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Enhancing Community Participation in the Use of the Public Libraries: Case Study of Peckham Library, London and Surrey Library, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Library, being a hub of information; used to be of great value to the society, although it was regarded as a quiet place of knowledge where informative materials were provided in numerous languages and dialects to reply desires of a different nearby communities. As a result, frequent visits to the library was imperative to students and experts within the 1990s for nonstop learning and for proficient progression. For decades, libraries have been neglected by the public due to lack of funds and the inability of librarians to meet up the pace of modernization, leaving the internet as a reliable and faster means of accessing information. This has drawn the attention of many researchers to the idea of re-envisioning the public library to go beyond its traditional mission of preserving knowledge or being a repository of books to being a fully digitized library that meets the growing needs of community thereby encouraging frequent patronization of the public library. This research was be carried out through qualitative research approach with the use of case study research method. Within which case studies were carried out on some outstanding Public libraries, and carrying out rigorous researches to provide practical and effective measures to make the library facility welcoming to the intended user's thereby enhancing public participation in public libraries. This research aimed at promoting public participation in the design and implementation processes to create user-friendly and sustainable public libraries that will meet the need of the time and society.

Key words: All-inclusive Design; Information Communication Technology; Digitalization; Library Service

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries nowadays confront phenomenal change in reason and utilization due to incredible changes in use of information. Technology nowadays is changing the basic shapes of information whereas the Web has revolutionized how users' get to and utilize data and appear no signs of abating down as the developing numbers of portable gadgets are anticipated to triple the number of individuals by 2017. (Cisco. N.p., 2016)

Frequent visits to the library were imperative to students and experts within the 90s for nonstop learning and for proficient progression. Libraries were of great value to the society, although libraries did not as it were, provide recreation perusing materials, but important informative materials in numerous dialects to reply desires of a different nearby community. The library was seen as an open space that provided students a calm place to study and a secure place to accumulate. (Christopher , 2016) (Sampson, 2021)

The public libraries in Nigeria have comparative broad capacity of serving the overall populace by giving instructive opportunities to the self-improvement mindfulness and conceivable outcomes for both natural and metropolitan inhabitants. In this way, it is fitting to look at and re-examine the concept of the public library to decide how it can be outlined in a way that permits the library in its aggregate to end up the learning commons of the society.

Libraries according to Carl Sagan Cosmos, bonds us with the intuition and knowledge of great minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the cooperative knowledge of the human species. (Sule, 2014)

AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research is aimed at providing effective measures through which public libraries can be designed to be appealing and attract different class, gender, age, and profession. Thereby promoting community participation in public library activities which in turn promotes reading culture in the society and effectively eradicate illiteracy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- To reinvent a public library whose facility and activities are based on the needs of users of the library.
- To enlighten the public on the benefits of the public library to social integration.
- To promote community based architecture in the design of public libraries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literacy, being the ability to read and write, is not all that's required to flourish and succeed. Nowadays, individuals must also continuously be able to utilize cutting edge technology successfully; they must have computer proficiency. Indeed beyond basic and computer education, individuals must be able to conduct and oversee their own information-seeking processes. Students now not only devour and download information; progressively, they make and take part in it. They are social creatures in each way that past generations were and in a few better approaches, sharing data carefully and utilizing each other as sounding boards. They value social experiences that blend communication and learning (Bryan, 2007)

According to a report of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries, increasing access to education, learning openings and social connections for all one of the great challenges of our time. It may be a challenge made more critical by the quick move from ancient mechanical and service-based economic models to a modern economy in which knowledge and creativity are the drivers of productivity and economic growth, and information, and learning are central to economic performance and prosperity. It isn't as it were the economy but all of society that's being reshaped by these patterns (Topeka & Shawnee County Library)

RESEARCH, ANALYSIS, AND STRATEGY

In recent times, public library institutions have experienced a great decline in funding as subsequent government officials tend to ignore the roles and significance of public libraries to the society. This lack of recognition has also lead to a decline in reading as a result of the inability of most librarians to keep up with modern trends and needs of the modern day library patrons, in order to continually capture the perusing interest of library users. With the advent of Personal computers, mobile phones, and the internet; quick and easy access to information has become the new order of the day. Thereby shifting the interest of young minds from the library as an institution of learning to social media as a means of quick information. This has led to the quick and easy

spread of both true and fake news, instilling fear and tension in the society. This also has caused the library institution its relevance in the society, as the government tends to build structures in the name of a public library without proper consultations with the Librarian society or the general public. Architect's also have failed to do due diligence by consulting Librarians, carrying out proper research about the host community, and getting them involved in every stage of the design process.

