



PEB Exchange, Programme on Educational Building 1998/04

Libraries and Resource  
Centres for Tertiary  
Education

OECD

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### ***The elementary school: a different vision***

The primary school will be higher and facing it older children will see a different structure. With an additional floor the school will be adapted to the children's growth, while keeping the same principles of light, amenity and variety in spaces and volumes. The period of adaptation from nursery school to primary school will therefore be reflected in the transition from smaller-scale to larger buildings, thus contributing to the children's awakening and to an interest in the discovery of new and different materials. The choice of colours will be in harmony with this development, varying according to function.

### **Respect for the environment**

A concern for respecting the environment is shown throughout the course of the project. Existing trees will be preserved and landscaping will complement them. There will be grassy areas, bushes will be planted along fences, and small slopes will be created.

### **Development and flexibility**

Flexible use of space is planned, with the possibility of interchanging nursery and elementary school classes (a pivoting partition will allow a classroom to be switched from one to the other). Further expansion will be possible by adding classrooms to the first floor and by using other non-classroom spaces.

### **Security**

Security will be ensured inside and outside the buildings, and it has been treated as a major criterion in the design of the project. There will be no sharp corners, pointed objects or protrusions in the hallways, playgrounds, or other areas reserved for physical activities; the walls will be curved and support columns round. Surveillance was taken into account in the floor design. Teachers will be able to watch the children from any point in the playgrounds and inside play areas; there are no hidden spots. Children's walkways around the grounds will be well-defined and totally protected from traffic.

For further information contact the PEB Secretariat.

*This text is based on an article which appeared in the Port Marly city bulletin, Le Marlyportain, January 1998 – N° 28. The architect for the project is Dominique Vayne.*

## **PROJECTS**

# **LIBRARIES AND RESOURCE CENTRES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION**

**PEB/IMHE EXPERT MEETING (held in Paris, 9th and 10th March 1998)**

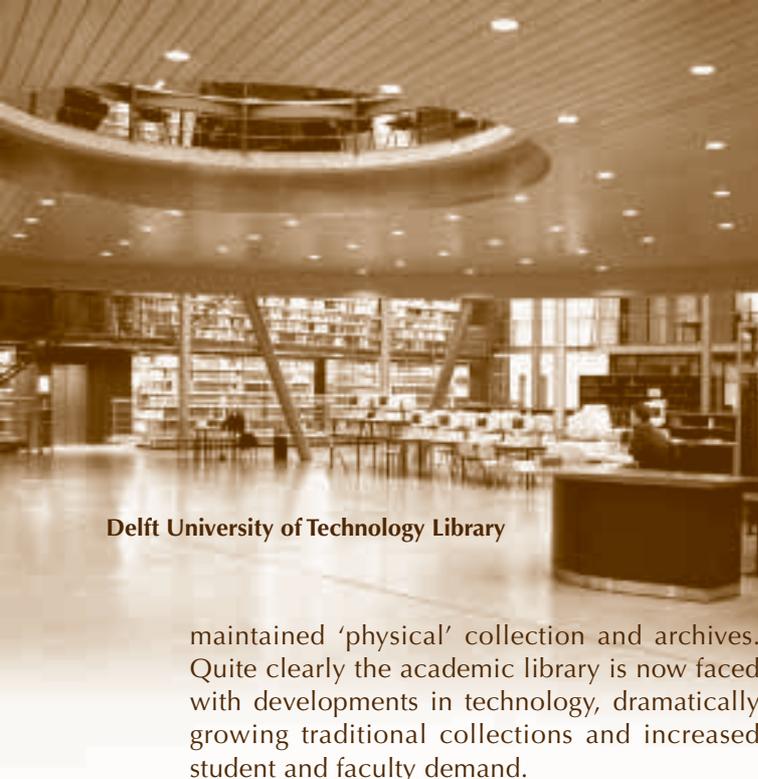
PEB, in co-operation with the Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE), hosted an experts meeting to determine how existing libraries for tertiary education may be adapted and new ones conceived to meet the future needs of the students, institutions and communities concerned.

### **Background**

Traditional universities and open and distance learning institutions are reorienting their resources and methods to create 'virtual campuses' where students can register in one institution and take courses for credit in a variety of ways, such as attending lectures (presential learning) or getting material through the Internet either in public places or at home. The new models of learning call for a new organisation of libraries, the traditional information resource.

