo of the library.

R: You think it's a nice building?

P: Yeah, it is quite a nice building actually.

R: It was opened quite recently wasn't it?

P: Um, I think it's been done out again. Think they just done it out, like.

R: Do you reckon it's inviting?

P: Um, a few people go here, yes, so, must be. Um, yeah, I don't feel, like, not comfortable, but, like, it's too quiet. Too quiet.

R: you feel you have to be quiet?

P: Yeah, and if you ain't quiet someone'll come up to you and say "Be quiet!"

06:00

R: Do you have a routine when you come in here, a particular place you go to?

P: No, I don't really come in here much to be honest.

R: It looks like they've cordoned a bit off [seating at top of escalators].

P: Shall we go sit there?

R: [Inaudible]

P: I read, like, [inaudible]… Like, I enjoy books, but if I start reading a book I've got to find it interesting, and if I don't find it interesting in a few pages, like, I won't read it. I don't mind books, like.

R: [Inaudible; something about browsing]

07:00

P: Yeah, there're plenty of different books, like, they have so many floors, like, the amount of books is crazy.

R: Yeah, it's pretty big. I don't know how many books are in here. I know the British Library in London, which is the biggest library in the world, has six miles of shelves added to it each year.

P: Oh my god.

R: Because it's a legal deposit library which means that every book that's published in the world has to have a copy sent to it.

P: That's loads, that.

B: They have to build, like, underground tunnels and warehouses.

P: Never-ending…

R: [Inaudible]

P: There are quite a few in here, this is massive, like. In Barry the library is probably just, like, this many books on this floor, not even that. This one's just so much more bigger.

R: What do you think about the building?

P: Um, I likes it, me, I likes the way it's built. I do like the way it's built in here.

R: How does it make you feel?

08:00

P: Um, I don't know, like, it's calming in here but it's just like, it's an atmosphere in here, like, you have to be quiet, and everyone's just, like, you have to be quiet and everything.

R: Are you worried you're going to get shushed?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think this is the sort of place that's better to come to with a group of friends or by yourself?

P: Group of friends.

R: Why's that?

P: Because, like, you have more people around you then, you know, like… you're not just sat there on your own, like, quiet, you can be sat there with your friends and stuff.

R: Yeah. You're not worried you'd attract attention?

P: No.

R: We can carry on wondering about if your want. Go to other floors.

      Have you been up to the top before?

09:00

P: No, I've only every really been on this floor and downstairs.

R: Not afraid of heights are you?

P: Um, like, I am but it doesn't really bother me. Like, there's computer facilities and stuff.

R: Do they have enough computers in this building?

P: Um, I'm not sure. Like, they have a few levels and this. Do you want to go up again?

R: It's up to you.

P: I don't mind, me.

R: We could go up to the front.

P: Yeah.

      They have all different types of books and stuff.

R: [Inaudible]

10:00

P: Yeah. See they have all, like, quiet areas.

R: Quiet areas with a piano in.

P: "Please ask if you want to play the piano". I'll take a photo of the piano.

R: Interesting thing to put in a library.

P: It is, isn't it? I've never noticed that before. It's a nice one, like. In a library.

R: It's like it's electric.

P: Yeah, that's good because you're in a library and they've got all, like, CDs and stuff.

R: [Inaudible]

P: [Laughs]. Probably. It is soon isn't it? It is Sunday, isn't it?

R: Do you feel comfortable asking a librarian something?

11:00

P: Yeah. I'm the kind of person that if something's got to be asked, like, I'll more than likely go ask someone about it. Like, if I want to know something I'll go and ask someone.

R: Yeah. [Inaudible]

P: No, I'm not really a shy person.

R: Well that's good for doing interviews.

P: Yeah, it's just knowing the right type of questions and stuff. They have so many floors!

R: Why do you think it's so tall.

P: The amount of books, isn't it?

R: Yeah, I suppose the floor plan is actually quite small considering how big it [the library] is.

P: Going up again, are we?

R: I'm just following you.

P: I don't know, I don't mind.

R: It's good exercise.

12:00

P: It is, isn't it, especially with these stairs.

R: You can get a good feel for a building, actually, when you go all the way through it.

P: Yeah, it's like different when you get to the top. You have the beams up here and stuff.

R: A lot of glass, isn't there?

P: Yeah, there's loads of it.

R: Is it like what you… When you think of a library, is this what you think of?

P: Not really.

R: What do you think of?

P: Like, just one floor full of books, like, not, like, six floors, five floors! Imagine how much it took to build it. All the books and stuff…

13:00

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah. It's probably, I think it's papers and stuff back there, like, you know, if you wanted to know something that was special, like in a newspaper, before or something, like, really something big, like, ages ago, I think there might be papers for that.

R: I guess there must be, even though it feels big, quite a lot of places in this building you can't get to.

P: Yeah, exactly, like in there.

R: [Inaudible]

14:00

P: Probably.

R: I suppose there must be a lift as well.

P: Yeah there are lifts. I don't do lifts, me, I hate them.

R: You don't like them; why's that?

P: I don't know, I just sort of have, like, a fear of them. I thinks it's 'cause I'm really claustrophobic. We can go down in the lift if you want.

R: You're going to confront your fear?

P: [Inaudible] Before, me and the girls was in the lift before and it stopped, and one of the girls [inaudible].

[…]

16:30

R: If you had to sum up the library in three words, what do you think you'd pick?

P: Um, decent.

R: Decent?

P: Um, yeah. Spacious and educational.

R: What do you mean by decent.

P: Like, it's a decent library, like. They have five floors and all, like…

R: Well-equipped, you mean?

P: Yeah, that's the word.

R: Well-specified?

P: Yeah, they have… they're a big library, like. They have loads of things in it.

17:00

R: I think it's great that you can have a place like that for free.

P: Yeah, it is, yeah. There's not many places, like, these days you can go into places free and, like, and sit there and do your work and whatever.

R: [Inaudible]

…

R: Do you travel about much?

18:00

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P: Um, I do, yeah. I get trains everywhere 'cause I travel from my mum's to my dad's and I'll travel up here or I'll go up my brother's at Mountain Ash and stuff. I do travel quite a lot, yeah. I likes it, me. I get carsick though. I don't like travelling my buses and cars because I get travelsickness, but I can get trains anywhere, like, and I won't feel sick at all.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I hates them. Like, if they're too packed and stuff…

R: Do you reckon [youthgroup name] feels more welcoming than the library?

P: Yeah.

R: Because it's smaller and darker or because of the people there?

19:00

P: Um, it's the people. People make places these days. Like, it's the atmosphere in there, like, if you're working there you'll at least have someone saying hello and stuff, and they're all helpful in there, like, very.

R: But in Central Library you don't feel that way?

P: No. I think it's the whole fact that you have to be quiet. There are more people in [youthgroup name] of around my age, and in libraries you have older people, like. Most people in [youthgroup name] have the same background. [Inaudible] It's just different; it's more homely in [youthgroup name] than the library, like.

R: Do you ever feel like you're being watched [in the library?]

P: Yeah, all the time.

1.8 NON-STUDENT 10 & NON-STUDENT 11, 9TH MAY 2014

Researcher: I guess this is a bit of town you're quite familiar with, is it?

Participant A: Yeah.

R: Come to [youthgroup name] a lot, do you?

PA: Hmmm.

Participant B: I don't.

PA: You do.

R: Why do you come down to [youthgroup name]?

PB: Drama. Yeah.

[Inaudible]

01:00

R: What type of areas in town do you guys like to hang out in?

PB: My house.

PA: No, I don't mind town. I do prefer this part of town, [youthgroup name] area 'cause it's more quieter, isn't it? Even with the drama that goes on in there. I feel bad.

R: Is the Central Library a place you guys visit much?

Both: No

PB: Didn't even know we had a central library.

PA: I did.

R: [To PB] You've got no idea where we're going?

PB: No!

PA: I do, don't worry.

R: I think it's quite a recent building.

PA: Yeah, it's been made more public, yeah.

PB: I just don't pay attention.

R: Whenabouts did it open?

PA: I couldn't tell you that. No, I'm not too sure when it opened.

…

R: At least in the library it'll be quieter [than in the wind outside] I guess.

03:00

PA: That's the library, PB, Cardiff Library.

PB: Oh the big massive thing? [Laughs]

R: It's the massive blue one with "library" written on it.

PB: Oh yeah [Laughs]. I don't look for the obvious things.

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library then?

PA: No.

R: 'cause you must have walked past it before.

PA: I used to walk past it and never pay attention, and then I got sent there the one day and that's how I found out where I was, otherwise I wouldn't have known.

R: When you say "library" do you think of something that stereotypically looks like that?

PA: No.

PB: No.

PA: I'd never think it would look like that.

R: What type of building would you think of?

PA: Like an old building, I would.

PB: Hmmm, boring.

04:00

R: Does it look like an inviting place?

PA: Yeah.

R: A place you might like to wander into?

PA: Yeah, like…

PB: I think just the word "library" puts me off.

PA: Just, yeah, if I thought, like, I didn't know what it was, I didn't know it was a library, I'd go in to see what it was, but because it's a library it's just like "Oh yeah, full of books and stuff; why would I want to go in there?"

R: Yeah. It's not the sort of place you'd just wander into with friends then?

Both: No.

R: Is that because you've already got [youthgroup name] and there are just plenty of other places to hang out?

PA: Yeah. Like, I don't even think if I had nowhere I still wouldn't come in here. Would you, like, just to chill? [To PB]

PB: No, not really.

PA: I don't think I've even got a library or anything. Have you? [To PB]

PB: No [laughs]

05:00

PA: I think the last time I had one of them was when I was in school.

PB: Think my brother had one.

PA: Where are we going?

R: Shall we just have a wander round. I basically just follow you about, asking you questions.

PA: How many floors do you reckon there are?

PB: Eight.

R: Do you think it feels inviting, just go in?

PA: Yeah, it looks like you want to wander round and see…

PB: It looks like you're on a film when, like, the killer's chasing the person down the stairs 'cause there's loads of stairs in there. I like films!

PA: [Inaudible]

PB: What, in all the books?

PA: [Inaudible]

PB: Do you want to take pictures, PA?

06:00

PA: What have I got to take pictures of?

PB: I don't know.

R: Take pictures of anything you want.

[Inaudible]

PB: I don't like stairs.

R: You don't like stairs? Why's that?

PB: 'cause I don't have any energy.

PA: This camera's quite good, you know. People are going to want copyrights to these photos I'm taking.

PB: Oh, that's cool, that splodge on the floor. [Laughs]

07:00

R: I notice we're still going up. Do you think the building encourages you to go up?

PA: Yeah, I wanna, like…

PB: You walk round the corner and there's another set of stairs.

PA: Yeah [Inaudible].

PB: I'm out of breath. Oh, there's a lift and we've been walking up stairs.

PA: [Inaudible]

PB: [Laughs] I think we're at the top now. Five floors.

08:00

PA: The battery's gone. Turning off.

R: Oh, has it died?

PA: Yup.

R: Oh brilliant. Never mind.

PB: Oh, can I go spin on the chair?

[Inaudible]

R: Do you think, now you've visited, you'd be more likely to come back?

PA: I don't know. Do you think you'd come back? [to PB]

58

PB: No.

PA: [Inaudible]

09:00

PA: We've just done, like, a whole circle.

PB: Pretty much. Shall we go down the lift now?

PA: [Inaudible]

10:00

R: Shall we get the lifts down?

PB: Yeah.

R: I guess there must be quite a lot of places in this building you can't get to, even though it's quite big.

PA: Yeah.

R: There must be a lot of staff.

PA: Yeah.

[…]

11:00

R: If you guys had to sum up the library in three words, what do you reckon you'd go for?

PA: Boring, books and students.

R: Boring?

PB: It didn't look boring.

PA: No, no, like a normal library…

R: It's fine…

PA: Not like this library, like a normal library. If you said library to me I wouldn't think of Cardiff Library. I'd think of the stereotypical library. Like, this is made fun, it seems as though it's been made for you to enjoy being here.

PA: I like these doors.

PA: Like, realistically, this place wouldn't need five floors of books, would it, if they didn't want to make it – shall we walk down that way? If they didn't want to make it as kind of [inaudible] younger people [inaudible]

R: [Inaudible]

PA: [Inaudible]

PB: Yeah, even the colours and that, like, if you go to a normal one it's just like all wood and that.

12:00

PA: That's what I mean by boring [inaudible].

R: Is that what the other libraries in Cardiff are like?

PA: [Inaudible]

1.8 Non-student 10 & Non-student 11, 9th May 2014
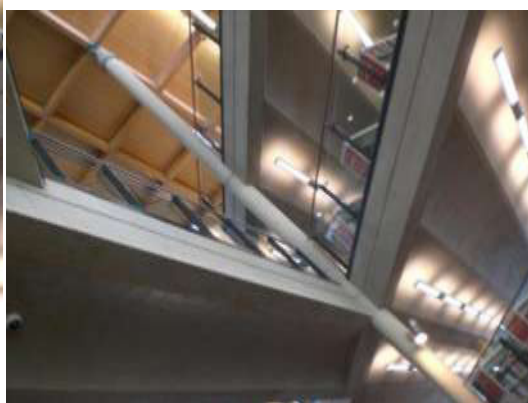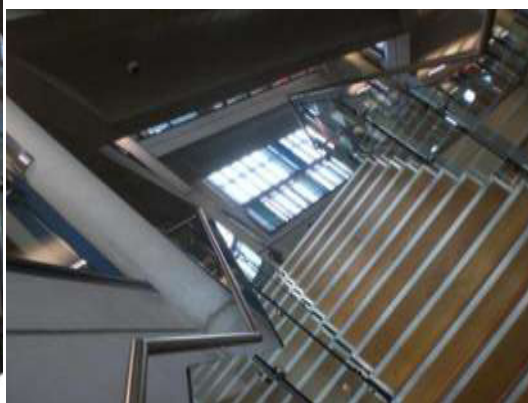
1.9 NON-STUDENT 12, 9TH MAY 2014

Researcher: So, yeah, we're going to Central Library, any way you want to go.

Participant: Come on then.

R: Unfortunately we'll have to do without the photos, unless there's anything you really want to take a photo of, but, it's probably enough just to talk about it 'cause I've been enough times now sthat I know where everything is.

Is [youthgroup name] a place you hang out a lot then?

P: Um, well I used to when I was a younger boy, but as I got older I got a few little babies, innit? So, I'm looking after them most of the time, with, obviously, it's, like, how can I say, it's in roto with the mother, isn't it? So I got them three days a week, she got them three days, so on my spare time I find myself going in now and again.

01:00

R: Is it just round there you tend to hang out or, I guess there are different places around town you tend to pass the time?

P: Um…

R: Does it depend who you're with?

P: Realistically, yeah, like I'm from Ely, see, so I can chill up in my areas with my boys but, like, my boys are always on the, say, wrong side of life. They're on the criminal side of life and me, personally, it's not my type of life, I was in there when I was younger isn't it? But as I got a bit older I got a bit wiser and a bit smarter and I find in town ways there's less violence, less proving, like round towards central ways, there's more of a chilling environment.

02:00

Everyone's out, like, either out to have a drink in the pub or to go shopping, or maybe go over sit in Castle grounds. Obviously you go get the odd fights in town but it's nothing to do with me.

R: I guess that depends on timing as much as anything?

P: What do you actually do on these studies then, on these interviews?

R: Basically we just talk about the town as we're passing through it, so this is like a bit of town that you come through a lot, so I guess it's reasonable to expect that you know stuff about it and there's always an interesting source of stories, talking to people like yourself, who know these places. And basically, when I've got a couple of dozen conversations together I can start to find where people are talking about the same stuff.

P: Well, I don't know, when you said "Take me to the library" I thought to myself, automatically, to take you straight through the St David's Two centre, but I was thinking to myself, "That's no fun, is it?"

R: We can go where you like.

P: Yeah, but it's no fun, is it? It's just a five minute walk, that is. It's a nice day; enjoy yourself, isn't it?

03:00

R: I think it's the first time this week I've felt I wasn't going to be rained on. I came down on Tuesday and spoke to [Name] and [Name2] and even though it was sunny I still got soaked.

P: I don't know, when I comes to town I either chills out at [youthgroup name] or I goes outside a shop called Blue Banana.

R: Right. Whereabouts is that?

P: Up by MacDonald's, towards the bottom of Queen Street. It's, like, basically it's a meeting place for the group of people that I hang around with, and, like, say they all meet up in there, we don't stay there all day long, but you just meet up; say, in the morning you go chill there till about twelve, midday, early afternoon and then we'll go on to maybe go somewhere else, like the Castle grounds, have a game of football, maybe go over back of the city hall there's a little park.

04:00

R: What is it about those places that's attractive?

P: Quiet. Not many people. It's easy access to town because everybody's coming from different areas. Like, say, I live up in Ely and my friend lives up in Llanrumney, the other's over, say, Llanedeyrn, well them three places in Cardiff are very far away from each other, so instead of two of us trekking to the other person's area we'll all come to town and we'll find somewhere out of town, which is quiet, to have a chill. It depends what type of day it is to be honest with you because if it's a nice sunny day then we'll go over somewhere like the Castle, have a relax in the sun, kick back, something like that, and if it's a rainy day we might find ourselves in the arcades here and St David's Two. And there's seats, so we're all on the seats, or whatever.

R: Is the library a building you ever hang out in much?

P: This library?

R: Yeah, Central here.

05:00

P: I come here… um, I'd say I come here more often than most. I come here every morning, me, just because at the moment I'm living in a hostel and the hostel that I'm living in kicks you out at eight o'clock, and then, obviously, cause I don't want to find myself doing nothing throughout the day I'll come to the library and I'll use the computer facilities and do maybe a job search or go on Facebook or something like that. I don't really like this library though.

R: This one?

P: Yeah.

R: How come?

P: Not compared to the old one. It's just too… weird, standing here on its own.

R: Do you mean compared to the central library that was over where St David's Two is?

P: Yeah, it was, like, the old library, it fitted in with the buildings, it fitted in with, like, the landscape. Like you looks around the library would fit in, but say you're walking down with street you can see this, this is like a red Skittle in a tray of blue Skittles, isn't it? It's like it just sticks out then.

06:00

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library?

P: No [immediately]. No, I don't know [less sure]. From a far distance, maybe not, until you come closer and you maybe read the sign that says "Library", no, but then that's stereotyping isn't it? Realistically, because, does the Ely library look like a library? No, it looks like a house, from the front, so, no building can be specific, it's just a building, isn't it? It's what's inside the building that makes it what it is, isn't it?

It's quiet though in here, isn't it [Entering library]? I'd come here if I wanted to do a bit of studying, or I wanted to have a bit of time on my own, or I wanted to read a book, or I wanted to think about things, 'cause this is a hard place for somebody to find you, unless you tell them you're in the library.

07:00

Obviously, everybody knows the rule of libraries, don't they: it's quiet? It's a very calm area, like. Obviously, if you've got nothing better to do with your day then they have got books, they've got computer facilities, they have got Wi-Fi facilities in there haven't they, so why not? Why not use the facilities that are given to us?

[Inaudible]

R: Are there certain bits of it that you prefer inside?

P: Higher up.

R: Why's that?

P: I just likes to be high. I just, I dunno, is there a piano in here as well? A baby grand, yeah? I come here before with my nan to listen to someone play and it was actually quite nice. Do you come to the library often?

08:00

R: I do recently actually, but the only time before I've really used the library massively before is when my Wi-Fi was broken at home, but that's mainly because the university has its own library, so if I have studying to do that's a lot closer.

P: What's the thing with going to the library then?

R: This library?

P: Hmmm.

R: Basically I'm studying libraries; that's what my thesis is about, it's about how young people use…

P: Shall we go up another floor?

R: How the design of libraries is suited or unsuited to young people, you know, whether they're more suited to old people or to toddlers, that type of thing. So I'm getting people's views on that.

09:00

P: I don't know, like, with libraries, like, you know the libraries outside of the central area, places like Canton, Ely, Fairwaters, their libraries look like libraries. They look almost like community centres, or they got that library look about them. They're cosier, whereas, I don't know, this library has gone from, compared from the old library to this library, it's got more of a fashion statement.

R: You reckon?

64

P: Look at *our* library, and *our* central station! Seven floors! This is more like a fashion statement. At the moment, where Cardiff is a rising city, and obviously buildings are getting built and bigger, more construction's going on, it's a rising city, a lot of development's going about, so at the moment I think most of the projects in the city centre are fashion statements, trying to make Cardiff the e better city that it already used to be. Like, I was saying earlier that, um, I compare, I prefer the layout of the old Cardiff city, when it was all like all the old Hays, all the old St Mary's Street, but then, I don't know, it's whether you're modern fashion, whether you're modernised or whether you're old-fashioned. Me, personally, I likes a bit of old fashioned.

10:00

R: It's interesting to hear you talking about that, because I've only been here for eighteen months, so that was all gone what I arrived. This is how I've known Cardiff, it's all I've seen of it, so it's interesting to hear you say what it was like growing up here.

P: You see, I don't know, I think it is though. I think that's quite stupid [the sculpture outside], you see that big ring outside, the actual? Obviously it's modern art, d'you get me, supposedly, but what is it? It's stupid. Why wouldn't you have a big sculpture of something like a book? Or maybe a philosopher or someone like that? Like, 'cause, I don't know, libraries, philosophy, books, maybe a very good, maybe William Shakespeare or something to do with him, or something to do with actual literature.

11:00

It doesn't have to be English, it could be Welsh. We are the capital of Wales. But it could look more like a library. Inside, obviously, you can't say it don't look like a library 'cause what does a library look like?

R: Full of books.

P: Full of books, yeah. And then on the outside it looks like a big, massive, I'd say a big office building, if I had to say. Then, when I do come into the library I don't tend to come… I tend to either go to the top floor or I tend to just use these quick computers here.

R: Just round to the side?

P: There's quick computers just round to the side, ten minute, fast access, but then, I don't know, they should put seats there.

R: Do you feel like you're being watched when you're in here? Or do you feel like you can hide away and it's quite secluded?

12:00

P: I don't feel like, I don't know, depends how you mean by "watched". Obviously, I know you're being watched by cameras, that's logic, but I don't feel that I'm being watched by any other particular person. I feel like maybe each individual person who does come to this library has come here for a specific reason, and obviously the majority of people are only interested in their reason, unless you actually ask someone, someone getting involved in your situation, and then, say you're sitting next to someone on the computer, yeah? You're doing your day-to-day business, they're doing their day-to-day business, they might never ever look at your computer screen all day, right, and not notice your business, yeah? But then if you ask them a question, which, like, don't involve them in your situation but makes them get interested in your situation then just, say, maybe they just might have a little peek or they might, it depends on the situation.

R: So everyone's pretty much in their own groove most of the time? Do you think this is a place to hang out with people?

13:00

P: You could. It's different, what I'd say, not different eras, not different generations, but different profiling. Say I was in university and I was studying a course, yeah? And I was to come here with a load of my university friends and we was all sitting around the table, we was all studying, having a quiet natter about our course, then, yeah, I probably would. But with the people who I actually do chill out, they're what you'd call chavved out. So they're not the type of people who you would, could, hang around with in a place like this 'cause they'd then end up making noise, making trouble and obviously a library is somewhere, it's not for youths to chill out, but it's a place for somebody to come and study, maybe, and relax, or maybe do something with the library, read a book. So you can hang around here, but it depends on your frame of mind and it depends what you're coming to hang around here for, if you understand that terminology, like.

14:00

R: Ok, shall we go walk again? Just to close, if you had to sum it up in three words, what do you think you'd pick for this particular library?

P: I don't understand what you mean by that question.

R: If you had to sum up the library building in three words, what three words do you think would best describe it? Or is that too simplistic?

P: Too big.

R: It's too big?

P: Too big. Two words: too big.

R: Physically, you mean, it's too large?

P: Too big, yeah. It's too many escalators, and too many floors, and too many… Maybe if they had, like, a lot less floors, maybe a full floor full of maybe just computers and then the rest of the floors books, a better layout, maybe.

15:00

But it's all too far, like, um, I went in there before and I was looking for fiction and fiction, I think, was on the second floor, and then I was looking for science-fiction and it was up on the third floor, and I was thinking, well, no; all fiction should be in one module, whether it be science-fiction, whether it be fairytales, whether it be any type of fictions…

R: You think there's too much walking about?

P: It is, too much. Sections are there… And it could have a better layout, but it is too big. Everything about it is too big. It's too many floors, the building's too big, it's like… It's not as helpful as a normal library either, if you was speaking specifically about Central Library. It's not…

R: In what way? Do you mean finding stuff or in terms of speaking to staff?

P: Speaking to staff, finding stuff, like, you go – I know this is a bit stereotyping and a bit judgemental – but you goes into the normal libraries and you have then some old ladies or the library clerk who's always stacking up the books, like, um, you can approach them better, and you can be like "Do you know where this book is, love?" and they'll be like,

"Yeah, of course, follow me," and she'd show you the book, whereas if you come in here, some different people with different personalities can only approach certain people.

16:00

It depends on what aura they give off themselves, like say if I'm standing there like that [poses aggressively], like with a big angry face on me, an intimidated person might not be able to approach me, it might just be my natural face though. But, say I go find someone I can approach at the bottom of the library and I say "Could you show me where science-fiction is?", she would then lead me onto someone on the third or second floor, and I'd have to walk back up the stairs, or I'd have to go and speak to another person. I just thinks it's too big.

And, it's not really advertised very good as a library, is it? Would you know it was a library?

R: Unless you saw that little sign, you wouldn't probably. That's my feeling. Especially as it's got stuff that's clearly shops.

P: That's what I mean, it looks like John Lewis or something like that.

R: It's hard to tell though, isn't it? Like what you were saying earlier, what does a library look like?

17:00

P: It's what's inside that makes the building isn't it? But I don't know. Do you know what it looks like? A cinema.

R: Yeah I can see that being a cinema, actually. It looks quite a lot like the one round the corner.

P: Yeah, that's what I mean; it looks like a cinema. Don't know why, but it's giving me cinema.

1.10 NON-STUDENT 13, 6TH JUNE 2014

Researcher: Right, we're good to go.

Participant: Let's go.

R: Any way you want.

P: Any way to the library. I'll go my usual way then. Don't mind if I smoke a fag, do you?

R: I don't mind.

P: I haven't had one in a few hours.

R: I guess we're going outside then.

P: Yep.

P: (Speaks to a passing friend)

R: So is this a part of town you hang around a lot then?

01:00

P: Err, well I spend most of my time in there, in [youthgroup name]. This is kind of the way I walk to the library. It's an easy way, but it's [inaudible]. Round here, up by Cineworld, straight through err… straight up Tesco's and then by John Lewis, and then you're there. Or we could go through… It's a nice sunny day so we'll stay outside.

R: Yeah, last time I came here it was really windy…

P: Yeah, yeah, if it's windy, go St. David's, that's the spot to go if it's windy, St. David's, with the little seats up by here

R: So, how come you hang around at [youthgroup name]?

P: Err, it's just the best place, yeah. The best place to chill. I don't know, shall I take a picture of St.David's?

R: Yeah yeah. I'll get out the way.

P: How d'you, err…?

R: It's just that button there, and you hold to focus and shoot.

P: Yeah? Alright. Righty-ho then.

02:00

R: I guess places like Cineworld, like St. David's [are places you hang around a lot?]…

P: Yeah, that's [Cineworld roof] in the shape of an owl because of the Illuminati. If you look from, over, see, the shape is an owl? The owl is the symbol of the Illuminati. Which is the symbol… well, you know, Illuminati, media mainstream, and that's why Cineworld's in the shape of an owl at the front. The face, with the eyebrows, look. See, the owl?

R: It's an odd building to make into that shape.

P: Well, it's Cineworld, isn't it? Obviously mainstream television, media, so that's the… that's an architectural fact of the day for you there.

R: Symbolism.

P: Yes, symbolism.

R: Do you think there's any of that in the library?

68

P: Symbolism? Well it's everywhere really, isn't it? But that's going into a whole different conversation, 'cause symbolism is everywhere. We live in a symbolised world, really. Everything we do is symbolised.

03:00

I'll get a picture of the owl shape.

R: Does it make you feel a certain way then, that shape, when you go to the cinema?

P: Kind of when you go by it, kind of makes you feel trapped. 'cause you know you're going into the system, the mainstream, as I call it. There's certain streams everywhere, like, I have my own stream, you have your own stream, but then there's a mainstream, and, like, this is what groups we have in town, like, I'm a chav, like, what they class as a chav, council-housed-and-violent.

04:00

I'm not council-housed but I wear the clothes that go with it, and, you know, stuff like that. Then you're got the Goths, you know, the black and the… So you know, they've all got their own stream, their own type of music, but, like, when you go in there [Cineworld] you're kind of like, "Oh, I'm going into the mainstream", you know, "I'm going into the main flow, the main system", you kind of feel.

R: Do you think that depends a lot on what the place looks like?

P: Yeah, of course, 'cause shapes play a big part in your brain, 'cause your brain picks up most of the shapes, 'cause obviously what you're seeing is upside down…

R: Oh, hang on, your microphone's slipped off there.

P: Oh, no, no, no…

R: Maybe the middle bit [his jacket] will be a bit grippier. There we go.

P: Righto.

R: Damn cheap things.

P: Damn cheap things.

R: Sorry, you were saying about places you hang out in.

P: Yeah, just saying, places you hang out in, gives the effect, dunnit, 'cause if you chill in, like, we usually go inside there [Cineworld side fire exit].

05:00

We're not supposed to, but you can go into Cineworld, go through the emergency exit and you can end up in here, and, like, sorry to say this on interview, but it's where we go to smoke.

R: Oh right?

P: You know? Yeah. So, yeah, that's another spot we all chill in, but yeah, you've got a point, shape does it does kind of effect the area, the building-wise, it does, 'cause you go into a nice posh building you feel more, you know, *whoo* [i.e. "It's nice in here"], you know there's this better help there, there's better… I dunno, 'cause, if you go in there and you see loads of chavs, you know, you're kind of like "Ooh, not a very nice place to chill, is it?" or a very nice place to sit down in, if there's teenagers shouting and screaming and messing about and that. It's not really good, is it? If you go in, you see, you know, people dressed

nice, casual, smart, you know, nice chairs, nice building, you know, you see nice windows, nice flooring, you're like, yeah, it's a nicer place, you get me?

06:00

You want to go there more 'cause it's a better place to be, like, 'cause we can either go into the black door where tramps go in and piss and, you know, do all the dirty stuff that they do, or we can go into a library where we can go on the computers, you know, sit down. I dunno, if you're a book fan, maybe read a book, if not, maybe do something else, you know what I mean? Chill, just get a little bit of space, time out, innit?

R: Do you think it depends who you're hanging out with?

P: Yes. Yeah, that is a big, very big point as well. Yeah, 'cause, like, I've got different groups of friends, like, if I'm with my *boys* then we won't go to the library, 'cause, you know, we're loud, we're, you know, just, like, bunch of trouble-makers, really, but if I'm with family and they're, like "shall we go to the library?", I'm like "Yeah, of course". Sit down, have a little discussion, you know, just depends who you're with really, innit? If you're with your boys it s different story to when you're with your family.

R: Yeah, so, you'd hang out somewhere else with them?

P: Yeah, if you're with your boys, I'll go doors [what?] or [youthgroup name], or anywhere, other places in town, maybe under the subway but, like, it depends who you're with really, doesn't it?

R: So what is it that makes the difference between those places and these places [between places where you'd hang out with one group as opposed to another]?

07:00

P: Well, these places are run by the council and the places we go are not. You know what I mean? It's kind of the law, in effect, so I mean, like, if it's automatically part of the council, any form of authority then, you know, teenagers, you know, kind of think *huh…* 'cause we all want our own way, everything, you know, we want everything to be, you know, like, we want it to be, 'cause that's the mainstream flow now, isn't it? It's like everyone wants it for themselves and not for anyone else, do you know what I mean? So…

R: Do you think having that space is important [a territory that your group can control and have power over]?

P: Yeah, yeah…

R: Do you reckon that council authority is expressed in the place itself?

P: Well, when you see council signs, you know, people with council logos, like, I seen the "HUB" thing they've got on now, that's quite friendly, you know, the little HUB badge, 'cause I used to live in St. Mellons, I used to spend quite a lot of time down St. Mellons library, if you know where that is, by, err, Tesco's.

08:00

And, like, before, when they had just the Cardiff Council logo, the green top, and you're like *huh*, but now they've got the HUB and the different colours and they're all, like, *whoo*. They've got to stretch out more for teenagers… They've got to, you know, be more, I dunno, "youth". More for the youth, instead of pushing the youth away. Like, 'cause if me and my friends walked into the library in about five minutes we'd probably be kicked out, d'you get me, so…

R: What would they [the library staff] say?

P: Oh, "You're too loud", you know, making too much noise. Obviously we do, like, I'm not, you know, it's tit for tat, innit, you know what I mean? There's never one way, it's always, there's always two sides to the story, but, like, I dunno, if they were more encouraging for youth to come in, if you know what I'm, you get what I'm kind of going at? Like, if they, you know, there's more youth projects going on in the library, or more, I dunno, just more word that gets out, like "Oh yeah, they're doing a hip-hop night at the library", or something like that. I'd be like "Yeah, hip-hop in a library, come on, let's go!" Let's go check out the people doing this, if there's more activities, more groups and stuff like that, then…

09:00

R: Do you reckon the library's a place to be quiet then?

P: Well yeah, that's what the mainstream says, isn't it? You know, the library's quiet.

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library? Like, if you said "What does a library look like?" is that what you'd think of?

P: Small building, not small, a reasonably sized building, you know, with a couple of windows, see, a bit of book. Like, 'cause obviously this is town, this has to be bigger for the amount of people 'cause it's a main city centre, so obviously it's bigger, but if you go into the, like, the single communities like St. Mellon's, Ely, Canton, stuff like that, you know, just the single communities, you know the libraries are a lot smaller, really than… Obviously, this is town so it has to fit many people, so you've got all the different languages there. Many people come in from different countries. They're not going to all fit into a small little thing, are they? 'cause people need a library, like. I haven't got a computer at home, so if I need any computer access to do a CV or anything like that it'll either be [youthgroup name] or the library, d'you know what I mean?

10:00

R: So you reckon it's just a size thing? There's not like a particular look to a library?

P: There is. It's not to look classy 'cause you've got books in there, and books is etiquette and education. Obviously, education has its own look, innit, do you know what I mean? Compared to…

R: Do you reckon that's part of the symbolism, like with the cinema?

P: Yeah, it is, basically, you know the symbols shows what it is, you know, gives you the picture in your head of what to expect, you know what I mean? Like, automatically with a library you think books, *shhhh*, d'you get me? The old TV programs, teenage films, and stuff like that.

R: Where do you reckon that idea of a library has come from?

P: I think it's been around for a long, long time. First they had libraries back during World War One and that, d'you know what I mean? Back then it was a lot smaller, you know, older books. Old people would go there to just sit, read a book, have no stresses, d'you get me? 'cause it was a nice quiet environment.

11:00

That's why we, as youth, don't fit in the library, because the library is a quiet, you know, nice friendly environment, and as youth, we… It's hard to explain. Like, some youth, like me, I've got a bit of etiquette, you know what I mean? Like, I know how to speak to somebody with respect and, you know, but then some of them don't, you know what I

mean? They've been brought up by a single mother, who's also been a youth, still. You know, and they've got all the slang, all the words, and that, like, everything's *big*. I mean, like, nowadays everything's big, loud, you know, and libraries are not big and loud really, is it, it's kind of *shhhh*. Sit down, read a book.

R: Shall we go inside?

P: If you like, yes.

R: It's good to talk about the inside of the library.

12:00

Staff [outside closed front doors]: We've had to close for essential maintenance. I'm afraid we won't be re-opening until Monday afternoon at the earliest. If you've got any books you want to return you can leave them here.

R: What's happened?

Staff: There's just been some issue related to health and safety.

R: Oh ok, alright, well thanks anyway. [To participant] Looks like we're going back then.

P: Yeah. What a shame. I would have liked to have a nice little trip in the library. What a shame.

R: It's funny, I was doing some reading and I read they had to close it once before in 2009 'cause of lice. Some guy with lice went in.

P: Urgh and then, obviously left on the seat, and then someone sits on it and then, yeah…

R: They basically had to smoke out the whole building.

P: Which library was this, this one?

R: Yeah, this one. The whole library had to be disinfected.

13:00

P: Wow. That's such a shame. I was actually looking forward to going to the library as well. It's been a long time since I've actually been in the library.

R: It's quite a new building, isn't it?

P: Yeah, it is.

R: Do you remember the old one?

P: Yeah, I do prefer this building though, compared to the other one though, 'cause it is a lot more, more mainstream. That's the best way I can explain it really. 'cause that's kind of how I see things, d'you know what I mean? Like it is, it is kind of, everything is mainstream now, d'you know what I mean? Everything is… ah, it's hard to explain. 'cause I'm dyslexic as well, see, I'm not very good at getting the words and my point across.

R: You better at drawing stuff?

P: Not really.

R: How do you like to explain things?

P: I don't know. I've had a problem all my life. Yeah. Any more questions, obviously, 'cause I've got a lot to answer, I've got a view on pretty much everything to be fair.

R: It looks like I'll have to cancel the rest of the interviews.

14:00

P: That is such a shame. That's really…. Coincidence that is. Talking about it and discussing it and we're about to walk in the library and it's closed! I've been inside there so if you've got any points about inside I could tell you. I do know it.

R: Well, yeah, what do you think of the interior?

P: I think it's quite nice. It is quite a nice layout, to be fair, like, the building, like the structure and inside the materials, it is quite nice and friendly, healthy colours, you know?

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, more stuff like that will, you know, bring more people to it, like.

R: Is that different from the library that was here before?

P: No, yeah, I do prefer that building [the new one].

R: What was the old library like? 'cause I never saw that.

15:00

P: Very old, tacky, like the old libraries, you know what I mean, like? Wooden and hard seats, you know the whole… kind of school style. Old school style, if you know what I mean. That's what I remember of it anyway.

R: That old library was built in 1988, so it was only open for eighteen years before it was demolished.

P: It was pretty old and tacky though. It wasn't nice, the hard chairs and that. You know the plastic chairs you get, them really uncomfortable one you get?

R: Like airport chairs?

P: Yeah, stuff like that, yeah. You know, after half an hour you're like "Ooh, I wants to stand up and get out now", you know what I mean?

R: They've managed to find some chairs, I don't know where they get them from, but they're incredible uncomfortable.

P: Yeah, it's kind of… I doubt the staff really want people in there all day. So I mean, like, the timer on the computer. You've only got forty minutes, is it, when you first log in?

16:00

R: Don't you have to book those as well now?

P: Yeah you, yeah you do. Yeah, you have to make an appointment to have your thing. They should have a youth corner though.

R: They've got a children's area haven't they?

P: Yeah, but that's for like toddlers and stuff, but that, like that's what I mean. That's perfect. That's the perfect example. They've got one for toddlers, and they've got one for, you know, old age pensioners, but where's the youth? D'you know what I mean? The youth is being forgotten. We, as youth, we're kind of being pushed away, even with the economy as well as with libraries, schools and stuff like that, but what they don't realise is that youth, we are the future. D'you know, we are the next.

R: So, in twenty years' time…

P: D'you know what I mean? When the people we rely on are all in the wheelchairs, and they're relying on us, we're going to be like… You know, "I didn't study in the library!", so how am I meant to know how to do this? That's what I'm saying, see?

17:00

R: I find it quite interesting to imagine what kind of library building a person designing libraries in twenty years' time is…

P: I think they probably won't [design libraries] to be perfectly fair with you. 'cause they're cancelling them, getting rid of so much, like three-quarters of the youth centres in Cardiff have been closed for budgeting cuts.

R: Have they?

P: Like, [youthgroup name] and, like, four, three others are the only ones left. And, like, [youthgroup name] is going to be closed in a couple of years as well. That's not even a full-time thing, d'you know what I mean? They're getting rid of everything.

R: You can always tell when something's about to be shut because they reduce the hours.

P: It starts being from an all-week thing to like a three-day, then a two-day, and then it's like one day a week, then two hours, and then it just stops.

R: Usually the Central Library is open on Saturdays as well.

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I've been in there a few times on a Saturday.

18:00

R: She [the staff outside the doors] said it wasn't going to be open until Monday, so I guess something's happened.

P: Something must, yeah, health and safety issues as well, and she wasn't really open to tell us, was she? Kind of puts you off the business, doesn't it, you don't want to go in the library when there's health and safety issues happening, do you?

R: You know it's got a grass roof, on the top of it?

P: Really, a grass roof?

R: Well, it's made of sedum, which is a type of grass. It's meant to stop surface runoff from the rain and makes a bio-diversity, like a little field, basically on the roof.

P: Cool. That is cool. Ah, they should do a garden up top. Get some safety barriers up there, it'd be a lovely little…

R: I read in the design brief… [inaudible]

P: Get some safety barriers.

R: …Get a reading room on the top.

P: Yeah, yeah, with the nice little grass… You could look out on the whole town. Get some safety barriers, some chairs.

R: I guess they didn't have enough money.

19:00

P: Yeah, but it's projects like that are more expensive when you think about it, 'cause there's more safety issues you've got to do, like, but that would be a wicked idea. I would

genuinely go to the library a lot if they did a grass thing on the top, like a little field on top. I would, like, I would go there on my own as well.

R: It's on a slope actually; it's not flat. It's quite steep.

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Have you been up to the top floor, 'cause you can see…?

P: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah it's nice… All the town… It's nice, would just be a lot better if there was a nice little grassy area on top where you could sit down and read your book. So that's an idea to give to them, if they ever get enough for the budgeting. That's it though, the budgeting.

1.11 Non-student 14, 11th June 2014

Researcher: If there's anything you want to take photos of, you can have this to take photos with if you want.

Participant: The only thing I wanted to know about, you know when you go down here and you've got this building?

R: This new thing?

P: What is it all about?

R: I think it's an office block.

P: Oh, is it?

R: I think so, yeah. Not completely sure. Um, I think it's just going to be offices, basically.

01:00

P: What's the site about, Admiral?

R: Is that the car insurance people?

P: I don't know. They've changed it now, haven't they, the car insurance?

R: Don't know, actually. When I was here before it hadn't got the logo on the sides.

P: Yeah they've got the logo, they've put that up now, but I don't know what it's about, Admiral.

R: I guess they must have nearly finished it. About time. Must have been a year, I think, they've been building this.

I guess this is a bit of town you know quite well?

P: I grew up around by here, grew up down Riverside.

R: Oh yeah.

P: So I moved here for three years, then I had to move away 'cause of my Nan, so then I come back here, back to Cardiff.

R: Yeah, so it's a place you feel comfortable?

P: Yeah. I grew up here, so, it is better.

R: What kinds of places do you tend to hang out then? [youthgroup name], obviously.

P: [youthgroup name], and then after [youthgroup name] I go work then. I got work through [youthgroup name]. They help you find work, with Dan. I had a look on the websites and all that.

R: Yeah, so you can do job searches there, that sort of thing?

P: I was on the job centre but that didn't help me find work.

R: Yeah.

P: So it was easier looking for work there.

P: Yeah, I used to go to the job centre, just ended up volunteering in a charity shop at the end of it.

02:00

R: What charity shop did you work in?

P: Barnardo's, but that wasn't here, that was in my hometown.

P: Where are you from?

R: Ross-on-Wye.

P: Where you from, like, what part of Cardiff?

R: Err, well, at the moment I live in Cathays. But this was in Ross, in Herefordshire.

P: Is it different compared to down here?

R: Oh yeah, it's really quiet. It's pretty much just hills and apple orchards round there.

P: So how long you been doing this now?

R: About a year and a half.

P: Is it going good so far?

R: It is going pretty good actually, yeah. The guys at [youthgroup name] have been really helpful, 'cause this is, sort of, the main interviews I'm doing, so this is where all my data, you know, is coming from.

P: How many people have done it so far?

R: You're the fifteenth.

P: Fair enough.

03:00

R: Yeah.

P: So what do you do after this, after you get your qualification for this, now?

R: Goodness knows. To be honest, I've no idea.

P: Fair enough. So you might get work, there's like a fifty-fifty chance?

R: I guess so, yeah. I might stay in Cardiff, 'cause I like it here.

P: Or would you rather go to your hometown instead of…?

R: There's not really much in my town, to be honest.

P: Fair enough.

R: No. I mean, that's why I ended up in a charity shop the last time I tried that.

P: Yeah, but it's better that nothing in a charity shop, isn't it?

R: Oh yeah, but…

P: Like, not just for voluntary work. They can find you work with this, that and the other. When you go to them there's nothing about it. So that's why I went into [youthgroup name] and they helped me out.

R: I guess you've got a lot of friends there now as well. Do they determine where you tend to hang out? Do you think, "Oh, I can hang around there with my friends."

P: No, I don't hang around really, 'cause, like, the people I hang around with, they're all grown up, compared to, like, with those, they'd rather stand on corner of the street, chill out, or go down here and chill.

R: But you've got a slightly different lifestyle to that, have you?

04:00

P: I've got to work twenty-four-seven.

R: Yeah.

P: Normally I chill out, I chill out round by mine, or at my mate's house, or I come into [youthgroup name], but I won't hang around the street all day.

R: So you're not so much a city-centre guy?

P: No

R: Right. I guess you probably haven't been in the library too many times in that case.

P: No, I've been in there three times, in the library.

R: It's quite new, isn't it? There used to be an older one where St. David's Two is.

P: Yeah. They knocked that down, didn't they? How long has that library been built for now?

R: 2009 it opened, so, five years.

05:00

P: Yeah, but it's not, like, a bad area, around here.

R: It's quite clean and tidy, I guess.

P: Compared to some areas. 'cause, like, compared to where I used to live up in Bristol, I moved up there and it's different compared with down here. They've got a library, but it's, like, smaller.

R: Right.

P: Compared to down here. They haven't got that many shops up there, compared to down here, but it's just a nice environment up in Bristol. It's like, where I used to live up there, there used to be all this trouble, fighting, arguing, but when I moved to Cardiff it's been a better place.

R: Why do you think it's better here?

P: It's better here 'cause, like, everyone gets along with everyone instead of everybody chipping and arguing. Plus, the thing I think is if you give someone respect, they're going to give it back to you.

R: Yeah.

P: So that's the only way I live.

R: That's a good way to live, I think.

P: There's no point arguing and hanging around the streets. Won't get you nowhere.

06:00

R: Do you know much about whatever was here before St. David's Two, that whole development? Do you remember that much?

P: No. I come back into Cardiff when they started building all of this. I don't know what was here before. Do you know what was here before?

R: I know, like, little bits of what was here before.

P: Like, they didn't have the library.

R: The old St. David's Link stuff. The library was over on the corner by where St. David's Two is.

P: Yeah, just the beginning of St. David's Two, isn't it?

R: There was no proper library between 2006 and 2009. There was storage, so they put all the books into a temporary library.

P: It's all changed now hasn't, town, compared to, like, last time. They didn't have all the new shops out, all the new cafes?

R: Well, I think so. To be honest, that's all I've known of the place. It's kind of why I came here actually, 'cause it's so, you know, clean and pretty.

P: Fair enough.

07:00

R: Do you reckon this thing looks like a library to you?

P: No. Looks like an office. 'cause, like, in libraries you have all, like, the brickwork, but in here it's got all the new glass, all the new computers, and all that, compared to the old one.

R: So when you think of "library", there's something you think of?

P: Yeah.

R: Like a certain look?

P: 'cause I usually come in here a couple of times, and, like, it's all changed completely compared to last time 'cause, like, in the old one there was just one floor to the library, and now it's all changed.

R: Yeah.

P: So, it's different when you move away for a couple of years and then come back and everything's changed again.

R: I guess it's quite different to all the branch libraries, you know, like St. Mellon's or Ely or Canton?

P: Yeah, I live over St. Mellon's now and it's different compared to this one.

R: Does it make you feel a certain way when you come in here?

08:00

P: No it's exactly the same, like. You get used to it after a while when you come in now and again, but it is a little bit hard to find stuff in here 'cause, like, you've got too many flights of stairs, plus there's different stuff on different stairs. So, it'd be easier if they had maps on here showing you, like, on screens like this, instead of showing different stuff. If they showed you a map where all the books are and all that it would be a lot easier for other people.

R: Okay. Do you think the floors look different, or too similar?

P: It'd be easier if they changed it so, like, you know, like, when the disabled people come in with the wheelchairs and that?

R: Yeah.

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P: I know they've got the lifts in, but it'd be easier if they one level of floor for the disabled people to come in and see everything, and then that's what they've got the lifts in for as well.

Can you not go on the top floor?

R: Not at the moment, no, I guess. Don't know how far up we can go though.

P: [Inaudible]

09:00

R: Well this [staircase] is clearly open.

P: So do you like doing this business, what you're doing?

R: Yeah, I do, I enjoy it. I just really want to find out if libraries are still relevant, you know, if they can be made more relevant. 'cause I'm with the architecture department so it's fundamentally about the building itself, but there's so many other things about how people use spaces and how people think about libraries, and what it is…

P: We're in the library, you've got computers and all that in here, I thought it'd be about books and the history and all that.

R: Yeah.

P: But it's about children's books and all that.

R: There's a children's section here, isn't there?

P: Yeah there is. Downstairs, I think. But, like [inaudible] older people come in here. The simple fact is everything's all over the place instead of in sections.

R: Right. They've sort of got main categories, but the thing for me is all the floors kind of look the same.

10:00

P: Yeah, exactly the same, but that's what they like, isn't it? It could have been better, like, if they'd had the playgroup in here as well. For the little kids, like, when people come in here with their kids. Instead of sitting and messing around they could have had a playroom in here.

R: Yeah.

P: For the little kids. I've seen it, now and again, like when I came in here last week, there were little kids messing around with all the books and that. They didn't have nothing to do. But it could have been easier if they'd had a playgroup and all that.

R: So young kids were they?

P: Yeah. So you can have a session for young kids and then the rest of them then, the parents, can come up here, read books go on computers and that, instead of their kids playing up.

R: Do you reckon it's good to have, like, separate areas for different types of people, or put everyone in together?

P: No, if you put everyone in together they'd be, like, too close together and, like, people would get irritated and that. I think people like their own space, like, in the library, compared to all, like, bunged up in one.

11:00

80

R: Do you reckon this library's too open or too compartmentalised?

P: I reckon it is too open, but it's, like, fair enough if you've got all flights of stairs with different stuff on, but every single floor's got the same stuff. Like, if they had different changes of flooring, like, different book, but they've all got the same books in each one.

R: You mean they look the same?

P: Yeah. If they had, like, a different style in each one, it'd be different, so people'd know where they were going.

R: Is it the sort of building that makes you want to go up to the top?

P: Yeah, and then you just think then, like, when you come up to the third floor, it's exactly the same on each floor, like, how it's set out. 'cause, like, where you've got all the books down here, you go onto the second floor and it's exactly the same. Like, if they was spread out more and, like, more stuff to do. Like, we could have had one area for all the books, and one for the computers, and then the top floor or something for, like, people to read books or, like, talk and that.

12:00

R: Yeah.

P: But they're all exactly the same in each isle.

R: I know it's got a sedum green roof on top of it, so it's covered in plants, the top of the building, and there was a plan when they were doing the brief to have a reading room up on top of the roof, so it was almost, like, in a field, which I thought would have been pretty cool, but…

P: That would have been pretty good.

R: …But I guess their budget didn't stretch to that.

P: There's too many buildings up now. There's, like, they're building down there, isn't it, the brewery?

R: Which one, sorry?

P: The Brewery Quarter.

R: Oh, the blue thing?

P: Yeah. They built that in I think it was 2010 and it's, like, exactly the same. They could have done the same with what they've got up on there, like, the balcony areas. Exactly the same up here, 'cause, like, more people can come in then, and like, relax reading a book in the weather instead of being stuck inside, so more people could have been attracted to it, compared to that. More open plan.

13:00

R: Do you feel like, when you come into a place like this, it's better to have somewhere you can see out or somewhere where you can, like, hide away?

P: Yeah, a view, like. So it could have been better if they'd had, like, the open things so you can see everything then, instead of being stuck in one place.

R: Yeah.

P: 'cause, like, in here, you feel, like, you're okay, but then you'd like your own space at the same time. But you can't.

R: You don't feel you can have that here?

P: No.

R: Can't tuck away?

P: 'cause fair enough with those areas with all the seating and that in the corner.

R: Yeah. This area here?

P: Yeah. But when you go over there, you got your own space, and when you go down to the next floor you haven't got exactly the same. It's all open. So if they had, like, what you said, with all the open plan upstairs, I reckon it'd be more, like, people'd be more attracted to coming, instead of thinking it's just one building.

14:00

R: I see. They've split it up on the ground floor, I think, 'cause there are shops in there, aren't there, that you can't get into from the library? I mean, it's all in the same building, but it's just the shops.

P: Yeah, they blocked off all the shop areas, but I don't know why, 'cause it'd have been easier for other people, when they're shopping, to come in here, chill out, read a book, or spend some time here, but it's all blocked off and you have to walk all the way round. Could have been easy access to go through…

R: Yeah.

P: …To the shopping areas. I don't know why they blocked all of those off.

R: I don't know. I mean, I could only guess at fire safety or something like that. Shopping centres are still all open, so I guess it can't be that.

Do you want to keep wandering around or go back down, or what?

P: [Inaudible]

R: I'm just following you around, mate.

P: So do you like this library?

15:00

R: I like it more, actually, the more time I spend in it, I think.

P: What do you reckon to it being more varied, like they planned it better?

R: I think they could have done something a bit more different on each floor, 'cause I quite often forget, like, if I'm on the second or the third or the fourth floor, 'cause they all look the same. And I know they've got numbers on them, but… So I guess it comes back to the budget thing. You'd have to spend a lot of money to get a completely bespoke interior.

P: But they could have done that at the first thing when they set up the building. They could have had a different design compared to all the rest.

R: Yeah.

P: 'cause they've got one up in Bristol now.

R: A new library, you mean?

P: And it's exactly the same as this.

R: What do you mean, it looks the same?

P: Yeah, but inside it's different, compared to this one.

R: Okay.

P: 'cause, like, when I went into that one you've got more room, more space for yourself and it's got, like, blocked in areas, so you can, like, stay on your own and, like, read books and that. So you can get a bit more privacy. Compared to, like, in here, it's all open. They could have changed this one. They could have, like, they could have done exactly the same as the old one, but they never. 'cause I would reckon the older ones now are better than the new ones.

16:00

R: Do you mean the hundred year old libraries?

P: Yeah, 'cause they got, like, they got more privacy and that. Where compared to the new ones, they're, like, trying to outstand them, compared to the rest, but, like, where people come in this and the other, people, 'cause when I walks past it don't attract me, compared to all the other places. So when I go to the old library, this, that and the other, you see the difference compared to the new ones. They're trying to outstand everyone else. So I think if we went back to the original, instead of, like, this, costing more money, they could put more money into it.

R: You mean into the inside?

P: Yeah. Instead of wasting all the money for the outside, compared to the inside.

R: I guess that's an interesting thought, 'cause then you think about, what about the actual old central libraries that have been renovated, you know, and have just had the inside done? I guess you've got something more like that, more like, say, Edinburgh central library [National Library of Scotland].

17:00

P: I haven't been to that one.

R: I've never been either. I just looked on Google Images, and it's a really old stone front…

P: Yeah, but it would attract more then, 'cause, like where you've got all these places, they don't attract me, like, all the glass windows and that. If it had brickwork, this, that and the other, you'd think, like, "What's inside here?" and then you'd go inside.

R: How come they don't…? Is it because you can already see inside?

P: Yeah, so there's no point. So if you have a surprise behind it, people'd be more attracted to come in and see, to have a look what it's like inside. But when people walks past the window they think "There's no point going in there; I seen what's in there". If they'd done it the old way like everybody else is doing, they'd kept it as the old way, more people approaches to go in.

R: Right.

P: 'cause, like, when you see all the old buildings, this, that and the other, they… You'd be exactly the same. If you see an old building you'd be attracted to go into it.

18:00

R: Stuff like the museum, say.

P: Yeah. And then when you go to the new places then, they've got all the glass window, you can see through it, there's no point going in then, spending money , when you can see

what is in there. So if people had, like, old fashioned instead of all glass windows, you could have had brickwork. So then, people think then, going past, "Oh, what's in there? Let's go and see later when we come back." Them more customers will come in.

R: Yeah.

P: Instead of having all glass.

R: I guess it's a symbolic thing as much as anything else with libraries as well, 'cause, it's not like a library makes profit or anything, or is part of a branded chain like, you know, Tesco or something. So, I guess the building has more of a job to do in terms of saying what the library does, 'cause you know what Tesco does, Tesco is Tesco.

P: Well, with a library, you don't know what's inside but where you see all the glasswork and you see inside then, you'd rather have new customers coming in instead of the old ones. I know you're making no profit on a library, but you can do, like…

19:00

R: You've still got to make money.

P: … and they're going to save more money, put it into the business instead of taking it out.

R: So you see it as being more than about just books?

P: Yeah. There's like, when you think, like, in the old library up in Bristol you've got a play centre for the kids and that's how they make their money back, but with the libraries now that have just come out, they just think, ah, let's go for the standard books, laptops and PCs and that. I'd rather have a playgroup in there, then the kids can enjoy it with their parents, so they can come back more.

R: Yeah. I guess it's important to get kids involved with libraries, 'cause in twenty years' time, they're going to be adults.

P: That's what I think. If you get the kids in there now instead of in the future, you may as well think about the kids, put a playgroup in there, let them read, sit down, read them books, and then the parents will keep coming back. Then they're going their stuff and the kids are in the play group.

20:00

R: Do you reckon that place appeals to young people?

P: I dunno, 'cause young people don't go in there 'cause it's for adults, not kids, 'cause there's no kids' place in there. It's for the older people who want a library. The younger generation like to chill in the streets, but if they knew there was all, like, play stuff in there, and all that for younger kids, parents would be going in with their kids, instead of, like, going into town, going back home, staying in the house. They could go to the library, and spend their time when they have their home.

R: Yeah.

P: So they can have peace and quiet when their reading and all that, catch up on stuff, instead of staying in town and going straight back home.

21:00

R: If you had to sum it up in three words, that library, what do you reckon you'd pick?

P: Just don't like it. That's why I never go in there, 'cause…

R: Uninteresting?

84

P: No, it is interesting, 'cause you think it's exactly the same as every other library, but, like, when you've got, like, the new style now, everybody thinks [inaudible] but then the people don't come back. They knows it's exactly the same as the old ones, but with the older ones, they catch your eye. Where there's been old fashioned this, that and the other, and they think "Wait here, let's just go and have a look at what it's like in here" but… I prefer the old libraries. You've got your own space in there, but with the newer generation now, they think, ah, let's blow all the money, let's get everything up and done and leave it at that. 'cause with a couple of libraries I've been with, they've got playgroups and play centres and that.

R: Right.

P: But with the new one now, I don't like it, 'cause there's not enough stuff in there.

We can go this way here.

R: Oh, you want to go in the back?

22:00

P: [Inaudible]

But do you prefer that library, compared with the old ones? Which one would you recommend, the old library or the new one?

R: What do you mean, the old central?

P: Yeah

R: Um, well, actually there have been two old libraries, haven't there. There's one where the Cardiff Story is now…

P: But which one do you prefer? That one that's just been built now…?

R: I like the newest one, just because it's, well, I guess the biggest.

P: It is the biggest but I'd rather go to the old one, 'cause you know then you've got your own space. Better than the new ones.

R: Yeah, I mean, the really old one in a cooler building I think. It's got that crazy Victorian tiled… Have you seen that?

P: Yeah

R: With all the tiles?

P: I prefer that one to the new one.

R: That's amazing.

23:00

P: That's a waste of money that new one, 'cause you've got four floors, four flights of stairs, all exactly the same. If they changed them one by one, the stairs, and, like the inside it'd be more attractive for other people.

R: Yeah.

P: So I'd prefer that.

1.12 NON-STUDENT 15, 12TH JUNE 2014

Participant: So what've I got to do now?

Researcher: We're just going to have a chat, basically. This is just to find out how you, um, how you think about your city, pretty much. So, we could start by saying is this a part of town you hang around in a lot?

03:00

P: Yeah, I go everywhere in Cardiff. Go everywhere.

R: You from Cardiff?

P: Yeah, I'm from Cardiff, St. Mellon's boy.

R: Oh yeah?

P: Yeah.

R: So you know the place?

P: I know it, like, the job centre' right by here.

R: Yeah, it's just in here isn't it?

P: It's a bit of a pain sometimes, but it gets you [inaudible], the job centre. They're building something down by here. I don't know what it is. I don't know what they're building.

R: This new thing?

P: Yeah. I don't know what it is. Think it's going to be, um… think it's going to be for work.

R: Office block or something?

P: Yeah, for work. That's alright, isn't it?

R: Yeah, that's fine.

P: You've got St David's mall here.

R: Yeah, that's quite new isn't it? I've only been here a year and a half myself, but I think they only built that a few years ago, didn't they?

P: That one?

04:00

R: Yeah. Do you remember what was here before?

P: [Inaudible]

R: Yeah, before this was built. Do you remember what it was like?

P: No, to be honest, I can't.

R: 'cause there was a library here before the current one, which I think was here.

P: Was it? Yeah, I think that was the old library. [Pause ~3 sec.] Yeah it was, yeah. Yeah. Cineworld by here as well.

R: Yeah.

P: You've got museum, castle here as well. Got loads here.

R: Do you hang around there sometimes as well?

P: I hang around there, yeah.

R: Does it depend on the weather or who you're hanging out with that day, or what?

P: [Inaudible] 'cause I'm currently homeless at the moment.

R: Right. Are you at the Huggard Centre then? 'cause a couple of the guys have mentioned the Huggard Centre to me. Is that by the station, isn't it?

05:00

P: Yeah, yeah [inaudible]

R: Really?

P: [Inaudible]

R: Is it busy there?

P: Very busy. People getting drunk every day, getting drunk. They're allowed to drink bottles of vodka, they're aloud to drink whatever they want, 'cept for cannabis.

R: Right.

P: Cannabis you're not allowed to have on the premises, you're not allowed to smoke it. If they smell it they phone the police. But you can inject things in your arm.

R: What, if they don't notice?

P: You're allowed… yeah, really. But they let you get on with it. Weed, 'cause they can smell it, that's it then.

You've got a little Tesco's by here.

R: Do you feel more comfortable hanging out in certain places than others?

06:00

P: No, I love hanging around everywhere. I've slept everywhere... I have, I have.

R: I guess that gives you a different perspective on things.

P: Haven't slept by here. I goes towards the museum way. Then goes for a shower then, change of clothes. I've got loads of clothes with [inaudible].

R: Right.

P: Trying to get housed at the moment, trying to get housed [inaudible]

R: What's that for?

P: 'cause I'm coming off heroin.

R: Okay:

P: Coping with withdrawal symptoms and that.

R: Yeah.

P: I've done good.

R: Yeah.

P: I used to be really, really bad.

R: Did they? What, like the…

P: No I used to be… Listen, if the guy pulled you back and told you I'm on it, yeah [inaudible] this morning I give a negative test, yeah? I give a negative test, yesterday, a negative, another negative… I've had to do all piss tests all this week. They've tried catching me out as well and things…

07:00

R: What, like, get you by surprise?

P: Yeah, like, they done one one day and then the next day they're like "Oh, you've got to do another one".

R: How do they do that by surprise? Just, sort of, pop up?

P: And so far, I've done so good. They're all proud of me and that. And they've got a big library here as well, which I used to be allowed in. I used to come here all the time.

R: But not now?

P: No.

R: They shut it last week. I came round here and apparently some bit of the roof had fallen off, so I'm not quite sure what happened there, 'cause the building's only been opened for five years.

P: Then they build here, they just use them for the money, to get all of the money out of them.

R: Really?

P: Yeah. Like, with the Huggard Centre building, that cost eleven million pounds, yeah?

R: Yeah.

P: And it's falling apart now.

R: How old's that?

P: Dunno, about a year, two years.

08:00

R: Really? 'cause this was about thirteen million, I think.

P: Yeah, for the computer, for, no, for, you know… Shouldn't have cost that much. I disagree with that. Do you?

R: I don't know what it works out to per square meter. That's usually how you say, like, how much a building cost per square meter of floor area.

P: We've got loads of clubs in Cardiff, loads. We've got McDonald's, you've got St. David's Two, Capital, there's a place… You seen Capital?

R: Yeah, yeah.

P: John Lewis?

R: Yup.

P: You been in?

R: I've not been in actually, no. This stuff's all pretty new, isn't it?

P: John Lewis ain't. This ain't new new, as in brand-spanking-new.

R: About five years I think, isn't it?

P: Less than that.

R: Five, six, something like that.

P: You've got a nice pub by there, you've got Greg's over by here on, um, Chippy Lane. It's called Chippy Lane for a reason, 'cause there's so many chip shops here.

R: And this is The Hayes, isn't it?

P: Yeah, all this, up by there's The Hayes.

09:00

R: Right.

P: This is just the normal path to the library.

R: There was a car park here before, wasn't there, I think?

P: Not sure. Not sure…

R: For the hotel.

P: Oh yeah, yeah. It's down there now [pointing behind library]. There's the car park there where all the [inaudible] are.

R: Yeah.

P: You've got, like, a bit of it, what's left over.

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library to you?

P: Yeah.

R: You do?

P: You wouldn't think it if you were brand new coming into Cardiff though. D'you know what I mean?

R: Yeah. Like, if you came down The Hayes, 'cause you can see it from over there.

P: Access, yeah. You can access this place every day, till Sunday. Sunday it's closed. I don't know why, but it's closed.

R: Right.

P: [Inaudible, heading for doors despite having previously told me he was banned from the library]

10:00

R: Let's not go too far in.

You can see that thing they've put up there. See that, up there? I suppose it's to stop bits falling on people.

P: [Possibly] It's to stop people from flying [maybe he thinks it's to catch suicide jumpers?]. [Inaudible]… roof; it's terrible. And that cost thirteen million pounds?

R: The whole building, I think it did.

P: Come on now, this ain't worth thirteen million.

R: Six floors.

P: Is it? This ain't worth the money. It ain't is it? It's just an [inaudible] building. You know what I mean? [Knocks on wall] Plasterboard.

R: Yeah.

P: You heard that, it's hollow? The only thing that real in here is this [refers to escalator]. There's no way this cost thirteen million pounds. They've been ripped off.

R: D'you reckon? I think the whole St. David's Two development was about five hundred and thirty five million.

P: Fucking hell.

11:00

R: It's a hell of an expensive business.

P: All that money... Where's all the money gone. They're supposed to help people, yeah [the librarians], but they ban people for no reason. I won't go too far [into the library, since he been banned].

R: You can see it all from here anyway.

P: [Inaudible]. People come in here all day, even homeless people come in here, they come in here, they sit down at the back there, use the chairs by here. You can sit down all day [inaudible].

R: Did you used to use the place?

P: Yeah, I used to sit there, yeah.

R: What did you use it for?

P: Sit down, chill out and relax. I can't read so, it's hard for me.

R: Yeah.

P: And, um, it's difficult. My mates use the computer, but I can't use them. Don't ask me how to use a computer 'cause I wouldn't know where to start. I wouldn't know where to start.

R: I don't suppose you ever felt you could talk to a librarian about that sort of thing?

P: Huh?

R: Do you ever feel that you could talk to a librarian about that sort of thing?

12:00

P: No.

R: Is there a bit of a barrier there, do you think?

P: They're not on our level.

R: In what way?

P: Like, with the people you've seen just then, like them at [youthgroup name]. They're different, aren't they?

R: Yeah.

P: You come in here and they're like "Huh, you got your library card on you, have you got this on you?", you know what I mean?

90

R: Is that why you hang out at [youthgroup name]? It's a different level of…

P: Yeah, we click more.

R: Yeah.

P: We get on better more. In here, all they care about is, can you keep it down, quiet. It's a library, isn't it?

R: Yeah. That's what a library is, it's being quiet, you reckon?

P: Yeah. I think it's mad.

R: All that *shhh* business?

P: Yeah, they're moody in here. They are. They ban you for no reason. Do you know what it was for?

R: What?

P: Do you know what they banned me for?

R: What was it? I don't know, no.

13:00

P: They banned me, right, 'cause I was in the toilets having a wash, yeah, 'cause at the time the Huggard Centre shower wasn't working…

R: Yeah.

P: So, 'cause they wasn't working I had to have a strip wash, so I was in here for ages and they thought I was doing heroin and stuff.

R: 'cause you'd been in there too long?

P: Yeah. They banned me for that.

R: Hmmm. You think they'd need proof.

P: No, they said "You're a heroin addict" bam-bam. I was one and, like, the guy [Dan Wilson] probably told you I'm still on it, but I've got so much proof it'd shut his mouth right up.

R: He didn't mention it, to be honest.

P: He did; he must have said something. I knows he did. Or "watch your phone", or something. "He'll rob you" or something. D'you know what I mean? That's wrong, isn't it?

14:00

R: Guess so.

P: I was sat in here and I got robbed. I was asleep.

R: Whereabouts?

P: In [youthgroup name].

R: Really?

P: Yeah.

R: Was that recent?

P: Yeah. Look, I've been bit by one of those mosquito things. It's gone all funky.

R: You have to watch those, make sure they don't get infected.

P: [Inaudible]

R: Yeah.

P: Feels horrible [inaudible].

R: Really?

P: Yeah. I feel like there's not much to Cardiff.

R: You mean like it's small or there's just not much going on?

P: There's not much going on.

R: Do you ever feel like you should leave?

P: No, I won't leave. I won't leave 'cause it costs more. If I went out of Cardiff it'd cost me a fortune.

15:00

R: Yeah. And you know the place, don't you?

P: Yeah, you know, yeah, yeah, you know where to hang around, where to go.

R: I guess if you went to, I mean, I was in Nottingham before here, and, you know, I guess there's just one big city compared to another, isn't it? They're all kind of the same.

P: Well, I've had quite a bad life, I have.

R: Yeah.

P: No, I have. Nothing's… no one believes in me or nothing like that. These people don't believe in me [[youthgroup name], presumably], but those people over there, it's called, like, a dip[?] centre, IOIS.

R: IOIS?

P: Yeah, that's what it's called. Look on the Internet. It's called IOIS and it's for people who want to come off heroin, yeah?

R: Yeah.

P: And, like, I've done good, yeah? I've come off. I've been clean…

R: If you're off, you're off, aren't you?

P: I've been off for the last month, and 'cause they don't believe me, it seems that they think I'm just one of these people that just wants to rob everything. I'm not into it, I don't need to rob. I never used to rob. I'd tap people on the shoulder and say "Excuse me, can you spare some change please, sir?"

R: Yeah.

P: Never sat on the floor in my life, never sat down and begged.

16:00

R: It's good that you think about yourself in that way, isn't it, I guess? You know, you have a bit of dignity.

P: The other people [inaudible] they get it and they go straight and buy booze, but I go straight and buy food first. I buy food, first, then after that I used to take it [heroin], I used

to be flat out, but I done good. In the last three months I've done good. In the last three months I've done two [inaudibles], yeah, two thing, I've seen things, I was seeing things, but now I've come off, I've been clean for a month.

R: Yeah. I mean it must be really hard with the withdrawal symptoms and everything.

17:00

P: I was on it for three years, and there's people who've been on it for eleven years, thirteen years, fourteen years, their whole life. Know what I mean? And when I'm twenty-five, I need to start changing my life before it's too late, before I turn thirty, know what I mean?

R: Yeah.

P: I'd love to have a good life. I've got nowhere to live, know what I mean? And I'm still doing well. Look, that says it all, I think.

R: Considering.

P: I still looks tidy, know what I mean? You wouldn't think I was a homeless guy, would you?

R: I wouldn't, genuinely. I didn't. I didn't.

P: You wouldn't think it though, would you? You wouldn't go "Oh yeah, he's homeless, the way he looks." No way, I've done, I have. I have done good. I'm fucking proud of myself.

R: I guess you've got to get work at some point, some kind of work.

P: No, I can't do it. [Inaudible] I really can't do it. Can't face it.

18:00

R: I guess you've been in here before? [The job centre]

P: Look at that bite mark, man.

R: You'll have to watch that doesn't swell up. [Inaudible].

P: And I've got a little daughter as well [inaudible]. And it's hard 'cause I'm not allowed to see her.

R: Yeah.

P: Yeah, it's horrible. Nothing's ever going right for me. I want something to go right for me in life. I wish I could help people out like me.

1.13 STUDENT 1, 26TH JANUARY 2015

01:00

Researcher: Is this the first time you've visited the library?

Participant: No, it's not. I've visited about three times before.

R: Okay. Have you been studying in Cardiff long?

P: This is my first year here, actually.

R: Okay, so you've been here a few months?

P: Only a few months.

R: Is this something you've found useful so far?

P: The library? Not particularly, 'cause it's actually quite a distance from where I live, so that's the first problem, and the second one would be that – I am a book-reader, I enjoy reading – but I haven't actually found a book in the library that I would particularly want to read, so I haven't actually borrowed a book or anything.

R: Do you find that you can find books elsewhere, or do you think the library does provide a useful service for that.

P: I would say it does provide a useful thing but, I think it depends on people. Some people just don't like reading books and that's a problem.

02:00

R: I find you can get so much stuff cheap on Amazon these days, there's almost no need to go out.

P: Especially with Oxfam just down the road, and you can actually buy the books as well.

R: Did you approach it from that way or this way?

P: I can down from this way.

R: Okay, so can see it from quite a long distance away.

P: Yeah, especially the statue here, I mean this structure here. It really does stand out.

R: Have you any idea what this means?

P: Err, not at all.

R: I have none at all either.

Do you feel it looks like a library? Is it something you can identity as a library from a distance? I mean, think back to the first time you came and visited it, how did you know it was a library?

P: Purely based off the word "Cardiff Library".

R: That's it?

P: That was the only thing that gave it away, otherwise I would have thought it was an office building or another mall.

R: It looks kind of the same as John Lewis next door, doesn't it?

P: It does.

R: When you think of how you would recognise a library, like how you'd recognise an office building or a department store, what do you think of?

03:00

P: When I think of a library, I tend to think of the architecture's older. It's kind of like something over there.

R: Okay. Like the Wyndham Arcade?

P: Yeah. Like an older kind of feel for the library, something like in Oxford University kind of thing.

R: Something, maybe, like that building right up there in the middle of the street?

P: Yeah, definitely.

R: That was actually the first library in Cardiff, so that was the public library in, like, 1880 or whatever.

P: Yeah, to me that would be a library.

R: That kind of Victorian brick; that look. I suppose that's not strange in a way because so many libraries were built around that time.

P: Yeah, especially when you think of England, you tend to think of it this way as well.

R: Okay. Shall we wander in, have a look around?

P: But, as I say, it's also quite nice because libraries nowadays are getting more and more modern, which is also a good thing. I think a slow progression from what it used to be to what it should be now.

04:00

R: Does that make it feel more welcoming, or do you find that older, more classical look more welcoming?

P: I actually quite like both, 'cause, like when I come into this one I'm like, oh, it's quite new, it's quite nice, but the other ones are like rows and rows of books, and I guess you do actually get quite excited, or you get some kind of excitement from it.

R: So if you were coming here to look for something, how would you start to find your way around? How would you start to get towards it?

P: I actually love just wandering around the entire place, 'cause, like, Cardiff Library is no particularly big, yeah, so I would walk down each aisle and look at what I would like to read.

05:00

R: So browsing is very important?

P: Yeah, browsing is very important.

It's also quite nice that they have a lot of chairs scattered around, so there's not like one big communal area where everyone's just sitting to read a book together, 'cause if you're reading a book you want to be by yourself. So I think that's quite nice, how they kind of did it.

R: So when you come in here you feel like you want to find your own little space?

P: Yes, definitely. I want to find my own little space where, if I could not see that many people around me, that would probably be the best place to sit down and read.

R: Okay, a quite part of the library. Is there anything else that makes an idea personal space?

P: Definitely one with a view, 'cause, yeah that would make it the perfect space, but otherwise as long as I'm by myself and if there's one or two extra people by me I'm fine.

R: Do you reckon this building's got good views?

06:00

P: Yeah, this actually has quite a nice view, 'cause it's not static. There's people moving about, there's buildings and everything. It's actually very nice.

R: Have you been to any of the restaurants down around there underneath us?

P: Um, no, I haven't actually.

R: I can't say I've ever been to a library that had restaurants built into it.

P: That's Cardiff for you, I guess.

R: They're not accessible from inside the library.

P: I guess they're trying to deter food from coming in.

R: Have you ever needed to speak with the librarians in here yet?

P: Err, no, 'cause I haven't been trying to find anything.

R: You've just been here to wander?

P: Yeah, I've just been here to wander. Probably the first time I talked to a librarian was to ask where you were.

07:00

R: Oh really? Yeah, the previous participant got a bit confused and turned up at quarter-to, so we had to do the whole walk-along in ten minutes.

Do you feel as you wandering around here that you're getting any sort of picture of where stuff is?

P: Um, slowly, bit-by-bit, I would say so, 'cause they have all the stuff at the side of the shelves, so you don't have to go to, like, one notice board to be like, okay, I want this kind of book, I gotta go here, then here, but this one's more or less I'm in the right area.

R: So you feel you already known quite well what in the first floor, third floor?

P: Yeah, I would say so.

R: Is it purely the signs you're using to be able to tell?

P: Yeah, actually. I'm, purely using the signs. I don't think there's anything else that I would look at.

R: I suppose all the shelves look kind of the same.

08:00

P: Yeah. Maybe if they had like a wall mural on each floor that shows what each floor is about. That might help.

R: Do you feel like there's colour coding in here, or is everything quite hard to tell apart in terms of colours?

P: I don't see much colour coding.

R: It's interesting because I've been told that the place is colour coded, but I've never seen anything that was other than, pretty much…

P: All the same. Yeah, white and the occasional orange bit.

R: You can see, if you start looking, that there's a bit of mauve here, maybe a bit of orange on the floor above, but I don't know. It doesn't go very far does it?

P: No. It looks the same to me actually. It really does. I don't see any colour coordination. The walls are the same, the shelves are the same.

R: On every floor, you mean?

09:00

P: On every floor.

R: Shall we carry on?

P: Yup.

R: I'm just following you around really.

P: How do we go up?

R: You lost?

P: Okay, yeah.

R: It's alright. Everyone gets lost at some point.

P: Oh, I didn't know they had CDs here.

R: I guess that's one advantage of wandering around [that you see stuff you didn't know about].

P: Yeah. I'm wondering, if they have CDs, would they have headphones or places to actually read the CDs from? 'Cause, like, if you're reading a CD you probably wouldn't want to go on a laptop, 'cause I know that's one thing with me, I don't like going on a laptop 'cause it takes forever to load. It would be quite nice to have somewhere where you just chuck the CD into the wall, kind of sit down there and listen to it.

R: Kind of like those things they have in HMV?

P: Yeah, exactly.

R: What's this floor?

10:00

P: Sport? Religion, philosophy. Oh, this is the nonfiction part.

R: Okay. I'd really like to know what's going on up there.

P: I always thought there was like a safety net in case someone falls down and it would catch them, but I thought it was quite ugly, given how nice the building looks so far.

R: This wasn't here until last summer.

P: What, they actually extended it up one floor?

11:00

R: No, I mean that's always been there. It used to have stuff on it, but something happened to the roof and they shut it. But that was, like, last May. I came in for the first time in six months last week and I was really surprised that it was still like this. It seems a bit odd. So I've actually no idea what's going on anymore. Basically, I think that floor's been emptied now. I can only assume the netting's to stop bits of the roof from falling, but it doesn't look like anything's going to fall off.

P: I actually quite like the library.

R: Does it relate to other libraries you've used? Is it similar or different?

P: Yeah, I would say I've actually been to more modern-looking libraries than the traditional-looking ones.

R: Is that because of differences in where you tend to find them, do you think? Like, these modern libraries tend to be more central and the other ones tend to be local branch libraries.

12:00

P: I think it's purely based off, like, the age of the library that was built, and nothing more to do than that. Like, I come from Malaysia, so we don't have the very long history that England does, so a lot of our stuff is newer, so the buildings reflect the age or the era that it was built in.

R: Okay. So what kind of age were the libraries you grew up with?

P: I think they were built around the 1970s.

R: So, sort of later 20th Century?

P: Yeah. I think the max they would be would be about a hundred years, but that would be the oldest, and I don't think I've actually seen one that old.

R: Most of the libraries in this country aren't older than about 130 years.

P: Oh, okay.

R: Yeah, the first Public Libraries Act in the country was in 1850, and there handful of libraries built in the 1850s and 60s. It really sort of happened between about 1870 and 1920.

P: Okay, so it's not that old either.

R: This one opened in 2009.

P: And before that it was there [the Old Library]?

13:00

R: There was actually one where St. David's Two now is. It was opened between 1988 and 2006. It's been demolished. And the old one was opened between – I really should know – 1860-70-[actually 1882] something and 1988. Way too small by then.

P: It's quite sad that Cardiff Library's, that Cardiff's not big enough, 'cause if it was big enough it could be like the library in Melbourne, like a kids' section; the kids could actually play there.