METHODOLOGY

This study used case studies of existing public libraries as the tool.

CASE STUDY 1: PECKHAM LIBRARY, SOUTHWARK, LONDON

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Figure 1:Pictorial view of Peckham Lirary

Source: James Morris (website (http://jamesmorris.info/))

Figure 2 Location Map of Peckham Library

Source : (https://maps.goMogalpe. dcoamta /©m2a0p2s2? Illm=5a1g.e4r7y4 ©18240,2-02. 0, 6B9lu3e6s8k&yz, G=1e6tm&ta=php&inhgl= penlsc-,U ISnf&ogtle=rUraS L&tmd a&p Bcliueenstk=ya,p Miva3x)ar Technologies, The GeoInformation Group

Project: Peckham Library

Location: 122 Peckham Hill Street, London, SE15 5JR, United Kingdom

Construction Date: Feb 1998 - Feb 2000

Architect: Alsop and Stormer

Project Architects: Christophe Egret, Will Alsop

Client: London Borough of Southwark, Education and Leisure Department

Structural Engineer: Adams Kara Taylor

Main Contractor: Sunley Turriff Construction

Materials: Concrete, Copper Cladding, Glazed Façade, Steel Columns

PROJECT INFORMATION

Southwark being the second most deprived council area in England of which Peckham was one of its grey areas. But the introduction of a state of the art library to the community has brought about prestige and a sense of architecture to the community. Peckham library is perceived as a catalogue of iconic architecture put together with an idea of urban and social regeneration.

Peckham library is famous across other cities, for its outstanding architecture and ability to captivate the interest of passersby, while the interior and book collections tends to give readers a

comfortable and spacious environment. The library's statistics has shown that the library had attracted over half a million visits a year, which slightly above the target set by the council.

According to the comments by students, John Salmon and Cathy Asante, being interviewed by Astrid Kolger. John Salmon described Peckham library as "calm, quiet and a big space,". He also adds that the library is well equipped and stocked while the staff are "very helpful". But Cathy Asante, points to a deficiency: "Sometimes I'm here all day and I'd like something to eat, but there's no cafe." (Kogler)

Jeremy Melvin postulated that, if locality and purpose are the raw material for architecture, Peckham Library's raw material is Peckham and libraries. If the interaction between them leads to a transformation of each, this statement ceases to be tautological. (Jeremy, 2013)

Alsop Architects used an all-inclusive design strategy, in which they had a close working relationship with the Client and local community to ensure that the project meets the needs and aspirations of the surrounding population and visitors to Peckham. According to an architecture journal by *Archello*, The Peckham model proposes that the 21st century library should reach out to the community, encourage access to knowledge and embrace the diversity of the local population. (Alsop, Taylor, & Borough)

The library was designed to be striking, to make people curious about what lies inside, it adds a modest transformation of its own, being visible from a distance at night because of its colored illumination, or during the day because of its attractive patinated copper cladding to challenge the traditional view of libraries as staid and serious environments. The architectural approach responds to a client brief which seeks to redefine the role of the library in the local community. Also, it is

part of a concerted programme of regeneration and community growth for this part of the borough

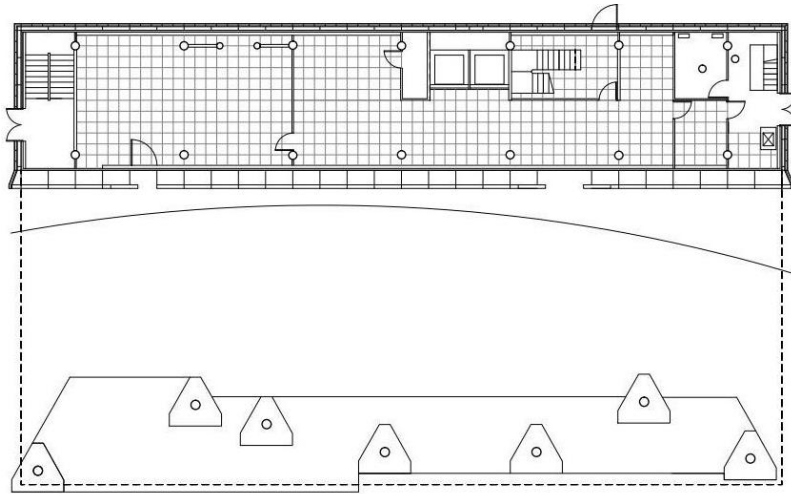of Southwark and forms one element in a new public square. (Jeremy, 2013)