The planning and renewal of academic libraries and the management of existing ones require a 'multi-focused lens' with an emphasis on envisioning the future. 'The knowledge society' and 'information society' – with 'knowledge workers', 'information managers' and 'knowledge navigators' – are overused phrases which nevertheless have a connection to the current and future importance of the academic library. The rapacious demand for information and the pace of change in its content and form suggest dramatic changes for what has been a 'historic' resource.

The role and activities taking place within the academic library appear to be changing. These changes are predicted to affect not only library related professions and their organisation, but also the provision and technical requirements of the physical library building. Historically libraries have been a research resource supported by a



**Delft University of Technology Library**

maintained 'physical' collection and archives. Quite clearly the academic library is now faced with developments in technology, dramatically growing traditional collections and increased student and faculty demand.

Further, new and more independent 'student centred' learning methods magnify the role of the library in the tertiary education process. As a result, many universities and other tertiary institutions are rethinking the ways in which they use libraries and learning resource centres. The library profession has demonstrated leadership in embracing developments and making responding changes to adapt to new methods in electronic information storage, retrieval and processing. However, the combination of the rapid rate of change and policies with regard to copyright provides a context of uncertainty for planners and administrators.

### **The forces acting on library planning, design and management**

The following diagram summarises the influences now impacting on contemporary libraries:



Within many countries, there is a rise in the number of new library facilities or renovations of libraries. A range of case studies of libraries built recently in the UK, the Netherlands, France and other countries were presented and discussed, along with

relevant reports such as those by Sir Brian Follett for the UK government.

### **Questions addressed at the seminar**

#### **Learning methods**

- How integral are libraries to the academic business of tertiary institutions, and is this likely to increase or decrease?
- How will new pedagogies and 'learner centred' courses, together with distance delivery, affect the design and management of libraries?
- What potential requirements should libraries consider with regard to increasing 'massification' and the expanded use of distance learning?
- Is the library also responsible for providing study facilities and technology tools to students? What are current models for this approach?

#### **Technology**

- What barriers and opportunities exist in the new emerging technologies? Will they see an increase in the size of libraries or a decrease? Which floor areas will increase and which will decrease?
- With the slow advances in on-line availability of books, due to copyright barriers, what will the continued growth rate for hard copy collections be, and what will be the likely impact on spatial requirements over the next decade?
- How will on-line services replace certain library activities and what new activities will be required?

#### **Management**

- What are the drivers of operating costs in libraries? Should reference libraries embark on ambitious programs to digitise their unique resources rather than investing in new buildings?
- Are there any implications for differentiation between undergraduate and post-graduate collections; the contrast between central collections (such as exist at most universities) with dispersed discipline collections (such as at Oxford); and the emergence of on-line documents such as journals?
- How will a decentralised library be organised?

## Facilities

- To what extent do tertiary libraries contribute to 'social capital'?
- To what extent will they collaborate with external users (e.g. industry, the public) requiring reconsideration of the placement of libraries with extended hours?
- What is the likely future mix of spatial activities and functions?

## Key findings

A group of experts from 16 countries were present at the two day event. The 28 participants presented 12 case studies, collaborated in four working groups around the themes and debated the issues with some passion. For much of the two days, discussion focused on the role of the university and whether it will diminish in relevance.

Many writers and thinkers in tertiary education are predicting the demise of the university. For example, Dr. Michael Peters, writing in the August 1996 issue of the *Australian Journal of Education*, noted that '...one might say that the...university in postmodernity will come to exist solely in cyberspace with no need for large installations, campus buildings, libraries, lecture theatres. No need, perhaps, for large multicampus metropolitan universities'.

But it was agreed that this was too radical a future. A number of participants on the electronic discussion group (EDG), which was running concurrently with the Expert Meeting as a prototype 'virtual conference', concurred.

It was pointed out, for example, that the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, UK, has a converged library, computing, telephones and corporate planning department and that they believed that the good traditional library has extensive collections in the fields it covers. An equally important feature is that it has *only* those items and is very *selective* – irrelevant material is excluded. The material is also well ordered and indexed for easy retrieval. This model – comprehensive, selective and well-ordered at the same time – is intellectually required for electronic as for print material.