14:00

R: Well, I think there is a kids' section, but it's a little bit hidden.

P: Oh, it's very well hidden then.

98

R: Let's see if we can find it.

P: Alright.

R: I'll give you a clue. It's down.

P: Okay, off we go.

R: I always thought it was a bit odd that there were escalators up to the first floor, and then no more escalators. In Liverpool, again, escalators up to the first floor, then no more escalators.

P: You come in and then- Oh, what floor is that?

R: That's the kids' area.

15:00

P: Why isn't it joined together?

R: I think they separated those two so it's easier to keep secure.

P: For the little kids, is it?

R: Yeah, so there aren't adults going through all the time.

When you were a kid, did you have a library like this?

16:00

P: Yeah we did. I went to the one in Kuala Lumpur. Basically that was my first time I was using the computer. Yeah, so it was my first memory of computers was in the library. It's actually quite cool.

R: I've never been down here before. It looks like a little story time area.

P: Yeah, it's actually very nice. I wonder if they do activities here.

R: I guess they must do.

P: This is perfect space for it.

R: To me, in a weird way, this feels a bit different to the rest of the library. It feels small and more, kind of, comfortable.

P: Oh yeah. It does feel a lot cosier. It feels a lot nicer as well. Like, here you've got the wide windows with no shelves blocking it. Libraries with so many shelves, it kind of feels a little bit claustrophobic sometimes, especially if they didn't do it how Cardiff did it, but they did it just row after row. It feels quite intimidating or, like, there's just too much to look at.

17:00

R: Is that like when you're in those older libraries, with shelving ten feet high?

P: Yeah, all the way up.

R: I remember I spoke to one of the librarians here and he said that the shelves are mostly 1500 or 1700mm partly so that librarians can see over then easily, so they can see a whole floor, so actually being able to see over then was an important part of how they were designed here.

P: Oh, I guess it helps because it opens up the space. I can't imagine what it would be like if it was all the way, given how small it is.

R: It could feel quite dark, I think. I remember the old university library in Nottingham, where you'd have these little corridors, basically filled with books.

Yeah, okay. I guess that's more or less it.

P: Yeah, shall we go back down?

18:00

R: That's the other thing about kids' libraries is they always have stuff hanging.

P: Yeah, but that is so cool though. That's probably the best part about a children's library. It's so much more interesting than the adult's one 'cause you can have fun and colour with it.

R: Yeah, I wonder sometimes why designers seem to think little children like that sort of thing but nobody else does.

P: Actually that's quite true.

1.14 STUDENT 2, 26TH JANUARY 2015

01:00

Researcher: So is this a place you've used very much before?

Participant: To be honest, I haven't used it at all.

R: Is this the first time you've been down here?

P: Yeah, that's the first time I've ever been in.

R: You came down from The Hayes, I presume?

P: I came down through the thingy [St David's Two] because it's warmer.

R: That was very smart of you. Were you able to tell it's a library quite quickly? Could you tell what you were looking for?

P: I knew it was a library, for sure, but I've just never been in.

R: How could you tell, was it just 'cause people have told you, or was it because it's got a sign on it.

P: Yeah, the sign on the front really. I don't think I'd know anybody else who's used it, to be honest, 'cause we usually use the university library.

R: Of course, that's the thing, isn't it? Which school are you in?

P: Um, the Business School.

02:00

R: So you've got Aberconway Library there, haven't you?

P: Yup.

R: Okay. The first guy I spoke to today, he actually said this would be a really good one for him. He's in the business school as well, but I think it's 'cause he lives quite close to here. I don't suppose you live close, do you?

P: I think I live closer to uni than I do to here.

R: So, yeah, probably not worth it, making the extra trip. Okay, you're right, it's freezing. Let's go back inside.

P: Okay.

R: Does it look like libraries you've used before, does it look like what you expect of a library?

P: Yeah, it is, pretty much. Yeah, I would say so.

R: So when you were a kid did you have a library growing up that you were taken to?

P: To be honest, no. I would get them for birthdays or Christmas, so I'd just read those.

R: So how do you tend to use the Aberconway Library? You go there to study, I presume, rather than to socialise.

03:00

P: I go there to study, yup, mostly, and to, you know, like, at the end of lectures they say, this is the reading list, then I'd book those books out, especially if I have coursework or exams coming up. So I'd book those books and collect them, and use the chapters in them.

R: So, if you were coming down here for a reason other than [studying], just to get a book out, how would you start finding what you were looking for in here?

P: As in, like, if I actually knew what I wanted?

R: Yeah, if you came here for something, or, I don't know, maybe if you were just trying to see what was here?

P: Well, I could probably just ask for help first.

R: That's what you'd do, is it?

P: Possibly, or, I'm pretty sure there must be, like, a computer system, like- Are we going up again?

R: I'm just following you around.

04:00

P: Oh right, play I was following you! Okay, we could go that way too. Um, yeah, so-

R: If we rush round the place this'll take five minutes…

P: I'm sure they should either have a computer system, like Aberconway, or fiction…

R: That tells you all the stocks?

P: Yeah, that tells you where you are. And I think it should be in alphabetical order, maybe, possibly. I think that should be the way it's… Maybe not, now I look at it. Oh, it is [looking at shelf] Boyle here. So it should all be arranged according to…

R: The fiction is alphabetical, I think, but the nonfiction's Dewey, I think.

P: Okay. Yeah, there should be a system to it, though, so even if I don't ask for help I can find it eventually.

R: As we were coming up, did you get a feeling for what's on each floor, what's in each section?

P: Umm…

R: I mean, just on that, at a first glance, can you get any sort of sense of where everything is in here, on each floor?

05:00

P: To be honest, no… I don't know if it would be better- I'm not sure if that has it, like, the "Two" thing, but you know when you're, like, in a mall and then you have, like, "Floor Two", and it's, oh, this is what's on this floor: that would be helpful. I think they might have it there but I'm not sure.

R: We can take a look if you want.

P: Yeah.

R: It's a very small sign.

P: Yeah, it should probably be- Oh yeah, it does. It's like the orange bit. But it's kind of missed when you're going up, so it has fiction and biography and large print, yeah, so that's good. It probably needs another sign downstairs showing what's upstairs, though.

R: You wouldn't be able to tell from that what's on any of the other floors, would you? It's not like there's a themed floor.

P: There should definitely be an overall one so you can tell where you need to be straightaway, rather than, like, guessing each floor, I guess.

06:00

It's much more like a… like, libraries are usually much more quiet, but this is more, like, kind of, you can hang out with your friends kind of thing. It's a lot different, like, the atmosphere, from what I would expect.

R: Different from Aberconway or different from what you think of as just a generic library?

P: Different from Aberconway, definitely. Both, I guess. Aberconway, we'd actually get told off. There's a thing where, like, if someone's making noise you text a number and the librarian comes round and tells them off, so, yeah, you definitely wouldn't get that here.

R: It's an interesting change. It's almost like it's being encouraged here.

Oh look!

P: Yeah, that's probably not the right side, though. Like, nobody would know, coming up, that it's there.

[She's referring to the lettering that tells you what's on each floor, which is on the back of the orange sign at the top of the escalators. There's another one we found higher up, with the useful information pressed into the side of a staircase and the front reserved for an off TV screen.]

R: That wasn't on the other side, was it?

07:00

P: No, it's just "Floor Two" on that side.

R: Well, at least everyone in the newspaper section knows where everything is.

P: Yeah. Because, I mean, this TV is not being used really for anything. You know what I mean? Like, what is that for? So they could have put that information on that side.

R: They could just turn the whole thing round, actually.

P: Yeah, that would be so much better, I think.

R: Shall we look round another floor?

P: Yeah, sure.

R: I depends really, if you can sort of tell what is on every floor. I don't know if you're expecting to fid any surprises as you're wandering about.

P: Um, no, I think the most surprising thing is probably how, like, not quiet it is, which is not a bad thing. I don't mind it not being quiet, but yeah, I'm surprised at that, for sure.

R: Do you think that makes it a worse place to study?

08:00

P: I think it really depends on the person. Like, I don't really mind studying on my own, so I like studying better with noise, to be honest. But then, obviously, if people are laughing lots and stuff, I think I'd be put off by that. But, like, normally when I study I study listening to music, so it would be fine, I think.

Probably more tables, like, study areas would be better, like there.

R: Do you think there's too much shelving?

P: Yeah, but I guess there's more on every floor, so that's fine actually.

R: Yeah, well let's go round take a look, see what we've got. It looks like this floor's mainly music.

P: Uh-huh, and maybe power points. I think that would be good.

R: For laptops and phones?

P: Yeah, for laptops. I think that would be great.

R: Does this fundamentally feel different to you from the floor below?

09:00

P: Um, probably less books, more, like, work being done here, I would say, and this seems a bit more quiet than downstairs, 'cause everyone seems to be doing work, so I think I'd be inclined to be quiet.

R: I notice you've lowered your voice.

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: It's on the back of there too, facing a wall [the signage about floor content].

P: Yeah, that's kind of… [laughs]. Err, yeah, shall we go up? I think you can't go there. How do you- 'cause there's, like, a little thing [barriers across a third floor walkway], unless we go that way. You know what I mean?

R: Well, let's take a look. I don't know what's going on with the roof of this place. This netting didn't use to be here. It only appeared last summer. I kind of thought it would be gone by now, but the whole top floor's basically empty now. It's a bit weird [inaudible].

10:00

What about this as compared to the previous two floors?

P: Hmm, I think this looks more like the first floor [Level 2], so the ground floor and then the first floor, not the one just now.

R: What's different about the second one?

P: I think there seemed to be more people on that floor doing work, compared to this one. I don't know. That's how I feel but maybe it's just me. I don't know.

R: This looks like more nonfiction books to me.

11:00

P: It's also, like, lacking… You know when you walk into Waterstone's, that kind of vibe, like an old kind of library vibe, like, it's not the same as that, strangely. I don't know if that's good or bad.

R: How does this make you feel?

P: It's more… It doesn't really… Like, you know how you smell books? It doesn't really smell like that. You know what I mean? You probably couldn't change that, but you know what I mean. It's that kind of atmosphere. You can smell all the book in here, you walk in and you're like, oh, I'm here.

[It makes me think of Barry Braverman's talk. It makes me think of Disney pumping smells into their parks to create certain mental images. It makes me think of the "cult of print" and

its relationship to the "economy of the printed word". What is the crossover point between the emotional appeal of the media and their functional value?]

R: Is that all that's different about a branch of Waterstone's, or any bookshop?

P: Probably, like, the decoration as well. Waterstone's is more like, I guess, like the wooden things, whereas this is white and orange and stuff, so it's like trying to be a bit more brighter, but that one comes off as – obviously it's not a library, it's a bookshop – but it kind of comes off as like an old, typical library that you'd think about, whereas this is more a bit like on the modern side.

12:00

R: Does that make this different to use?

P: Um, I guess because Waterstone's is a shop rather than a library, you wouldn't use it for the same purpose in the first place, but if Waterstone's was an actual library where you can sit down and read the books, then I'd personally like that atmosphere more than this atmosphere, because I like the whole atmosphere with the books, and it feels, like comforting, whereas the modern kind of thing, I could probably get that from Aberconway.

R: Okay, so comfort, and cosiness, and warmth, are not things you experience here?

13:00

P: No, it's too much on the modern side, I think, for sure, yeah. Yeah, like, even Waterstone's staircases are all, like, wooden, but here it's all, like, glass and stuff, but I guess it's all different people and different tastes. Like, you know, some people might think this is better because it's more modern, but I prefer the more stereotypical library, I think.

R: Do you think brightness is important, how much light you're getting in there, 'cause I think this is definitely brighter, isn't it [than the average Waterstone's]?

P: Yeah, I think that's much better for studying; that's good. I probably wouldn't like to study in Waterstone's, for sure.

R: You'd fall asleep.

P: No, but if I wanted to just sit down and read a book that I liked, it would be, probably, Waterstone's, 'cause it feels more homey.

14:00

R: I don't know, there aren't really any other old libraries in Cardiff, are there? Not big ones, anyway. They're all Victorian branches that have been refurbished and are kind of like this inside. They're probably all going to get shut down in a few years anyway. Might get shut down in the next few months, actually, some of them.

 If you were studying in here, or reading in here, for that matter, what kind of place would you like to sit? Is there anything you'd look for?

P: I personally don't like to study around people, because sometimes, you know, they, like, tap their pens on the table and it's just like, oh my gosh, like shut up, basically.

R: So you like a bit of isolation?

P: Yeah, basically isolation, so to me it's better if, like, you know, some places they have a little cubicle thing, so they might have a long desk but each person has their own little cubicle, so I like that, but other people may not.

15:00

R: So, kind of, more like that kind of thing [pointing to some more substantial desks]?

P: Yeah, more closed off.

R: I'm trying to remember if – maybe I imagined it. There were some long desks which had a screen between them, but I don't think the sides were partitioned off.

P: But, obviously, somewhere with more light, I think, so if there was one like that near the window, I think I'd probably prefer that.

R: So these little desks here, with their individual desks?

P: That would be good, but it would probably be better if the desks were, like, you know what I mean? Like, there was more space for me to put the books in front of the keyboard [she's referring to the PC stations on a row at the front of the Level 2, near the foyer atrium]. Because, like, right now, where am I going to put my books.

16:00

R: I don't think those are meant for studying really, are they? And what about these ones up here? Again, those desks are probably too small, I dare say, for anything much more than a notebook.

P: Yeah, the big desk over there is probably the biggest one here, like, but that more like… You could study in a group there, but individually it's not good 'cause there's other people at the table.

I guess another thing is, like, is there a coffee shop here? I'm not sure, like a Costa or something? That would be nice.

R: I don't know where the nearest one is. There are shops in the bottom of the building, aren't there? There's a Wagamama's down there around the corner and some other stuff. I guess you'd have to go into St. David's.

P: I guess maybe they don't want eating here.

R: I'm pretty certain, from what I remember, speaking to someone about this, when the initial thing was being decided, they did want a coffee shop, but they couldn't find the budget.

17:00

P: I don't know, budget, like, if there's a Costa in here, won't they help to pay it, because they're getting money as well?

R: You mean a sort of franchise arrangement?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Yeah.

P: Like, a really small one.

R: Maybe they couldn't justify it for the size of the building? I'm not sure. It's big enough, you'd think.

P: Do you know the new Business [School] building, next to Aberconway? They've got a really small Costa in there and it's always full, like, there's literally queues every single time a lecture ends.

R: Business School students though. They need their coffee.

P: That true.

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R: I don't know. I mean, I know the top floor is now empty and, quite frankly, I wouldn't be massively surprised if a coffee shop appeared in it in the near future, but for one reason or another, there definitely isn't one at the moment.

18:00

P: Because, like, when I study coming up to exam time, I just stay, like… Do you know the Julian Hodge Building?

R: Yeah.

P: I literally stay in there all day. I go down to the vending machines or the coffee shop nearby. I stay there all day. I won't go out, so if there was a coffee shop in this building I would stay here all day. That would help me.

R: If you'd come down here in the first place.

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Which you wouldn't.

There is a kids' library, a children's library, downstairs, which might be worth a look at.

P: Okay, sure.

R: Because I feel like it's a bit different from the rest of the library. There's only one thing I'm not so sure about. I guess maybe it's a sign of the fact that this was designed on a fairly small budget, is it's essentially empty floors with stuff put in them. It's not really designed in a very holistic way. You could basically take the shelves away and turn the thing into a completely different function over a weekend. You could turn this into an office building so easily.

P: And, like, when I think of libraries I think of really, like – I don't know, maybe I'm wrong here to think this – but I think there's not much variety in the books. There's not enough, if that makes sense.

R: Sorry, do you mean the quantity of books?

P: Yeah, the quantity doesn't seem to be enough. Or maybe it's because they're spread over so many floors it seems like, overall there is enough, but I imagine, when I go into a library, big, huge bookcases, full, like, up to the ceiling. You know what I mean? But this one's really [low], so it makes it seem like there's not much, but I feel that overall there probably is, it's just spread out over so many floor.

20:00

R: Yeah, there certainly is quite a bit of stuff in the stocks. I don't know… It's hard to tell how well used most of it is, isn't it?

P: I think, like, it's probably not necessary to, like, you could have one floor just for, like, desks and computers and stuff. You know what I mean?

R: Would that make it better, do you think?

P: Umm…

R: Or do you think it would make it easier to find your way around, at least?

P: Yeah, it would. And then all the books are on one floor instead of – well, not one, but maybe two floors – instead of spread all over the place. And there could be a coffee shop on the same floor as all of the desks. Something like that.

[Participant argues for spatial segregation to ease navigation]

21:00

R: Do you think – well, I suppose you've already answered this implicitly – but I was going to say, do you think the people who run this library do enough to relate it to the students in the area?

P: Personally, no. Like, I've never read anything or seen anything, like, nothing pretty much. No fliers, nothing on Learning Central or anything, like, saying that this is actually here for students to use. If I wanted to look for a book specifically, I don't know if I could find it here. Like, I'm sure that they must have some kind of online system for me to look online from home, to look for a particular book, but, like, that doesn't come first to mind because I'm not used to- Oh, we're passing it [the kid's library]! How did we…? Oh, we have to go up again.

R: Yeah, it's like a half floor.

22:00

P: Okay. So, yeah, it wouldn't come first to mind 'cause I'm not used to using this library, I guess, 'cause I don't know what features they have to offer here.

R: It certainly feels like students aren't ever considered as an interesting user group for this place.

P: Yup.

R: Maybe there's an assumption we all have our own libraries with our own universities and we're the last people they'd need to target?

P: Because, like, Aberconway Library has all the business books, so what would this offer? Would this offer more than that? Like, what's the reason for coming here?

R: I guess aside from a study space, you wouldn't really use it for a resource, particularly.

23:00

P: I actually quite like this. I feel like this is a good part of the library.

R: This, to me, feels different fundamentally to the rest of it.

P: Yeah, it feels more homey, for sure, and more comfortable, especially with these seats and stuff. Yeah, I definitely like this a lot more than the rest of the library. I don't know why. I think it's more comfortable.

R: You made me think of this, 'cause this is, for me, halfway between that new modern look and that kind of cosy quality.

P: Yeah, I agree.

R: I couldn't put my finger quite on what exactly makes it cosy and modern.

P: Like, even putting the book cases that high, I think it makes it feel a lot better, but I don't know why it does, but them being this low, it makes you think there's not much to offer.

24:00

R: It makes it more interesting, perhaps. There's more going on here.

[A discussion of sightlines I think should include now some talk of what's at eye level, and what eye level means for how your surroundings feel.]

P: And I think it's the privacy of looking at whatever you want to look at, the books, rather than people can see you looking at these books for half an hour, you can just stand here for as long as you want and no one will take a second look, you know what I mean?

R: Yeah. I think… um, I remember one of the librarians telling me that the shelves upstairs are all 1500mm or 1700mm so the librarians could see over them and have a clear view of the whole floor, 'cause it's a public library, obviously there's all sort of people coming in, so they need to be able to see what's going on, and it does mean that you can see the whole floor at a glance, and I'm not sure what effect that has on the way it makes you feel, if it makes it feel cold.

P: Yeah, I think it does, to be honest. Like, I think if it was a bit higher it would be more, like, homey and private. I think that's much better. Like, if anything, you could possibly do rounds instead to check on the whole floor, like every ten minutes. Like you just check the floor.

25:00

R: So you just go for a wander, basically?

P: Yeah. The librarian could do it, instead of having to keep all the bookcases low.

R: One way they used to do it in Victorian librarians, where they did have massive great bookshelves, was to arrange them sort of radially, so you could sit at one point and look down all the rows, but it gives you a sort of panopticon thing going on, which makes it seem a bit under-surveillance.

P: What is down there? I don't know.

R: This has always been a very weird space for me. It used to me quick-access PCs round here, so you could just pop in and out, but since they closed the upper floor, they've brought the local history section down here, so there's microfilm readers.

26:00

P: I think it's just a bit awkward. Like, why is this here?

R: I think it's temporary, this arrangement. It does seem slightly odd.

P: Yeah.

R: Mind you, there was a guy there all morning doing something with the microfilm, so he was using them.

…

27:00

P: Because, like, a lot of the time, you know how business students are? They literally just go through all the books, they take it out, and it's all gone for a whole month, like, it's so hard to get copies of something.

R: They have half a dozen copies of something and they all go as soon as the reading lists are out?

P: Yeah, pretty much, especially when exams or coursework is due. It's, like, you won't be able to get it, so if they had those books here, they definitely would be taken out.

R: I feel it wouldn't be very difficult for a library to work in conjunction with the university and just temporarily get in the stock.

P: Yeah, I think so, for sure, 'cause I think it's definitely lacking the numbers, like, I wish Aberconway had specific books, like, they had more of them, 'cause sometimes I want them and it's like, oh, you're fifth in queue, and I'm like, I will never get it in time for my coursework.

28:00

R: What do you do then?

P: I just use all the other materials that they've told us to read.

R: And this is information you can't get open access, you can't get online?

P: Sometimes they'll scan the books in, but sometimes they don't, so you have to get the hard copy, in which case, I can't get it.

R: There's no illegal trade in book-scanning? Whoever's got a copy just scans it and sends it round to everyone?

P: No, 'cause it's literally, like, chapters and chapters, so I don't think anyone would be bothered to do that. It's a bit much.

R: And a lot of trouble for getting booted out too. Doesn't seem worth it.

1.15 STUDENT 3, 26TH JANUARY 2015

Researcher: This isn't the first time you've been down to this library, or is it?

Participant: Yeah, yeah, this is the first time I am here inside, but I made a couple of circles around this floor. I have seen it. What I really like is that here there is a section with newspapers.

R: Up here on the third floor? [I.e. Level 4] [Actually the newspapers are on Level 2, but Hristo has seen another newspaper in a stand of journals or something and got confused.]

01:00

P: Yeah, but it would be better if it was somewhere down [it is] in the first floor. I think I saw [The] Times. Yeah. For example, I am interested in [The] Financial Times.

R: Is that because of the course you're studying?

P: Yes, I study finance and management. It's good to keep track on the finance. And it's a bit messy how can I find that newspaper here.

R: Is that the Business School?

P: Yup.

R: There's the Aberconway Library there, isn't there?

P: Yeah, I know. Yeah, they have The Financial Times there.

R: Do you think you'd ever need to come down here to use this or would you go to the Aberconway Library if you were studying?

P: I don't know. I think that here it is more convenient for me, the location, and I prefer that here there are sofas and tables where I can sit comfortably and read, whereas in the Aberconway, you can just sit in a kind of box and stay and study. This is less formal.

02:00

R: Yeah. And did you say that this is more conveniently located?

P: Yeah.

R: Because you live somewhere down in town?

P: Yeah, I live five minutes' walk from here, and it's more convenient that Aberconway, and at the same time I have access to computers, as I can see, and some kind of quiet places like there, where I can sit and study and won't be disrupted by anything.

R: When you were coming down the street just now, were you able to tell that it was a library from some way off? How did you find it exactly? How did you know which building you were going for?

03:00

P: I have seen it before, and it doesn't look from outside like a normal library, but there is a big name on the front of the library, so this is helpful, and if there are some directions [i.e. signs] around the town, for example, I have seen Cardiff Castle and some others, if there is Cardiff Library it would be helpful. Maybe it would be helpful.

R: Do you think there is such a thing as a library look, when you what think of a library. When you think of what a library looks like in your head, do you picture something different from this?

P: Err, yeah. It's kind of more modern library, this one. I usually picture only books, not a mix with computers and places where you can sit and read and enjoy. Usually I think about something with stacks of books and one big table in the middle where you can read, but I think it's better and more modern.

R: Did you have a library when you were growing up?

P: Yes, yes.

R: Was it more like this or more like what you've just described?

P: No, what I've just described, yeah. This is kind of modern, more modern, yeah.

R: Which library?

P: It wasn't the UK. It was in Bulgaria. I'm from Bulgaria, so yeah it's a public library, not a school library, but it's very traditional and it's on two floors and everything is on stacks and one very big table where you can read.

R: [Explaining Liverpool]

05:00

P: I think that this type of library is better, it's far better than the old type. I am wondering, here, if I want to find a book, what should I do, how can I find the book. I think it's a bit complicated. I'm not sure. For example now I need something on business or finance related. What should I do? Everywhere I see "Science", "Crime", "Fiction", and I'm not sure on the four floors where should I go in order to get that kind of book. This is kind of more difficult. If there was, for example, in the entrance something where it's written where I can find something, for example, "Business is on the Second Floor", or something like that, it would be more useful and better.

06:00

R: Apart from signs, is there any other way of finding out where stuff is? Like, I mean, could you speak to a librarian?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Are you able just to tell by looking? I personally feel they all kind of look the same, the floors.

P: Yeah, what I would do is just go and ask, but…

R: You can't do that every time can you?

P: Yeah, yeah. That's why I'd prefer if there was just a place where it's written, everything , where it is, which floor, so I can find it. And, for example, some other times, I am looking for one book, but when I go the business section I see other books which are interesting for me, so I pick two or three books instead of just one, so I think that it's better to browse by myself, not to be taught that I can go to the second floor at the right corner and you'll find your book. It's better for me to browse around the whole section of topics and find interesting things.

07:00

R: It's interesting then that it's important that you can't have a computer screen; you have to have a whole shelf.

P: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Usually, for example, here I start looking and checking the names of the books, but if I find something interesting before my book, so I decide to pick this as well

before I find my book, and to pick the two books, and I find the other book relevant as well, but if I do that on the computer screen, for example, on the university platform Learning Central, I find only my book, and I don't find any other books which might be interesting, but I don't know about them. So I just like to go and browse the whole section and check different things.

08:00

R: Do you feel that it's quite easy to wander around this place, that it's quite easy to get a sense for it in your head?

P: The good thing is that as it was the first time I was here, it was somewhat complicated where are the stairs. At some point I was not lost, but I was puzzled where are the stairs. Where should I go? And no, I think it's not really good, 'cause when I was on this side on the upper floor, I wanted to go on the other side, and I was there: there is no short cut to go on the other side. I had to move around the whole floor.

09:00

So yeah [now on upper floor], where can I find business books?

R: Well, that's a good question, isn't it?

P: I have no idea how.

R: I mean, all the information I can see it what's on the ends of the shelves. That says "Music", so that's not very helpful.

P: "Arts" and "Media"… I think yeah it was here. So yeah, I used to be there on the other side, and I wanted to come here and check, and I was coming to here, and suddenly I can't go through here [the blocked walkway]. It's closed, and at some point I was thinking where are the stairs for going down?

10:00

R: You could take a photo of it maybe.

P: Okay, yeah.

R: Okay, shall we go down to the entrance, maybe?

P: The entrance was good. When you enter, you see a desk with people who are ready to help you and guide you if you need something, so it's good that I am not… [Gets lost] Now, now, yeah…

R: [Talking about Liverpool's confusing stairs]

11:00

P: It's a bit better [than Liverpool], but sometimes I am thinking, where are the stairs? But, yeah, for example, I enter from here, and when I was looking for you I came immediately to the desks and ask about you. If I hadn't seen the desks there, I was going to think, what should I do? Where to go? I'm not sure what is there in the right?

R: Down here?

P: Yeah.

R: I know there used to be computers there.

12:00

P: I think here is not good for books 'cause no one's going to stop here. Everyone goes up when you enter, naturally, you go upstairs, and I wouldn't think here would be some books.

R: I think here used to be some quick access PCs, so if you just wanted to run in, you could use one for ten minutes and then shoot out again without having to go up right inside.

Because the top floor is closed – you saw all the red netting? – they've had to close the local histories section, so I think this is now the local histories section, or like a small version of it, so I'm not sure it's going to be like this forever.

P: And what is here?

R: I think this is more of the local history section.

1.16 STUDENT 4, 26TH JANUARY 2015

Researcher: Which way did you come down to the library?

Participant: From Barclays, from Burger King. This street.

R: Up the Hayes?

P: Yeah.

R: So you can see it from quite a long way off, can't you? Is it a building you've visited much before?

P: No, it's my first time. I've seen it quite a lot but it's my first time visiting.

R: Okay. Did you know it was here before you came down today?

P: Yeah, it's very prominent.

01:00

R: It is, but would you know it was a library, do you think, at a glance? Did anyone tell you it was here?

P: I saw sign boards around, the street signs that I followed to Cardiff Library. I've been in this area, so I knew it was here generally 'cause from far off you can see through the glass windows the books. I think it was obvious.

R: You're probably quite observant. Okay, let's pop back inside.

P: Oh, and the sign here, of course, "Cardiff Library".

R: Gives it away, doesn't it?

P: Definitely.

R: Do you think it has a welcoming feel to it?

02:00

P: Yeah, I think it does. I feel it's definitely very modern and approachable. You can definitely come to hang out, even if you don't want to really get a book.

R: Is it similar to any of the other libraries you've used before?

P: Ah, well just talking about Cardiff, I just use the library for my course at Bute Library, and I think this is much more modern and generally it's [Cardiff is] very approachable; the architecture is very new and fresh compared to… I mean, it challenges the stereotypical view of a library because I guess that's just traditional and, you know, vintage.

R: Dark, high shelves, silence policy, that kind of thing?

P: Yeah. And I guess this appeals to people who might not be attracted to that.

R: Is that why you feel the stereotype needed challenging?

03:12

P: It didn't need challenging, but I feel it's good to have an option for people who wouldn't really go to libraries for that purpose, knowing that it's really old fashioned and just the traditional sense.

R: [Inaudible]. Do you think this kind of building improves the library function as well as making the atmosphere more welcoming?

P: Well looking around, I think it's a pretty functional library. There's signs everywhere. The structure, I feel, is really welcoming.

R: Okay, and if you were coming in here to find a book, say, how would you go about finding things? Do you have any sense in here of where everything is, how you get through it, how you get to it?

04:00

P: When I was waiting downstairs I did see the whole floor map, and that did make it easier to navigate around the library, so I guess I'd go around there, at least get to the right floor, and if I can't find it then ask the librarian around.

R: Okay, shall we go for a wander then?

P: Sure.

R: Do you tend to visit public libraries much? I suppose for your course requirements you have everything you need in your school library, in Bute?

P: Yes.

R: So maybe you don't go to public libraries for scholarship or for academic work?

P: No, I'm just a first year student, so it's very new to me at the moment.

R: Which school are you in?

P: Journalism.

05:00

R: Ah right.

P: So I kind of don't have the need, as of now, to go to libraries that often to fetch articles or scholars' works. I mean, I don't have the need at the moment. I might in the future, but right now I can just buy books. I have been using library books, but not of public libraries. Just a very few trips to the library as well.

R: What about the things that libraries offer side from books and scholarship? Do they offer anything else particularly?

P: Err…

R: It's alright to say "I don't know" if you don't know. It just means they aren't advertising it enough.

06:00

P: Err, I think it's a good environment just to study as well, this entire space. A good working space, I feel, because even if there're no books to borrow it's a good working environment.

R: But then, so is Bute…

P: Yeah. Yeah, but I feel it's a good place to come if you want to get away from people you see every day. It's a complete change of environment, which is a good thing sometimes.

R: [Inaudible – Essentially, "How does this floor compare to the one below?"]

07:00

P: Err, I think I feel that it has more working stations with computer benches and just… In that aspect, yes.

R: I don't know about you but I personally feel that the floors all kind of look the same. Sometimes I forget which one I'm on if I've been sitting down for a little while. I guess you've not been in here long enough to know or to have decided.

Are you lost? You wouldn't think it would be that hard to get lost in here.

P: Yeah, it's quite an open space. Even the shelves are pretty low, most of them, so it's easy to see above them to the other side.

R: Is that a help?

08:00

P: It's not much of a help. I feel it just gives a very open-plan feel, which is good. As I said before, it challenges the stereotypical conception of a library because they would normally be high shelves that touch the ceiling, or something like that, so, yes, it's just different.

R: Does "different" make you feel more comfortable? Do you have certain expectations of what you're hoping to get out of the place?

P: Just to have a good working environment, to get the books that I need really, easy to navigate, and I think having an open space concept allows that. I think sometimes that when I go to a traditional library, like the one I visit up in Bute, I feel very suffocated and kind of overwhelmed because the books are so close to you. It's very narrow lanes to walk in. Different is good.

09:00

R: Do you ever go there to meet friends or just get a book out and leave again?

P: I think I would come after, just talking about Cardiff Library. I think it's a good place. I'd definitely come here again, because this is my first visit, to come with friends or without. Yeah, just for the quiet, peace. It's a good place to come to, even just with friends to do something socialising or group work, but not much socialising. I think group work: in that manner it's good.

10:00

R: I'm not a flag-bearer for the place, so you can say whatever you want. It doesn't all have to be positive, although equally, you don't have to lay into it.

Does it interest you at all? Does it make you want to wander round?

P: Yes, it does. Because it's so interesting I feel like exploring even more to see if they have more to offer, but, as you said, most of the floors, the floorplan just looks the same. I'm not sure, like, does the library have a café?

R: I don't think so, no.

P: It might be a good idea if they did.

R: I think there's a Tesco just down the road, which is where I went for lunch, but that's the closest I can think of. And a Boots.

11:00

Do you feel like there are enough places to sit?

P: Um, no.

R: Do you think you'd be struggling to find somewhere to study?

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P: No, I think I'd struggle to find places to sit. I think they might have aimed to keep the seating very minimal to avoid getting crowded.

R: Oh, I see. Do you mean they didn't put the seating all together to avoid too much footfall?

P: Yeah, but on the other hand, there is a lack of seating. I feel I might be put off and want to leave if I've not place to sit, because there's very limited place available.

12:00

R: Certainly if you were coming here to study rather than just to take books out that would be important.

P: Yeah.

…

R: How come you're taking a picture?

P: Just to show the study space. I think that's one of the only spaces that you can actually study without getting disturbed, 'cause the confined walls as well. I think they're studying; at least, they look like they're having a quiet time.

R: So those enclosed desks are a useful feature of a study area?

P: No always but that's one of the few that's available here, that and the one downstairs.

13:00

R: I think that's most of the main part. There's a children's library too. I don't know if you saw that as we were passing.

P: Okay. In the building?

R: Yeah, a children's area. It's kind of beneath here, 'cause the ground floor is a double-height floor, and part of it is given over to the outside, like Wagamama's and the other restaurants just around the corner, and the children's library you can see down here. It's kind of on a mezzanine.

…

14:00

P: I don't think I've ever been in a library that has escalators.

R: Oh really?

P: Yeah.

R: I wonder why this one has escalators.

P: Just a lot of floors, I guess, for easy movement.

R: It's only the first one though, isn't it?

P: Yeah. Very unique.

R: Only up to the first floor. So this is the kids' library up here.

P: Oh right. I think it's quite interesting and nice how they've got a separate space for them so it isn't linked with the rest of the floors, even though you can get through the elevator. It's very nice.

15:00

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R: Did you ever have anything like this as a kid?

P: No, I didn't visit many libraries or spend time in them.

R: No, me neither.

P: I think I'd like to though, if I was a kid right now. It's very friendly.

R: I came in a couple of hours ago and there was a little kid here being read to.

P: A good place to drop off your kid for a couple of hours, maybe.

R: Do you think this bit of the library feels different to the rest or quite similar?

P: Um… not really. I like how it's isolated from the other parts, and even though it has its own toilets.

R: Does that make it feel a particular way?

P: Very homely.

R: Homely?

16:00

P: Yeah, I mean home but not home, so you can feel really comfortable here and you can take off your shoes and have a good read under the couch: that kind of way.

R: Yeah, that's what I thought too. It just feels a bit cosier to me.

P: Yeah, cosier.

R: I bit safer, I think.

P: Yeah, safer.

R: You know that whoever's in there has come by the front desk, by these stairs. I like that feature.

…

17:00

R: You didn't mention anything about the top floor, I noticed.

P: I can't remember, actually.

R: It was completely covered with netting and blocked off.

P: Oh yeah.

R: The entire top floor is completely covered with netting.

P: Was it renovating?

R: Must be doing something up there. It shut last summer.

P: It's been shut since summer?

R: Yeah, it's been closed for months. But this section used to be up in the top floor. There used to be quick-access PCs here, so I'm not quite sure what's going on, if they're planning on changing the layout while it's being fixed up.

1.16 Student 4, 26th January 2015

1.17 STUDENT 5, 2ND FEBRUARY 2015

Researcher: Have you been down here before?

Participant: I've never been inside the library but I've been past it.

R: So you kind of knew the building was here before?

P: Yes, yes.

01:00

R: How did you know it was a library before going in?

P: I think I had to check Google, and of course it says on the sign there as well, but initially I think I was aware of it through Google.

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library?

P: Yes it does, because I come from London and it's architecturally similar to the Idea Store.

R: Okay yeah, yeah. Where is that, around Whitechapel?

P: Whitechapel, Oldgate. There's a couple of them.

R: So have you been inside the idea stores? What are they like inside?

P: It's actually quite similar to this in the sense of how it's designed.

R: They're kind of similar looking [to this] from the outside, aren't they? I remember it was meant to be a reference to the market, and the sort of canvas tops of the market outside. This was supposedly meant to look like books, but they look exactly the same as far as I can tell. But, um, which way did you come down today? Was it from the Hayes?

P: Yeah, this way.

02:00

R: So you can see it quite a long way off, can't you? I guess you know what you're looking for. Okay, shall we pop back inside?

P: Sure.

R: So why were you using the Idea Stores?

P: Well, it's been quite a while since I've used the Idea Store, but I used it simply because it's the closest to where I live, and I used to be a member, actually, of the Idea Store.

R: They offer a bit more than most libraries, don't they? They don't call themselves libraries because they offer more, don't they?

P: Yeah.

R: I've never visited before. What's it like inside?

P: It's quite jovial, very free-spirited. It's not as stern as some libraries. Like, I know I've been to Paddington Library or Pimlico Library, where it's very strict, very *shhh*. With Idea Store you're still allowed to communicate to a certain degree.

03:00

R: And what types of buildings are Paddington and Pimlico in?

P: Quite ancient. I'm not sure the exact history of it, but they look quite ancient.

R: So they're quite different from this?

P: Yes, completely. They're substantially different.

R: Red brick, I'm guessing. Probably Victorian, I suppose.

P: Yeah.

R: Okay, so this is the first time you've been up inside the library?

P: Yeah, very first time.

R: Is there any sort of first impression that strikes you coming in?

P: It's very organised, very structured. Everything's clearly laid out.

R: Okay, so now you've come further inside, does that strike you as being similar to the Idea Store or different?

P: That's a good question. I would say, subtly different from it 'cause this is actually much more structured than the Idea Store would typically be, although there is a similarity in the sense that they do have escalators in the Idea Store.

04:00

R: Okay, shall we go for a little wander? I'll just follow you around, so go wherever you want to go.

P: [Seeing the vending machine] Yes, of course, at the Idea Store they also have a drinks machine. You don't get that at every library, so at Pimlico Library they are no drinks machines, at least inside. Paddington's the same.

R: No café then?

P: No, no. Well, I think there's a café attached to the school where Pimlico Library is, so people use that, but at Paddington Library there's none whatsoever.

R: When you come in here – or any library, I guess – what sort of thing would you start looking for? Is there any way you're evaluating the place as you're going round it? Are you looking for a place to sit, or are you looking for…?

P: Usually I'm looking for the computers, 'cause most of my work is organised around computers.

05:00

R: So that's primarily why you'd use the library, is it?

P: Yes. Very rarely would I use it without having the need or without requiring a computer.

R: Okay, and would that be for school work, university work?

P: Yes, university work and school work.

R: Okay. So you'd tend to go in when there's an external need pushing you, rather that when you're just killing some time?

P: Yeah.

R: Okay. And in here specifically, if you were coming in to do a bit of work, how are you feeling about this? Are there computers obviously around?

P: From this standpoint? No, it's quite obscure where the computers are.

R: Okay, let's keep going.

Would you tend to bring your own laptop in then?

06:00

P: I would usually. Sometimes I would, yes. Ah, see these computers here.

R: So you'd probably just come up here, sit straight down and work wherever?

P: Yes.

R: Does it feel like the sort of building you can wander round quite easily? Are you getting a sense of where everything is as we're going through it?

P: Yes, the things are appropriately labelled. Say, go for "Romance", and I think Romance is over there.

R: Over this side?

P: Yes, if I'm not mistaken.

R: I think these are large print books.

P: Yes, I think I saw something associated with Romance here.

07:00

Perhaps I'm mistaken.

R: Do you think you'd ever use this sort of library for course materials?

P: Um, yes I would.

R: Or would you just stick with Aberconway?

P: No, I think I would, because at Aberconway, sometimes they do have book shortages, so if this library does supply a book that I require, then I would use it. And plus, there may be just some books I want to read out of general interest, so perhaps I'm already here, and I'm doing coursework, and I see a book that perhaps I've walked past, and I think that's interesting. I'd want to read it. Of course, the barriers are that, unfortunately, there's no easy mechanism between Cardiff University and this place.

R: Do you mean literally because they're a mile apart?

P: No, I mean in the sense of actually having to register to borrow a book. That might put me off a bit.

R: No, okay. Shall we go up again?

P: Because I don't want to carry too many library cards.

08:00

R: No, I've got a wallet stuffed with them.

[Explaining Liverpool business section]

Does this immediately strike you as being any different, or quite similar, to the one below?

P: Yes it does, actually. This one does come across as a little bit different. Of course, you've got this, where you can oversee everything.

R: You mean this flyover?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you know when this building was opened?

P: No. Would you like me to take a guess?

09:00

R: Yes I would.

P: Um, 2004?

R: That's not bad. It was 2009.

P: Oh, wow, very recent.

R: Yeah. So you were in the right time frame. I think the Idea Stores opened about ten years ago, didn't they.

P: Yeah. So what was here before this?

R: This was a carpark before. I've only been in Cardiff two and a half years, but apparently it was a carpark for hotel over the way, and this was put in as part of the St David's Two development, and John Lewis. That was all done at the same time, so it was a massive redevelopment, over half a billion pounds. I don't know how long you've been in Cardiff.

P: Almost three years now.

R: Ah, so you've been here longer than I have.

10:00

It's funny: no one ever mentions the netting.

P: That didn't capture my attention. Is this meant to be significant in any way?

R: Well, it just strikes me as a bit unusual for a library to have the entire top floor covered in red netting.

P: I didn't notice it, but then again, I didn't look up.

R: I'm not sure what happened but it's not accessible at the moment, so they've netted the whole thing up, which is odd, 'cause it's not like people were going to be flying up to it.

P: Oh, so you don't know the reason why they've netted it up?

R: Not really, no.

P: Yeah, so for instance, a section like this would be quite interesting 'cause I've an interest in philosophy, so perhaps I'm already here and I see this. I may just look around to see if there are any books that pique my interest.

11:00

R: So the action of actually wandering past books is a useful thing to do?

P: Yeah.

R: I think this is arranged by the Dewey System, isn't it? My books would be up at 720.

When you're looking for a place to study, is it literally just a place with a computer?

P: Yes, for the most part.

R: Or do some feel better than others, places, I mean, to study.

P: You mean, does this place…?

R: Anywhere within the library, I mean, does one seating position feel better than another?

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P: I would say, the closest, so perhaps somewhere like there [a blank desk] would be good, 'cause I know that perhaps I'm actually not using the computer at the moment. If I wanted to use the computer it's within a few steps from where I am.

R: So that's advantageous because you can do your own work there and then move to a computer.

12:00

P: So I know at Pimlico Library, there's a table not too far from the computers, and that's where I'll usually do my work. Very seldom would I go somewhere very far from where computers are.

R: Okay, and would that be literally just a table or more of an enclosed desk like that?

P: Just a table, but an enclosed desk, I would actually prefer that. So in this sense, this is superior to what's in Pimlico.

R: Okay. Is that because it gives you a bit more privacy?

P: Yes.

R: Is that like what they've got at Aberconway, or is it more open?

P: Aberconway is more open. Even at the ASSL, I don't think there's anything like this.

R: [Explaining ASSL's study carrels]

P: Oh, that could be the case, but most students wouldn't go up to them.

13:00

R: Yeah, they're not open to most people.

When you go to the library, do you tend to just go by yourself? You wouldn't go with friends, particularly?

P: No, because I would find friends a distraction from what I'm going to do.

R: Do you get much call for group work in [the academic school]?

P: No, I've got zero group work. I've never had group work, actually. Actually, no, I've had it once. Um, yes, and that was it.

R: Now that we've wandered around the place, do you feel that it's accessible and welcoming, or is it a bit austere and offputting?

P: On a scale of zero to ten, where ten is very accommodating, I would put it at six.

14:00

R: Six. Okay. Is there any particular reason for that?

P: Because, like, for example, you have the enclosed desks, so that gives you the impression that it's just a space for studying, that you can't have small chat with people. Yes, that would be it for the most part. Whereas I know at a place like Idea Store, or even Aberconway, because it's more vast and it's more open, I know I have this impression that I can speak to others. But this is a place where you really want to study, where you have to study. If I wanted to speak I'd have to walk out.

R: So this feels quite serious to you?

P: Yes, quite serious.

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R: Was that a surprise when you came in, 'cause from the outside you were expecting it to be much more, sort of…?

P: Open, yeah.

15:00

R: It's interesting, actually, how much it varies depending on what day of the year it is, 'cause I remember when I was here last year and they had Japan Day.

P: Oh yeah, I heard about that.

R: They had loads of exhibitions downstairs, hundreds of people in, and it was just really noisy in here, and that was when the top floor was open and it was really noisy even up there.

P: We actually did receive an email about Japan Day, but I didn't go. I think I had a lecture.

R: Right, so there are some emails about the library's activities getting to the university?

P: Yeah, yeah. Do you know if there will be something similar this year?

R: I don't know actually. I know that the library service is really being squeezed, so quite a few of the branch libraries are probably going to shut in the next few months, like Cathays, Radyr, Rhiwbina, a couple of other. At least four, I think, are going to be shut. There's going to be a protest on Saturday, outside, and we're going to come down and hold up and book. "Save Cardiff Library". That's the idea, yeah. I don't know if it'll achieve anything.

16:00

Did you notice there's a piano on the second floor?

P: I didn't notice that. I didn't know at all. The reason I didn't notice is because it's white. It doesn't stand out from the, um, shelves or the books. Yeah, I didn't notice there was a piano at all.

R: It's quite a small piano, I suppose. Have you noticed any sort of colour coordination here to distinguish one floor from another? I mean, do the floors feel quite distinct to you or do they feel quite similar?

P: Well, with the exception of that flyover [they're on all the upper floors…], no, I'd say they feel quite similar. There's no, like, striking difference.

17:00

R: Yeah, I've heard that they are supposedly colour-coordinated, the levels, but this is blue, the next level down is a purply colour. Actually, 'cause all the carpets are black and the shelves are white, it all looks the same to me.

P: Yeah.

R: Do you find that being able to see right across the whole floor like this is a good thing?

P: Yes. It gives you a good vantage point.

R: Does that help you to find your way around, do you think, or just generally make you feel more comfortable?

P: Yeah, makes me feel slightly more comfortable. If I wanted to get a book, I'd feel everything was within reach.

R: Shall we wander back down again?

P: Yeah, sure.

R: I mean, unless you want to go somewhere else. I don't know what you want to look at really.

18:00

P: Social studies. I think they mean social studies in a different sense, 'cause I study economics, so sections like this would be of interest.

R: This floor is the nonfiction floor, I think.

P: Okay, yes, so this is the section I'd ideally want to be in, 'cause I don't read much fiction.

R: The one below is music, CDs, scores. That's why the piano's down there.

P: Yes, I don't think I would ever want to study on a music floor.

R: It seems a bit of an odd thing to make a whole floor from. I was sitting there earlier and I wanted to get a book, so I had to go to a whole different floor and then come back again. The fiction's down on floor one.

19:00

P: So that's another thing. I would like to study not only within reach of a computer, but also within reach of nonfiction books. So I would like to sit in a place that was close to my reading preference.

R: You say you used the Idea Stores years ago when you were going school work, what about when you were a little kid? Did you have a library then?

P: I did, but I didn't use it much. Even with the Idea Store, I didn't use it much. It was around GCSEs, I think, that I ventured to the Idea Store, and of course the difference with the Idea Store, compared to a library like this, is that it was actually a place you'd go to hang out with friends. It wasn't like a place we'd really go to study, as such.

R: What the difference? What made it attractive? Was it just because it wasn't so serious?

P: Yeah, it's not so serious. The people there are much more jovial. They're very young.

20:00

R: Were there a lot of places to sit? Does this place strike you as having plenty of places to sit?

P: Yes, it does, whereas the Idea Store, as I remember, it was very often that there wouldn't be enough space for people to sit, especially with the computers. Like, I think that [here] there are a few computers available, but in the Idea Store, very rarely was that the case.

R: Just 'cause there weren't very many computers or 'cause there were loads of people wanting them?

P: Loads of people.

R: Okay, and was it quite a kid-friendly place? Were there a lot of kids around the Idea Store, like eight, nine year olds?

P: Um, I think there was a place at the bottom, but I wouldn't say there were that many children.

R: What about this place, by comparison, for small children?

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P: No, I would say no. It comes across as a place that, if you had children, they should pretty much want to stay away.

R: There is actually a kids' library in here.

P: Oh really?

R: But it's quite well hidden, and you tend to only see it as you go out again. So, maybe we could go and have a look at it. It's just one of those funny quirks. You don't notice it until you're going down the escalators.

21:00

P: That's very badly designed.

R: Possibly, although it does people that most people don't know about it, so it's very quiet, which makes it safer for kids.

P: Although, that makes one wonder then, why have a kids' library at all?

R: I guess, as long as they make sure the parents know it's there…

P: Okay, oh there's a person with a child.

R: Oh yeah. Clearly not going to the children's library today. I wonder why.

22:00

You see, 'cause the ground floor is basically a double-height space, from the outside you've got those restaurants, Wagamama and Gourmet Burger Kitchen, or whatever it is. See, here, there's like a half-height mezzanine.

P: That seems really interesting, that cobweb thing.

R: Yeah?

P: I would actually take a picture of it, but…

R: Well, we can go up. It's got its own staircase. I think that's what throws people. Most people don't come in and then immediately double back on themselves, so you wouldn't look for it here.

23:00

Does this strike you as being any different at all?

P: Yes, yes. A lot, substantially. This is completely different. You have things hanging down. You have common things like Harry Potter, you have the cobweb.

R: It's a very decorated place.

P: It's very decorated.

R: Does it make you feel any different, when coming into this space?

P: Yes, I get the impression that this is very set apart from the rest of the library, so whereas the rest of the library, the floors weren't really distinct, so you couldn't really tell which is from which, this one, you know you're in a children's place, in a children's library.

24:00

R: Is there anything apart from the hanging stuff that lets you know that?

P: Um… well… No, not really.

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R: Okay, so it's primarily the fact that it's decorated.

P: Yeah, like, so for instance, I can't really tell anything from the chairs, per se, that this is a children's library, with the exception of that. That comes across as something you'd expect in a children's library, but then you have a place like that [the PC terminals to the side]. That feels, like, generic.

R: Maybe we can just have look. [in response to receptionist being on phone]

25:00

Have you noticed that? They always seem to have little doo things in kids' libraries, stuff that you kind of poke and pull open.

I don't know if you notice anything a bit odd about the shelves here, as compared to the shelves in the rest of the library.

P: Yes, actually. The shelves are… How do I describe it? They're all connected together, basically, and they're arrange alphabetically, whereas the other books are arranged by numbers [actually they aren't; that's only the nonfiction that's Dewey].

R: It struck me that they're a lot taller as well.

P: Um, yes, yes, yes.

R: Which is odd for a children's library, a place for people who are four feet tall, 'cause all the ones upstairs are kind of chest-height, aren't they? They kind of 1500, 1700mm, but these are quite a bit taller.

26:00

Does the idea store feel more like this?

P: Yes, I would say so.

R: Okay, that'll probably do us. We've walked around the whole thing now.

27:00

P: Is there a reason why the kids' library uses a staircase rather than an escalator? Is it just for the fact that it's not so long a distance?

R: It's partly that, and partly 'cause the access is coming back on itself. To get an escalator in, you'd probably have to start it over there or something, or, I don't know. I think it's just 'cause it's quite a small space, and because it's not meant for having masses of footfall going into it. Aside from anything else, if you did have masses of footfall going into it, because it's a dead end, it would just fill up and then people wouldn't be able to come down again. I guess that must be it. They must want to keep it quite quiet. The first few times I came round, I had no idea it was there.

1.17 Student 5, 2nd February 2015

1.18 STUDENT 6, 2ND FEBRUARY 2015

01:00

Researcher: Is this the first time you've come down to this library?

Participant: No, I've been in it before.

R: Are you a regular user, would you say?

P: No, it's a bit far away for me and I haven't really been looking, but I know the library at the uni has the books I need for the study, whereas I don't know about this library, and I'm not signed up to it.

R: No, so just the fact that you can get fiction here isn't enough of a draw to walk all the way though town.

P: Oh, I've got fiction books at home and I still haven't had the time read the ones I have, but if I lived in Cardiff, like, through summer, I would definitely. I use the library so much at home 'cause I love reading fiction, especially on holiday, so I'll come and get like five and then take them all on holiday with me.

R: Oh really? You're not one of the Kindle folks?

02:00

P: No. I should be, but now.

R: I thought that was what they were really good at, was holiday reading.

P: Yeah, 'cause it is a nightmare to take five books, but no, I really like folding pages.

R: Okay, so you'd be, if anything, more a sort of casual public library user?

P: Yes, just when I've got the time to read, really. It's just been a bit crazy with university.

R: What kind of library do you have at home?

P: A tiny one.

R: Anything like this one?

P: No, it's quite rubbish really compared to this one. This is pretty much heaven for libraries, but no. It's, err, how would I describe it. It's like, the outside is attached to a GP's, so it looks like it's all part of the GP's. It's really small, and, um, there's a bit of a bigger one if I go a bit further away, but it's still not even half the size of this one.

03:00

R: Okay, and that, even though it's a lot smaller, is still all you need, I mean, as far as getting books out? If you use it a lot, I guess it must be doing something right.

P: Yeah, I do find I use the online system to get things reserved, so the ones I want are going to be there when I go, but if I could just go in then I'd way prefer to go into one this big, although I might then get a bit stuck for choice 'cause there're so many, d'you know what I mean? Like, at home there's only a few, so there's only a few to choose from, so I'd be like, oh yeah, I'll take that one!

R: In a perverse way I guess that's quite helpful. Does it look anything like this? Is it just a smaller version of this?

P: It looks nothing like this. Um, it's not that modern, I would say, at all. The one that's closest to me is, like, not modern at all. I don't go there that much; I go to the more modern

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one that's a bit further away, 'cause it tends to be more convenient for me. Although it's further away, I go to where it is more often, if that makes sense.

04:00

R: And does this look like a library to you? Can you tell it's a library at a glance or is it only because it's got "Cardiff Library" written on the side?

P: Yeah, I think the "Cardiff Library" gives it away. Other than that, it could look like a shopping mall, couldn't it, it's that big?

R: Yeah. Do you think there is such a thing as a "library look"?

P: No, no. I don't think it matters what it looks like from the outside really.

R: Okay, what about the inside though? And speaking of which, shall we head back?

P: Okay, that's fine.

R: It's just worked through my fifteen layers.

P: I think I prefer modern inside.

R: Would you say the character of the library is mostly expressed by the interior?

05:00

P: Yeah, yes, I would say so. I don't think the outside is as important as what's on the inside. I mean, as long as it doesn't look like a hole, like you don't want to go in there, but it doesn't matter if it's majorly modern like this one or, like, you know, a pub-looking one.

R: I'll just follow you around, basically, so feel free to explore and wander about the go wherever you want to. You've been in here before, you say?

P: Yeah, but I can't remember why.

R: Was that last summer?

P: I think it might have been, 'cause I think I lost my family in here. Yeah, 'cause it's quite big, so I think I came in here with my family when we were in Cardiff and we thought we'd come in here to look for some reason – not to hire books 'cause obviously I don't know why would be hiring them in Cardiff when we live in Bristol. Um, but I think we came to have a look around the library, as strange as that sounds.

06:00

R: Okay, and you all got separated in here somehow?

P: Yes, 'cause you each look in your own different sections, don't you. So everyone was looking in their own separate sections, and everyone got split up from each other, and 'cause there's so many levels, it's just hard. Ah, we came in to use the toilet. That was it.

R: That spiralled out of control quite rapidly then.

P: Yeah, and then everyone starts looking at different areas. I think that it's so big it's just a bit confusing as to where everything is.

R: Okay, so you're not getting too much of a sensation of where everything is located walking through?

P: They do label them and I can see that, but… I dunno. I think it's just because I'm not used to it, but I'm used to knowing where things are in my local library.

07:00

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R: How do you know where things are in your local library?

P: Um… How do I know? Um, well I've been there from when I was a child, so I know where the children's section is, and then my mum always looks in the crime fiction one, which now what I'm interested in, so I know to go to the section where she would have gone before. But I find just "Fiction" as a title is not that helpful. I feel like they need to say what type of fiction it actually is, 'cause otherwise I'm going to spend ages trying to find one single book.

R: That's weird because over there it definitely says "Crime".

08:00

P: So what are these ones then? That's the Adrian Mole ones. I think they've just done them in alphabetical order, 'cause sometimes they must be difficult to categorise.

R: These are alphabetical.

P: Yes, and this is a good alphabetical system because they've actually got dividers, which is good, and they're clear, which is even better, 'cause at mine at home we do not have this clear labelling. I think it just goes from one letter into the next.

R: So you'd kind of have to go through squinting at stuff?

P: Yeah. I think it's got something, but it's just not as clear as this type of thing. But, yes, so they've got the teen [area] over there, haven't they?

R: Do you think the shelving is important at all?

09:00

P: I think these are a bit low, to be honest. I wouldn't want to be kneeling down, and that is what I'd have to do. Do you know what I mean? This is nice to have them at eye level, not too high, obviously. I think the highest one should be how they have those averages of heights and stuff, but, like, yeah, it should not be much higher than eye level. But that [as it is in Cardiff], that does seem a normal level for it to be at for libraries, 'cause that's where it usually is, but I do end up sat on the floor sometimes, and obviously that's not a very dignified way to be in a library.

R: Do you think it gives the whole floor a certain feel? Do you think, if these were twice the height, it would feel a little claustrophobic?

P: I would prefer it, I think. I think also the fact- I dunno… It's just 'cause that's the classic library feel: the high [shelves]. Whereas in here I guess they've tried to modernise it. You shouldn't be able to lose your family too easily in this one actually. That is a positive about it.

10:00

R: That's what I was wondering about. The whole thing is totally open.

P: I think it's just because there are so many different levels.

R: Presumably because you were all sitting on the floor.

P: But, um, I guess it has its pros and its cons. Mostly pros, but I'd just prefer it to be higher up.

R: Pros in terms of being able to look across the whole floor.

P: …See. And I suppose, what if you're hiding from someone? There's nowhere to be hiding in here.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I just feel that they're a bit low.

R: Are you able to tell the floors apart quite easily? Are you able to at least navigate on a floor-by-floor basis?

P: Yes, I think so.

R: And how can you tell them apart?

11:00

P: The stairs. When you say "How to I tell the floors apart?" as in… what's on the floor, like, as in height-wise, not in like what's on the floor?

R: I suppose either really.

P: Um, I don't know; I just count the number of sets of stairs, I suppose. I wouldn't get confused, I don't think, just because…

R: They do look different?

P: Well, they've got clear labelling over there, so I know I'm on Floor 3 now.

I wonder where the psychology section is. It might be worth trying to find it. It might be worth looking at, actually. Um, I've no idea what's on this floor. Oh, here we go! Um, that's not me, is it?

R: Considering it's big and orange, it's a very small sign.

12:00

P: Yeah. I feel, like, the stairs are there; people are going to be coming up there: that's where that needs to be, isn't it?

R: Look at the back. That's actually the useful information.

P: Yes it is! I suppose they thought of coming down the stairs, but they've not thought of coming up. I don't know why you'd need it for going down. Upstairs is where I need to be, although I don't think they've got psychology on there. Maybe under "Life Sciences". Yeah, should be under "Science" or "Life Science" or something like that.

One, two. This is a test

P: I'm not really sure what they're testing.

13:00

Life Sciences. Let's have a little look. That definitely looks like biology and medicine.

R: What number is psychology?

P: I wouldn't know what number psychology is. Is there a machine to help you? You know where you have computer searches.

Oh, that's another thing I always used to like looking at was the cooking books. You know the fancy cake books? I always used to just go and look through those. This is dentistry and pharmacology.

14:00

R: I sometimes wonder, if you're only going to provide a very small, fragmented selection of factual books, text books, is there any point taking up this entire floor at all with them? Are

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they going to be useful to anybody, because anyone who's a student is going to have their own library?

P: Oh, social studies, psychology! Yeah, they will, and at the same time, it's sometimes nice to get away from your own library and come somewhere else. I know they probably wouldn't have as specialised books.

R: If you wanted a different study space, you could always come down here to study.

P: This would be a good place. I think this is the type of thing that people doing dissertations do. I wouldn't know 'cause I've not done one, but I would have thought that they go to the different libraries. Don't they go to different cities to go to different libraries? I can't remember. I remember someone speaking about it.

15:00

I've seen "Child Development" and that's psychology.

R: I mean, it looks a little bit overly populist. They're not very technical.

P: You'd be surprised. We've got some like that for our compulsory reading. It's called "Bad Science". His name's Ben Goldacre; that's it. Yes. Oh, yeah, I wouldn't have said that these would be overly useful for me.

R: I wonder what the lending rates are for this sort of thing.

P: What, you'd have to pay to get these ones out?

R: I don't think so. Everything should be provided free. But if it's not terribly useful and it's a long way away from where you work…?

16:00

P: Yeah, I wouldn't come. By these books, I would not come here for studying with ecology, that's for sure. What's upstairs: nothing at the moment?

R: Well, now there's nothing. There used to be a floor there.

P: What happened to it?

R: I don't really know. It just disappeared one day last summer.

P: Oh. What was up there?

R: It was local history.

P: So they must have moved it down here.

R: They've moved it to the ground floor atrium, and these weird netting's been up ever since. It's all a bit sinister, I think.

P: Yeah, like something bad has happened up there.

Oh, there's more social studies up there. There's loads more.

17:00

R: There's quite a lot of it, isn't there?

P: Yeah. I thought that was all of it there, which is why I was a bit disappointed. This is a lot more, actually. I still don't see anything textbook-ey. They just all look like not-textbooks.

R: Have you seen the children's library in here?

P: Um… no. Where's that: on the ground floor?

R: Not quite on the ground floor.

P: First floor? Was that the team centre?

R: Up there? That's level two. I'm talking about level one. You see that, halfway up the escalators?

18:00

P: Oh yes. You go down the stairs over there to get to it, don't know? So that is a bit hidden, isn't it? Let's go and have a look there.

R: It always strikes me as having quite a different feel about it to the rest of the building.

P: Is that a good thing? I would have thought that's a good thing, isn't it, for children, and the little library activities that they do.

R: Story time.

P: Yeah.

R: I never had any of that as a kid.

P: Why not?

R: Well, not at a public library. My parents read to me at home. Our library wasn't anything like this. It was just a bit austere, as far as I remember.

19:00

P: All the time I've been grown up, they've always done "the challenge", which is where in the summer you've got to read, so every time you've read a book you get a reward, so say every five books that you read.

R: What type of reward?

P: Um, like, you get to rent a DVD for free.

R: And who manages that?

P: The library.

R: It's run by the library itself?

P: Yeah, I don't know, 'cause all of the libraries in the area do it, so maybe it's the council.

R: Libraries are administered by local authorities.

P: Oh, I don't know where to go now… Oh, are they?

R: Yeah. I think we go down to the entrance hall and then back up again.

P: Oh. That's a weird way of doing it.

R: I think it's so it doesn't get filled with adults.

P: Maybe, yeah. That is a good point, actually, 'cause we're only going there now by the special little way.

20:00

R: Exactly. It makes it a really quiet, safe space. I'd feel, if I had a two year old, I'd feel very comfortable going in there. They've got a desk right by the front of it as well, so everyone has to go by them.

P: I didn't see it on my way up, actually.

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R: No, you don't. You only ever see it when you're on your way down, and you think, hang on a second, I must have missed it.

P: See now I'm worried I'll look creepy going up into the children's section.

R: I've been up three or four times and nobody's said, wait a minute, you're not a child. I'll ask the librarian.

It is quite tucked away, isn't it?

P: Yeah.

21:00

See, they've got one of those in here. Have they got them upstairs?

R: Oh, this [self service point]?

P: I haven't seen any, unless I've just not been paying attention.

R: I've sure they do.

P: It would make sense if they did.

R: It's a really quick system, actually. Very responsive. Quicker than the one in Bute Building, I'd say.

P: Where?

R: Bute Library. Do you know that one?

P: I don't think so.

You can't see what those books are.

R: Do these shelves strike you as odd at all?

P: The shelves?

R: Compared to the other ones.

P: I prefer them. See, they've got the eye-level thing going on.

22:00

R: Exactly. But the thing is, we're a lot taller than the average two year old. It strikes me as a bit odd that you'd have the tallest shelves in the kids' library and the lowest ones everywhere else.

P: Maybe they're expecting the parents to be with them, but that is very true.

R: I was told that the reason the shelving upstairs is all 1500mm or 1700mm is so the librarians can see across the whole floor and keep it monitored, but I guess here, because it's a dead end monitored from there, they don't need to do that, so they can have taller shelving. That's my assumption, anyway.

P: But surely if there's stuff against the wall they can have taller shelves anyway, can't they?

They've got a little curtain for story time. And these [seats]. We've got these in the SU, haven't we?

R: They have some stuff like this, yeah, on the third floor International Lounge.

23:00

I'm always struck by how different this place feels to the rest of it.

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P: It's a lot more crowded, it feels, despite the fact there's no one here. Like, it's more crammed full of things. Which is good for children.

R: Not so good for you?

P: Um… I prefer the bookshelves like this, but then there is just a lot going on.

R: You can always stuff hanging up in kids' libraries. It's like this unwritten rule that you have to suspend things.

P: I just don't like that very much, but the children would like that 'cause it's Harry Potter themed.

R: Yeah, I can see some glasses.

P: It's probably children have made that, which makes it nice and like, come to our library; you can make Hedwig.

R: Oh, that's what it is. I thought it was some slightly grotesque Japanese Studio Ghibli type of thing.

P: No, it's Hedwig.

24:00

R: It's still slightly grotesque.

P: Children have made them. They're good.

R: I've still got the owl I made when I was six, in a box in my bedroom somewhere.

I wonder what the rest of it would be like if that sort of shelving was used.

P: I think it would have- I would prefer it, personally, but everyone's different and it does make sense that they have it lower down for safety reasons and for finding people. I'm just strange and I like them to be higher up.

R: I don't know that that's strange, particularly. I mean, you can't really see something that's at knee height.

25:00

P: No. I don't mean like particularly, like, ridiculously high, but just, like…

R: About that height?

P: That's a good height, I would say, 'cause in our Cardiff Library they're a bit taller than that. I go to the social sciences library, the one near Lidl.

R: The ASSL: the Arts and Social Studies Library?

P: Yeah, yes, I go to that one.

R: They're much taller! They're, like, up here.

P: Yeah. I think they're maybe a bit too tall, but I've been to any except that one, because that one's got all I need.

R: Narrow corridors too.

P: Yeah. It's a bit awkward to go past people, yes, as well.

And I like this little thing. I'd never seen it before I came to uni, the little book sorting thing.

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R: I spent most of my day standing there, waiting for people who never came, and it's certainly quite fascinating to watch the books going back and forth, 'cause it's kind of got two sets of rollers.

26:00

P: Yeah, it's weird. I've watched the one at the psychology library do the same thing. It's a bit less sophisticated.

R: I think, to be honest, there's more scope for that kind of theatricality around the place. [Explains toy shop with overhead train track. PB talks about the one in Cadbury World]

2   WALK-ALONGS – LIVERPOOL

2.1   NON-STUDENT 16, 24TH OCTOBER 2014

Researcher: We're going to go for a walk to the library any way you like. I don't really know where we are so…

Participant: I'm not from Liverpool so I don't know.

R: You don't know either? Well I think it's that way. So, if you're not from Liverpool, are you from anywhere near Liverpool?

P: Warrington.

R: That's fairly near Liverpool? Where is Warrington, exactly?

P: It's, like, in the middle of Liverpool and Manchester, I think.

R: It's a bit north of here?

P: I don't know.

R: So I take it you don't know the local area in massive detail.

P: No, but I know little bits.

01:00

R: This little bit? That's quite handy because that's the bit I'm interested in. Is the library a building that you use a lot?

P: No, never. I've been told it's down there.

R: Yeah by me, just a moment ago.

P: But by other people as well.

R: Do you use many of the public buildings around here?

P: Lime Street.

R: The station?

P: Yeah.

R: How long have you been here?

P: Um, like, three weeks.

R: So really not that long.

P: No.

R: Are there computers there [Ann Fowler House]?

02:00

P: I'm not sure.

R: Are you liking Liverpool so far then?

P: …

R: Do you know which of these buildings the library is?

P: No.

R: Probably hard to tell; they all kind of look the same, don't they?

Okay, well, let's see if we can find it then.

03:00

P: Um, I think it's down there. Oh, that says "Museum". Don't know.

R: There's an art gallery. How do you think you'd tell a library normally from its surroundings? Is there a particular library look?

P: Don't know.

R: When you think of a library, generically, what sort of thing do you think of? Is *this* [the neo-classical surroundings] the sort of thing you think of?

P: No.

R: What kind of thing do you picture?

P: A book.

R: Just a book? What about the building, or does it not matter?

P: Every building's different so I don't know.

04:00

R: Do you like these sorts of buildings?

P: No.

R: Prefer something else?

P: Yeah.

R: Is Warrington like this at all?

P: No.

R: More modern maybe?

P: More scruffy.

R: I think they call this the cultural quarter, this area of the town. So, they probably take a lot of effort with it.

P: There's the library!

R: Here?

P: There, I can see a sign.

R: Do you think it's quite pretty around here?

P: I don't know. I think that's pretty, that big building up there, there's, like, loads of mirrors on it [West Tower].

R: Which one, sorry?

P: That big one over there.

R: That tall one?

P: Yeah.

05:00

R: Well I suppose this certainly lets you know it's a library [the literary pavement].

P: Wow.

R: Is this the sort of thing you were expecting?

P: No.

R: What were you expecting?

P: I don't know. That's really pretty [view up atrium].

R: Does Warrington have a library?

P: Yeah.

R: Anything like this one?

P: No.

R: Shall we go for a wander?

06:00

Are you much one for reading? Do you like reading much?

P: No.

What's through here?

R: What this space?

P: I don't know. I've never been round here.

R: What are you thinking?

P: I don't know … [inaudible]

R: Does it make you want to explore?

P: No.

R: Does it make you want to run out as fast as possible?

P: Yeah.

R: Why is that?

P: I don't know. I don't like being in libraries.

R: What's wrong with them?

P: I don't know.

07:00

R: I'm trying to find out, so it's all very interesting to me. I really want to know what it is about libraries that's offputting to people.

P: I think it's just the books.

R: Something repellent about books?

P: Yeah.

R: So, do you mean if the library was the same as it was but there were no books in it, that would make you feel different about it.

P: Yeah, 'cause it wouldn't be a library, 'cause there wouldn't be books.

R: I don't know what it would be really.

P: Just a building. Loads of shelves.

R: I think that would be weird, if there were just loads of empty shelves.

P: I think it's 'cause I don't like reading. I don't really feel the need for it.

R: Do you mean the building feels useless to you?

P: Yeah.

R: Is it just books that libraries offer though?

P: I don't know.

R: Some and some, I guess. They're all different. Certainly a lot of computers in here.

08:00

When do you reckon the building was built?

P: Quite recent.

R: Recently?

P: Yeah, 'cause it looks, like, new, but they've tried to make it look old.

R: All this stuff? [Iron trusses in children's library ceiling]

P: Yeah. I like all the lights and stuff.

R: Let's go up the escalators.

Does this make you want to go up?

P: No, not really. I can see it fine from here.

09:00

R: Is it the same with museums?

P: No, I like museums.

R: Are you more interested in history?

P: Yeah.

R: Is that why you like them?

P: I just don't know about libraries.

R: Know what about them?

P: I just know about them.

R: Do you think you're not sure what they're for?

P: I just don't like reading, like. It looks really old in there [Picton].

10:00

R: Funny that. It looks different depending on where you are.

P: Yeah.

R: Apparent this was the first library in the country to have electric lighting. This bit was built in the 1880s, I think.

12:00

R: What did you think of that room?

P: It's too quiet.

R: A bit spooky?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think the library's a place you'd come more often by yourself of with friends?

P: By myself.

R: Why's that?

P: Because if I was with my friends I'd be dead noisy. We'd get kicked out.

R: You reckon?

P: Yeah.

R: I don't know… It's not silent in here, is it?

P: I know, but it's still quite quiet.

R: Quite early in the morning though.

P: Yeah.

R: I get lost round here myself as well. Can't quite see where the next flight of stairs is [after taking a wrong turn coming out onto Floor Two.]

13:00

Not the sort of place that makes you want to…?

P: It's there [the staircase].

R: Oh yeah. …Makes you want to stop and look around and even just have a coffee at the ground floor and never even touch a book?

P: No

R: I know, as well, that they do events in here, gigs, music acts.

P: Do they?

R: In the first round room that we went into.

P: Ah.

R: You a fan of heights?

P: I like them.

14:00

R: Do you? There's something written down there. Levi Tefari? I notice you're being quite quiet. Is that just because libraries make you feel…

P: Yeah.

R: … like you have to be quiet?

P: Yeah.

R: Come on; we're nearly at the top now.

15:00

I feel like there ought to be ferns and butterflies up here.

If you drop my camera [down the atrium] I will not be happy.

Hit the button [disabled access button for roof terrace door].

P: Are we going out there?

R: Well, why not?

P: I didn't know you could.

R: I guess this isn't a view of Liverpool you get much? Hard to find places like this.

P: Yeah.

R: Look at that. The old bit.

P: That?

R: Yeah, that's the round room.

16:00

Do you like it any better now you're up here?

P: I just like the view.

R: Do you reckon you'd ever come up here to hang out with friends?

P: No.

R: Just have a picnic or something. Where about do you hang out with friends?

P: I go to Warrington to see my friends.

R: They're all there, are they?

P: Yeah.

R: Where about do you hang out in Warrington with them? What kinds of places?

P: Just anywhere.

R: Parks, streets, friends' houses. Usual stuff, I guess.

Certainly a lot of construction over there.

P: You can see that from ours. And they all spin [the cranes].

R: Six, seven cranes.

P: There's one over there.

R: Nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Twelve cranes!

17:00

P: Thirteen, fourteen.

R: Yup, fourteen cranes. Amazing. Must have a few up here too when they were doing all the renovation work.

Is it like any other buildings you've ever been in, this?

P: What?

R: This building: is it like any others you've been in?

P: No.

R: How's it different?

P: Um… I don't know. It's, like, really high up.

R: Do you think they could improve it, make it better for someone like you?

18:00

P: I don't know.

R: Let's go down the stairs. It feels like Harry Potter.

P: Like they're going to move around.

R: Would you ever use a place like this for doing school work?

P: No.

R: Are there places at school that were better than this for doing work?

19:00

P: I do a college, so I don't really need to go somewhere.

R: I guess you had school work before that, though?

P: Where's the stairs? Down there.

R: It's easy to get lost. You wouldn't think it would be.

P: I didn't know if it took a picture of that then.

R: Of what, sorry?

P: Escalator, going down.

R: Oh, the escalator.

20:00

What kind of entertainment are you interested in then? Just not books? Films or games or something?

P: Um. Just computers.

R: I think this bit's for teenagers.

Do you think it's good to have a separate space in libraries for teenagers?

21:00

P: Yeah, 'cause they can be noisier and they won't disturb anyone else. Yeah, 'cause there's, like Xbox in there.

R: Is there?

P: Yeah.

R: Ah, an Xbox controller chained onto the… chained up.

P: One's already been robbed.

R: No two-player for you.

Do you think it's quite colourful in here?

P: It's really colourful, but they could do with a colour going around that box [the teen space]. Just to brighten it up.

R: Is there anything else you want to look at or is that good?

P: It's good.

22:00

R: If I asked you to sum up the library in three words, what do you think you'd pick?

P: Very, very boring.

R: Very… Ah, clever.

P: It is though. It's too quiet.

R: What sort of thing would you be interested in?

P: Like, if they had music on in the background.

R: Okay, like a shopping centre or something?

P: So, like, you could be reading a book or on the computer but you can listen to music at the same time.

R: Yeah. And the quietness makes you feel uncomfortable. Does it make you feel as though you're being watched?

P: Like everyone's listening to you, like, if you're talking.

23:00

R: How does that make you feel?

P: Like they're nosy. I don't like it.

R: Is that related to why you think teenagers ought to have their own space?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think it's too open, that it needs more subdividing?

P: Yeah, like, libraries are supposed to be for oldish people, I reckon.

R: Why is that?

P: I don't know. There's always just a load of old people in them.

R: I guess it's just who uses them.

P: Yeah.

R: Does that make you feel, I turn, that they're not for you?

P: Yeah.

R: I know you havn't visited it before, but the building was only opened last year. They did this massive renovation job on it. You can probably see, the front of it is old and the round bit is old.

P: But all the inside of it's, like…?

25:00

R: Yeah. In nineteen-forty-something it got hit by a bomb, right in the middle, which demolished the inside, set it all on fire, so what they did is they built a new bit in the 50s and a new bit in the 70s. By five years ago it was just a sort of labyrinth of dark, hard to navigate room, so they just ripped the whole lot out. So that middle bit with the elliptical atrium is essentially a completely new building that attaches to the old bits, so it's quite interesting what they've done, really, mixing the old and the new.

2.1 Non-student 16, 24th October 2014
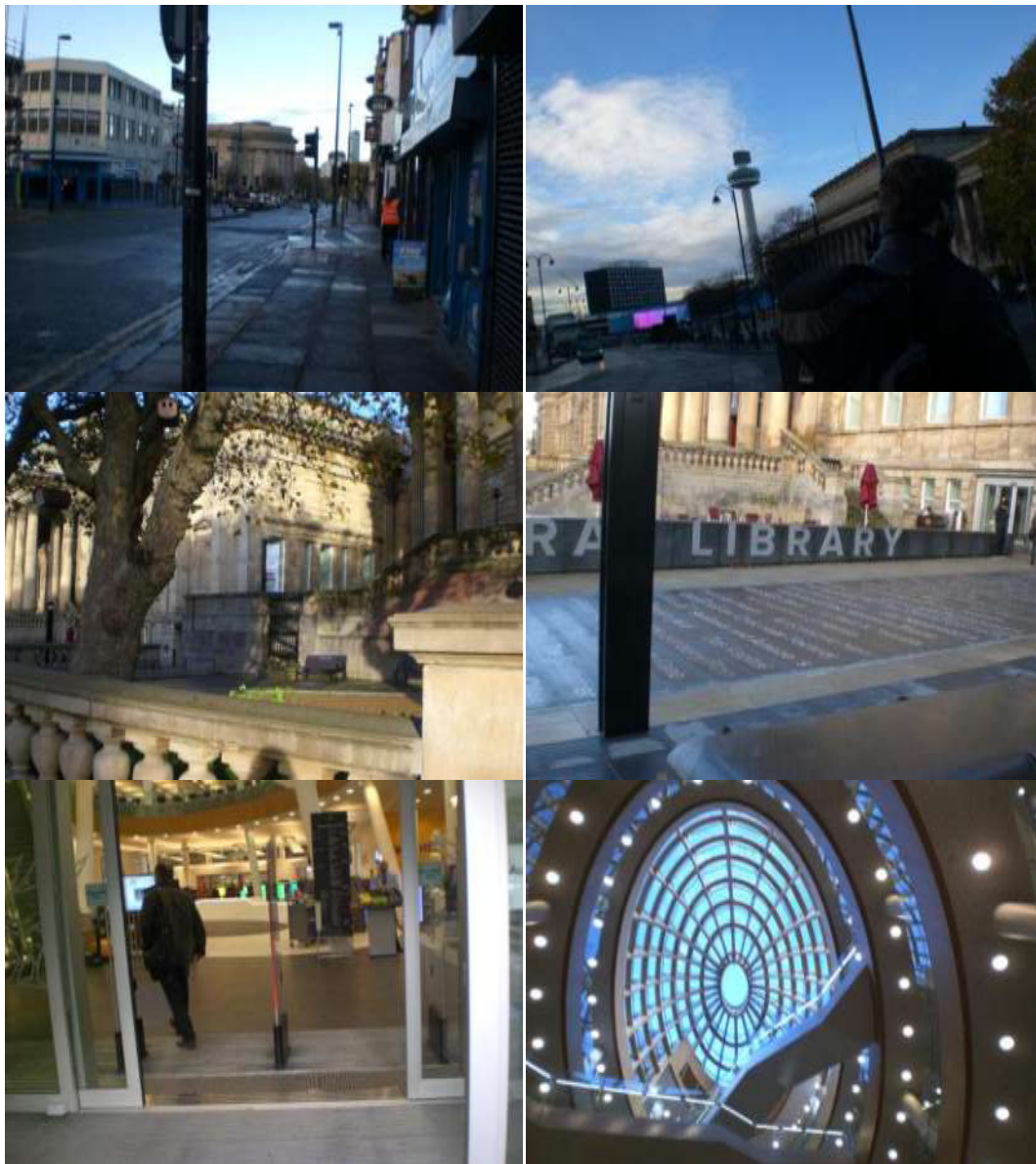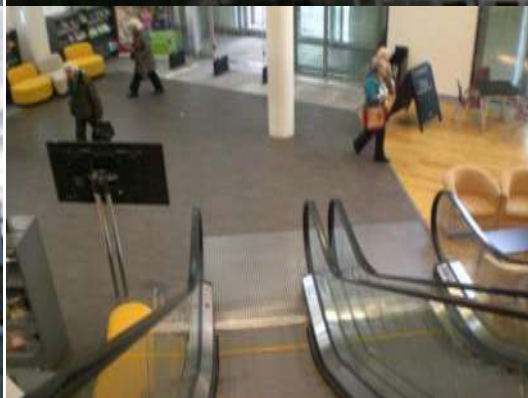
2.2   STUDENT 7, 17TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: I suppose the best thing to ask is, the first time you came to the library, how did you find it? I mean, how did you literally find it?