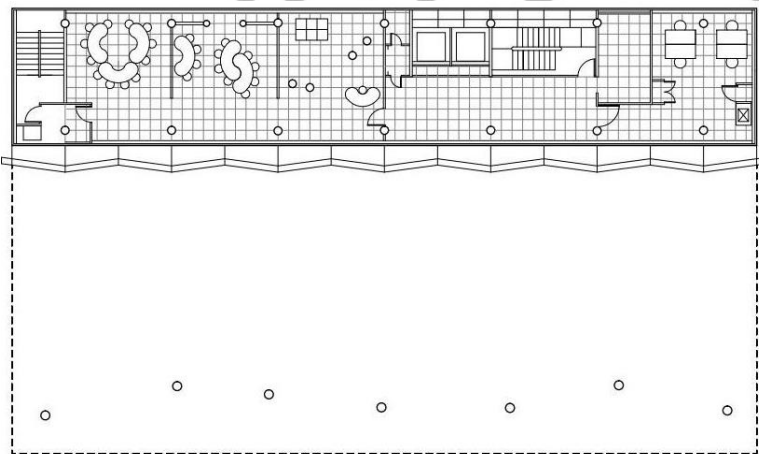*Figure 3: Ground floor plan*

Source: James Morris (website (http://jamesmorris.info/))

Figure 4: First floor plan
Source: James Morris (website (http://jamesmorris.info/))
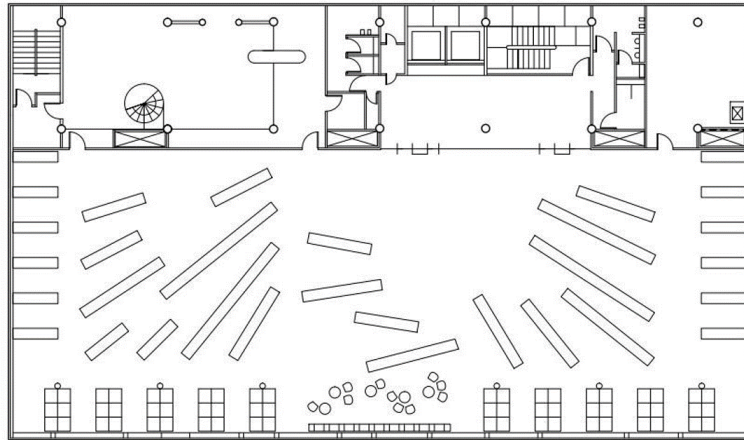
Figure 5: Second floor plan
Source: James Morris (website (http://jamesmorris.info/))
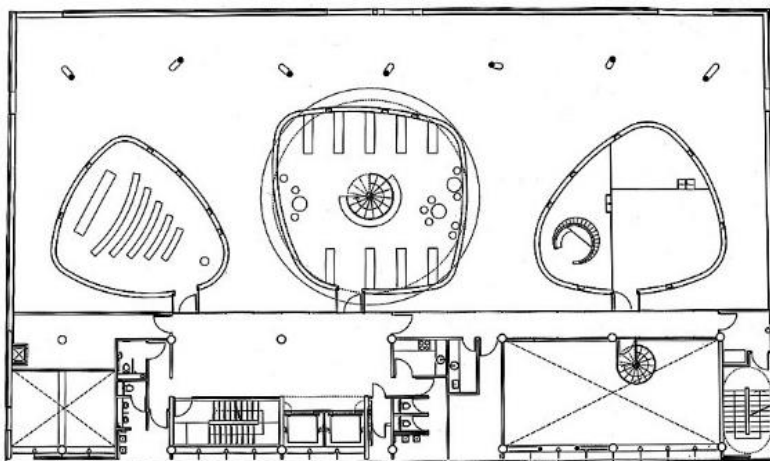
Figure 6: Third floor plan

Source: James Morris (website (http://jamesmorris.info/))

Design Composition:

The library form is like an inverted L-shape with a cantilevered overhang which additionally shades the façade from the sun. It brings to mind the form of an open notebook resting on one end, and the other end resting an extraordinarily slender and slanted column.