The balance between local and national/international provision will of course be different but each community of users is going to continue to need an organising force covering community interests. This does not preclude individual community members using other access channels – just as they always have with print.

Northumbria University is joint Project Leader of a five-university consortium exploring how the hybrid library will work in social, economic and educational terms - it is believed that the technology will be driven by bigger markets than education. The project, called HyLiFe, is part of the UK eLib electronic libraries programme for higher education, and is one of five hybrid library projects (details of the eLib programme are available via <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk>).

Another view supporting a 'physical/digital' campus appears in the 1998 OECD report *Redefining Tertiary Education*. It notes that 'acceptance of the value of sensitively designed new building and equipment in fostering learning and positive attitudes towards

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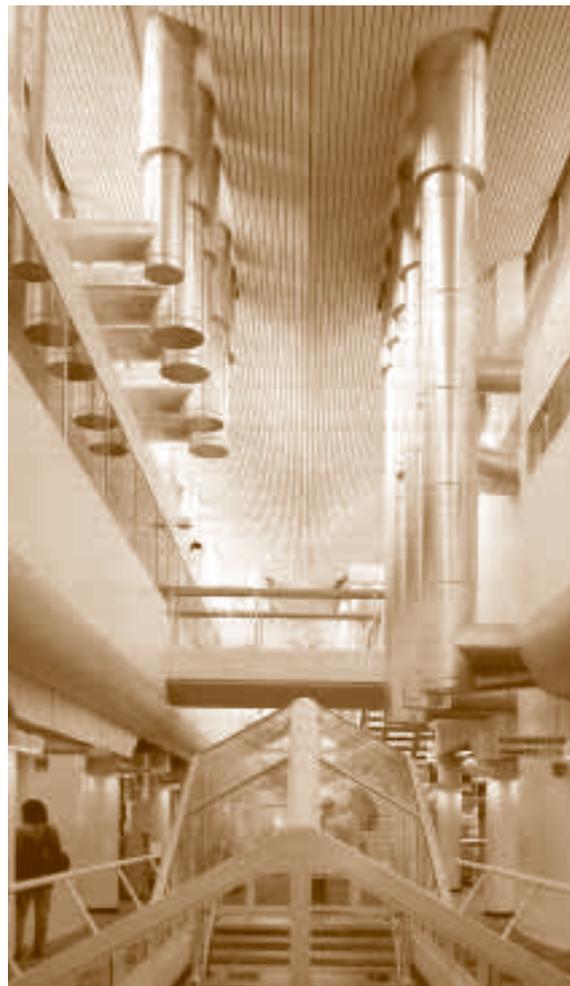


Stockholm University Library

study lies behind some highly imaginative projects visited by review teams – in Denmark, Sweden, the UK, the US and Japan. A marked feature is overall quality of design and materials for example in the new libraries-cum-learning-cum-social centres. The combination of advanced technology with a welcoming ambience of the multi-purpose complexes, which are increasingly becoming the main centres of institutions, is impressive’.

It was in this context of predicted change that the participants at the seminar sought to agree to a set of principles which will shape the redesign of current and future libraries and resource centres for the tertiary educational sector. While a complete report will be submitted and key recommendations presented, the participants wished to convey to decision makers the following points which summarise their unanimous opinion:

1. New and renovated libraries will provide a visible, identifiable and physical image of the future university (in its traditional and digital modalities) to attract the best students, teachers and researchers.
2. As technological evolution is unknown and unpredictable, new facilities have to include as much flexibility as it is possible whilst meeting today’s expressed needs.
3. The new library is integral to learning by educating towards a critical use of the networked resources. The need for staff and students to be trained and re-trained is recognised and must be budgeted for.



4. Protecting the cultural heritage remains one of the fundamental roles of libraries. But this is to be accommodated with a new mission regarding guidance in the digital world for students and professors and, whenever possible, the whole community.

The report on libraries and resource centres for tertiary education will soon be available through the PEB Secretariat.

**Relevant Web Sites:**

- The Library Association – National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education: Evidence of The Library Association: [http://www.la-hq.org.uk/dear\\_la.htm](http://www.la-hq.org.uk/dear_la.htm).
- The UK Office for Library and Information Networking: <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/>.
- RERO: *Réseau des bibliothèques romandes et tessinoises*, (Director: Bernard Levrat): <http://www.rero.ch/>.

For additional sites, see page 17.