Participant: I knew it was here.

R: Are you from Liverpool?

P: No, but I'd been watching it while it was under construction anyway, so I sort of knew its location.

R: You were here while this whole renovation was going on? That was about two years ago.

P: Yeah, so it pretty much started in my first year.

R: You must have been very keen to see it when it opened, I guess.

P: Yeah, 'cause it was the day, pretty much the last month I was here for part one, it was open.

R: Do you think it looks like a library? Is there such a thing as a library look?

P: Um, I don't know. I did find the first time I came here that I went to there, to the main steps.

02:00

R: I did exactly the same thing. Apparently those steps weren't here originally.

P: No?

R: The street was lowered, and it was actually higher, apparently. It was about 1860 when this was built. I realised my mistake when I got to this. I presume it was the same with you.

P: Yeah, I came from that way and you see that and this is all hidden. You find it quite quickly, I think, in the end.

R: Yeah, I don't think there was any possibility of having the door anywhere but here really. Do you reckon it feels like quite a welcoming building?

P: Hmmm.

R: I suppose the important thing to ask would be, how does it feel compared to what was here before, because I suppose you must have…

P: No, I never got to it while it was open originally, I'm afraid.

R: Damn and blast.

P: I actually hadn't realised it was closed once and turned up to try to find something that I thought would be in here and it was a building site.

03:00

R: You walked into the building site?

P: No, but I turned up to the front and found a building site. I think it was very soon after it started.

R: Then I suppose you had three years.

P: I'm not sure if they had started by the time I started in September.

R: There was quite a lot of demolition that had to be done.

P: They took the centre out.

R: Where do you fancy heading?

P: Upstairs, I guess. Always interesting.

R: Actually upstairs isn't where I first headed.

P: No?

R: When I first came in I marched straight into the back of that horseshoe of desks, realised there was no way out and had to turn round. Is there anything particularly about this that draws you in this direction?

P: Yes, but not what you want to know.

R: No?

P: I want to have a look at those stairs for a precedent.

R: Oh, you've got your own agenda here.

P: It wasn't the plan! Maybe that's not the right answer.

R: I don't think it matters particularly. I'm more interested in people's personal stories about the library than I am in generalisations anyway. Do you mean these stairs?

04:00

P: Yeah.

R: What is it about them that's interesting?

P: The way they're suspended, yeah, yeah ,not that you can see much on them.

R: I presume they're got a couple of I-sections underneath.

P: Yeah, I guess so. We're doing something similar up the centre of one of our buildings.

R: I guess it's a steel frame.

P: More likely to be concrete slab, wouldn't it.

R: Must be some steel in here.

P: Yeah, there'll be some steel in there. The whole draws you up, doesn't it?

R: Yeah, particularly during day time. Have you found the library easy to navigate so far?

05:00

P: I've never really gone round it in the aim to navigate it.

R: No, okay. You haven't got lost trying to go round it?

P: I've only over gone up and down the centre. I know architecture's there. That's the only bit I know where something is.

R: Do you tend to use, I presume there's a dedicated architecture library on campus.

P: Yeah, yeah. I use that more than this, but I've not had the need. Well, I guess it's not been open when I've been doing much study before. I certainly have wanted to come here previously.

R: [Inaudible]

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P: Not yet, but probably will be. Always find I keep going back to all the architectural bits for the connections between the old part and the new part.

R: Fascinating, isn't it? That's partly why I'm studying here, because it's quite unusual to have such a strong…

P: And almost the way it echoes, almost, the layers on each side.

R: What, you mean with the light from the top, the circular…

P: Yeah, and the levels.

We can't get through up here, can we? I think it's always a bit weird that you've got the nice… and you're directed down underneath, so you can't get through up there.

R: Yeah, it's a little bit of an odd corner this.

P: I guess it's the level of…

R: Where you've got something like this going on, perhaps it's a place where it's slightly less successful.

P: They've just had to fit a beam in there at the last minute.

I think it's quite interesting, the sudden change [as we pass through the upper door into the Picton]. The ambience as well, the atmosphere is much more serious, in a way. I guess that's partially created by the more traditional nature of it. Can we get down from here?

R: [Inaudible]

P: There's one here [staircase, presumably]. I think you feel less comfortable.

R: [Inaudible]

P: No, no. That almost looks private, doesn't it?

R: [Inaudible]

P: 'cause it looks like it's almost private and not part of it, in a way.

R: Are you expecting to run into bits that are private?

P: I don't know. I think the older nature, you don't quite read it so easily. It wasn't signposted, the fact that there's an exhibition in here. You just sort of end up. It's rather nice.

R: This was a big part of the refurbishment, I think, 'cause this room has been off limits to the public. I was very excited, actually, just to see that the exhibition is of designer book bindings. I've never actually studied book bindings.

P: It's something I've played around with for portfolios.

R: I think there's something fascinating about book cover as it's kind of like the interface between the building and the abstract content of the information.

P: But it's also how you first meet it.

R: Yeah, exactly. It's quite an architectural thing. You get books en masse, they are an architectural feature.

P: It's like this is almost, how do you get to all the things in here?

10:00

R: Presumably they're locked. It's completely different to the other half, isn't it?

P: Yeah, yeah. You feel you're restricted from it. Well, you *are* restricted. I guess someone must be able to get these books out for you.

R: The quality of the silence is different as well.

P: It's very heavy.

R: Yeah. You said you didn't feel particularly comfortable. Do you feel as though you're being watched?

P: I felt suddenly walking in there [the Picton] and having a conversation that you were being watched. People turned round and watched you. What are you doing in there not working? Whereas in the other space, that's a lot less so.

R: Do you think there's anything about the actual design of the space that makes it more suitable for silent working?

P: I think in terms of acoustics, there's a lot more deadening in there. It's a much more active space.

R: Sound deadening?

P: Yeah, in there. You walk in there and you…

R: I thought it was quite echoey actually.

P: Really? Compared to this? There's a lot less background noise. You walk in there and you just – it's quiet. That's what I found anyway.

R: Well, that might be because no one's making any noise.

P: Yes, but there's a reason for that.

R: There's something almost reverential about it. I don't know what it is that makes that.

P: I think it's partially the different between the old and the new. It's almost expected.

R: What is it about the old that encourages that?

P: Formality?

R: Literally the formal formality?

P: I think so, to an extent, and I think that's something that people have grown up with and expected, rather than…

R: Do you mean, when you say "grown up with", do you mean that relates to people's preconceptions?

P: Yeah, yeah, I think that's much a more traditional space and people know that's a quiet space just from the way it is. At least, that's how I would view it going in there.

R: Do you think there still space for that in public libraries, modern public libraries?

P: I think so.

R: [Inaudible] private work in this space?

P: No, I think there are some things where you need to be able to cut off a bit more, to an extent. I don't know. It depends who you are potentially. I certainly would prefer to go if I was here for an extended period of time, if I was reading or something. There's a bit more going on in here and you don't see it so much, you can't concentrate as much.

R: What kind of libraries did you have when you were growing up? Did you have a library when you were growing up?

P: We had quite a big school one, which was very similar to that in terms of…

R: Dark wood shelving.

P: Yeah.

R: Was that quite a traditional school?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Was quite similar at my school as well. Never really had a public library. There was one, but there was nothing really attractive about it.

P: Yeah, we went to one when I was a lot younger and getting children's book and things, but I think after that the school sort of replaced it. Used it a couple of times to find things for school but nearly everything was available at the school, rather than needing to go to a public one.

R: Is that what made the difference? It was the quality of the stock, or was it just the fact that it was part of somewhere that you weren't already at, because you were at school.

P: Yeah, I think it was a lot of that. A lot of it was travel and the ease of getting to a school library. You're there and the school library's a lot more orientated towards what you need. It's not got everything, it's got the sort of subjects you're looking at and it's maybe laid out easier.

15:00

I'm just enjoying the space here. Always think they should have made it wider.

R: That way?

P: That way. Deeper, maybe.

R: Do you know what's on the other side of that?

P: Council offices or something, is it?

R: The offices are underneath and the archive stack above.

P: Ah, in the gold.

R: Yeah, that's concealed.

P: It's just a nice little cut-through.

R: It's funny isn't it, it feels like we're between two buildings here.

P: That is the aim.

R: In the same was as at the front.

P: And then you're got this board of quotes that you can't read from any floor.

R: No. Reminds me – I don't know if you know The Hive library in Worcester?

 P: No, I don't know it.

R: It's Europe's first combined university and public library, which is why I'm studying it, but it's covered in gold all over on these abstract, sort of geometric shapes. You go inside and it's actually like a Scandinavian church inside. Masses of pale wood and skylights.

Do you know what this place is?

P: It used to have an Xbox in it but it seems to have disappeared. That's all I know about it.

R: You can still see the Xbox behind that glass.

P: Ah they've locked it.

R: Undoubtedly bulletproof glass.

P: And the controllers have disappeared.

R: Can't work out if the chains are for the controllers or for tying someone onto the couch.

P: They definitely used to be in there. I was always intrigued – what are these white dots?

R: I thought they might be lights shining on it, but I don't think they can be. Are they not?

P: They're not painted either.

R: They're just in the plastic. It's very peculiar. It looks like they're glowing.

P: Lit from behind.

R: Why would you, unless when it gets dark…

P: Yeah, it glows.

R: But it's always going to be bright in here.

P: It's just the subtle effect. But it's interesting that that's the place to game and you see people upstairs on games anyway.

R: Do you?

P: We walked past someone playing games, even though there's a room for them.

R: Were they an older person?

P: Yes.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I guess.

R: Although it's not like they're going to lock the door unless you can prove you're under 21.

P: I've been in over 21.

R: Was there anyone else in there with you when you were using it?

P: No.

R: You just had a look?

P: It was just the first time I came round.

R: I always wondered if it was a good decision to make it obviously completely separate. I suppose noise transfer [inaudible]. There is a café down there [inaudible]. Apart from that, I was wondering what other reasons there were for you to [inaudible].

P: I guess it's just a sense of privacy in a way.

R: Why specifically teenagers though?

P: Is it specifically for teenagers?

R: I don't think there's a policy for it, but the fact that it's got an Xbox in it…

P: It's got computers in there as well. I just looks like a space for if you need to not work.

R: Yeah.

P: It hadn't read as if it was just for teenagers to me.

R: You didn't think so?

P: No.

[Inaudible]

P: A slight echo of what's above [we're in the children's library now].

R: This used to be a lecture hall back in the 70s and everything was boxed in.

P: That's what all these are? All that's left over from the lecture hall are the levels then.

R: Yeah, I think that's certainly some of it.

P: It's almost a shame they covered so much of it up.

R: I presume they didn't have the spiral ramp.

P: Just a stair. Well, I guess that's the old stage then, that woodwork?

R: They've got gates.

P: To stop the kids getting out.

R: [Inaudible]

P: We can go up the ramp.

[Inaudible]

20:00

P: It's quite interesting they've kept these few original pieces.

R: The wainscot. Gosh, it's hot down here, isn't it? [Inaudible]

P: This one they've filled in. It is hot.

R: Very bright as well considering there're no windows.

P: It's an amazing amount of light getting in. I guess this is all just uplit off these things.

R: There must be kilowatts of the stuff in here. I was thinking about the heater by the front door as well and the racket it makes.

P: But it saves energy having it there.

R: What, rather than letting a mass of cold air get into the library?

P: That's the point of it. You just keep that air. Instead of having a series of doors you can just have one. All shops do that, don't they, public spaces?

R: [Inaudible] They've even got lighting over here.

P: Yeah, and this side.

R: I've not actually been round this part of the library before.

P: No? It's one of the more interesting spaces.

R: Is this the sort of thing you feel you could have benefitted from when you were five?

P: I think it's far more interesting than the little lean-to shed on the side of our library we used to have to go into. It's a lot more playful. Probably the most interesting space, in terms of design.

R: It's funny, isn't it, how there is a sort of, I don't know, complete design approach to it. Everything's designed to go together.

P: Whereas out here you sort of feel some bits are…

R: Put in, as opposed to designed for the space?

P: Yeah, especially with the shelves. Maybe that's hard to deal with.

R: Do you feel the shelves are successful?

P: Hmmm.

R: I haven't tried to use them but they look fairly serviceable.

P: Yes. They look almost not very efficient, especially in terms of space use.

R: How?

P: Well, they don't go very high; they've only got three shelves on them. But that may ease usability. You'd expect to get more books in the floor area.

R: By putting the stacks higher?

P: Yeah.

R: That's something that's happened, isn't it, over the last hundred years, that stack heights have got a lot lower.

P: There's more floor area available [would lower heights take up *more* floor area?]. There's more books, I guess [lower stacks and more floor area means *fewer* books].

R: Is there anything else you want to look at?

P: Go all the way up.

R: Yeah, why not? Lifts or take the stairs?

P: Take the lift. I guess there is a lift.

R: I've never used it before.

P: The challenge is finding it. That's quite a nice continuation of the outside into the library.

R: Although it's very hard to find a position to read it from. You've always got a staircase in the way.

P: Maybe you just go up one level, and then you can see it.

R: [Inaudible] I haven't noticed any people walking all the way into the middle of it before realising it's actually solid at the back. [Inaudible].

P: You've not been out onto the docks before then?

R: I just haven't had time. I've only visited to do this work and then it's been so hectic that I haven't managed to get away. I'm meant to be doing twenty-eight walk-alongs in three days, plus getting up from Cardiff and then back.

P: Oh, so you're based in Cardiff?

R: Yeah, I'm travelling up, staying in a hotel for two nights. It's the fourth time I've been here in three months. Even if people don't turn up I have to stick around because it's only a forty-five minute slot so I don't have time to go away.

25:00

P: It's quite interesting, that arrival into a space that seems like a private space [the fourth floor, from the lift], on that side. Seems like you've arrived into someone's room. It's a nice view.

R: Apparently this was the only one of the schemes offered by the architects competing with a roof terrace.

P: I always feel it's a bit of a shame, the bit of Liverpool One that's the massive stony brown wall.

R: Oh, is that Liverpool One?

P: Yeah, all those modern bits are, all the way through to that glass stuff sticking up behind it is Liverpool One.

R: I know people really sneer about neo-classicism but I personally think that [St George's Hall] is incredible.

P: Yup, and that's [Liverpool One] the back of a building that's been designed badly, and it's spoilt the view of the coast. We could go up a couple more floors and actually see.

R: It reminds me of Pink Floyd, that does. Just the expanse of concrete.

P: Yup, and that building's quite nice on the front.

R: Yeah, as I say, I haven't had enough time to explore. I've only been able to really experience Liverpool…

P: You can see the Liver Building through there.

R: Yeah. Those birds on the top that you'd think might look a bit goofy actually look really impressive somehow.

P: Yeah, in silhouettes.

R: Massive clock face as well. Can't get too gloomy when there's buildings like this still being built. I know it's a sort of PFI and under lots of budgetary constraints and so on, but I think they've still done very well.

P: You can't tell it's a massive budget building.

R: Fifty-odd million.

P: I always find interesting you don't have much, when you hit a staircase, you don't have much direction of where you're going.

R: I have to admit that down there, where there're shelves between, I've turned right because that's what I did for the one before but actually the next flight is just round to the left.

P: You almost expect it to be like a shop and tell you where to go. What's on what floor.

R: You expect it to be light a shop or have that customer service quality. Do you think that's it's not or that it is?

P: I think every time you hit a floor you don't know, necessarily what's on it. You don't know, other than the one you arrive at.

R: When you're walking around a supermarket, do you know exactly where to go?

P: Yeah. I think you have to find out as you arrive. You can't wander round. You need to know exactly where you're going or you need to discover stuff as you arrive.

R: Do you think that's because you can't tell what books are at a glance?

P: Yeah, but also you don't know what area you're walking into. You've got signs and they just say "Enquire". What's that mean?

R: It's not terribly helpful, is it?

P: No. And you've got the one sign at the lift and at the bottom that tells you what's on each floor, but why not have a sign here saying "You've arrived at…"?

R: Do you think signage is particularly important in a library?

P: I think it's important anywhere you need to find something. I think you're coming here to find a specific thing, so if you see here, they've done it quite well. You know you're looking for.

R: It reminds me of Robert Venturi's book, Learning from Las Vegas. Have you read that?

P: I haven't read it, no.

R: Obviously Las Vegas is almost about the sign and he says that there are three methods of telling what something is: The literal sign, which tells you what something is; the physiognomic, which means when you tell what something is from its appearance; and the locational, so you can tell what something is from where it's placed in relation to other things.

P: You don't really have any of them in here.

R: Well you've got signage.

P: Yes, although…

30:00

R: If it just says "Enquire", that's not particularly helpful. "Enquire" or "Inspire" or "Discover", they're very general associations. "Reception", now that's a word I can understand.

P: Yes, and "Game Area".

R: It's not an imperative verb.

P: Like "Discover", if you didn't see the big one behind it, it would almost say, go up to discover.

R: It might as well say "Wonder where you are?"

P: Yup. I think you hit here, you get everything when you arrive and that's the only time.

R: Is that useful to you?

P: It's more useful than nothing.

R: I see there's a QR code down there if you fancy kneeling on the floor. I personally thought that was a bit of an information overload.

P: It's quite a lot but…

R: I suppose if you were looking for something specific you could just pick it out.

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P: There's nothing in between really, is there.

R: I terms of quantities of data?

P: Yeah.

I think you're right about this walking into the centre and…

R: I didn't know anything about it when I walked in and I assumed that was a reception desk.

P: I was in Exeter at the weekend and I had a very similar situation, where they had a big wooden desk with one part raised and one part lowered. It looked like a very traditional reception desk and it was by the front door of their Union.

R: Now you see phyiognomically and locationally that's saying reception desk.

P: And it was just a study desk.

R: That's fascinating.

P: It was very weird.

R: And that was Exeter?

P: Yes, it's in their library. They've sort of built a sort of guild onto the side of their library.

R: A guild?

P: Like, union.

R: A students' union?

P: Yeah. Half of it's been built onto their library.

2.3 STUDENT 8, 17TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: So I suppose you must be an undergraduate year at university.

Participant: Yeah, first year.

R: So you've not been here too long then?

P: No, just a few, I think two months. About two months now.

R: But in that time you say you've already used the library?

P: Um no, I've only used the university library. I haven't been here yet.

R: Oh, you haven't been here yet? Sorry, I thought you said you had.

P: No.

R: That's actually better in that case so I can sort of get your first impressions.

P: Yeah.

R: Is this a bit of town you use much, that you come through a lot? Is it not really something you need to use a lot?

P: Well, I didn't even know it was here. I mean, I've been to a careers fair, which was in Saint George's Hall, so I've been down there.

R: That's a lovely place for a fair.

P: Yeah, it was a really nice place. There were lots of people and everything. But I didn't actually know the library was here, so I did come past here and see there was something.

R: Did you manage to find it okay when you just came in?

P: Yes I just looked it up on Google Maps.

R: Okay, and it brought to you straight here?

P: Yeah, yeah. I mean I kind of you where it was because I've been here as I went to the careers fair, so I had, like, an idea of where it was from looking at Google Maps.

R: Okay. Do you reckon it looks like a library from the outside? Can you tell it's a library?

P: I don't think I would have thought that, no.

R: Really?

P: I think it's because, like, the other one, like, those are museums so I think it looked more like a museum because of that, because it's a Certain style of architecture.

R: Yeah.

P: So I don't know.

R: I might be wrong, but I think originally it was all one thing, it was combined with the museum.

P: Oh right, okay.

R: Those steps weren't there when it was built, but the street was lowered about a hundred years ago I think.

P: That's interesting.

R: But this stuff is all knew for last year.

P: It looks new, yeah.

R: So you're never been around it before?

P: No.

R: Alright let's go and have a wander. I'll just follow you about, so you'll go wherever's interesting to you.

P: I mean, it's quite something to look at.

R: From inside or from outside?

P: From outside, like, it has the columns and everything.

R: After you, anyway.

P: I actually like photography, so I'm just taking some pictures.

R: That's good because we can use them at the focus groups. We'll do an activity where we sort the photos.

They call this a literary pavement.

P: This shouldn't be in German, so I'm pretty sure that should be different. Der Ring *der* Nibelungen, it should be.

R: Really? Isn't that Wagner?

05:00

P: No, well yes and no. It's basically like a saga and he based an opera on that. It's very old. I noticed that earlier. It's kind of bad though, if you're going to put it up there you should your research.

R: This city was the European Capital of Culture in 2008 as well.

P: Was it?

R: Maybe they should have known better.

P: Ah well. It's an easy language.

R: Did I leave you up here or did I follow you up here?

P: No, we just went up here.

R: Does this seem like a natural place to go?

P: Yeah, I mean downstairs there was this round thing.

R: We can go and have a look at that later.

P: Okay.

R: Is this like any other libraries you've been in?

P: Well I think this one is… I don't know. I have to think back to libraries I've been in. I think it's different to the university library, definitely, because you don't have to go through a barrier, you can just go in, show your card, swipe your card.

R: Does it feel like a welcoming sort of place to you?

P: Um, yeah.

R: Where do you want to go?

P: I don't know.

R: Too much to look at maybe?

P: Yeah, I think, I mean I noticed this over here. Um…

R: Did you know, this was the first public building in Liverpool to have electric lighting?

P: Really?

R: 1879, I think. Seems quite late to me

P: It does. Public building?

R: Yes, unless I've been mis-told that.

P: That's very late.

R: I've noticed we've dropped our voices a little bit. Do you think this space feels different to that space?

P: Yes, it does. I think it's more studious.

R: Do you? What makes it feel like that?

P: Um, I think it's more original, not original but it's like an older kind of…

R: It is. Do you think it's the dark wood or the books that gives it that impression?

P: Um, yeah, yeah. I think on one side this is also more modern and it's also more open. Like here you have… That side, I don't really mind that it's like that. On one side you have more than an area where you can talk more, I suppose, and you have one where you can like just do your own thing.

R: Yeah, so you mean you've got private study in here? Do you think it's important that a library can offer a mix of things like that, a mix of different spaces?

P: Um, and yeah. I mean it depends what exactly you're doing in the library. Like, where I live, the local library… People do… Actually they do have study areas as well, they do but it's quite big so you don't have to be quiet so it doesn't really feel, like, this separate.

R: Are they enclosed desks, or what kind of study desks are they?

P: Yeah, yeah, they have several tests and, um, they have, like, chairs between the bookshelves so you can sit down and they have partitions between them as well between the computers too.

10:00

R: Everything's partitioned then.

P: Well, not too much because they don't have a lot of spaces. They just use spaces they have.

R: They have to split them up in order to make them useful, you mean?

P: No, that doesn't sound right. I mean upstairs they have one corner and they have, like, three tables and those are partitioned, but then they have two others which are very open. Sometimes children come there so sometimes it can get louder, so they always get told off, basically, when they're too loud, like, very loud, I mean you can't talk if they're shouting around.

R: So libraries are a place for a bit of quiet?

P: Hmmm, I suppose.

R: Within reason.

P: I suppose. We have tests, so we have to study, so sometimes we do group study. You have to talk to each other, so I think that's a good thing, but sometimes you want to do your own.

R: I notice you're a bit hesitant. Is it quite confusing, the inside of this building?

P: No.

R: What's causing you to hesitate?

P: Well, I think on one side I've never been here, so…

R: So it doesn't really matter where we go.

P: No, but on the other side, I have to see where I am. Like, it feels a bit, not exactly under pressure, but it feels that you have to do something. So if it was just me here, I'd just be walking around once to see what's there.

R: Is there anything you're looking for then like lifts or signage or desks or something in particular?

P: Um, not really.

R: Do you want me to go first?

P: Yeah.

R: I'm heading this way. Do you think it's important to have a good quality of light in a library?

P: Um, yeah, I suppose so.

R: Do you think it matters what sort of lighting you have?

P: Um… I mean I suppose you come to a library to read, to get books, so having good lighting is probably a good thing, yes.

R: Although older libraries often seem to be quite dark, I think.

P: Maybe the room down there was older. You know, it had, like, darker…

R: The circular [children's] room?

P: Yeah. I mean, if I think of the libraries I've been to, they've all been very light, I think. Like, they weren't dark.

R: Do you mean they have a lot of electrical lighting or windows, or both, or light furniture, light painting inside?

P: Yeah, I would say, yeah, yeah. Lots of windows. I think actually this is darker because you don't have the windows. You have, like…

R: Well, let's go over and have a look. Do you think this wall is different because it's solid, essentially?

P: Yeah, yeah. And I think you would kind of expect it to have a window somewhere.

R: There're some down there. It's interesting you mention that because that is the old front of the building. That was built in 1860 and that was building in 2013, so it's essentially just a front wall with a completely new building behind it.

P: Oh right. So they just kept the wall and basically did everything else?

R: Exactly, yeah.

P: Okay, so I suppose that's the reason why it's like that.

R: It's basically a whole new building. Obviously the circular reading room we were just in isn't new, that's part of the original building. There are a couple of other rooms as well, which I'm hoping we find at some point. They're original as well. They were refurbished last year, so they look really good.

15:00

P: Um, so that's like, um, more historical. I don't know.

My library actually has a small section with the history of where I lived.

R: Like this type of area, a local histories area?

P: Yeah, I think it was something similar to that.

R: Does this floor feel different to you from the lower floors?

P: Well, yes it does because around the middle, around the stairs it had all the computers and I think it had more people as well but here it's like sectioned off a little bit.

R: Okay, so it feels a bit quieter and stiller up here?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Is it the sort of building that makes you want to go upwards? I sense not by the fact that you didn't go upwards.

P: No, I think I would have gone upwards, yeah.

R: I was sitting by the door for a few hours this morning waiting for people who never came, and a lot of people, when they come in they look up like that.

P: No, I did that as well.

R: You did? Oh that's good. It's clearly doing something then. Might as well go the whole way up, unless you want to have a look around this floor.

P: Okay, yeah.

It's older texts.

R: "Archive", it says. Do you feel that there are bits of the library you can't get to, barriers in your way? Do you feel to roam about the whole place?

P: Um, I suppose.

R: Not afraid of heights are you?

P: Not really.

R: That's fortunate.

P: I suppose that's one thing that maybe, like, my sister probably wouldn't look down 'cause she can't stand heights.

R: Shall we go round to the stairs again. These are the lockers I popped up to to get the microphone.

P: Oh that's…

R: Have you seen these before?

P: Not really, no.

R: Do you know what they do?

P: Um, it's like a film?

R: Yeah, I think it's for microfilm. A lot of people use them for newspapers. You can view scans of newspapers. You just wind that handle.

P: Oh right. Someone's doing something.

R: It's tempting to peer over his shoulder.

P: Yeah, no, I haven't seen these before.

R: I'm not sure what these ones are.

P: It's, like, different to a computer.

20:00

R: I think they're the same but a different type. Yeah, it says microfilm.

P: Can you just take them out [referring to the rolls of film in the cabinets]?

R: Yeah.

P: Maybe I should try that. It's interesting. So that's, like, an archive for different thing.

R: Yeah. A lot of people on this floor do family history, that type of thing, looking for their ancestors.

This is a bit different.

P: Yeah it doesn't really feel like a place where you would go a lot because you know it's [inaudible]. Can you go outside? Yeah, that's actually nice.

R: It's nice and fresh.

P: So in the summer this would be a nice place.

R: Yeah, it's a lovely place to come out and have lunch. Only trouble is you've got to find food.

P: There is a café down there.

R: Yeah, they do. Pretty pricey though.

P: Oh well, you can't have everything.

R: Let's see if we can find those other old room.

P: I think we didn't go round on the whole of the first or second floor.

R: They're called the Hornby Room and the Oak Room, so if you see any signs, let me know.

I find it's easy when I'm coming down the stairs to lose track of where the next staircase down is.

P: Okay.

R: Yeah, end up going the wrong way.

P: I what way.

R: Like at the bottom of here, going left and getting round to there before realising that the stairs are just here.

P: I usually have a pretty good sense of direction.

R: Do you? That'd great.

P: I cannot understand why… I suppose like here, the shelves kind of…

R: Yeah, you can't really see, can you?

P: Yeah, you don't really think of going there. It's obstructed so you just go there.

R: Is it that but you were talking about, over there? I don't know what that is.

P: Um, yes, there seems to be other rooms.

…

R: Oh I see it's the Picton Reading Room. Oh look, can we get round there?

P: I think so. It's a bit hidden, isn't it?

25:00

R: There's no sign on the door. Can we get through there?

P: Oh.

R: [Inaudible]

P: [Inaudible]

…

P: Yeah, this seems more like a museum.

R: It was shut for decades. You couldn't get into it. Such a waste.

P: Was it recently reopened?

R: Yeah, just last year. An exhibition of book bindings. This is exciting. I'll check this out if anyone else doesn't turn up.

P: I should think it's better if someone does turn up for your research.

R: Very true, very true. [Inaudible] That's really impressive.

P: That is kind of cool.

R: Okay, do you want to go back downstairs now?

P: Okay, sure.

R: Is there any more you want to go round?

P: No. That's interesting. You said there was another room round here.

R: The Oak Room. I think was the one we were just in. It was those two. It was the second one with the book of birds in the middle. That's the one.

All okay?

P: Yeah, I'm just wondering what else to do.

R: You don't have to do too much; it's just a twenty, thirty minute chat.

P: Okay.

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30:00

R: Technically, of course, we haven't been around the whole building. It depends how interested you are, I suppose. There's not much left to look at really.

P: Well, there's over there.

R: The back, yeah.

P: Yeah.

R: That is probably worth a look. What makes you interested in that?

P: I just saw it.

R: Just glimpsed it through the door?

P: Yeah, I didn't see it before.

R: You know, the very first time I came into here I walked straight into the middle of that horseshoe shaped desk. I got to the back before realising that there was nothing there. I had to just turn straight round and come out again. It was a bit stupid.

P: I think here it has a lot of, almost like children's things. One thing, it doesn't really feel like a clear-cut area. There's a lot of things inside each other.

R: A lot of angles and pathways, do you mean?

P: Maybe pathways, yeah. Yeah, like, it's not… I don't know.

R: Not quite straightforward?

P: Yeah, maybe it could be more clear-cut how things are laid out.

R: What do you think of this room?

P: I like it, actually. It's very light.

R: I wish I'd been brought here as a kid. Considering there are basically no windows in here it is quite bright, in a strange sort of greenish-yellowy way.

P: Yeah, there's one library we went to when I was a child. It had a little playground. It was full of things but you could actually build things out of them.

R: Which library was that?

P: It was in Germany.

R: Whereabouts in Germany?

P: Um, it's in Aschaffenburg, which is a town near Frankfurt-am-Main. It's their city library. It has, like, I'm not sure if they still have it, but it had stairs and you could sit down with pillows and you could listen, you could borrow headphones and you could listen to things on there. And there was a cafeteria. I think it's just half an hour by train from Frankfurt-am-Main.

R: I suppose we'd better get… Oh, it's on the back of your head now. I bet you never realised how much your scarf moves around.

P: No, I didn't! I'm surprised.

R: You learn so much on these.

P: One thing that interests me is the "Game". I'm not much of a game player but I'm just curious if they have an actually PlayStation or something where you can play a game.

…

R: There's a television. I'm pretty sure I've heard that there's an Xbox somewhere in here. I can just see it in that cupboard. Looks like it's behind bullet-proof glass.

P: That's not good.

35:00

R: I can also see some chains. Someone's been chained up in order to play Xbox. I'm not sure how all this works.

P: You can see it's been used because the fabric is torn.

R: Vandalism. It's odd that it's a separate room like that.

P: Yeah. It's strange.

R: I've never seen anything like that in another library.

P: No. So it's supposed like some, supposed to… Oh… I'm not quite sure if I should. I suppose that's a bit of a bad thing, if you don't feel you can't touch it [Investigating a strange piece of sculpture that has buttons on it].

2.3 Student 8, 17th November 2014

2.3 Student 8, 17th November 2014
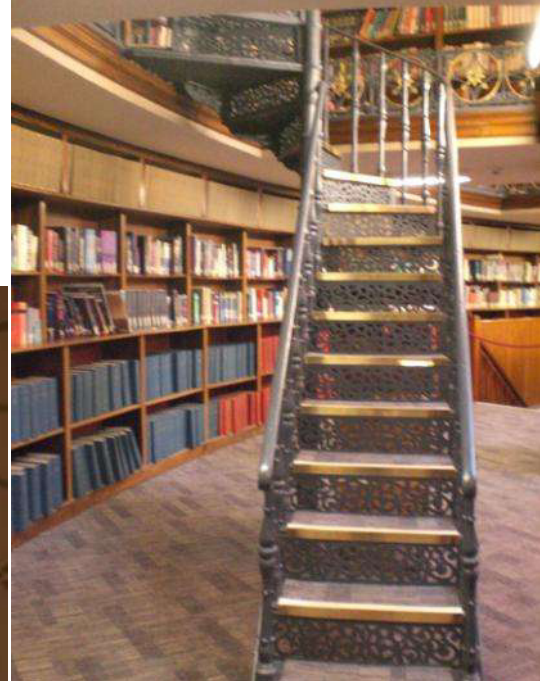
2.4   STUDENT 9, 17TH NOVEMBER 2014

Participant: Well I do really like this library. I think it's really nicely done. It's obviously quite modern now.

Researcher: Yeah. Have you used it much?

P: No much. I've briefly been in it. I wanted to see it when it first opened and so I came along a few weeks after and I did sign up for it, 'cause I love reading, but it's a lot easier getting books online now.

R: Have you got a Kindle?

P: Yeah. I've got a Kindle Fire HD, so the tablet version.

R: I think that would distract me more than…

P: I genuinely prefer real books. I hate digital.

R: What is it about that's better?

P: They're easier to read. An actual Kindle's okay, but I've got a tablet, so it's not the same. I just prefer them.

R: I can never work out how far through I am.

P: I don't use them, but I prefer them. Like, I use digital more now just because I want to go travelling so you can't carry loads of books everywhere, but with digital you can. So I really like this library. I come into it and I just want to have everything.

R: Do you?

P: I just want to read everything.

R: Take a Saturday off, or something? Does it look like a library to you? Is there such a thing as a library look for that matter? How do you know it's a library, other than the fact it says "Central Library" on a forty foot long sign?

P: There is the big sign.

R: If you hadn't noticed that, do you think you'd be able to tell?

P: I'm trying to ignore it. The problem is I knew it was the library before. It's an old-fashioned looking building and you kind of associate libraries to look old-fashioned.

R: Yeah.

P: But then, obviously when you go inside…

R: But then, I suppose everything round here is old-fashioned. When I first marched down here looking for it I went straight towards the steps.

P: I was going to say, yeah, you probably don't notice it that much, 'cause I've seen people trying to go up the steps for it, so you probably don't know it is until you see that, but that gives it away quite a lot.

R: Particularly when it's floodlit.

P: Yeah. I like this that they've done.

R: The Literary Pavement?

P: 'cause I like the random letters that've got it.

R: The red? Apparently they're not random.

P: No, it says "Cyclops in the wood" or something like that.

R: Something like that, yeah.

P: I tried to find out what that was then when I first saw it, and I think it's some big old-fashioned book that they have here. I'm not sure.

R: Yeah I got told. I did an interview with the manager of the record office, 'cause I asked.

P: So I like that 'cause it gets you looking at it and then you're looking at more different books.

R: Why do you think this is better than just a pavement?

P: 'cause it gets you thinking as soon as you walk up and it's good for kids 'cause they like to see random stuff on the floor, don't they. They're like "Ooh, what is it?", and then they're trying to read what the letters are and then adults are doing that too, so you feel like a kid.

R: So that puts you in a frame of mind before you even get in.

P: Yeah. I like that. And then when you walk in, you've got that straight away, which I think looks amazing when you walk under it. I'll take a picture of it so you remember.

R: Now is that something you associate with libraries? Is it like any other libraries you've used?

P: Well, from back home they have the most boring library I've ever seen, so no.

R: Where's back home?

P: Yorkshire, a place called [inaudible].

R: Okay, so it's quite a small community library?

P: Yeah, it's just in a boring old building that's not… It's just a square building. But I think often with libraries it inspires more creativity, reading. So I like them when they've got more architecture to them, a bit more exciting.

05:00

R: Is that all about that literary frame of mind that the Literary Pavement's started?

P: Yeah. Well, I read mostly fiction and it's just like looking into a different word, isn't it?

R: Does it make you want to explore, this place? Does it make you want to look around?

P: Yeah, oh I did want to, yeah, when I first came.

R: You did. Went round once; never again?

P: No, no, I've been here a couple of times actually. I like that you've got the games at the back as well.

R: Well, sure, let's go take a look. Lead on.

P: Because the one that I was from, like I said, it was quite a rubbish one. I don't even know if you could rent games from them at the time. You might be able to now. I'm not sure.

R: So this is when you were younger?

P: Yeah, but I like that they've got their own dedicated room. You can hide away for it.

R: So this appeals to you?

P: Yeah. I love playing games.

R: Do you? Yeah, me too.

P: I bought an Xbox One and then had no time to play. I spent a little bit of time on it. I've never actually had the chance to use this, but I like the idea of it, definitely.

The only times I've wanted to use it, somebody's been in here.

R: Bulletproof glass… It smells different in here.

P: It does smell different.

R: And it sounds different.

P: I suppose when you're playing a game the acoustic might be better. I don't know if that's true.

R: I doubt they've put that much thought into it.

P: No but I'm thinking it.

R: [Inaudible]

P: They're quite nice seats.

R: Are they? [Inaudible] I was surprised by the seats at the front door actually. I almost fell into it 'cause of how soft it was.

P: I've not tried those. I'm not sure.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Um, I just like that you've got somewhere to hide away and play your games in. Have they got a DVD player in here as well? I'm not sure.

R: Do you think it's important to have different parts of the space where you can hide away?

P: Yeah, yeah I think it's good to have open bits and closed off bits as well, where you can have a bit more privacy for yourself, your own little area. But then sometimes you might come in as a group, and that area you could go in as a group and you're not being noisy for everyone else if you're in there.

R: Is that essentially just a group study room then with an Xbox in it? I noticed it says "Game" on it, but is it essentially just a study room with a console in it?

P: It's probably more of a chillout room. And then I like through here, where it's a bit more… Is it through here or is it upstairs. Not it's not this bit that I was thinking of? Is there an upstairs to this? I think there is. I haven't really been in this bit very much, obviously, 'cause it's the children's. I don't really need to.

R: I think they could actually just fill the thing with coloured balls, have a ball pit.

P: I was just picturing that, and now I really want that! And then I would be in here.

R: It's quite a beautiful room though, isn't it?

P: Yeah. I was going to say I think there's an upstairs to it, and I think the upstairs is more, um… It looks a lot older, less modern.

R: Older than this?

P: Yeah, I think it does.

R: Does this look modern to you?

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10:00

P: Um, it's very modern, but then they've got these on the side. They make it a bit older. But this room feels a bit more… sterile. It doesn't seem as nice as a rest.

R: As all the rest?

P: Yeah.

R: In what way is it not as nice?

P: I don't know why. I'm just trying to work that out.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I know, I know. The top bit I like, like, I like these lights. I'll take a picture so you remember what I'm talking about.

R: That's excellent.

P: I like that. But I don't know. Maybe it's the carpet.

R: Sterile?

P: I'm trying to work it out. It feels like when you walk into a doctor's place. I don't know why. But there doesn't seem to be very much creativity in it, which is weird, 'cause there's a lot of curves going on.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah. I don't know. I think it's partly carpet; that's definitely making me think of a doctor's, in two different colours.

R: It's out there too, isn't it?

P: Yeah, but out there you don't see it so much. I wasn't looking at the carpet in there, whereas it's all you notice in here.

R: Is it because you know it's a children's library you were expecting something else, or is this what you expected?

P: I was going to say it's a bit more of a play area, but they've got a bit down there.

R: I think maybe we'll have to come back to that.

P: Maybe but there's nothing…

R: Is it something about the actual shape of the room?

P: I think, like, you're expecting something more like, 'cause it's a kids' area, you expect more beanbags to sit around on. Maybe it's to do with the furniture as well.

R: Even though there are these small chairs and tables?

P: Yeah, you want something like that. You want them to sit down properly and have tables. Look, that's kid's just sat on the floor. He needs a beanbag.

R: It's quite obvious now you mention it.

P: Yeah, or just, like, mats to sit on. It's probably not the shape of it. I quite like the shape of it.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah but it's harder to get the furniture to match it.

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See now I'm looking at the carpet in here. I don't know; it fits better in here.

R: And it's still colourful, isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: I read in a review someone saying it looked quite bare and barren.

P: No, it's really cool 'cause it's got all these lights around the edges. They give it a bit of colour. I was trying to work out if they matched anything, but I don't think they do, like if they were for a certain specific zone.

R: Just random lights?

P: Yeah, they're just a rainbow. But, I like that. It's not something I'd notice, but I've never really stared at it this much. I still really like that every time you walk in you just look up.

R: Does it remind you of anything? Does it make you think of anything?

P: Not really.

R: Okay.

P: Well I was partly wondering if it reminded me of a ship but I think I'm stretching to think of a ship.

R: I was thinking of Close Encounters [of the Third Kind], with the space ship coming down.

P: I can see why. It didn't make me think it, but I can see why now you've said it.

I think a café's always good. Personally I don't really use them.

R: A café?

P: But I think it's nice to have one.

R: If there is one, you don't use it?

15:00

P: I'm a poor student. I try and avoid, and I don't drink coffee or anything so I try and avoid it. Have you been on the roof? Has anyone taken you out on the roof?

R: I have been on the roof. It's impressive, isn't it?

P: I like the roof. I was searching for somewhere in Liverpool where I could go onto a roof, 'cause I had no idea where I could go onto a roof.

R: You just had some kind of…?

P: I'm from the countryside so I miss the stars and just chilling out. That's the room I was talking about.

R: The Picton?

P: Yeah. But I miss just somewhere that's quiet and you can look out over everything.

R: [Inaudible]

P: See, I love this as well because I like modern and old. I love both, so I like that they've combined the two and not just made it completely modern. I like the way it's all brown wood everywhere and the designs all the way round it.

R: [Does it make you feel different compared to this half of the building?]

P: Yeah, probably. You can kind of feel more nostalgic and more like you're in a museum.

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R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah [Inaudible]

R: [Inaudible]

P: I think so, but I like that. I feel like you've got more respect in here.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I'm not sure.

Why is there a revolving door but no exit? It makes me really want to just walk through it. Just keep walking around and around. Does the clock work?

R: [Inaudible]

P: It's five-to-five.

R: Five-to-five. It is working.

P: But I haven't changed my watch yet so it says five-to-six on my watch.

R: You haven't changed it from…?

P: Ages ago, yeah. I looked at changing it.

R: But you'd only have to change it back.

P: I looked at it, but at the perfect time, 'cause I looked at it on the hour. So, perfect time to change it, when it's exactly on the hour, and I didn't and every time I look at it it's a few minutes to, and you don't want to change it when it's a few minutes to. But I use my phone anyway. And it confuses people.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Um, now more, but when I came before, probably less.

R: Okay. Was that the first time you've been?

P: Yeah, the first time I've been was when I was exploring it, maybe looking for different kind of books that you'd picture being in there. I kind of walked in and you feel it's for people who are doing really hard studies.

R: And the place is suited to that?

P: I don't know. It just looks like the place where you'd keep the books that were really important.

R: Not fun.

P: Yeah. Interesting books, maybe, like, really old fashioned.

R: Have you seen the other old bits, the other old bits that were restored.

P: I don't know.

R: Well, let's have a look.

P: Okay. Yeah, I don't know where I'm going now.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I don't know if I've been this way.

R: Turn left.

P: No, I've not been in here. Now I definitely feel like I'm in a museum, with all the glass cabinets. Is this the book? I did wonder where they kept it. I thought they'd keep it in that room. I wondered if it was in that room [Picton]. Do they have anything to explain it?

R: [Inaudible]

20:00

P: I want to know what's on the other pages.

R: [Inaudible]

P: It's a giant's book. That's why I wondered if it was the Cyclops book.

R: If that was a reference to this?

P: Yeah. There's nothing. They need to write something. It's probably on that, that we just ignored [referring to the screen]. See they're still keeping the modern with the old.

R: As opposed to just sticking a bit of paper on the side?

P: Yeah. I like this, but I feel that they need some kind of sign on it even if it's just the name of the book or something, just somewhere.

Can we go up there? I've just made myself dizzy [from not knowing which way to turn in the corridor outside the Oak Room]. Oh, yeah, there's a way through there. I like that. Why are there not more books like that?

R: [Inaudible]

P: It is but it's making me think of Harry Potter. We need more books like Harry Potter. We definitely need big old books. Can you even touch these?

R: [Inaudible]

P: [Inaudible]

[Discussion of the bindings exhibition in the Hornby Room]

P: I was reading how they've found a few books bound in human skin. Well they say they are. They don't know if they are. Oh, I like that one. Yeah, I like that. It just reminds me of the little movie [The Snowman]. That's why it kind of fits in here, because you feel like you're in somewhere that… Like I said, it's like a museum so it gets you thinking about things.

R: Do you think it's odd? Did you feel like "Oh, that's weird" when you walked in here, or were you a bit prepared for it?

P: No. Um, no because from the outside of the building it looks quite old anyway.

R: So the actual shock is coming in and finding that atrium?

P: Yeah, in some ways, and like I said, I love combining the two. I think I expected something like this somewhere in here. Especially from being in the Picton Room I did feel like there should be something like this, and I didn't know this was here. It was a bit hidden.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I don't know. It's just, I like both, whether they're together or not. I like modern and I like old. I don't really care about in the middle. So the fact that they've combined it I like, because you associate libraries with being old – you think of them as being old.

25:00

R: Library buildings, you mean, or the people who go to them?

P: No, just the buildings as being old. But, um, so I love that they've made part of it really modern.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, definitely.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, you kind of feel like you shouldn't be in here a little.

R: Do you reckon?

P: Only a little. You feel… It was a bit like I said in the other room, this is the place where you get people really… like, professionals coming in from the Da Vinci Code or something, finding hidden codes in the books. I don't know.

R: I feel like I've wandered away from some event at a school after hours. Like you only ever come here for school assembly.

P: Yeah, definitely.

R: On this side there's a very sharp transition [as you leave the Hornby Room and go into the business area].

P: I was just about to say, this is a very… Yeah. I did think it from when we were about here. I feel like it's, um, like… Did you ever read Kipper? I don't why it's making me think of Kipper. Because I can't – Is it Kipper I'm thinking of?

R: Kipper the Dog, the kids' books?

P: I don't know why it's making me think of it. It's something… No, I might not be Kipper. It wasn't a dog. It wasn't about a dog. There was a dog there. Who owned Kipper? Who owned Kipper? There was a kids' thing with a key, anyway. They went off into different worlds. They stepped through into different worlds and that's what it felt like.

R: [Inaudible]

P: What is it I'm thinking of?

…

[Inaudible] Like, buildings within it to show what the streets used to be like. Where you're walking down an old street, and that's what that was like. And then you walk into it, and it is a different world.

R: I'm not sure quite where the outside of it comes from.

P: I was trying to work that out.

[Inaudible]

I've obviously not walked down here. Yeah, it looks like it's outside. I've never noticed that before, so thank you for pointing that out. I feel like that's just made the library more magical.

R: [Inaudible]

P: That wouldn't surprise me. See, that would be a great entrance to a children's library.

R: Yeah it would.

P: Yeah go through a wardrobe. You could even hang up lots of really furry coats. You wouldn't know it was there, but it would be cool.

I don't know where I'm walking to; I just walked up some steps.

R: You got lost?

P: I don't know where I'm going; I was just walking. There's nothing through there. Yeah, let's go that way.

30:00

R: Lift or stairs?

P: Let's take the lift. I've got a bad foot.

R: [Inaudible]

P: It's actually healing quite a bit now. It was probably about four months ago.

R: [Inaudible]

P: It's annoying though, 'cause I keep wanting to do things, but I don't know if I should because I've got an injured foot. 'cause it's your foot it doesn't heal.

R: Do you play a lot of sports, things like that?

P: Um, I ended up playing netball, but I don't really do that now. But, um, I did Tough Mudder while it was injured and then, I do climbing, so that's probably not the best for it 'cause your foot's like that in your shoes, but it's getting there. Yeah, it's bouldering that I do indoors.

Can we go outside?

R: I wonder what they're doing up here?

P: I was just trying to work that out.

R: 'cause there are normally partition walls there. They're moveable. There are, like, three meeting rooms.

P: Yeah, I don't know what's happening now.

I like this. You cannot see that on the camera. I've not been up here at night actually.

R: Me neither.

P: I like that you can see the wheel. I've been on it a few times. I don't think it has a name that I can remember. I've always liked that building.

R: Which one?

P: The one that's lit up different colours. I think – I'm not entirely sure what it is – I think it's a University of Liverpool building.

R: It's in that direction, isn't it?

P: Every time I see it – not as much from here, but when you're a bit closer – I always think it looks like shot glasses, so that's probably not the best thing to have for your uni building.

If it was, like, accommodation, maybe, but for a uni building, maybe not shot glasses. It's just the shape of the lights. It changes colours.

R: All the Christmas lights are out, although they're quite restrained around here, aren't they. A bit of fairy lights.

P: Um, yeah. They put lights. They put a massive tree up on one of the main streets over there and they have some giant reindeer, like, statues, and then they usually put something on.

R: What, you mean some kind of show?

P: No, they usually put all down the street, like, stalls in these wooden…

R: Oh, like a German market?

P: Yeah, yeah, they have them all down the streets, Christmas stall, which I like. Now I just want to stand up here for hours 'cause I haven't been on a roof for so long.

R: Fresh air's good.

P: Yeah. I'm not sure about the seating though.

R: It does stay wet for ages after it's rained.

P: More than that, it doesn't feel very comfortable. I'd love to come up and sit here for ages. Like, I could sit here for hours. If I had a book, I could sit up here for hours and look out.

R: I should try next summer to see if I can get a proper folding deckchair up here. It wouldn't be difficult.

P: You probably could, but they would be very comfy. 'cause that's the first thing I saw. When I first came up here I was like, "Yes, I've found a roof!" I was so happy. It's not the best, like, I wanted to maybe actually go up on there.

R: It's not bad. It was the only scheme of the four that have a roof terrace.

…

35:00

Okay, is that everything you want to talk about?

P: I think we've looked at most of it.

R: Is that the roof of the Hornby Room?

P: That's the Picton.

R: I was just wondering if that's the Hornby Room. I can't quite work out what it is.

P: Um, well it looks like where you'd walk through somewhere. I'm trying to remember where we went.

R: That's not the Oak Room and the Hornby, is it? That's too high.

P: I don't know what it is.

R: It could be part of the Walker Art Gallery, actually. That's right next door.

P: I've never been in there.

R: I've heard that there's a stack, in addition to the main stack, the new stack, in a 1930s building, which is kind of shared with the Walker Art Gallery, so that might be it.

P: That's one place I've always wanted to go and I always forget that it exists, the gallery. I've never been in it. I've been in the museum and I've been in here, but never there.

How do you open this? Okay, let's get down.

I think they need to be able to shut this off, make it more private.

R: I think you can. There are partitions.

P: No, I know that. I mean for them having a big meeting…

R: Oh right you mean the floor.

P: We could have just walked right into the middle of it. Anyone could. Even if there was just a sign saying "Please don't go up unless you're part of the…"

So yeah, I think the one thing that really disappoints me about the building is probably the children's area.

R: Yeah, you seemed a little hesitant about it.

P: Everything else I really like about it.

R: So if you were six or five, do you think you'd feel the same about it, so cold and critical?

P: Yeah, it doesn't excite me. You don't walk into it and think "Whoo!" whereas the rest of it, you do.

R: You'd think the children's area would be the most exciting bit.

P: Exactly. No I didn't like that.

2.4 Student 9, 17th November 2014
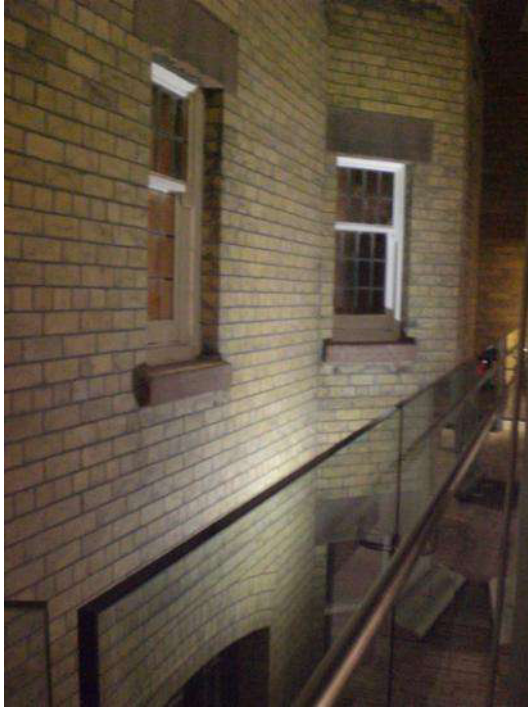
2.5 STUDENT 10, 18ᵀᴴ NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: Have you been in here before?

Participant: Yes, I came the day it was opened and I've worked in here as well.

R: That was May 2013, wasn't it?

P: Exactly.

R: And you've worked here?

P: Not, like, a job but actual work-work. University work.

R: Sorry, yeah. It's just a sign I'm a bit tired, I was suddenly picturing you in a hard hat.

P: No.

R: Like, "You helped build this place?"

P: No, no. Okay, um

R: So you are quite familiar with the building.

P: Yeah not so much the upper floors. I've only been there once or twice so… Did you manage to figure out the [Literary Pavement riddle]?

R: I didn't actually, but I was told that it's something to do with a Cyclops.

P: Oh really? I tried to do it but I didn't have time.

R: It would take a while I think. It's a reference to some kind of resource in there.

P: I think it's interested because it only really had one use to begin with, 'cause they actually ran a competition and gave away prizes for it.

R: For guessing it?

P: Exactly, for guessing it. And it was for, like, a couple of months I think. But it's just interesting whether people realise it's there.

R: Did you find the place was easy to find when you first came here? Did you know where it was?

P: Well yeah, when I first came to Liverpool three years ago this was one of the first places I actually found. It was a lot different back then, obviously they hadn't started the renovations.

R: So you knew it before?

P: Exactly, yeah.

R: Well that's fascinating because you're the first person I've spoken to who actually did know it before.

P: Right, right.

R: What was it actually like to use or to visit?

P: Oh, it was a lot harder to use. It didn't really have as defined areas inside and it didn't have the sophistication that it has now, which meant that the user experience wasn't… I don't know; you couldn't really engage with the building as well or the resources because everything was more, not exactly old technology, but it wasn't as modern as it could be. But it's quite interesting that when this was closed for renovation they moved it into the museum next door.

R: The library?

P: Yes, they moved quite a bit of the library, 'cause quite a lot of it went into storage, and this you couldn't use for about a year, maybe two. So they moved it into the museum that's just across there and it's a weird space because it was on, like, the second or third floor and you've got the hub if the museum on the ground floor and throughout the rest of the building, and then you've got this place that's trying to be quiet with not that many books 'cause most of them are in storage, so they've only got reading books, not many non-fiction, for example.

R: So that was from presumably some time in 2011?

P: Exactly, probably about late 2011, early 2012, something like that.

R: To the early, middle of 2013?

P: Round about, yeah, I think.

R: Does it feel quite wel- I mean, from the outside, does it look like how it did before, 'cause I know they did some work here.

P: They did and they changed a bit of the façade I think, but quite a lot of it is as it was, and it's a really nice building. It's a very nice classical building. I really like the materials but, again, you've got kind of a contrast between the retrofit that they've done to it and the alterations they've also made to the surrounding buildings as well, 'cause at the same time they did that, they did a bit of work on the… I've forgotten the name of this room.

05:00

R: The Picton.

P: The Picton Room, exactly, yes. They did a bit of work on the outside of that as well as the inside I think, from memory and it sort of… It's quite unusual because the entrance there is never used because it's now an enclosed garden space around it, so you could get through both entrances. That one leads into the ground floor. There used to be a… almost like a… I think it's Luis Kahn? No. The guy who did the libraries but with the staircases that go up through the central space into a second floor. It's almost like a gallery, but a usable space, and it's that kind of feel that you'd get with this place if it was open as it should be, like, back fifty years ago or more.

R: So that was closed a long time ago?

P: Exactly. This was closed, I think, about ten years ago – I was talking to a guy – or a bit longer. They actually put the balustrades here, I think they extended the top of the fencing around and enclosed all of this area off. So you'll notice that some of the stonework is quite a bit newer than the rest and that's kind of the retrofits, but I think it was also done a bit previously.

R: Do you reckon it looks like a library to you? Is there such a thing as a library look?

P: Well, if it didn't have the sign up at the top, it doesn't look particularly like a library 'cause… I'm from Leeds and our library… Our town hall looks more like this, to be honest. especially with the big portico an everything.

R: 'Cause this actually looks a lot like the town hall in Liverpool.

P: Exactly. It's just a shame though that the entrance isn't there.

R: By the steps?

P: Exactly. Well, the main steps, 'cause that would be an awesome building; it would be a magnificent building. You'd have floor of space and everything would be arranged kind of either side, but obviously you've got the museum which has taken up half the building and I'm not quite sure what that- I don't know if you know – what that is?

R: I'm not sure how far over the museum comes…

P: The library goes to, as you can see, the writing on that wall. It only goes to…

R: The whole central portico area.

P: Yeah.

R: But there's something… there's a fascinating disjuncture-

P: There is.

R: Between the way the building's used and the way it looks like it ought to be used. When I first came marching down here I got to here before seeing this, and I was heading determinedly for the steps, expecting…

P: Right, yeah, yeah.

R: 'Cause this, all of that, just says "Go in here", doesn't it?

P: Yes, yeah, but it's quite interesting. It's one of the interesting bits and I suppose you don't notice it too much because it's set back and the entrance way is kind of concealed from this angle, almost, apart from that, obviously, the steps. It's quite interesting that this side entrance almost mirrors the one for the [St] George's Hall and obviously the Walker Art Gallery's is exactly like this, so I think their main entrance is there.

R: I think the Walker up there you almost go to the side and then back in.

P: Exactly, yeah. I'm just wondering whether you'd do the same here, 'cause that would be…

R: Do you mean in order to get up there?

P: I mean with the main entrance as it was back in the day.

R: I don't know. I know the street was originally higher when that was built and that was built in 1860 or something. This was higher and was then lowered about a few decades afterwards. The little handbook shows it being higher.

P: Yeah, yeah because apparently, I think it was when the column – maybe not the column, the statues, or the water feature or something like that – it was when one of those was put in I think and they kind of landscaped all of this area and I think put the gardens in as well, or access to the gardens.

R: Or the steps, 'cause the steps weren't originally there?

P: Sorry, I'm trying to remember from first year.

R: Oh, you had some history and theory lectures, did you?

P: No I had to research it, but Pevsner and his guides describe it quite well, I think, and there are a few other books that I can't remember off the top of my head.

R: Oh, don't worry; Pevsner's a good place to start.

P: I could email you any of the books if I've got any around.

R: It's a very simple email address, incidentally; it's just woodfords@cardiff.ac.uk. You shouldn't be able to forget that.

P: Sure. But the uplighting helps as well, especially in the dark. But, um yeah. It's a weird space. Obviously, with the new entrance as well, specifically for the outdoor café area that's enclosed by itself as well. I don't know.

R: Have you ever used that outdoor café area?

P: No I haven't actually. I'm not sure if you can go straight up from there as well, now that I look at it.

10:00

R: Does it invite you in, this? Does it make you want to explore it?

P: The…?

R: Is there a literal tendency just to walk along the words here or is that a bit too childlike?

P: Lots of children do. I don't know if you've seen them during the day. They all go along and try to read words or kind of hop from things-to-things, but it's, um, it's kind of the dichotomy between- Obviously you've got a seating area; you've got almost, like, a big paved area to invite you in, and then you've almost got seating as well, and sort of like a thoroughfare, and it's sort of… I don't know. It's not really a very good interview so far! Sorry.

R: This is fine. This is what's happened with all of them so far.

P: Alright, okay.

R: Just with less architectural detail in many cases.

P: It's really nice that you can see inside.

R: I'm after how it makes you feel personally.

P: Well I really like it. I really like the old building, and I like that they haven't changed it too much on the façade as well. I like the fact that you can see in and you get light deep into the plan sometimes through that big central element that they've installed, and it kind of radiates outwards, and that sometimes percolates out through here at night as well.

R: How does that make you feel?

P: It's hard to say. It's more…

R: You're getting uncomfortably in touch with your emotions?

P: Yeah.

R: Is it fascinating or…? Maybe that's too strong a word. I'm not talking moth-to-a-flame.

P: Yeah. It is to an extent, yeah. I'd say it's welcoming. It… I don't know how to…

R: We can walk in and walk around and maybe that'll help.

P: Yes. That's a really nice picture. It's not really of the thing though. It's the Picton Room though.

R: Yeah, yeah, that's part of the building.

P: Well, yeah, I suppose. It's kind of the outside of the…

R: I didn't mean, when I gave you the camera, that you're only allowed to photograph the outside of the building. I'm not saying let's have selfies but the context is fine too.

P: I really like that entrance.

R: Someone pointed out earlier that there's a piece of the new building poking up over the top of it.

P: There is, yeah. It's quite hard to notice at nighttime though. But also that stonework is all new as well.

R: Which stonework, sorry?

P: That one just receding back there. I think that's all new from memory. In the day time you'll probably notice it.

R: You mean the flat…?

P: Yeah exactly, yeah.

R: Yeah that's the bit I was talking about.

P: Yeah, and there's also a bit of glass you can see. You have to go a bit further back.

R: Is it the top of the dome, perhaps?

P: Maybe but there's certainly a bit that rises up at the top somewhere.

R: Right, well, after you then. You just go anywhere you're interested in, basically.

P: I would like to know where this goes.

R: This gate off to the side?

P: Exactly. What it went to before.

R: I hadn't thought of that actually.

P: It's just such an odd detail to have, considering it goes nowhere, but then with Victorian architecture you do have those quirks sometimes.

R: Yeah, although I suspect that being Victorian, or having had years of extensive remodelling…

P: Yeah, well I suspect that maybe these were two separate buildings, but it can't be.

R: It looks to me like you could get through under there before.

P: I wonder if there was a passage through. I just wondered if when it was first built there was an access route through all the way through into… I don't know.

R: There's some sort of access under there, clearly.

P: I guess this kind of…

R: That's been there a while.

P: Exactly. It could have been added a bit later. They could have been two separate buildings and it was adjoined, but I don't think so. It's highly unlikely.

R: If I remember the history of the building, that was added about ten years after this building was opened.

P: Ah, so they were two separate…

R: But I mean it was added as part of the building. It was built onto it. It was an extension.

P: I see. Well that makes sense.

R: Yeah.

P: So that explains this weird gap.

R: It's always been part of the library, but it's just interesting, as you point out, that formally they are separate.

P: I mean, the council may have just put it in to stop people… kind of, vagrants.

R: These look like Victorian gates.

P: That's the thing. I don't know if because it was a listed building they had to or…

R: I think they're Victorian anyway. Now that I look at it closely they look new actually.

P: They do look a bit new.

R: That might be a machine weld.

15:00

P: Yeah. They do look new actually but this is the detail that's on the rest of the things.

R: I think they're historically sensitive.

P: Interesting.

R: Presumably this lighting's new as well.

P: Yeah.

R: How do you feel coming into here?

P: Well I like it. The trouble is that it's a very noisy space and also it's not that function to be honest.

R: That gap?

P: Well, exactly. You've almost got three entrance ways, 'cause you've got the…

R: I guess thermally it's functional.

P: Exactly, yes, exactly, but the thing is, these doors tend to open and close at the same time, so it doesn't really serve as that. It's almost like in a space station or something, you have a door that opens then another one that opens after that one's closed, an air lock.

R: I wonder also, equally, how many sets of doors or how deep it would have to be to make sure the front and back were never open at the same time.

P: Precisely, yeah. But it serves a purpose because if you just had the one door you'd have a lot of noise pollution and everything else coming through.

R: Yeah and there'd be no chance of that heater heating the air.

P: Exactly. But it's interesting how this space is huge, because obviously they've got rid of parts of the floors. It's a shame that, I expected that to be more like a skylight that would let a lot of light deep into the plan.

R: I don't know if it's translucent.

P: Exactly, yeah. Now that I look at it I'm not sure. But the inside; I really like these windows and they let a lot of light into plan.

R: The sunset that comes through them is really beautiful.

P: It's quite distracting when you're working on that floor though.

R: Is it? Do you mean the front of the upper floors?

P: The disadvantage of this design is that noise percolates all the way up and obviously compounds the higher you get, so you get all of the previous floors' noise disturbing you while you're working higher up because it's not a complete enclosed level.

R: Shall we go?

P: Where?

R: Anywhere you want to go.

P: You sure?

R: Yeah. If you want to go to the lifts, that's fine.

P: Remind me exactly what your title is.

R: That's a matter of some serious debate. It changes every few weeks. Essentially what I'm studying is how library buildings are suited for use by young people in the 16 – 25 age group, so not kids.

P: Ah, okay.

R: Not that I'm saying, therefore let's not go in the children's library.

P: Sure, sure. It's interesting, the dichotomy you've got between this and the more teenage, adolescent space, which is around the corner.

R: At the back of the ground floor?

P: Exactly. I almost prefer this design, but it's a bit too… childish, maybe? Child-orientated maybe. Which is good; it's a very good thing and they've done it very well, but in terms of architecture, I really like that they've kept these exposed…

R: I love them too. But I spoke to one of the previous participants and they said they weren't a big fan of those, "I could see why they'd want to hide them".

P: Sure. They've hidden quite a lot of the nice bolts that you get at the dome.

R: It's a pretty brutal quality or artificial lighting, isn't it?

P: That's true.

R: Yellow-tinted particularly under here. And it doesn't have any windows.

P: Well there's those there.

R: Are they onto outside?

P: No, that's the thing. I don't think they do. I think they're there for show.

That's the link across into… I don't know if we can actually go through. It's the like through into the rest of the building.

R: Well, this is interesting.

20:00

P: I know, it is. I'm trying not to take up too much of your time, but it is interesting.

R: Toilets. I never knew those were here.

P: I'm just wondering what's behind here.

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R: I think this must be card entry. I expect it won't open. Oh, it does. So at the moment we're now at round the back of the children's library.

P: Oh right, so this is the original entrance way at the top.

R: This must be the door that goes…

P: Exactly, on the very top.

R: This is very interesting.

P: So the ground floor, the basement almost, you'd go straight into that entrance.

R: Well, that used to be a lecture theatre, so that would have been the public entrance to the lecture theatre.

P: Right, yeah, yeah, of course. And then this would have been round the back of the lecture theatre.

R: This is publically accessible but I don't think I've ever seen anyone come down here.

P: No. It's just almost a space that's been designed but nobody ever uses it, which is weird because it's been open for a year.

[…]

R: Maybe we should go upstairs instead.

P: Yeah, sure. Okay, well I guess the main difference between that and the teenage area, the adolescent area is you've got the self-enclosed box area. I don't know what to call it. But it has audio-visual facilities in there.

R: There's an Xbox, isn't there?

P: Exactly, yeah, which is why that's used a lot, but it's a shame that not the rest of the library, really gets used in that area, apart from the DVD section that you've got there, and then this is main adult fiction.

The idea of this is really good, though…

R: The café?

P: Exactly, yeah. Um, it's a good use of this area.

R: I know that the library in Cardiff doesn't have a café and I've thought on a few occasions, I wish it did, 'cause there's only a vending machine and that's useless, pretty much.

P: Sure, I don't think they're allowed to serve hot food, so it's only got limited use.

But the reason I went into the ground floor of that [aka the children's library], 'cause obviously the upper floor [aka the Picton Room] is really nice, but this is more… this would be utilised by teenagers.

R: Do you mean this part or the Picton?

P: This part particularly. Because they use this part, they tend to go into that area too, because this is the main computer area, aside from the ones that kind of fringe the outside. I think on one of the other floors, as well. Might be wrong about that.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Sure, but this is really popular with teenagers, particularly.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I would say not.

There's really a contrast between downstairs and upstairs. It's not really that noteworthy, but this space is really nice for silent reading especially, but in the daytime it doesn't really get used for that. It just becomes a really noisy group space in the day time, especially when there are children or teenagers around.

R: I've been in here quite a few times and we've always had to lower our voices.

P: Sure. But obviously you've got the gallery as well that runs round and all of the reference books, I think, are in there.

R: Okay, so this is basically for reference, is it?

30:00

P: Exactly, or large format books, things like that. Coffee table books would probably be in there, I'm guessing. It's nice that there's a difference in the use of space as well as different types of space as well, so obviously if these doors were closed that could be a silent area or could be enforced as such, whereas this could be almost a group area. The rest of the library could be mixed use.

R: But you can never really partition this half off.

P: Exactly, because the library's so open both on the centre of the plan and the outsides the extremities, because you get a lot of noise and light pollution, it doesn't really help anyone trying to work there silently, which is that why that's an awesome space, but it's just underutilised, so it doesn't have that many, for example, if you look and see, there's not that many tables or chairs and things like that, so it means you can't really get that many people working productively in that space.

R: Do you think that reflects the use of the library generally?

P: I think it reflects how the use has changed, which is quite interesting. I think if you were to come back…

R: Less scholarship?

P: Yeah, exactly, less scholarly work, I guess.

R: Although maybe it's just the mixed use. There's a much more subdued atmosphere about the place now.

P: Well the thing is, because you've had the advent of the internet and ebooks and things like that, lots of the print books don't tend to be used as much, so therefore there's not a great deal of draw for people to come into the library in the first place. That's why they installed things like the audiovisual suite for teenagers down on the ground floor and also put all of these computers here, 'cause it means that there's, um… Once you're in, you're more likely to stay or discover all the different areas and different books and do work and things like that.

It's just interesting as well that there isn't a space like that for the younger children. Not that they'd really want it. Apart from the play space cum general use space on the ground floor, they don't really have a normal work space. So if they want to do their homework, for example, without being disturbed by the rest of the children.

R: Maybe we're talking about people here who are a bit older than three, four?

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P: Exactly, exactly. Or maybe that age in between like six or seven. They haven't really been catered for to that extent, so they have to come up to these areas which again propagates the disparity between the two I suppose.

Also, these areas here… I know we were at the one in the ground floor, but these areas are used a lot by younger audience, younger library user, especially.

R: Are there seats round here?

P: Exactly. Seating, the computers and the iPads as well. And I like that fact that this space is actually quite big so you can have, and usually do get, almost like a group of friends or something like that around one of these.

R: Do you mean around this table, literally?

P: Yeah, sometimes.

R: Really? Where do they get chairs from?

P: Well, no, sometimes, if they're on the iPads, for example, they congregate around there but then move off into chairs.

R: I love this, with a great big bulky manacle of a thing around it, weighs about half a ton.

P: Yeah. See, the thing is, the workspace that's on the fringe isn't really group-friendly.

R: No, because it's all in a line.

P: Exactly. It's all in a line or, especially above, there's almost group-ish tables, but they haven't got enough seats. But the little alcoves there are quite…

R: Alcoves?

P: Yeah, sort of these. You'll notice on every floor they've got either a small or a big one of these. This is actually- This has changed use since I was last in, 'cause it's got more tables in. You could use it almost a as a group space if you wanted, I suppose, but I've never been down here to that area of the library.

R: Okay, let's go.

P: But, as you can see here, we're on the outside of something.

R: It's weird that, isn't it? [We're talking about the outside of the Hornby Room from in the business space.]

P: But it's nice actually, 'cause it almost means this part of the library's going to be filled with very old books or books that are… Well, yeah, there we go. You got the hint from the architecture and then it came into being. It's a really nice use of the architecture, to keep that and then to utilise it into this space.

35:00

R: You come here and think, "I'm in the middle of this library", but then there's a gap, then an external wall that's clearly a hundred years old. You go through it and suddenly you're in this beautiful…

P: I know, I know; it's a really nice space, and it's got really, really old books you're not allowed to read, quite obviously, but it's nice to…

R: Nice to able to see them.

P: Well, exactly.

R: I think they use it for exhibitions.

P: Precisely. It's quite a nice space, and obviously you've got the gallery as well. I'm not quite sure what's through here, but, this is probably an example of a teenager-unfriendly space. Not on purpose but through the nature of its design.

R: Okay, just not designed with that consideration.

P: Exactly, but it was never designed to be so, so this is more for… I guess every part of the library has a use and this is more historical, and it's meant to be like that.

R: Yeah. Obviously it wasn't when it was new, though.

P: Well, yeah, that's the thing.

R: It wasn't historical when it was new. [What was the purpose of the Oak Room? The Hornby was designed to maintain a man's donated collection, so in that sense it was historical when new.]

P: Exactly, I mean- Oh, this is the famous…

R: Birds of America.

P: Exactly.

It's like a bank heist or something, trying to get this book like Mission Impossible through the ceiling. 'Cause that's, like, super-valuable. It's worth millions and millions and millions of pounds 'cause it's one of only about five, I think, or three. And obviously one's in America, one's here, and I'm not sure where the other one is. With a private collector, maybe.

R: I had no idea.

P: But they're all, like, hand painted and everything, I think.

R: It doesn't actually give you any information about it on the screen.

P: Sure. But you see, when this was designed, would you think it was more, when it was built, trying to contemporary or trying to have… I don't know, almost the air it has now? Was it designed to have that?

R: It was designed about 1905, 1911, something like that.

P: So it would have been typical of libraries of the day.

R: This could have easily been built earlier than that.

P: But it just seems a bit more classically designed, rather than… Because I've seen libraries from that period and some of them aren't as, I don't know, almost Victorian in their architecture. Trying to be a bit more modern, I suppose. And then you've got places that is primarily geared towards…

R: So strange, isn't it, how you've got an old window?

P: Exactly, yeah, but then this is the teenagers' space that gets used a lot during the day.

Oh yeah, you're right. They're retractable, the ones on the front.

R: The blinds?

P: Yeah. But yeah, if you just have a look on the, um… I don't know if you've noticed – I'm sure you have – the murals with the words that go up and down. They're really nice. A little bit distracting when you're trying to work next to it. Trying to figure out exactly what they

mean. It's almost like a riddle. You just wonder if they've been purposefully put in that order.

R: This is the side of the archive stack.

P: I don't know if you can see that space that's up there.

R: The bridge?

P: Yeah, that actually leads to offices up at the top.

R: I think the top's the archive stack.

P: Yeah, I think so.

R: So it's totally sealed.

P: Ah, I see. But this façade is really nice. The trouble is, through the day it's so noisy down below this area that it just overflows into this space. Actually, it's not really as useful as it was intended. So I think it's nice that they've got that. Obviously you get light directly from the top, almost like a light well, and it reflects off the metal bit of the façade. It doesn't really help to enclose the teenagers, but then again, do you really want to do that?

R: There is that box, but I don't know how desirable it would be to put all the teenagers in the building inside it and then seal the door up.

40:00

P: Precisely. But the trouble with a library is that it has to be so multifunctional that it needs to have quiet areas, noisy areas, bits to close those people off and bits to open them up instead.

R: It just depends how much scholarship or serious work you're ever expecting to do. One of the other cases I'm looking at is The Hive library in Worcester, which is Europe's first combined university and public library, so there you've got a lot of students who've got their own books and want their own silent study areas, but you've also got a massive great kids area full of screaming toddlers.

P: Which is why that area is quite useful for that, 'cause it kind of almost encloses a lot of the noisy children in that space.

R: Under the Picton, that space?

P: Yeah. And, um, the only other space that's interesting for teenagers…

R: It doesn't matter too much. I'm not trying to hit certain questions here.

P: The only thing that's a bit weird, obviously, is you've got the stairs that go up and down and the escalators: it's almost like the teenagers can't be bothered to get to the higher floors sometimes, but then again, a lot of them congregate on the top floor as well 'cause you can go out. I think there's a roof level on that floor.

R: The terrace, yes.

 P: Yes, so that's quite popular as well. This is just from my personal experience of being here, different times of day, different types of climate.

…

P: I would say that the top space is unlike anything you would expect to find in a library. You wouldn't expect to find a roof terrace or multifunctional space on the roof level.

R: What do you mean, "multifunctional space"?

P: Well I guess it can be used, I've see it used for exhibitions, stuff like that, or…

R: The top floor, those partition walls?

P: Exactly, year. And group things as well, on that roof terrace, and also the floor below you can use as exhibition space, I think, or the floor below that. I don't know if they've changed the layout, but those alcoves that they have on every floor are quite useful because it provides a little area of quiet or a little area that groups can congregate in, a little group space, so they're only lined with books, I think, on two sides.

R: Which alcoves are you talking about?

P: We didn't actually go to the floors. It's kind of, I think, second floor up. Each has an alcove that's right about where that "Imagine" sign is. The one that we went into is kind of an elongated version of that [the business area]. Most of them are quite small.

R: It's where that join is, between the Picton and the main bit?

P: Yeah, exactly, but I imagine that's reciprocated up and they just made it into a little alcove.

R: I think the top floor's smaller, if I remember right, but I don't know; perhaps it's covered up.

2.6   STUDENT 11, 18TH NOVEMBER 2014

Participant: Shall we start from the beginning of the…?

Researcher: Yeah, let's start outside.

P: Yeah, you're the boss.

R: Well I'm not really. Essentially, I'll be following you about.

P: Okay.

R: Starting outside does give us a good perspective. I had been going through town before to contextualise it, but I thought, if I'm meeting people from the Universities it would be better just to meet here.

So, you say you're studying architecture?

P: Yup.

R: How long have you been doing that?

P: Um, about four months now, so I started in September.

R: So, I guess, is this a bit of town you know much or have had a chance to use much?

P: Um, I've used the town centre, but I haven't really been in this direction towards the library, and St George's Hall. So yeah, I haven't been this direction. First impressions of the building, are that it looks really nice in the dusky sunlight, but walking down here, it's my first time at the library, I found it – not hard – but it wasn't really clear where the entrance was because you've got a massive building here and then a tiny little entrance. This bit here…

R: Do you mean the pavement?

P: The bit that says "Central Library", here, if you're walking from this direction it only reveals itself when you're, kind of, round the corner, so the entrance doesn't really draw you in.

R: So you saw it when you got to this? It's quite a small area.

P: It doesn't really draw you in.

R: Have you ever come to it from the other side or been round the other side?

P: No, I haven't been round the other side.

R: It's got "Library" written on it in, like, fifteen foot high letters, but obviously it's useless from here.

P: Is there an entrance round that side?

R: No, this is the only entrance.

P: Yeah, that's a bit useless.

R: It was pointed out by the previous participant as well. If you come up from that side, you can't see this either until you're literally alongside it and going up that way.

Do you think it looks like a library? Is there such a thing as a library look?

P: No, it doesn't. Has it always been used as a library, do you know?

R: I'm pretty sure it has; a library and museum.

P: Well it looks like a museum, but no, not a library.

R: What do you associate with libraries?

P: In terms of ones in cities, I associate them with more modern designs, to be honest. The inside is quite modern, but yeah, I associate them to be more modern because in terms of cuts and spending and stuff they often like to build, especially large libraries, they like to build ones that are kind of… I don't know, maybe to attract young people.

R: Really modern? Do you mean like Library of Birmingham modern, that kind of thing, shiny stuff?

P: Yeah, that kind of thing. That's what I associate with the library.

R: This is obviously quite different from that from the outside. What were you expecting as you walked up to this?

P: Um, in terms of the outside or…?

R: Well, the inside. Did you expect anything in particular as you approached it?

P: I expected it to be more old-style.

R: Have you been to the Walker Art Gallery?

P: No.

R: You go inside and it's like brass and marble and that kind of thing inside.

P: Oh yeah, that's more what I was expecting.

R: More what you were thinking of?

P: Kind of, more of an old style library, but now I now I know.

R: Do you know much of the history of this building?

P: No.