The library itself is at fourth floor level, the short arm of an inverted 'L', with offices, meeting rooms and other ancillary facilities on the lower floors. Overhead, at mezzanine level in the studying room, are three pods of blob-like forms which rest on tripods. The central one is open to the clerestory allowing sunlight to enter the main space.

Structural

The Peckham Library is supported on concrete-filled steel columns, angled to form an irregular arcade which encloses a covered space, an extension of the new square.

Aesthetics

External claddings are chosen for durability and for their expressive textures and colors, pre-patinated copper and steel mesh contrast with colored glass (used on the north facade). Peckham Library portrays an urban rej

uvenation in contrast to the Modernist housing schemes and its youthful appearance, places it outside the regions of the Modernist Movements

CASE STUDY 2: SURREY LIBRARY, CANADA

Figure 7: Picture of Surrey Library, Canada

Source: Nic Lehoux and Ema Peter – http://www.archidaily.com/789073/surrey-city-centre-library-bling-thom-architects
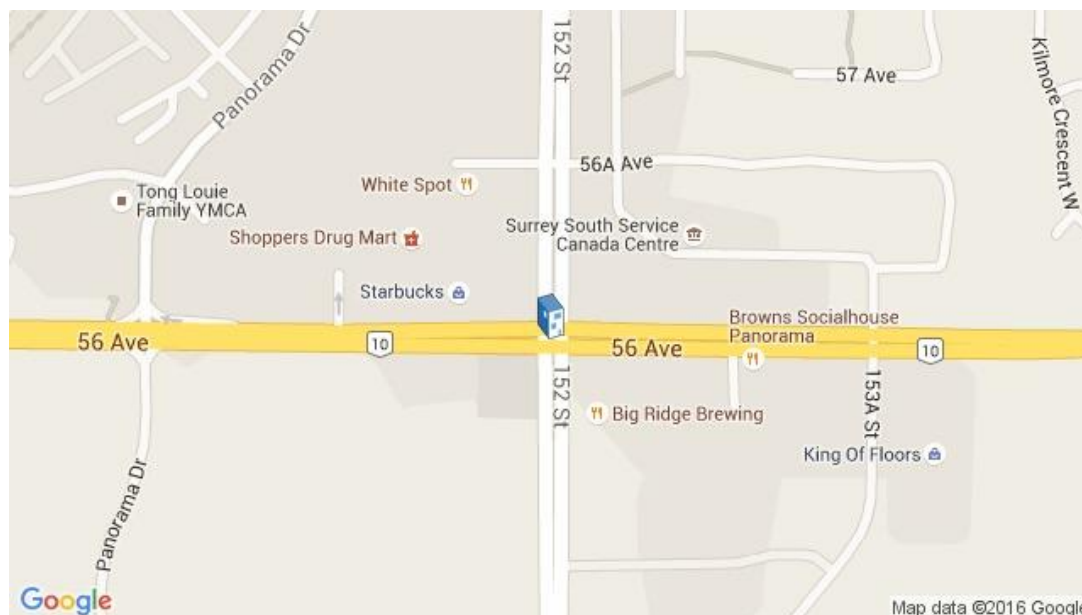
Figure 8: Location of Surrey Library

Source: Nic Lehoux and Ema Peter – http://www.archidaily.com/789073/surrey-city-centre-library-bling-thom-architects

Project: Surrey Library

Location: 10350 University drive, Surrey Canada.

Construction Year: 2011

Architect: Bing Thom Architects

Area: 82000 ft²

PROJECT INFORMATION

According to Caulfield, Bing Thom Architects understood that with developments in easily available electronic information; the role of the library was changing and that the shelves was no longer the central focus. Therefore, providing suitable spaces for evolving library activities is now the priority. The library is not just a place for reading but also a gathering place that appeals to people of all age groups, gender, profession, etc. (Caulfield, 2012)

The project was federally funded and because of the time constraints, Bing Thom Architects consider the use of social media against the normal community consultation processes which is lengthy and time consuming.

They made a social media approach using blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr as the medium through which they could reach the intended audience, in order to increase the pace of their survey. While working with Surrey librarians, they posted photos of libraries in a blog on the library's website which was linked to a Flickr site, so members of the community could comment and post photos. (Zapartan, 2016) Others were given the opportunity to share their opinion at the local library. The outcome of the survey was a sustainable design that recognizes and supports the changing role of libraries and that incorporates the needs of the client and the ideas of the community. (Zapartan, 2016)

The library offers series of user-friendly activities such as; Technology help, outdoor family story time, toddler story time, settlement services for new comers, services for new comers, plant project and seed exchange, adult book club, pyjama story time, teen study lounge, A/V club, adult writers group, etc.
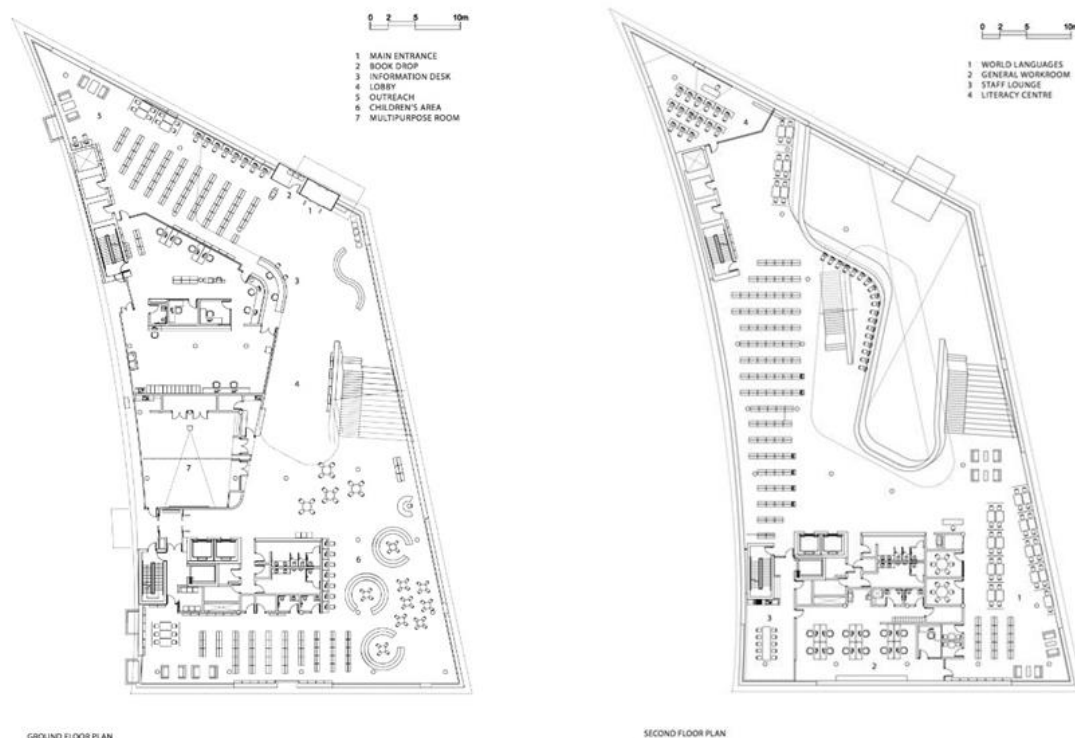
Figure 9: Ground and first floor plan