R: Basically, the original was built in, I think, 1860-something, so this façade is from then, and the Picton Reading Room, which is that rounding building to the side, and a couple of other bits, they were added, like, a decade later, and in the war it took a direct hit from an incendiary bomb, and basically the front was all that was left, so they built a new bit in the fifties and a new bit in the seventies, but they were inadequate by ten years ago, twenty years ago, so what's essentially behind it is a completely new building.

05:00

P: Okay. It's just a façade?

R: It's just a face, basically.

P: You can see right at the top there's a new bit poking out.

R: Actually that would be quite a good picture. I hadn't noticed that. Well spotted.

P: It's quite funny to see that. Even from this lower angle you can see it if you're further back.

R: It's quite subtle isn't it, but there's no attempt to make it look the same.

P: Well, it would be hard to make it look the same.

R: I mean, they could have used the same stone.

Does it invite you in, do you think? Does it make you want to explore?

P: Um, seeing through the glass it does, because you can see it's totally different, but not in terms of it kind of drawing you in in the sense that the walls are coming in.

R: You don't feel any urge to follow this as you pass?

P: I haven't really read it. I don't know why not, to be honest.

R: Maybe because you've never been here before.

P: Maybe if I was in less of a rush I might have been it, but I had my headphones in. When you do that you kind of just block out everything else.

R: Shall we go in?

P: Yup, yup.

R: I'll just follow you around, basically, so if you've not explored it this'll be a good experience.

P: I don't even know how many floors it has. Maybe I should have wandered round before you came and we did this.

R: No, no, it's fine that you haven't, good, in fact. It means you won't have to try and think too hard about what you felt the first time.

P: First, there's a really loud bit with the fans. That's not that nice to walk through, just with how loud it is. In here it's okay I guess, and I really like the atrium, to be honest because I like this kind of architecture. I like the use of lights and bright colours to attract you to different things, so I prefer the inside to the outside.

R: Do you think it's quite dramatic?

P: Yeah, I don't know how it'll hold up in fifty years or, like, maybe in two hundred years, compared to the façade. And the big, the large lettering's good as well, on the walls.

R: Do you mean where it says "Imagine"?

P: Yeah: "Imagine", "Read".

R: What does that tell you?

P: That it's defining different areas.

R: Is that helpful information?

P: Yeah, it is. It's often hard to find 'cause all books look the same, essentially.

R: Okay. What sort of things does it suggest you might around there then?

P: Under the "Imagine" bit?

R: Yeah.

P: The "Read" bit is the books, but yeah, the "Imagine" is more media, I guess.

R: I think under "Read", it's fiction.

P: I'll be interested to see what the non-fiction bit is then, what it's defined as. This, um, kind of cocoon is quite strange. I don't know why… Is it a meeting room or…?

R: It doesn't say meeting room on it. I think they've got an Xbox in here.

P: Oh, okay. That's very closed off. I don't know why they shut that out so much, to be honest. They put blinds on it, which gives the- but only on some of the windows.

R: Do you want to go in?

P: Yeah, sure. It's interesting that they've put blinds on some of the windows because you can close these three sets of blinds, but then just walk round the corner and see in. It's way quieter in here as well [There's a thing about teenagers not liking spaces that are too quiet, yet this is a teenspace]. Just, I don't really like this space. It's strange.

R: Does it smell odd to you?

P: It smells new.

R: What is it about the place that's odd, other than the smell?

P: Um, the fact that it's strange is because we're in such a massive, open space and then this is kind of just plonked down in the middle, and it's unattractive because it's small and kind of cramped, compared to here. When you move from this space to that one it's completely different, which I don't really like. I prefer the open space.

R: It's a shock to the senses?

P: Yeah, 'cause they're so contrasting.

10:00

I like how tall the ceilings are on each floor as well. It's really light and well lit. Some people prefer libraries when they're really dark and enclose you in the shelves. I don't really like that.

R: Is that anything like a library you grew up with or you went to when you were younger?

P: Yeah, there's a library which is- it's not really modern, but it's all glass around the sides, so as a child that's the one I always went to, so maybe that's why.

R: Was that a local or a central library?

P: Just local to the town a live in. It's a small town. But that might be why libraries that have lots of glass and are light, maybe, I'm not sure. You can tell it's modern 'cause of the escalators and Costa.

R: They give a certain image?

P: Yeah. Well, I think it's trying to attract people, basically. If you want to come in for a coffee, well, you don't even need to read, necessarily. They're trying to attract people to the library so that then you might use it for loads of different things. I think libraries have to, like, diversify now. They're not just places where you come to get books. They have to provide computers…

R: Is there a good reason for that?

P: I think people wouldn't use them as much if they didn't have plenty of extra things like magazines, media, computers, that kind of thing.

R: Why was it in the past that that was okay?

P: To just have books?

R: *Did* they just have books?

P: I think so. Or, well, they had, like, local information and maps and history, but they didn't… I think the way technology's going, the Internet and stuff…

R: I know newspapers used to be really big about a hundred, a hundred and fifty years back.

P: Did they have cafés in them then?

R: I don't know. I don't know if they *had* cafés in them but they were quite a lot of the time attached to coffee houses, that type of thing. They grew out of those, but that was before the public libraries.

P: Oh, that's when they were still private?

R: Well, they were sort of communities that would get together and do a subscription type of affair.

P: Okay.

R: They were associated with that type of thing, but I honestly don't know.

P: I'm interested to see down this alleyway.

R: Down here?

P: Yeah.

R: Where it's blue?

P: Yeah. I'm attracted to the colours. See, this the space, compared to that room where the Xbox was, like, it might be a little bit bigger, but it doesn't feel enclosed because there's a space up there. I don't know what's up there. This bit doesn't feel an enclosed for some reason.

R: Looking up at that, it's really weird, 'cause that's clearly the outside of a building.

P: The old building. But I guess they get the light in. That's tall and you can't really see up to it when you've over there, which means that the space doesn't feel as enclosed as the games bit downstairs.

R: A lot more people in here too.

P: That's true. Maybe because there's more people in it, you think it's, like, a better place to be. The fact that if there's no one in a space you think it's not as interesting as if there's lots of people there.

R: Personally, if the space downstairs was full of kids, I would feel even less comfortable going in there.

P: That true. Yeah, maybe that's true too. It depends who uses it.

What's this bit here? Are we allowed in here?

R: Are we allowed in here? Don't know. I can't see any barriers.

P: This is totally different. Is this a modern room?

R: No, this was built in 1879 I think, opened in 1879.

P: Okay. It's staggering, the roof.

R: Bet you weren't expecting that.

P: No. When you see the curved bit- It's the curved bit from the outside, isn't it?

15:00

R: Yeah. Actually, where we were standing, there's another surprise just round there which we didn't explore. We turned back.

P: Oh, the Hornby one?

R: Yeah. I was wondering if you'd go in there or come back. Interesting that you came back again. When I was there for the first time, I thought I'd wandered into a different building, you know. It was very surprising.

P: Yeah, it's the same effect with this one, although it looks smart. The outside looked kind of grubby, the façade, whereas this has obviously been repainted. It looks really clean.

R: It is, it's crisp.

P: Yeah, which I quite like. And I guess the roof light lets in a ton of light during the day, when the sun's out.

R: Yeah, it's just a bit late now.

P: Yeah.

R: What is it about the place that makes it feel so different from in there?

P: I think the design of the bookcases because they're much more old. More old-style in their design.

R: They're made of wood, they have brass lamps, that kind of thing?

P: Yeah, the materials then, I guess is what makes it different.

R: That's interesting. I wonder why that is, because they're about the same size, they're filled with books the same as those ones are.

P: Higher up books as well. There are volumes of things that are all the same colour, which I think I associate with more historical libraries because they contain, like, volumes of different texts, but when you look at each shelf, it's got, like, red books.

R: When you say "higher books" as well, you literally mean that they're a long way off the ground.

P: Yeah.

R: What do you think of that lamp in the middle? I always think that's a strange feature.

P: It's a fairly good idea though.

R: It would be missing something if.

P: It's a good way of getting light centrally into the rest of the space. It would look much more ugly if it was just, like, spotlamps going round.

R: Does this feel as welcoming to you or as intriguing to you as that other space did?

P: Which one, the blue one?

R: The space we were just in: the other half of the library. Does it make you feel different when you're in here?

P: Um, yeah. In terms of welcoming me in, not really. I think, because I've seen through the doors it's more historical, I wouldn't expect to find the books that I want to read in here. I'd expect to find them in the main library, so that's why it doesn't attract me as much.

R: Okay. I was interested as well that you said, "Are we allowed in here" before we came in. What was the reason for that?

P: Normally a lot of the time in historical buildings there's bits you're not meant to go in and this seemed like it might be one 'cause of the historical design of it.

R: Okay. Is it that looking different makes you assume it's for a different purpose, in other words a private purpose or a management purpose?

P: Yeah, yeah. I just assumed that, well, the library's massive in there and it's different. I assumed that this wouldn't be used for the general public.

R: Yeah.

P: Are these shelves new.

R: I don't know actually.

P: Because they've tried to, with the similar wood.

That would have been in for the old building, I should think. Just used then.

This is what I mean about the volumes of books. They're all the same colour. You can immediately see that it's full of volumes.

This is the library, the but that… [inaudible]. That's like we've come to a museum. That's strange.

20:00

R: Yeah, when I first came here they had a centenary exhibit up. There was a bit Union Flag hanging up there.

P: Is this the only room like this in the library?

R: There's one more, which is smaller. I was started when I came through.

P: Is this the original design or, like, after it was bombed did they try to re-do it?

R: This wasn't bombed. This bit has only been renovated. This opened in about 1905, I think, and that in 1911. This is the Hornby Library because there was a guy called Hornby, whose statue we just passed, and this was his library that he bequeathed. So, this was all made to house it after he died. It opened about a hundred years ago, I think. I don't know if we can get up onto the gallery.

P: I like this room because… in a different way to the main library, the contemporary one. Like, I wouldn't… I'd prefer to work in that or read in there, but just wandering around, this is, like, interesting for me as an architecture student.

R: Do you mean more interesting architecturally than the other one?

P: Yeah, but it's less practical.

R: The functioning of it's less useful?

P: Yeah. And I'd prefer to have function rather than it's more architecturally interesting, I think.

R: Do you think when it was new this was seen as a very functional design, the most functional it could be, or was it designed to be interesting when it was new?

P: It was probably designed to be functional because, well, I don't know what this bit would have been used for, to be honest, the floor. But in terms of the books and how they're laid out, it's going to admit natural light through the roof lights, which would have been very important, so it could have been seen as quite practical. But styles have changed, I guess.

R: I haven't ever really looked at the ceiling here, but looks to me as though there is a roof above the ceiling.

P: Yeah, a glass roof.

R: And also a couple of those central lights are raised slightly by about an inch. Do you see that?

P: Which lights?

R: These central roof lights, the square ones, there's a gap underneath them.

P: Oh yeah.

R: So they have some sort of ventilation strategy.

P: Maybe. It's probably ventilation. I guess you can't open the windows or, well, they wouldn't open the windows and it's less likely that anything will happen up on the roof.

R: No. They use it as some sort of exhibition space.

P: Yeah. Oh, you can't go up to the gallery. This again probably would be seen as being practical.

R: Okay.

P: The roof light in here, do you reckon that would always have been translucent or do you reckon it could have been transparent?

R: It looks to me like it's been re-glazed. That's not hundred year old glass. But I honestly couldn't say.

P: And I don't know if the light would always have been here, 'cause why would they put a light hanging down from the roof light that's emitting light into it? It's shaped obviously that you could use it at night time but you'd probably put lights up around the ceiling instead of where the roof light is to let in daylight.

R: I guess we can't go up again.

P: No. It's strange seeing the modern, these screens in here.

R: Do you think that spoils it or makes it better?

25:00

P: Like, it's information.

R: It is.

P: Are these pictures [on the screen] from the books around here?

R: I didn't notice it say anything about them. Obviously you've got Birds of America in the middle. [Inaudible.]

P: Oh it's just… That makes you think that it would be like a storage room or something.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I've been to the one in Birmingham, actually.

R: How is it?

P: It's not as- I prefer this one, to be honest,

R: Birmingham is bigger, isn't it?

P: Yeah, it's over, like, eight floors

R: I think, although this was hardly a cheap renovation, Birmingham's budget was about four times what this renovation cost.

P: I much prefer this one.

R: I think it was about 200 million.

P: It felt really disjointed, Birmingham.

R: Did it?

P: Yeah and it was hard to find things.

R: Mecanoo did that, wasn't it?

P: I don't know. I like how here there's kind of tables and things revealed as you move around the bookcases.

R: Why do you like that?

P: It's kind of like it feels like you're exploring. I mean, this is my first time here so in future I might know where the tables are.

R: But obviously if you came in and you could see the entire thing, that wouldn't be the same.

P: No, it wouldn't be as good I think. It's good to find little pockets, especially in the library, 'cause when you've got a book you want to settle down and hide away.

R: So is it about finding your own space a bit when you're studying?

P: Yeah. I always in here, and when I'm in Birmingham, I always wish there was more seating in libraries, like, not even with a table necessarily. Like, the ones that are right by the entrance, those kinds of ones. Just small one that could seat, maybe, six or seven people in the space between the bookshelves.

R: Like, so if here there was an armchair?

P: Yeah. For example, where these tables are they could just get rid of the tables and put five or six of those nice chairs. Not necessarily armchairs. They could be beanbags, even, but just more places to sit and read without a table.

R: These are all subject-specific resources these, aren't they? They're not fiction as far as I'm aware. "Enquire" it says. I think downstairs in fiction the seating is more informal. There's, like, one area of seating I can think of anyway. It's not much though.

P: I'll have a look when we go back down.

R: I mean, it's quite possible that we walked within ten feet of it, so if you didn't see it that's clearly a sign that it's not obvious.

P: I just wish there was more 'cause not everyone wants to come to a library to work at a table.

R: So you mean the guys who are here for fiction mainly?

P: Yeah.

R: The less strenuous activities.

P: Give the novel readers a bit of comfort as well.

R: With a beanbag?

P: Yeah. I love a beanbag. I really like when you're standing right at the bottom and you look up you can see all the stairs criss-crossing, and I don't think it's that much of an annoyance to walk around here to get to another staircase to be honest.

R: I suppose it depends if you're in a hurry or not.

P: Yeah, that's true.

R: I have come up here before and gone right 'cause at the previous one I went right, then got round to about there and see the staircase was just eight feet away.

P: Well, why have they put that bookcase there?

R: These three.

P: Yeah, these three there.

30:00

R: Space demands I guess, but they do block the view.

P: Maybe they could do something like, not arrows, but they've kind of got a path with this carpet, sort of, but a more definitely, like, path that you can follow.

R: A route?

P: Yeah, like those three cabinets there, put the darker grey round them and you might follow.

Okay, this is an archive. This is local history, family stuff?

R: That's the thing, yes. I've been up here once or twice. It says [inaudible] there, family history here.

P: It's interesting they've got lockers. Do you think they're for staff?

R: No, I've got some stuff in there actually. You only need a pound coin.

P: What do you store in there?

R: I've got a laptop in there at the moment so I don't have to lug it around.

P: I guess if you spend hours and hours here that would be useful.

R: Yeah. They say on them that they're for people using the Search Room, 'cause you're not allowed to take things into them, but I think in fact they're quite sort of laissez-faire with it 'cause quite often you see not one of them in use. I don't think I've ever seen more than about half a dozen in use at once.

P: That's an interesting addition. There's some strange wood things over here, computers, desks, which drew my attention. Oh, these are for reading the maps, I think, or something. Maybe not.

R: Some kind of… They're got signs here.

P: Yeah it's like a light box.

R: Some sort of projector.

P: And it's used for zooming in on maps.

R: I saw a guy using one over there.

P: Yeah, over there.

210

R: I think these are microfilm readers. You put a roll in and you go through it.

P: Funny that they've got so many.

R: Yeah. I don't think I've ever seen more than two in use at once. I wouldn't be at all surprised if you come back in ten years time and find that there's only four here. It does get quite busy, this area, sometimes.

P: It wouldn't be the peak time of year, I guess, November.

R: I don't know the ways of the family history researcher.

P: I like how the computers are facing, um, like… Because the middle is the open bit and it's, like, circular, the barriers, where if you're on a computer wherever you are you're looking out, not just staring at a blank wall in front of you, which is quite nice, to have a view out past the computer.

R: For usability?

P: Just for comfort and interest.

R: Stretch your eyes a bit?

P: Yeah, instead of just looking at a brick wall or something.

I'm excited about this bit because it changes because you're in the roof section now. When you looked left and right before it was all the same, well, similar kind of thing. You've got bookshelves and people sat at tables, but this bit's a bit different when you're walking up the stairs and I normally like looking out over things.

R: Yeah, it's slightly different this floor, isn't it? I think these partitions are moveable so they can be collapsed away.

P: Okay. Can we go out on the roof? Yeah. I love coming up in high spots. I like that they have this here. It's a bit cold now but I think it would be nice to sit up here in summer and read. There you go, a place for people who like novel to sit and read.

R: Yeah, okay. I don't know how comfortable those would be for a couple of hours stretch.

35:00

P: That's true, yeah. Just grab the beanbag and take it out here.

R: Yeah, you can't really do soft furnishings on a terrace.

P: And the view's quite good. You can see all the way to the wheel.

R: I guess, is the sea over that way?

P: I think so, yeah. I'm pretty sure. I've been in Liverpool four months, but yeah, I think it's that direction 'cause the wheel's next to the docks.

R: You've not been in Liverpool much more than I have in that case. I looked at studying here as an undergrad when I was doing architecture at the University. Are you John Moores?

P: No, main university.

R: So, I looked at that department actually but ended up going to Nottingham.

P: Nottingham was one of my choices.

R: Was it? I did love Nottingham. It was a nice place.

P: Free materials.

R: Free materials? What?

P: Yeah, they said that.

R: That's a damn lie. Unless they've changed things radically in the last four years. I wonder what they hideous noise was, but it's stopped at least.

P: Is that the bit you can see from…

R: I think it might be actually.

P: Oh yeah, it was. We were down there, weren't we? Or…

R: Yeah mean this?

P: Oh, yeah. That's the roof bit. And also, when we were looking up and you could see this bit here from the floor, right at the entrance and you looked up and you could see this.

R: Is that what we were looking at?

P: I think so.

R: Was it not that?

P: Oh, yeah. I was thinking that's really far away to be able to see it.

R: I want to go all Mirror's Edge and this point and go exploring. You can see stairs and everything, but I guess it's not meant for us. I suppose that must be the Hornby and the Oak Room next to it.

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: It's a really dense lump of buildings actually.

P: They're really crammed in. Buildings look completely different when you see their roofs and look at them that way.

R: And you can see from up here just how far off round that is. It's really a compressed ellipse.

P: Does it widen as it goes down or does it stay the same shape?

R: Wow, that really bounced. Shall we wander in again?

P: Yup.

R: Not that I was saying much of any interest.

P: I do like it up here. I like it when the- automatic door.

R: I think you can just pull it.

P: Oh yeah.

R: It really does change throughout the day, this building.

P: In what way?

R: Well in the amount of light, particularly, and the occupants here. You get more little kids during the day.

P: Right. Where's the stairs now? There's the problem. There.

R: You can line yourself up as your approaching, play spot the next one.

P: It's the exact issue we were talking about earlier.

R: Is it the same in Birmingham, there's an elliptical atrium criss-crossed with stairs?

P: Yeah, well you know how I said it was disjointed, or felt disjointed?

R: Yeah.

P: In the lower ground floor there's the children's bit and some non-fiction books, and then there's an escalator to a bit that would amaze you. There's this kind of drum of books and it looks like it's hanging, and that's where all the old books are kept. But I didn't know how to actually get into the drum bit. It was basically like a hollow cylinder, and the escalator came up into the cylinder and onto a floor, but I didn't know how to get onto the drum of books. And there was a roof space, like, a roof garden that went all the way round the building, and there were corridors you'd go down to, you'd think, get onto the roof garden from, but then they'd lead to a dead end or something. There'd just be toilets on the corridor. And you'd reach, like, a glass panel that you could see the garden out of, but it wouldn't be a door. It would just be a glass panel.

40:00

R: Ah. It sounds bewildering.

P: And the staircase was hidden away and there wasn't very clear signage on where stuff was. I really didn't like it.

R: Really? Considering it was so expensive, that's odd. You'd think it would be very impressive. What about the outside?

P: That's got the rings.

R: Yeah, that kind of fretwork façade. Do you want to go through here, just before we finish?

P: Yeah, that's fine.

R: I just wasn't sure whether you were going to notice this or not.

P: Oh, no I didn't, despite the massive green wall saying "Discover".

R: Well it's not like it points to anything, is it?

P: That's true. Oh, is this used for, like, children's groups and they'd do reading?

R: It's the children's library. I think they do events in here from time to time.

P: I quite like it, but it's weird how you come in on a raised bit instead of coming in on the ground floor.

R: The higher level?

P: Yeah. It means the ceiling's quite close.

R: I think that's a remnant of its previous life as a lecture theatre, which it was for most of the twentieth century. You can see, can't you now. I don't know much of this… I don't know if they ahd a ramp.

P: No. It looks quite fun though. If you were a child I think the colours and stuff. Now I can really read the lecture theatre. It would be quite nice to just sit right there and read, but they don't give you that option.

R: No shame.

P: Why can't they, not do something exactly the same, but just make a place to sit?

R: You think they could apply this… There's something odd about it, isn't there? The floor is treated, as you pointed out, in a very different way from the rest of the library.

P: Yeah, there's all kinds of changes in levels and ramps. The silver railings, when you follow the railings round, they're all, like, this one on the left hand side comes along, then goes up, then goes back down. They they've got a higher one that swoops down, I think, just following the lines of the silver railings, and then you've got the lights as well. There's lots of kind of swoops and curves, which probably makes it quite engaging for a child, I guess.

R: Yeah. It's something to follow with your eye.

P: Yeah.

R: I love these almost Brunellian trusses.

P: I didn't really notice them, to be honest, maybe because of the colour they're painted in.

R: Pale grey?

P: Yeah. They blend in quite well with the ceiling. They probably wouldn't want to make a feature of the roof trusses.

R: No?

P: I don't think so. I don't think they're that attractive, personally.

R: Okay. Shall we go back to the desk, or is there anything else you want to look at.

P: No, I think that's everything.

…

P: There's not much seating in this bit.

R: No. That's what I was referring to.

P: I'd want more mobile, as in, like, there's just two sofas that would sit three people each.

R: Yeah, and you'd probably just get a person sitting on each end.

P: Yeah, like the chairs over there, right by the entrance that you can… People wouldn't necessarily move them, but that could be moved if you wanted to sit on your own or sit in a group of three, facing each other et cetera.

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Researcher: It's probably best to start outside the library.

Participant: Okay, yeah.

R: Then we can work our way inwards. So you're a student, I guess.

P: Yes.

R: Not studying architecture are you?

P: No, pharmacy.

R: Ah, I had a pharmacist in yesterday. How far through your degree are you?

P: I'm second year out of four.

R: So you've been here for a year already, so you know the area a little bit?

P: Yes, yeah.

R: Have you had a chance to use the library before.

P: Yes, well I've had… I actually love reading books, so last year I would come here maybe once a week, pick up a book, take it back, bring it back, so yeah I've been in here quite often.

R: I guess you'll keep doing that for as long as you can find time for it.

P: Yeah. Not as often this year.

R: No. Do you remember when you first visited the library, was it easy to find?

P: Um, yes, yeah, yeah 'cause on the on the backside it says "Library", or going down the side.

R: And that was the side you were coming from?

P: Yeah, so I did. That's how I first knew there was a library here. I saw that sign, so I was, like, "Okay, let's check that out."

R: Okay. Okay. That's where pharmacy is, it's over on that side?

P: Yeah it's over on that side.

R: And when you come round the front, does it look like a library to you?

P: No, no, not really. So actually when you do come up here, you're like, "Oh, which one could be the library?" and if you're coming from this way [heading up the hill] you don't actually see the library sign at all, so there's not any indication that this would be the library. At first I thought maybe it was a museum or something.

R: You've got a museum there and an art gallery there.

P: So you don't really know, and then you notice the Liverpool Central Library sign, and you're like "Okay, I guess this is the library."

R: Okay. Is that big enough do you think?

P: No, not really.

R: 'Cause if you're coming up from that way, as you say, you'd miss it.

P: You're kind of like "Maybe it's this one? No. Maybe it's this one? Alright, yeah."

R: Okay. Would this give it away at all [the literary pavement]?

P: Yeah, this is actually a really good idea with the titles of books, so that did give it away, to make sure oh yeah, this is the library, but it's not very, like, it doesn't stand out or if you're just coming by, you don't notice that there's a library here.

R: Have you seen that done differently in other libraries? [Inaudible]

P: Well I thought that when I saw it I thought it was a really good idea. I've never seen that anywhere, so that is one good indication that it is a library, but I think that maybe to make it a little more obvious, maybe a sign that says Central Library.

R: Now we're inside, basically the plan is that I'm going to follow you around, so you can go wherever you want to go, so it's just about whatever you're interested in or want to have a look at.

Why the escalator then?

P: Hmmm I don't know. I thought it's the first thing, if there were stairs when you entered right away, I'd take the stairs, but the escalator's there, so I'm like it's the easiest way to get up. You don't actually when you come in, you don't see any stairs, so I don't even know if there are stairs to get up here.

05:00

Usually my favourite place to go is the dome [the Picton] just 'cause it looks really nice.

R: So is that why you're heading upwards straight away?

P: Yeah, 'cause I, like, if it was my first time here I'd probably check out all the floors, but I've been here so I know I usually like getting a book and going in the dome, or if I'm studying I enjoy coming here, just because it's more quiet, it's… Yeah, I enjoy coming here 'cause it's a lot quieter. You can just do your own work and it looks like a library. You get that.

R: Is there anything particularly about this that makes it [the Picton] look more like a library, 'cause there's still books there.

P: I think it's, um, I don't know. It just has a library feel, the wooden pillars, the use of the lighting, it just gives it a more library atmosphere.

R: Okay, what do you mean about the use of the lighting.

P: Well, I like that they have more natural light, so with the big dome in the middle, it allows more of the light from outside to come in.

R: It's all from there, isn't it, the natural light? There isn't any other window in here.

P: No. And then they don't have – it's just kind of subtle – lights on going around and then the big on in the middle, but you kind of feel like the main light is coming from the top.

R: Does that make you feel a certain way?

P: Um, I think… I think maybe it's just a good lighting to make it easy to read. I think it just creates an atmosphere that I enjoy, like, personally I don't like coming to the library when it's dark. Usually I'll be here in the daytime to use the natural light instead of, like, other lighting.

R: Is that just because it's easier to read?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Okay, cool. If you like this, I guess you must like the Hornby and the Oak as well?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: I was quite surprised. I first went in round this way and I was quite surprised and how sharp the change was between this and that. It almost looks like the outside of another building.

P: Yeah.

R: It's a bit weird.

P: I think we can go upstairs.

R: Of course, there's plenty of natural light in here too.

P: Just, there more conversation, there's more people, there's enquiry desks so people are asking questions and sometimes, like, when you just want to focus it's a good, like, people aren't in there talking, whereas out here there are computers, so maybe people are coming in to check their emails, they don't have internet at home or something, so that's more secluded, it's more... You can do your own thing.

R: Is that something that a library needs to offer?

P: Oh yeah, definitely, definitely. I know I've been here for group assignments as well, so it allows at least a common place for people to meet up and work on a project together.

R: So you would use it in a group?

P: Yes, sometimes we would come here during- When it's really nice we go out to the terrace. So if it's something where we don't need, like, books and papers and if we're just talking like a startup point, we'll head up to the terrace 'cause there's benches there. We'll talk if it's a nice day, and if it's more, like, oh we need to have our laptops and be working, we'll come to a table like this where we can all talk. I'm not sure if there's, like, study groups, if there's rooms where you can have groups. I haven't really looked for them.

10:00

R: Yeah, I've only ever been here by myself because I'm visiting from Cardiff, so I don't actually know.

P: So, yeah, I'm not too sure, but usually we'll just grab a table like this. We'll do our work together.

R: If you were wanting to find out, how would you go about it?

P: I'd probably just go to enquiry and ask them.

R: Go to the desk?

P: Go to the front desk, yeah. They'd probably be able to help with that.

R: Is the signage good around here, do you think, for finding your way about?

P: Yeah. Um, I think when you're on the front, when you're on the ground floor there's a good indication of where your nonfiction and your fiction, where all your books are, but then when you kind of go up, like from here, all I know is that enquiry is on the second floor, but not really about what's on this floor itself.

R: It says "Enquire".

P: Oh, it says... I don't even know what that is.

R: What does that mean?

P: I don't know.

R: It's pretty nonspecific.

P: Yeah, so usually when I come here I kind of check out at the group floor where I want to go in terms of what book I need, where I'll find it, and then I go straight there. I don't usually, like, look around. I'll know why I'm coming here.

R: So you use the place in quite a utilitarian, pragmatic way?

P: Yeah, yeah. But, yeah usually I don't actually come up to this floor.

R: Do you mean you'd go straight past it on the way?

P: Yeah. Yeah, I don't know if we want to go up one more floor?

R: I don't know. It depends if you want to.

P: Yeah.

R: I've been sitting around all morning, so I'm not about to argue.

P: I'm guessing this is their archive. Yeah.

R: Have you been up to this floor before?

P: No. Usually if we're going up to the terrace we just go straight up there.

R: Shall we take the lifts or the stairs?

P: Um, the lift, just because if you're going all the way to the fourth.

R: It's quite a long route.

P: Yeah, we can just bypass all this and get there.

R: What is it about the terrace that appeals to you and your friends?

P: It's quiet; not many people. [Either] they don't know about it. You get fresh air, you're not, kind of, inside a building, you can be a but louder and it's okay, so if you're with friend, it's okay, you can kind of talk out loud and no one's going to say anything, so you don't have to worry about other people, and it's just being outside in the fresh air, you don't feel like you're in a library, studying or doing something. So the terrace is a good place.

R: It's a big bonus, is it, as far as libraries go?

P: Yeah. This is the first one I've seen with a terrace.

R: I was told it was the only one of the schemes that was shortlisted that had a terrace, a roof terrace, anyway. I think there were four and this was the only one that had a roof terrace.

P: Overall this is a really good library.

R: Are there any other libraries that you used to use when you were younger?

P: Yeah, well I'm actually from Canada.

R: I was guessing you were.

P: Yeah, well I've only been in Liverpool for a year and a half now, so it's very different to the library that is back home. Well, this is a bigger library than the one where I'm from, so there's a lot more variety here. The only one thing that I found about this library is that if

they don't have a book here and you want to get it requested to pick up from here, you have to pay for a pickup.

R: Really, on the inter-library loan?

P: Yeah, to request a book, which I found was kind of like… that's turned me off from getting some books sometimes, 'cause I'm like, "Why would I pay?"

R: Well libraries are meant to offer a core service for free and I'd have thought interlibrary loan would be part of the core service.

P: If I want a book to come in from another library it'll charge you and I'm like, okay then, I'll find another book.

R: It's the postage I presume.

P: I'm assuming. I'm not really sure. Back home, from library to library there's no charge and they email when the book gets there and you just pick it up.

R: I certainly know at university there's no charge, although of course we're paying a lot of money anyway.

P: But yeah, that was one thing I didn't really like about this library.

R: I'll have to ask about that.

P: And I did find that a lot of the books I wanted to read were not available here.

15:00

R: We're talking fiction here, are we?

P: Yeah, fiction.

R: You'd have thought a place like this would be pretty well stuffed with fiction. Certainly a lot of the second floor seems to be educational or subject specific. I don't know how well it's used. It always seems quite busy, the second floor.

What do you think of this atrium? Do you reckon that's a waste of space or an essential part of the building?

P: Um, I think it's not a waste of space because there has to be an appeal to the library, I feel, that the kids that we just saw, they must be like, "Wow, this is a cool looking place", and that's one way, I guess, to get kids to come here. There has to be some appeal to, um, get people here. No one goes, "Oh, I'm just going to go to the library", but if it looks cool it appeals to people to come here.

R: Okay. So people would never say that because… Why not? Because there's a kind of preconception that a library is…

P: …A place where there's books and you study. Like, it's not a day out for fun. That's what I assume kids would think.

R: So, do you think in that case that the spectacle of this is compensation for something that's inherently quite dull?

P: Yeah, yeah, 'cause I think when you think of a library you think of just a rectangular building with books in it. There's no cool designs. It's just a place filled with books, at least this is, like, if you're walking down the stairs, kids see people walking on top of them and they're like, "This is pretty cool". The staircases, the way that it's…

R: With something like, say, a hospital or a branch of Natwest or a branch of Greggs, those aren't architecturally exciting places but people still go there frequently.

P: I think that's because it's a necessity. Going to the library is, like…

R: No one needs to?

P: No. Nowadays you can find everything online as well.

R: Does that mean libraries even need to exist anymore?

P: … Oh that's a… I don't know. There's… There must be people who've never set foot in a library and I guess they're doing okay, but I personally, I think libraries, 'cause I like physically reading books. I'm not a big fan of internet, like, reading off of the internet or using online textbooks. I like physically holding books and flipping pages to read things.

R: And in a world where it's possible to buy second hand books from Amazon for a few pennies…?

P: Oh, that's true as well!

R: Is it still necessary to have a £50 million pound building for people just to wander round and read books? Because although it's free at the point of use, it's all tax paid.

P: Well, I guess in terms of people who can't afford to buy all their textbooks or all their books off of Amazon, this is the closest thing they have or a place to go, at least.

R: Yeah, sorry I'm not trying to cross-question you, deconstruct your entire outlook, but I'm just really curious, which is why I'm writing a PhD about it.

P: I never actually thought about that. You could just buy everything, but I guess…

R: Technically you could.

P: You could, you could!

R: You can still see. It's sort of commonsensical, looking around, seeing that it's useful.

P: Oh yeah, it is.

R: There's more to it than just connecting people and books. Getting that down and getting your thumb really on that… Let's put a different scenario by you and say, imagine that there weren't any public libraries in the country and somebody stood up and said, "I want to build 4200 buildings in every city across the country and fill them with books and people can just wander in and read them for free and use computers and go to events and it's not going to cost them anything, but we're going to fund it from tax money", how do you think that would go down?

P: I think people would be a little sceptical about it. It kind of seems like a crazy idea that let's make it all free, but I think it… It enhances learning. It allows for a place to go to get knowledge. Without libraries I think… 'Cause sometimes I think even when there's nothing to do, it's like, a library's a place you can go. You're going there at no charge, but you're learning something out of it, so I think it's worth putting libraries… It's a good investment.

20:00

R: Okay.

P: But I see the first person who came up with this idea must have been, yeah; that must have been hard.

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R: Yeah, well his name's actually on the wall over there. A man called William Ewart, but he was the first person to adopt the Free Public Libraries Act in 1850. It went through Parliament but then it was up to individual constituencies to introduce it and have a county library network. So that was 1850 when that happened and Liverpool was the first to get a free public library [Actually, it wasn't. It was one of the first, but not the first].

P: I don't think many people actually think about that. It never came to my idea that… like, they make no public, no income from libraries, in terms of signing out books or using the internet. They don't charge you for internet usage or anything.

R: It's all got to be allocated in council budgets, basically.

Do you think it's odd, the mixture of old and new in this building?

P: I think it's good. It allowed for… This is a place where there's no generation gap, like, it's open to anyone, there's book for everyone. Whatever you're looking for, you could find it here. Whatever you're curious about, it doesn't separate by age or by any gender or anything here.

R: And the same applies to the different bits of the building. From the outside it looks old.

P: Yeah. Inside is really new.

R: It is old, the front. That was built in 1860, but this was built last year. Do you know the history of the library at all?

P: No, not at all.

R: Basically what happened was it sort of got a bit blown up during the war. Only the front was left, and the reading room and the Hornby and the Oak. The middle bit was all burnt out. They built a new bit in the fifties and a new bit in the seventies, but they were a bit rubbish, so they had to demolish those and this is the result, so what you've essentially got is the front of an 1860s building and then a completely new building.

P: And you can see that from the back, 'cause from the outside it looks really new, and then when you come through the front you think, "Wow, it looks really old now".

R: Yeah. Do you remember what you felt the first time you went into the Hornby Room?

P: I just thought it was a really… The atmosphere hits you first, I guess. It's a really nice, peaceful place.

R: I thought I'd wandered into something, like I'd somehow got into the wrong building.

P: That's true, you feel it's very different. It's like, you're still in a library?

R: 'Cause there are no books in there [There are, but you know what I mean. They're hidden away] it did even feel like it was trying to be a bit of the library. It was just like a museum exhibit.

P: That's true.

R: Do you want to wander round anymore?

P: Um…

…

We can go up one more floor.

R: [Inaudible]

P: This is…

R: There's another giant word: "Meet".

P: "Meet", so maybe they do have meeting rooms. They do.

R: Yes, although yesterday those weren't there, 'cause there're moveable walls, so all the wall were gone yesterday. It was just a big open landing.

P: 'Cause I've actually never see it like this. I guess they do have rooms. That's actually really convenient. I'm not sure if you have to book it or anything.

25:00

R: I think you probably must do. I don't know what they're for exactly.

Ah, I love this terrace. I had lunch here about an hour ago.

P: Yeah, this is where I love to, even, sometimes I'll come up here just to read a book. The only thing it would be neat for them to do, it would be good if they had these benches closer so people could actually…

R: Huddle around?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: If they'd been slightly tilted as well so water ran off.

P: Yeah, that would have been an idea 'cause it rains a lot in this country, or even, like, a few tables up here, made out of the same thing so they don't have to worry about maintaining it.

R: They're not really moveable are they?

P: No, I don't think so. But you can't really get into a group, that's the only thing, so usually we'd kind of all sit. Or, like, if it's not wet we'll sit on the floor. But that's the only thing I wish they had up here.

R: More flexibility?

P: Yeah, 'cause they've made this place but, one, I'm not sure if many people know about it, and two, you have to sit in these places that are like…

R: Miles apart.

P: Yeah.

R: You know what I'd do if I was running this place? In summer, I'd definitely have an Italian ice cream stall up here. People would come out, buy ice cream. It would be great, really draw people upwards.

P: Yeah. It lets you see a lot of the city from up here. Like, you can see down to the dock from here.

R: Do you go down to the docks much? Is that one of your favourite places? I haven't had a chance to explore.

P: It's really nice. I would definitely go visit the docks at least once. And today's a nice day; the sun's actually out. But yeah, I enjoy going to the docks.

R: Do you ever come here to socialise, or do you ever say, "Let's meet at the library and then go somewhere else"? Is it a waypoint at all? Or do you have other waypoints and other socialising places?

222

P: Yeah, usually the library's not a place that [we socialise] 'cause you don't pass by the library to get to [anywhere]. So it doesn't become, like, "Oh, let's meet up at the library". If anything, we'll chose a different location because one, you have to kind of go in the street and it's only worth it if you're going that way, but we don't really go that way. You're going to head out this way. So it's never "Let's meet at the library and then continue going this way", 'cause we come from that side.

R: That's Liverpool One, isn't it, that huge great Pink Floyd kind of wall thing?

P: Yeah.

R: And you're more over that way?

P: Yeah, that way.

R: Are you John Moores or the University?

P: No, John Moores.

R: A lot of John Moores stuff's up that way, isn't it?

P: Well, I'm only in that one building over there, so it's never "Let's meet at the library". And even, I feel like it's if we met at the library, we'd have to pass by all these buildings to get to the library. It's like we'd just say, "Let's meet at the museum" or something.

R: Yeah, yeah.

P: But yeah, so it never comes down to just, let's meet here.

R: No, okay. Do you think it's a welcoming, inviting building though, just generally speaking?

P: Well, I think from the outside, like, when we were outside I didn't really think about it, but the first time it doesn't really look like a library from the outside. Um, but I mean it's not like just putting a sign that maybe says "Central Library" is not going to make it more welcoming. I feel like if you have a plan, or if you want to go to the library, you'd go to the library, regardless of what it looks like from the outside. You don't even really think about what it looks like. You're kind of like, "Okay, I'm going to the library today", so you just go.

R: Yeah, yeah. It's interesting. There's some kind of relationship there, isn't there, between the library as a place you go to for a very specific thing and the library you go to just because it kind of offers a sort of mood. You know, the way you were saying, it's not like Natwest or a hospital because those are places you go to for a very specific thing, but at the same time, you do decide in advance you're going to the library for a specific thing, it's just it's not like a commodity. It's a sort of… I mean, do you head here because it's a good place to study?

P: Yeah.

R: It's kind of, the mood of the place is the commodity, in a way.

30:00

P: 'Cause it's kind of like, there are no distractions. It's a place where it's built for education, for learning. You're kind of like, I'm gonna go there, I'm gonna do what you do in a library.

R: So that's what you're engaged in.

P: Yeah.

R: Smashing. Lots of lovely fresh air today.

P: That's true: you need a break, you just head up here and get some fresh air. Go back there, start studying again.

R: It always reminds me of something else, this. I was trying to put my finger on it. Have you ever been to Sheffield Winter Gardens?

P: No, I haven't. Haven't really been out of Liverpool yet.

R: [Inaudible]

Oops, almost took a wrong turn. That's interesting from a navigational point of view. Is it easy to find your way from one staircase to the next?

P: I don't think so, actually, 'cause I remember I actually just came here last Friday with a friend, and we came here 'cause we wanted to fax something and they still have the facility to fax in the library.

R: You could have headed down to the museum next door.

P: And we were trying to take the stairs to come up here and we ended up walking all the way round because we weren't sure where the entrance was.

R: Really? You walked all the way around the atrium?

P: Yeah, so we came up here and then when we came up to the second floor we walked this way and then we were like, "Oh no, no, the stairs are that way", so we had to walk all the way round again.

R: Yeah, I've done that myself. I remember the very first time I came in. I don't think I've seen anyone else be this stupid…

P: Yeah, no, 'cause it's not very, like, you think it'd be an obvious think, but it wasn't. We were both, like…

R: The first time I came in I actually went straight across the poem and ended up at the back of the horseshoe before realising I had to turn straight round.

P: Turn straight round as you came?

R: Yeah. I thought it was a reception desk.

P: And it's really weird, 'cause if you go down to the first enquiry desk…

R: On the ground floor?

P: On the ground floor, they usually don't really do anything. They just tell you to come upstairs to this one on the second floor, and I've always been directed to this one.

R: The first floor enquiries desk?

P: Yeah. At reception they usually just tell you to come upstairs and enquire.

R: Did you find it quite easy to get to 'cause I've always felt that it was a bizarrely long distance from the front door?

P: No. Yeah, 'cause when you come in, you have to kind of look for, kind of, "Where do I…?" I remember the first time I came in I had to get a library card and wondered where I do I have to go, and then you keep on walking and you're like, okay. And you have, 'cause your first instinct when you come in is to take the escalator when you walk in.

R: Yeah, although I suppose that's okay 'cause there is another one up there.

P: Yeah, yeah.

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R: You don't want to look at anything down here, do you? The children's library doesn't interest you much?

P: No, not really. But I do like how they have the children's library on the [ground] floor, 'cause it can be a little bit louder. The doors are constantly opening, and that's okay 'cause they're going to loud as well.

R: It's funny, isn't it, that that's essentially one structure, that round bit, and you've got bedlam, essentially, on the bottom half of it and then the most serene and stately room in the whole place above it in the same sort of shape.

You ever used that sort of thing with "Game" written on the side of it?

P: I've never, actually.

R: No. I think they've got an Xbox in there.

P: I actually didn't even know they had that, 'cause you don't really imagine that that would be in a library, but I think that's one of the things that they do to appeal to little kids as well now. I mean that's the first time I've ever seen anything like that.

R: I know one of the other ones I've been looking at is The Hive in Worcester, which opened in 2012, Europe's first joint public and university library, they've got a whole sort of sub ground floor area, which is really big actually, which is just for teenagers, with Playstations and screens and that kind of thing down there. I don't know if that's becoming more fashionable. I guess it must be.

35:00

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Researcher: So you say you've never been here before?

Participant: No, it's my first time in the UK. I come from Morocco. Yeah, just got transferred here. Like, I was thinking about coming here, but then when I received your email about this interviews, I was like, "Okay, maybe it's better to leave it until after", so I think my first impression will be more important.

R: Did you manage to find it okay?

P: Yeah. After I checked it on Google Maps, it's easy, it's close, so I just came.

R: Which direction did you come from?

P: There.

R: Up from the column, that side? Okay, and did you know which building was the library or where the entrance to it was when you approached it?

P: Well, at the beginning no. I thought it was that one.

R: The round one?

P: Yeah. And then I was, like, just keep walking for a while and then I noticed this sign. And then I came first thing, I saw it's this. I wanted to read it but I thought, okay, just get in first.

R: Is it like any other libraries you've known before? Is it similar to any you've used before?

P: Ah, well, no. Like, most of them are new buildings, but this looks pretty nice, especially as it's very different, and I didn't know there used to be this kind of architecture in here.

R: Oh really?

P: Yeah. Okay, first picture.

R: Sure, why not?

P: Okay.

R: Does it make you want to go in and explore, this? Is it inviting?

P: Yes, yes, like when I saw this I was first, like, curious. I wanted to read it, but then I wanted to check. I want to go in and check what's inside and have a small tour.

R: Okay, well we can do that now. So you just go wherever you're interested and I'll follow you.

P: Okay. So, like, by second thought when I got in is like, the inside looks very different from the outside.

R: So is this not what you were expecting form there?

P: It's a huge contrast. It's not what I really expected, but it still looks pretty nice and I thought I might find a lot of nice books to read. Let's go up.

R: You want to go up?

P: Yeah. I generally always find my kind of books upstairs, always.

R: So this is just something you've known from other libraries, to go upwards?

P: Whenever I want to get something, like, I find it in the upper levels and never down. I never knew why.

R: Yeah, I wonder why.

P: 'Cause generally I check for some philosophy books and medicine books, sometimes engineering books.

R: So you're not so much here for fiction?

P: No. For fictions I just buy the books.

R: [Inaudible]

P: It's like, getting here, I just want to have a look in there.

R: Okay. What is it about here that makes you want to look?

05:00

P: That's my kind of library, this kind of setup. That's what I was actually expecting at the beginning. So, I'll take a picture.

R: Is this more appealing to you than that?

P: Like, the way the books are organised, like, the shelves and everything, and it gives me the impression there are a lot more books and a lot more choices in here than there is in there. The thing that's started to annoy me a little bit already is that I don't know what kind of books are in here.

R: [Inaudible]

P: We can change our course.

R: It's a bit too quiet in here. I feel a bit awkward talking in here.

I see you point though, actually. There weren't any signs really saying what the books were.

P: Yeah. Like, it just doesn't tell a lot. As I said it gives a good impression, but you need to check almost everything to know what's in there. That's kind of tiring and time-consuming.

R: It's quite different from here, this bit, isn't it?

P: Yeah. So at this floor I just start feeling I'm getting closer and closer to what I want.

R: Does it invite you to explore? Does it invite you to wander about the place?

P: It makes me want to check the others. The way it's organised right now, it's easy for me to remember where I can find everything, so I can keep going and when I know what I can find in this library, I can just go back and get what I want.

R: How is it easy to remember? What makes it easy to remember?

P: Well, it's just like most of the other libraries. We have here, it's kind of empty [the atrium] so we can look at the other floors, so while we were walking in there I was a little bit checking out everything, so it's kind of like preparing my brain to put names and where I can find everything, like a mind map, if you see what I mean.

R: Yeah, so you can see right where everything is from one position.

P: So, like, when we get up, we have those titles.

R: On the sides of the shelves?

P: It's pretty much telling me everything.

R: Do you think the signage is quite good in this building or not so good?

P: The what?

R: The signage, the signs that tell you how to get about and tell you where everything is. Are they adequate?

P: Well, they are good but I didn't see any like the big thing here that tells you for each floor what you can find on it. Yeah, I didn't see that, so that's a shame.

So, it looks like this is the top floor.

R: Is this the sort of floor you'd use much?

10:00

P: No, not at all. I pretty much have this habit when I get a book, I stay in the same area as I got it and I read it there, or whatever, until I get what I want, and then I put it back. I kind of like need to put back everything I need to its place correctly.

R: So you're using the library for research, basically, you go in, get the book, read the book?

P: I don't really use the library for research. I read a lot of books, so generally for my own research, for university, I just check out some articles on the internet.

R: Yeah, you'd use the university library for that.

P: And that's all, but when I get, for example, like, I major in business management, but before that I had a whole different major and to keep up with that I'd just go to the library to find books I'm really interested in, 'cause it's not really easy to find them on the internet and I think it's better to have the actual book.

R: So you're using the books for personal research actually? Okay. That's interesting. I don't think there are too many people that do that, just go to the library to educate themselves.

P: I actually thought it happens a lot in Europe.

R: You'd think so, but I don't know. [This could be related to the prevalence of students now. People do learn but their universities provide everything.]

P: I've been to other European countries like especially Spain, France and recently to Greece and Portugal, and people mostly go to the library and they sit there just for themselves, for personal use, so I thought it's the same here.

R: Okay. Well, it might be, actually. I don't really know. Are we going somewhere?

P: I think we're going here.

R: You want to take the lift?

P: No, actually.

R: Not much one for lifts.

P: No, I don't really like lifts 'cause you can't see a lot with them.

R: No. Can't see anything really.

P: So, here, if I remember, was…

R: Is this where you'd head if you were coming in to use the space?

P: Yeah, so now I think there are books I'd like to read in here. Yeah. Okay, that's surprising. I don't know those books.

R: Okay. They almost look like fiction, some of these, don't they?

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P: Yeah.

R: I didn't think there was fiction up here. I thought all the fiction was on the ground floor.

P: There's also some history books. Now my curiosity is down.

R: Okay.

Are you looking for anything in particular?

P: Not really. Like, I used to study ancient history and I was curious if there will be some interesting books to have a look at later, so I'm just looking for… I try to just look for medicine books, but I didn't see any till now. So I'm like, let's redirect the search.

R: Is that why you were looking at the sign next to the lift?

15:00

P: I was more looking at it to know if there's something I didn't see. So, like, err, in when I did ancient history there was three books I might be reading later. I think they were Greek history, and that sounded interesting. So my impression right now, more like what I think right now, there are not many books I might be reading here, like, few, unless I am looking a lot.

R: It that the sort of thing where it would be better using the university library?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: It's a bit more educational.

P: The university library, I think they have much more interesting, as you said, educational books and I don't know why there is this huge difference right now, but I think it's better to go there than here. I think also that the set-up for the university library is much more clear.

R: You mean where everything is?

P: Yeah, where everything is. Like, for example, for John Moores' library, the one in John Foster Building, it's like we get in, there's the reception like here, but then you can see already the sign with each floor, what you can find in, and then you head directly to the floor and you have all kinds of signs telling you where to go if you want anything, while here it's more like, you check by yourself and you find it.

R: Okay, yeah, so you have to do a bit more wandering around here, a bit more searching?

P: Yeah.

I was actually reading some titles right now.

R: I just saw a book on that one there that I was reading the other month so I think I'm in my area too here. Well, the more architecture and design stuff.

P: Now I'm checking this floor. I think I want to go back to the silent area.

R: You mean the round reading room?

P: Yeah. I want to get to know that place more. It's more attractive.

R: Is it the fact that you could see all the books at once?

P: Yeah, actually it's that it gives me the feeling there's more choice in there and it's not that modern looking design. It actually looks more simple, but in it you could do a lot more research, that's all.

[Inaudible whispering]

…

R: Are you looking for anything in particular or browsing?

P: I thought maybe they will have some law books in here and it looks like there's law in here.

R: It looks like they're arranged by classmark, so you could find something quite quickly if you knew the classmark. I'd be looking for 720 if I was looking for books in here.

20:00

P: Is it architecture? Let's have a look.

R: I don't suppose there'll be anything in here. 709… that's architecture.

P: How do you know about the number?

R: Just 'cause whenever I've got stuff out of the university library in Cardiff they've all been in the 700s, usually 720-something. Social architecture. There are art books.

P: I didn't notice the reference number thing.

R: The classmarks? All the books should be sorted with a number that refers to the type of subject. I know in Seattle Library in Washington State in the US, it's arranged with what they call a book spiral, so all the books are arranged according to the number. Everything from 0 to 699 is on Floor One, so I know that my books would be on the second floor, 'cause there in 700, architecture and all that. But in Seattle they basically go from 0 all the way up in a big spiral to 999 so you can just kind of follow a ramp and go round the whole lot.

P: That's interesting. So I think we'll be heading to the first floor.

R: Okay.

P: I didn't have a good look at the books in there.

R: Do you like it to be a bit quieter or a bit more active around you when you're trying to study.

P: Oh, actually when I'm trying to study I prefer to be in, like, my own study room, so whenever I go to the library I just go there when I really need a book I can't find.

R: So you probably wouldn't even study too much in the library.

P: Yeah. It's really nice. It makes me want to sleep, so I just don't go.

R: What makes you want to sleep, sorry?

P: The atmosphere.

R: Oh, in here?

P: Not in here. Like, I didn't stay long to know in this place. I think the really quiet area, like hearing people rustling the pages. That sound makes me want to sleep.

R: Ah.

P: And I don't really feel comfortable focussing on reading while people are around, so I just get the books I need and go back to my room and start working by myself.

25:00

Okay, I think that "Discover" place might be interesting.

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R: It's a bit of a vague term, I think. Technically, if you haven't been here before it applies to the whole building.

P: Okay, this looks really bright.

R: This is the children's library, I think. You can tell we're directly underneath the reading room. Can you imagine yourself using a place like this if you were six? I didn't have anywhere like this when I was growing up. Did you have a library when you were younger?

P: No, when I was a small child I preferred to watch documentaries than actually reading.

R: Yeah, same with me.

P: Yeah, until a while later, like, around twelve years old I started reading encyclopaedias. That was…

R: A dark phase.

P: Yeah.

They don't have a lot of books about this.

R: You think there should be more on mind, body and spirit?

P: Yeah, I think there should be more, a lot more than this.

R: How come, just because you think it's important?

P: Well, in all the libraries I've been visiting, not in the UK, they all have a really big area for this. Like, there is a greater variety of books and topics saying about that, and it's also, like, this [shelving unit] is quite open and only having a few books displayed on it is quite limiting the choice and the understanding. Let's take, for example, this book. Yeah, I haven't read this book, but I've read many other books kind of speaking about the same thing.

R: "Change your Mind, Feel your Body".

P: Yeah, I've read books like this one.

R: It's about psychological and physiological health.

P: Yeah, and…

R: Benjamin Zephaniah, who is a poet, I believe. He is a poet, isn't he?

P: So, like, I can't really see a lot of books speaking about the same thing.

R: No.

P: Maybe indirectly this one.

R: They're self-help books, aren't they? Think positive, that kind of thing. But, I suppose if you look at this, Caesarean Recovery, that's really specific. That's only going to appeal to women who've given birth recently by c-section. So that's obviously not for everyone.

P: Yeah. I think there's not much choice in this area.

R: I'd be interested to know how popular this area is in terms of whether a lot of people come here looking for books. Maybe not a lot of people do.

P: I think they've only got the most known books in here. So I just made a small conclusion right now. I think it's better if I use the university library than using the public library.

30:00

R: Just because there aren't the books here that you'd need, or that you'd want?

P: Well, like based on the small search that I've been doing right now, it feels like it's just too general. In the university library, okay, I haven't been there a lot, but every time I've been there I always find exactly what I want with a lot of choice, so I can diversify my point of view, which is the thing I really like to do.

R: Because you get a good coverage of information about something?

P: Yes. I think, like, for example, if I read this… Okay, not that book. If I read this book, I want two or three other books, at least, about the same thing, but different people speaking about it with different sources so I can get to know the…

R: Do you read quite quickly?

P: Yeah. I think it would just take me three days.

R: I think it would take me probably three *whole* days to get through that, so I'd have to spend three entire days to get through that. It's not what you'd call accessible is it, to most people? I don't think most people would think, I'll take that to the beach on my next holiday.

P: No, I don't really think that. I think there's always a moment when people decide to stop within these kinds of things, even if it's just one hour.

R: Okay. Is there anything else you want to look at?

P: Well, I read that there's a… was it? Yes, science and technology. I didn't see it until now.

R: That would be the upper floor.

P: The upper floor?

R: Yeah. We're currently on the ground floor, here, so we are in… here.

P: So, let's try to find this one.

R: Okay I always thought it was a bit odd that the First Floor was actually the first floor *up*, rather than the first floor you come into. You know, when you say, "I'm on the first floor", it means you're on *that* floor. I always thought that was a bit of an odd naming strategy.

P: Well, I don't really think so. It kind of makes sense for me when they say, "This is the ground floor; that's the first floor", so when I hear "first floor" I think it's the first floor above the ground floor.

R: You know 'cause you're used to it, but I think if you weren't used to it you'd assume the first floor was the lowest one it was possible to be on.

P: I just did that 'cause I spent three years in China and they assume the ground floor *is* the first floor, and they name this second floor. So I saw and I thought, first floor, let's go down.

R: And you ended up in the basement?

P: I think it's just about getting used to it and that's all.

R: It's not too difficult to get used to.

P: Yeah, you just to think- Ah, medicine. Okay, that was hidden from me.

R: That might be interesting to you. Over there there's a section on business planning and business practices.

P: Err, I don't really use it a lot.

R: I thought you said you majored in business strategy.

35:00

P: Yes, I do but, like, it's not arrogance or that, but it's just kind of easy, so my base year and my first year, I've done them in China, and during that time I've practically read a lot of books about that, so now I'm okay with it. I just went directly to second year in here and it's really, really easy compared to how it was before, so I'm okay with it until now.

R: So you can focus on medicine.

P: Yeah. Unless I have a report due; then I start doing some research. Generally, as long as there are articles helping me out, I don't go to books.

R: They take too long to read, I suppose, if you've got a report due.

P: Um, not really. It's actually, like, we had two, three months to do our report and we still have one month and a half to give it, so it's fine. I think it's better to do more research before giving it up.

R: I just like papers, I like journal articles 'cause you can get more points of view in a quicker time. You can sort of construct an argument quite quickly, if that's what you're out to do. I mean, I tend not to read the whole of a book ever, just 'cause there isn't enough time to read all of the book anymore.

P: I actually think that reading books, on its own, is not that useful 'cause I learn things better when I do theory directly. I have a real life example or just starting directly with the real life example, then go to the theory, so it's more easy to understand it.

R: Because you've got a framework.

P: Yeah. Obviously theory doesn't apply directly to real life, just like that, so there are things to get used to. There are changes that have to be made, and things like that.

Okay, this looks like general topics.

R: Same sort of thing, isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: I suspect if you wanted to get good quality medical books, you'd probably have to go to a medical library at the university.

P: So, let's check out the science and technology.

R: Animals… Stephen Fry…

P: Okay, this is…

R: Maybe over there.

P: Maybe. What's in there?

R: Just the business stuff.

I need to have a check quite soon to see if the next participant has turned up. Sorry it's a bit rushed but I set a forty-five minute schedule. It's quite possible that they won't turn up, but I still have to check.

P: Is that likely.

R: Oh yeah. You're the sixth person who's turned up out of 21 I should have seen. Still getting good quality data.

P: The business books don't look as general as the other sections.

R: I think this has been set up slightly more specifically. It's kind of got its own area.

It looks quite specific.

P: Yeah, if some day I happen to be next to this library and I want to get a business book, I might come here.

40:00

R: Okay. At least we've found one bit that's useful then. Guess we'd better head back down now.

P: Okay.
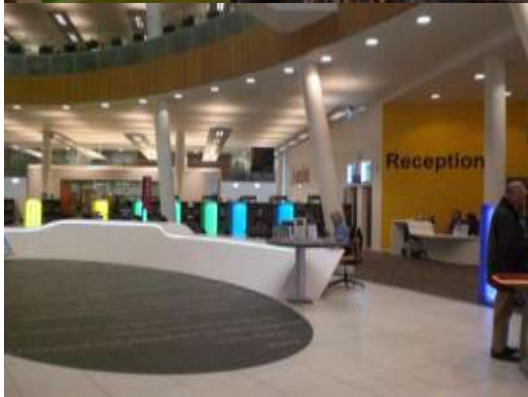
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Researcher: I would suggest that we start outside. It's a good place to start.

Participant: Fair enough.

R: After you.

P: Thank you.

R: Have you been studying here for long?

P: No I moved in in September, so not long at all, but I've been to this library about twenty times already.

R: Oh really.

P: Yeah.

R: Why's that?

P: I love reading and it's better to borrow the books than to buy them all the time, so that's why.

R: Were you on the lookout for a library, then, when you arrived?

P: Yeah, definitely. I always, like, I'm from Prague originally, and I always went to libraries, and we have a similar massive library in the city centre.

R: Really? I don't know Prague Library, actually. I should study it a bit more. Was it quite easy to find when you came looking for it?

P: Yeah, definitely. It's the biggest one in Liverpool, so I Googled and this was the one to pop out. I didn't look for the small local ones really. And it's convenient 'cause I can walk from my accommodation. It's, like, ten or fifteen minutes. And everything is in one place. Um, I like that they have different language books as well, 'cause I speak Spanish, so I was curious if they'd offer me books in Spanish so I could practice. There are different floors and they have a good structure, I think. Like, at the bottom you have all the adult fiction and nonfiction books, and then you have, um, the language ones on the next one, I think. Then you have a business kind of room as well.

R: So it's quite logical, easy to find your way through?

P: Yeah it's very easy to find your way through.

R: You say you're studying business management?

P: Yeah.

R: So I guess that area is quite handy for you.

P: Um, it's not bad but we have a much better academic library at campus.

R: Maybe it's more for business people who don't have access to the university library.

P: You can get, like, some things but not everything. The more detailed text books, I would go for our school library.

R: So you'd more be here for casual reading?

P: Definitely.

R: Okay. Does it welcome you in? Does it feel inviting or does it feel austere and threatening.

P: I think this style of architecture. I like old buildings. I think it's quite welcoming. I like this passageway into the library. I think it's interesting.

R: The literary pavement, if I remember correctly.

P: Okay, I didn't know that. Well you've got famous books and authors. I like that. I've read a few. But it's nice. It's a nice touch.

R: And it lets you know where you are as well.

P: I think it does, and also, like, this massive sign saying "Central Library", it's quite obvious where you are.

R: You can't really misunderstand that.

P: No, you can't really misunderstand.

R: Did you find yourself looking for that as you approached. Did you assume that was where you'd go in before you saw all this?

P: I wasn't confused. I just knew where to go.

R: Because when I first came, I came from that way, and I was initially heading for the steps until I got alongside here.

P: Oh, I didn't even think about that. Maybe I noticed the sign straight off.

R: Yeah, well somebody else was telling me that she was coming from down the hill, so you couldn't see that at all.

P: But if you were going from that direction, I can imagine that it's quite confusing, because they don't have a sign on this side, so you kind of walk and you miss it, and you have to go back.

R: I suppose all it takes is to find it once though.

P: Yeah. Once you've been here you can't really forget..

R: Shall we go inside again?

P: Yeah.

R: So if you've been here twenty times, I guess you know the inside pretty well.

P: I haven't been to all the floors. I haven't been at the top.

R: Haven't you? Oh, well we can go up there.

05:00

P: I know that there's a children's section on the right. It's an area for them to play and, like, a messy and colouring area as well.

R: What kind of thing are you looking for when you come in here?

[Conversation with very friendly staff member]

P: Okay, your question was, "What do I look for when I come in". Um, probably as it's a library I always like to have a look at the new books.

R: So, they've got those nearest the door, haven't they?

P: Yeah, there's three bookshelves, and on the right you can see all the latest offers, new books that they've bought and then they put on tables. Books there are similar or related to a certain topic on something. It changes every week or two weeks.

R: Right.

P: I like that the reception is actually visible from entrance.

R: By that yellow wall?

P: Yeah, by the yellow wall. It kind of gets you attention. If you need something they're always happy to help.

R: So you find the ground floor quite easy to see what…

P: It's easy to navigate, yeah.

That's the business corner, the turquoise…

R: Shall we go through there?

P: We can go, yeah.

R: I suppose you checked it out and didn't find anything terribly interesting.

P: Yeah, I checked it out. I haven't been to the Hornby Library. I don't know what that is.

R: You've not been through here?

P: No.

R: This should be quite interesting for you. Does it strike you as an odd space that we're in at the moment?

P: No, I think it's quite good. It's set aside and it's usually quite quiet, so if you want t space to study, or just want to take the book from the shelf and sit down with it, it's very nice. I don't like sitting in open space, so I like to be tucked somewhere.

10:00

R: You don't like too much space behind you?

P: Yeah, it annoys me, or if there's a table in between two bookshelves and somebody's looking for a book standing behind you, you can't focus on your own work and it just doesn't feel that good.

R: This is a nice little corner, isn't it? I've always thought it was a bit odd that you're inside a building and you come to the outside of another building.

P: Yeah, that is a bit strange.

R: It's just a completely different building.

P: Like, different style completely as well.

R: I think this was built in 1905.

P: Okay. It's very nice though. It sort of reminds you of how the old libraries looked like.

R: Well, exactly.

P: You see the tradition and the history, briefly. I'll come and have a look another day, to explore it better. It smells nice in here. It's the old books and wood polish.

R: Apparently this is very valuable.

P: Yeah, he did say.

R: And that's the Cyclops from the red letters on the pavement. It's really clever but it's not flat, so t wouldn't fit in a bookshelf too well.

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P: Which way do we go out?

R: Are you lost?

P: A bit. Bathroom…

R: That's interesting. Old tiles. I've never seen that before.

P: Is that quiet study area.

R: Ah yes.

P: This is gorgeous.

R: This is where we whisper.

Have you worked in here much?

P: No, I haven't been here.

R: Never?

P: No, not in this section. I might come here because it's the quietest part of the library I've seen so far.

R: Yeah. I feel a bit awkward talking in there.

P: Yeah.

R: People glance at you. I wonder what it is about the place that makes it quiet. I wonder why it is quiet. I mean there's no one saying "Be quiet", there are no signs up saying "Be quiet".

P: That's good though that people learned to respect that in a library you keep quiet because people come here to study, maybe if they don't have their own space at home. They just can't carry all the books to their place. So I think it's nice.

R: This half is definitely noisier, but now I think about it, I think most of the noise is coming from the ground floor, isn't it? [This suggests that the noise transfer of the atrium might paradoxically be beneficial to the library, as it helps dispel the notion that libraries should be silent, which puts people off. Instead the library is filled with children's voices and the noises of the self-service machines, which are deliberately noisy.]

P: People come in and go, and there's a café downstairs where people talk, obviously.

R: Yeah. Are these sections of interest to you?

P: Um, I didn't really borrow anything about music, but I like painting so I might explore this section a little more later on.

R: My section, this.

P: Architecture.

R: Not that I would ever come here to get architecture books, 'cause I'd just use my architecture library. I would tend to come here for fiction myself, if anything.

P: What I don't like about this library, and it's where I've found it very different from libraries we have in the Czech Republic, you don't have letters saying, "This section is from A to B", "This is where authors beginning with C start". You don't have it here, so when you're looking for a book it's a nightmare finding the correct shelf.

R: As far as I'm aware…

P: Like, they are in alphabetical order, but if you're looking for a book in fiction, for example, you've got to go round the shelves and trust the librarians that they put it in the right order, otherwise you'll never find it.

R: No. Of course, these letters here at the end refer to the author.

P: Yeah, but you usually have it on the shelf, like, this is A, and you could have four shelves of A, and then B starts.

15:00

R: Things aren't arranged by those, are they?

P: No they're not. I think that's the old style.

R: I guess, you have to know exactly what classmark these are arranged by. So you know exactly what subject area you're looking for and then assume they've got a little bit in which to find the author you're after.

P: Yeah. It's easier in art, for example. You don't have that many, but try looking for J.K. Rowling, for example, on ten shelves of fiction. It's a wee bit confusing.

R: Yeah, I suppose it would be.

P: This is the Spanish literature.

R: I suppose you spend a lot of time here.

P: Yeah.

R: Are they in Spanish?

P: They are in Spanish. These are in French. They don't have many new books, just the old classics, usually. Sports…

R: Do you know what that golden wall is?

P: No.

R: I think that's the wall of the archive stack. It's a separate box. You see, the floor above, where the search room is, the librarians can go across that bridge to get stuff out of the archives.

P: I didn't know that. It's a nice touch.

R: Everyone like a bit of gold.

P: You can sit here and plug your computer in.

R: It's a good place for you to work, near your books?

P: Yes. This would be a bit more annoying. It's in the open.

R: I'm nearly banging my head on these lights. They're a little bit too close.

P: You're too tall.

R: Did you say you haven't been to the top floor?

P: No. I haven't been to the next one either.

R: Does it encourage you to walk around the building?

P: Yeah, it does, yeah. And when you've got the stairs [like this], they're obviously put in so you have to walk round the whole floor to get to the next one.

R: It makes you look around, doesn't it?

P: It makes you look around, it's like in shopping centres you've always got the floors and the stairs in opposite directions, on opposite sides.

Probably more for adults or people doing serious research here.

R: This is where the local history and family history sections are, and the archive search room. Have you used these before?

P: No. What is it?

R: It's a microfilm scanner, so if you want to look at anything in these records…

P: You can look at it here?

R: Yeah.

P: Interesting.

R: [Inaudible] Wow, that's a long way.

P: I feel a bit dizzy.

R: It's quite interesting though, because the reason they're separate is that that's the old front of the library from 1860 or something and that was all that was left, and the reading room and the Oak and the Hornby rooms.

P: So they built the inside again.

R: Yeah, 'cause it got blown up in the war, so the inside was burnt and they built some new bits in the 50s and 70s and they were a bit rubbish, so they tore them down and this was 2013, so this has only been open for a year and a half but it's essentially a whole new building behind the old front.

P: Okay.

R: That's why it's got these weird thresholds where you go through a doorway and you're back 150 years.

20:00

P: But it's nice. It's quite gentle, the mix of the old and new. I think that someone who designed it was quite careful and thought about it.

R: Yeah, I feel the same.

P: I'm a big fan of glass and metal and I like these simplistic features.

R: At the same time, you clearly liked the Hornby Library when we went into that.

P: Yeah. But it fits well with the city. You can see that we're moving on in time, so we're adjusting to current styles as well as respecting the old… Will it close? [The terrace door]

R: Yeah, it'll close when it realises it's open. It's a bit slow witted.

P: It hasn't been used much, probably.

R: I guess you've not been out here before.

P: No. This is a very lovely surprise though.

R: Yeah, I love it up here. You can see how many cranes there are.

P: Yeah.

R: I think the last time I was here I counted fourteen cranes. Let's just quickly do another check.

P: Yeah, Liverpool's going through a lot of big construction, which is good.

R: Only ten cranes. They've slowed down. Apparently this was the only one of the shortlisted designs – I think there were four – that had a roof terrace.

P: Okay.

R: Which was one of the big reasons, I think, why they went with this design.

P: It's nice to use the space. If you've got it, why not use it. Liverpool has a nice, like, view. They're nice buildings. In the summer I can imagine that people will come and sit here and read or bring their lunch and talk.

R: Although someone yesterday pointed out that you can't move any of the seating around, so if you're with a group of people, you either have to all sit in a line and sort of look away from each other, or you have to sit miles apart, which is a bit odd.

P: That is a bit odd. Someone was thinking more of how it was going to look than about how it's going to be used, so that's unfortunate.

R: I think it would be a great idea in summer to get an ice cream stall up here. You know, with a coloured umbrella, guy with a hat on? That would be brilliant.

P: Okay.

R: Do you want to look around more or do you want to go back down.

P: We could go down. I think we've seen enough.

R: I'd be quite happy just standing here for a while to be honest, but just got this darn schedule to stick to.

…

P: It's quite clever to put the meeting rooms at the top of the building because you'll keep the noise upstairs and it's out of the way. It doesn't disrupt the people who come here.

R: I think they're moveable, these walls, so you can take the whole lot away.

P: It creates an open space?

R: Yeah. They were doing an event here on Monday, some entrepreneurship thing.

I always loved how the columns aren't vertical. They kind of swoop round. I think this was the only design as well that had that type of thing. Everything was much more straightforward.

P: This is much nicer. It feels more welcoming. It's not that rigid, if you know what I mean. Like, straight lines are not as welcoming if it's too like cubes and stuff. This is more gentle.

R: Is that the symmetry that makes the Picton Reading Room, well, the lack of symmetry here or the symmetry in the reading rooms, which is circular, that symmetrical quality that makes it more formal and this but less format?

P: Yes, I think so.

R: It encourages a certain kind of use, maybe.

P: Yeah. It doesn't seem as formal so maybe it might be more appealing to our generation, younger people. I think there some people are age who are quite scared of the formal

areas, and, like, "How am I supposed to behave here?" or "Do I even belong here?" It's more fun in a way.

25:00

R: And of course, there's lots of writing in this building, not just the books but that over there, and that there, that up front. Although it does seem a slight oversight that no matter what direction you look at that from, there's always a staircase in the way. Unless you sort of go round there, you're never going to see the whole thing. "Levi Tefari" it says, local poet.

P: I think the staircases are a part of the decoration, so that…

R: Part of the decoration?

P: Yeah, part of the decoration, part of the interior. It makes it unique. It's not like any other library, maybe in the world, even. It's a unique design, so you stand out.

R: Okay. Shall we go down again?

P: Sure.

R: I'm still following you, but I think we've basically been around the whole library.

P: Yeah, we've been round. And for anyone who doesn't like the stairs, there's the elevators there, so even disabled people or mothers with prams can go round. I think that's nice.

R: I'd be interested to work out how many steps it takes, how many footsteps, to go from the front door to the roof terrace.

P: You'll have to go once again and do counting.

R: Oh, I'm sure I'll be going many times. I was supposed to be doing 28 interviews over these three days, just at 45 minute intervals for three days, but actually a lot of people didn't turn up, so thanks for coming along. You're the sixth I've see.

P: I was looking forward to it: try something new.

R: Were you? Well that's good. Yeah, it's good to do that.

P: And, like, one day, maybe I'll be in the same position for something of mine and I'll want people to turn up and help me.

R: I've suddenly got much keener other people's research in the last few months, 'cause it seems a matter of propriety.

P: Yeah.

R: Shall we go back to the desks? It kind of reminds me of Sheffield Winter Gardens. Have you been there?

P: No.

R: It's a Foster and Partners project [Correction: Pringle Richards Sharratt Architects]. It's basically a sort of greenhouse in the city. It's got this wooden arched roof.

P: I always think of Hogwarts and Harry Potter.

R: Because of the staircases?

P: Yeah.

2.10 STUDENT 15, 19TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: So you're studying locally, I presume.

Participant: Yeah, I'm in John Moores and just behind here, really. I'm doing pharmacy.

R: Ah, you're a pharmacy as well.

P: Was there another pharmacy?

R: There've been quite a few. I can't remember who it was though.

P: There's quite a lot of us.

R: How long have you been studying there?

P: Um, this is my third year now, so I've got another year after this.

R: So you're spending a couple of years in Liverpool at least.

P: Yeah, four years.

R: Were you here before you started your degree as well?

P: No, I live in Cheshire, but, like, obviously I'd been to Liverpool a lot, and then I moved for my first year.

R: Did you know the library before it was renovated at all?

P: I'd walked past it a long, long time ago, but when we came for the first two years it was closed, so we just walked past all the, like, screens and stuff, so I never saw it until last year.

R: Does it look like a library to you?

P: I wouldn't say it looks like a typical library. Where I am at home, it's a horrible building. This one's pretty decent really. It's a lot more like, do you see that bus? We always go, "What on earth is there to see?", but if you think about people who've never been here, these buildings are amazing because of… they just are.

R: I remember when I first came off the station it was, like, wow! Everything is neo-classical around here. The first thing I saw was St George's Hall.

P: That is pretty impressive.

R: It's one of the world's best neo-classical buildings.

P: But then you also have Radio City as well, and that's not that attractive!

R: No, but at least it's interesting.

P: Yeah.

R: You don't expect that. Does it invite you in, this, or does it feel a bit offputting?

P: No, it doesn't feel offputting. When I walked past it I wanted to come in. I think 'cause it's, like, you wonder what it's going to be like inside. I think that's what the first impression was. And yeah, like on the floor as well, I thought all that was quite interesting 'cause they're all books aren't they?

R: Yeah. The literary pavement, they call it. Have you noticed that some of the letters are red?

P: Oh yeah, does that mean something?

R: It does! It does mean something. It's a riddle.

P: Oh, I'll have to look at that then.

R: It spells a riddle that refers to a particular book in the library. I don't know how much time you've got but maybe we'll leave that for another day.

P: Yeah. I'll have to have a look at that. I didn't realise. Yeah, so, and then is the library just up to that bit?

R: Yeah, it is.

P: And then it goes up.

R: Is that clear, do you think?

P: Err, I don't really know what that building is, to be honest.

R: This middle bit? We've got the museum down there.

P: Yeah, I've been in there.

R: And there's clearly something between them.

P: Yeah, I don't know what that is.

R: No I don't either.

P: No. The steps are the big everyone sits on. It always looks tidy, I think that's what… It's always horrible walking when it's untidy. That's just horrible. The pavement is neat and that invites me.

R: Shall we go back in?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: How many times have you used the building?

P: Um, I come in occasionally 'cause obviously our library's the main university library and it's just up there, so I can get all my books there, but this one I come to get, like, normal reading books if I want them.

Okay, so start upstairs.

It does look amazing inside. My friend's dad helped in this building when it was being made.

R: Really? What was he doing on it?

P: I'm not sure, actually. I know he's a builder of some sort.

R: Is that why we're going up, 'cause it's attractive?

P: I've been to the second floor but I've never been further up, so it'll be interesting to go up there and see what it's like, but I think it's nice how it's all, like, circular.

05:00

R: How the atrium's got that kind of ellipse to it?

P: Yeah. And the only thing I think's a bit strange is, like, the layout of the books, the diagonal lines and things. Like, you know how it's not all- Maybe that's just me being all OCD, but…

R: Which diagonal bits?

P: When you look at these, they're straight, and then that book's on a diagonal. So you know the layout.

R: Is there a way you prefer them?

P: Yeah, straight.

R: Is this a room you like?

P: I've never been in here?

R: Oh really?

P: No, but I think the oldness, it reminds me of the Titanic, and old the old intricate designs. I think that's really pretty. That's amazing. Yeah. I've see somewhere like this before, but I don't know where.

R: You mean in another public building?

P: Public building, yeah. It's really good how it's mirrored, you know how it's…

R: [Inaudible] oculus?

P: Yeah [inaudible]

R: We can't talk too loud.

P: It's really pretty.

R: Does it make you feel different from the rest of the library?

P: Yeah, this is a lot more old. This is, like, I'd imagine that to be like a classic library, you know, from the olden days, and then this is, like, your typical library, but it's not typical in some sense because the building's so much different from any other library I've ever been in. Where I live it's just like, I don't know what year it is. Maybe it's the 60s, like flat roof building.

R: Very square, is it?

P: Yeah, horrible building.

R: Bit damp, musty?

P: Very musty. Too hot in summer.

R: I know the type.

P: But yeah, I love how, every floor you come off the staircase, you want to walk this way for some reason.

R: Go right?

P: Yeah.

R: When I first came up here I got all the way round to here before realising that it's that way.

P: I never noticed that before.

R: While we're on that subject, does it feel quite easy to get around the place?

P: Yeah, it definitely does.

R: You know where you're going?

P: Yeah. It's a lot easier than, like, some shops and things. Take Primark, for example. Their lifts are on the complete wrong way to where you'd expect it, so everyone's just walking

around in circle trying to find it, but this, at least you know if you walk around in a circle you will eventually get to the next steps, do you know what I mean?

R: Yeah. So you can use the atrium to orientate yourself?

P: Yeah, you can. Definitely. It's very open, like, the bottom floor especially. It's very open plan, which I think is very inviting. Like, if walked in and it was all books, I think people are a bit more like…

R: Do you mean straight into that?

P: Yeah, straight into that. They might want somewhere that they can think about what they want to do first.

R: So you've never been up here before?

P: Never been here before, no. "Archives". And it's good, like, how they've got the desk all around the middle. I do know people who use this and they say they prefer here to, like, Manchester and places like that, but I think Manchester's pretty impressive too.

R: I know Birmingham's got a new library. I think it's the biggest one in Europe.

P: I haven't been to Birmingham in a long time. It's good that that bit's sectioned off, so it's obviously more quiet.

R: Archive Search Room. It's not to keep it quiet necessary, but because that's where the archive is, so the rare stuff, you can't nick it basically. You have to book an appointment and sign in, basically.

P: Yeah, I know somebody who does that, actually.

Oh, wow.

10:00

R: I didn't find anything useful.

P: Shall we take a picture then? It's just how there's so much light in here. I think that's one of the main reasons why you don't want to go in somewhere that's dark and depressing, especially when it gets dark at about half past four.

R: There's a lot of lighting in here. You can see even under balustrade hand rails there's lighting.

P: Oh yeah, they do. I wouldn't have realised.

Oh, I did not know this was here. Wow. Let's have a look. I suppose in summer this is pretty nice.

R: Yeah, even in autumn like now it's quite nice to get some fresh air.