Source: Ema Peter - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/
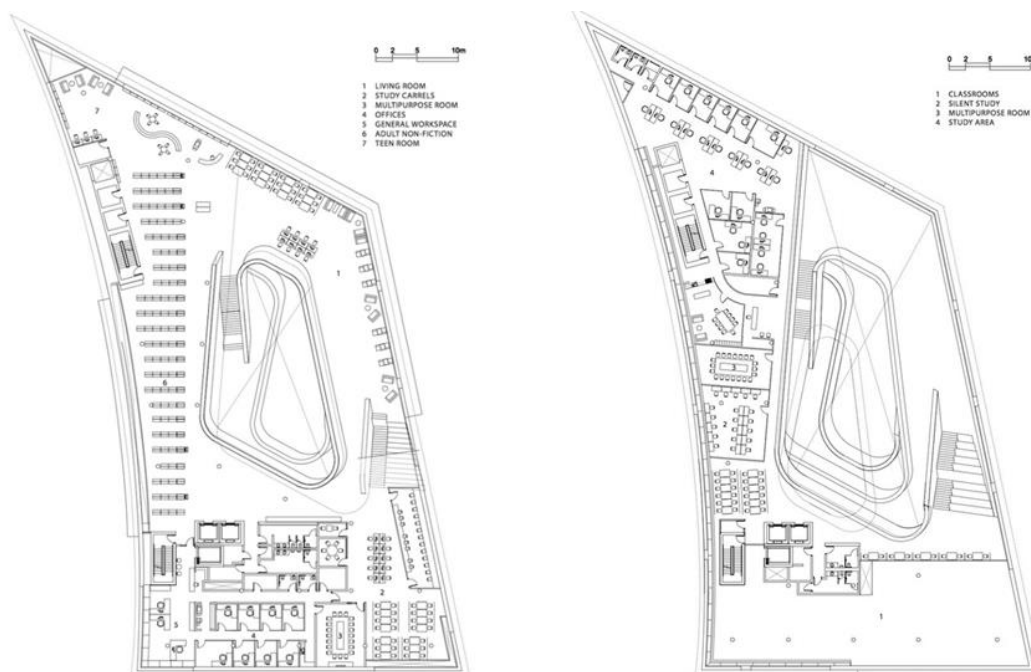
Figure 10: Third and fourth floor plans

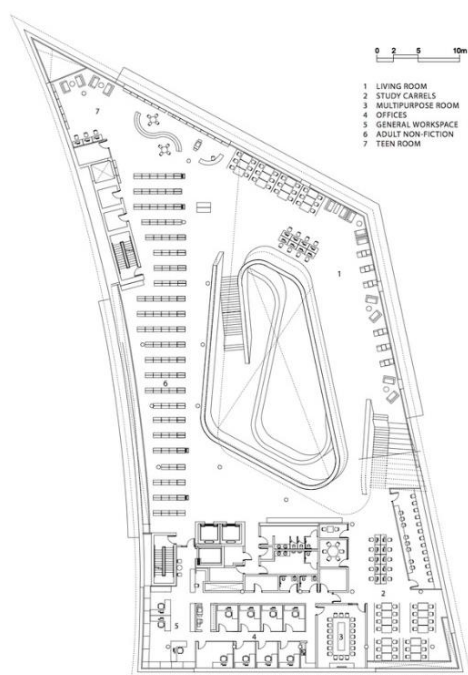*Source: Ema Peter - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/*

Figure 11: Fifth floor plan

Source: Ema Peter - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/
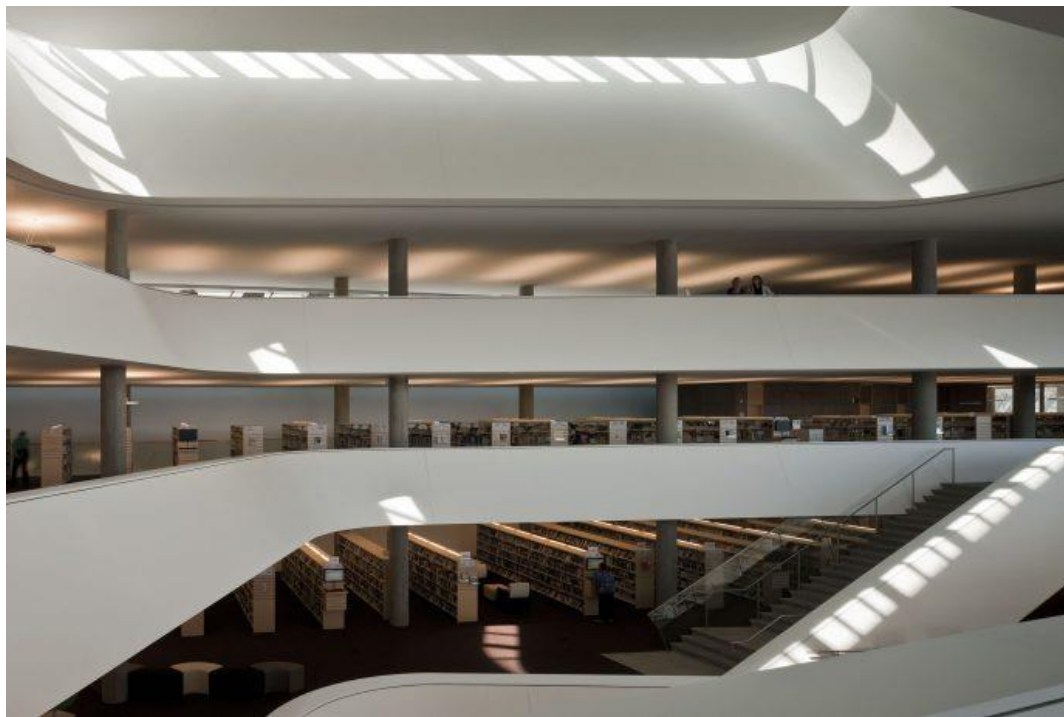
Figure 12: Picture showing interior of Surrey library