P: Yeah, that's the one thing you can find, that it gets quite hot in there. I've notice that. I think maybe 'cause how the light is all coming from everywhere, it does get a bit hot if you're standing in particular places, but obviously you can't help that with the sun.

[I have to take a picture for some people]

R: Right, where were we?

P: Um, I think I was saying about the light. You can't really help that, I suppose, because it's just natural isn't it and you can't really moan about having not natural light when places just rely on lighting, don't they?

R: You mean you think it's important to have lots of natural light?

P: Oh yeah, definitely. It makes you feel… well, like, it's just so dim, isn't it, if you're just having normal lighting. Like, in lecture theatres you just fall asleep all the time. You need natural light. It makes you more awake and people want to stay in there longer.

R: So it's just a necessary part of using a library?

P: Yeah, definitely.

R: Where you're probably fighting to stay awake anyway.

P: I like all this kind of… Like, I think it's very modern. That's quite nice.

So, if we go down.

R: You want to take the lift or stairs?

P: I don't like lifts very much.

R: You don't get to see very much.

P: They make your head go funny as well sometimes. I think it's more if you've been in a dodgy lift before, you just say, "I don't want to do that again". Um, we should go round this way, I think.

R: I can smell something nasty.

P: Hmmm… no. Should there be something that smells?

R: I just caught a particular unpleasant smell.

P: Oh. Maybe someone's trodden in something.

R: Maybe I'm going crazy 'cause I've spent too long in here. Three days.

P: Three days in a library.

Yeah, it does seem a bit strange that we've walked that way round, so I definitely do go with my feeling that it's better to walk – which way did we say? – the right way. Yeah, that way. To the right.

R: I definitely can smell something.

P: Maybe I've got a cold.

R: I don't know. This is irrelevant anyway. It's a complete aside.

P: Maybe they should all have air fresheners.

R: There was something quite horrendous when we went round the second time. Definitely. Did we go this way before?

15:00

P: I think we did. Did we go over here? What goes on in there? Oh, that's the reading gallery, isn't it? So that's basically where we just went into, but the top bit. Across there is that…

R: Strange isn't it, what's going on here. A lot of weird angles.

P: There are a lot of weird angles. I do like that archway, that definitely looks like you're going into something that's not the modern, like, square kind of feel.

R: Yeah, it kind of lets you know where you are?

P: Yeah, like, "modern" to a lot of people does mean this kind of square, blocky stuff, doesn't it? I think it is nice for the library, 'cause they've been around for so long, you do need that aspect of an old feel to it, and that room in there [Picton] is really impressive, like, I don't think I've ever seen anything like that.

R: Really?

P: No, not in Liverpool. I haven't been in enough buildings.

R: It is pretty cool. They've redone it as part of the part of the rebuild to bring it up to scratch.

P: Yeah, I presumed they had. And the wood, different colours of that, that's really modern.

R: This paler wood, you mean?

P: The paler wood, yeah. Is it actually wood, or is it just, like [laminate]?

R: I'm not sure.

P: But the old, definitely. All of that, from the arch onwards is old library, and then all of this is new library. And the colours; I think the really bright blue and different colours for each level, I think you can kind of get your bearings a bit more. If someone hasn't been in here before, this is all green on this floor.

R: You can use the colours?

P: Yeah. And an architecture section as well.

R: You always see something on the other side from you.

P: We do, don't we.

So how long did it take them to make this building?

R: I think about twenty months. I'm not exactly sure. I know it opened in May 2013.

P: Yeah it did. I remember going in.

Yeah, I notice now what you said about the lights everywhere, aren't there? Like, on top of the bookcases and things.

R: I don't know how that fits with their energy policy, to illuminate absolutely everything. It all has to be festooned with LEDs.

P: My brother wouldn't be impressed. He does, like, renewable energy. That's what his PhD was on, so maybe he should come and look at this.

R: What type of thing was it?

P: I have absolutely no idea. It's too complicated. I don't understand physics.

I like how that is curved with- it just looks like it's suspended. Even though, obviously, there's pillars there, and that area's nice as well because it's different because of the floor changes. You know that's kind of the café bit.

R: Over here, where there's this different floor?

P: Yeah. I think it looks a lot like floors you'd have in an old fashioned house or something.

R: Yeah, that's not anywhere else, is it? I hadn't noticed.

P: This is all, like, boring floor, but it's still different 'cause obviously it changes into the ellipse. It's all based on the same kind of circle shape, isn't it? Even the tables are, so I think it is all really nicely- It has a theme running through it.

R: A theme?

P: Yeah, like the circles, the shape of the building inside. Everything's that shape, isn't it? So it's really nice. And then more lights.

R: And the Harry Potter thing.

P: Yes! And they don't change on Fridays.

R: I was kind of thinking Close Encounters as well.

P: I don't know what that is.

R: You know, the spaceship coming down with all the lights underneath?

P: Oh, yeah, yeah.

R: A little bit like that maybe.

P: It is very nice.

R: Is there anything else you want to look at?

P: Um, could we just walk round here?

R: Yeah, I know we've missed a couple of bits.

P: Oh, have we?

R: Yeah, which are on the first floor.

P: Well we can go back there.

R: It depends how interested you are really.

P: Yeah, yeah. So this is, like, all the CDs and things, and it's very, like, minimalist.

20:00

R: Do you think it's important to have this sort of thing in a library?

P: Yeah, definitely.

R: It's not just for books?

P: Yeah, 'cause you can still, like- A lot of films are based on books, aren't they?

R: That's true.

P: A lot of people don't like reading.

R: So you think the library's for more than scholarship?

P: Yeah, yeah [as though the idea was silly]. I think it should be for anybody. So, shall we go? Is it the first floor?

R: I think so.

P: Yeah, yeah.

Oh yeah, and there's that room there.

R: The children's library?

P: Yeah. I've looked in there. I went in there.

R: What do you think of that?

P: I really liked it, actually. I think it's just a little bit separate from this bit, which is just adults, isn't it? I think you definitely do need a second part of a library for children.

R: Did you ever have anything like that as a kid when you were growing up?

P: Um, not like this. We had the normal library and then, no.

R: It would have been great if I was five, toddling around there.

P: Yeah.

Where is it?

R: It's interesting that we managed to get the whole way around the place without wandering into these other couple of spaces that we're heading towards now.

P: Oh.

R: A few of the guys have been around and just never realised they were there. There's basically one door from the Picton and one just around the corner.

P: Okay. And we've missed them. Oh, the Hornby Library. And it goes really old style. I'd heard about it, actually.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Wow. I can't believe that this is here and I've missed it. Wow. Yeah, this does remind me of the Titanic.

R: Does it?

P: Yeah.

R: [Inaudible] It's called the Hornby Library because the guys whose statue is out there bequeathed his collection, so these are all his books.

P: Wow.

R: Not, the stuff in the glass cabinets; that's an exhibition of book bindings. They look pretty cool. Look at that: £1680.

P: That's quite decent. Wow. Yeah, this is, like, you know, proper museum style.

R: This is what you think of when you think of traditional libraries?

P: Yeah, definitely, but I mean very, very traditional. And it goes into there. Oh, wow. You always expect to tap on one of them and it slides back.

R: And there's a secret passage.

P: Yeah. Oak Room. I like the smell of it. It just smells of old books.

R: Old books and polish. This is Birds of America. It's quite a famous books, apparently. Aside from being enormous, it's quite rare.

P: That is enormous.

R: This says there are 120, so it's quite rare.

P: Very rare.

R: It does feel quite different from the rest of it.

P: Yeah, you feel like you've suddenly walking into a museum and you don't feel like you're in a library any more.

[Sees me tapping wall] No secret panels.

R: Is that because you clearly can't use any of the books?

25:00

P: Yeah, 'cause they're all in cabinets, aren't' they? It's so ornate, like, all the gold and that dark kind of blue grey, isn't it? I think everywhere, like, if you go into old places like museums, there is that theme of gold, isn't there? I think when you picture something as something else, you automatically kind of go into that place, so if you look at this, I think there's gold and there's wood, I think it's a museum. So you, like, think of things you attach two ideas and join them together.

R: So when you think of museums, you think of that brassy gold colour?

P: Yeah, yeah you do.

R: And oak.

P: Well, I do, anyway. It's just the museums I've been in.

R: I think it's not just you. A lot of other people probably do as well. Victorian glass tiles.

P: Yeah.

R: We probably want to go the other way, actually.

P: Oh, do we?

R: Or we'll end up in that silent room again. Just can't be comfortable talking in there.

These look, like windows, which is a bit odd.

P: Are they actually windows?

R: You can see little rollers where the sash cord would have been.

P: Oh yeah, but they don't have any glass in them.

R: No, no. I didn't mean…

P: That they're just magic windows. Oh, so I didn't know that was there. That should be better signposted.

R: It's easy to miss, isn't it?

P: Yeah, yeah definitely. Wow, and then you just come back into the general library. So, are there no stairs going down to the bottom floor?

R: Just the escalators, or the lift.

P: So why would you not put escalators for all the floor then? Why would it only be for the first floor?

R: Maybe 'cause they're really, like, bulky.

P: Maybe.

R: They'd have to go across the atrium and they're not as slim as a staircase.

Well that was fun. Nice chatting.

P: Do you want to go back to the desk? We can sort out some cold, hard cash.

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2.11 STUDENT 16, 19TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: Have you been studying here for long?

Participant: Um, not long. I've been here for two months.

R: Okay, so you haven't. Are you quite familiar with this part of the town?

P: Yes, just the city centre part. I just stay in this part. I haven't been to anywhere else.

Where should I start? Here?

R: Well, anywhere really. You say you got lost finding the place?

P: Yeah. I Googled it and the map showed some buildings like [these], quite similar. I went to that one 'cause it's the biggest one.

R: So you went to the…

P: What is it, a church?

R: No, St George's Hall, it's called.

P: A school?

R: A hall: St George's Hall.

P: For holding weddings?

R: I don't know. Maybe.

P: I've never seen it open.

R: I don't know what they do in there, but it's a hall. They must do something in there but I don't know what

P: Maybe.

R: And then just up the road you've got an art gallery, the Walker Art Gallery, and then next door you've got the World Museum, and the library's in the middle. Do you think it's hard to tell it's a library? Is it difficult to pick it out?

P: Yeah, from the appearance, but we can know from this part. Like, they have many walls and letters, these big letters, and "Library".

R: That gives it away. Okay.

P: I might take a picture of the end of the road.

R: Yeah, sure.

P: Actually, when I first came here, I passed by this street and took pictures here, but I didn't remember it was the library.

R: Ah, okay, so you had actually been here before?

P: Yeah, but I didn't go inside, just this part. I was attracted by these letters [literary pavement].

R: You notice some of them are red?

P: Yeah, I was wondering, can they be put together and become one [word]?

R: They do spell something. It's a riddle.

P: A riddle?

R: Yeah.

P: Ah. Like, an English riddle?

R: Yeah, well, basically it's a clue for one of the books inside.

P: Wow.

R: So you can see, if you follow it along, C, Y, C, L, O, P, S.

P: Oh yeah, C.

R: So, "Cyclops"… "in", I, N.

P: Where's the I? Ah, yeah.

R: "The", T, H, E.

P: "in the"

R: W, O, O, D: "Wood". "Cyclops in the wood".

P: It's a book?

R: It's not the title of a book, but it's a clue that's about a book, that we might see when we're inside.

P: Do you mind if I Google check what does Cyclops mean?

R: A Cyclops is a mythical creature with one eye.

P: Ah.

R: Like a giant but with one eye.

P: Like Medusa?

R: Did Medusa have one eye? Snakey hair. It's that type of thing, yeah.

P: What does it do?

05:00

R: Um, I don't know really. The Cyclops is from Greek mythology. Yes, so now we're inside, just go wherever you fancy.

P: I love this huge round.

R: The what, sorry?

P: This round.

R: Do you mean the poem?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you feel quite welcomed in here? Does it invite you in? Or is it a slightly intimidating building?

P: Yeah, like, when I first came… Oh, it's like half of an egg.

R: Half of an egg?

P: Yeah. It's, like, gathering people in the middle. There is a screen.

R: I've not been over to the back before, actually.

P: "You should come with me. I'll be your guide." ["If you come with me/ I'll be your guide" – quoting from floor poem.] It's a guide. Let's see what's over there. I like the lights?

R: The coloured lights on the ends?

P: Yeah, like, the design of the bookshelves. Maybe they to distinguish different kinds of books.

R: Okay. Do you normally think of libraries as very colourful buildings, or quite plain buildings?

P: In my opinion I think a library is somewhere very old and very organise. But I do like libraries with very warm colours, and I think organised is the most important, maybe, because I always got lost in libraries and I have difficulty finding the book I want.

R: So finding your way around is one of the key things the building has to do?

P: Ummm…

R: Letting you know where everything is inside?

P: Yes, yeah, yeah.

I do love very simple building, like, very simple inside, very organised, but for myself I'd like to design something very complex.

R: Is there a particular type of thing you're interested in?

P: Um, for now I'm designing a hotel. It's supposed to be in New Brighton [at the mouth of the Mersey]. My concept is illusion. Like, um, I don't know how to express it. What you see and what you experience, maybe, is not real, and maybe the nature can make people rethink, renew thinking.

R: So when you see one thing that you were expecting to be one thing and then it turns out to something different, that creates an exciting moment?

P: Yes.

R: Is this anything like that? When you stood outside, were you expecting the inside to look like it does?

P: Yeah, no, the inside is totally different.

R: Some of it, not all of it, actually.

P: "Reception". I love the table of the reception. Is it polite to take photos of it?

R: I don't think they'll mind.

10:00

P: It's blurred. Did it take?

R: That looks good to me. It's a lot better than some of the photos people have been taking.

P: If I come alone I wouldn't discover this place because the round [atrium] makes you focus on the middle part, but it's at the edge of the round shape, so I might ignore it, if it's in a corner.

R: This is the children's library, as you can probably tell.

P: Ah.

R: Did you have a library when you were little, that you were taken to as a child?

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P: No, not until I was in high school. Before high school I didn't have a library.

R: We had a library when I was a kid but it wasn't very good. Didn't really do there much.

P: How was it?

R: I can't even remember it really. I think I went there about twice. It was just a bit dark, silent, big shelves, that type of thing.

P: Yeah. I like libraries with lots of seats and tables you can sit down and read, but the library in my city, like, in my school had more bookshelves than seats. They preferred us to borrow books back, to return then, but not read inside the library.

R: So it's a lending library? They just want you to take the books and go somewhere else to read them?

P: Yeah. Maybe we have too many people to fit into the library.

R: I think that's why this was built, 'cause the old buildings just weren't big enough. They needed more capacity.

P: So the outside is newly built?

R: The outside is old. The front of it is from 1860-something [actually it was built from 57 – 60 and opened in Oct 1860].

P: Just the front of it?

R: Just the front and a couple of other spaces, so that round room there, that's from 1879 I think, and there are a couple of others upstairs, but this middle bit was built last year, opened last year, so this is essentially a completely new building. You can see it if you come down here [to the light well at the front]. You see, it's actually separate? So this is all new, and that's just a wall from 150 years ago.

P: What does it do before this wall?

R: I don't know what was here before anything was built. I think just taverns and houses and little, crumbly buildings, but yeah, it says a little bit about the history there [on the side wall]. You can see 1850. I think this was the first public library in the UK [it wasn't], but it got bombed in the war, so the inside was all burnt.

P: Like the church?

R: Which church?

P: There is a church [St Luke's] without a roof.

R: Probably. I think it is actually, yeah. They had the opportunity to do it all new again.

Does it make you want to explore and wander around? Or do you just want to find one little bit and stay there?

P: Um, I think it depends on what purpose I come here [with], if I can just want to spend my leisure time or just want to have a rest, if I'm not rushing, I might wander around, but if I'm in a hurry I'd just go to what I want.

R: Do you think the library's more a place for individual people or for the group, for groups of friends?

15:00

P: I think it's for individuals because a group of people, they come here to talk, to communicate with each other, but I think the library's more a place to study, to learn alone, for me.

R: So it's for people like here, quietly studying?

P: Yeah.

What is that behind the transparent glass?

R: I think that's offices for the librarians, and above is the archive stack.

P: I can't see anything.

R: Anything?

P: I can't see anything downstairs.

R: Oh, can't you? They'd probably like to keep it that way.

…

P: Oh!

R: You hesitated a little there.

P: Yeah, it's a very different style here, like you're entering the past.

R: Yeah, yeah.

P: This is the sense of library in my mind.

R: This is much more what it feels like, oak? Smells different as well.

P: Yeah, maybe it's for old books here. They use ionic columns.

R: What colours?

P: Ionic columns, Greek columns.

R: Oh yes.

P: But they use very new columns outside.

R: I'm not too good on the classical order. I never studied them. I pretend I know what I'm talking about 'cause you have to.

P: You study a PhD of architecture?

R: Yeah, in Cardiff.

P: Cardiff. How was it, the PhD of architecture?

R: I'm enjoying it a lot. I varies a lot, depending on what you're studying, so I'm studying libraries, of course, how they're designed for people in the 16 – 25 age group, which is why I'm doing these interviews here, but I'm self-funded though, so I have to have a job to pay for food and drink, living costs. It's good though. It's very rewarding. It's very difficult though, a lot of working on weekends.

[Discussing working…]

R: This is the Oak Room, as you can see, this is the wood that is referred to in the line "Cyclops in the wood".

P: They changed material.

R: What do you mean, sorry?

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P: Like, from there to this room and to here, they used different materials to identify different room, like, this is a whole timber room, and there [Hornby] it's stone, outside maybe concrete. We can't tell.

R: Pretty sure it's stone [the façade] although there's probably some concrete in there as well. This was built in 1914 or 15. I guess it's called the Oak Room 'cause it's all made of oak.

P: So is this much more older, this room?

R: That what, sorry?

P: Than that room.

20:00

R: That was 1905, I think [actually 1906], so it's about ten years older than this one. But these two are a pretty similar age, but they're about a hundred years older than the new bit.

P: So what's the difference of book stored in these two buildings?

R: That one, the Hornby Library, was all the books of a guy called Hornby. When he died he game all his books to the library, so that was built to house them. It's basically his private collection. I don't know where these books come from.

[Explaining about the Cyclops]

R: Does it make you feel different, this kind of space, from the one next door?

P: That one was quite open and encouraged people to talk, to do some open stuff, but this one looks very serious, like, very organised, like great storage, from line to line.

R: Yeah. It's much more ordered. Why do you think it's different? Why do you think we have these different rooms in the same place?

P: You mean, why?

R: Why were these built one way but the new library was built a different way?

P: Um, in my opinion, this room is for storage, not for people to read. It's for collection.

R: So these are meant to be out of the way of people. Okay.

P: So, maybe that's what made me hesitate to come in here.

R: You thought it might be private?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: [Inaudible]

P: [Inaudible]

Ah! We've come back.

R: You see where we're back to now?

P: Yup. This part is… I love this place [Picton]

R: I guess this what you were thinking of when you said a "traditional" library.

P: Yeah. How do people go up?

R: There are some stairs somewhere.

P: But to this part. Oh, there's a door. You see, a door?

R: There are some stairs here.

P: Yeah.

R: As long as we can get up there.

P: I love this. It's like a private square, like, defined space [inaudible].

R: You mean the gallery that goes around?

25:00

P: Yeah.

R: You say it's like a private space?

P: Yeah.

R: [Inaudible].

P: We can only go down from…?

R: I think we just went past a door. Maybe we can get through that.

Passerby: There it is: a hidden door.

R: [Inaudible] And we're back out.

P: Ah. Staff only.

R: Staff only up there [the top gallery].

P: There is a third floor of that storage, round storage.

R: Oh yeah, the third level of the gallery [really the second gallery; third level in total]. It's closed off for some reason. We can't go there.

P: But we can get to the stairs inside.

R: That doesn't go up again. That only goes to that level. It's cordoned off. You can't go up to the next level.

P: No?

R: Yeah.

P: Yeah. You can only go to the floor or the first level up.

P: But I think we stopped, maybe we just go…?

R: We can have a look. If I remember correctly – and I could be wrong – it's cordoned off.

P: Ah, yes. Yes. [It is cordoned off]. Maybe they have to organise the upper level.

Is it for wheelchair [the lift]?

R: I think so, yeah.

P: But I think the inside gallery is too narrow for wheelchair.

R: Hmmm, it might be. [Probably for carrying books then] I don't really know. It is quite narrow, isn't it? You certainly wouldn't be able to get down the stairs, but the I guess that's the point.

P: Fire door [reading from sign].

R: Is that interesting to you?

P: Yeah, they use the same colour to hide the door, but they use a different level to distinguish the door. [It's a fire door, painted the same colours and the wall around it, but recessed into a doorway, so at a casual glance you wouldn't notice it.]

And they didn't say which kind of book is where, did they?

R: Is it hard to tell where everything is?

P: Yeah.

R: Okay. How would you go about finding what you wanted?

P: Um, I might chose, if they have computers with information, I might go for the computer, but they usually say the number of the shelf, which is also hard to find, so I might just walk along and…

R: Check them all?

P: Yeah. It might be really annoying if I'm looking for something in an emergency.

R: Possibly this might help. I don't know if that might help.

P: Ah, yeah.

R: You see the book stock, up to 700? Architecture should be on this floor.

P: Did you see something like these on the first floor, on the ground floor?

R: I think so. You see down behind that column, facing the door? I think on the other side of that is a sign.

30:00

P: Ah. We can check later.

R: Yeah. Do you want to go up or down?

P: Around and then up.

R: Okay.

P: I like that design which is faced to the railing, to the glass, to study, but not faced to the wall. If they face to the wall, they may have a negative feeling, but if they face to the glass, which has a little bit of distance to the wall, they can't see… [She's talking about the computer desks that face the atrium – the view distance makes for a more comfortable experience, less hemmed-in.]

R: You don't feel so negative then?

P: Yeah.

R: Is that the same thing here I suppose? You can see right through.

P: Yeah.

…

R: Do you think lighting is important in a library?

P: Yes, very important. I like bright lights.

R: Even underneath the handrail?

P: Wow. [She hadn't noticed those lights.]

I like the crossed stairs.

R: How come? Where the stairs go across each other? What's good about that?

P: I don't know.

R: You just like it for aesthetic reasons?

P: Yeah.

R: That's fine. I mean, not everything has to be deep and philosophical. I think sometimes I'm overcomplicating things enough as it is.

P: Wow! It's cool! [Out onto the terrace]

R: It was really nice about an hour ago because it was sunset.

P: It's so cool for a library to have a roof garden.

R: Yeah.

P: You can read under the sun.

R: You see that rainbow coloured building over there? It's one of the university buildings, isn't it?

P: Yeah. Every day I go across it. When I'm in the city centre, I use it to recognise which direction is home.

R: Oh, really? That's handy then.

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think this adds to the function of the library, this space?

P: Yeah. I like this library.
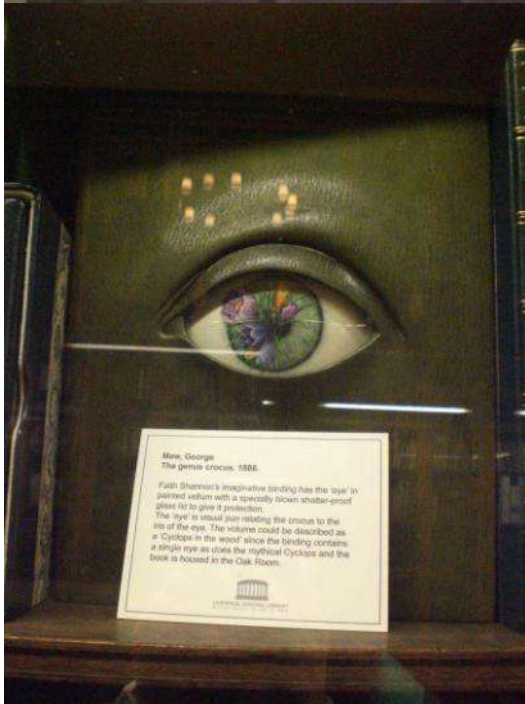
2.11 Student 16, 19th November 2014

2.12 STUDENT 17, 19TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: Shall we start outside and then work our way inwards?

Participant: Yeah, 'cause when I was outside I didn't expect it to look like this inside. I thought it'd be really old fashioned, and it's really not. I can't believe I've been living here for so long and just not ever bothered to come here.

R: I guess you've known about it.

P: I've known it existed somewhere around here, 'cause I was going to go to the museum, and then I was like, that does not look like a library, 'cause there was a statue outside, so this was the next thing up, and then I was just going to go to that one, but I don't know what that is.

R: Which one, sorry?

P: That one over there.

R: The big one?

P: Yeah.

R: St Georges Hall, one of the finest neo-classical buildings in the world, very impressive, etc. etc. Did you find this place alright?

P: I just put it in my satnav and started wandering around here, and then came here, 'cause it's not really, it doesn't really say library anywhere except that sign, so I had to walk all the way up.

R: I know it's quite a big sign.

P: No, but I was walking round from the other side, so I couldn't see anything, and then I automatically assumed that would be the library.

R: Does it look like a library to you? Do you have any preconception of what a library looks like?

P: The only library I've been to, 'cause I come from London, and we have, like, tiny small community rooms in our libraries, so this is nothing compared to a library that I've been to ever. I know they're building a library where I live.

R: Which part of London's that?

P: It's north London, Enfield.

R: Okay, I don't know the bits of London.

P: I know the good libraries are in central, more towards the posher areas.

R: Some of them have these things called Idea Stores, which are these new take on the library. I think Tower Hamlets has one, Hammersmith has one, Whitechapel. I think there's only about three or four of them. They were meant to be a new take on the library thing, more like department stores.

P: We're having a new one built. It's called the, it begins with O. I think it's Oz-something, and they're doing the whole checkout thing, but it's been two years and they still haven't built it.

R: Really? Does this feel quite welcoming to you, or is it austere and offputting?

P: It's very big, and 'cause I'm very small, I'm very scared of, like, high things. I know this is being relative but I don't usually like to look up, 'cause it's quite grand. But it's pretty as well, I will admit. I think this is one of my favourites.

R: Is it overbearing at all?

P: Not particularly. It's quite large though.

R: There's quite a lot of mass to it.

P: There is, but we were just thinking that was just because of the pigeons.

R: What do you mean?

P: Like, pigeons try and attack the building, because last year we were always walking down and we were always going to try and come to this building, or go to the museum, and we wondered why there was so much stuff around it.

R: Do you mean that netting?

P: Yeah.

R: I think that is for pigeons. So we can just go anywhere you want to go. You just want to explore and I'll follow you.

P: It's insane. I just want to get pictures of the stairs. It's like a modern Harry Potter.

R: Do you think Harry Potter too? A lot of people have said Harry Potter. I think it's the staircases.

P: It's the staircases. It's beautiful. It's huge. I want to go down to "Discover". It looks so much smaller from the outside that it does from the inside.

R: A lot smaller from the outside?

P: Yeah. I didn't think it'd have this bit.

R: This is the round bit that you can see next to the front.

P: Yeah, but I didn't think this would be attached because it looks completely separate to me. I don't know if that's just me being an idiot.

05:00

This is a very, very posh children's area. This children's? Yeah.

R: You can see the tiny chairs.

P: Yeah. It's got the lights and everything. They're really gone [all] out.

R: I never had anything like this when I was little. Did you have a children's library when you were smaller?

P: I did by it was very small and didn't have very many books because people kept stealing them. Where I come from it's a very poor area, so they didn't really fund more books to come into our library, so we didn't have much to read.

R: I can't see the point of stealing books that are free to access anyway.

P: Neither can I. We did that little card for the Read Scheme thing, where if you read more books then you got a little card and we used to get vouchers. Would it be weird for me to take a photo of the lights?

R: No, you can take photos of anything you want.

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P: It's a cool idea for lights. Pretty pointless 'cause it's very, very well lit, but it's still cool.

R: [Inaudible]

P: [Inaudible] Yeah, I see school buses come down here, 'cause I used to live in the student accommodation down the road and loads of school people came here. I do like these frames [trusses]. I like the fact that they- maybe they've overdone it a little bit. They tried to keep the old little frame things. I guess that's old.

R: What do you mean, overdone it?

P: It's *really* modern. It's not like modern. It's an old modern, and then it's really modern inside. Like, they've just stripped away any element of what it used to be.

R: Okay.

P: I feel like they have. They've painted these so they blend in, so you can't really notice any of it. They haven't made it a feature that they've kept some of their old history, they've just tried to make it blend in and not [inaudible].

Wow, this is huge. Let's go upstairs. Is that something we can go in, "Read"? I don't think we can talk through that though. I assume not. Or is it just saying words? It says "Read", "Imagine", and that's reception just through there. It says "Discover".

R: I think they're pretty general. [Inaudible] but you'd assume they apply to the whole place.

P: Yeah, it is a library. They do have loads of books, which is insane. I might have to come here- Oh, no, it's a thing. It's a café store [realising that the word "Read" on the wall refers generally to the space, rather than to a room through the door underneath, which is presumably for the café staff].

R: That's a bit misleading.

P: Well, they pointed to reception and "Discover" as main elements.

R: Do you want to take a photo of that, the "Read" sign above the closed door?

P: I guess some people might find that [the sign] inspirational. I don't really feel like it is, but okay. And then it's got a coffee place. It's a great idea. When I was younger I always had the idea of moving to Canada and setting up my own coffee slash bookstore.

R: There's a lot of tradition in that, coffee houses with books attached that go back hundreds of years.

P: Well, I thought of it when I was younger and we were all like, yeah, let's do that, but I'm twenty-one now and I still need to do a degree and make my way up and all that stuff, but it's a great idea.

R: Is there anything you're looking for in particular or are you just wandering around to see what's here?

P: I'm just intrigued what's here, but I usually go for sci-fi books, but I don't know where they are.

R: You read what, sorry?

P: I usually read sci-fi or crime. I've noticed the crime, actually. Don't know where the sci-fi stuff is. The problem is it's so huge, you have loads of books on different levels.

R: How do you go about finding the books that you want?

10:00

P: I guess you'd have to walk up and down. I guess this is the whole point of it.

That's really nice [Picton]. See, this is what they should have gone with. This is gorgeous. It's absolutely gorgeous. Ah, this is beautiful. Very quiet.

Ah, they have, like… This is so cool. I guess these are really old books then.

R: I'm not sure.

P: What do they put on these shelves? Yeah, it's literature.

R: Reference only.

P: This reminds me of a movie. I don't know what movie it reminds me of but it's a really cool movie. [Talking about the movie.]

R: Does it feel quite different from the other space?

P: Yes, insanely. I feel like you should be quiet here as well. I'm sure all the intellectual people come here. So they kept, like, I don't even know if that's modern or not but it blends in very well. They've kept the features the same. How do I get down now [from the gallery]?

But even just up there is incredible.

R: The dome?

P: The dome, yeah. It sounds slightly silly but I feel like I'm in some other foreign country 'cause it's all, like… like Italy or somewhere. Are these stairs? No, these aren't stairs. I don't think we can… Is that the fire exit?

[It opens]

Okay, good. Ah, more stuff. Oh I know where we are. We're back onto ourselves. No we're not. Yup. Are we on the third floor or are we on the second floor?

R: I don't know where we are [that's a complete lie, but I wanted to let her work it out]. Second, it says.

P: Good. This is all the history stuff.

R: So we went in down there, and we came out above.

P: Yeah. "Enquire". So this is all the history stuff and the literature stuff.

R: Do you think the building is quite easy to navigate or is it confusing?

P: I don't know if it's because I have a simple mind, but I guess it's because it's so huge and there're so many things going on, and there's just things that say "Enquire", "Lifts", "Helpdesk". It doesn't really explain what each level really has. I know it shouldn't really have to because…

15:00

R: Well, shouldn't it?

P: Well, it's should because if I wanted to get to a specific book in a specific section, and just go to that one section, then I'd want to know where that section is, rather than having to through, what, how many floors is this? It must be four or five floors, just to find myself a section. And then I'd probably be lazy and get a lift up, because I'm not that great with stairs.

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R: It's quite a long way, actually.

P: Yeah, especially for any elderly people, I guess, and lazy people like me, and people with children. I know they have lifts.

R: You have to really. You certainly couldn't get a wheelchair up here without one. Shall we keep going?

P: Yeah.

R: Why did you think the circular reading room felt different? What was it about the place?

P: Because it felt like it more belonged to the building from the outside than [the bit] when I came in. When I came in it was like it was in some absolutely modern place and everything had been done up to the future, whereas it felt like they kept the browns and the- Like, bright colours like this shouldn't be in a building like this.

R: Do you mean this red colour?

P: I mean, like, they've put in yellow and they've put in pinks and lights and everything.

R: And they don't belong here?

P: I feel they don't. I feel like they should have kept at least some of it.

R: Why is that, because libraries are inherently more sombre?

P: Libraries are for those who want to learn and want to discover things, and part of our history is from what we have learnt previously. I don't think we should make it all modern and shiny because people want to see lights, I guess. I mean, what this all is is just very shiny things, but it's still a library. It still has everything in it. It doesn't need all this stuff.

R: What we're standing in now is a completely new building, from scratch.

P: Is it?

R: Yeah, two years ago.

P: Oh, okay, so what did it use to look like downstairs then?

R: I don't know because I've only been studying here for a couple of months, but basically what happened, what you've got here…

[History lesson]

R: …There's also a couple of other rooms that we haven't found yet, from the original library..

P: I'm guessing they're on that side 'cause everything they've kept is on that side [using knowledge of the history of the building, i.e. that it got blown up, to deduce a spatial hierarchy]

[More history lesson]

P: It is a beautiful standard [to which they've refurbished], it just feels a bit… I just don't like how many lights [there are]. Like, I know we've got natural light coming from the dome, and then just everything has lights around it. Everything.

R: Even if you look at the undersides of the balustrades.

P: Yeah, everything has lights around it.

R: What do you think light should be like in a library.

P: I'm not saying we don't need to read, 'cause you need to see to read, but it just seems a bit excessive, especially compared to any other library I've been to when I was growing up and, I have been to one recently but it wasn't on this scale.

R: Which one was that?

P: Um, Enfield Library. There's one in town. They made it modern, but they built theirs from the foundations up. It'll be Enfield Library. You can Google it. It's all made from glass at the front.

R: I know London has a few new libraries, or architecturally whacky libraries.

P: It's got a fountain in the front they've made, and then it's mostly made of glass, I think, but I can understand that 'cause there was nothing there, to my knowledge, while I was growing up, unless they've knocked something down that I wasn't really paying attention to.

20:00

R: Are they important to the community?

P: Last time I went down I was getting a book for my brother, 'cause he wanted to get the Lord of the Rings book – they're the only ones that seem to have it – and there were loads of children there. They seemed to enjoy the fountain bit, just sit around it and read a book there, but there was loads of children there. And then they have children on the bottom, 'cause it's only two floors, children on the bottom, with teenagers with that, and then upstairs you've got books. But never on this scale.

I know Greenwich Uni have a really nice library.

R: Do they?

P: So I've been told. One of my mates does law in Greenwich and she takes selfies in the library going, "Oh no, I've got loads of work to do!", and you can see how beautiful the library is.

R: What do you think of this floor particularly? Is it something you think you'd ever use.

P: Not really. This is family history. Unless I wanted to find my family history, but I don't really have ancestors here, so I would expect that they'd know anything about my history.

R: I tend to hear the most Liverpool accents on this floor.

P: Yeah. I don't know why they'd have lockers though, to put your stuff in.

R: Well, I'm glad they do. I've got my stuff in one of them now.

But you're doing a doctorate, so you've got to store stuff while you wait for us all to come, or be stood up.

[Talking about PhD logistics]

R: Look at that light; it is unnecessary, isn't it?

P: Yeah, I mean, I'm pretty sure you'd get lots of light coming from here. Even so, we are surrounded by windows. I'm sure – I mean, I'm not very knowledgeable about architecture – but I'm pretty sure they could have put some more glass in.

R: There glass at the front between the old façade and the new bit, but it's got blinds all the way across.

P: Yeah. I don't understand that. Ah, can you come out here [roof terrace]?

Well this is pretty damn awesome.

R: It's nice and fresh.

P: It's very nice and fresh. You can see everything from here.

R: Those are the windows I was talking about, between the 1860 façade and the new building.

P: You can tell there's a clear difference. I still think they should have- I know, I know, I understand how it got bombed and all that happened, but they could have run it through and kept some of the history I guess.

R: Do you mean some of the twentieth century stuff?

P: Yeah.

R: Apparently it was rubbish.

P: Was it rubbish?

R: Apparently, yeah. Just the worst of seventies.

P: The worst of all seventies is probably still better than our twenty-first.

R: You do wonder how this'll stand up after fifty years.

P: Yeah, I highly doubt that it'll ever be the same as what it looks like now. When was it developed like this, then?

R: It was opened in May last year.

P: Ah.

R: They started work on it probably 2011, I think. A couple of years.

P: You have to push the button.

R: You don't *have* to push the button.

P: "Meet". I guess this is where they have meetings.

R: Yes. These walls are removable.

P: That's incredible. That's pretty cool.

R: So you can take them all away and just have a completely open space.

P: That's pretty cool. Where are the two bits that we missed out? Shall we just go down?

R: Yeah, they're called the Hornby Room and the Oak Room.

P: Interesting. Oh, this is a list of everything I think.

R: You can take photos if you want.

25:00

P: I could try and help you, if I find my way around this maze.

R: Yeah, Hornby Room and Oak Room.

P: Okay. Shall we try with the second? No, didn't we realise the second was the…

R: It says here.

P: Oh, okay.

R: Hornby and Oak.

P: So it's on one.

R: Yeah.

P: Down to one.

We went to the Picton Reading Room, right?

R: Yeah, that was the circular one.

P: I can see brown stuff. This is the same. We've been to that one. I feel like we're on a mission to find this. "Business and IP Centre Liverpool": that's not it.

R: What are you looking for?

P: I'm just looking for doors and something that would have the sign for it, but that side's all toilets, so I'm guessing it must have to be down here.

"I have a dream."

I was wondering who wrote that.

R: It doesn't mention it?

P: It doesn't say. It's just quoting some random quotes [the golden wall display]. I just like the feel of old libraries. It doesn't smell that old; it's just a nicer feeling.

R: This feels…?

P: This feels like a library.

R: How?

P: Well, it feels like a museum more than a library now, 'cause there's things in glass, but it feels more like a library.

R: Do you feel you need to keep your voice down?

P: Yes; it's very echoey. But I didn't notice anyone else, so I'm just going to talk normally. But it looks like a- Is this a museum part or are they just displaying stuff?

[Discussion of the exhibition, the riddle, Birds of America – a lot of people don't realise there's any information about it until they notice the info screen later]

P: That's just weird that they have a- Is that part of the library?

R: They look like old windows to me.

P: A statue of an old guy.

R: Hornby.

P: Was he the guy that did this?

R: This is the Hornby Library and it was built at his bequest, so he gave his whole library collection, those were his books.

P: Oh! Did we just read that or did I just…?

R: No, I knew already. Well, that's what I understand anyway.

P: Must have been very intellectual, and rich [the classic association with the private library].

[More waffle about collections]

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P: Ah, this makes more sense now! [Back into the Picton.] You can't really talk in there. People are, like, really silent. Here you can get people talking and doing things [the new bit].

R: We must have been round the whole thing now.

P: We have. That was a very interesting tour.

R: There're a lot of surprises in this place.

P: Big surprises. But I guess I probably will come here at some point, probably when I'm doing my revision. It seems like a nicer library than my student library, obviously; it would be.

R: Is it?

P: Yeah. If I wanted quietness I'd go to the old rooms and if I wanted to talk to someone I'd come to the new bits, whereas there are just people screaming and playing music in my one.

R: Really?

P: Yeah, but the librarians don't care [which suggests that a great deal of the interior properties of a given library is down to the attitude of the librarians].

R: So there's no really silent study there?

P: Ask anyone from LJMU. Ask them about the library. They'll be, like, don't even bother.

35:00

R: Is that the central LJMU library or is that a department library?

P: Like, what do you mean? It's in individual library. There's two. It's the university library.
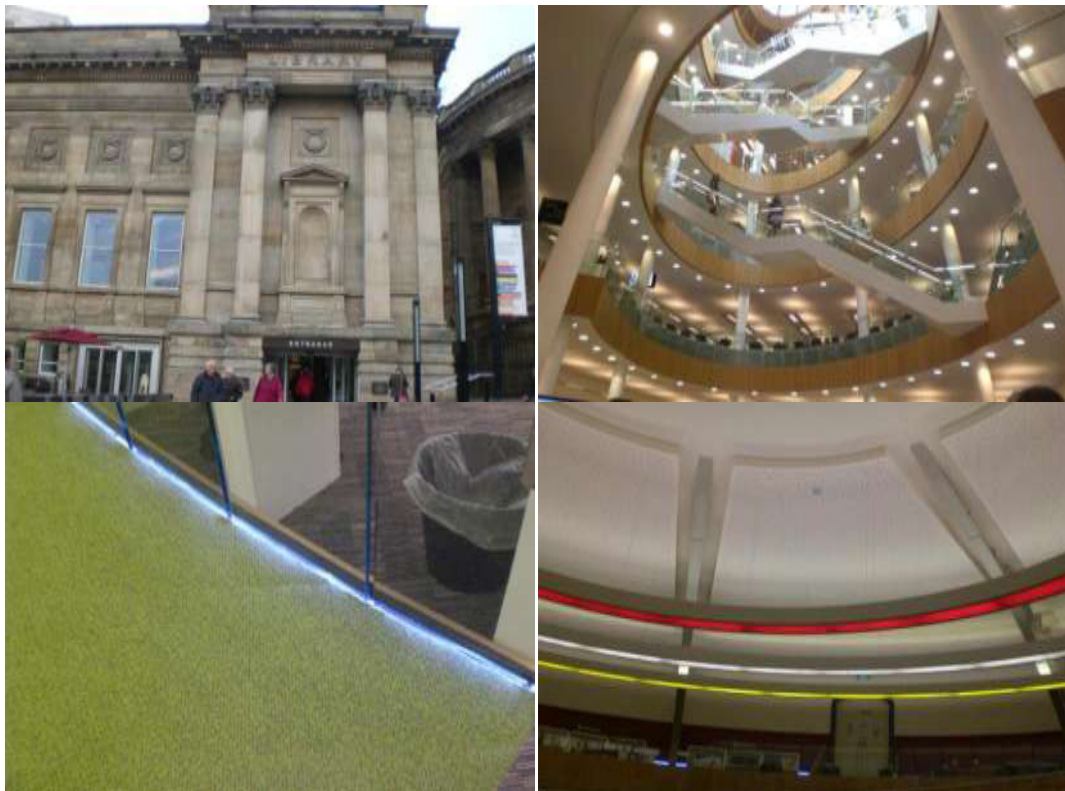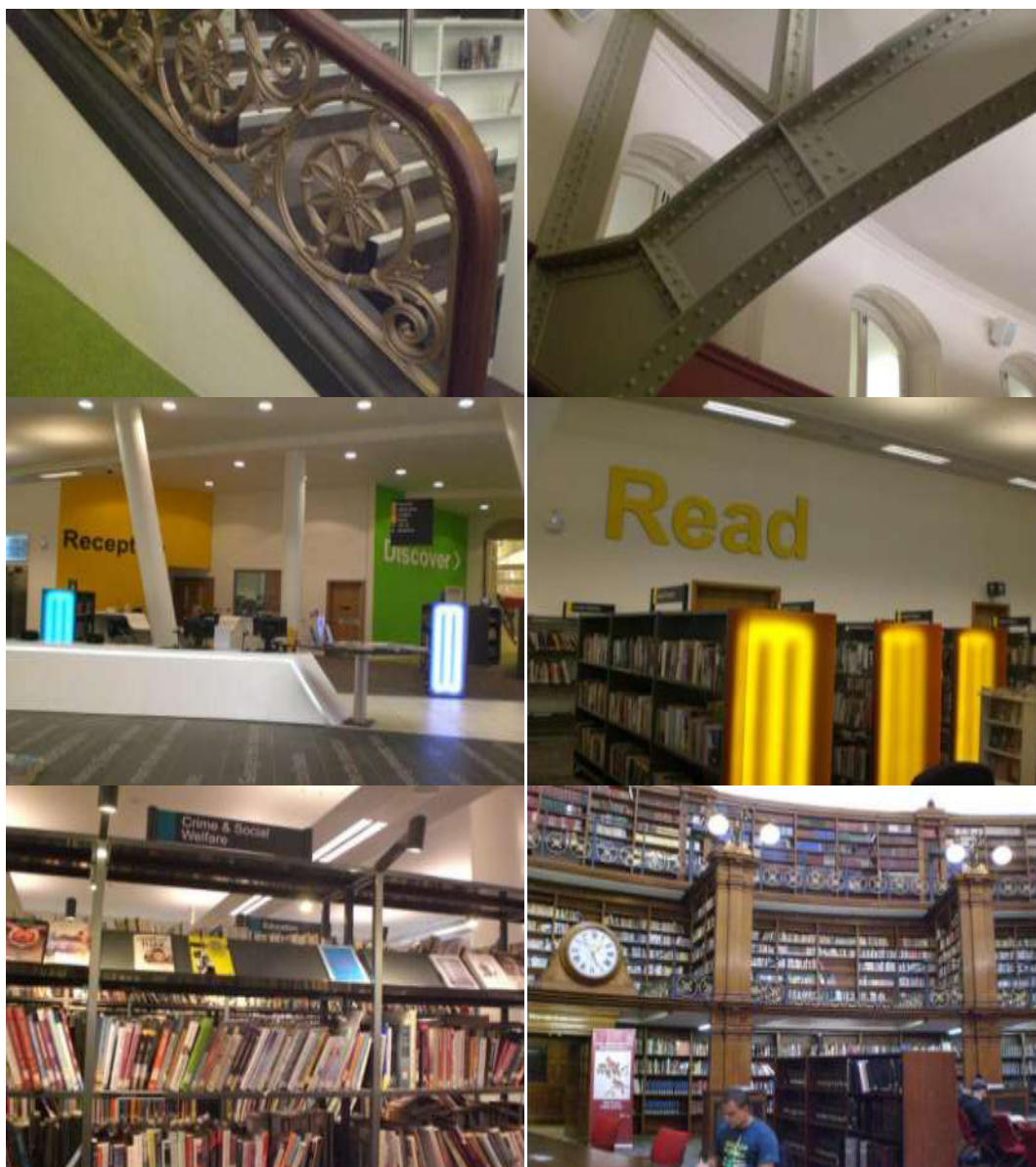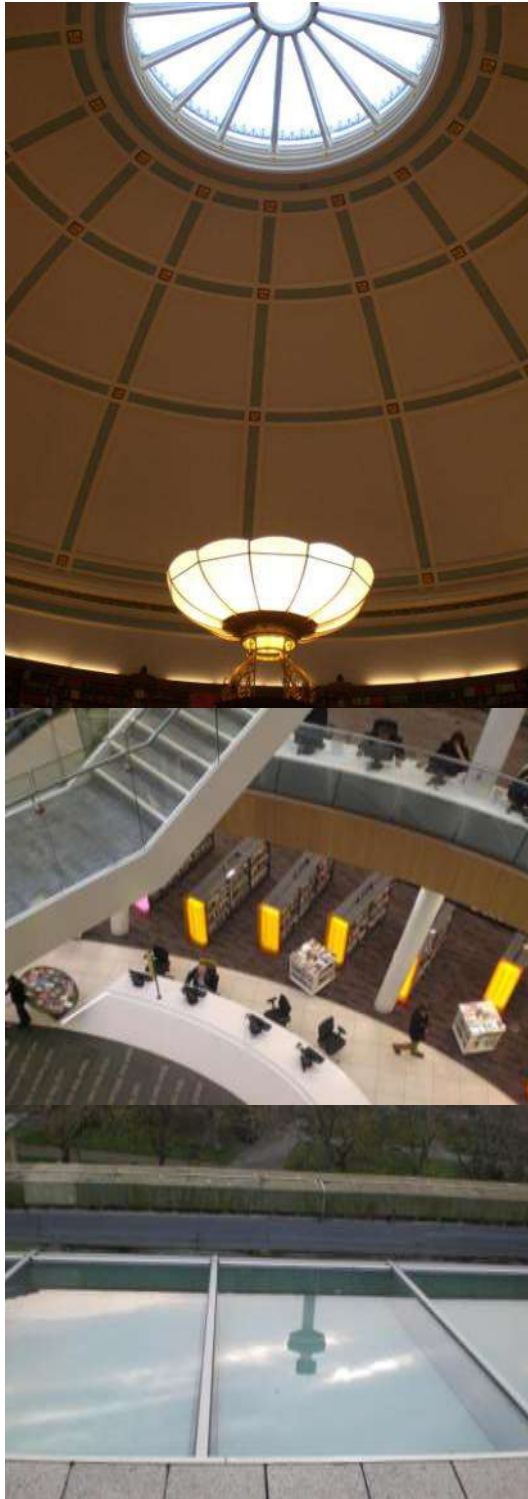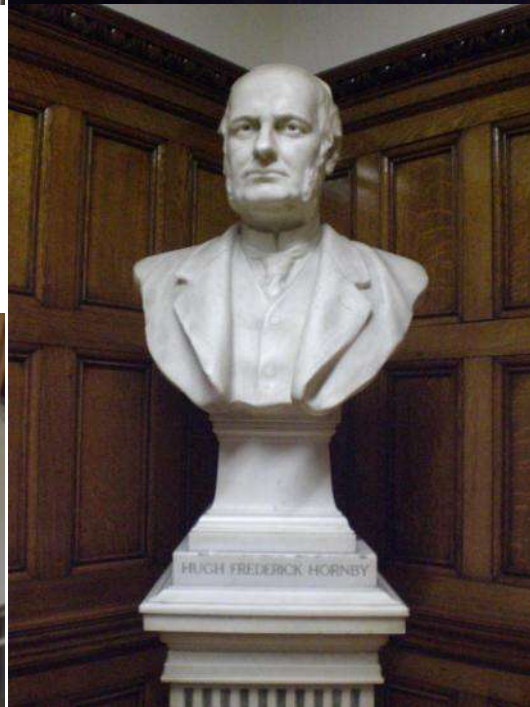
2.13 STUDENT 18, 19TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: So you say you're studying at John Moores?

Participant: Yeah

R: Have you been doing that for long?

P: This is my second year.

R: Okay, so you've known Liverpool for a year already, at least.

P: Yeah.

R: Have you lived here before?

P: No, 'cause I'm from Canada.

R: Ah, I see. I was speaking to someone from Canada yesterday, actually.

P: Yeah, she was telling me about it.

R: Oh, you know Shilpa?

P: I know of here, and I saw her and I guess she saw my name on the list, so she asked me if I'm going and I told her yeah.

R: So, is this is a building you've used much before then?

P: I did a lot. I came here a lot last year, this year not so much.

R: Why's that?

P: I don't know. I think I just never got a chance to, 'cause last year I used to just come here to get books and other things as well, but this year's just all unit stuff.

R: Was that studying or for background reading?

P: Background reading, yeah, and some studying.

R: If you were going to get books out for something you'd probably use your own library?

P: Yeah, yeah. But last year, just for general stuff, just because it was first year and I wanted to get more background knowledge on what I was doing, so then I did come here more often.

R: Does it look like a library to you? Does it stand out? Is it quite easy to find?

P: It does, yeah. Yeah, I know last year it just opened up, so we were all really excited 'cause it's a central library, a public library, so it did.

R: Okay. When you think "libraries", is this the kind of look you picture in your head? Is there a particular look you picture in your head? Like, you know what a branch of Natwest looks like.

P: I think I'm just comparing it to the ones back home, so ours don't look like this.

R: What kinds of libraries do you have?

P: Like, just the outsides are more modern. Over here I feel it's more, just the way it's built.

R: This façade in particular is from 1860. I think was one of the first public libraries in the country.

P: Ours just looks more modern, with bricks and stuff. It looks a lot different from this.

R: One of the others I'm looking at is a super modern library in Worcester, which is a really traditional town, and it's really geometric with gold mental panels all over it, and it's nothing like this at all, so I always ask people to see if what one person thinks of is the same as another.

Do you think it invites you in? Does it beckon you in, or is it a bit austere and forbidding?

P: No, I think it invites you in. Um, yeah, I think it does.

R: So you feel quite welcomed by the place, that you can use it without any sort of inhibition?

P: Yeah.

R: Shall we wonder in then and have a look? Not that we haven't already, of course.

P: Because with our libraries over there, it's usually a community centre, so we'll have either a gym or a swimming pool or other activities going on, so it's a lot bigger and it looks different.

R: A lot are though, aren't they, in this country too? The majority I'd say are community libraries, if they're branches.

P: Ah, okay.

R: There's a few central libraries. I now Birmingham has a new central library, Manchester, Sheffield, a few big cities that have all built these libraries in recent years.

So you just head anywhere you want to go.

I see you're heading for the escalators. Is that because you know there's nothing here of interest to you?

P: Yeah, I guess none of the books [interest me] and it's just the first thing, and you know when I first came in here, the first thing I did was go upstairs, just… felt like there would be general stuff in them.

R: [Inaudible] Is there a particular bit you like to head for then, or used to when you were coming here?

P: The sciences.

05:00

R: Just 'cause that's where your books are?

P: Yeah, so the sciences I used to in the beginning, and then after that just anything general, so I used to check out cookery books, anything with bakery, 'cause we used to bake a lot last year.

R: Did you? Were you in a student house where you used to have a kitchen together?

P: Yes, and I was living with randoms, so it was fun. That was how we kind of bonded together and did activities together.

R: But you haven't had so much time for cooking this year?

P: This year, not as much. Cooking-side we did, but we didn't bake or anything. So I used to come here a lot.

R: Cakes?

P: Yeah, cakes and cookies and muffins.

R: I suppose this is a bit you're familiar with.

P: Yeah.

R: Did you tend to have quite a small bit of the library that you'd frequent or did you wander throughout the whole place?

P: I think just wander, yeah, just look around getting to know it.

R: So you've seen pretty much the whole thing, have you?

P: No, not as much, but I did wander the first time just to get a feel for it, but after that, when I know the areas, I'd just go there. So it was the sciences, or if I'd need something in particular, that's it.

R: Okay. Does it invite exploration, this place, or is it quite utilitarian?

P: No, I think… Like, you kind of know where to go 'cause of all the signs and everything, but at the same time, if it's your first time, I think you'd want to explore it.

R: Do you find the signs quite handy? Is it a good system?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: So you can get around without needing to use a map?

P: Yeah, the sign's especially good 'cause the first time I came, it was school-related, so I knew exactly what I wanted to go to, but, looking at the signs, that's how I got there. And even the staff, like, I had to ask the staff sometimes, so they were helpful.

R: Right. Are they easy to find, easy to get hold of?

P: Last time they were. A couple of times I came, the desk downstairs was usually empty, like, no one was there, but the first time I came, yeah, they were helpful.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I've actually never been there.

R: You've never been through here?

P: No.

R: Any particular reason for that?

P: No.

R: Just never needed to.

P: Just never needed to.

R: I guess you've probably never used these computers round here?

P: Yeah, I haven't. And even if I do end up coming, I've always brought my laptop in, if I have to use it, so I've never really been on the computers.

This actually looks really cool. Do you want me to be taking pictures?

R: You can take pictures of anything that's interesting to you, so if you think, "Oh, that's cool" you can take a picture. We can use them in the focus groups.

P: Are we able to [take photos] in here?

R: Yeah.

P: I've never been in here. It's pretty cool.

R: I don't know what this is.

P: Some kind of key.

R: [Inaudible, looking at the posters on the Picton's walls]

P: [Inaudible] Wow, that looks a lot different than what it is now.

R: It's a completely new building. There are a few old spaces, this, the façade, the Hornby Library and the Oak Room, but everything else is essentially a new building.

10:00

P: Oh wow.

[History lesson]

P: This looks really nice [the lamp]. So that's the first light that they had?

R: I was told by one of the librarians that this was the first public space in Liverpool to have electric lighting.

R: It's always a bit of a different conversation. You can breathe again.

P: I've never been in here either [the Hornby]

[More history lesson / talking about the bindings exhibition]

R: Does it make you feel a particular way, this room?

P: Yeah, it's really old.

R: Does it make you feel different from the rest?

P: Yeah, like, this looks- it's like a museum where you're looking at things from back in the day.

[More book bindings, riddle etc.]

R: They did a competition when it opened to see if anyone could guess it and someone guessed it.

P: That's really cool. So, why are these particular books here?

R: I don't actually know.

[Birds of America]

P: How do you get out from here [Oak Room]? I don't know which way.

R: Are you confused?

P: I've never seen that part of the library. I never realised they had so much just behind this area.

R: I was exploring yesterday and I got a bit told off by one of the security guards 'cause we somehow ended up outside what turned out to be a fire door. I just didn't realise I wasn't still in the library. I did once I was outside, of course, 'cause it was dark and I was in a stairwell.

Have you been up to the top before?

P: No.

R: We should go.

P: That way, yeah.

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R: Do you think it encourages you to go upwards, this? I presume not, bearing in mind we haven't.

P: No. I know the first time I came I took the escalators and then just took the elevator up and down. I don't think I've ever walked up these stairs.

R: Really?

P: No.

R: You didn't get the stomach-turning vertigo?

P: Yeah, I'm actually scared of heights, but it's not too bad, but I don't think the stairs appeal to me.

R: Oh, really? Sorry.

P: No, that's fine.

R: You can't really see, can you?

P: Yeah.

There's music on.

R: These are these upper part of the classmarks, so this is 700 to 999, so I guess more artsy stuff.

P: Oh, that's really cool, how they have vocal sets.

R: I've never really looked at these before.

20:00

P: Do you play any instruments?

R: No. I used to play drums to about grade three when I was younger. My sister's a violinist, actually. I've lived with musicians for the last three years. Students, student musicians.

[Talk of music]

R: We've missed the stairs.

P: Yeah, they're on the other side.

R: The lifts are right here though.

P: Yeah, go all the way up.

R: Did you say you'd been up to the top before?

P: Not all the way. Mainly just the first floor.

R: So you go up the escalators and then just stay there?

P: Yeah, usually. Like, the first time I went, but I knew there wasn't much here anyway, like, not much that would interest me.

R: I guess it depends a lot on the subject.

P: Yeah, or what I'm going for.

R: Whether it's fiction or nonfiction.

[Silence]

R: We've somehow ended up on the ground floor.

P: This looks familiar.

R: That's the thing about lifts: you can never see where you're going. Unless they're glass. I think they've got those in the museum just down the road.

P: Oh right, yeah, yeah. This one, the World Museum just next door.

R: The World Museum, yeah.

[Door open]

P: Oh wow, that's really nice. Can we go outside?

R: Ah, fresh air. It gets kind of stuffy in there.

P: It's actually really nice here.

R: Do you feel outdoor space is important in a library?

P: Yeah, especially when a lot of people come there to study and just, sometimes it could get to them, and I think that's why sometimes I would come here rather than the uni library.

25:00

R: To this terrace?

P: No, I actually didn't know about the terrace, it's just over there I see so many of my classmates and people that I know, and when people are freaking out that gets you more stressed out, so coming here you know there aren't going to be many people that you know.

R: When you're getting near a deadline, maybe the Picton Reading Room is quite a tranquil place for quiet study, as long as people aren't doing interviews in there, walking around.

P: No, I think it's really important, just to get fresh air and relax a bit before getting at it again.

R: Yeah, I think actually if I had a deadline coming up, just a walk out here. It's really beautiful.

P: Yeah. Not a bad view either.

R: It's not, and it's really hazy today as well. It's a shame you can't see the cathedrals. Oh, I can just see the metropolitan one. Have you been up to the metropolitan cathedral? It's amazing inside.

P: Yeah.

R: A bit OTT, if anything. Heck of a lot of cranes up there.

P: Yeah, tons. Even, you know the docks? There's a lot.

R: I think I can see ten. When I was here a couple of weeks ago we counted fourteen.

P: Really?

R: So, not so many.

P: In a way, they're maintaining everything. There's so much construction and stuff going on nowadays.

R: Do you want to go back inside or stay up here? I could stay up here for ages, getting my wits together.

P: I've actually never been up here. It's really cool.

R: I've got to keep half an eye on the time. I've got forty-five minutes and it just doesn't quite give long enough to speak to people.

P: Oh, they have meeting rooms here.

R: They do. You can take those walls away [inaudible]. I'm not sure how you book them. Maybe just ask a librarian.

P: I thought this was really handy as well.

R: The signs [by the lifts]?

P: Yeah, so you always know where you're going. Sometimes you forget which floors it's on, so I thought it's really handy.

R: Do you think it's the sort of building that would appeal to young people in the 16 to 25 age group, not kids?

P: I just think that a lot of people, just 'cause they're uni-based, just 'cause there are so many students that are from uni, they tend to go to the other libraries more, like, the school library more, which is why even last year I didn't really know about this until I passed by it and say it was a public library.

R: And if it was people who weren't students?

P: Yeah, then for sure, 'cause even the one over there, like, back home we have the library really close. It's a five minute walk, so over there we do tend to go over, pass by during school 'cause it's a good place to study, even after if we had swimming classes, because it was a community centre, so the swimming pool was right there too, so we'd always stop by into the library.

R: Is that an important part of the appeal then of the library, combining different functions?

P: Yeah, 'cause I think you tend to stop by more afterwards.

R: Do you think a library as a place on its own, filled with books is still a worthwhile place?

P: Yeah it is 'cause you get rid of that noise, all that that happens within a community centre.

3   WALK-ALONGS – WORCESTER

3.1   STUDENT 19, 10TH NOVEMBER 2014

Participant: I come from Doncaster and our old library shut down there.

Researcher: Oh really? What type of library was it?

P: Is one of the public ones. You know when they started shutting down the library?

R: Yeah.

P: Ours went first.

R: So was that a branch library or a…?

P: It was everything. Everything went.

R: What sort of building was it?

P: There was the old college library; that went first. Then all the public ones went, around the little areas. Now I think there's only one, at college, and that's it.

R: So there's no public library at all in Doncaster?

P: Not any more.

R: Wow.

P: [Laughs] You can't imagine coming here. It's like, "Oh my god! Oh, a library!"

R: I presume it wasn't anything like this library.

P: No. Absolutely nothing like this. This is beautiful.

R: What sort of place was it like? What sort of place was it?

P: More… A little community thing. More of a community building, it is. A little tiny thing maybe.

R: So you were surprised when you saw this for the first time, were you?

P: Yeah, completely.

R: Have you been in Worcester for long?

P: Only been since the term… Well, I came over in February, then September. Yeah. But I couldn't imagine leaving.

R: Really?

P: It's just that sort of place. It's so quiet. It's nice.

R: So you feel at home here straight away?

P: Yeah. I mean I heard my first police car last week!

R: Oh?

P: I know! They have these things around here? It's really nice around here.

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R: Do you reckon this thing [The Hive] fits in with the rest of Worcester?

P: I think it does, but when I've been talking to the local residents…

R: Have you?

P: On trains. Yeah, that's what I do. I talk on trains to people. But, um, yesterday I was talking to a man called George, a man in his seventies. He's been living here for about forty-five years and he absolutely hates it [The Hive, rather than the town]. He reckons it sticks out like a sore thumb.

R: Yeah, 'cause it doesn't look like the rest of Worcester, does it? It's quite traditional, the rest of Worcester.

P: But it looks like, especially during summer. You know what I mean? The light just hits it and it looks so beautiful. I think it does anyway because it's just so different compared to the rest of it.

R: So you're not likely to mistake it for anything else?

P: No, no. Never get lost.

R: Where are we going? I'm just sort of following you.

P: I don't know where we're going.

R: I mean, we've got to end up back inside so…

P: Yeah, well there's only bits for the public round here. I mean I've seen several school trips go round here.

R: Have you?

P: Yeah, with all the little garden bits.

R: Out in this landscaping?

P: Yeah. All the little primary schools, they all come into uni. They love it.

R: Does the landscaping get used much? I don't suppose you've had a chance to see it much yet.

P: I ain't really seen much 'cause it's autumn winter, but I presume it'll be very lovely in summer.

R: If you reckon the town feels welcoming, do you reckon this building feels welcoming as well?

P: Yeah. I've come here every time. I've never had any problems, ever. No rowdy kids, no nothing like that.

R: No rowdy kids? I heard they had a problem with rowdy kids when it first opened.

P: I don't know. That were three years ago, I think. Two-thousand-and-ten, wasn't it?

R: Twenty-twelve. Summer twenty-twelve. I got shown round actually just a month after it opened. That was when I'd just started my PhD, so it's interesting to come back and see it now two years later.

P: I suppose my rowdy kids are different from your sort of rowdy kids.

R: Possibly.

P: Yeah, 'cause I've been brought up with different kids all my life. A bit of arguing ain't that rowdy to me, I suppose.

R: I'm not quite sure who decided they were rowdy kids.

P: Ah well, it's so quiet round here. I've never had any problems at all.

05:00

It was nice 'cause I've got four younger brothers and whenever they come down I can actually fetch them down, and they love some of the stuff in here. Yeah, you know, like, they have a couple of DVDs and manga, all comics and stuff. It's brilliant.

R: Where are they, down here [Floor 0]?

P: Yeah and they have all the games systems and everything. It's brilliant for kids.

R: So when you come here do you come down here [Floor 0]?

P: I'd like to take them down here. They've not come down yet, but I know it's so much cheaper, hanging round the library all day than what it would be.

R: Do you think it encourages you to wander round, this building?

P: Yeah. I never even realised what's down here. I never even knew there were comics down here.

R: [Inaudible, as Floor 0 is noticeably louder]

P: No. I've never been to a place this big before, in terms of libraries. Not public libraries anyway.

R: Right. It's quite interesting actually, isn't it, because it's not just a public library? It's a university library as well.

P: It's a lot more…

R: It's the first time it's been done in Europe.

P: It's so beautiful. And it's such a great idea. I don't see why universities actually have separate libraries.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I don't get it. Why don't they just [inaudible]. You know what I mean? Or there? It seems like an alright thing to do.

R: I think this area's for teenagers more than for people in general, isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: Is there anything that you think makes it particularly suited to them?

P: There's a lot more… Well, you've got cheap DVDs, cheap CDs. You've got… it stays up to date.

R: There's better resources available?

P: Yeah there's always… It's always updated… There's not stuff from ten, fifteen years ago.

R: Do you think if they had these racks somewhere else, say, up on the third floor just to one side, that would work so well?

P: No. I think, well, the Third Floor is a lot more quieter. It's meant to be more adult, more student stuff. It's meant to be like that. I wouldn't be able to concentrate as well if there were kids running round.

R: You think they'd be a conflict of usage?

P: Yes, that's why you've got them down here.

R: Okay. So is that why you think this is kind of separate?

P: Yup. It's a very good idea.

R: And what about this children's bit up here [climbing the stairs Level 0 and turning left into the children's library]? It's also quite separate.

P: I've not really been round this bit as much.

R: No, I haven't either. It's a good opportunity to actually, to go round and see bits of the library you don't normally go to.

P: It's very friendly. You've got a café there, so you could just leave your kids to wander round here quite easily.

R: It's quite different from downstairs, isn't it?

P: I didn't know about this bit. This is so cute.

R: It's like a little tiny classroom.

P: It's such a good idea this.

R: I can't believe I used to fit on those little chairs.

P: I never did [laughs]. My little 'uns, my little brothers would absolutely adore this.

R: Would they?

P: Yeah, they'd absolutely love to run around here all day.

R: What kind of ages are they?

P: Um, nine, seven and six. And they'd absolutely love it down here. [Inaudible]But I know they'd absolutely adore this bit, all the stuff they can do round here.

R: Do you reckon it's better for libraries to be more open or more, sort of, split up?

P: It depends on what you really want out of it, doesn't it? If you have it more split up you have more options, you can appeal to more people, whereas if you have it more open you can only go for more families, I think, you can only go for one certain group.

R: Okay.

P: If this was all open I don't students would be that happy, as happy going upstairs or anything.

R: You think it strikes a good balance between…

P: Yeah.

R: …open and closed?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you feel you can wander around the place quite freely?

P: Yeah I definitely can. I feel like I know I can.

R: Cool. What sorts of things do you use the place for, have you used it for?

P: I use it more for research on the third level.

R: So you come in here to visit the collections?

P: Yeah and I go through more that bit and silent study, and then I go for the comics. I'm not a kid, I swear, I just enjoy them. And CDs as well. It's so much easier to take a CD that it is to buy one.

R: I guess you haven't had an exam period yet?

10:00

P: Um, not till June.

R: Not till June?

P: No, I only have one. Everything else is just coursework and writing. It's not really... I'm here more often than not.

R: So I suppose you get to see all the different things that the place does.

P: Yeah.

R: It's not just about the books is it?

P: No. There's a lot more to it.

R: I've always felt that it must be incredibly hard to design a building where one building has all those different functions in it. It's not like a supermarket where everything's just essentially repetition of one thing.

P: No, but I think it works so well. It just feels so open, even though it should be closed.

R: Do you think lighting is important in a place like this?

P: Definitely. I've been, well, the more light, the more open it feels so it's more relaxing if you've got more light, especially when you've got big windows that look out onto that, outside. Just a lot more... There's no real hardback chairs, there's no straight big tables.

R: Is that a good thing?

P: Yeah, it's a lot more relaxing. You can sit down. You can actually work in piece, rather than thinking, "Oh my god, I've got exams, I've got all this pressure here!"

R: I find myself wondering a lot what's caused that change [between the structure of a Victorian library and the informality of a modern one – I had just made a point to that effect but it was too loud to hear] over a hundred years, a hundred and fifty years, from that to this type of thing.

P: I think it's just less... I think people don't see the importance of things any more. It's more, what's the point? So I think, if you sort of embrace that sort of thing, people are going to work a lot better with you. If you keep on trying to push things on people they're not going to take it.

R: You reckon? So there's a customer service element to it?

P: Yeah.

R: Okay, shall we go this way?

P: Do you want to do the other side? [For the microphone]

R: I know you couldn't really do this without walking through a library, but at the same time, I'm still quite conscious of the fact I'm talking and walking where people are trying to do quiet study.

P: No, this is the area where you can talk. You've got to be silent up the next floor.

R: The Fourth Floor?

P: Yeah. I've not actually been in there. Well, I've been in there once. I like to talk about my ideas if I'm working with someone, so this floor's more my floor.

R: What type of thing are you studying at the moment? You say history and sociology?

P: Yeah, but I'm [inaudible; at another library] doing witchcraft at the moment, so I'm down there where they've got a section on, um, I think it's power relationships and family. So I don't really stick to one section any more. I can't.

R: You get quite a lot of crossover between different things? I guess that must help when a library's easy to move through.

P: So easy. It's so easy to just walk round. You don't get lost easily. Once you know, sort of, where it all goes, where the numbers are, it's easy.

R: Yeah, yeah. Do you mean the classmarks?

P: Yeah.

Just feels a lot better with all the light. This feels a lot better.

R: Better than if it were solid [at the roof]?

P: Yeah.

R: There's almost something Scandinavian church-like about it, I think. It's the pale roof, the height of it.

P: Yeah, definitely. I know it's artificial lights, but I think with natural light it just [inaudible]. It's just a lot nicer, especially when you've been sat in a dark room for twelve hours.

R: And you can see right through, can't you? You can see all the way down to the other end. I know from the outside it looks like separate compartments, doesn't it? It's not at all, actually.

P: Very open.

15:00

P: [She sees a book on a shelf and grabs it for later, spontaneously] [Inaudible]

R: That's not something you can do with eBooks, is it?

P: No. I mean, I have to read eBooks and journals a lot, but I like actual books. I like to be able to read through them, and I think it's split between the amount of eBooks Worcester has and the amount of normal, paper books. I think it's about fifty-fifty.

R: Is it?

P: It's very well-stocked.

R: Do you think it's odd, bearing in mind how in the last twenty years digital media have increased so rapidly, that this building is so stuffed with books?

P: I think it's beautiful. I think it's great that they're holding onto the older stuff. Like, what we're seeing now is going to erase it all, all this new technology. I like the way it caters to

the people that want to hold on, who want to hold on to a book. I think that's why I chose this uni anyway to start off with, just for this library, mainly.

R: Really?

P: Yeah.

R: This was a big pull-factor for you?

P: Yeah. I mean, obviously you've got big collections like in Sheffield and stuff like that, but it just doesn't feel as open.

R: No. I don't think I've seen the university library there. I looked around Sheffield when I was doing my undergrad degree. They've got that tower there, the Arts Tower.

P: Yeah. When I was doing my A-Levels I used to go down Sheffield Uni a lot. Yeah, just because. Because it used to be a lot more stocked than Doncaster used to be.

R: I guess, judging from what you've said this [The Hive] is more a place you'd come to study than a place to hang out with friends? I'm presuming there are other places in Worcester you'd go for that.

P: Yes, definitely. Yeah, go down t'pub. Go t'pub, get a pint, talk about fascism. We're all cool like that, us lot; we're all friends. Shall we talk about fascism today, shall we talk about feminism? Oh, yeah, let's talk about first-wave feminism over a pint! Yeah, we're interesting.

R: Even a social library can't quite match that.

P: No, it's not bad at all, is it?

I think maybe there could be a few more computers.

R: You reckon? Is that ever a problem then, that they run out?

P: Sometimes I come later on, 'cause I usually have late lectures, mostly. But then, towards the end, well, about midday, everyone's on them. It's like, you want to print something out really quick on your way back.

R: I noticed that have a screen downstairs that tells you how many are free on each floor. That must be quite handy I suppose.

P: Yeah, but then when you want to be on the Third Floor with your books nearby and you want to grab some and go, it's just a bit of a…

R: A walk?

P: Not really a walk, it's just [sighs disappointedly]. "I should have brought my laptop with me, maybe." That's the only issue with the library, really. That's the only thing.

R: I was very pleased when I logged on to one over there how long it would let me use it. It said six-hundred-and-something minutes.

P: Yeah, if students don't book them then you can stay on all day.

R: I suppose that means they tend to fill up around lunch time and then stay after that.

P: Yeah and then about three o'clock when all the primary school kids get kicked out.

R: Do they come down here too?

P: Yeah. A lot of families; I've noticed that. They come down here a lot. It's nice.

R: That's something you'd never get in an actual university library, is it?

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P: No. It's nice, as I say, when you're working here and there's little kids laughing downstairs, it's just a bit of a, "Oh, that's nice! They're having fun."

R: It adds a bit of atmosphere to the place, livens it up?

P: Yeah. I mean, I like to work in quiet, but not too quiet 'cause that's just, like, it gets a bit too much, don't it?

R: Yeah.

P: It gets too quiet, and you can hear kids running round downstairs. It's not really that irritating. It's nice. I suppose it's because I've got my, I've been brought up around my family for god knows how long, so it's nice to have a few kids running round.

R: It's good to be, it's good to be. Oh, I've never been here before.

20:00

P: No, they're more short-term ones. They're, what, three days? They're not [inaudible] books. You get some books from there that you can't… They slightly older, slightly more needed.

R: Right. I've never been in this corner of the building before.

P: No? It's nice. I've heard rumours that apparently the library opens up for homeless guys at night.

R: Really?

P: Yeah, I've heard them say that, obviously it's shut to the public and the university, but I've heard rumours. But I thought that's real nice to do that.

R: You've heard that from friends?

P: In public as well. I don't know, I mean I've been round town. I don't know if I've seen dancing shadows but I was a bit drunk. I don't know, but if they do it's just real nice, if they do that. Makes it even more appealing to me.

R: Yeah, to make that work.

P: I think it's just a multi… You can use it for so many things. It's not just a pure university library. It's not just a pure public library. I like that. I like it a lot.

R: And I guess it's not something you get anywhere else.

P: No. If you're going to have a place, if you're going to have a building, you might as well use it completely. There's no point in having it open half the year and shut the rest of it.

R: No, well it seems a bit of a paradox, doesn't it, that a lot of community libraries, they reduce the opening hours, and by reducing the opening hours they reduce how much people want to use the library, so it gets used less, and then it's harder to make a case for budgeting it.

P: And then people don't come in, 'cause they can't [inaudible].

R: Exactly.

P: And then they say "Now no one's coming in, we'll close it down anyway."

R: It's like a vicious loop.

3.2   STUDENT 20, 10TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: So, you say you've been here a couple of years already, is this building something you've used the whole time you've been here?

Participant: Yes, yes it's… When I was over on the St John's campus it wasn't as easy to get to, so when it rains…

R: That's over the river isn't it?

P: Yes, over the river, down the road, past all the puddles: where it flooded a lot.

R: Okay.

P: A couple of years after that, second and third year, been living in own so it's much closer, easier to get to.

R: And how do you use the building? Is it just for reference work or does it have a social aspect as well?

P: It was social mostly first year, 'cause people knew where The Hive was in first year just arriving there.

R: Okay, so it was a landmark that enabled people to gather.

P: Yes. "Head towards The Hive and we'll go from there" sort of thing.

R: Okay, and that's good because everyone's new in the city.

P: Yes. The Hive was fairly new as well.

R: It opened a couple of years ago didn't it?

P: Yeah, just before I started.

R: Did you find Worcester a welcoming place? Is it friendly?

P: Err, as friendly as home. I live in a smaller village at home, near Stafford, and then coming here Worcester was about a similar size. I don't think I could have hacked a really big city like Birmingham, but it's close enough that you still have the shopping and stuff and transport.

R: Do you feel the building fits in with Worcester? Does it suit the place or does it stick out like a sore thumb and people can't work out why it looks like that.

P: Well, people who live in Worcester hate it. I know that much. When I first started coming here there were locals still coming round "Oh, that's looks nice" out the window, but they really didn't like the look of it. But the university's taken over Worcester really, so there's a lot of gold everywhere, there's… it's all kind of fitting in more now with the arena and other things in town.

R: So is this colour scheme elsewhere as well? Is it like a university colour scheme?

P: The university is… Yes. It's a lot of columns. It's the same sort of setup at the university as well. The different areas, trying to keep the quiet while also encouraging group work, that sort of thing.

R: I've heard that Worcester is the fastest growing university in the country at the moment.

P: Yes.

R: And you say it's taken over the city?

P: It's taken over the city when all the budget cuts and they're cutting the buses. So I think there's less buses from the university campus into town, which means more people have to walk in to use the Hive, so maybe it wasn't the best idea moving all the Hive's resources from the university campus and library to here.

R: Oh really? Has it made it more inconvenient?

P: I think it has because a couple of the girls in the year above me, they didn't have The Hive when they started, and they kept expecting "Oh, I'm on campus, I've got a three hour break, I don't want to walk into town". The library was on campus before, but since they have to walk all the way in, perhaps they won't be doing so much reading or stuff like that.

R: Someone told me that the former library is now a study centre with just computers in it.

P: Just computers.

R: What was it called, again?

P: The Pierson Building.

R: Pierson: that was it.

P: Yeah. It's definitely got the tech in there, but it's…

R: This place or the Pierson?

P: The Pierson… All the computers, group areas, quiet areas, but it's always really crowded. It's less crowded at The Hive.

05:00

R: Is it? Do you think that's because of its location or because it's got members of the public in here, or maybe a bit of both?

P: I think it's, I think Pierson is busier because it's on campus, because if people are going to be spending all day on campus, they're going to be more likely to do an extra hour on their essay sort of thing. The Hive, yes it's got the public in there, but things like Floor Zero, I don't think…

R: This one through here? [Through the windows, viewed from outside]

P: Yes, bottom floor.

R: It's their kind of youth area, isn't it?

P: Yeah, I know a couple of older people; they won't go down there. There's just nothing really of interest to them, so that's a good place for group work. It's a bit noisier.

R: Okay, so you like that space for group working because it's a bit less formal?

P: Yeah, group working, definitely. If I was going am essay on my own I wouldn't use it. Go up to level three where it's a bit quieter. Bit lighter as well, less of the artificial light.

R: Okay. Have you seen this landscaping here get used much, 'cause it's not just a building is it? When they built it they did this whole area. All this bit round here, does this get used much? Or is it just, like, background?

P: It's just background I think. I've seen kids playing on the grass down here and getting ordered off.

R: Down here?

P: Yeah, just kicking a football around, and they got ordered off, which I thought was really disappointing.

R: I mean, it's pretty here, but it's a little bit… sterile.

P: Yeah.

R: I mean it still looks brand new and it's been here for two years.

P: It's like it hasn't had time to establish itself yet.

R: Yeah. Do you want to wander back up before you freeze to death?

P: Could be worse. It hasn't started raining yet.

R: No. So you were mentioning that this gold colour appears elsewhere. Is that the reason that this is gold, do you think, or was it that this was built and then everything else…?

P: I think this came first and then things like the university area, they were re-golding it last summer. They had all the scaffolding up and they were putting a new roof on it last year, but I think the Hive was the first big one. They kept telling me in first year, "It's an architectural masterpiece! You really should just go and admire it."

R: What's the point of it looking like this?

P: Supposed to represent the beehive, the hive of activity, everyone wants to be there.

R: That's just a metaphor though, isn't it? That's not anything specific to the location or people. Maybe that's the point. Maybe it is enough to have a purely symbolic look. Is it anything like any other libraries you've ever used?

P: As I say, I come from a fairly small village, small town sort of thing. It had a library. It was very small. It was about the size, maybe, as a semi-detached house and had three computers.

R: What sort of age was it?

P: It was fairly old.

R: It wasn't Victorian was it?

P: I'm not sure. It might have been.

R: Red brick, columns, that type of thing?

P: Yeah, the lift never worked, the computers never worked. The librarian sat there reading his book and just gave you a dirty look if he thought you were going to take up his time.

R: So you didn't feel terribly welcome there?

P: No, no. Didn't use it that much. Went in there when I was waiting for mum and dad to pick me up if they were late.

R: Shall we have a wander round? I'm just going to follow you, really. Don't forget to take photos if there's anything interesting.

P: Ah, of course. I don't tend to use the children's area, but definitely downstairs.

R: This is an area you're familiar with?

P: Yeah. Group work is easier down here, I think.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, yeah. The thing about down here is, I was in second year and people said "We'll meet at the library. Oh yeah, we can do the group work on the bottom floor". "The bottom floor? That's, like, the kids' area". I didn't know this place existed.

R: Really?

P: Yeah.

R: How long had you been here?

P: Well, I was on one of the tours in my first week of uni, and they sort of showed you around everywhere, but this guy, he was in second year and he didn't know that there was a bottom floor. Admittedly in that first week when everyone was going round, they were still doing the stairs. They were redoing them. There's a lift round the corner, but it's a bit out of the way.

10:00

R: Is there anything about this place that makes it particularly suitable for young people generally?

P: Err, I think it's just more comfortable down here. Like, the… You're not going to get in too many people's way if you starting having an argument about something in one corner.

R: So you mean it's secluded?

P: Yeah, like, the public won't think there's rowdy youths are causing trouble or anything. I mean, there's a lot of space, it's nice and bright most of the time, it's out of the way. It's a nice place for group work.

R: So just having a bit of room, brightness and space?

P: Yeah, um, if I'm doing work on my own I'll…

R: That's a different matter is it?

P: Yeah, if I'm upstairs I'll be on the Third Floor, I'll be, like, computer, spread out my work on my own.

R: Why is it better up there for individual work?

P: Close to all the reference texts to be fair.

R: So it's quite a practical concern.

P: Yeah, you might have a computer and then you'll have half a desk's worth of space to spread out, find a corner where you're right next to all the books you need.

R: So in that sense the library's still very much a place for storing books and accessing books and working with books?

P: Yeah, definitely. It's always useful. I'm okay using the library, finding the areas I need. I know some people have trouble.

R: Using it as a library?

P: Yeah. But a lot of the time it's usually just finding the books, working the numbers down the aisles or anything.

R: I guess you get familiar after a while with your subject area in numbers.

P: Yeah, and then you'll have one book that's in an entirely different area and it completely throws you.

R: I have to say, I think that's pretty impressive [referring to roof]. Does it make you want to explore the place?

P: It did initially and then there were all these corners that I didn't discover until a little bit later. And one of the first times I went round that side and found the dome things [the ceiling-mounted speakers], that was quite cool.

R: I only discovered them myself about two hours ago. A previous participant showed me. They come on when you walk under them, don't they? Although that one on the end was broken.

P: Yeah, think that one's always been broken. They're really cool.

R: Do you know if they're used much?

P: When we first started – and this was a couple of years ago – they had personal stories. I don't know what they are now. Someone said they were going to do about the, obviously, remembrance, that sort of thing. They said they were going to change them every few months for variety.

R: So it's more of an exhibition space, that little flyover?

P: Yeah. If I'm just going up and down the stairs I don't tend to go round there, but if I'm waiting for someone I'll have a wander round, if they're late or something.

R: Is this a floor you use much?

P: Um, not so much. Occasionally we might have group work in one of the spare rooms, 'cause students can use them if they're empty for free, so occasionally we'll use them. And I spent a whole day doing a twenty-four hour assignment on one of the computers round the corner.

R: Wow. Shall we have a quite look, see what's on here?

P: Yeah.

R: So you have used it before.

P: Yeah, horrible twenty-four hour assignment, just camp out at The Hive all day.

R: When's it open till? It's not open all night is it?

P: No, open till ten.

R: During exam period is it open all night?

P: Not that I've heard. But yeah, we just found a spare corner and settled down for the day.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I haven't spend much time around here, as interesting as it all looks.

R: There's stuff for sale. I suddenly want a pewter magnifying glass.

15:00

P: If I'm tending to do work here I'll get here when it first opens, half eight in the morning, spend a few hours, then go for lunch, so I get a fair few hours of work done and it's usually quieter in the mornings.

R: Is that something you think a library need to provide?

P: Yeah, yeah, I'm glad it opens for longer. I'm glad it doesn't take a lunch break, 'cause I know the one at home did take a lunch break. About two hours in the middle of the day, just when you've got a free period and lunch and you can do a bit of work.

R: [Inaudible; possibly referring to the material around the atrium]

P: I know they designed this to minimise the noise, so whether it helps with that.

R: Right, to minimise the noise transfer around the whole building.

P: Yeah, 'cause they had a lot of people saying, "Well, we don't want noise up on reference floors". Have to say, my favourite place in the library is over in this corner. First thing in the morning, first computer on the end, no one sat behind you, all the windows looking out.

R: I came here a couple of weeks ago to do some work and this was first place I headed as well.

P: These are usually all my books, the social welfare books. And then right in the corner with all the windows round you. This seems like wasted space here, so I'm just really glad that when I do work here there's nothing behind me.

R: This is weird isn't it? That's not a solid wall is it? It's just been brought forward for the window seats.

P: You can see all the uni accommodation.

R: That's halls is it?

P: Yeah, there's halls there, then there's the City Campus in the old hospital building. Course, trains going past every now and again.

R: What attracted you to this place, this particular corner of the library?

P: Me and my books, out of the way, difficult for people to find me.

R: You can just get on with work, off the grid, as it were?

P: Yeah, yeah. So that's social welfare books there, sociology books down the way a bit.

R: Is it quite hard to tell where one stops and the other begins?

P: Well this section's just confusing. These are labelled.

R: I think the architecture books are right over the other side of the floor.

P: So as far from these secluded corners as possible.

R: [Inaudible]

P: But, yeah, I don't just use this area. The fiction section's my, like, release from doing essays all morning. Just pick up a book and curl up on a sofa.

R: So maybe that something that's great about having a combined university and public library, 'cause a university would never really have a fiction section, would it?

P: No, I'm glad it does, and the view from here is pretty spectacular on a good day.

R: Is it. Must be a nice place to have lunch.

P: When I first started coming here things were arranged a little differently, so the sofas were by the windows, but there's a brilliant view just across the Malvern Hills.

R: Do you think lighting is important in a place like this?

P: Yeah, you end up doing essays and stuff on the computer all day, you end up with so much artificial light that you crave going outside a little bit.

R: It is very bright in here. I guess that ceiling's quite reflective.

P: It's very cool when it's snowing out there, you're just looking up. It doesn't quite look real.

20:00

R: A bit of a Hogwarts quality about it?

P: Yeah.

R: Are the librarians approachable here? Do you ever need to speak to them?

P: Err yeah.

R: Do you know where to find them?

P: With the university, they'll give you an academic librarian, so I can email him or I can email askalibrarian if I'm literally sat at home, can't find the books I need.

R: Quick chat, is that?

P: Err no, slow email.

R: Oh really? Cardiff has this chat feature, a chat window. I thought, this'll never work, but I typed in it and literally within three seconds someone was like, "Hello, can I help you?"

P: See, I can see that would be quite valuable. They're pretty quick anyway, but your first impression is an automatic response saying, "We've received your question". Okay that's fine, that's fine, I can deal with that. I mean, they are quick. The chatroom thing might be useful. There are plent of computers round here.

R: I was asking this to someone earlier, but is there any other building that this reminds you of?

P: See, I've been to the Eden Project and it kind of feels like that.

R: Really? I do love the Eden Project. I was thinking just churches, particularly Scandinavian churches for some reason. Maybe it's the pale wood and the space, but the Eden Project, yeah, I hadn't thought of that one.

P: 'cause they don't have it glass all the way round, do they at the Eden Project? Of course you've got the great big plants, and some are covered. I haven't been there in years but as a kid I just had the memory of it.

R: It is one of the best days out.

P: I think dad got discounted tickets or something from work. He said, "We've got to go there".

R: Have you ever been there when it's pouring with rain, like, properly hammering down?

P: Yeah, we were caught under one of the tents that we had outside. There was something else going on and everyone just crowded in. They were saying, "No, no, you can't come in; you've got to have tickets!"

R: It was so loud and because it's in a quarry the whole thing basically floods.

P: No, I can imagine. It floods a fair bit in Worcester. I was told the basement here floods, flooded last year, anyway.

R: The basement? There's level underneath Zero?

P: I've been told that. It's not for public use or anything, it's for storing artefacts, things like that, or it might be the other corner of level zero or something, but I remember them saying, "Oh, it's flooded, you can't go into The Hive. The basement floor's flooded. Just let them sort it out." And there was a bit of a running joke.

R: I know there's a pipe that connects it to the river, but I think that's an air pipe. You see this thing underneath the stairs, next to the Roman ruins? It's a vent in the floor that provides supposedly cool air from the river. It's cooled by the river, sort of passively.

P: Passive aggression from the river over there.

R: Yeah. Have you used the café much?

P: Um, I do now and again when I'm running low on a bottle of water or something, but it tends to be a fair bit expensive for me. Student budgets don't really stretch to this sort of thing. But it's a nice place for meeting people, again, if you say, "Oh, meet me at The Hive." Good place to people watch.

R: Yeah. I was here for lunch the other week, sitting there at the window. Is that everything you wanted to see? I know I've guided us back here but there's no reason why we have to stop.

P: I haven't had to use The Hive for much more than uni work. There were one or two things last year where I had to use the council services, but I went up to a librarian and said, "There's no one there" and they were just, like, "Oh, I'll take down your and sort something out for you". Always been helpful and everything.

3.3   STUDENT 21, 10TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: Is this a building you use much? Is it an area of town you come to much?

Participant: Well, I do come here a lot 'cause it's a place for resources, in terms of studying, any referencing. For our course you have to do referencing each week, so, like, one of modules is a history kid of module, so we do history of illustration. So, basically, each week we have to find a different reference for a specific thing they give us. They give us questions, so one I had before was "How did cave art influence twenty-first century illustration?" and then we have to find different references. So we can come and find books that have illustrations.

R: So you are using it as a library, more than just a hangout space, or whatever?

P: Yeah. Yes, basically.

R: Shall we walk around it a bit, have a look at it?

P: Okay.

R: I'm just quite keen to start from the outside because it's such a weird looking thing, isn't it?

P: It's a weird looking building but it's kind of interesting.

R: Does it look like other libraries you've known?

P: No, not that I know. I'm from a small town, so it's a small library inside a shopping centre. So it's like, this is different. There's a lot more books, so it's good for resources.

R: I guess you must have some sort of idea in your head of what a library looks like. Is there such a thing as a stereotypical library?

P: I actually don't know. I've never really thought about it. I've never really thought of that question before.

R: How can you tell a library? Can you? Is it even possible?

P: I actually don't know. I actually don't know that question. I could be many things. It depends on the individual and what they interpret.

R: There aren't any preconceptions that you'd associate?

P: I don't know. I'd probably say books really.

R: I suppose that's the kind of key thing really.

P: I'd probably say books.

R: Is there another way in on this side? There isn't, is there?

P: I don't think so. You can go down the stairs. Like, there's a study area down there. That's more children's books, but you need to go inside to go downstairs.

R: Can we go in that way?

P: I don't know.

R: Never mind. We can go round again, go back.

P: There's some stairs somewhere behind one of the counters.

R: Can you see this building from a long way away across Worcester?

P: You can. You can see it from the other side of that bridge, and down there. You can see it from all the way down there.

R: From the other end of the rail bridge?

P: Yeah, and if you're on the other side of the river you can probably see it if you're standing over there. I'm not actually from Worcester so I've only been here since the start of the university this year, so I'm still learning my stuff.

R: I don't know if this is a particularly useful question, but is add to Worcester, do you think, I mean as a piece of the skyline?

P: I think it kind of does. Worcester does have a lot of old buildings with interesting characteristics, but then it also has a load of modern kind of features as well.

R: Do you think it feels quite welcoming?

P: It does feel quite welcoming. It's very big and open as well.

R: Does that help?

P: I think it probably does 'cause it's noticeable. If it's small, not many people'll notice. 'cause it's big and open like this you get a lot of people looking. There are some stairs down there, that'll take you downstairs.

R: I'm just following you now.

P: That's, like, more of a study area.

05:00

R: Down here?

P: Yeah, and it's got stuff like DVDs, CDs, games.

R: How did you find out what this area was?

P: I was shown it.

R: You were given a tour, were you?

P: One of the librarians gave me a tour and some of the others a tour, basically. They do have some books of fiction for teenagers down here, and there's lots of, like, computers down there.

R: So this bit is particularly for young people?

P: Yeah, for teenagers and probably younger.

R: Do you think it's suitable?

P: I think it is suitable for, like, a study area for group projects…

Staff member: Can I help you?

R: Hello. We're just doing some interviews about the library for a PhD thesis.

P: So this is a good area for group study as well, so they have all these circular tables so people in groups can sit down and discuss things.

R: That makes it suitable, does it, the tables particularly?

P: Well, yeah, because, like, anywhere you sit, there's not going to be space to put information down of sit around and talk.

R: Do they not have tables upstairs?

P: I think most of them down here. And they've got a load of computers on this floor. But down the side there they've got DVDs, CDs.

R: Do you ever use those?

P: I haven't used them, no, but other people use them. But, like, down the end those TVs are PlayStation games that people are playing on. You can hire the CDs and DVDs out, but I think you have to pay a small charge.

R: Do you use the library socially?

P: No, I more use it for work.

R: I guess it's only been a couple of months.

P: Yeah, and I'm on campus.

R: Yeah, have you got other places on campus to hang out then?

P: Yeah.

R: Are you in halls?

P: Yeah, I'm in halls.

R: Ah, that takes me back.

P: Quite a while?

R: Yes, 2008.

P: There are children's books there.

R: Okay.

P: So that's interesting for my course because I'm doing illustration, so I could choose to illustrate children's books. So I can do a lot of research as well. I could research different types of books. I haven't done that yet, but when it comes to it I can look through.

R: It's interesting that the area for young people and the area for children are on separate floors.

P: Yeah. These are more for really little kids, but the floor below is probably more for teenagers, and down there it's for teaching.

R: Teaching? Shall we go down here?

P: Okay. This is an area for little children, like, little toddlers.

R: It's very colourful isn't it?

P: It is. They have a lot of toddlers round here.

R: Do you think there's anything round here that makes it suitable for toddlers?

P: There's a room in there and they do sessions in there like breastfeeding and other stuff I've seen. It's like a room. You get primary school kids in there as well. Like a little room for the children. And they do different things in there with the children, or sometimes they have sessions where if the parents are studying at uni their children can come here.

R: Is that a function you'd normally associate with a library?

P: Not any other library, but with this one.

R: This one's unique in that sense?

P: Yeah. It's got a lot more in it that you do with other libraries, but these are, like, books to do with teaching. They showed us this 'cause this could be for my course, depending on what I'm looking at, well, associating with children, if I'm doing children's books. You have to do a lot of in-depth research, so this is a good place if you need ideas or where to start. But I'm not sure about that room up there 'cause I haven't been in that one.

R: On the top floor [i.e. referring to the meeting room on the top of the two floor free standing tower whose lower floor is The Oasis room for toddlers and babies]?

P: Yeah, that one there. I haven't been in there.

R: We could go and have a look.

P: If you want.

R: Work out what it is.

P: There's also a studio there. They do different things.

R: What type of studio?

P: We have art history in there sometimes. We just come in and sit and talk.

R: You do classes and things?

P: Sometimes, not often.

R: Looks kind of like a lecture hall or something.

P: These illustrations [on exhibition in the atrium], that's from a competition they were doing with our department.

R: This is student art then?

P: Um, one of them's from this uni. Can't remember which one now. This one. She's from our uni, this student. It's the lemniscate competition; these boards over here tell you about it. And these books were donated by the author.

10:00

R: Do you like this table?

P: It's interesting [No.].

R: Looks like it's fixed in place.

P: But this is something our course h started up. The International Lemniscate illustration competition and basically one of the authors that helped with this has donated a load of books and these are some of the books that have been donated. But this is a new competition that's started up for internationals and it goes on a tour, like, here. It also goes to Shanghai and other places so it kind of travels around. But they've created a research collection for picture books.

R: Really, as a resource?

P: Yeah. On the other side there it's got information about it. It kind of tells you more about what they do on these here. It's hard to read them here. But it's something they've started to help blind kids to read by touch and feel so they've not disadvantaged by the fact they've got no sight and there's, like, other things they're doing as well.

R: I guess that's an interesting part of the library's function. It's providing books but in a totally different way.

P: There are a few books around, I think, that have feel and touch on them, which is interesting.

R: Do you know what this is? What's going on here? [Referring to the air vent under the stairs]

P: This was being built when I came last year. I think it's like a seat; you can sit on the wood. I think it's kind of for show as well, but I'm not really sure 'cause that was already, well, there. It was in progress when I came for my interview last year. This was already built but not that in the middle there.

R: Oh really?

P: It's kind of interesting though.

R: Looks like ruins or something. Do you think this building encourages you to explore?

P: It does but it's so huge. There's so many stairs as well, all the way up there.

R: Do you want to go up?

P: Okay.

R: Just a suggestion.

P: That's fine.

R: [Inaudible]

P: No each floor does different things, like those machines there, that's where you return your books.

R: That's quite handy.

P: You just put your book under and it automatically scans it and it just goes straight through, so you don't even have to hand it in. It's like at my college, we hand the books in. You actually have to hand them in at the desk to return them at college. And you've got the archives. [Referring to the Floor 2 turnoff on the stairs]

R: There are a lot of different functions combined in this building.

P: There is. Most of the other books are on the third floor. So here you've got different archive stuff, history, there's meeting rooms.

R: When you come in here is there a particular area you head for?

P: Upstairs on the third floor.

R: Upstairs? Why do you like it up there?

P: It's got a lot of the stuff I need, my resources.

R: Okay. So you're near to the books you're after.

P: Yeah, and it's also got that bit of interesting architecture [the participant is referring to a suspended art installation above the main doors] in the main reception there. That's above the glass door when you walk in [There is a view of the piece from the second floor due to the cuts through the building].

R: What does it mean? [Said jokingly]

P: I don't know. This was built when I came in last year.

R: It's quite a new building I think.

P: It is. It's a couple of years old now.

R: Yeah, I think it opened about September 2012.

P: I think it was, yeah. I was still in college then, so. But all the way round this floor it's got, like, research.

R: Are you a fan of pale wood?

P: I don't know.

R: You kind of have to be really, don't you?

P: I like buildings with old characteristics 'cause I find them interesting.

R: Old characteristics?

P: Yeah, in buildings, like the older building.

R: Do you think one has any old characteristics?

P: Not really. I think it's completely modern.

R: What makes old characteristics?

P: The features of the building, like, in my house, for example, we've got, like, a curved wall. Instead of corners it's literally curved round. We've got arches.

R: Yeah, we've got a slightly curved wall in our house too.

P: And we've got arches too.

R: Oh, we haven't got any arches.

P: And it's, like, from when it was built.

R: Love an arch. Haven't got an arch.

15:00

P: There are books all the way round here, and they carry on further back. Some are short loan. And the ones with blue stickers are over there. You can borrow them for two weeks, for students, 'cause they're high in demand. And the short loan have orange stickers on and you can't borrow them, well, for more than two days, so it's like you have to come in here and do all your studying. And over there you've got Ask a Librarian, so if you've got any questions people can always come here.

R: So you can see the librarians. Does that make it feel more comfortable?

P: It depends what you're looking for. If you don't know what you're looking for or where it is, you can talk to them. But they've got books here for literally everything, from architecture, they have languages, history, literature behind us.

R: I suppose, being an art student, lighting is quite important for you; you must think about light.

P: Yeah, for drawing I do.

R: Do you think this has good light, this building?

P: I think it does have some good light, but then sometimes it's not too bright, so it's kind of interesting, the way the ceiling is up there. Where you've got some light coming down, you've kind of got a pattern. Or you have some light coming from the windows 'cause they're quite large as well. But it's nice quite spacious.

R: Is it brighter than a lot of the libraries you've been in?

P: It is compared to the one at home that I've been in.

R: What's that one like?

P: It's very small and it's one level, but there's not that many books in there 'cause it's only like a little town kind of library.

R: Yeah.

P: It's not like a big one like Birmingham or here.

R: Have you been to the Birmingham one?

P: No. I live by there but I've never been to the library. Never been to that one 'cause I live just outside of Birmingham.

R: Do you want to keep exploring?

P: There is another floor somewhere, but I can't remember how to get to it now. But it's got, like, it's got journals and stuff that people can use for referencing and your dissertation. It's a very small floor, so you can't really get many up there.

R: No, so I guess it's got a different purpose from the rest.

P: Yeah, but you can't get the lift to it. There's some stairs to it. But, like, the library's just so huge you do get lost in here easy. Especially when looking for books.

R: You think it's easy to get lost in here?

P: I do. Especially when you're looking for special journals but you can't take the fourth floor in the lift.

R: How do you think it could be easier to navigate? Is it a signage problem?

P: [Inaudible]

R: So it's basically a study room?

P: Yeah, but it's for journals if you need them for your work, 'cause, you know, sometimes your dissertation.

R: Reference work?

P: Yeah. They have loads of journals upstairs, but there's so many different books for different areas that it depends on what you're looking for and what kind of course you're studying.

R: Is it a bit bewildering?

P: Yeah, I've never seen so many books in one place. They've got books here in other languages too. For people that aren't from here but study here, they can probably still read stuff.

R: I guess that's an important part of it, if the library's to be for everyone.

P: Yeah.

R: Must be very hard to make it for everyone, especially when it's combined with a university library and a public library, council hub and a history.

P: A bit of everything, literally a bit of everything.

R: Is it ever too much? And a café too.

P: I don't think it's a bit too much, 'cause it's not like it's all crammed together. It's all spread out.

R: I guess it's a new build they knew exactly what they had to do.

P: In the old buildings you're more limited in what you can do and where you go.

R: Shall we go back round again?

P: Yup. The fourth floor is a quiet area. When you go up there you can't really talk.

3.3 Student 21, 10th November 2014

3.3 Student 21, 10th November 2014
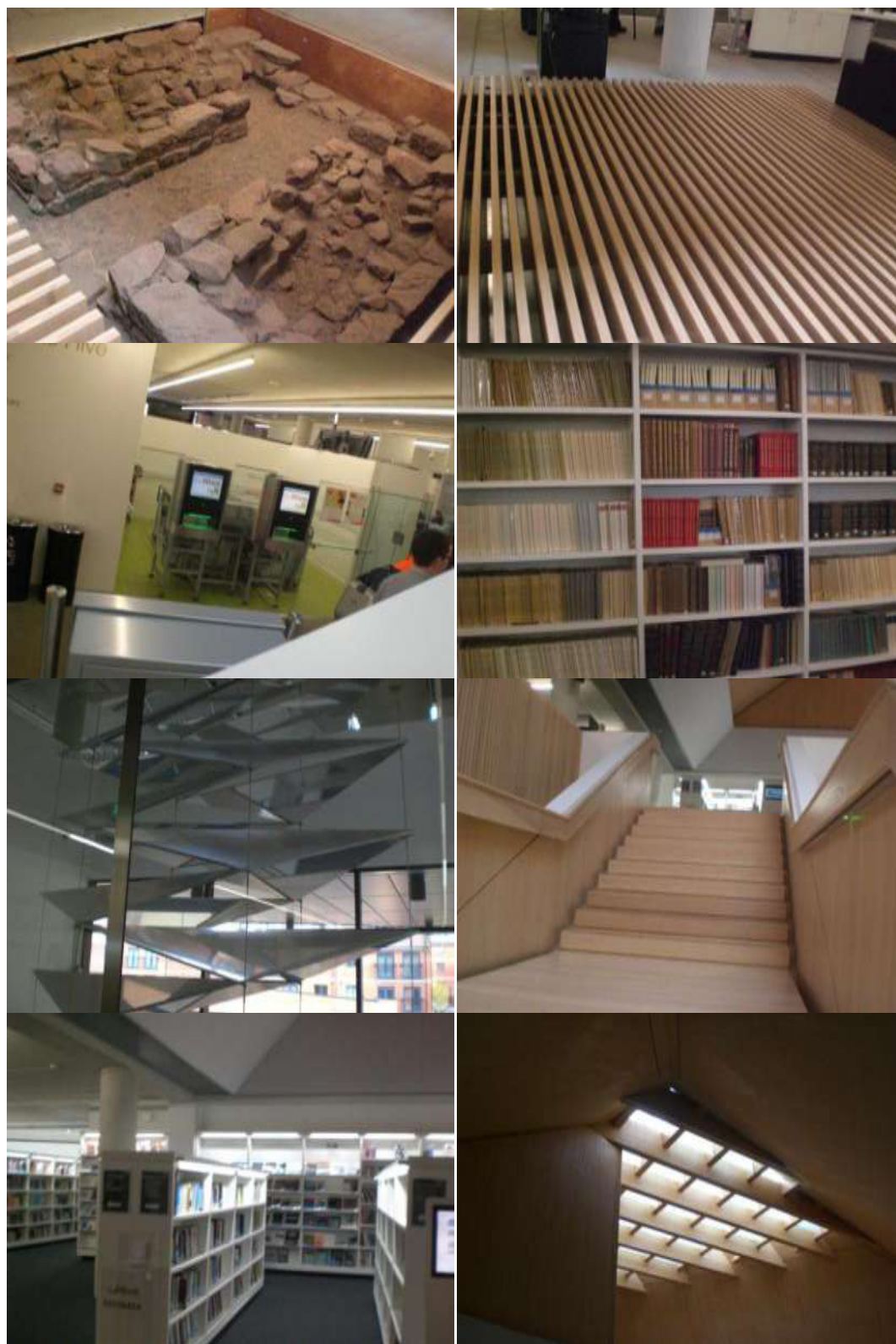
3.4 STUDENT 22, 10TH, NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: I guess, being a third year, you must have had some experience of this place over the last couple of years.

Participant: Definitely.

R: 'cause I've spoken to two first year undergrads this morning and they've only been here for a month and a half so, were you here before it was opened?

P: No, I was the first year that it had opened. I think it had opened the summer before I came.

R: Yeah, summer 2012 it opened. Has it been a big part of your studying here?

P: Overall, yeah, because obviously it's got all the university books. I don't use it as much as I used to, but I think that's just because in my first year I was located on this side of the river. Now I live on the other side.

R: So it's just too far to go conveniently?

P: Yeah.

R: Was it ever a place you used for socialising or was it always a work place?

P: I used it a bit. Like, I'd meet up with friends 'cause it's an obvious big place and it's free.

R: It's a landmark in the city?

P: Yeah.

R: You can see it from quite a long way round, can't you? Do you think it adds anything to Worcester's skyline?

P: Um…

R: I think it could be quite contentions potentially.

P: I don't dislike it. Lots of people object to the shape of it, the design, but I'm like, that's kind of cool. It's like a beehive; I can dig that.

R: I think they were going for something that you couldn't forget easily.

P: Yeah.

R: I don't know how far along here you want to go. We need to get back eventually.

P: It's your call.

R: No, no, it's your call, my friend.

P: Really?

R: Alright, let's go back this way. Is it like any other library you've ever used before? Do you have a home library you've used much?

P: I used to use one at home all the time.

R: Whereabouts was that?

P: Merseyside.

R: Near Liverpool.

P: Yeah, sort of. It's not, like, Liverpool, but Liverpool way.

R: I'm studying Liverpool Central for one of my other case studies, the one that's just been refurbished. It's an amazing mix of Victorian and brand spanking new, so it's quite interesting. This one, obviously, 'cause it's the first joint university and public library in Europe. And then Cardiff, which is where I'm from. Well, where I'm studying.

P: Oh really?

R: I'm not Welsh. You can probably tell.

P: Yeah.

R: So, do you think this is a welcoming kind of place? Did you find it inviting when you first came?

P: Well I was interesting. It was like, ooh, what is that? And obviously I've always liked libraries, like, I've always used them, which is different to a lot of other people, I think, of my age group. I don't think many people would use them. But I was always like, oh man, gotta check out the library!

R: So, you folks, did they bring you up always going to the library?

P: Um, I think through school. Um, 'cause in school, in my first year I was always reading. I always read a lot, so I read books. In my school there was a reading club thing, and our local library got refurbished in my first year and we got involved with the refurbishment and we got to pick books for the library, and we got to see it redone, and I started to use the library from then on.

R: So that really invested you in the whole thing, having that renovation process and getting involved with it? And you were involved in choosing books?

05:00

P: They gave us a budget and we went on a trip and we all got to pick books and they were supposed to have a slip on them saying "Chosen by students" sort of thing.

R: Like and hand built engine cover plaque?

P: Yeah. It was like, look, the kids are picking the kids books! And it was kind of a cool thing.

R: I wonder if that's been picked up anywhere else. Shall we go for a wander round?

P: Okay, well, where you want to go?

R: I want to go wherever you want to go.

P: Um, okay.

R: You're essentially showing me round. Pretend I've never been in here before.

P: Right. And do I take pictures whenever I want to take pictures?

R: Yeah, yeah. If you think, ooh, I want to make a point about that, take a picture of it.

P: Well, this is probably the place I come the least, so I'm just trying to remember what it looked like.

R: Why have you come in here?

P: Um. I don't really know.

R: When you come into the library, what guides you around the place?

P: Um. When do I come in? I've never seen this [Children's area]. Wow.

R: As far as I'm aware, this is for preschool kids and their parents.

P: I'll take a picture of this. Because they've got the study booths and I've never been in those either.

R: Do you mean the ones upstairs?

P: Yeah.

R: I think this is quite cool. Essentially it's a like a two-story tower.

P: Right, so it has different levels?

R: Yeah.

P: That's the thing I find with this place is even though I know it, and I've been in here for two, three years, I've still not been in the little corners, the little nooks and crannies.

R: Why do you think that is?

P: Um, I don't know if they're advertised well enough. I'm not really sure. Like, they say the university books out all the of the meeting rooms when it comes to exam periods so you can study properly, so that you can just go in one of them, but I don't really know where they are or what the terms are. I guess they say you're supposed to walk in, 'cause it is a university library.

This is probably the floor that breaks the whole thing for me, 'cause I like it but it's also supposed to be the social learning space, or the more social space.

R: Is that what they call it?

P: Um, I can't remember the actual brand name, but it's the loudest bit.

R: And this for you doesn't work so much.

P: No, because you have… Say I have group work, so we come down and we go on some computers, or whatever and we do work, but then you've got *that* going on. People being loud around, and it just never quite fits.

R: With the rest of the library, the whole ethos of the place?

P: Yeah. There should be a social learning bit, and then a more social social bit, rather than putting them on the same level.

R: Is that why you think it's separated from the rest, sort of cut down like this?

P: Um, I feel that they've got, "Oh look, adolescents get their own space", but at the same point it's like, "Oh no, not those adolescents! Put them away!" So they're sort of ashamed of it.

R: Do you think that's more the benefit of the adolescents or the librarians and other staff?

P: Probably everyone else. I think it's to just "ghettoise" them. I don't know.

R: Okay, so do you mean it's identifying those people as a problem, sticking them in a particular place because they're never going to conform to a certain silence code?

10:00

P: Yeah, basically. It's like everyone knows how to behave in a library, sort of, traditionally, and these people will not do that so they' have their own bit. This is the bit where you can talk because you know you won't stop them talking.

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R: What kind of stereotypical library is that? There is some sort of thing that's identifiable as a library, isn't there?

P: Yeah.

R: What is that, that stereotypical hypothetical library?

P: I think it's a place where there are more books and computers and, you know, you've got that old woman librarian who's like, "Shhhh", and everyone's being quiet.

R: What type of building is that? Does it matter?

P: Probably not. I'd imagine old. I don't really know.

R: Could it be this building, do you think? Could this building function that way?

P: Um, maybe. Especially if you look at the, sort of, Level Two. I have a feeling that Level Two is a bit like that, which is why I never go on Level Two. Probably the place I'm least familiar with, just because there's nothing that really…

R: What even is on Level Two?

P: It's the Local History, which I don't… I've never been interested in local history.

R: So I suppose it's more a dedicated research destination.

P: And they have artefacts that you can… They have records, right, and you can go into a place a hand in your badge. You're not allowed to take anything in with you, and you can handle the old records and look at… I don't really know.

R: Right, I've got you. So it's definitely not a place for certain people?

P: No. I'd say it's the least populated, but I don't know 'cause I've never gone there. Shall we go up?

R: Yeah sure. Is it the type of building that inclines you to wander about, do you think?

P: Err, I think it does at first, because you have the central… *this.*

R: This atrium?

P: Yeah, and it's like, "Oh, I can stop here", and, "What's on here", and you go around and then you realise that it's not really for you or you find out whether it is or not. Like, it's got those sound dome things. Have you dealt with those?

R: No, what are they?

P: Let's go.

R: I've never been there before.

P: In this aspect, it has a lot of things I've never seen in other libraries.

R: Here?

P: Yeah. And the big touch screen thing. I'm not really sure what the… who that appeals to. If you walk under… Oh, is it not on? [Referring to the sound domes] I'm not sure. It's supposed to be that when you walk under them it'll play a sound recording, and they can change what the recording is, and they used to be about accounts from the war. It's all local history, and they have accounts from members of the public.

R: So is that designed so that you can't hear it if you're standing outside?

P: I think so. I think it's to focus the sound.

R: It's certainly quieter here. It's impressive.

P: The first one I ever stumbled under began with an opened, sort of, air raid siren. I was like, "Whoa, duck!" So they seem like a novelty more than anything else. I'm not really sure.

R: I can't say I've ever noticed anyone using them. Have you noticed anyone using them?

P: No, but again, I don't work on this floor. But then I suppose the design that left this little corridor thing – what can you fill it with?

15:00

R: Yes, I suppose it's sort of exhibition space really, isn't it? You can hear it quite clearly from here, can't you?

P: Definitely. Should we go to Level Three?

R: Why not?

P: Can we go in here, into one of these little…?

R: Meeting rooms. Presumably they don't have to be booked.

P: [Reading] "This room is vacant and may be used by students or for study purposes only". I'm a student. Wow. Wow. This is cool.

R: The lights aren't coming on.

P: No.

R: I guess these are bookable.

P: I suppose. I'm not sure how. I've never been told how to book them.

R: That must be directly over that thing we peered into downstairs [The Oasis].

P: Ah. I've known people who've used these sorts of rooms to study in before but I've never done it myself.

R: Like a sort of penthouse, isn't it?

P: Yeah. You can all sit together and do group work because Level Zero isn't so suitable because everyone's making noise.

R: I imagine that these must be the places that are booked out during exams that you were mentioning.

P: Yeah.

R: That one as well.

P: If I remember right, Level Two has this weird little room where they play the news.

R: "Business Centre", it says.

P: They used to play the news on the TV. I'm not really sure what this is. I'm not really sure what the purpose is or why it's here.

R: It must depend who uses it.

P: Definitely. Like, I can't criticise the place for being diverse, but overly diverse, maybe.

R: Do you think it is overly diverse? Because, what have we got in here? It's a public library, a student library, a history centre, a records office, a council hub, an exhibition centre, business support. There're a heck of a lot of things.

P: Yeah, um, I'm not really sure how I feel about it in that respect.

R: Is that something that you think is a departure from the stereotypical library that we were mentioning just a few minutes ago?

P: Yeah. It's different in that respect, but I don't know how effective that is. Um, this is obviously where I guess most people spend their time.

R: Are there enough computers in here?

P: Just about. If you come by yourself you can always find one, but if you come together, to find two next to each other, that's not likely.

R: Not after eleven a.m. anyway.

P: No, definitely not. Um, I don't know if it's more a criticism of the library or the adolescents that when they finish school they come here. They seem to just use it as a social space, which can then interrupt the learning, especially on this floor, where you can see there are a lot of members of the public, 'cause obviously this is the main library floor with all the books and, um, it says you need to be quiet but not silent, and sometimes people don't follow that and I don't think there's enough action by the staff.

R: Okay. You think it should be quieter than it is?

P: To manage it. I think they should manage it better.

R: So, I suppose that arises from the combination of public and university library. There isn't really another big library at Worcester University, is there?

P: No. They have…

R: What was used before this was built? Do you happen to know?

20:00

P: It was the Pierson Building, which is on the campus, and now it's been refurbished and it's just computers, so I guess they moved all the library stock to here, but it's not a twenty-four hour study space and it's got computers.

R: Has that been an overall improvement in facility, would you say?

P: Um, I don't know what it was like before, so I can't really say. But Pierson is where I do most of my work now because it's easier, it's closer, because it'll never shut…

R: What time does this place usually shut; eight is it?

P: Ten p.m.

R: Oh, ten? That's not too bad.

P: But, it's like you have to leave at ten-to-ten, sort of thing.

R: Do you think the building has been working well so far?

P: What do you mean?

R: Just ignoring the service provision, as it were, do you think the building does the job it need to, for supporting all this stuff, light and space and how it feels, how people move through it.

P: Um, I think that temperature is a bit of an issue.

R: Is it?

316

P: Temperature control, 'cause I don't know about you but I find it overly hot right now.

R: Is that true all the way through?

P: It's sort of overly hot, but then if the window's open it becomes overly cold.

R: I was sitting actually doing some work a couple of weeks ago and the windows just opened and it was freezing. I don't if they're trying to cross ventilate or something.

P: I'm not sure how it works.

R: I'm sure the air would be mixed by the time you got out to this atrium where there's nobody working, but everyone's right by the windows. It made a hell of a noise when they opened as well.

P: If they catch you off guard, well.

R: It's got a café though, hasn't it? Is that important?

P: I've used it once.

R: Have you?

P: Yeah. It's too expensive for students because they need money so it's a bit, I'd say, overpriced.

R: It's like the one in Liverpool. You can go and get a meal deal for three quid with a sandwich pack, drink and a packet of crisps. The other day when I was in the library I bought just a sandwich and a drink and it was, like, five pounds.

P: You're like, "Never again".

R: It stopped me feeling guilty, actually, about not spending all my money in there. I feel on the one hand that maybe I should be supporting the place as it's free to use, but that's a bit much.

P: Like, provide equal for what it's worth.

R: Okay, is there anything else you can show me or you want to talk about?

P: Well, um, I'm not really sure about the council bit, this Worcestershire Hub thing.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I know that this wasn't here when it first opened, I don't think.

R: This bit?

P: No.

R: I've never really been in here.

P: I'm not really sure how it works. It seems like an administratical hub or something, to be honest. It was never really well advertised to students anyway, but what there used to be was over there, where you can see the desk, there were, like, more desks of computers, so there were just, like, more computers. So there was more room to work and now it's whatever this is.

R: People doing council tax and job searches, I presume. I can see some little booths over there.

P: Should they not have their own building for this sort of stuff though? I'm not sure.

R: It's interesting to speculate why it's all combined. I suppose they feel there's a kind of critical mass, as it were. You put enough stuff together and everyone will go there.

P: I imagine something to do with the finding, like, the amount they've put into the library. If it's then not used efficiently, why did they spend all the money?

25:00

R: Yeah. I'm not exactly sure how it worked. I think it's a private finance initiative contract, which means that this is owned by a particular group for a particular lease of twenty-five years, or something like that, and afterwards it'll be handed over to the council, but it's that group provided most of the funding for the building. I think that's how PFI works. It's the same with Liverpool, same with Cardiff. So Liverpool is run by a group called the Inspire Partnership for a certain number of decades, and then when that's finished it'll revert ownership to the council in exactly the same condition as when it was new. So that's how they finance these things. I don't know if that has an effect on bringing stuff together.

P: Yeah.

R: It's still a fair chunk of money, I think about 28 million pounds.

P: Really?

R: Yeah. The one in Cardiff was about 15. The renovation in Liverpool was almost 50 million last year.

P: Wow.

R: So that involved a lot of historically sensitive stuff, so there's the Picton Reading Room, the 1860s façade, a couple of old rooms inside from 1905 and 1911 got renovated. They're really beautiful, plus a building about this size that's brand new. It's very impressive, but then so is this one. They're going to build somewhere around here, a new building. There's a plot of land somewhere adjacent to this that's going to get built on fairly soon. Anyway, shall we take a seat and conclude our business?

P: Um, what strikes me as well, over the three years that I've been here and this has also been here. The general appearance looks more, sort of, grimey.

R: Really?

P: Like, from the outside of the building and all the marks on the floor. I don't know how you could maintain that.

R: No. I suppose short of cleaning. Some buildings look great in architectural renders and then awful five years later.

P: Like, at the start this was really shiny, and it was, like, "Wow!" Like, if the sun was out and it bounced off there into your eyes, you couldn't see for ten minutes.

3.5 STUDENT 23, 11TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: I suppose I should begin be asking, how long have you been studying in Worcester?

Participant: This is my third year.

R: Third year, so you're familiar with the building, you've used it, I presume, and you're familiar with the town as well.

P: Yes.

R: Did you find the place welcoming when you first arrived here?

P: The Hive itself?

R: The whole place really. Worcester and The Hive. I mean, do you think they suit each other and fit together.

P: I do actually. I didn't feel like there was anything I couldn't use or anything I couldn't ask about. It certainly felt like The Hive itself was fairly easy to understand once we'd got the hang of putting uni backslash in front of login every time, which took me longer than it should have.

R: You ended up with a public login, did you? Is that how it works?

P: Well, no, I didn't have a public login. It wouldn't let me in and I kept getting backslash and forwardslash mixed but because I'm a little thick.

R: Ah, some kids enjoying the local library [two kids having a friendly fight outside the front door].

P: I think I've just taken a picture of them. I'll do another.

R: Have to get the security guards on them. Have you had an opportunity to see if the landscaping is used much?

P: I have never seen any of that bit really used.

R: They did put a lot of effort into it, particularly around that side.

P: I think it's mainly aesthetic, to be honest with you. I've occasionally seen people sit down and have a phone conversation, but other than that…

R: It's just a walk-past.

P: Yeah. It's very pretty.

R: Do you think the building's very pretty?

P: No, but I don't think it has to be. It's eye-catching, like, you know where you're going from a distance away and everyone who describes it goes, "It's gold and it's covered in weird little square things", and you just know where you're going. So that's handy really; it's all it needs to be.

R: So people use it as a landmark, do they, to navigate by?

P: Yeah, the people I talk to, the university students often.

R: Right, so they know where they're going.

P: They usually use it in instructions. Like, they'll go, "Oh it's past The Hive", "It's to the right of The Hive", "It's on that street where The Hive is above".

R: So it's more a waypoint than a meeting place?

P: Yeah, I'd say, although often when you're in groups studying something or if you need to do research together then you will meet at The Hive, because while some people are on campus and close to campus, there are a lot of people – I've always lived in the city centre, so actually if I'm meeting up with someone it's easier to go to The Hive than go all the way to the university.

05:00

R: So you're quite close by?

P: Yeah.

R: I don't suppose you remember, when you first came here, was it easy to find the entrance and work out how to get inside the place?

P: Oh yeah, once I knew where I was going. It says "The Hive" right there.

R: If you walk past this way you're going to know straight away, aren't you?

P: Yeah, and even if you come up the other way, there's, like, steps leading up and other stuff like that.

R: Is it anything like other libraries you've seen or used before?

P: It is not, actually. I think it's a lot more technologically advanced, 'cause I come from quite a small place just south of Leeds, and we've got one library with four big, old computers.

R: From about 1998?

P: With people always playing that weird little games where you attempt to build your own village and attempt to team up with another village to take down the third village and whoever's the winning village is the one tat's conquered the most land, and somehow you always end up being the slowest, shitist village.

R: I'm not familiar with that.

P: No, I don't know if that's on any other computer but it was on ours.

R: So here it's technologically advanced in what way?

P: Well, it's much more a base for online research and using computers and stuff like that. I would rarely come in here more to look at the books, whereas with other libraries that would be my express intention. Like, even the Leeds university library, which technically can be used by the public, they wouldn't really. Most people don't go into it, and even I, as a university student, wouldn't go there while I was in Leeds.

R: So this must be quite different from a university library if it's going to be a joint public and university library. There's going to stuff in it that a university library never would.

P: Yeah, I think so, and it's taken a lot of emphasis off hardback books I think, which, you know, is debatable either way whether that's a good thing. I don't know. It's easier for students, I would say, because there's a finite amount of books, and if you've got four and an entire course is doing sa specific subject, once those four are gone everyone just has to wait.

R: Shall we wander round a bit or go back inside?

P: Sure. Are you cold?

R: A tiny bit cold, but that's irrelevant. Totally irrelevant. I'd much rather get good data than be a bit warmer.

P: Ah that's good. Phd student, sacrificing being chilly.

R: So when you come in here, where would you tend to head?

P: Err, I would go up to the third floor because there's quite a lot of spare computers, but also it's not the silent room, but there is a silent room for students, but I always feel I'm being too loud in it just by typing or coughing, anything like that. I'm too worried everyone else has gone there for complete silence and I'm not quiet just operating. I would say I think the checkpoints are quite useful.

R: What are the checkpoints, sorry?

P: Err, just, like, over there where they have people who work at The Hive and you can go up to them.

R: The desks? Shall we have a look? So there's one here, one over there, isn't there?

P: I would say these are quite useful because, for example, when I first came and I wasn't sure of the way out and how long you could use the computers for and stuff like that, come up here, ten minutes. You're usually not waiting very long to see someone and they're very helpful.

R: They're quite easy to approach are they?

P: They are. And there's always someone working them and people moving about as well.

R: Does it make you want to explore when you come in here, look around? Is it the sort of place that invited you in, do you think?

P: Err, I would think so, like, little exhibition like that tend to change quite regularly. It's like I haven't seen this one recently.

R: They were just putting it up today I think.

10:00

P: But stuff like that is interesting, and it's not necessarily about what you've come in for, but if you've got a bit of spare time and you're killing it at The Hive, maybe because it's warm, maybe because you're meeting someone here, then stuff like this, it'll serve your interest and you'll look into it. Like, I've never been a big art person, but I find this interesting. It draws your attention, and even if there was something here that you didn't find necessarily interesting, something to kill a bit of time, something to look around, but it's not a focal point that causes a lot contention and you have to either see it or not go. It's there if you want to look.

R: Okay, and do you think the design of the building is conducive to that, that discursive approach to spending time?

P: I do because if I wanted to ignore this, if I had something to do, I could easily just go straight up the staircase, no bother, I don't have to pay any attention to it, I can just get straight on with my work, leave. Or, if, as I say, I'm at a loss, I can nosy round and nobody stops you, although they do stop you using the children's computers if you're not a child. I once thought, it's still on the same level, I'm only here for ten minutes, but I got told off.

R: At what point do you stop being a child in a librarian's eye?

P: I don't know, but I reckon twenty-one is apparently…

R: It was very busy in her earlier, looked like they were doing some stock changing.

P: I'd say, like, this bit for kids. Like, I don't have kids myself, but I'd say it's quite useful to just park them here.

R: You'd feel safe, feel quite secure?

P: I would if, as I say, I had them because, like, it's very easy to see, it's very open, it's on the ground floor so the security guards are always round here, and those things there are big windows so you can see straight out into the main library very easily.

R: These seat look great, don't they?

P: Apparently they're comfy.

R: Let's find out [Sits]. Yes. I wonder if [inaudible] these could be quite popular elsewhere in the library too, not just for kids. Maybe not, I don't know.

P: Personally, sitting next to a big window freaks me out. But I do see what you mean.

R: Is that a little bit too open for you?

P: Um, personally, I tend to go towards, like, that's why I like the third floor. There's some bits of the computers that are surrounded by books, and there's only a few computers there and they tend to be more deserted, and you can go for a bit more private without having to go to the silent area.

R: Do you think it's quite an attractive space, this?

P: I think the inside is very pretty. The outside, as I've said, not so much.

R: A little too much, maybe?

P: But the inside is clean but not clinical, and I like that. I've never really used the second floor, I'll be honest with you, 'cause this is more for specific research I think, but it looks interesting, like, I've had a look at that and I still don't know what it is.

R: This thing on the end?

P: Yeah. It looks like some sort of jukebox.

R: There's a little shop.

P: I didn't realise that. Yeah whatever this thing is, it looks like an oldy-timey jukebox, but I've never heard anyone playing anything on it. And there's big archive computers, not like the laptops that everyone else is using. They're obviously for specific research, holding specific types of document, and it's quite well established, I think. You know which ones you're going to.

R: So you come up here [ascending stairs to third floor]?

P: Yeah, I think the third floor is the main usage for most people who are sitting down for an extended stay.

16:00

R: Is that more students or public or a mixture?

P: I think it's a mixture. I know a lot of students complain quite vocally about the public using these computers because you can hear people playing Candy Crush because they don't turn the sounds off, or having quite crass conversations quite loudly. But it's quite handy if you need to come in quickly, just sit down for an hour, something like that. You

could easily use one of these readily available computers, and they're right next to loads of convenient research books.

R: Departmental subject.

P: It is, although one thing I'd say is it's very difficult to figure out the three-point-something system they use.

R: You mean the classmarks?

P: Yeah, like certain psychology books will be in 362-point-somethingorother.

R: Have you ever had to ask to find what you wanted?

P: Most times, because there's the different between long term and short term as well is quite difficult to figure out. Like, you'll use one of the main search computers and it'll say this is in so-an-so in short-term loans.

R: Don't they have stickers on the side to say two-week loan, one-week loan, one-day loan, that type of thing. I think, I don't know, do blue stickers show two-week loans.

P: I think the blue stickers are short-term, which, if you don't return them on time then charges you per hour that they're late because I think they're more popular usage. But, like, as I've said, these ones that are surrounded by books, are a bit quieter and more secluded, but it's not totally out of the way, so it's not somewhere you feel you have to be entirely silent and if you're not, people are going to angrily complain about you on Facebook.

R: It's fascinating isn't it: the building is almost completely silent now? Six hours ago it was really noisy in here.

P: I think it depends, like, certain times, certain people come in, like, during the day you'll get little kids'll be out more and parents'll be taken them to the library to give them something to do, or, like, if the general public, like, if kids have got a day off school or something and they want to go and play on the computers, 'cause one thing I know about Worcester is it's quite small and if you're a teenager there's not a lot to do, so I always thought it was quite sweet that a lot of the teens, the troubled teens, tend to hang out in the library. Like in Morley they all hang out in the car park.

R: Is that where you're from?

P: Yeah, it's in south Leeds.

Also, these things are quite handy.

R: Printers?

P: Yes. But also the way it's obvious where they are 'cause they've marked them off like this [with partitions] and I think it's very well laid out like that. I think it's really easy to tell where you're going.

R: Does it help that you can see it's open here, that you can see through it?

P: I think it does if you're looking for something in particular. Like, if you don't know where you're going and you're trying to, like, see if there're any free computers. You look for the catalogues or something like that, you've got a very clear bird's-eye view and the only room that's really closed off is, as I've said, I think it's on the fourth floor, the silent working area.

R: I went up there earlier with a participant and it felt like we'd wandered into a service lift area. There was a little concrete stairwell, wasn't there?

P: They take silence seriously in there, which is why I don't like going there, 'cause I've often got a little bit of a cough or something. Everyone glares at you.

R: I guess that's more like traditional library in that respect, a bit more prickly.

20:00

P: Yeah, which is why I'd say it's good that this is public access, so it's not like that. It' makes people feel more comfortable using the facilities.

R: These facilities, or this part of the facilities? The noisy bits or just the whole thing?

P: All of them, I'd say. It's like, usually with libraries you go for a very specific purpose with a very set amount of time and you avoid going there if you don't want to do silent working right now because you'll be kicked out very quickly and stuff like that, but because it's more open and more friendly and a better atmosphere, I think, then it's easier to feel free to use the facilities without feeling committed to it, if you know what I mean.

R: Does this kind of space remind you of anything or make you think of anything?

P: I suppose it's supposed to be a beehive. I think that's why it's called The Hive, but I think it's better that it doesn't remind me of that really.

R: I'm not completely sure, because I read that there are seven of these tower things, and from the outside it's meant to be like the Malvern Hills.

P: Oh, I heard that.

R: But they don't look anything like the Malvern Hills.

P: I think I'm the only one who still… I've never seen the Malvern Hills, I've never been to the Malvern Hills.

R: They're very steep; they're very beautiful, but they are just hills. They're not golden and they're not square. That's two important differences.

P: No, I think people read too much into stuff sometimes. I think someone wanted a big, flashy attention-seeking building.

R: Gold, that'll do.

P: Detailing the ceiling and stuff like that, I think from the inside looks really nice. It's modern but not so modern you feel uncomfortable in it.

R: It feels Scandinavian to me. Feels like a Scandinavian church.

P: Oh, I see that. Swedish.

R: Yeah. Oh possibly there's a bit of an oasthouse aesthetic.

P: What's an oasthouse?

R: Where you dry hops. They're sort of conical buildings with a point on top and a thing that sticks out. Very Kentish. Never mind.

P: Ah, you and your Kent again, you and your mint cake!

R: Ha, Kentish mint cake! I only spent two weeks there.

P: And I think, like, where the teenagers tend to go, where the young people tend to hang out, I think that tends to be the bottom floor.

R: Shall we head down there in a bit? [Inaudible]

P: I don't, but I think that's just because I moved to this area and also because, as a psychology student, that's where a lot of the psychology books are on three-point-something, so I've had to find them round here. There is, like, I think on this side, there is a fiction section somewhere, which is quite good. It's more comfortable chairs, stuff like that.

R: A public side?

P: Yeah, if I can find it.

R: This is all fiction that we're passing.

P: Aha! It's for people with their own laptops, perhaps sitting around with a pile of books, like, just somewhere comfortable to sit as opposed to you have to be at a computer, facing forward, kind of thing.

R: Is this side of the floor more informal? Is that the idea?

P: Yeah, I think so. It's a smaller space because I think the computer usage is now more popular because you can find a lot of texts and articles online.

R: I don't know how many computers there actually are in the whole building for public use and for student use.

P: I would take a guess and say lots.

R: I know in Liverpool they've got about 150.

P: Oh, Liverpool's got one now.

R: Yeah, it's amazing.

P: I've got family from Liverpool.

R: It's bigger than this one.

P: Bigger doesn't always mean better.

R: No it doesn't, that's very true. It's interesting in a different way. Feels a bit strange when it's empty, doesn't it?

25:00

P: No, I always tend to come when it's quite empty because, you know, students studying into the night and stuff like that. And it's open till ten p.m., which is an aspect that I think is more catered for the student side of it and is, I think, very useful.

R: I did read on the website this afternoon that this has the longest opening hours of any public library in the country. 94.5 hours per week.

P: That's because of, I think, its alliance with Worcester University because they both sunk funding into it.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Well, we often have all-nighters.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I sense one coming up. I've got an assignment due and it's not finished, but as I've said, I think this area is more used by teens and young adults and stuff like that. Less quiet, I think, which is why I wouldn't tend to come down here, but also it's the more similarly informal setup that area of the third floor was.

R: It's a lot louder, isn't it?

P: It's because, I think, of the type of people who come to this floor, like, would tend to be the type of people who wouldn't be doing intensive work.

R: Yes, I think that's a polite way of putting it.

P: I'm diplomatic, if nothing else. As well, like, they have the computers, so it's obviously for more of a relaxation kind of thing.

R: Do you think that's important to a modern library, to have a space that's like that?

P: I think it makes it more accessible.

R: To those young people?

P: As I've said, there's not a lot to do in Worcester, so having somewhere that they can come… There's magazines here, there's TVs, there's stuff like that. It's something for them to do instead of sitting in a park and drinking, which is what I did when I was fourteen.

R: Do you feel that this is almost a different thing from the library, like you've got the history centre is a different thing, the council hub's a different thing, the record office's a different thing? Maybe this teen space is essentially a different thing, you know? It's a space that caters for young people as opposed to being part of the library.

P: I would say so. Like, perhaps because a lot of funding was lost from libraries recently, with a few exceptions, and I think that's because it offers quite a few different things. It's not just a library, because it was just a library people aren't really going to those any more. They're not as popular. There's, like, also credit crunch, "we should take money away from somewhere" sort of arguments, whereas by combining lots of different elements and making this like several different types of centre, it's like a youth centre and an archive place and a university study area and a general computer place. By making it all these things it's managed to make it more popular, more in use, and attract funding as opposed to having it taken away.

R: Do you think that's possible because it's physically a big building? It makes me wonder about the branch libraries.

P: So are churches, and they're not getting more popular.

R: Very popular as bars though these days. There's some perverse joy to having a drink in a chapel. I was just wondering if, that seems like very good thinking to me, that combination of function being greater than the sum of its parts. Is that possible in branch libraries, which are often much smaller and local?

P: I wouldn't necessarily say so, if you've got quite a small area, like, you can't maybe close of a quiet working area and a more interactive, it-doesn't-matter-if-you're-talking kind of place, whereas, maybe that's why they built it so big and made it so open. There's a lot more you can do. Also, literally means that you can spend an entire day here and you don't have to go anywhere. However, very annoying, I don't think they take card. At least, they didn't the last time I tried and that was annoying 'cause I was l like, I don't have any cash, I don't want to go anywhere.

3.5 Student 23, 11th November 2014

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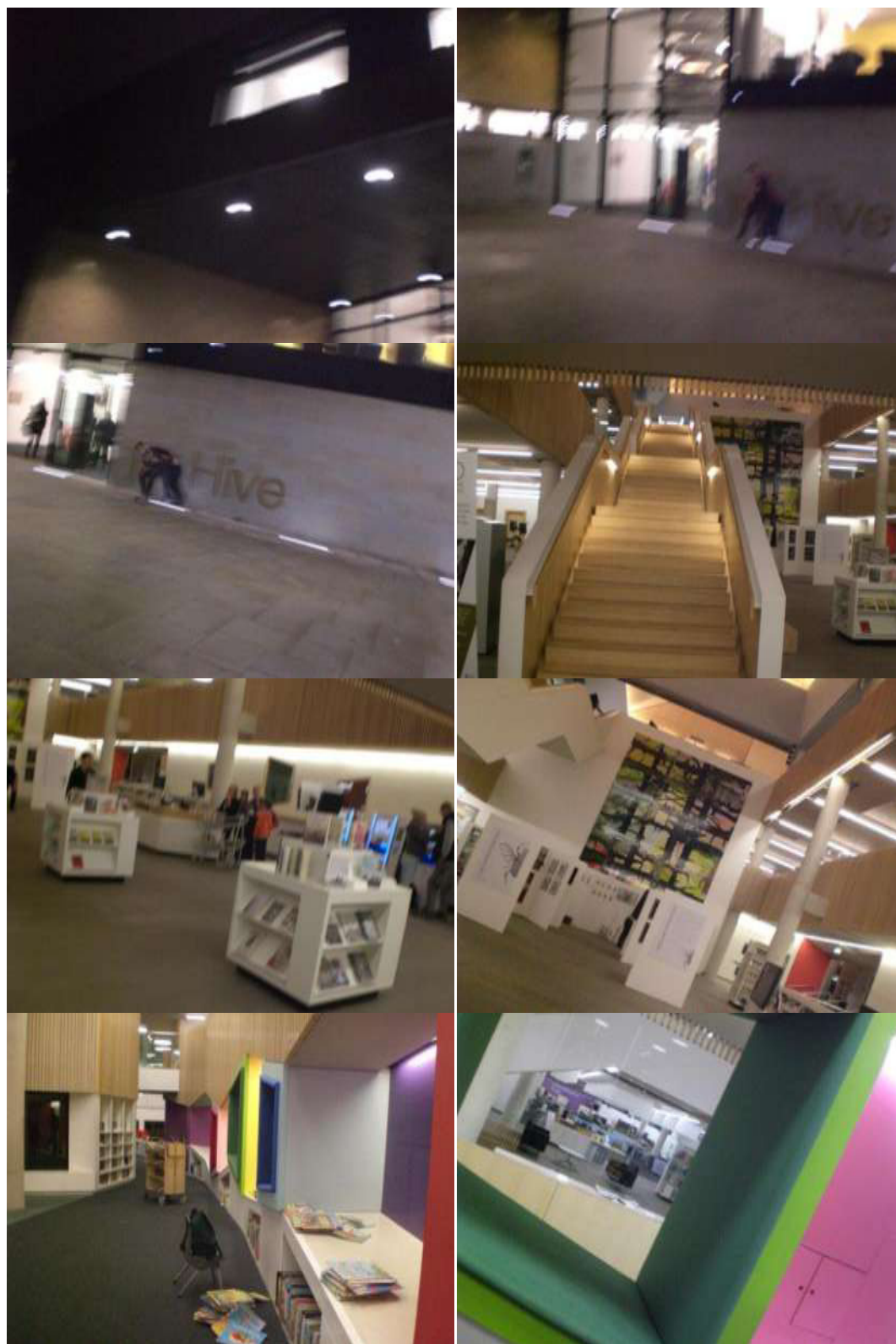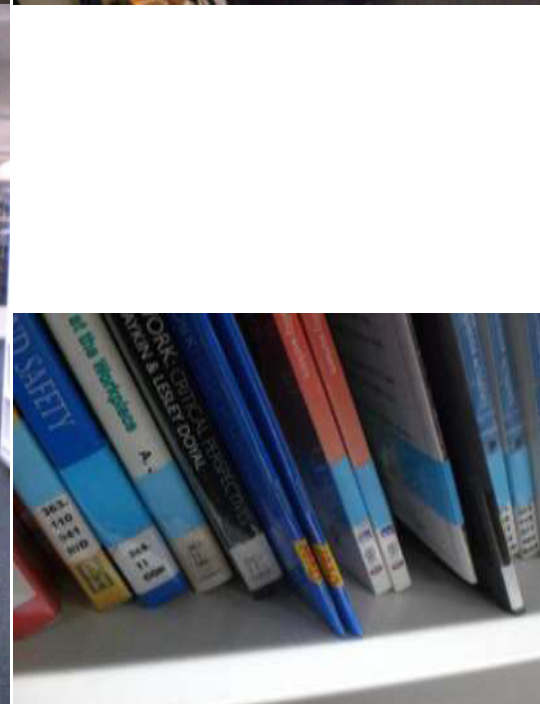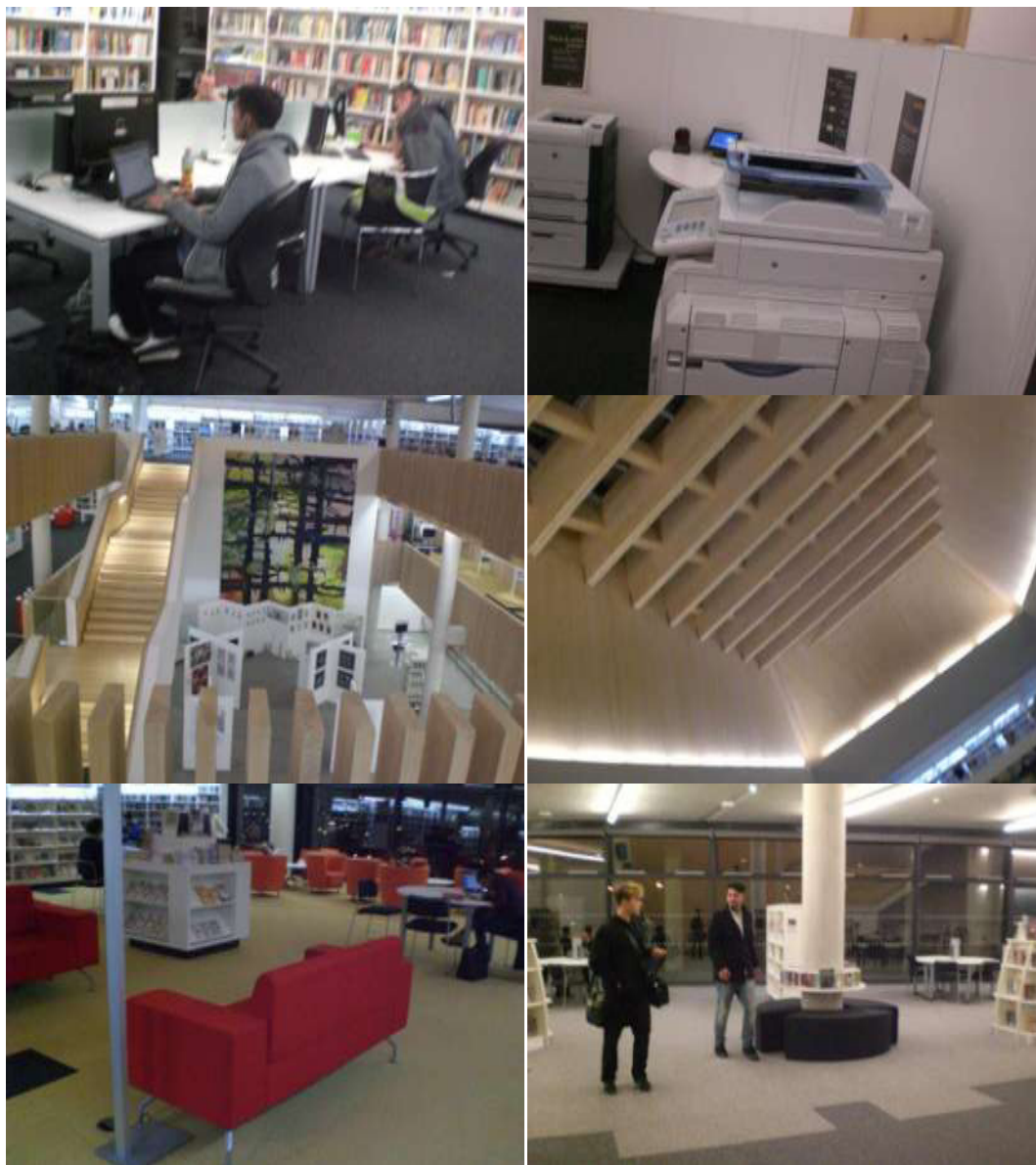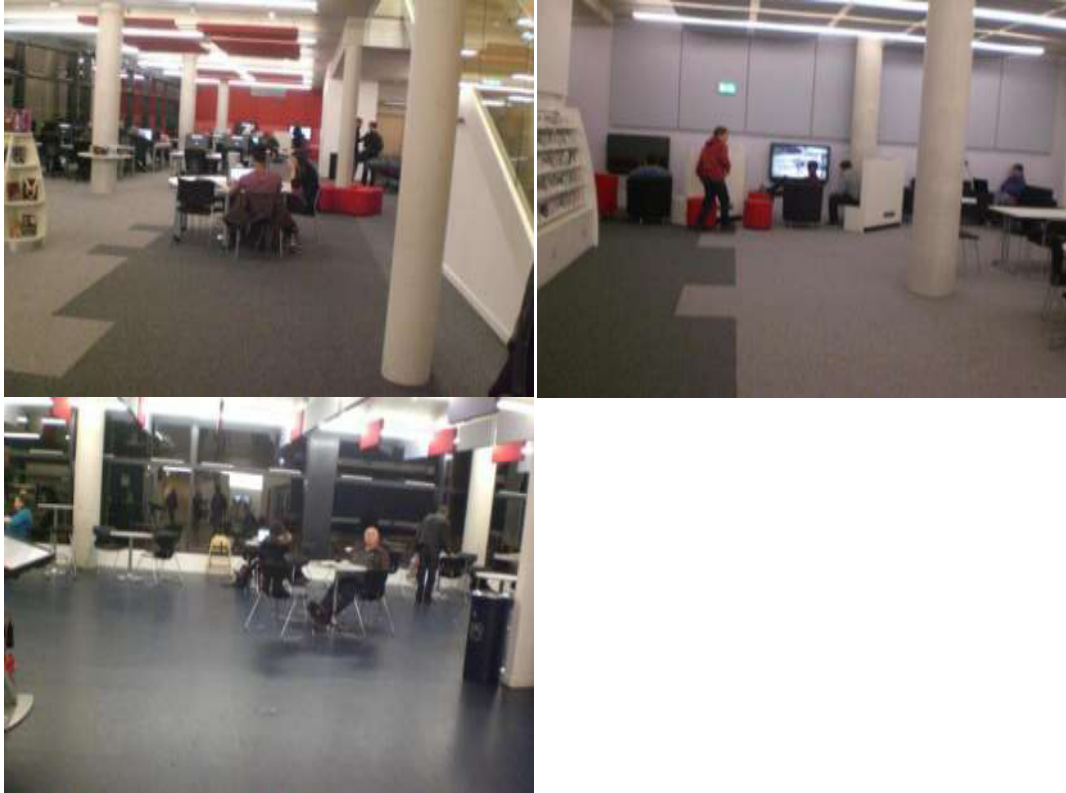
3.6   STUDENT 24, 11TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: So what are you studying here?

Participant: ****

R: Is that on this side of the river or the other side?

P: The other side.

R: Have you been doing that for long?

P: I'm in my second year.

R: So you have some experience of this building?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you feel that Worcester is a welcoming sort of town?

P: Yeah, I like it size-wise because it's big enough for you to have things to do but it's not unfriendly, so it's like a small town but with enough things to keep you entertained. I like the, kind of, medium sized town.

R: Yeah, and does this fit in with that? Does it fit in with Worcester, do you think?

P: Not really, 'cause I've seen the Birmingham library and the architecture outside is pretty similar to this, but it kind of looks more into place in Birmingham because it's a bigger town, so you expect such a massive, pretty obvious building.

R: You can't really miss it, can you?

P: Yeah. Whereas in Worcester it looks out of place.

R: Do you know what people round here think of it? Have you heard anything?

P: People usually make fun of the way it looks from the outside, but there are no complaints about the architecture on the inside. The complaints are more related to noise and the way the staff manages that.

R: Oh, on the inside.

P: Yeah, and yeah just people coming in and not doing work and disturbing people who are doing work, but I guess that's what you get if you get a public library for both students and the public.

R: I think that's the first time that's been done in this country, maybe in Europe. I'm not sure.

P: Yes, I think it's in Europe.

R: How do you use the building?

P: Um, I usually come when I need books for my assignments.

R: Okay, so it's very much as a student library.

P: Yeah. I did borrow a book that I just read for leisure, but that was just once. I usually just use it academically, and I don't really like doing work in here because it tends to be noisy.

R: It's too loud for you to do your work?

P: Yeah, it does have a silent level, a quiet zone, but I feel a bit restrained in there because I feel if I bring something to eat or something to drink, the slightest noise is going to disturb everyone else.

R: You can't just pop out and have a sandwich?

P: I guess you can, but…

R: I went up there this morning actually and it was lovely and quiet. There was just the rain pattering on the roof. I thought it would be a lovely place to have a little sleep. I'd probably fall asleep if I went up there to work.

P: Yeah it usually is not the case in the rest of the library.

R: Is it like any other libraries you've used?

P: Um, not really because I tend to use the study area on campus which used to be the library for students.

R: The Pierson?

P: Yeah. And people there do come and sometimes they talk, but there is more the feeling that you're there to do work, so I feel more motivated when I go to work there than here.

R: Where do you want to go?

P: Um, second floor?

R: Sure. Is it the kind of place that makes you want to explore when you come in?

05:17

P: Not really. When we go downstairs we can go to The Studio. I've had a reading group in there and I really liked that space, and I was surprised that there is such a place in The Hive, but usually I come here when I actually need to. I try not to spend too much time. I like this level. I've just discovered it because a friend of mine gave me a tip, because it's the archaeology level, so you usually only get archaeology students or other students. It's quieter than the rest.

R: Yeah, you're the first person to take me onto this floor.

P: People don't really come here, which is a good thing for me.

R: That's the search room there, isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: For the archives.

P: It's a like a quiet area without officially being a quiet area.

R: Have you used the meeting rooms at all?

P: I've never used them, but I think people just reserve them or pay for them. Not sure. I think some lecturers might use them.

I've only recently discovered this, as I said, because a friend told me about it because I always complain about the noise level in The Hive. You can never go and work in the Hive. So she said "Oh, we'll go the archaeology level because no one really goes there", so, it worked.

R: Would you ever use the place just to meet up with friends or as a waypoint or something? Is it a kind of landmark in the town?

P: Not for me it isn't. I guess people do meet up here, um, 'cause it's an obvious location, but I haven't done that. I only come here when I need to do something that requires a book.

Level Three is probably the level I use the most because all of the material and books and research that I need are here.

R: Okay. This is the most student-y area is it?

P: Yeah, well, not only students. Either Level Zero, but that's usually people who aren't students. They just come here to mess around. And here, mostly students. Then you have the literature section, and they have different sections related to the subject 'cause most of the books used to be at the university, so there's a lot of university books here.

R: Is the lighting here good for working?

P: Um, I guess. Um, yeah. I've never been when it's so dark outside, usually, so I couldn't really tell, but I don't see it as a problem from where you work because you've got light from the computers. Between Level Zero and Level Two, this level's probably somewhere between Level Zero and Level Two, noise-wise, um, 'cause you can get times when it's really noisy and there're a lot of people here or times like this when it's pretty quiet.

R: Is there any area up here that you particularly head for when you come to work on this floor?

P: No, not really. Just wherever's quieter or wherever I find a free computers, 'cause sometimes it's so busy you hardly find a place to stay. But this is the area I head for when I come here because I usually come and just get books out, so this has all the books and stuff I'm interested in.

10:00

R: Does that mean you have to travel a little way to get your books.

P: Yeah, I guess.

R: How far actually is it from the other side of the river?

P: It's about a fifteen minute walk.

R: A mile?

P: Yeah.

R: Are the librarians here approachable?

P: Sometimes, yeah. I think all the times I've been here it's only been once a librarian wasn't particularly friendly, but usually they try and help. The thing is, because the library's so big, they don't really have that much control over the books because you can come and you can ask about a book and it can still be in the library, but someone might have just taken it and left it on the table and not put it back, so they wouldn't know where it is, so you'd know that it's in the library but you can't get it. It's a bit frustrating but I guess it's nobody's fault; it's just it being a big library it's a big area.

R: Does the fact that it's got so many different groups of people combined together make it better or worse in your opinion?

P: Um, I think it makes it worse in my opinion. I kind of have that debate with some of my friends and they're like, "Yes, but it's a public library, you can't restrict access to it!" Yeah, but it would be more efficient if the access was a bit restricted. Maybe if people had to pay, if people had to pay some sort of monthly fee to come here or something, because you really get people who use it as a social meeting place, who just come here to talk and use the computers, and at times when you're stressed with your assignments, it can be a bit annoying.

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R: Yeah, little babies screaming and kids running about.

P: Yeah.

R: Looks like they've got a new exhibition up.

P: Yeah. It's interesting how they use the space, I think. A couple of weeks ago it used to be something else and there used to be postcards that they gave away.

R: Really?

P: Yeah. Um, I've used that space. I'm not sure if you can get in.

R: There's a cleaner in there. It' a lecture hall.

P: I've been there or a reading group.

R: Ah. It's quite good for that, is it?

P: Yeah, it was a good space, and quiet, kind of isolated from the whole library. Um, and I didn't know it existed because it's in the corner, hidden in plain sight.

R: And what's all this stuff?

P: Just kids' section. I really like the way they put chairs there, like, well, not chairs, but they made some seats. They're really comfortable. Take a look.

R: In the wall?

P: Yeah. I was looking at it once and I actually wanted to sit there but it would have looked way too weird in a children area. I wished they had but that somewhere else as well. It just looks like a nice place to just sit and read.

R: Yeah. I can see why they put glass in the back. It's about a twenty foot drop. I sometimes wonder if the whole place would be better if it was designed like this.

P: Yeah, it looks nice and it looks comfortable. It think it's an enjoyable space for children. I would have liked to have had that when I was little.

R: Yeah, I was saying that earlier to one of the other participants that I never had anything like this when I was growing up. When we came by before it was full of kids and they looked like they were having so much fun.

P: Yeah. Um, everything is really quiet today, weirdly enough. Level Zero is pretty much where the young people who are not here to study come and they have entertainment stuff and comics. It's a bit like a ghetto.

R: Does it feel like part of the library, or does it feel like another building, tagged on beneath it?

P: I guess it feels like part of the library but it's, like, the bad part of the library. It's, like, where you go if you don't have anywhere else to go.

R: But it was designed deliberately like this, wasn't it?

P: I don't know about that.

R: I mean, this space has been here from the start.

P: Oh, I didn't know that.

R: I think this area was always meant for young people.

P: It makes sense. Yeah, I sat here a couple of times but it was because the library was so busy there was nowhere else to go.

15:00

R: I guess that's the thing about it being a public library.

P: Yeah. I like the DVD section. I've never taken out DVDs but they do have a nice selection.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I think as a student some of them are free. I'm not sure which ones though. Yeah, you can just take them out like books.

R: What is it about this place that makes it less attractive?

P: I guess just the fact that it's designed for younger people that come here just for entertainment and leisure and they can often be quite noisy sometimes and you often get librarians trying to make them behave. It's a bit distracting. It's not the ideal place if you come here to work.

R: Do you think that's what a library should offer?

P: Yeah, I don't… Now that I think of it, it's not a bad idea to have a part with entertainment, but, I don't know, maybe if it were organised differently.

R: Do you mean this space or the way it's run?

P: Yeah, yeah. I'm not sure how, but they need to have a clear separation of people who come here for leisure and people who come here for entertainment, to play video games or PlayStation or whatever and people who come here to do research for an assignment or who are looking for a bit of a quiet space, but I'm not sure how to do that because they seem to have it organised so it doesn't seem to work so well.

R: Do you mean like one big room?

P: Yeah.

R: I heard that they had problems when the place first opened with young kids taking over that space and being a real nuisance.

P: It's a bit… It's interesting to observe because you can hear them talking in front of The Hive and there's like a group of friends and you can tell that they know each other already and they just go "Oh, I'm banned. I have, like five more days and then I can go inside again".

R: What, you hear them out there?

P: Yeah, it's just this place of gathering and they sometimes get banned but they just come back. I've never seen it with any other library.

R: Yeah, they do seem to have security here. I was here last night, about six o'clock, and some guy got told off by the security guard.

P: Yeah, they do tell them off.

3.7 STUDENT 25, 11TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: I suppose I should begin be asking, how long have you been in Worcester?

Participant: Err, about two months.

R: So you're a fresher?

P: I'm a fresher.

R: Okay. Have you used the library much in that time?

P: I've been here a couple of times. Not amazing because, like, I don't know, it's just effort to walk down, especially in the rain. But I came and read here and it's just quite a nice place.

R: Are you on this side of the river?

P: No.

R: What subject are you doing?

P: Art and design with illustration.

R: Ah, I think I must have sent out the request to a particular faculty or department. There are quite a lot of arts and social science people.

P: Yeah, you sent it to the art and social science faculties.

R: I sent it to others but I'm not sure they forwarded it. That's probably a good bunch of people to ask, actually. Do you feel it's a welcoming building, or do you feel Worcester's welcoming in general?

P: Yeah, because – Oh, yeah, Worcester's really welcoming – but because this is so big and quite open and, like, the glass on the side as well, it makes it quite open and, like, free.

R: Free? It's not at all intimidating?

P: Not really. I mean, I don't particularly like the outside.

R: Don't you? Why's that?

P: It's quite an ugly building. It stands out, which is good, but it's just really odd. They could have done a much nicer architecture, but because they wanted it to be a hive and, like, a hive shape, they went with that. Which I get, but I don't really like it.

R: Can you think of any other libraries for examples of the sort of thing you mean?

P: Um, no.

R: Or any other buildings in general? What kind of thing are you talking about?

P: How do you mean?

R: When you say a nicer building, a more attractive building, when you think of a more attractive, nicer building, what sort of thing are you thinking of?

P: Well I quite like old fashioned sorts of buildings. I think they're quite nice 'cause of the architecture and stonework, so, like, museums and stuff. Um, but I also like blobitecture. I quite like that.

R: Blobitecture?

P: Yeah.

R: What exactly is that?

P: It's a type of architecture.

R: I've not heard of that.

P: I can't think of his name. It's more Spanish based, but they have some really nice modern buildings. I think, you know Walt Disney Theatre.

R: Yeah.

P: That's blobitecture, I'm pretty sure.

R: Ah. I assume, by older stuff, museums, you're talking about columns, steps, stonework, all that kind of thing?

P: Not necessarily columns and steps, but just a simplified version of that.

R: And this? Do you think it fits well with Worcester?

P: Yes and now. Like, Worcester I would say is quite old fashioned; it's quite a small little city, quite markety, quite rural, and this is isn't at all, but I guess they're trying to bring it into the twenty-first century a bit.

R: Okay. Well, I guess you certainly wouldn't mistake it for anything else. I wonder if it will look dated at all in twenty years' time.

P: Yeah, I think it will, especially with the gold. That's just going to fade and looks quite rusty and just not very nice. Or it might make it even better.

R: I came here two years ago when it first opened, literally it had been open about a month two years ago, and I was shown right round the place. I have to admit, since then it's got noticeably grubbier.

P: Yeah.

R: There's this staining under the windows where stuff's been washed down. They've done a lot of landscaping around here as well. I don't suppose you've had a chance to see that in use much as it's autumn.