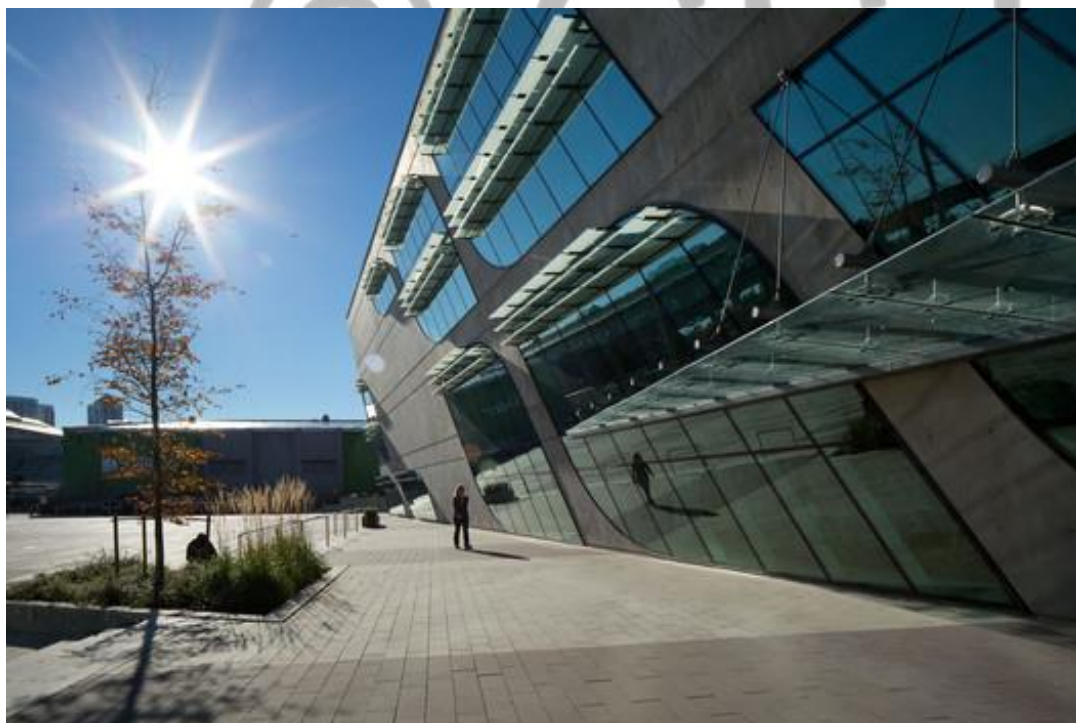*Source: Ema Peters - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/*

Figure 13: Picture showing Surrey Library

Source: Ema Peters - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/

Figure 14: Picture showing the Library stairway

Source: Ema Peters - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/

Figure 15: Picture Showing the Library hall

Source: Ema Peters - inspirationist.net/a-library-designed-with-the-aid-of-social-media/

Design Composition:

The design evolves out of the need for a public library that would serve not only for reading but also as a gathering place for the a community. The Library was designed with flexibility in mind in order to accommodate all of these purposes in a way that will intrigue and entice the users of the building.

With a grand, center atrium and the requisite private study areas, the design includes a large community multipurpose room that will accommodate 120 people, a computer classroom, a meditation room, and a teen lounge and gaming area.

Aesthetics

The building was designed to be truly sustainable as it is borne out of the ideas and contributions of the community, both old and young. Some amazing features of Surrey Library includes; its welcoming entrance with clear sight lines that allow visitors to quickly familiarize themselves in the space, large windows, and a central atrium with two skylights that allow natural light into the building. The building envelope is of a concrete structure; carefully detailed as the final surface, inclined outward at an angle between 10 to 15 degree, coupled with a complex combination of glazing and concrete/metal panels, which is not very common in institutional buildings.

DERIVATION FROM THE CASE STUDY
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FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

This principle suggests that, rather that buildings being designed in accordance with past precedents or stylistic trends, the purpose of the building should determine its form. That is to say the architecture of a library, both internal and external, should be related to its purpose, the users, and the environment of which it is located. According to Friedrich Weinbrenner, "*the exterior of a building should suggest, as much as possible, its designation and interior function. The distinguishing features of its exterior, in accord with the interior, express most expediently and most directly the characteristics of a building*"

USER CENTERED DESIGN APPROACH

User-centered design (UCD) is an iterative design process in which designers focus on the users and their needs in each phase of the design process. In user-centered design, design teams involve users throughout the design process via a variety of research and design techniques, to create highly usable and accessible products for them.

Architects who apply this philosophy are enabled to design facilities that form unique connections with the communities they serve. After all, without users, what's the point of having libraries?

With this approach, the communities are involved in every step of the design process. This way, you can be sure that the library is effectively fulfilling its purpose; not only about the value it has to offer, but also in how it offers that value to the user. A user-centered approach to design helps ensure that the library isn't just another basic solution that will certainly get discarded in the long run.

ALL-INCLUSIVE DESIGN APPROACH

All-inclusive design is an architectural strategy used to create buildings that accommodate people of all types. Whether building a school, civic center, or healthcare facility, every design decision made could potentially exclude or alienate end users. To ensure that you support all members of the community, you need to consider the design details that will help everyone feel comfortable and welcome in the building's spaces.

Public Libraries should be spaces where all students can explore their interests on their journey to a productive adulthood. Students learn differently; not every child is able to perform tasks that other children find simple. Beyond making allowance for student learning modalities, you'll want to include features that encourage socialization amongst users. This will help bonding the community, especially the youths, thereby discouraging social vices in the society.

CONCLUSION

Public libraries as institute of knowledge, is one of the most important traditional buildings in the society. Just like the museum, it also helps in preserving our social and cultural heritage by passing down knowledge from one generation to another. According to Carl Sagan, it connects to the knowledge of great minds of old, information that cut across all professions.

Public libraries are all about people and information, therefore the users of the facility being the host community ought to be involved in the entire planning process to ensure that the public library meets the needs of the general public. A Public Library should be well-funded to meet both the design needs as well as human comfort criteria, and a good environment that encourages socialization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Public library as the name implies, is all about the public and the preserved information therefore to create a good public library that is centered on its users, architects will need a profound knowledge of your targeted audience. It will require conducting and extensive research into the users' challenges and desires. Set up a discuss group with them and offer multiple opportunities to provide feedback to enable them develop a comprehensive user data that can be used to establish your design priorities.

These innovative library designs reflects the collaboration of the community and the architects. It incorporates the needs of the surrounding community, as well as the demand for libraries to adapt to the way we live and work today

In order to accomplish this, architects will have to look at a number of demographic factors such as: Age, Gender, Sexual orientation, Education, Income, Religion, Cultural beliefs, Ethnicity, Language, Physical capabilities (mobile, auditory, visual, etc.).

Most of the tasks that library users perform require visual sensation which indicates that the public library ought to be visually comfortable. A suitable in-door environmental quality will greatly enhance the learning capacity of users of any academic library. For example, proper indoor environmental quality conditions can improve the effectiveness of comprehension and assimilation, as well as reading. The provision of a visually appealing environment in public libraries is a serious issue to enable users to maintain good health and productivity.

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