05:00

P: Quite a lot of people were sitting out here, just kind of having a fag.

R: Is this a kind of meeting space at all?

P: Err, occasionally, like, quite a lot of young people just hang out here at night because it's just free and open and no one's really here. It's quite empty.

R: Okay. Is the building open in the evening?

P: It's open till ten every day, so that's pretty good. If that was all night for students that would be better though.

R: If it were a university library, maybe it would be open, particularly at exam periods. I don't know if they've had any problems with the fact that's it's both a public library and a university library. It's the first in Europe.

P: Yeah, I heard that.

R: Okay, we'll go back in if you want. I'm just following you around now.

P: Oh, okay.

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R: So [inaudible].

P: It's quite nice because you get it and then it's just like, oh, it's not just a library. It actually has a lot of art and architecture in it. Even just like that bit there, you can tell it's The Hive because it's got those hexagons, which are just like bringing that out.

R: Yeah. Is it like any other library buildings you've ever used before?

P: No, not really, I have to say. I'm not one to go to libraries unless I have to.

R: No, I guess a lot of people are like that.

P: But, like, it's modern. It's quite nice that it's all ages as well, because you can just, like, see lots of different people. If you're stuck with something, most people are just going to help you. I'm going to go this way. Yeah, they have actually brought the old in with the new a little bit. I can't remember why the foundations are there, but they are.

R: Roman oven [reading from sign].

P: That's interesting.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah there's quite a lot of history here. I went to the museum the other day and actually it was quite interesting because they had an army barracks there and it was quite big. A lot of military stuff happened, apparently. Not that would know that. And I really like this. That's probably my favourite part of The Hive. It just lets so much light in.

R: How does that feel?

P: What, looking at it?

R: Yeah, when you walk in, that light from space.

P: It makes it, like, quite fresh. If it was a dingy library I don't think I would ever do any work in here because you'd always feed quite tired, but it makes you brighten up and be a bit, like, turned on kind of thing. I don't know. I think light always helps. It's not an intense brightness and it's also not a fake brightness. If it was just, like, artificial light I think that would do my head in.

R: I suppose for studying here it's very important to have a good standard of light.

P: Yeah, they have quite a lot of them as well [rooflights]. I think there's three of them, all the way along.

R: What, sorry?

P: Three of the windows.

R: These skylight things?

P: Yeah. There's one over there I've just seen, which I didn't realise.

R: It looks kind of different up there.

P: I was just about to go up.

R: Does it make you want to explore, this place?

P: It does. I haven't really explored. I just literally went to the book I know I needed, read it and then, like, left again. Took some notes, but I quite like how it's quite open as well. You can see every kind of level and what you want.

R: Is that a help in finding where to go?

P: Yes and no. You kind of want to go and explore it, but then you're like, no, I've got to carry on.

R: It makes it want to go off on side tangents?

P: Yeah, which isn't always helpful if you've got some reading to do.

R: No, I guess not. I lot of people seem to manage to walk past that floor though [Level Two].

P: Yeah. This doesn't have a completely different feel.

R: From where?

P: From the ground floor, because it's just like the entrance. This is kind of spacious, kind of arty. There's a lot of, like, artists who just come and work and there's that picture [on the wall of the atrium].

R: What do you think of that picture?

10:00

P: It's alright. It's not my favourite piece of any art. It's quite unique.

R: I think it looks like camouflage.

P: I mean, I don't really get why they get it, but they have. Yeah, this is much more like a working environment [Floor Three].

R: Yeah.

P: More quiet. It's a student floor.

R: When you think of a library, is there anything you just think of generically?

P: Lot's of books and really quiet, kind of thing, 'cause that's just how I was brought up, but then when I was, like, a child my mum used to take me to the library and we'd just read books there, which was really nice.

R: What type of library was that?

P: Just a town library.

R: Smaller than this?

P: Yeah, much smaller.

I quite like that window there. It lets even more light in. It's quite open, but then you can't see it from the outside. Black mirrors.

R: These windows?

P: Yeah, they're blackouts. It's quite nice if you're working and you can have a bit of greenery that you can see.

R: Do you think that's important, having greenery that you can see?

P: I don't know. I would say so. Like, subconsciously I always think having trees about and having some plants always helps. But I really like nature.

R: Yeah, I'm a country boy myself. Is that because they're quite restful, do you think, quite tranquil?

P: Yeah you can just stare at them for ages.

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R: It's nice to be able to focus on something in the distance, especially when you've been staring at a screen.

P: These are really interesting seats. How do you sit on it? Oh, that's quite cool, but then, why only three?

R: Maybe they're very expensive.

P: Probably, but quite helpful, I guess. If you like drawing, actually. That's quite a nice idea.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, but then it comes to night and it's more artificial.

R: [Inaudible]

P: I get why they did it because a hive is broken into different sections, but I don't understand why it's not hexagons. But I actually quite like them, although they've very angular. This building's all very angular.

R: I can't really see any curves here at all, apart from the columns, perhaps.

P: Yeah, that's pretty much it.

R: In Liverpool, where I'm doing as well, there's an atrium like this atrium, and Liverpool's is completely curved. It twists upwards. It's got a light like this over the top, and it's made of wood and it's curved, it's a dome, and the entire atrium is lit as it curves up and even the columns are curved. They're not vertical.

P: Wow, that sounds quite impressive actually.

R: Yeah, it is impressive.

P: I think it's nice how they've got sofas, just for chillaxing.

R: Do you think it would be any different if it was just a university library and not a public library?

P: I think if it was a university [library] it would have been a lot smaller because I think they joined it so they could have combined money, kind of thing, and also a bit more spread out, 'cause if they had a smaller building, but more space in it 'cause they wouldn't have the children's section or anything, they probably wouldn't have a bigger café. It would have just been a machine or a little stall, kind of thing.

R: [Inaudible]

15:00

P: Yeah, I actually do like it quite a lot.

R: You don't resent having members of the public in the place?

P: No. Only way it's annoying is if you're working and there's a child screaming. That's the only thing.

R: I just noticed that that [mirrored art installation in the entrance hall] reflects the hexagons [of the cladding around the hall].

P: I've never really seen it from this angle, I must say.

R: Have you got a favourite bit that you work in here, or have you not come in here enough so far?

P: The bit I was working in before, which I actually really like, they have window seats and I just sat in one of them and it was really comfy. Just got a book, yeah.

R: Is there anything particularly attractive about window seats?

P: I don't know, I personally really like them. Not sure why. It's just natural light. I get headaches from artificial light quite quickly so, um, but then it also means I can get distracted quite easily if I'm sitting by a window.

R: [Inaudible]

P: This is where all the arts stuff is, so these, like, little bits here. And these window seats are really comfy. You can spread out, people watch. It's great.

R: I wonder what they're doing to that wall [sandstone wall across street]/

P: I think it fell down a bit so they're having to re-do it. It's only recently, like this week that they're doing anything on it. This is where, for me, it's not overly attractive outside so you don't always get distracted, but if you want to let your mind wander you can.

R: Yeah, that sounds like something you can't have in shut-in, dark, labyrinthine libraries, I suppose.

P: It's quite good but also I don't understand why the gold bridge is also what it is. It's part of The Hive, I guess, because it's got that gold.

R: You don't understand why it's gold?

P: Hmmm?

R: You don't know why it's gold?

P: I'd say it's because it's part of The Hive, but I don't know why because it's obviously not. Like, why isn't it brick?

R: I don't know when it was built, actually. Looks brand new.

P: It does look really new, but the brick doesn't exactly look old.

R: No, true. If they wanted something that people could drive underneath and it would remind them of it, it's not like you can't see this from outside.

P: Yeah, I would say it's rather distinctive building.

R: Have you been up to the top floor?

P: No. I have to say, I thought this was the top floor. Is it only by lift?

R: It's a silent study area.

P: Oh, I haven't been up there.

R: It's smaller.

P: How do you get to it? I'm really intrigued now.

R: Well, let's see if we can find it, shall we? I'm not going to tell you where it is.

P: It's not in there, is it?

R: [Inaudible]

P: It's quite interesting how they have quite a lot of drops down, like, spaces through the floors. Or that and then by the entrance, and then there was also one over there. Is it that door there?

R: Maybe.

P: I'm going to go through.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Level Four. This kind of just looks like a cleaner's entrance.

R: [Inaudible]

[Silence]

P: That makes so much more sense now. I thought I recognised those pictures and it turns out it's my art lecturer who's the artist. He has a really weird style and I can't quite work out what it is. I kind of thought I saw them before and I was, like, where do I know them?

R: [Inaudible]

P: Well, they had some quite nice old books. I wouldn't read them but they look nice.

R: I'd really like to study up there actually, just listening to the rain sounds on the roof. I'd probably fall asleep.

P: It was must more calm and out of the way. Let's go back down.

R: [Inaudible]

P: What, a silent place?

R: Yeah, a sort of silent, separate tower.

P: Yeah, I guess it's good for people who have revision or, like, essays to write.

R: One of the other interviewees I spoke to said the hires out study rooms.

P: Yeah they do.

R: [Inaudible, referring to the hammering from the new exhibition set up. Most of what I'm saying can't be heard over the sound of hammering.]

P: I'm going to say some kind of art thing, because normally it is.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, yeah, I was here for it. Yeah they've had two in the time I've been here, which is quite nice, and they're always in the back studio. I'm not particularly bothered about the archives floor, I have to say.

R: Do you know what's on there?

P: Archives.

R: I'm guessing that's a good start.

P: And a shop. That's interesting. But I do go into the children's section a lot, because for doing illustration I do have to read a lot of children's books. It's a really nice place to just sit and read as well. Much more colourful and vibrant, really nice.

R: Is that something you just appreciate generally then?

P: Yeah.

R: Lots of soft furnishings.

P: Yes, definitely. I don't know why they haven't got a ball pool yes, but…

R: They could turn the entire atrium ground floor into a ball pit.

P: That would be amazing. I don't know, I think colour's aesthetically pleasing and it's much more easy to learn from colour.

R: That's a lovely picture. It's so difficult to paint water like that, I find.

P: Hmmm dyslexic-friendly books. I've not seen that before. Ah, that's amazing, apart from there's nothing in there [little wall cupboards]. That's a shame. They could put things in there. Pumpkin, Christmas presents. That would be cool. Yeah, I just think these are just really nice.

R: Are the backs of these glazed?

P: Yeah it's got glass, just in case anyone fell.

R: So little Johnny can't fall out and plummet down the stairwell? That would have been an embarrassing oversight.

P: It would. What is that?

R: What's what, sorry?

P: The Ark? It's definitely some art exhibition or something. She's made masks over there.

R: They're going to get some school kids out?

25:00

P: Probably. It's probably going to be another university thing that you know you have to go to.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, that's helpful. I'm guessing that's a meeting room up there.

R: Yeah, they're meeting rooms. I think they can be booked out.

P: This is nice, little story time area. I think this is good actually 'cause if they have computers here the parents can use them as well while the children are just reading.

R: I don't know if it's difficult to keep a building like this supervised.

P: Hmmm, yeah. Is that a playroom? That have a playroom? They have a board to draw on? Oasis.

R: I wish I'd had a place like this when I was growing up.

P: Yeah, me too.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Yeah, for us it was then also turned into a computer room and changing room, 'cause there was nowhere else. That's really good if you want to teach people. Are they just for anyone? Maybe it's just for if a school comes in. That's quite a cool resource to have though, not for loan. Not to be taken from the library. I guess that's quite good if you're doing teaching you can just come here, get some ideas for what you want to do.

R: Quiet, isn't it?

P: Yeah, like this bit's a nice little biut. There's wuite a good study, which I think is now booked out.

R: What kind of room is it?

P: It's kind of just flat and then it has some tiered seating.

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R: So it's a lecture hall?

P: Yeah, it's not really s studio, I wouldn't describe it as.

R: When I think studio I think art.

P: yeah, me too. Yeah it was wuite nice but it's always packed, so we always end up sitting on the floors, so they need some more seats in there.

R: I don't suppose you've had much experience with this bit?

P: No, is this just like the council bit?

R: As far as I'm aware.

P: 'cause I thought the council has a different building cokmpletely, but I'm guessing not.

R: Maybe they're here as well. It's so noisy here isn't it.

P: Yeah. Where's Floor Zero.

R: Floor Zero?

P: Yeah.

R: It's got to be around here somewhere. [To staff] We were just trying to work out where Floor Zero was.

Staff: Ah, I can show you that. It's down here.

P: There's steps. That's really well hhidden.

R: That's why they have the glazing .

P: Ah, that makes so much more sense. Intersting. Wow.

R: I can tell you haven't been down her before.

30:00

P: Err, kind of. I've had a look in before from outside, but people were just like, "Don't go down here" because it's just full of school kids.

R: Really?

P: Yeah. Like, students are mainly on the Third Floor and then with some, like, other people.

R: So is it that certain parts of the building are only used and frequented by certain groups of people?

P: Yeah, definitely.

R: How do you think that's happened?

P: I have no idea. I mean they did name the place Shared Study, and then the youth thing on thing on Ground Zero, you know, it was, like youth space, however, I'm not sure if that's dedicated space.

R: There are a lot of different groups of people using the building. Some people have mentioned this is a good place to go for group work.

P: Yeah, probably, 'cause of the tables and they're quite helpful if you've got a group discussion or project, plus, like the TVs at the end. They're quite helpful because you can just log on and then the whole group can see instead of just having it on a small laptop.

R: [Inaudible]

P: Kind of, 'cause you don't really think "Oh library, games".

R: That's not something that you associate?

P: No, definitely not.

R: Would you associate films and music with libraries.

P: I wouldn't because stereotypically in my mind a library is quiet and books.

R: I haven't see red anywhere else.

P: No. It's a completely different colour scheme down here because they don't have any wood or anything. They always seem to have these sound blockers on the ceiling to stop echoes.

R: I suppose if it was concrete it might be quite echoey.

P: I think it makes it a nicer colour and texture as well. It gives it a nicer colour, like, vibrancy, 'cause if it was just concrete that would be really boring and dull.

R: It would be like a car park.

P: Yeah.

R: I suppose, being an artist, you must be always looking at the artistic. Do you feel there's enough art in this building?

P: Yes and now. I think they could have more. I mean there, why isn't there a painting? It would be a perfectly good place to have a painting or some kind of sculpture. Like, they could commission me to do one. I wouldn't mind.

R: Are you primarily into children's illustrations? Is that your thing?

P: Err, I haven't really decided yet. We're kind of just doing everything at the moment, so I don't think we have to specify our skill yet.

R: I guess you're more one for traditional media and not digital art.

P: Yeah, I haven't actually done any digital yet. We've done lots of print media, all that kind of stuff.

…

P: I do quite like the café as well.

R: Do you eat in here much?

P: Not at all, but I do think it's a really nice thing to have. Nice for families.

R: It does feel quite family friendly to me.

35:00

3.7 Student 25, 11th November 2014

3.8 Non-Student 17, 4th July 2015

Researcher: We can probably start outside, actually

Participant: Okay

R: Then we get to look at the outside of the building. It's probably a good place to start.

[…]

R: I suppose the first thing to start us off is by asking what is the purpose of your visit today.

P: My visit, I'm on farm, so we do not have internet or something like this, so I am going to only visit the internet and talk to my friends on Facebook and so on, maybe play some games.

R: Okay, so would you say you're more visiting for work or for social reasons?

P: Social, recreation, yeah.

R: And is it your first visit to the building?

P: Ah, no, no. I've been here many times. I am here in Worcester, third year. I'm gathering beans and I'm part time job here.

R: Ah, so you're working in Worcester?

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: Are you studying here as well, or are you studying in the Czech Republic?

P: I'm studying in Czech Republic.

R: Yeah, okay. Um, so, what's your, sort of, feelings about the building? Do you think it fits well with the city?

P: I love the building, except, we think that it doesn't look like a hive. It looks like snakeskin or something like this.

R: It's a bit of an odd name really, considering how it looks. Do you feel welcomed by the building, or is it a bit offputting?

P: Yeah, personally it's very great, always helpful and, um, I'm always feeling great in The Hive.

R: Okay, let's go back in again. As I say, it's only a quick tour. As you come in, what are you looking for? Are you heading for a particular area or…?

P: I first check the, err, computers…

R: On the screen over there [which shows availability]?

P: Yeah, yeah, then I go.

R: So you tend to be looking for a computer when you come in here, is that it?

P: Err, yeah, yeah.

R: Right. And where abouts do you look for computers? Anywhere that the screen says there are computers free, or do you have a favourite part of the building?

P: I have a favourite part because we gathering there with friends in the downstairs, and we have sometimes LAN parties.

R: Oh really? To play games?

P: Yeah

R: Is that the best part of the library for that then?

P: Ah, no. Err, there maybe first floor is good. I also like it.

R: Where the archaeology is?

P: Err yeah.

R: Okay, what's better about that place? We can walk up there and have a look if you want.

P: There it's much more quieter.

R: Okay. Is that better when you're with your friends?

P: Because downstairs there are sometimes kids and shouting.

R: Okay, so you'd tend to like to be with your friends, but away from noisy people.

P: Yeah.

R: And this floor's good for that is it?

P: Uh-huh.

05:00

R: I'm just following you about really, so anywhere you want to go is fine.

R: Do you ever come here to study?

P: Study? No.

R: Back in the Czech Republic, do you use the library differently there?

P: Yeah, yeah, definitely. I go in there to, in my university library, so I go in there for doing my homework or study with friends, or something.

R: Is there anywhere else in Worcester that offers the same sort of thing that this building does?

P: I don't know, but I don't think so. I was surprised that everyone can use computers and everyone can sign up for borrowing books and so on. It's not quite common in Czech Republic, I think.

R: Do you mean because this is also a university library it's surprising?

P: No, in Czech Republic we, I don't know… No, but I'm a foreigner in this country, so…

R: Oh, I see, right. Is there anything else in this building you want to look at?

P: Um, I don't…

R: I guess you probably don't need to come up to this floor [Floor 3] so much, from what you were saying.

P: Uh, yeah, I don't know. Sometimes, yeah.

R: What are you photographing?

P: I'm photographing the overview.

R: Of the atrium?

P: Yeah, from the third floor.

R: Why's that?

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P: I don't know, I like it that it's… um, it's what… I don't know how to say it… Uh, no…

R: You mean you like the way it looks?

P: Uh, yeah. I like the way it looks, and that photo, I think represents this library. Like, people going and…

R: I see, so you're saying *that* represents the library for you?

P: Yeah, I think so.

R: And in what way was that?

P: Because this library is always in move and, like, and everyone is going somewhere. I think of it that way.

R: I guess in that way, you could almost say it's a hive of activity.

P: Yeah.

R: Shall we go back down. I don't mind really. We've had almost ten minutes already. You were on the bottom floor today.

P: Yeah.

R: Any particular reason?

P: Um, I don't know. My legs hurt so I prefer to do downstairs instead of upstairs.

R: So it's just that it's easier to get to?

P: Yeah, I think.

R: You ever tend to use the café in here?

P: Err, yeah I used it, like, once I think.

R: I don't think I've ever bought food here myself.

P: Food no, but probably coffee, yeah.

R: It's a bit pricey.

P: Err, yeah, yeah.

R: Well, we're back here again and it's been about ten minutes, so we could call that good if you want.

P: Yeah, I think it was a good tour.

R: Good. Okay.

10:00

3.8 Non-Student 17, 4th July 2015

4   Sᴇᴅᴇɴᴛᴀʀʏ Iɴᴛᴇʀᴠɪᴇᴡs – Cᴀʀᴅɪꜰꜰ

4.1   Sᴛᴀꜰꜰ Mᴇᴍʙᴇʀ 1, 16ᴛʜ Jᴜʟʏ 2014

Researcher: If I remember correctly, people suggested I speak to you because you worked at this library and at the previous one. Is that right?

Participant: And the previous one, and the previous one.

R: And the one before that? Is that the one where the Cardiff Story currently is?

P: Yeah.

R: So you've got an excellent perspective on the three quite different buildings.

P: Yes.

R: Which is really what I'm interested in.

P: Okay.

R: I don't know… How much have I outlined already, of what I'm doing?

P: You're looking at, as I understand it, how what young people require from buildings actually taken into account when they're designed and built.

R: Yeah, more or less, yeah, and how they experience the building once it is built, and the existing stock, so yeah. Um, probably best to start, I suppose, by talking about going from the very first one, which, I think, was built in the 1800s to the St. David's Link one. I've read a little bit about the St. David's Link one and it struck me that at the time it was built there was a great sense of optimism and enthusiasm about the project, that it was this new central library for Cardiff, but then it shut and was demolished eighteen years later, which doesn't seem like a terribly long time.

P: No, it was the… We got that library as part of the development of the original St. David's shopping centre.

R: Okay.

P: The agreement was that they would have permission to build the shopping centre if they provided a public facility within it. It could have been any public facility, it could have been swimming baths, it could have been a public gym, it could have been anything really, theatre. They decided that because the old library was no longer fit for purpose – which it wasn't; it needed an awful lot of money spent on it to bring it up to reasonable standards – that they go for a public library. However, it wasn't designed from scratch as a public library, which did lead to some issues with the building itself. Basically, it was kind of a large office block, which was retrofitted, in effect, as a public library. There was no really… In terms of the building design itself, there was no, kind of, library based input into it. It was just…

R: A shell?

P: Yeah. I mean, basically it was a shell with shops on the ground floor, ground floor access to the library, which wasn't an ideal situation, and then we had three or four floors, which

were basically public floor, which were just wide open spaces, with central core services, and then a floor of, kind of, staff accommodation in terms of offices, there was a bindery, local studies department on top, things like that. We had – that's why I said – we didn't have a separate design brief or remit for the children's library or for the nonfiction library or for the fiction library, it was just an open floor that had been subdivided with small interior walls. So it wasn't exactly great from a design point of view.

R: Did that mean, were there, I mean how much light access was there? Was it literally sort of a standard building that was designed by people who weren't intending it to be a library?

P: In terms of the actual building itself, as an office block it wasn't too bad, it was a standalone building – let me just think if that's true – Yes, it was a standalone building, so in terms of things like light and space it was quite good. It had one or two disadvantages, as I said, all the services were run through a central core, which means that visually, within the building you couldn't see from one end of the floor to the other, so we had to kind of have several service desks to supervise the floor as a whole.

R: Do you think that's important, to be able to see?

P: Yes. One of the things we designed this building, that we wanted to be able to see across the floor, basically.

R: And that's as a librarian's perspective, it's good for librarians?

P: Yes. It's good from our point of view. With the best will in the world, there are... our clientele are mixed, and there are issues with some of them. So being able to supervise the floor more or less completely from one service desk is always an advantage, hence why, when we designed the shelving, we've got a low shelving in the middle of the floors and we don't have anything higher than about head-height, until you get to the outer edges, so you can kind of see more or less across the whole floor form the service desks.

R: And would you say that that's the primary reason for it being that height, so it can be monitored by a librarian?

P: Yes. Well, no. That's one of the reasons. One of the things about the old library was that virtually all the shelving there was two metres. Um, so it was very, kind of, um, it felt quite academic, like academic kind of library stacks, where, even though there was a lot of shelving it was all two metres high, so in terms of disability, wheelchair users couldn't use the bottom shelf, and they certainly couldn't use the top two shelves, which is another consideration. We also felt that two metre shelving didn't really make it feel particularly spacious, so even though the floors were quite large in floor area, because they were subdivided so much by this two metre high shelving, it still felt quite claustrophobic once you were among the shelves. So it was a deliberate decision, when we did the shelving for this building, we'd try not to do anything above about fifteen hundred, seventeen hundred, tops, um, so it does feel a little more spacious.

R: Do you think that, when the St. David's Link library opened, did it feel at the time as though it was, um, perhaps belonging to a previous age of library building, was it not quite the library that... the library of the future, as it was then, that you were anticipating?

P: No. We came from the oldest library, the one that's, well it's still on the Hayes, was a very traditional library. It was a lending library downstairs, then there was a reference library upstairs, research department, and those never mixed. They have separate staff rooms, separate staff, separate everything. There was no interbreeding between the two whatsoever.

R: It wasn't a Carnegie, was it?

P: Um, there's some debate about that. No.

R: Right.

P: No, Carnegie tended to kind of, do most of… Some of the branches are Carnegie libraries, but this one was done, as far as I recall, by the city council of the time.

R: It's interesting that you say there's debate about that because I'd have thought if there had been any involvement from Carnegie it would have been quite above-board.

P: We've… well, it is above board. We've got a couple of libraries, which… which don't say they're Carnegie libraries, but which I believe Carnegie had some input into, but they're branch libraries. I'm pretty sure the central library was entirely, kind of, city council, or whatever it was at the time.

R: Do you think, speaking of branch libraries, that the people who use libraries in the surrounding area think of, when they think of a library, they think of two quite distinct things, you know, as far as public libraries are concerned – central libraries and branch libraries – or do you think those people, who perhaps don't think terribly critically about what a library really is at its core, perhaps the library's one thing, one entity, and it has one function and it does one thing, and most libraries you go into are the same?

P: I think… it's changed a lot in the last five or ten years. It used to be that they thought of libraries as two entirely separate things. They thought of the branch library as their library, which they'd go to on a regular basis, once a fortnight or once a week, mostly for recreational purposes, so they'd exchange their fiction, and they'd do this, you know, get a book of nonfiction out, and then the central library was something entirely else, that was kind of for the serious nonfiction, for the reference books, things like that, so I think at that time they had two completely different ideas of what a library should be in their head, their local friendly kind of branch library, and the big central, you know, kind of storage of knowledge etc, etc. I think that's changed completely now because, um, for several reasons… um, we've kind of… we've not – and I'm not going to use the phrase "dumbed-down" – but we've certainly, we certainly haven't got the clientele in central library that we used to have, kind of, fifteen years ago, in terms of serious research or scholars coming in, you know, amateur scholars coming in to use the collections. We've got some of it, but nowhere near what we had a while ago, ten fifteen year. Um, so the usage of the central library's become much more like a larger branch library.

R: Right.

P: Also, in terms of the stock, there's more crossover with stock now. We still buy the very specialised stuff for Central, but we're increasing that element of the stock in the branch libraries as well. Plus the fact that you can borrow and return to any library, so stock moves about within the branch libraries a lot anyway. We've also got more online services, so perhaps the things that you normally had to go to the central library for, you can now either access from the branch library or online, or you can do it from home online. So, with the internet, more and more of the reference services are becoming accessible from virtually anywhere, so, for example, we've got Britannica Online, we've got the Oxford English Dictionary Online; we've got kinds of things online so people don't have to come in to the central library to consult those anymore. They probably just go on Wikipedia anyway, to be honest, but in theory they've got access to them from home or from branch libraries.

Also, things like, the big thing for research was newspapers, and more and more of those are online now. We've got a good range of national newspapers online and we've also got some local newspapers that are online. The National Library at the moment is busy

digitising virtually all the Welsh newspapers, Welsh language, Welsh and English, and Welsh periodicals, so that kind of thing where, if you want to do research, you do anything like that, you had to come into the central library, that's no longer true. You can either do that from home or from a public PC in a branch library. So I think that'll change the concept of what a library is anyway.

R: Do you think that's altered the effect, or altered the relationship between how people view the function of the library and how people view the actual physical building itself? Because obviously they're both called "the library", you know, the contents and service is called the library, and the building itself is also called the library, and it can be quite easy to think of the building as nothing more than the place where you go to access the library proper. Do you feel that this library, perhaps in particular, has taken on a new life, having, you know, the building itself contributes to the appeal of the function?

P: Yeah, I mean, when we did the, we were conscious of that when we designed the building. The phrase that came into our head was that we wanted to create a kind of living room within the city, so they could just come here, not necessarily borrow, but just come in and use the library for other purposes. We didn't go quite as far down that road as we would have liked. There was originally going to be another floor on the building, which was going to be a kind of café area, but the one phrase you become very familiar with, when you're involved in kind of designing a new project or building a new building, is "value engineering", which usually means that the money has run out and you have to engineer your ambitions down slightly, so in effect, because of budget restrictions, we lost a floor off the building quite early on at the beginning, and we never quite went as far down that "living room in the city" thing as we did, hence there's no café as such in the library. We've got a coffee machine and we've looked at other things, but there's no kind of café area. But I think people see it as a, certainly as more of a social space, and because we've got free Wi-Fi, we provide free PCs, people do come in for non-stock, non-information enquiries and just spend time here either doing their own thing or meeting friends and then going off. So I think people have a different idea of what the library is, because now it's a kind of venue to meet and to occupy rather than just a place to come here and borrow stuff or look stuff up and then go away again.

R: I remember reading, I think in one of the very early draft design briefs, from about 2004-5, that there was some suggestion of putting a space on top of the sedum roof, it being a sort of reading room that you could look out from. Is that what you were referring to?

P: No, that was… They may have been something mentioned very, very early on but it was a complete other floor, um, which would have been used, as I say, for café and that kind of thing, a small kind of meeting room, lecture theatre, that kind of thing.

R: And now that the building has been open, what, five years now, I suppose, um, do you still feel that that's necessary space for the library to have, or has it sort of settled into a routine where you think, actually everyone seems to be getting on fine without it after all?

P: No, I think if we had the option we would still prefer it, we'd still like a space like that. Um… generally speaking I think the building has worked quite well. I think in terms of how it's used it works quite well. There are a few things that we would have liked to build in that we couldn't, and a couple of things that we didn't really consider that were necessary on reflection. One of the problems we have is that, unlike the old library, where a whole floor was dedicated to staff space, in here there's very little staff space at all. Virtually everything you see is public space.

R: Right. It's more or less this back quarter here?

P: It's more or less this back corner of the building, yeah, but even that isn't… On this floor, it's just that area there, so there's one office, general office, manager's office, sick room. That's it. Computer server room, on this floor, that's it. Basically, from this division back is, in effect, non-public space on two of the floors. And on the other two floors there are two meeting rooms, which is public space but not kind of general public space. I think we've, the lesson we've learned was one of the things we would like to build was, kind of, an area where it could be cordoned off for quiet study. Because of the open nature of the building, one of the comments we have had is that it's quite noisy during revision time, which affects some of the age group you're looking at in particular.

R: Yeah, I have noticed a lot of young people here, and particularly during, I think it was Japan Day, I was in here…

P: Yes, Japan Day is always quite hectic!

R: It was wonderful, actually. I personally thought it was wonderful.

P: It's nice but…

R: There's a real life to the place, and art stuff and people pattering about.

P: I think mostly it's fine. I mean, just to talk about study spaces in general, in the old library we looked at the study spaces and the way they were being used – in the old library we had about half a dozen carrels that people would use, but no more. And they were taken out of commission towards the end of the life of the building because the other room was being used by somebody else. But when we looked at… and the other major study space in the old building was an open floor, part of the open floor, which was towards the end, above the stacks area, and it was just study tables, very big study tables, four, six and eight-seater study tables. We looked at how that space was being used, and basically people would use the study tables but they'd sit on opposite diagonal corners. On a six person table there'd be one person there, one person there, and they'd set themselves up and people would be quite reluctant to disturb them and sit on that table as well. So we made a conscious effort to get away from that and have, more or less, have – we've got some tables around – but we decided to have individual study chairs that were mobile, so people could study on themselves, or they could put the chairs into groups of four or five or whatever and study together as groups, but still on the open floor of the building. I think we'd have preferred it if there was more open space for them to do that, but in order to do that we'd have had to reduce the stock ever further, and reduce the shelving even further that we did, which we weren't too happy about. It's great, it's fine during most of the year; it's frantic between April and June, so about a quarter of the year it's completely insane, when people get time off school to do study leave or they come here, half the school, and every chair is full and all the floors are full. There are people sitting on the floor, which, you know, we don't mind too much.

I think, in retrospect, if we had a space we could have used for individual quiet study, we'd have been happy with that, even it was just a large room that…

R: Reading room, basically?

P: Yes, yes. Um, because as I say, it is nice most of the time to have a bit of life in the building. We don't have a silence policy. If somebody does want to work quietly we do direct them to level five because this floor was, generally speaking, a bit quieter than the other floors. But yeah, one of the observations we've had from people is that it would be nice to have a quiet study space. We did try using one of the meeting rooms, one year, as an unsupervised study space, but, as an unsupervised space it was fairly quickly apparent

that it wouldn't work. So we had it open for a couple of weeks and there was so much hassle we had to close it down. We couldn't have a member of staff just sitting in there invigilating it.

R: I suppose it sounds like an obvious thing to say, but the atrium must have a large part to do with the noise transmission through the building, but also, on the other hand, light transmission through the building and sense of airiness. I suppose that was something that was… Was that immediately in the brief from the start, or was there ever any discussion about it?

P: No, we knew we wanted something to open up the centre of the floor to get light in and get space in, so we knew we didn't want solid floor. And we'd looked at a few, kind of, exemplar library around the country and on the continent, and the ones that seemed to work best had this kind of central atrium, central, just, you know, some kind of space that open the floor to light and space. And we knew that we had a compromise between that and noise in the building, especially because we've got exposed concrete roofs, so, you know, sound does bounce around a bit. Um, there are various kinds of sound deadening bits built into the furniture, so the large digital portraits aren't just paintings; they've got sound baffling in them.

R: Really?

P: The individual study carrels, they've got sound baffling built into them as well. So there have been attempts to reduce the noise, but we are aware that it can get noisy. I think that was one of the big issues… It was one of the big differences between this building and the other one for people, in particular, using the local studies section, because in the other building it was absolutely silent. And here you can't impose a silence policy if you've got people on open floors. But, yeah, opening the atrium up from the beginning was definitely one of the things.

R: And do you think, if, now that you've identified a sort of paradigm as regards good libraries, as an atrium, do you think that there is such a thing as a library look or a library style?

P: It's changing. It's really difficult… It's difficult because it's quite a long process. From the idea of "Yes, we're going to have a new central library", first built to actual completion was something like six years, five or six years. It was quite a long period and even within that period you could see bits changing, so decisions that had to be made fairly early on, we were conscious that some of them probably wouldn't be, maybe, want we'd actually want when the place opened. Um, I think it has changed, yes, it has changed. If you look at libraries that are opening now, by far the best place to look for really nice libraries opening, kind of with a national idea of what a library should be behind them, is Scandinavia, the Finnish and the other Scandinavian countries. The libraries they're building there have all got that kind of feeling that, you know, good furniture, good shelving, good stock, interesting building, flexible learning spaces, that kind of thing. And that seems to be a kind of universal thing across Scandinavia; it's just how they've built their libraries. It's great.

We kind of look at libraries in this country, we went to look at Norwich because at the time Norwich was one of the big ones that was just opening, that had just opened up, and again, the building was lovely – the stock was awful – and again, quite claustrophobic in terms of the stock. The building was lovely but the shelves were quite close together, very tall.

R: I've not visited. As far as I'm aware, it's essentially a large atrium with a sort of semicircular arrangement.

P: Yes, it's kind of a horseshoe kind of thing. It's got, again, it's got retail on the ground floor, leading onto some of the upper levels at the sides of the building, and then the library's at the back and arches round the top. It is a nice building, but once you're inside it does feel – it did; I haven't been there for a long time now – it did feel quite claustrophobic, quite tight.

And we went to Bournemouth, which had just opened and was by the same people who did this building, BDP, and it was nice and it uses strong colour, which was something else we wanted in this building. But it was quite uniform, and people at the time were still buying from library furniture catalogues, and that's much-of-a-muchness, it's all bog-standard, indestructible…

R: Is that what Demco does?

P: Not any more. Not since this building.

R: Is this stuff Demco?

P: No, no. We went totally the other way with this stuff. This is all, kind of, quite expensive, a lot of designer input into the furniture, kind of, top of the range office furniture, that kind of thing. I think we may have gone too far down that road. Some of it's not quite as robust as we would like. But it's quite interesting because we looked at Bournemouth and that was kind of bog-standard Demco stroke other supplier's furniture, and we looked at a couple of the places in the UK and because library suppliers at the time, there were a small number of them, they all did the same kind of furniture. It was all quite educational, institutional furniture. So every library sort of ended up looking the same, you know, you've got shelving from a certain range, furniture from a certain catalogue. You use more or less the same palette of colours, so the building design had been individual, once you got inside it still felt very much like a traditional library. And that's still happening to some extent. You can still go to a new build library now in some places and it's just, they could have built this twenty years ago.

The one big thing that has changed in the interior decoration sometimes, specifically, the loose furniture has changed a lot. We went to Amsterdam Library and that was a real eye-opener. It was, kind of… Have you been to Amsterdam Library?

R: No.

P: No. It opened, it must have been about seven years ago, and we'd gone to see another library in Nijmegan, which our corporate director had seen and had been quite impressed by. That was okay; there was strong use of colour, but they used colour, because it was only one floor, they used colour to divide up the floor. So, you know, the music library was green, and it was *very* green, the carpet was green, the shelving was green, the furniture was green, the ceiling was green. It was very green. You paled significantly to walk in. But, because the library was pink and another area was red, that worked quite well for a library on one floor, and as we were leaving, the librarians asked if we were going to see Amsterdam. And two month ago [at the time] it was opened and it's the largest public library in Europe. So, we had two hours spare before the flight, so we rushed to Amsterdam, got off and had a quite look round and it was a stunning building. We went back maybe twice more again to have a look at it. It is just absolutely stunning, um, very similar to this: central atrium, lots of wide open spaces. They only used a basic palette of black, white and wood, and then everything else was just really strong colours and the furniture and fitting just dropped into that. So you have a group of bright red chairs, and somewhere else could be a different design and bright green chairs, stuff like that. And it worked really well, and they had a piano and a restaurant and they had a bar – *they had a*

bar! – at which you could sit and look over the city and have a beer while you decided which library book to borrow.

R: So, when you say those things I immediately think piano downstairs, views over the city, colour scheme divided by floors. Is some of the thinking in this building quite clearly derived from there?

P: Yeah, we kind of looked at, we shamelessly stole bits and pieces from what we thought were the best looking libraries at the time. We got the colour scheme from Nijmagen because we did think that strong use of colour in libraries was a good way to divide things up. It kind of worked, in a way, but we couldn't translate it in its entirety because they'd used it specifically because they were on one floor, and specifically to divide up certain areas, but we did want to transfer that strong use of colour within the library.

One thing we didn't like about Bournemouth was that it was exactly the same colour throughout, so every floor, every wall, had the same colours. The floors all had the same carpets, so it was just too uniform, it was not exactly bland but it was quite, kind of, boring, you know? It was kind of a purpley-blue colour throughout. So, yes, so Amsterdam was definitely a big influence, so yeah, we kind of went through, we did look at the furniture from the library suppliers and it was boring and old and tired, so we went the other way and went for designer, top-of-the-range office furniture. We went for strong use of colour to delineate the floors. It's kind of worked quite well.

R: Do you feel there is enough delineation between floors? Because, obviously, if you've got quite a small floor plan and an atrium taken out of it, you're going to have quite a few floors vertically to make the space.

P: Yeah, I suspect not.

R: You think two, three and four look a little bit like each other?

P: Two isn't…

R: Or maybe three and four?

P: It's a difficult one. One of the things we said for, in terms of orientation of the building, which in retrospect may not have been a great idea, but we thinking about things like, in terms of people with visual impairments, so when they're using the building, we did try to… The problem with a public space or a public building like this one is there're so many interest groups you have to take account of you end up compromising something just being able to say, you can't get one hundred percent of what you wanted but everybody's going to be able to get seventy percent. So one of the things we did from the focus group for people with visual impairments was that they said they do find it quite to orientate within buildings, full stop. So one of the things we tried to do was, apart from this floor, which is kind of unique because of the nature of the stock, but certainly on Two, Three and Four, we tried to stack the services together in the same place, so when you come out of the lifts you always know the toilets are in a corridor on your left had side, the main enquiry desk is always just in front of you on the left hand side. You know that the other enquiry desk is at the bottom of the floor. So we have stacked those above each other. Um, it does mean that the floor can look the same, hence the very large numerals we have painted. We would have liked a little more differentiation. There were certain colours we couldn't actually use for the wall colours, so we couldn't really use red and green because there were issues with them being used for fire signs and so we couldn't really use those. So we were stuck with, we used orange for signage and for certain wayfinding, so whenever you see orange in the building, it either means "information board", or "you can get information here", or "this is

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telling you where things are", things like that. So in the end, we were kind of limited in the number of colours we had left. But, yeah, I agree, they… It's quite difficult knowing how to change, how to give each floor its personality, if you're still trying to stack stuff, the major features, in each place, and if you've got white shelving throughout the building and you've got all black carpet throughout the building, it is quite difficult to give the floors their individual feeling.

We tried, as you know, we've tried highlighting colours on the walls; we've tried to use that. We could possibly have looked at doing more with the furniture. We did try to do it with the furniture, but chairs seem to migrate between floors by themselves, because nobody admits responsibility for it. But they just do, so…

R: Hmmm, that's fascinating. I've done a few interview, well, fifteen so far, with local young people, so I have an early understanding of how of those young people experience the building, and I've been interested in how concepts such as intrigue and wayfinding, the sense of – it's been implied, but I've noticed by looking at the transcripts – a sense of intrigue, or possibly theatricality, you might say, being of interest to them, particularly with things like the microfilm readers or the automated return system on the ground floor, or just the view sort of pulling you upwards, like that big window, being responsible, in some ways, for how they move through the building and interact with bits of it. I wondered if that's something you've noticed at all.

P: [Sighs]…

R: You can say no; it's fine.

P: Its difficult because, certainly in kind of, when we used the focus groups when the building was designed, but we were one step removed because all the research and focus groups was done by the developers, so we got the end result, in effect. And what most young people tend to say, when asked about what they want from a public space is that they just want somewhere to sit and be left alone. They don't particularly want to be bothered, in effect. If they want something they'll come and ask for it. We try to wander round; we do walking and just having a look at things.

I think what young people want in a building is somewhere they can stake out at their own kind of territory. And that worked to a certain degree here because we've got some circular hubs. They're quite popular because they move into those and they kind of form little groups within those. We've got some circular units that hold study tables on one end, and, again, they congregate there, and they've taken to kind of – because a lot of the furniture's on wheels, which is what we wanted – they have taken to occupying certain areas. And I think you're right; I think they do like, they like to see their friends doing stuff on other floors, so you can frequently see them hanging over the atrium and watching their best friend snog somebody in the corner, so that goes on quite a bit. So, yeah, I'm…

We get… It's interesting because we get some people who come in to use the library constantly – not constantly – but they use it from when they're about… They go as kids to the library. They're actually readers and borrowers.

R: They consider themselves "library people"?

P: Yes. And then we get another lot who don't come here until they reach GCSE kind of level, when they have to get out of the house and find somewhere relatively quiet and relatively peaceful to study, and then they start using the library for those purposes. We're always trying to kind of, we're always hoping for them to cross over and become library users while they're here. I don't know how much of that actually goes on. I suspect they

come in and do what they've got to do and then go away again. But that does kind of hang on, because it's one of these, at the end, that is one of the great things about libraries is that you can come in, spend all day here and nobody does worry if you're here all day and you don't spend any money and don't do this and you don't do that, you know. It's a fairly non-judgemental place. It always has been, as you can see by some of the occupants of our newspaper area.

R: As long as they don't bring lice in that's fine, isn't it?

P: Pets aren't allowed really. Obviously there are exception and we have to do something about those, but generally speaking we're kind of fairly accepting of people who don't want to use the library for, in quotes, "library purposes". Some people just want to come in and chill for a day, read or not read, just use the Wi-Fi, and we're fine with that. And I think, even though our places have kind of loosened up a bit, if you're in Starbucks you do feel obliged to buy the coffee every couple of hours just to justify using the Wi-Fi, and it's not like that in a public library. You can come in at nine, leave at six.

R: When you say "a public library", do you feel that that's *this* public library specifically. Is that not a situation that every existed at the two previous central libraries, because you had a different clientele, the building was for a different purpose, essentially?

P: I think this building is a lot more relaxed about non-library use than previous libraries. Certainly in the old library that's on the Hayes, there was no reason to be in there unless you were actually borrowing or consulting material. You know, in the lending library downstairs there were no chairs. You came and borrowed your stuff and then left. The reference library upstairs had limited seating so, unless you were using library material, you weren't really encouraged to stay and just read your own stuff, or sit there and chill. You came in, used the library. Frederick Street, it was slightly more relaxed, but again… there was nothing to encourage you to stay really. The furniture was fairly hard; we didn't really have any easy chairs at all, there was no Wi-Fi, so, unless you were desperate to get out of the rain and cold there was no real reason to stay. And, as I say, here people do come in and stay for hours. They'll stay all day. We do have people come in nine o'clock, leave at six at the end of the day, and they do that all week, so they spend virtually all their waking hours here, as many as they can. I mean, obviously they have reasons to do that, reasons they're doing that, but it's not something we object to; it's not something that causes us a problem.

We tend not to judge how people use the building unless it becomes a problem to us, and we'll address them on an individual basis. We have lots of people come in from hostels an stuff; we don't say, "Oh, hostel users, you have to read something, you have to borrow something". If a person's being a problem then we deal with that person, not the type of person they are.

R: Do you think, looking at the progression of the usage of those three libraries, as possibly from a more formal to a less formal library function, you can also follow the use of things like symbolism in the building itself? If you go back to the earliest one, you're looking at things like sculpted inscriptions on the top and that type of thing, through to a more – I think there was a glass atrium on the St David's Link one – and now this, which possibly could, I mean, you might suggest that it, that you wouldn't know it's a library from a distance down The Hayes unless you came up to it saw "Library" written on it.

P: Yeah, and even that wasn't going to be there originally.

R: Originally it was written over in horizontal orange lettering, wasn't it?

P: It's wasn't even there originally.

R: Oh really?

P: It wasn't going to be labelled at all, at one point. And then, yes you're right, there was going to horizontal thing on it and somebody decided that it should be bigger and brighter. We went to Peckham and saw "Library" written on the roof.

R: Yeah, that's an interesting one, isn't it?

P: Yes, in terms of… The comments we had when we opened were things like, "This building's nice, it's really great, it doesn't really look like a library at all", which in one way was what we were kind of aiming for. You know, we didn't want it to be regarded as a traditional-looking library with regimented shelving in rows.

R: People have a preconceived notion of what a library is for, based on the look.

P: And I think the other thing that happened was, because the other building had such a great, kind of… heritage to it, because it had been there an awfully long time and it had been paid for by subscription, etc, etc. And there was a lot of historical baggage that was associated with that building, and that was moved over to the one in Frederick Street, so the meeting room in Frederick Street was called the Ballinger room after one of the former county librarians. A lot of the paintings and statuary and stuff were moved over to the new building with plaques on walls etc etc.

Obviously, when we moved from there to the temporary building that just couldn't be accommodated anyway, but there was a conscious decision to, in terms of the building, to make a conscious break from that kind of heritage. So, we didn't think it appropriate that we bring the busts of Ballinger and previous city and county people with us and put them up in this building because it wouldn't seem, it just wouldn't have worked. Interesting, from Manchester they've done it as an entity, as a kind of room itself. They also did the same kind of thing in Amsterdam, where they have one room, which was more or less as it was, which was kind of wooden shelving, leather furniture, chesterfields, and that worked quite well; because they had the luxury of space they were able to do that. It was quite bizarre; walking from this ultramodern building you'd turn the corner and there was this little museum piece of a room. Nice idea; worked quite well. I think we decided we'd make quite a clean cut from even Frederick Street to this one, so we didn't bring any baggage with us.

R: Do you think that that's something you were able to do because of the nature of libraries as being quite regionally administered and feeling like the products of the local area?

P: Yes. It's interesting, there's kind of a move towards regionalising libraries again now. It's been done in Northern Ireland for a while – I think there's only one library authority for the whole of Northern Ireland – I don't know how much autonomy the individual areas have within that.

R: Is that part of Ed Vaisey's plan to "let them sort themselves out"?

P: Don't know. But there's kind of that move within Wales again to unify some of it, and it's… I can see why. I can see why, in terms of economies of scale, etc. etc. you do get certain advantages, so there is talk of one library management system for the whole of Wales, which is an interesting concept and one that might be done. We have various regional lending systems in South-East Wales and South Wales, which work quite well.

How far down that would go, so there would be one design brief for every new library in Wales, I'm not sure that would happen.

R: I guess it depends whether you're talking about, when you say "library", if you mean the service and the resources, or whether you're talking about the building…

P: I think it's far more likely that the services and the stock, to a lesser degree, will be unified throughout, and I can see the reason behind that. We do have this kind of baseline thing in Wales where you should be able to go into any public library and have this baseline service you expect, regardless of where you are. The next logical step is that you can take your library card, and if you've got the same library management system in Aberystwyth, you can just borrow books in Aberystwyth. And I can get all that, I see all that. But in terms of the building, the building depends so much on where it is, you know, and what people… Would people in Anglesey have the same expectations of a library as people in Swansea? Different people, different demographic, different lifestyle, they might want a completely different physical building with slightly different services. I don't know. I can't ever see flat-pack libraries being delivered.

R: I mean, obviously it's happened before but that was due to the Carnegie Corporation. That was quite a sort of unique thing, wasn't it?

P: But even if you look at the Carnegie libraries…

R: There are variations, considerably.

P: Yeah, yeah.

R: I know that, and this is relating to something you mentioned earlier, in the Finnish library service in particular, in the manifesto for it, they say that we want to give the appearance of a homogenous nationwide library service, and it's not entirely clear from reading that whether they mean "we're going to have a bunch of totally different buildings where you can borrow in the same way across them all, or whether the experience of using the building is important enough now, on its own, in order to stand on its own.

P: I suspect what they mean is the service, rather than the building, because one of the nice things about Scandinavian libraries is that they've all got that same kind of feel to them. All the buildings are unique and interesting. There's one that's shaped like a grouse, or something, like a Ptarmigan. It's great. And there are brilliant libraries being built around the world. There are libraries in Mexico that are being building. But it's only in Scandinavia, I think, where they've got this idea about what a library should be, and how that should be reflected in the building, but still leave enough leeway to still make the building individual and interesting.

R: I noticed, something I read about eighteen months ago, I suppose, was this idea they put forward in San Antonio of a bookless library, which, I mean, it was only a couple of pretty mediocre SketchUp images, which, as far as I could see…

P: It's opened.

R: Has it? I haven't actually followed it up. They planned to stuff the thing with iPads, as far as I could tell, which seemed, I mean, aside from the fact that obviously an iPad will be obsolete within about five years…

P: They were trying to do two things, weren't they? They were trying to provide a service where you can take your own reader and download stuff – and I'd question why you'd do that – and I think they were trying to provide a service for people who couldn't afford. One of the things we get blasé about is we assume everyone has ICT at home, that everyone's got a connection and these days that everyone's got an e-reader. It's simply not true. I mean, if you look at the library cuts around, not so much Cardiff but in some of the valleys areas, then vast proportions of the public don't have ICT at home in any form whatsoever,

and they're the ones who need the libraries to stay open. It's extremely difficult because on the one hand you've got the government pushing the digital agenda, and then you've got cuts to the one kind of building that has a history of being open to the public and having a history of providing digital help and facilities. It's an example of joined-up thinking at its very best. But yes, this bookless library they've opened in Texas is… I don't know. I don't…

R: Do you suspect at all that it's more of a fashion statement, a "look what we can do"?

P: Yeah. It's quite odd because in all the research I've seen, forever, if you asked someone what they want from a new library, most always in the top two or three is good stock, and now people still, when they say that, I think, for the most part, mean physical stock. They might say good services, helpful staff, and things that are always in the top four or five things, but this idea that the stock of the library should still be good is still up there with public PC provision and stuff like that. So I think we still have that idea that that's – not what the library *should* be – but what people want from a library. It would be interesting to see if they've done public consultation for that though. It would have been interesting to see where a building with no books but a lot of e-readers would come anywhere within the top ten that are asked for.

R: Whether you can call it a library, you know, just as an etymological thing, it doesn't seem very much to do with physical books.

P: No, and from what I've read, it does seem to be an agenda that was pushed by one particular representative, who was kind of very keen on this. I don't have an issue with eBooks at all, and I don't see why some people view it as an either-or situation, you know? Either you have eBooks or you have physical books.

R: I can't see there being much of an argument for saying that if you have both it's a compromise. I don't see that at all.

P: No, I don't see that at all. EBooks are great for some stuff and physical books are great for other stuff.

R: And if, going back to your comment, in consultations people tend to say we want good quality physical stock, does that make it harder to justify a reduction in stock when you move from one library to another or a reduction in stack heights or a reduction in floor area?

P: No, because we've… The old library had slightly more stock than we have here, however we had the luxury of space in the other library. We had tall shelves, we had huge floors, we had whatever. What we found was a lot of the stock wasn't being used at all, so people were coming and saying "You've got a marvellous transport section, you've got three bays of transport books", when actually if you looked at the usage statistics, a quarter of those books hadn't been out for the past year, half hadn't been out for two years. Our belief has always been that a smaller, more active stock, that's turning over faster and getting renewed faster, is much better than a larger stock that just sitting on the shelves and getting out of date and not being used.

R: That's the, sort of, worst type of stock. It gives stock a bad reputation.

P: Absolutely. You know condition's poor, the information's outdated, it's outlived its usefulness and no one's reading it anymore, and the transport section was a good example of it, because we did have some very enthusiastic people using the transport section, but they'd read a book when it came it and it would be read quite heavily in the first year, you know, it might go out seven or eight times, which for a transport non-fiction book is pretty good. Then, bam, nothing. All the people who were interested in that book didn't read it

anymore. But, you know, at the time we did some stock editing, but we didn't have to worry about it because we knew we had so much space we could just expand into it. If it was really necessary we could just add another bay onto the transport section. So people perceived it as a good collection simply because of volume, whereas what we see as a good collection is stock that's constantly turning over, and so you get new stuff coming in, you withdraw the old stuff. The collection stays the same size – it may not be huge – but every time you go in, in theory, there's something new on the shelves you can have a look at.

R: Beyond lending figures and, I suppose, people through the door, how many people you see at reception, is there any way of getting a grasp of the actual value of the library to the people?

P: Define value.

R: Well, yeah, I suppose that's the first problem, isn't it? People talk about the value of books, the value of libraries, as being a very important thing. Every time you talk about it there are these discussions where cuts are planned and everyone's standing up and talking about the value of the library being "democratic", or "intellectual" or…

P: These things are all impossible to measure, aren't they?

R: You can't really pin those things down.

P: No.

R: Do you think that's a problem or, maybe, an advantage in some senses?

P: There's a couple of things. Firstly there are certain things that can be measure. You can find studies on the economic impact of libraries and how they benefit the community, so there are those kinds of studies out there. There are also those studies that come out every so often from the Reading Agency or something close to the Reading Agency that say, you know, reading for pleasure amongst children means that they do better at school, so everybody's aware of those kinds of things. How much influence that has on an individual council that has to take a massive cut in its budget, I don't know, but I suspect it doesn't really have that much influence at all.

It's one of those things that everybody knows libraries are a "good thing", but it's quite hard to quantify some of it, and even if you can quantify it, there's no guarantee that anybody's going to take the blindest bit of notice because the political reality is that cuts have to be made. Budgets have to be cut.

R: Do you think that places more importance on the building itself as a sort of advert and announcer of what the library does? You can't leave that so implicit as maybe it has been in the past.

P: Yes, I think one of the… One of the things about this building is, we kind of have a central library manager who's very keen on using the building for events, and in terms of stock issued or new borrowers who join and retain membership as a result of those events, it's probably not that significant compared to the percentage of traditional, if you like, library users who use the library regardless of whether we have an event here or not. The advantage of the events is that they raise the profile of the library in the community and even more importantly it raises the profile of the library in the county council, both the elected members and the officials, so we do have quite a strong program of events here, since we're opened, and that's definitely raised the profile of the library. There's a big push this year on the summer reading challenge, which we've done every year, but there've been significantly more resources put into it this year, and that's been noticed amongst senior officers and senior members of the council. So that kind of thing where, yes, the

building has definitely been used as an advocator for the library services as a whole. Again, at the end of the day, whether that will make an enormous amount of difference – because we've had to take cuts to the building this year. Virtually all the cuts to the library service this year were centred on the central library because the branches got hit a bit last year. This year it was Central's turn; next year, don't know. And so we've restructured the staff a bit this year and lost a few posts, had some other changes which we're not entirely comfortable with, but it's one of these things that has to be done, but I think would possibly have been worse if the library didn't have such a high profile.

R: Is it easier to make the cuts, to say "Oh well, it's marginalised anyway"?

P: Yes, I think if it's… Yes, I think if we hadn't, if Central Library manager hadn't pushed the events agenda, I think it would have been easier… I think the cuts would have been probably worse than they are now.

R: It's interesting, isn't it? It introduces an element of strategy to the management. You know, quite a conflict of interests, potentially.

P: It's difficult because we're still… All usage in all public libraries is, as you know, kind of dropping off. Wales is better at the moment than England; it's not dropping quite so quickly, and in fact it's growing in some areas. We're still one of the busiest libraries in the country, the busiest in Wales, but that kind of steady usage isn't something that's going to grab political attention, if you like, whereas Japan Day, where we get X number of people in for that, and it's in the papers and it's on the news and it's on social media, that's the kind of thing that does get mentioned and the central library's name is put about. I think if we'd just been a big building kind of acting as a traditional library, I suspect we'd have taken more of a cut than we have.

5   Sedentary Interviews – Liverpool

5.1   Staff Member 2, 23rd October 2014

Researcher: It struck me, actually, on those libraries, that there's quite a discrepancy now occurring, quite a rift between what's happening to central libraries and what' happening to branch libraries. When I was a kid I never really thought about central libraries and branch libraries as being different things. There was just the appearance of once, homogenous library concept. But particularly today, with central libraries seeming to reinvent themselves, and combine themselves with council functions, becoming hubs, history centres and record offices, as well as public libraries, there's that difference occurring, and I wonder if you think that's something that will the public thinks about because that's really, I suppose, what my interest is, what this PhD is, particularly with young people in the sixteen to twenty-five age group, that's the group I've taken hold of. Is there a difference between what professionals are involved with, in making our libraries, and the image that is actually interpreted by young people who visit or use them? I don't know if you have views on that in particular? For example, last year I was at the Speak up for Libraries conference and there was a lot of fist banging on tables and librarians getting very riled up, and that was mostly centred around branch libraries. It was a very pragmatic, grim situation. But then, contrasting with that, we have these beautiful, high budget projects being built. Do you see that as being something that's going to end essentially in a particular national situation?

P: I think each case is different to be honest. I mean, we got the funding for Central Library after working on it for about twenty years, working towards this project, and we struggled to get the funding. We did all kinds of feasibility studies; we looked at moving out of here, maybe into the shopping centre in Liverpool, handing the building to the museum and art gallery next door, moving the archives out of town. So it was a long gestation and we got the funding, or started to get the funding, the private finance initiative credits back in about 2006/7, and it grew from there, so we were actually doing our project, it was originated a long time ago. Obviously it looks unusual now in the fact that austerity has come along and recession has come along and cuts have come along, so this was started a long, long time ago. But because we got a significant grant from the government, that's what has made this feasible.

While we were doing that, we had many years of investment in our community libraries, so this building actually declined in use, but also in terms of its quality and condition and particularly historic areas were suffering water ingress, all kinds of problems. It was very outdated and outmoded. And we invested a lot in our community libraries. That was either through combining with council one-stop shops, who brought money in, or European money, or in the case of Toxteth Library, a big lottery funding and a big grant to restore it and renovate it and make it more attractive.

So I don't think we've ever ourselves said, you know, we see Central Library as the flagship and the others are just satellites. We've never seen it that way. It's just what's happened at this particular moment in time. So a lot of our community libraries were upgraded and we wanted them to be good and be what we thought of as attractive, modern image which would attract all users from nought to five, right through to the older age group as well.

So we just happened to be in this unusual situation now that Central happens to finally have its investment, whereas we've got severe budget cuts that might affect our community libraries.

R: Yeah. I noticed, I think, it might have been a call for public meetings on the desk of the Archive Room upstairs, which I think said that eleven branches were at risk.

P: Potentially at risk, yeah, which we're trying to mitigate against in different ways, so we've had a load of consultations, and we're going through a lot of negotiations with groups that might be able to take on the libraries. Liverpool's been particularly badly hit in the council funding. It's relied a lot on grant funding, which has been the funding that's been cut, so over a four year period, Liverpool City Council's losing well over fifty percent of its budget. It's a massive, massive cut. So it's having to cope with that, and we can't just say we'll leave libraries alone. It's having to make difficult decisions based on that.

But Central Library here has always, although we see al libraries as good and attractive and welcoming to everyone, Central Library has always had different features. We've always had the archives here, so it's not been that we've recently changed in any way. The archives have grown up here as part of the library, and we've always had a significant reference selection here, a very historic, important one, and we've always had special collections here, so that's been something that does make Central Library different to our smaller community libraries.

R: Do you think there's a critical mass, essentially, that makes the whole thing much stronger than the sum of its parts?

P: Yes. Yeah, and different. We want all our libraries to be excellent and welcoming for all age groups, not least the younger age group, but this does make Central Library a bit different, the nature of the archives, the reference and special collections, and that was something we had to deal with or wanted to deal with as part of the project.

R: The renovation was done last year, wasn't it, or at least, it opened last year?

P: It opened in May 2013, after about a two and half year build period.

R: And, if I'm right in believing, we've got the Hornby Room, the Oak Room, the Picton and the façade as the Victorian bits.

P: Yes, Picton there, Hornby and Oak [points to plan in front of us].

R: And then before that, in here somewhere, there was a seventies bit and a fifties bit, wasn't there?

P: Yes, so you've got the 1860s façade, which was the original library combined with the museum. Now this took a direct hit in the Second World War from an incendiary bomb, because Liverpool was very heavily blitzed, so this bit here we call the Brown Library, after William Brown, who funded it originally. It was rebuilt in the late fifties style, which we felt had become extremely outdated. It had lots of levels and galleries. It didn't connect well to the nineteenth century building at all. It was very cumbersome, difficult to find your way around. The whole reading of the building was difficult. It was cramped, no day light to speak of, those kinds of problems. Also poor facilities, lack of toilets. There was only one toilet for the whole building and it was on the ground floor.

R: It would be fascinating to speak to someone who was involved in the building of that to know what the, sort of, what the – I don't know if there *is* anyone – but what the ethos was when it was put up.

P: Well, I suppose at the time they thought that's what was good for a library, but we thought it had become very dated, particularly the lack of daylight, the lack of natural light, because we are hemmed in on either side. You see, originally at this end here it would have had daylight because it had windows looking out onto some small gardens.

R: So that would have been open between the 50s and 70s?

P: Yes, that was a garden. There was originally housing right up to it but that was removed when a lot of housing was taken down and flats were built. So you have a garden here and the Brown Library looked out, so you had daylight and I think it was more pleasant and you could perhaps understand better how it worked.

But in the 1970s, because of the need for space and consolidating everything… At one time, for example, we had a lot of little departments spread around the city, so you might be told, well, go over to X Street for the music library and go to Y Street for the newspaper library, which obviously was inconvenient, and for us it was difficult because we were staffing different places, looking after different buildings.

I think it followed on from the bomb damage, when a lot of stuff was disbursed and it became difficult to fit it all back in. So they put up a 1970s. It opened 1978 and was basically a steel framed sort of, quite functional basic library-type stack, but also with some spaces used by the public. An eight story building, if you include the ground floor. But that was right up against the Brown Library, so the Brown Library lost its daylight and its view, and had this 70s building up against it.

R: That must have made the whole thing quite labyrinthine I should think.

P: Yes.

R: From a public point of view… I mean, I think of this building… I found it enormously valuable, not just because I'm studying it, but because when I come off the station at Lime Street, rucksack on my back and four hours of travelling behind me, it's fantastic just to go somewhere I can sit down, check my emails and take stock, and I don't suppose that was really possible before this came along.

P: No; never. It was a difficult to use building. You'd come in through a previous entrance, which we now use for the café terrace. If you imagine where the café is, the original entrance was, essentially we used to refer to it jokingly as the cat flap because it was such a small entrance, and you were overshadowed by the museum and art gallery. There wasn't actually much to tell you outside in the way of landscaping, signage or lighting that it was a library.

R: In that sense, it must have actually been a victim of its classical façade. It certainly happened to me when I turned up, that I started heading towards the steps and assumed that this massive walkway would lead me up, but then had to veer off. And, I mean, I could tell as soon as I came around the corner that *that* was actually the entrance. I mean, a lot of effort's been put into making sure you actually realise that's the library.

P: Exactly. We moved some balustrades, we had the literary pavement, and we got permission to bring it out onto the public domain, so we got Section 278 permission to do all that. We've cleared it, we've made it legible to attract people in and we've made it clear with signage and lighting, for the first time in ages, really, that there's a library here and this is the way in.

Those steps were a bit of a historical addition; they weren't originally there.

R: Oh really?

P: Originally you'd have gone in just either side: one side to the library, one side to the museum. The street level was lowered significantly one time in the past, I think early nineteen-hundreds, and then they built this huge flight of steps, but it wasn't in the original scheme. So, yeah, and the museum used to use that until about ten years ago, it was their main entrance.

R: Really?

P: But when they had funding to change their building around, they had an entrance made lower down the street. But you're right, we wanted this very welcoming environment for all age groups and all visitors and we never had a café before; we just had vending machines, which are always unsatisfactory.

R: And the café was important?

P: The café was very important both to provide for visitors who stay for a long time, you know, they'll be researching family history or using the reference material, stay a long time during the day, save them having to leave the building and go and find somewhere and come back, but also to give a sort of image and, you know, a good facility to families and people who are just dropping by. And we deliberately set out to think, well, we could also just attract to tourists who are coming to Liverpool and want to look round, and maybe find our facility attractive and useful. One hundred percent Wi-Fi inside and out the building, and that includes the rood terrace as well, which is free to access, and the café terrace, and we thought providing that was important as part of our whole offer. A library and archive, but also, given our location, we're in the "Cultural Quarter" of the World Heritage Site of Liverpool, we're listed buildings, we've got the fine art gallery, the museum, St. George's Hall. We thought we should be also on the visitor's destination.

R: Perfect location for it, really, isn't it? You couldn't pick a better one.

P: And that's, as I say, has been really where we've exceeded our expectations. We've double our visitor numbers since we opened. We got about 800,000 visitors in first year. But visitor feedback has been tremendous, and we've actually been voted by TripAdvisor users as the top tourist destination for Liverpool out of 137. And that voted us as one of the top ten UK landmarks. Now, I know TripAdvisor has certain features. I don't particularly use it myself, but we do keep an eye on it now because we've become so, sort of, popular on it in terms of customer feedback.

R: I presume quite a lot of people visiting the library now might be, sort of, "casual users", as it were, who haven't come here to study anything.

P: Yeah, and we're happy with that. We don't mind particularly why people come here. If it's just to drop in, maybe they're in Liverpool for a day; we know people come off the cruise liners and maybe explore Liverpool for a day, and maybe they're coming here because they like the building, they've heard about it, they like the roof terrace, and we've quite happy with that. If people then go on to become a regular user, join the library, that's excellent as well. We have had over, I think it's now 70,000 new members join the library since we opened, so they're people who've actually signed up for a library ticket, who weren't members before, so that kind of casual use is fine and we're happy with it and we put on a lot of events and exhibitions and activities, but if it turns into more regular use, even better.

R: And those extra activities are now, I presume, more important than they were before, in a public engagement sense. I guess you have the space to be able to do that now. I presume it's more *this* are that you're using now [the children's library]?

P: Well it's a combination really. Underneath we really created the children's library from what was previously a sort of library stack, if you like, but before then had been a lecture theatre and a performance space. So we combine the children's library with performance, so we can put on a range of things there, including noisy activities, which don't disturb the rest of the library and we do things out of hours as well. We've had a couple of rock bands perform and the Get it Loud in Libraries campaign.

R: Oh, I've not heard of that.

P: Yeah, yeah, it's quite a nice campaign where they've got funding partly from the arts council. They get up and coming rock bands and musicians to perform in libraries to give libraries a different image for the young people, but it helps people of an age, say, where, young teens or maybe twelve to eighteen, who can't necessarily or shouldn't necessarily be able to get into clubs and pubs, get to see a band that they like in an environment that's quite safe.

R: That's quite, I mean, bold in a sort of image sense. Perhaps you might say that there's a stereotypical library that exists, which perhaps is what this was before. Quite close, actually, to what you might call a stereotypical library, and it's… I mean, if you're holding rock concerts it's a very deliberate push away from that, it seems…

P: Exactly, exactly.

R: … what you're articulating to the public. We don't do all the *shhh* stuff anymore.

P: Exactly. Exactly right, and we were lucky that the guys who runs it, he's based not too far away up in Lancaster, and he has done other libraries. He's done it there and he's done it in other libraries, particularly around the north-west. He's got his funding, so all we really have to do is provide the venue and keep it open till midnight once in a while so this can happen, and it's a good thing for us. It does give a different image and the people who come, I think, like the fact that it's in quite an unusual space which is a combination of historic, with historic features restored, which date back to the 1880s, but also modern in the way it's been changed to a children's room.

R: Yeah, I thought that was one of the most fascinating things about the building actually, and why I was quite keen to study it, being interested in symbolism and the image and the relationship to a stereotypical library, it's quite fascinating. I didn't have any sort of preconceptions when I came here. I was aware that it looked old from the outside but was renovated, and when I was first down, which was in July, I went through here into the Hornby Room…

P: Yeah, just above this level.

R: And it was quite a shock, actually. There was nobody else in there and it was almost as though I'd, you know, hesitated for a second; have I wondered somehow into a completely different building? It was beautifully renovated.

P: And the key thing about that room and one adjoining it, which we call the Oak Room, is that those were closed to the public.

R: The Oak Room is the one with the Birds or America book, isn't it?

P: Yes, Birds of America. That one was built in 1914 as an extension and was never ever open to the public until now. It was always a back office space. The Hornby Library, I think when it first opened, was open for some time. It opened in 1906. For some time you could go in there, but only by appointment, and there were study tables. But, certainly for about fifty years, it's been closed to the public and only opened for special events, so we would

fetch the books for someone and they'd look at the elsewhere under supervision, but they wouldn't actually go in the book. So, the idea was, have a circulation, make it visible and get people into rooms they maybe never even knew existed.

This is it here. So this link we think is very successful because the 70s building was very close here and you couldn't get a view of the exterior of these rooms, but by linking it this way to have a complete walk round, you've got this nice inside-outside space here, which is a really good place to sit but also to circulate. So, yeah, that was a key part of the scheme, opening up these areas and really making the most of our buildings and collections as a visitor attraction, and, as I say, if we can then convert people to regular users and visitors, even better.

R: Do you know what the purpose of them was when they were originally built? Were they just extra space?

P: Well no, the Hornby Library was quite specific in that it was funded by a gift from a merchant called Hugh Frederick Hornby. His family traded very successfully with the Baltic, the timber trade, and his obsession was collecting finest art books, engravings, prints and so on, and he ended up leaving his massive collection in his will in 1899 to the city, and ten thousand pounds to build a customised library to house it all in, in his memory.

R: So it was a philanthropic gesture?

P: Yes, philanthropic and designed by the Corporation architect, Thomas Shelmerdine, in what they apparently call an Edwardian baronial style, but customised for his collection, so on the lower level you'll see various wooden drawers, which are on rollers, which were specially made for his prints and engravings. So it's all customised for his collection and we particularly wanted to keep it that way because his bequest was his books, his prints, to be housed in a library he paid for.

R: It's almost like a private library in a sense.

P: Yeah… yeah, in a way, but it's always been open to the public, so when it arrived there was already a printed catalogue, which we still use to this day, and it was always available for people to look at. It's never been in any way restricted, but, as I say, for about fifty years the room was just closed off. We couldn't keep supervising it and staffing it, and I think the decision was made to keep it for special occasions.

R: That's an interesting point you raise there, actually, about supervision and staffing because I know in Cardiff, which is one I've been looking at, the building is very open plan. The building has an atrium, like this, and then five floors which are essentially completely open around it, and very low shelving, and the purpose of that, apparently, was to permit a view through the entire building so it could be staffed from service desks and maintained quite easily. Does this, has this, posed any particular problems because there are almost no sort of clear lines of sight through it all?

P: We weren't overly concerned about that. We have put some very high value items into the repository here, but only really, really, exceptionally high value ones on the insurance lists.

R: Were they put down a mine, or did I just imagine that?

P: Yeah, while we were out of here they went down the salt mines in Cheshire, where there's a company that extracts the salt to put on the roads in winter and is left with these huge caverns. They're about five hundred feet below the ground, but they're perfect for storage.

R: Very stable.

P: They're a stable environment, dry, obviously secure, and they're actually used by the British Library, National Archives, Cheshire Record Office, so we thought, for peace of mind, we could put our high value material down there, which worked fine.

So, other than that, we've put things back in place to respect the bequest. We did increase some of the security around the glazing on the cases and the locks. We've put CCTV in reasonably discreetly. We will occasionally patrol, but more often than not they're looking at the CCTV to make sure nothing untoward is happening.

Really, we've then taken it on trust that people would respect the area and a year and a half on we've had not reported incidents or problems of any kind. Nothing at all, so it's been successful in that respect.

R: I wonder if there's something about the space itself that makes people act in a certain more responsible way.

P: I think so.

R: You feel it's almost church-like, the quality of that space.

P: I think so. There is that. And I've met people going round of all ages, including quite young lads who've thought; well, when we first opened it they said, are we really allowed in here? And we said, yes, that's fine.

R: It's funny, isn't it, because there's no silence policy and yet you do instinctively drop your voice and walk a bit more softly when you're in there, and I wonder what it is that causes that.

P: Well, similarly in the Picton reading room, where everyone's welcome to go and sit and we get a lot of young people, school students in particular, and university students, use this for study. It was absolutely packed in the summer before the exams. But they naturally just seem to respect the fact that it is a reference library and it should be quieter than this space, and maybe because of the dome. It does have an echo because of the dome, and we reduced that by half, but it is still evident. But I think that lends people to also respect the space.

R: That's a very interesting point, isn't it? It's a bit like, I've been up a few times now to the Metropolitan Cathedral on the hill, a fascinating place… but if somebody dropped their keys at the back of it I'd be like a gunshot, wouldn't it, the echo is amazing. I've never heard anything like it before. You have to almost creep through the space; you're terrified of brushing anything. Perhaps that's something we don't think about so much, the actual quality of the sound in a place, which could play as much of a part as colour or light or space.

P: We did our best to reduce the echo because it could be inconvenient in the past, if a member of staff was talking and their voice was echoing around, it could be distracting. But there was only so much we could do, given the nature of the dome. I think when they first opened it in 1879 and had the opening speeches, they were actually quite embarrassed by the echo, but it was just an accident I suppose. We tried to reduce it by various means including, for example, carpet tiles on top of some of the shelves where they're out of view, but just to dampen the… There was also a 1960s glass perimeter that was put in that would have had lots of Formica edging and we took that away again because that was, I think, exaggerating the echo.

R: So, was that around the cast iron?

P: Yeah, exactly, all the way round there was kind of a 1960 glazing area put in. I don't know if they thought… The staff were often placed behind there and there were also study spaces.

R: Must have been a bit of a Panopticon, I should think.

P: Yeah, I don't know if they thought it was a useful thing to do in terms of having a staff space and different space. I don't quite know why, but it never worked particularly well.

R: So, on this [floor plan], this is above us now?

P: Yeah, and this is four floors above us, the repository storage for archives, special collections. It's a sort of solid block, no windows, other than on the staff areas on the third floor.

R: It's all climate-controlled?

P: Climate-controlled, very closely climate-controlled, and it's got four hour fire protection. It's also got a gas fire suppression system.

R: Is that CO_2?

P: It's not. It's a system called Inergen, which is an environmentally friend sort of gas that would just reduce the oxygen level, and it's set automatically so, should there be an incident, staff withdraw as they should do in case of a fire and then the gas would be released just to extinguish any fire. I mean, the risk is minimal; it's just a belt-and-braces approach to make sure this irreplaceable material is never lost at all.

This [another block on the plan] is a library stack from the thirties, which we still use and we've got the first three floors, which we refurbished, and the art gallery's actually on the top floor which is a bit unusual because you're walking around the art gallery, and you don't realise it but you're actually above our book stacks.

R: So the Walker [Art Gallery] is over the top of this [separate block on the plan], and this void here, is that…?

P: That's an access area, really. It's partly for us to get deliveries…

R: Ah, of course, the delivery area.

P: …And it's also for the Walker to get equipment to, if they needed to, or get access to.

R: And these gardens that they had before, were they accessible from inside the building?

P: No, I don't believe so. I think only from outside.

R: So they weren't really related to the library?

P: No.

R: I suppose now, you've got the roof terrace on the top, haven't you? Is there any particular reason why there was a decision to include a roof terrace, or was it simply that there's a lovely view out there and why not?

P: The latter, as you say. When we did our brief and all our planning, we never expected a roof terrace. We had four schemes that were in competition for this project that we went through quite a long process of what the European Union would call competitive dialogue, and during that we could say things we did or didn't like, refine the scheme, so instead of the architects simply presenting you with something and you choosing one and going with that, you've got quite a long process of meetings and dialogue. The architect of the winning team simply said, well I think I can offer you a roof terrace with space for the public to go

out on, and we immediately said that would be superb. We didn't expect to have it; it was a bonus, the only scheme that had it in their solution. But we thought, yes, definitely. You get a good view, not only of the city but also of our historic buildings, so you can see quite close up the detail on the historic buildings and the parapet and the frieze, for example, round there. But also you get an outside space to sit on, so we've put benching, we've put Wi-Fi. Some people go up there for a picnic or just come along with their kids and just look out. We also have events up there sometimes, so in certain times of year when we open for special events and occasions, or even when we're using the meeting rooms, we can put on musical events or performances, things like that. So it's a real bonus. We never thought we'd get that.

R: I guess there must have been a few occasions like that where you were being shown these proposals by the architects, and there must have been surprises in there, things that you saw and thought, that looking interesting and exciting. What kind of things were those, and how did you go about deciding which was the best?

P: I think with this one, in all of the schemes – and we had a reference scheme of our own for them to compare and look at, because we needed to do that to prove what could or couldn't be afforded – in all the schemes there was a version of an atrium and it varied considerably. This, we always felt, was the most attractive for us because the way it was offset, the way it appears both from the ground level and as you go up the building, with the staircases deliberately offset, we thought it was the most interesting and imaginative, and had the kind of wow factor, if you like.

R: There's certainly that, isn't there, particularly if you combine it with the spotlights? You come in and look up and there's this – I thought of a spaceship landing.

P: Yes, yeah, yeah.

R: That's the image that strikes me about it, that sort of "Close Encounters" type thing.

P: Yeah, absolutely. But, funnily enough, someone who came in earlier on was looking for a possible film location and thought this could do something for them in terms of a sort of sci-fi type space film.

R: I guess that's not something you had with the old building, is it?

P: Oh, no, no, no. You came in through the small entrance and it was a low ceiling immediately. You had no sense of the scale of the building or where to go next, or just what was on offer. We thought this one also offered, then, the best way coming in, having this wow factor. You'd come in through an 1860s façade but suddenly you've got this wonderful space with light, but it also showed you the extent of the building, helped you understand, maybe, where to go next, what was on offer, and also levelled out this access here to the children's library, because previously that was through corridors and up staircases. A huge amount of work was done to level that.

R: It's a great connection now, isn't it, the way you can walk past and look straight in? It's almost like the whole thing was actually designed at one time.

P: Exactly, which hadn't been the case before from the 50s building.

R: I guess it must have effectively been four different buildings before.

P: Yes, this and this they did together and made it more legible. So we thought the atrium in this scheme was the best, and also the roof. You know, you get a different feel for the atrium, I think, from the roof level as well. We chose the escalator because we wanted to invite people to explore the building a bit more and give them more of a modern retail

building, which is what you see in Liverpool One, where they've got the new shopping centre. Even in some of the outside spaces they use escalators.

R: I've not been down there actually.

P: No, it's worth looking up. We thought that gave a modern image and it was inviting people to explore.

R: It's certainly an image of customer service, isn't it, the escalator, for some reason. I think it's possibly a department store thing.

P: Yeah, I think it is a bit of that, and we did look at other libraries and archives, but we did look at retail and what they seemed to do well, as part of an image for the building. Obviously, having the café at this point was good for us as well, so different schemes had the café in different places, but we thought having it when you came in. This was the only scheme that managed to then use the old entrance to have an outside café area, which we thought was an excellent idea because this particular part of Liverpool doesn't have outside pavement cafés at all, and we thought – and it has worked – by having outside parasols, and café, people would walk past and think, oh right, I'll go and use that. And it works for families, it works for the tourist but that comes up and down here all day. So that was a real bonus as well, and for me, this was the only scheme that dealt with the archives properly in that is gave us a separate block, which helps to meet the standards for archives, giving that separate store block.

R: Really? So in other proposals there was more integration?

P: Yes, which I think was taking a risk in terms of the fire strategy, in terms of the physical security to the building. I think the whole design had scope for expansion as well, so other schemes went away from our ideal, which was a separate repository, and tried to merge the buildings more, and we felt that was leading us to compromises. I think this one had the best solution for the children's library as well, in converting the space. It was a really imaginative scheme. Others were much more traditional looking, just, use the room and put some furniture in it, put up some shelves and seats.

R: I'm not sure what was there before, but the moment you've got a sort of high level circular area and then it ramps down into the middle, doesn't it?

P: The ramps are an addition, because originally it was terraced, and when they had the lecture theatre that was fine, but they had no disabled access, but when they shelved it the terracing held the shelves and all the various levels right down to the middle, but it was difficult for any access at all, but impossible for disabled access, so the ramping was just the way of getting people around the room, but using a bit of colour and imaginative use of furniture.

R: Yeah, and it does make the space look a bit more dramatic. I presume the customer feedback with regards to how easy the library is to move around has been pretty positive.

P: It's been very positive. I mean, when you look at feedback on TripAdvisor, which I mentioned, but also you're welcome to look at our visitors' book, which is by the main reception desk, all the feedback's been really, really positive. We did work hard to make this a much more inclusive, accessible building. Obviously we had expert advice on that to make sure we did as much as we possibly could.

R: One thing I managed to do when I came in – and I'm probably the only who's managed to do this – it walk in the front door and get approximately to here [the middle of the desk horseshoe] before realising that I was at the back of a horseshoe of desks and I couldn't get out, and had to turn around again. Perhaps I was just marching a little too quickly.

P: I don't know; I hadn't noticed that as a problem. We also had the bonus of treating this as a kind of performance space so sometimes we've had choirs performing or groups do a bit of drama here or readings, small, informal poetry readings. We thought, because that's so visible when people come in and you could look over the balconies, that made a…

R: No one could possibly be stupid enough to walk into the middle of it?

P: Well, no, no, it might have happened. So, yeah, we viewed that as a bonus a bonus as well, because we could use it as a kind of informal performance space. The other thing we do is let groups use it who want to attract new members or give out information, so, for example, we've had the RSPB seem to come in quite regularly and have a stall. We've had a hospital consultation going on about the cancer hospital being relocated and they wanted to do some public, face-to-face consultation and could they set up there, so we said fine.

R: That's actually a bonus, in that case, isn't it?

P: Yes, it's a big bonus.

R: By making it not a footfall area. That's actually something I'd not thought of.

P: It's been used in all those ways very successfully, and it's very popular. We get a queue of people asking. We've had the Stroke Association; we've had all kinds really. We've had a group who were raising awareness for Motor Neurone Disease, and one of the ways they do that is to just lie on the floor and it's a Japanese thing. So you just see this whole group of people lying on the floor…

R: Is there any likelihood of people seeing it as some sort of performance art piece?

P: No, not really, but they're lying just flat on the floor. What it does it, it's quite effective, you think, well, what's this about, so you ask and then they tell you, it's raising awareness for Motor Neurone Disease.

R: It's a great way of getting people, to make them ask you.

P: Yeah, exactly, and it certainly attracts attention, so that's been another useful bonus of the space.

R: Part of the wider function of the library, I guess, because a library, particularly a central library, isn't really a library any more in the etymological sense that a library is a place for books; that's not.

P: It's more than that.

R: It's much more than that in a service sense.

P: So we, quite deliberately, aimed to do everything, from the children's library space through to all the traditional library spaces too, from reference to archives, but also IT, and we've increased the number of computers. People are still using those even though there're more mobile devices around now, people still coming and regularly using all our static PCs.

R: Yeah, that's a…

P: And the Wi-Fi as well.

R: You do really need those. I remember there's a new one that opened in Bristol last year or the year before, called Junction Three. It's a branch, rather than a central one, but quite a nice branch, and I walked in and they pointed out the new IT section, and it had a grand total of, I think eight PCs, and every one of them was full. I was quite surprised really. It

doesn't seem like a massive amount. I mean, there are 150 in here, I think, even though it's a central rather than a branch.

P: But they are in use a lot of the day, and even into the evenings.

R: Yeah, packed around the atrium.

P: Yeah, they are very busy. So, we provided that plus the Wi-Fi. The game area here is a bonus as well. We wanted a little area that was more informal for teenage use.

R: It's a sort of box thing, isn't it, that sits separate?

P: Yeah, it's kind of deliberately done like that. It's sound attenuated; it's not fully soundproofed. And based on our consultation with non-users and teenagers, they said, well, if you created a bit of a space that's a bit more suitable for us, and a bit of our own sort of space, we might come in. And if you do something like put a game box in – which we've done; we've got an Xbox in the corner with controllers and armchairs, computers, things like that – then we might come in and use it.

That is successful during out of school hours, weekends, school holidays, and sometimes with families, not just the teenagers or young people. It's free to use, there's no booking system, no limits on how long you can stay. It's sort of self-managing in that respect.

R: Have you ever noticed any sort of appropriation by particular groups that end up sort of thinking, this is our space, and other people are afraid to use it?

P: Not particularly. We worried that could happen. It doesn't seem to have happened. I think we found when we first opened there were one or two or three very regular users who'd spend a lot of time in there, but it hasn't become a longstanding problem at all. It seems to be more drop-in use. It seems to manage itself. I think staff were quite concerned they'd be intervening a lot and maybe responding to problems, but it hasn't been the case.

What's also been a bonus with this one is that we've had groups from Barnado's who were working with excluded teenagers, who asked if they could use it as a kind of informal weekly meeting space with them. Originally we didn't envisage it as a kind of meeting room, but they say they prefer it to the more informal meeting rooms upstairs, and they think it's got better atmosphere for them, so we've agreed to that because during school time it isn't going to be as well used as other times, so we said, yeah, you can use it in that way. That's been a combined use, which we hadn't really expected. We thought it would just be drop in use for individuals, but it's actually been used as a meeting space.

R: It's funny, you wouldn't think that partitioning off a block like that would increase the usability and diversity of the space function; you'd think making it more open would make it more flexible.

P: Yeah, I suppose, and there are mixed views on that, and probably we were worried about noise, that it would generate a bit too much noise for other users. I don't think it has done, to be honest. And there's a certain amount of respect for the space. I think you feel that you are in a different area, but it is obviously visible. I know there are blinds in there. We have sometimes seen people go in there and close the blinds to give themselves more privacy, and we tend to just go along and check everything's alright. The idea's that they're meant to stay open. People do seem to feel they're in a slightly different space of their own.

R: In a way it's almost like a kid's bedroom transplanted into the middle of a library, and I presume that was something that was identified as a need from the beginning, just part of

the enfranchisement process, I suppose you might say, of growing kids. If you've got up to the age of maybe ten…

P: Twelve-ish.

R: Twelve, yeah, and then there's a gap between those children and people who would have need, say, of the records or the archives, then something has to be done with them if they're not to be lost as library users, I guess.

P: Yeah, I think that's a classic problem that libraries have had, which is that we've quite good, you know, we've got school kids in here, we've got activities going on, free during holidays, certainly for the nought to fives, and probably for the five to twelves, but libraries tend to use the teenagers for a period. Sometimes they never come back, particular male teenagers we well. So by talking to them, this was a way we could address them.

R: Do you know why males teenagers in particular?

P: I think there's a sort of belief that it becomes a bit uncool to be seen to be borrowing library books or going to a library. It's not the place to go.

R: Maybe that relates to the stereotype?

P: It does, I think. Yeah, the older image of a library, the more traditional. So we think we tried to address it in some ways. I've also found that we are attracting a lot of teenagers around the whole building, and I've found during, as I said earlier, the school exam time, the building was overflowing with kids coming in here. I think the word got round: it's quite a cool place to be and study, and they've got a café, you can sit and it's informal. We deliberately kept this very informal, other than areas where we have to keep it for quiet study and the archive search room floor, we're quite happy with the fact it's got quite a vibrant, buzzing atmosphere. It's not like, you must be quiet, and *shhh* and all this. We've really kept it quite informal.

R: The same thing's happened in Cardiff. The place was absolutely packed with school kids around exam time, and it's becoming known that the local library is an excellent place to do study leave because you're not at school, necessarily.

P: Yeah, you're not at school, maybe, with the distractions you might get at home. You're away from that. I've spoken to quite a few and they've said that's why it appeals to them. Plus, also they can be with friends while they get on with their study, but they're not at home with their distractions.

R: It always helps to be surrounded by people who are engaged in the same work, isn't it?

P: It's conducive to study then, isn't it?

R: Very much. And just incidentally, how do you go about speaking to those young people?

P: Well, it tends to be sort of informal. I happen to be, well, my son was one of them, so I knew his mates, so that helped me. Obviously you have to be careful about just approaching people, otherwise.

R: Well that's why I carry these things about with me, although getting a teenager to read that and sign it and say, yup, after you then… I'm finding that very difficult because… What happened in Cardiff was I worked with a youth group. I spoke to an academic who was a trustee and he said just go along and tell them I sent you and they'll be happy to help. And it was all surprisingly easy. The place was two hundred yards from the library and these kids are basically sitting around, waiting for someone to come in and tell them to do something. So, I've been doing walk-along interviews as my main method of data gathering: find the

young people, put a microphone on them, give them a camera and take them on a walk to the library, and they can take photos of what they find interesting, so it can ground the discussion in the city and puts the library in that whole picture. And that's been very interesting, but here, and partly going back to what I said earlier about not being able to just pop over, scheduling is something that teenagers don't seem particularly keen on, which is sort of a bit of a catch-22: I can't book anything beforehand because I don't want to visit without having something arrange. I don't suppose you have any thoughts on that.

P: It's a difficult one because when we were consulting before we did this work, we were able to use our marketing department, who said, we've got some access to groups and mailing lists and we'll create a little group. We wanted them to do it at arm's length from us as well, so, rather than us as librarians sitting down, we gave them a list of questions for the marketing people. They found the group, which included non-users and teenagers, and they asked all the questions so people could say whatever they liked, and they fed back the information to us, but we were lucky in that they did that. We weren't having to go and sort of select and find some way of doing it, so I don't have an easy answer to that, I'm afraid, other than, all I could suggest is, we've had someone else doing a different bit of research about the kind of use of libraries and the effectiveness of libraries, and he asked if he could just put some publicity and ask people to come along to a session. He booked a meeting room upstairs and he did it that way, and he wasn't particularly looking at any age group.

R: That's the thing; I very much wish sometimes in retrospect that I'd focused on the fifty to sixty demographic, people who have calendars and diaries.

P: Well, maybe, but I think your age group is an interesting one in terms of libraries because we need them to be engaged with libraries for the future benefit of libraries really.

R: I mean, originally I was looking at disadvantaged males, actually, but that really was a challenge I couldn't get over.

…

R: Light is something that interests me, how the lighting quality is used to symbolise a certain ethos behind "what a library is", in inverted commas. Everyone's got some idea of what a library is. It was built by people who had some idea that they were trying to convey to the public, and, hoping it would be used in a certain way, and perhaps light features in that, transparency, lines of sight through the building, perhaps features in that in more than a purely functional way. Similarly the use of territories and sub—areas, those are themes that interest me. I don't have any particularly cutting, on the nose questions to ask right here and now about them. We've sort of, I think, worked round those subjects.

P: I suppose on a purely practical level, bringing in plenty of daylight was a good thing to do, not just in the atrium, but we also liked the fact that this provides a light well at the south end of the building, which is a nice space and, obviously, floods the area with light, and then this end as well. It have us a break for the repository, but it also gave us a light well at this end of the building, and you get some interesting views across the city from these angles in particular, and also there actually, you can see the other building. And we also like that we could then provide benching with power along there for people who are going to bring in laptops, and they were particularly popular areas for teenagers to sit during this exceptionally busy study period.

So, I think light is a practical thing, but also as a welcoming thing, attractive, to sweep away any ideas of a dusty library, a bit dark and dingy, which it was before. We also very clearly said to the architects, we want a high level bright light in the building as well, and above the shelving, so there's none of this sort of dark corners. We provided a lot of light, I would say.

R: Do you think, and it's something I should have mentioned, is that we've got some kind of relationship between this glass dome and the glass dome here [atrium and Picton]…

P: Absolutely, absolutely.

R: Although in some ways they're sort of formally similar, although quite different in execution, I guess the reason they exist in the building are not the same, that the reason this space had that beam of light that comes down from the ceiling and moves about throughout the day, that's a different quality of light and a different intention behind the use of the light than perhaps is the case here.

P: I think you're right, but it was interesting that the architect of the scheme actually said he was designing this partly as a nod to the Picton dome and the oculus there, but to do a modern version. He didn't want to do a pastiche sort of thing; he wanted a contemporary version of the dome in the atrium and bringing in light. But it was a definite reference to the fact Picton originally had its dome and its oculus as well, so you're quite right. There is a reference there, but it's a different quality of light and, actually, an interesting point on the Picton reading room, when it opened in 1879, it was the first public building in Liverpool to have electric light, so that was quite was quite an innovative thing at the time, so they obviously, like us, considered a quality if light important, probably as well for practical reasons. You're studying; you want a good level of light.

R: I presume it was gas lighting everywhere else?

P: Yeah, at that time, and the librarians actually wrote about it in the library journal of the period because they were having to justify why they had opted for electricity as opposed to sticking with gas. And they had to justify it and say that it's good in these various ways and I think there were worries that this newfangled electricity might be a bit dubious. So they were having to justify that.

R: Are those library journals you spoke of in the archives?

P: They're probably around and about. I can't remember which ones exactly we found but there were reference at the time, definitely, to this decision they made to go with electricity rather than gas. But yeah, lighting was important for us, but also we liked the scheme where we've got these white walls. Again, it feels bright and clean, crisp, and then the big graphics stand out extremely well. We paid a lot of attention to signage and getting that right, and getting it clear and getting it easy to find your own way around, so the more people can help themselves. Obviously, we've got self-issue machines and return machines for books, and one outside. Computers as well: a lot of that can be self-service, so the more it could be easy to navigate, the better, and clear signage, bold signage, was important to us as well. And I think part of the image, as opposed to the old fashioned clutter, which we had, which sometimes libraries have been guilty of, a whole clutter of signs and notices, and don't do this and don't do that. We swept that all away and had this much cleaner look with big, bold signage and no posters and things everywhere. And certainly no "be quiet", "don't do this, don't do that" notices.

R: On that, I should probably just ask quickly, if there were changes to the way the librarianship was carried out that coincided with the building being renovated, if the job the librarians were doing actually changed at the same time, or if you're essentially doing exactly the same thing just in a new building.

P: I think the same thing in a new building. I think it had already evolved in that time and moved away from fetching and carrying and a lot of reference material, and moved much more to an IT role, and helping people understanding and access IT and databases,

particularly for the reference library, because that's a big part of what we do. We'd already shifted quite a lot towards IT, but also the self-service thing we'd already started, but we've been able to do it in a better, more effective way, so the self-service being more prominent, and we've tagged more books when we were out of the building. The self-service element of issuing and returning books has come from about ten percent to seventy-five percent, so things we were doing before have just been done now better in a more modern facility.

R: Over the last ten or so years.

P: Yeah, I would say.

R: Was it essentially the same stock in the new building that was in the old building?

P: Yeah, yeah, pretty much. We did a certain amount of housekeeping, because we did find… There was some material that really wasn't unique to us and was very much out of date, say, some very out of date science material that really people wouldn't be looking at any more, and that we didn't have a role – we're not a legal deposit library – we didn't have to keep that. So there was a certain amount of housekeeping, and we offered that material elsewhere, and it wasn't accepted. It was sent for charity or recycling. Otherwise, no, we brought things back. In amongst that there was history materials and important stuff that would be hard to find elsewhere nowadays.

R: Was anything found that had been lost or forgotten?

P: Not particularly, no, I don't think so. We didn't make any discoveries as such, no. But in this stack in particular, staff had a chance to do a lot of cataloguing on to the electronic system of that material that wasn't on that at all before. It was all old fashioned, card indexed, that kind of thing only. So it been a good chance to do that, and obviously by doing that you come across certain quite interesting books, but I wouldn't say there any eureka discovery moments, no.

6   SEDENTARY INTERVIEWS – WORCESTER

6.1   STAFF MEMBER 3, 12TH NOVEMBER 2014

Researcher: Really the main thing I'm interested in talking to you about is how the building comes to look the way it does, and be the way it is, as opposed to a different shape. I suppose I should start off by asking, were you working at the previous library?

Participant: Yes.

R: That was over on the high street, wasn't it?

P: Foregate Street, away from the shopping and the town.

R: Somebody mentioned to me that it was a much older building, a Victorian building.

P: That's right: purpose-built, opened in about 1894.

R: Really? So that was built as a library?

P: As a library, yeah, with a museum and gallery upstairs.

R: I presume a lot of the problem was space.

P: Space was an issue, yeah. The opportunity came about to go into partnership with the university. We'd talked about having a new library for quite a few years previous to that, but it came suddenly that this was going to happen, a partnership between the university and the county council.

R: Okay, and what were you looking to get out of that opportunity, in terms of the facility? I presume not just the same thing but bigger

P: Not the same thing but bigger, but just, the space that we were offered here, being able to bring in lots of different organisations like Archive, and Archaeology, and also The Hub, so, and the university students, members of the public, um, it might encourage people into a library that had never been into a library before, so Hub users come to query council tax or housing, they might never have set foot in a library, so coming them in here encourages them. "Oh yeah, what else is in here?", so from the library's point of view it's probably widened our doors to lots more people that perhaps would've come into the more traditional space we had before.

R: I presume you see that as being a necessary part of twenty-first century library service provision?

P: Ummm, uh-huh.

R: Does that… I couldn't help but wondering, as I was wandering around it with a couple of my participants, that a lot of the ability of the building to provide a lot of those services to all those people, comes from its physical size, which made me wonder how you approach a branch library, or a branch library network, when the buildings are physically much smaller, or if it's possible to apply the same thinking to those?

P: What, with lots of different bodies within one building?

R: Yeah.

P: It does happen. I think in Malvern Library they've got a Hub. I think even the job centre might be in there, so more and more it's looking to partnership buildings to maintain services on all levels really.

R: Okay. And presumably where there is limited total space, cutting stack space, provision; I'm assuming here, is a sort of corollary to bringing those other services in. Does that ring with you at all?

P: Not really. I mean, we were able to boost our book stocks greatly. I can't remember what the percentages were exactly, from what we were able to offer.

R: When you moved to here?

P: Yeah. I mean, if you just look at the children's library for instance, we never would have been able to house what we have in there.

R: But because this building is a clean sheet design, you're able to specify those things. I presume you were closely involved in the briefing for quite a long period of time.

P: Staff were, definitely. There were different work streams you could get involved in.

R: Was that difficult at all, being PFI? I presume there was… it wasn't totally open?

P: I wasn't involved in that side of it, so it's probably quite difficult for me to answer these sorts of questions, a little bit. Umm, I don't know how that part of it was managed.

R: No.

P: But staff were involved. Once the contracts were sorted, then the work streams were established with the university staff and public library staff for the library provision of it. We weren't necessarily involved in the archives or the Hub, or Archaeology, unless there was somewhere where we cross over, say, with Archives, and Archaeology, it was schools , for instance, working with young people that way. So there was involvement in saying what we'd like in a children's library, what we'd like in a public library, so there was input at that, you know, different stages.

R: Okay. And public input, I presume, as well.

P: Yes, there were consultations, groups with different… groups within the local community. Focus groups, I think they called them.

R: Yeah. Did that… I'm also presuming that the response from the public has been much improved in terms of feedback over the previous building, that the change has been met with approval?

P: From the public?

R: The public library, yes.

P: From our existing customers, so moving from the old library to here?

R: Yeah.

P: I think a lot of them were anxious about it, so we had open times when they could come and see it before we opened. Um, some you're never going to please, so they're not going to want to move here. Perhaps they haven't come with us, but then we've gained a lot of customers as well.

R: Right. It sounds from what you were just saying that you had quite a traditional core group of users as the old place. Maybe there's a slightly different demographic now?

P: Yeah… I think it's, by the very nature of the building, it's increased who comes into here. If you're looking at it from a young person's point of view, there probably wasn't the attraction of coming into the old library compared with where we are now. We had, when we were getting more public networked computers, that attracted different people into the library where we were before, who perhaps would never have come in. But certainly it's, if we're looking at young people coming in, The Hive certainly became the place to come, whereas they would never have probably considered coming into Foregate Street at all. They probably weren't aware much of what was there.

R: Okay, so that's to do with the relationship of this building to Worcester. It's quite different. I don't suppose…   Are you aware particular of what the general consensus is among Worcester residents of the new place, of this building?

P: I'm not particularly, no, no. I mean, the business manager would probably be a better person to speak to.

R: Yeah, I spoke to her briefly.

P: [Name] Um, because I'm talking to people face to face on a day to day basis, so that's not a fair…

R: They're the people who are enthusiastic about the place?

P: Not always, no, not always.

R: Oh really?

P: To begin with people coming in would say "Oh, didn't like before and don't like it now!" Getting less of that happened.

R: It is quite a challenging look from the outside.

P: Umm, I ask the children whenever there's a class in, 'cause I was always interested when we first opened, I thought, oh, young people'll have their hands up; young people'll like it, but a lot of them were quite, I don't know; I'm not sure if they liked it or not.

R: Really?

P: According to them it's the Marmite building.

R: Really? There's no, sort of, middle ground?

P: Well there probably is but they identify it as "I like it or I don't like it".

R: I find that people tend to have quite strong feelings hidden away somewhere about they think a library is or ought to be, and a very divisive – well, from the outside – a very divisive building like this can bring those to the surface. A lot of people I've spoken to have said things like "I don't like it, but sort of approve of it; I can see why it's necessary and why it's a good thing for Worcester". Possibly that goes hand in hand with the university increasing in size very rapidly.

P: It is, yeah.

R: I've heard it's the fastest growing in the country.

P: I get the feeling lots of people have said they've not like the outside, but when they've come in they've like the space, 'cause it's quite light, airy space inside.

R: I'm almost tempted to say actually I like it more after it gets dark 'cause the lighting makes the wood sort of glow, doesn't it?

P: Amazing sunsets from here.

R: Really? I haven't got the benefit of those yet the last couple of days. Wrong time of year, November.

P: Yeah. Yeah.

R: Um… Well, if we're…

P: Was it…? I was under the impression… I got the feeling I was involved more because of young people?

R: Yeah, I am interested in young people. A big part of discovering an understanding of how they use buildings instead of the context around how everyone else uses the building.

P: Uh-huh, okay.

R: I mean, from what you've seen of young people using the place, I presume it's been quite an active sort of space; there's perhaps less sort of scholarly work?

P: It varies. I mean, obviously you've got student, young people, and I'd say they was scholarly for the most part. It's a meeting place for young people. Level 0's called the Shared Study area, but it's quite a communal meeting area of a weekend or of an evening, and I think that took us by surprise to begin with, how many young people would want to come in here.

R: Okay. Is that to do with Worcester, do you think, being a…?

P: I think there's possibly less places for them to go once the weather deteriorates.

R: Did that bring any tension, conflicts, when that influx of people happened?

P: Uh-huh. We had to manage it quite carefully. Um, make it a place that is for all, not just one or two groups of people.

R: That was a job for staffing then, was it?

P: Yeah, yeah, a lot of engaging with young people and member s of the public. We had a youth mentoring scheme that came about, so they were students employed by the university to activity engage with young people, particularly on Level 0, finding a purpose for being in a library. Um, so they'd run events, and that's ongoing. It was National Youth Work Week last week, so lots of events happened for young people. Again, they have to want to come to them. You can't make them.

R: No. I suppose, I mean, I don't know the raft of statistical analysis techniques that you have available to you, but I don't suppose you've noticed an increase in that particular demographic, who wouldn't before have been at all interested in the library services being much more…

P: It depends. Certainly if they want to go on a computer they've got to sign up for a library card. Coming through the door, I mean, you wouldn't know, other than feeling there were more young people coming in. That's the only way of gaining the statistics, really, would be through their computer usage, and, as I was saying, how many young people had signed up for cards. Not all of them do. They don't have to. You don't have to have a library card to come in so unless they've got a particular reason for wanting to use it, if they want to borrow books or use the computers, there are PlayStations down there, there's no reason why we would necessarily have figures for how many came in. I mean, you've got people-counters but they're not counting the age group that's coming in.

R: Really? And I suppose that includes people who go out and then come back in again, does it? Okay.

Do you if the landscaping around the building has been used much, 'cause it looks there's been quite a lot of work put into the landscaping.

P: Yeah, um…

R: It's always quite empty when I've come past. I know not just at this time of year.

P: No, it gets to see groups and staff. The staff will take lunch out there. It's a walk through, to get into the car park or into the city centre, but classes will go out and say can they have their lunch break out there when the weather's suitable, um, and we've got the story island as well, which we tend to just keep open when the weather's better.

R: So is that a story-reading area?

P: That was the intention, yeah, so there's a door off from the children's library, um. You have to have a voice that'll project well if you're telling stories out there, 'cause obviously you're open to the elements. But children can go and sit a read books out there, and they do.

R: There's story reading area inside [the children's library] as well, isn't there?

P: Yeah, the Story Pit, that's right. We'll hold activities and put on Whacky Wednesdays in there as well.

R: What's Whacky Wednesdays?

P: The children's centre come in and run a stay-and-play session, and our input is hopefully – the children's centres work throughout the city centre, often with targeted families, so it's quite good for them if they encourage them in here because they might not know that the library can be used, lots of children's books, so we do a story time and encourage them to sign up for the library service. So again, it's reaching customers we might not necessarily reach.

R: Is that how you, um, I suppose, justify the need for funding, 'cause it not as though you make money directly from sign-ups of the library cards.

P: No. They look quite closely at the issue figures for us though. Yeah.

R: I presume there's this whole range of other things, of other ways of explaining where money is going or why it needs to be maintained, 'cause that must be quite an important issue in this day and age, justifying cost, particularly for an expensive, flashy building like this.

P: You're looking a lot at the moment at library closures across the country.

R: Particularly among branch libraries.

P: Worcestershire's looking quite creatively at the moment at how to keep those branches open, either going in with another organisation…

R: Do you mean volunteer run or privately run?

P: That's another questions. Volunteers: there's a lot of discussion going on at the moment, but libraries do use volunteers, where you've got something like metres and metres, um, we've also got events like job clubs. Volunteers'll come and there'll be members of staff supporting them. No, I think it's keeping them open by going in with a hub or a job centre. Whether there're any Post Office ones around the country I don't know, but yeah. So it's not exclusively a library building any longer.

R: No. Is that day passed, do you think, of buildings that are exclusively a library building?

P: The Birmingham one's pretty much a library isn't it?

R: Oh, I suppose it is really. There's some exhibition space off to the side, some shopping around there somewhere. There must be some around there somewhere.

P: No, there's was reference anyway, but it's very much at heart a library.

R: Yeah.

P: I don't think there's any other…

R: I'm getting the impression increasingly that that's only becoming possible for central libraries that have this kind of size and architectural quality to them, that makes enough statement about a city that it's almost an ideological or symbolic thing as it is a functional one.

P: Ummm.

R: There's just that problem, that difference between the central libraries and the branch libraries. They were never the same thing, but it seems almost like a wedge is being driven between them now by the need to articulate funding value. I find myself wondering a lot how small branch libraries can keep up with that, you know, something like the Library of Birmingham, which almost £200 million I think, and is enormous. If you're talking of a £10 million refurbishment of something smaller, or a £5 million, or a £1 million, is that actually going to really turn around a building that's seeing declining visitor figures?

P: What because you're creating a new, refurbished library?

R: Yeah.

P: You initially always get an upsurge of people coming in when you build anything new, I suppose, but then it's maintaining that afterwards, keeping people wanting to come through the doors. I mean, there are two branches in Worcester. There's the St. John's one, which is over on the other side of the river, and then you've got Warnden, which the Fairfield Centre. The St. John's one is still a library building, whereas Warnden is now in the Fairfield Centre, which is in with lots of others, and it's near the school as well, so there's a link with the community that way. So perhaps that is a way of maintaining branch libraries, is by partnership working. So people have got another reason for coming. I think there's one… I know Hereford have struggled, but I think, is Bromyard that went in with the leisure centre? I know there's was talk of that at Pershore and places.

R: Is there much of a difference between, in a catchment area, a central library and a branch library? I always think of branches as being much more community focused in the things they offer. You know, it could even be one street, a town high street, whereas a central library might be attracting people over a wider area. It just struck me that perhaps by combining the university students with the public library here for the first time has actually been quite a clever move because it's effectively brought that community library quality, because you've got that pool of people very locally, and combined that with a broader…

P: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure it has, and I think the university are very keen, because they are expanding into Worcester, to link in with the community. There is a lot of work. They call it outreach, working with local schools and local organisations. Yeah. I think they use mentors. That's seen very much as engaging, not with young people when they're coming here, but supplied in the community as well.

R: Okay.

6.1 Staff Member 3, 12th November **2014**

7 FOCUS GROUPS – CARDIFF

7.1 SIX NON-STUDENTS, 16TH JUNE 2014 (ABRIDGED)

Note: This focus group used a different elicitation method from those in Sections 7.2, 8.1, and 9.1, because it used affinity as a way of clustering photos, rather than a free association task to create constructs which are then used for sorting. This is explained in the summary of Chapter 4 (Section 4.7).

Participant A: Are you recording this as well?

Researcher: Yes, it says so in the sheet. It has to be recorded, basically, so I can transcribe it afterwards or I'd never remember what anyone's said.

[To self] So, we'll go with those later.

First thing's first, to arrange all this lot.

[To Participant B, who's on their phone] I'd very much appreciate your attention.

PB: You have got my attention

PA: Laughs

R: You're a good multi-tasker.

Participant C: What the hell is that? [referring to card picture]

PB: It's the library.

R: Yeah, these were all taken on the walk-alongs.

PA: They're all in town somewhere. Ah, there we go.

R: So basically they're all between here and the inside of the library.

PB: [Inaudible]

That's the library stairs [pointing to a card]

PA: There's the library. [Inaudible] That's in the library.

PB: That's in the library was well. [Inaudible]

PC: [Inaudible]

Participant D: They're all buildings round town.

PB: No, there's the police!

PD: [Inaudible]

PA: What's that?

PC: What's that meant to be?

R: I think that's a floor.

PB: That's in the library.

R: I didn't take any of these pictures, I might add.

PC: Ah, you're doing my head in now with all these pictures.

R: Well these are your pictures.

PC: I didn't take any of them.

PB: I did, I took some of them!

Everyone: [Inaudible]

R: Basically, we're just going to go through and [inaudible]

PB: This is outside the library as well.

R: Start grouping them together in any way you like.

PE: In any way you like? But ain't there no particular form…?

PB: No, you just got to do anything.

PE: I could just go, ah, there we go, they're all grouped together [randomly gathering a heap]

PB: Well you just messed all them photos up now.

Participant E: Yeah, I could have messed them now… Let me…

R: Based on… If you grab one, it's basically similarities between one card and another. So similarities of what's in the pictures.

PA: They're both the cinema.

Participant F: And that one.

R: Yeah, so if you want pictures of the cinema, you can start grouping them like that.

PC: That's the [inaudible]

PA: What's that?

PC: This is inside.

PB: And that one

[General muttering]

PC: They've got to be two, haven't they? They've got to be in pairs.

PA: They've got to be in pairs?

R: No, no, any groups you like.

PA: There's another building.

PD: Got any cinema one there?

PB: I have.

PD: There's some cinema there.

PF: That's inside the library.

PD: What about the library ones?

PC: There's a library one by there.

PD: What about the library?

PB: They're all here.

PD: Are you putting the "libraries" together or "inside the library" together or just "library" as one?

PB: Which ones have you got?

PD: They're all library ones.

PB: Inside.

PD: Or just inside and outside? Nah, they're inside the library, actually.

PB: Oh, I'm sorry.

PA: That's a library!

PC: There's a library, and there's the outside.

[Inaudible muttering]

PD: What the hell is that?

PE: In the library.

PB: I reckon this should be PA's job. She's doing quite good at this.

PD: Ah, there's [Youthgroup name].

PC: Yeah, there's one.

PB: Who was that?

PC: [Youthgroup member].

PB: There's another one for [Youthgroup name].

There's a St. David's one

PD: Red Hot Buffet.

PC: Ain't it *buffet*?

PD: Buffet, buffet. Whatever pronunciation you want, okay. Depends whether you want to speak in good terminology, good etiquette.

PB: Look at you!

PA: [Laughing] Can you understand him?

PD: Depends, doesn't it? It's like me saying wa'er or water, innit?

PC: Wa'er.

PD: It's not though, it's *water*, isn't it? You'd have a drink of water.

PB: Where's this one go?

He's speaking about good etiquette.

PD: Why do people always seem to empathise the current seriousness of the situation? [Inaudible]

PC: He's clever, him!

Girls: [Laughing]

PD: Just quite educated.

PE: That's St. David's. I don't know what that is. That's the Motorpoint Arena and all of this is by [Youthgroup name].

R: So these are just other random places, apart from the library.

PD: It is random places.

PE: I want to know what that place is.

R: I think that's a fire door beside Cineworld.

PD: Oh yeah, that's *the* fire door!

PE: Oh, it's that…

PD: You should know.

PE: It's *that* door. Ah, the amount of times I've run out of there.

PD: Outside the, um… St. David's Two.

PA: Who's got those?

PD: You. Filing cabinet.

PB: That would go inside, wouldn't it, if it's in the library.

PD: I don't know where it is. That in the library, bro?

R: Yeah, it is. That's on the top floor.

PD: In the library. Carpet, in the library. In the library. In the library.

PB: We've got enough photos going in the library, haven't we.

PA: [Laughs]

PD: And this is… in the library. Taken in the library, anyway.

R: So we've sorted everything; that's great. Now what we've got to do is name the groups, saying what each thing is. So, are these all separate groups?

PA: Yup.

PB: That's [Youthgroup name].

PA: That's another group.

R: This one… You guys can name these groups. What are those groups over there you've got?

PA: Inside the library and this is books in the library.

R: Ok, there's a tag for you.

PB: This pen's running out. Is there another one?

R: Um, you might have to share.

PB: I need another tag, and a pen

PF: Can I have one?

PA: Do you want to try this one?

PB: It doesn't work. He gave me another one but it doesn't work.

R: Does the thick end of that not work?

PA: No, look, it's running out.

R: You can make do with that.

PB: What's these ones, outside?

R: Right, while you're finishing off that…

PA: What do you want me to write on them?

PB: You write this one. Outside the library.

R: Okay, so, if you pass me that one. So what's this group? Cineworld. This is just going to take a second. I've got to write down the numbers.

PB: What've we got to do, write down the numbers?

R: No, it's alright. I'm doing this bit. Takes a second.

PE: All the numbers are on the back.

R: Okay, we're doing well, we're doing well. Put that back. Thank you very much. What's this? Random Places. You'll just have to bear with me for a couple of…

PB: Have we got to take photos?

R: No, you don't have to take any more photos. The photos were to prepare for this, and so we had something to talk about as we were going along.

PA: What are you doing?

R: I'm just writing them down 'cause you've got all my pens.

PA: Do you want your pen back?

PB: There's a pen here.

R: It's alright. I've started using my phone now, so I can just carry on.

Others: [General muttering]

R: What are you doing to that picture?

PE: Just giving him a…

R: You defacing [Youthgroup member]?

PE: Just modifying him in Photoshop. Practical Photoshop.

R: I didn't think that would be a drawback when I said I'd give everyone pens.

Do talk amongst yourselves.

Everyone: [Laughs]

[Background talking]

R: You being missed downstairs?

PB: No, someone just asked where I was.

R: Ah. Should… hopefully someone saw the posters I put up.

PB: Why, are you doing more of this?

R: I'll do one more, if I get enough people, yeah.

PA: Don't let anyone else have a fiver.

R: Exclusive club. Well, you're [PB] the only person to get two so far.

PB: Special!

PC: Do you want to just use a pen. It'll be so much quicker.

R: Err…

PA: He don't want to now 'cause he's already started on his phone.

R: Yeah, I've started…

PC: This one's a massive pile over here though. Can't you write it on the paper?

R: Yeah, alright then.

PA: Do you want us to write for you?

R: Yeah, if you write those down…

PA: Do I write the name of what it is as well?

R: Yeah, just write the name of the group and then the numbers underneath that. That would be really handy.

PA: I'll do these ones first.

PB: Look at these two using their brains.

PC: [Reading names and numbers while PA writes them down]

PB: Still really hot outside though, isn't it? Yeah, it's disgusting.

R: We got any more to do?

PA: This is these done now.

R: Oh, smashing.

PC: [Continues reading numbers to PA]

R: Brilliant. Thank you very much. I'll just grab those. Thanks very much. The next thing to ask is can any of these groups be joined together or put under another group? So, if you look at all these groups we've got, do any of them belong in one super-group?

PB: Yeah. Inside the Library, Technology in the Library, Books in the Library and Outside the Library.

PE: They're all in Cardiff.

PB: Oh yeah, and you could put them in that.

PE: They're all in the city centre.

PA: That'll be the final thing, won't it?

PE: [To researcher] I remember you were on about this when I was chatting to you.

R: Yeah?

PE: Yeah, it was specifically about the library in the city centre and what it looked like compared to the other libraries.

R: Okay.

PA: [Two different conversations taking place] And then these are all places.

PE: It was about the architecture of the library and the buildings.

PA: Yeah, grab another cinema one.

R: Does anyone want another card?

So what are all these ones?

PC: Places that are… buildings [other than the library].

R: Okay.

PC: And then they can be put all into one group: *Buildings in Cardiff*

R: So is everything going underneath that one?

PC: No, there are two separate ones. We can't put it into that one.

R: So these one's are all under this. Okay, I'll write that down.

PA: Should these ones be under, like, attractions?

PE: What are they?

PA: Them buildings, those attractions.

PB: Why have you got the cinema then?

PA: 'cause that's the Motorpoint Arena, yeah?

PB: What is? That ain't that's the Admiral office, actually.

PF: Oh. That one's meant to be there then. And that one, innit? And that one's for shopping and that one's for cinema. And they're just buildings.

PC: [In a low voice] You're just making it up.

R: So these ones are all attractions in Cardiff?

PF: And these ones.

R: And these two?

PF: Yeah.

R: And those three piles there are Cardiff library stuff?

PF: Yeah.

R: Okay. I'll note that down.

PB: How long's that been on [the voice recorder?]

R: About fifteen, twenty minutes, so we're getting there.

PD: Is there a point to doing this, like at outcome, a conclusion?

R: It's not a quantitative thing, I'm not really sort of measuring the numbers and getting graphs out or anything. Basically just to have a chat together… [Everyone laughs] Well, you know…

PD: Like, is there a point to it?

R: I'm hoping so. I'll find out when I analyse it.

PB: Ah, you go away and analyse it all?

R: I have to…

PB: Are you at uni doing all of this by any chance?

R: Yeah, I'm at the Welsh School of Architecture.

PB: Oh yeah. What you studying?

R: It's about how young people use libraries, basically. How libraries are designed to be used well by young people and if they're not designed properly, how that…

PA: So what made you do this then?

R: Well this particular activity is about discussing how young folk like you and like us understand the library in the context of the city you live in and how they relate to each other.

PD: Yeah but the Central Library ain't really a library, is it? More like an office building. It is though, innit? Like, you've got St. Mellon's Library, Ely Library, Fairwaters Library, they look like little community centres, don't they? Red brick community centres, and then it's got some stupid little modern art outside of it.

PB: I like it, I do.

PA: I imagines going up at, like, a hundred miles an hour.

PA, PD and PB: [Inaudible]

PD: They should have had, like, a big book outside and you walk into the pages of the book.

Everyone: [Inaudible]

PE: Yeah, it'd be sick, wouldn't it? A big book leaning up against the library.

R: [Inaudible]

PD: Yeah, or something like that. There's a lot more things that could have happened. The old library was better.

R: The one where St. David's Two is [now]?

PD: Yeah the old one, that used to be by the UGC Centre. It used to be literally by, like, where St. David's Two is now. Used to be on the corner there by Primark, Peacock's and all that.

R: What was good about that one?

PD: It looked like a library.

R: How?

PD: 'cause it did?

R: From the outside, you mean?

PD: Yeah. You knew it was the library anyway 'cause it looked like every other library in Cardiff. It had the same bricks, the same windows…

Girls: [Laughing]

PD: It did! They've all got, like, red bricks, haven't they? Like the community centres. You go up by, do you know the community centre by Roath Park? That little community centre there? You walk up to it, from a distance you can tell straight away it's a community centre, can't you? It's just the way they're built, just that red brick. Do you know, like leisure centres?

PB: I know what you mean, yeah.

PD: You knows it's a leisure centre from miles away, just 'cause of the way it's built. Eastern looks exactly the same as western leisure centres.

PB: Yeah.

PD: But, yeah, I don't know architectural shit in town is all different because it's all based around town, the new, modern theme of town, of Cardiff…

PB: Yeah, but can you imagine if you had an old town and it wasn't modern? You'd get bored of that, wouldn't you?

PD: The only reason they invested in Cardiff town was 'cause Cardiff was, like, it was like a mini New York of Britain, it was one of like… We were up there, like, Birmingham, London, Edinburgh up in Scotland, we was like one of the most fastest growing cities of this time, so they invested so much money into Cardiff city, and that's why they've still got the St. David's Two…

PB: How do you know all that? He's quite brainy!

PD: It's just, it's just…

R: He probably read it in the library.

PD: No, you know how your own city, don't know?

PB: Well, I don't!

R: That's why I speaking to you guys, 'cause you know stuff.

PD: If you looks at the library and you looks at the St. David's Two centre, the St. David's Two centre and the library, the way they were both in the same period of time, they both have the same architectural view of the outside, all the glass, windows…

PC: [Inaudible}

PD: It is though, innit? I reckon that's only 'cause they were built in the same period of time, like.

R: Okay, we've just got one more thing to do and that is, now we've grouped them together, pick any big groups and see if they can be subdivided. If there's stuff within those big groups, and then we're done after that.

PA and PC: What do you mean?

R: So, like, if you've got a big group like this one… Actually that's not that big…

PB: That one's big.

R: There's a big one. Let's just move a bit of space here. We can spread these ones out again. Is there any way these can be more subdivided?

PB: Floor and books?

PC: Yeah. [To researcher] Well, they were, but then you told us to put them into bigger groups.

R: Yeah, we're doing this in different ways, splitting them up different ways 'cause it encourages you to think about them in different ways. So it's perfectly fine that we're going to be sorting these…

PD: Books and ceilings?

R: You guys can stand up if you can't see from there.

PB: I like to sit. So what you doing? Ceilings and floor?

PD: You don't need this one.

R: You want to take this one out?

Gather round guys, it's got to be a group effort.

PF: We are gathering round; the table's in the way!

PB: We don't like that photo.

Everyone: [Assorted muttering]

R: I tell you what to do, so you guys can do this, you pick a big one down here…

PA: There's no more big ones. They're all little ones. Give me outside the library. There, this one'll be fine. Leave those as it is.

PB: Yeah, but these are all books.

R: Is there anything in the pictures that's other information? What about sorting by places that you…

PD: How about like there? That's the library ceiling. It all shows the library ceiling, yeah?

R: Okay.

PD: This one is, like… Where's the other one? These, there's the roof, this is…

PB: The floor.

PD: …The floor.

PA: Here we are. We've got this one for the big wheel, the big circle thing.

R: Yeah, okay. Where did that one come from?

PA: Outside the library.

R: Okay.

PD: Different angles of the library interior. [Inaudible] Different angles of the interior of the library, innit? So it's not just any specific thing, is it, just an interior? [Inaudible]

PB: You can't divide many of them down.

PA: They're, like, all the same pictures.

R: It doesn't have to be, necessarily, what's literally in the picture. It could be how it makes you feel. You could sort them that way.

PD: That has green in it. This also has green in it. This has green in it as well.

R: That's a level that's almost too literal, if anything.

[… Ten minute section removed as off topic…]

PD: I wouldn't come to Central to take a book out; I'd go up Ely and get a book from the library in Ely 'cause it's right next to my house.

R: I guess it just depends what they think people are going to use libraries for, and what they're going to use a library for depends on what they think a library is. That's why it's important to have a discussion about what a library is.

7.2 FOUR STUDENTS, 26TH FEBRUARY 2015 (ABRIDGED)

Elicitation and identification of constructs:

Spacious

Dichotomy of utility* and comfort [Utility-disutility]

Comfortable* [Comfortable-uncomfortable]

  *Selected as two main constructs

Researcher: So, what do we think? Libraries. What do you think a library should offer, ideally, to you guys, that a library should be, what a library should do, conceptually, on a general level here? You can say anything you want. Don't worry about being sort of structured with this.

PA: Um, comfortable.

R: Comfortable?

PC: That would be my feeling too.

R: That's the first thing you think of? […] And what does comfort mean for you guys? What would comfort be?

PB: Spacious.

R: Spacious. Okay.

PA: Having lots of nice places to sit, so if you did want to read a bit of a book you'd have somewhere that you could do that.

PC: Yup, so, like, the seating wouldn't be a stall; it would be a comfy chair with nice cushioning and everything.

R: Okay, and that's good for any sort of reading, is it?

PC: Yup.

R: Okay, so we're talking about casual reading here.

PC: Casual reading. Not studying.

R: Good seating for recreational reading.

PA: Also have somewhere where you could do studying if you did need to, with tables and chairs.

R: Okay, so tables and chairs for studying.

PB: So the social sciences library is a good example of a library that combines different things together.

R: The ASSL down the road?

PB: Yeah.

R: Anything from you?

PD: I think it needs to have a lot of light, so it can't be too dark.

R: Is that related to comfort as well? Light. Any sort of light in particular, bright, dim?

PA: Not that, like, surgical, white light.

PC: That makes me tired.

R: Is the lighting in here okay for you guys?

PC: It's okay.

[…]

R: Right so, not surgical. Okay. Have we got any more?

PA: To do with comfort, or in general?

R: Anything at all. Any association or thing a library should be or do.

PB: I can't image any library today existing without some computer or internet access, so that would be mine.

R: Computer access.

PA: I kind of prefer it when the computers aren't all in the same place as well, sometimes. It's quite nice when they're a bit spread out, 'cause then you've got your own space, if you know what I mean. Like, rather than when you're in a row of computers, sometimes it's a bit nice to have the choice of going in a row of computers or sitting further away from everyone else. My library at home's got, like, the row of computers and then it's got ones dotted around the room as well. I quite like that you don't have to sit in a computer area to use the computer, if that makes sense.

R: Yeah, it does. I'm just trying to think of a good way to summarise that. I know what you mean. Um… personal space or varied space…

PA: Yeah.

R: I'm not quite sure how best to put it. I could put that as a subsection of that. Personal space… personal varied space. Okay.

PD: Places to plug in your own laptop as well.

R: Okay. I suppose that's relating to this actually, isn't it, the ability to set up your own personal little space. Sockets for laptops.

PC: To do with desks, like, the wider it is the better. If you have a laptop then if you have room for a book as well… It would be good to have room not just for your laptop. So you could have it in front of one another, so it needs to be wide enough.

R: I've written these as subsets of "computer access", but now I look at it, "personal space" is the main thing here and the others are subsets of it. Enough space for varied use.

PA: I guess it's kind of computers, but when they've got the screens and you can find what book you're looking for and what section it is.

R: Like a catalogue?

PA: Yeah, but rather than having to speak to somebody, it's just a computer screen that you touch.

PC: That would be good, yeah.

R: So you like the ability to take control of your information finding, personally?

PA: Yup.

R: "Access to personal information finding". Is that enough for us?

PC: Going back to comfort, I was thinking more like a homey feel, so I don't really like libraries as much that are more modern, but perhaps that's my personal feeling, like, I like it when it feels that you're kind of at home, but not at home, because you're at the library to get away, possibly, from home to do your work. But you want, basically, that feeling.

R: Okay. Is that because your home isn't a super-modern Grand Designs sort of house, it's more of a… Or is it more because you have an idea of something that's comfortable?

PC: Yeah, the idea of something that's comfortable. So to me that's comfort, whereas in a modern building where light's coming through, like in the library we went to in the interview, it was really, like, bright and stuff, whereas I prefer a bit more closed off, but that's personally.

R: Is that something everyone else feels?

PD: I personally like it modern.

R: And is that… Do you live in a super-modern house or is that just to do with how you like to work?

PD: Yeah. I think it depends on what you're doing there. If you're there to study, you don't mind it being modern, but if you're there to read I feel like you want to be comfortable, you want to feel a bit more homely.

PA: I feel like, if it was too homely I'd just not work.

PD: Yeah.

PA: It depends what you're doing. Like, if you're working you want it to be modern.

R: That's quite interesting 'cause it almost sounds like you're talking about two completely different things, conceptually. One is essentially a tool for helping you find information, and one a sort of mood-space, almost. So, I'll put that down as well. Let's say "dichotomy of modern and comforting".

PA: They do that quite well in the S.U. actually, on floor 3, 'cause you've got the bright bits, where you've got a lot of light and you feel like you could work in those…

R: Which one, sorry?

PA: Just next door.

R: You mean the International Lounge?

PA: Is that what it's called?

R: Yeah.

PA: And they've got round pods, and then they've got the pods with the tables, which are a lot lighter, and I don't feel you could do work in the round pods, but you could in the ones with the desks, 'cause they're like completely different moods in the same place.

R: I do know what you mean. I'm worked in those pods before and all the ones where you're practically lying on your back in complete darkness, looking up at this scree, you just can't use a laptop in there, it's impossible. "Dichotomy of utility and comfort". How about that? So that does relate to comfort, definitely.

Alright, maybe that'll do us. I see we've got ten minutes on the recorder already, so, doing well. Okay, so if I flip all these round so you can see them, is anything starting to emerge that might be main categories? Does anything stand out as sort of two or three main

categories? Do these relate to each other in a particular way? Are they talking about the same things?

PC: Comfort, I think, is a general one, 'cause that's to do with personal space and comfort, and this one's comfort as well.

R: I'll just put that down there.

[Arranging paper]

R: What I'm going to do then is put a box around this to show it's a main category.

PD: This one.

R: "Comfort and personal space"? Are those two related or are they separate categories?

PD: Linked.

R: "Comfort and personal space" maybe together as one category. Okay, so these two are category one. Is there anything else, apart from comfort and personal space that is a major theme for you in terms of what libraries are?

PC: I guess technology-wise, computer access and stuff would be a second one.

PD: So that relates to the screens as well, finding your own books. The technology, maybe.

R: Maybe we're talking more technology there?

PD: Yup.

R: "Utility". So, okay let's take those two. This is where it gets really fun. What I'm going to do is arrange this as "comfortable-uncomfortable", which may sound laughably over-simplistic, but bear with me.

[Explaining method]

PA: I can't see any seats.

PC: There's one hiding behind there.

PA: That makes it seem more comfortable.

R: That sort of children's display, you feel some sort of attraction to that?

PC: Yeah. And the piano would make it look a bit more homely I guess.

PA: I think because it's near the windows there's quite a lot of natural light. I like that.

R: So windows and light also providing comfort.

PA: That's a study area, isn't it, which maybe [inaudible].

PD: Yeah.

R: Uncomfortable's good when you're studying?

PA: If you're too comfortable it puts you in a sleep state, where I want to go to sleep rather than do work.

PB: Yeah.

R: How comfortable are you now?

PA: In these seats? These are, like, study seats so they make me feel like I'm doing work.

7.2 Four Students, 26th February 2015 (Abridged)

PC: I prefer… have been to Julian Hodge, like, the study room upstairs? I prefer those seats because the back's padded, so if I'm staying there for hours on end I can have a break in between, so I prefer that to these chairs.

R: I suppose seating actually might be quite important. Hadn't really thought about seating much, so that's interesting to know. […]

[Inaudible]

R: Okay, so this is a book shelf.

PA: It seems quite cluttered. Stressing me out.

R: What were you saying about this, sorry?

PA: It's too cluttered.

R: Cluttered?

PA: Like, I was saying before during the interview that these are too short. They don't have any personal, like, time to yourself to look at the books you want. Everybody's, like, looking at you.

PD: And you have to bend down.

PA: They should be higher, definitely.

R: Okay, that's interesting. So we're talking about a kind of ergonomic comfort.

PA: Yup.

[Inaudible due to people speaking at once]

[Researching giving instructions on method]

PA: I think comfort is about the inside more than the outside.

R: Because it's about the working environment? Okay, well that's the entrance, so I'll give you that to think about.

PD: That does kind of look comfortable, but it's kind of weird how it's not just a normal door.

PC: Yeah.

R: Do you mean when you walk up to it you think, this is weird?

PD: You're not sure if it's a rotating door or what.

PA: Basically it's obvious when it opens.

PC: That looks uncomfortable! What's that?

PB: [Laughs]

PA: What?

PC: I don't know what that is. Like, it looks like it's for printing something.

PB: How old is that computer?

R: I honestly don't know what on earth it is. I think it's a microfilm reader.

PD: I think I was watching a film where they used one of those the other day.

R: Do you mean, like, an educational film or a movie?

PC: I don't know about everyone else, but this is, like, a bit weird.

PA: It does look weird, but it is used though.

PC: I just think it's not comfortable.

[Discussing research method]

PA: Don't like this. It's too dark.

R: Do you mean it's a badly taken photograph or the actual space is problematic.

PA: It's the actual space.

R: So that's going to come down here, I suppose. Okay.

PA: That can go with all the other ones.

R: I know you mentioned a darkened space as being more comfortable because it's not too bright, laboratory-like, but that's uncomfortable for you because it makes you feel, well, how exactly?

PA: Sleepy.

R: Sleepy? So it's primarily to do with the attitude you're approaching the library with, whether you're coming there to work or to read.

PA: Yeah.

R: Okay. Have we finished with that particular one now?

PC: I think so.

PD: That one should probably go on the end.

PC: This one, you mean?

PD: Yeah.

R: Okay, what's that one?

PD: They're the library's… The shelves are a bit higher in that one, actually.

PC: Yeah, and there's a comfy chair. Yeah, I guess.

R: I'll just come round this side and have a look. So which ones of these are actually on the thing? Would that be… why are these ones not on it?

PA: Don't really know how to classify them in "comfort".

PC: I wouldn't want to go upstairs, but, yeah.

R: That's fine. Okay. On here we've got some easy seating, some informal sort of child-friendly stuff, a piano. Why's that in comfortable?

PA: The seating's quite, like, sociable, so that makes it seem more comfortable. The piano's quite homely, and the children's stuff is quite homely.

R: Do you have a piano at home?

PA: No. It's just not normally something you'd find in a library typically, is it? More of a home.

PC: I agree.

PB: I wouldn't be comfortable in the children's area because it would make me feel out of place.

R: Okay, so when we went up into the children's area, did you feel uncomfortable?

PB: Yeah because I didn't feel like we were supposed to be there, necessarily.

R: Okay. And I suppose the piano gives it a sort of personal touch. Maybe that's what you're meaning by that? Is that right?

PA: Yeah, I think.

R: And at the other end of the scale, we've got some stuff that's neither here nor there in the middle. Down here I'm seeing stairs, the roof…

PC: It's the kind of angles I think.

R: The inner bits of the buildings.

PA: All the different sharp angles of the building make it seem uncomfortable.

R: Okay. We have these low shelves in uncomfortable, and here I notice we've got some higher shelves also in uncomfortable. Is that just because…

PA: No seating really.

R: So for different reasons that photograph's in there? Okay, great.

[Discussing method]

[Beginning utility-disutility]

PB: That's the epitome of disutility.

R: Why's that?

PA: We don't know what it is. It doesn't look like it belongs anywhere.

R: Right. Sorry if I'm asking questions that you think are obvious. I know what you're thinking, I just need to hear you say it that's all.

PC: Nobody's going to…

R: The piano? It does get played occasionally.

PA: That would be quite distracting.

R: You can put headphones in it, play it quietly. I think. I think it's electric.

PB: Ah, that's nice.

PC: What's that?

PA: I'm not sure. That can go in "disutility".

R: So this is another thing that you've no idea what it is?

PC: No. It doesn't look… I'm not sure.

R: Okay, so I think we can say with certainty that its appearance doesn't tell you what it is or how to use it, in which case you'd have to rely on instructions or librarians.

PA: I feel like those would go up the "utility" end.

PC: [Inaudible]

R: So you've got the self-service machine.

PC: And this as well.

R: What's that you've got there?

PC: That's the reception desk.

R: Okay. That's in the children's library, isn't it?

PA: Any area of the library with a reception desk is useful.

PC: I guess the escalators are really useful as well, 'cause I would never want to have to climb up all those stairs to be honest.

PD: The signs would be useful 'cause that's telling people where things are.

PC: But then, at the same time, like, when I went for my interview, it didn't really say the information that I wanted it to say. It had it on the back. Do you remember?

R: I do remember, yeah.

PC: It doesn't tell me what's on the other floors.

R: So you felt the signage was…

PC: Yeah, it wasn't as good as it could be. It was good, but it could be improved, so I think it would go, for me, in the middle.

R: So, we're talking about things you would be looking for in the library if you were trying to identify areas of comfort and places where you can get utility. I suppose that's related to that dichotomy of utility and discomfort that we mentioned before.

PA: I guess there's a computer here, so there's computers you can use. So that's utility, and I'd say the seating over there with the tables, that would go in.

R: So there you're identifying particular types of space where you can work, perhaps, depending on what type of activity you wanted?

PA: Yup, definitely.

PC: I guess there's a chair here as well, so that's good for doing work. He's got his laptop there.

PA: I just don't like these shelves at all.

R: These?

PA: Tiny little ones, that's really pointless.

R: So that lacks utility for you because…

PA: It's very low down to start with, and it doesn't really hold much in it. It seems like…

PB: A waste of space?

PA: Yeah, like, when it was in the downstairs section it was the history stuff, and the books were all laid out like *this*, instead of…

R: Facing out?

PA: Yeah, so it seems like that's a massive waste of space and they could have so many more books in there by just putting them the other way round. Like, that seems fair enough because obviously you've got the most popular ones at the top, and that's a good thing, but in the history section I feel like they could have had a lot more in it if they'd just laid it out better, instead of how they have laid it out.

R: So this would go on here maybe towards that end would it?

PC: Like, for me, if I look at that then I would feel like the library doesn't have much to offer in each section.

R: This one here with the two full shelves and the one that's just facing outwards?

PA: I feel like it should have a…

PC: It just makes me feel like there's not many books there.

PA: The top shelf is used for nothing.

R: You guys get so used, I suppose, to associating a good library with just, like, a wall of books?

PC: Yeah.

PA: But a lot's beyond reach though.

R: Okay. Is that everything for these?

PC: Think so. I think for kids this would be good. They'd be able to reach it, so the short ones would be good.

R: Alright.

Computer access
↳ ▷ Personal / varied space |
  ↳ Sockets for laptops
  Enough space for varied use
  Catalogue access – Personal information finding

7.2 Four Students, 26th February 2015 (Abridged)

Comfortable | Tables & chairs
for studying
Spacious | Light – not surgical
Good seating for casual reading

Dichotomy of utility and comfort
↳ Is the library two things?

8   FOCUS GROUPS – LIVERPOOL

8.1   SIX STUDENTS, 6TH FEBRUARY 2015, (ABRIDGED)

Elicitation and identification of constructs:

Modern (stock)

Comfortable

Resourceful (i.e. with good quality resources)

Study friendly (for individual or group work)

Appealing (not "creaky, dark, gloomy; with natural light")*

Organised*

Light (natural)

Colours

> *Selected as two main areas

Researcher: I don't if anyone wants to shout out anything they think a library is or should be?

Participant A: Modern.

R: Morden. That's a good start. I'm just going to write these all over here and then we can start grouping them afterwards.

Participant D: Comfortable.

R: Comfortable.

Participant F: Resourceful.

R: Like, full of resources?

PF: Yeah.

Participant B: Study-friendly, so having rooms where you're actually able to study on your own and with groups also.

R: We can probably run out of things quite quickly. I don't know. What about this library? Let's move onto this library particularly, then. Have you guys used this much or just whisked through? I know I've spoken to you guys before about this. Is this the first time you've been in here?

PD: I saw different rooms and thought it looked cool.

R: It looks cool?

PD: Pretty much, yeah.

R: Is that something a library should be?

PD: I don't know but it makes me want to come here. Um, the big massive rooms with all the books, it looks so cool.

R: Okay, I'll put that on.

PF: If it's appealing people'll come here. I guess it should be appealing.

R: Appealing, yeah.

PF: Looks creaky. I don't think you'd want to study there. Get depressed more.

PA: Organised.

R: Okay. So, starting to get a few here aren't we. They're all quite general, aren't they? Is there anything that relates a little more specifically to what you guys would want in a library, or does that pretty much cover it?

PD: Pretty much covers it for me. Like, when I study I like to be comfortable when I'm studying and then obviously, being organised, you'd want it to be easy to find things.

R: Okay, so we've got, what, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven? Are there a few of these that are more important than others, or they all completely on an even standing?

Participant C: I think resourceful is really important 'cause I come here 'cause I know I can find everything.

R: That's the point?

PD: And organised as well.

R: So I suppose we're talking about organisation and resources, pretty much.

PD: Appealing as well.

R: Do you mean like in an aesthetic sense?

PD: More like… you wouldn't want to come here if it's not… nice, pretty much. If it's like in a dark, gloomy room kind of thing, sort of like…

PB: The lighting.

PD: Yeah the lighting.

R: That's good. I'll start writing these down.

PF: I guess modern could go into appealing.

PD: Yeah, and comfortable.

PF: It's subject isn't it?

PA: Modern as in up-to-date, 'cause it's the resources. Everything changes as years go on. You don't want to be reading a book that's twenty years out of date.

R: Okay, so that's to do with this one here? I'll bring that in here. What aside from lighting makes a place comfortable?

PA: Neutral colours?

R: The colours?

PA: Yeah.

R: What sort of colours are you thinking here?

PA: Neutral ones.

R: Nothing too jarring.

PD: I like orange and yellow, and bright colours, pretty much.

[…]

PF: Calm colours.

R: Why is that?

PF: Because you're probably stressed out from studying, in the first place.

PB: Usually the colour of the room affect your mood, so sometimes if you're in a red room, like, a bright red room, I don't think that would be ideal for studying.

R: So I suppose we're starting to get there now.

[Explaining method]

[General discussion of photo sorting activity]

R: Okay, cool, it looks like we're starting to get two discourses here: a utility discourse and an aesthetic discourse. I see there's no sort of middle ground here on appealing.

PB: No, I think they're all meant to be over here.

R: They're all appealing?

Participant E: Actually…

PD: No.

R: I do personally find that quite appealing, actually…

[More sorting]

R: Okay, so, assuming these are roughly scaled evenly from one end to the other… You don't want to just have a heap at one end, do you? You can have a heap at one end if you want, if you're just like giddy children who want to look at everything because it's so appealing.

PD: I think this library is really appealing though. Like, when you enter I think it's really nice.

PE: With the stairs and everything and the escalators.

PD: Yeah I think the only thing is…

PF: When you said we were going to be coming to this library to do this, I was excited.

R: Ah, that's good.

PD: Yeah, it is a really nice library.

R: Let's start to look a little bit at this then. I noticed immediately that we've got some of this here. What was your thinking for that?

PC: Colour.

R: You just don't like orange?

PA: It's a bit pointless as well.

PD: A bit random.

R: It's a bit what, sorry?

PA: It seems a bit pointless.

PF: Is it lit, or something?

PE: I just felt distracted. I don't know, I just don't like it.

PD: It seems a bit pointless and random.

R: I'm just going to have a little look at this end in case I can find a very similar picture. I don't think that's happened, so that's good. That's some consistency right there. Okay, so at this end I'm seeing a lot of the dome in the middle, and actually the one in the Picton as well. There are two domes here aren't there? Um, who put stuff on there?

PB: I think the dome's the most appealing.

R: Okay. That definitely features heaviest here. Because there are a lot of photos, clearly it's something people were interested in taking photos of a lot, along with the literary pavement outside, so… Why is it that you all find that appealing, the dome and the pavement?

PD: I think the dome is, like, if you're sitting in a room, even if it's night you can look up at the sky.

PA: And the natural light, 'cause it's a lot better to read a book in natural light.

PC: I think it's unique, 'cause you don't think a library's going to have a dome. You assume it's a regular room; you don't assume there's going to be a dome in there.

R: So you find it quite uplifting and that makes for a better working condition as well?

PD: Yeah, definitely. You'd enjoy going to the library instead of dreading going.

R: Okay, what have we got round this side? So this stuff is relating to how easily you'd be able to use the library, I guess. I notice those shelves again at the bottom. That's slightly disorganised. Does that relate to its appealing-ness or unappealing-ness?

PD: Definitely, yeah.

PB: The less organised something is the less appealing…

PD: The more unappealing it is.

R: So we've got this stuff in the middle. The children's library's appearing in the middle a bit, along with the middle of the library.

PC: I don't think we really ranked it.

PF: We put them all in the middle.

PC: Yeah, we didn't really rank it.

R: Oh I see, so it's all just right at that end.

PF: Some randomness is appealing though.

PD: It's just unique.

R: Do you think if it all was like that, it would start to get a bit monotonous, maybe?

Several: Yeah.

PF: That's what I mean by randomness. It makes it appealing.

PB: I guess that's usually what the children's library does. That section makes it the disorganised.

R: There's definitely… I know it's not in use, but that actually looks quite neat to me, quite organised, even though it's the kids' library..

Several: Yeah.

R: I don't know about you, if you guys have been into the kids' library, but it strikes me as having this slightly sickly yellow lighting in it. There are no windows at all. It's really unattractive, actually. As you can see from that, it's quite dark and yellowish.

Okay, is there any more we can take off the board here? We've got "organised" and "appealing"… I don't know if they can be broken down… "Comfortable", possibly? Doesn't relate to what's here, unless it was a component of appeal. I suppose it would be. So let's just go back to these. Is there anything on here that can't be, or is everything collapsible into "appealing" and "organised"?

[Inaudible]

R: Okay, and looking at the pictures, does anything strike you that should be on here? I mean, is there anything in the middle that isn't a duplicate? What about this one here? I don't think I've seen that one anywhere else? 5614?

PD: It's modernised, to have those beam-type things.

R: What do you mean, sorry?

PD: It's modernised to have those beams in buildings, 'cause you see them quite a lot.

PA: You can see the structural integrity of the building.

PF: I think it's more, um, random, but it makes it look good because it just shows a different architecture compared to different parts of the library.

R: That's Victorian, isn't it?

PC: It shows the modern side to it.

R: So, yeah, okay. So I suppose you'd say something like that as well, which I think, I might be wrong, but I was told was the first electric light in a public building in Liverpool, in 1870-something. What about lighting, 'cause I noticed that lighting was one of the first things we put up there. You were talking about lighting in terms of functionality. Is there any other way lighting is interesting.

PE: [Inaudible] But then with the dome you end up with natural light and day light coming through.

R: I don't know about you, but I find it infuriating when I'm trying to work on a computer and there's a beam of light going straight onto the screen.

PD: Yeah.

R: These are all definitely straight up in appealing, so it's got appeal as an object in itself, but I suppose if you had a direct beam of light… You were talking about the entrance to the library as you came up.

PE: Yeah.

R: Because you got lost. Does it strike as being interesting how different it looks from day to night? You can see, that photo there, struck me as having quite a different feel about it.

PE: I don't why but I went into the museum.

PF: I guess the majority of the buildings in Liverpool look like that.

417

PE: Maybe 'cause the style of how it was built.

R: Yeah, well it's interesting you say that 'cause it was built as a public library and museum. It was both, and now the world museum's just next door. But you're right, all the buildings around here kind of look the same.

[…]

R: Is it like any libraries you guys have used before?

PD: No, definitely not.

R: How is it different?

PD: I don't want to keep going back to the dome, but the dome is, like…

PB: And a lot of libraries have that direct light, or natural light.

PA: I think 'cause it's an old building as well, with modern interior. I don't know, it might just be me, but with these ones, here, like, 5585, it looks a lot like the grand staircase in Titanic.

[Laughter]

PD: I was just thinking that it looked like something out of Titanic.

R: It's interesting that you say Titanic, 'cause that's brand new, but I know what you mean.

PA: It's majestic and grand and really cool. I'm just looking for DiCaprio to come down the stairs.

[Laughter]

R: He's probably gone up to the second floor and then got lost 'cause he doesn't know where the next staircase is.

PE: It does look like the British Library in London as well. That's grand as well.

R: That's true, although it's made from brick, the one in London. So you guys like a sense of theatricality about the place? That's part of its appeal? I notice this rather weird book here. Is that appealing for any particular reason?

PD: It reminds me of the book out of Hocus Pokus.

PC: You kind of think, when you go to this place, it's so magical you can find anything there. It's mysterious and…

R: So it puts you in a certain frame of mind, you think, when you come in here? Do you guys ever pop in here for group work or… I don't know if pharmacists have much call for it?

PD: No, we kind of use the uni library, but I know for studying for exams last year, two of the girls I live with decided to come here to study and went to the dome room [Picton] to study 'cause they felt like it was a nicer environment than the uni library, which it definitely is.

R: Okay. What's the university library like?

PD: Like, not great.

PC: Boxed in. The top is just rows of tables and books.

PD: And computers and that's kind of it, like. It's not appealing at all. The only rooms that area appealing are like little study rooms. Why I like them is because there's a massive

window and you can sit at the window and that's what I love about that room, but anywhere else I don't really like, but that bit is the nicest.

PB: No natural light coming in.

PC: Yeah, the natural light I think has a big impact.

PD: Even when I was studying for my exams I would always sit at the same computer at that window 'cause it's massive, and even if it's at night and it's dark, you can still see. It's still nicer than just…

PF: You don't feel enclosed.

PB: And this [Liverpool Central] is nice 'cause you actually go outside, but with the uni library you have to go all the way down and go outside. It's like a mini break then if you want to take anything to just go outside, get some fresh air.

R: It sounds like the connection with the outside is really important to you.

Everyone: Yeah.

PD: I didn't realise how important it was, but I'm talking about it!

R: And I guess that can't have been any consideration when the university space you guys have was put in.

PD: You say that, but downstairs in it, they do have a massive window. Like, that's only in the ground floor.

PC: The sun doesn't really come in.

PD: No, the sun doesn't come it. It's on the other side that the sun comes in.

PA: From an early age, I used to love having classes outside. You think of studying, you're just inside and it's quite depressing, but to be able to have all the natural light, go out on the roof terrace. It's quite refreshing.

R: The department's just over the way, isn't it? You've not had to come down off the hill to use this place if you ever want to.

PC: I think the walking distance was the same as the library. It's not much further.

5614

5585

9   Focus Groups – Worcester

9.1   Five Students, 19th February 2015 (Abridged)

Elicitation and identification of constructs:

Books

Support/service (informative/supportive*)

Technology (technologically advanced)*

Warm

Old

Varied spaces

Family-friendly

Comfortable/cosy (somewhere where you'd want to be, where you could spend a few hours; good chairs)

Welcoming ("people feel like they want to be here", somewhere you'd enjoy being for its own sake, a "social meeting place", more likely to be used for group work)*

> *Selected as three main constructs*

R: Basically, what we're just doing is having a little brainstorming session of things that you associate with libraries and things that you feel libraries ought to be. Just any old concept you can think of, so we've had "books", "computer technology", "warm", "old", and "varied spaces" so far, so a huge collection. We're going to sort them out afterwards, but for the moment it's just brainstorming these things. So if any of you guys want to chip in with anything you can think of, as I said, just what libraries are or what they should be in terms of qualities. Let's try to think adjectives if possible.

A: Probably more family spaces.

R: Family-friendly? Okay, we'll go with that.

[…]

I suppose particularly with all that going on outside you appreciate that.

A: Comfortable?

E: I was thinking cosy.

R: Okay, in what sense? What does that mean for you?

A: Somewhere where you want to be, somewhere you can sit down and spend a few hours there.

E: So including the chairs.

R: Okay, good chairs.

K: Also welcoming as well.

R: Welcoming in what way?

K: Well people feel like they want to be here, rather than just getting a book to go [inaudible].

R: So you mean you'd want it to be a place where you'd enjoy being for its own sake rather than just a service?

A: It's got to be a social meeting place really.

R: Is that because as students you have a lot of social interactions and you need a place like that?

E: Yeah, I think it's… yeah.

A: You're more likely to come to a place like this for group work and stuff like that.

R: Okay, we're starting to get quite a few there. If there are any more you want to say, do shout them out. What we'll try to do now is just sorting a few of those into groups, categories, and see what we end up with, see if we can make sense of them.

[Explaining method]

R: Is there any sort of thing that jumps out as being a sort of major category here? Any ways of collecting things together?

A: Technology encompasses quite a lot.

R: Really going for adjectives here, so what about "technological" or "technologically advanced"? You feel that's something quite important, so we'll go with that then, and if you think I'm putting words in your mouth, just stop me.

E: I was thinking comfortable, 'cause then you've also got the warm spaces.

K: [Inaudible]

R: Okay "welcoming", "opening". Is that what you were saying?

K: Yeah.

R: Is there anything else here? Now that we've spent a couple more minutes thinking about it, is there anything else at all? Is "technologically advanced" and "welcoming" all you need? Does that completely cover it?

A: I still think books are quite important, but it's not really an adjective.

R: "Information-rich", maybe?

A: Yes. Informative.

R: "Informative". Maybe that would include the service. Okay, let's leave it at that and see how we get on. Okay, so what I've written there is "technological", "welcoming/open", and "informative/supportive".

[Explaining method]

K: I suppose a library is a place where those two things ["technological-traditional"] merge together.

[Explaining method]

[Sorting process; group talking to each other together]

R: What's this one here?

E: It's the group study. It's the youth zone on the bottom floor.

K: They also have tables down there with no computers so you can sit in there and do your group work.

E: Get your laptop out.

K: And there are games and things.

E: Would you say it's somewhere in the middle then, 'cause it's got places with technology and places without technology, so you've got that split. You can work in the old-fashioned with, from books and things?

[…]

A: I think whatever coding [book classification] system this is has got to be quite old fashioned 'cause I can't use it at all.

K: It's not bad.

A: It's so confusing, like, you try to get a sociology book and there's two different types of sociology book and you accidentally go to the short-term loan and try and take it out for two weeks, and, oh no, it's so confusing.

R: Is that the Dewey system?

A: I don't…

K: Yeah.

[…]

J: Is that upstairs?

K: Yeah.

R: Third floor, is it?

A: Fourth floor.

K: I don't think it…

A: It is, 'cause I don't like to go up there 'cause I always feel like coughing is disturbing everyone.

E: I made the mistake the other day…

K: I made the mistake the other day as well of going up there. We got awkward looks off everyone as we walked in 'cause it's a silent room. You can't talk in there.

[…]

J: Aren't these chairs specifically designed for something? I've never known…

E: What you do is you sit on it with your legs in between that bit, like, this is the arm. It's really good for drawing out of the window.

A: I was going to say futuristic, but it's way more "Spy Kids".

R: Okay, that's the last of them. So is that everything you want to pick out? I assume it is.

[…]

J: What about the lights and stuff?

E: I was thinking the architectural sculptures.

J: Yeah, they're quite modern. And the stairs. This library is quite open plan, isn't it?

K: It's all quite modern, quite light.

[…]

E: I never realised how the light… like, in the windows are set up, what they're supposed to do, like, how disburse the light.

R: You mean the roof windows?

A: I don't know, like, there's a reason why they're all chequered.

E: And the reason is?

A: Well we haven't figured it out.

R: You mean what this square pattern is?

A: Yeah.

E: It seems like a lot of effort.

[…]

R: Okay, so as far as I can see here, this is spanning Roman burial straight through to old books, then some kind of 1930s or 20s jukebox, conventional books, photocopying, multi-study space, silent study area, the architecture of the building itself, and then sort of furniture and big screen, and then air outlet and sound baffling. Is that right?

Everyone: Yeah.

[Scanning photos]

[Set up of next sort: "welcoming/open – unwelcoming/closed"]

A: I know for a fact this is unwelcoming 'cause I took that photo and there were two kids having a fight [outside the main doors].

R: So, kids having a fight.

K: That's pretty welcoming as well because it's sort of open as you walk down…

E: I saw so many people get trapped in the door. It was hilarious.

R: Which doors, sorry?

K: We nearly got trapped in the…

E: In the main doors.

R: How do people manage to get trapped in them?

E: Because they're really slow and then they go really quickly, so someone on a wheelchair got stuck, and I'm sorry but all I did was laugh.

I: The whole place just looks really welcoming. There's a lot of space.

K: It's very open, isn't it?

E: I would say even the light makes it open.

A: With all the windows it makes it feel bigger than it is.

K: Even those stairs kind of seem welcoming.

[…]

J: Are there any more pictures of the fourth floor, 'cause I'd say that's the least welcoming place in this whole building.

[…]

E: I don't mind it up there. This one is, but that looks really welcoming and that's the fourth floor.

A: It's this one that's the second floor with all the archaic computers, the ones for the archives. That's always been a bit closed for me. I can't navigate that very well.

R: The archive area? Okay, what is it about that that makes it less…

E: I don't even know where that is.

K: It's on this floor.

R: That half of floor two, what's wrong with it? What puts you off?

A: Maybe it's just how big the computers are, it's how close together they are, or seating, but it's quite hard to navigate I think, and I always end up feeling like I'm going to knock someone over.

R: Oh right, it's a bit closed in, you can't see through it so clearly?

A: Yeah.

[…]

E: They have surprising comfy seats, actually.

K: In public places, seats are so uncomfortable.

R: Which one's this, sorry? Is this the third level?

K: Yeah.

R: The fiction section?

E: Umm… yeah.

A: Yeah, but it's also got sociology books, crime books, psychology books. It's the one with most of the books.

K: Most books are only on the third floor, and some on the fourth.

E: It's a really nice place to go and watch the sunset, 'cause you see it over the hills.

K: We did some drawing here. We stood on the balcony and we nearly got locked outside 'cause the door was very stiff.

[…]

R: So this is the children's area isn't it? It's very busy today.

K: It was very, very busy Friday. Over two hundred people here Friday.

R: Were there?

K: I was trying to do some drawing here but there was these two hundred kids, someone with a guitar, someone singing.

R: Was that a special event then?

K: I think so, but there was over two hundred people that one area down there.

R: Okay. What makes it good for that? What makes it so popular? I mean, if they tried doing that activity on the third floor, you wouldn't get so many people.

E: It's easier to work there.

K: It's just the little kids' area, with kids' books, and they've got like a little seating area down there.

E: They should just have that for students. Screw the kids.

A: I got kicked out of the kids' area once for trying to use their computers when I couldn't be arsed going up the stairs.

[General laughter]

R: Okay, is this complete, do you reckon?

A: Yes, and we've still got another thing to do.

R: Okay, that's good timing. I think we're just about on target here.

[Setting up final sort: "informative/supportive – uninformative/unsupportive"]

A: Books are supportive.

E: This is the woman I like. She's great. She finds books for me.

A: This also appears to be a librarian. I just talked to somebody on the first floor to find out where this room was, so they are informative.

[…]

E: Did you have that lecture from a librarian? No? Okay, we had a lecture from a librarian in the first week and this woman came and just explained everything to us and how to use it all…

A: I remember there was a library lecture, but I wasn't paying a lot of attention.

K: Well books are supportive and informative, so put that there somewhere.

I: Well, they can be.

K: Yeah, they can be.

R: Okay, you mean the books themselves aren't, but the system that guides you to them is?

J: I would say how the bookshelves are set up is well 'cause it's neatly rowed and everything in its subject, like, you know you've gone too far if you want crime about women and then it goes slowly crime about the general public, you know you've gone too far.

[…]

A: What the hell is this and what is the correct way up?

K: You've not noticed it when you walk into The Hive?

E: If you look up when you walk in, or you look down from the second floor…

K: If you're in the entrance and you look up, or you're on the second floor and look through the window down there…

A: Jesus, I've been here three years, never noticed that.

K: If you look through the window down there later by the entrance you'll see it.

J: What's this?

K: It's a panel.

J: Interesting pattern though.

R: Kind of… Hivey.

K: Goes with the name so well.

A: I like how the outside of the building's designed. It's really cool.

E: Really? You like it?

J: Yeah.

I: Yeah.

E: Oh wow.

J: It's not usually the kind of building I'd find attractive, but I just think it's really cool.

A: The outside is a bit ostentatious for me. Maybe 'cause it gold. But I like the inside.

E: I like the inside.

K: Have you guys got any others you want to stick on there?

E: Is there anything else you can find that's uninformative?

A: That thing is sometimes quite difficult to use.

E: Oh god, yes.

A: It is quite handy, especially if your card doesn't work.

K: It's for scanning your books in and taking them out.

R: A service point?

K: Yeah.

A: I'd say they're very simple, but sometimes you scan your card and it'll say no.

K: I scanned the card; it wasn't working so I had to go to reception.

E: That's happened to me but they've fixed in five minutes. They're really helpful.

K: They fixed it, but I went back and it still didn't work, so they had to fix it again.

9.1 Five Students, 19th February 2015 (Abridged)

Books / Quiet
computers Technology
Warm / Old   Family friendly
Varied spaces

Comfortable   Social
Cozy
Good chairs

Welcoming - feel like you want
                to be there

9.1 Five Students, 19th February 2015 (Abridged)

Unwelcoming/ Closed

Welcoming/ Open

Uninformative /

Unsuppo

Informative /
Supportive