

New Library Buildings and Library Reconstructions

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Visits to libraries have always been an important part of the LIBER Architecture Group Seminars, as they add practice, concrete examples of success and mistakes to the theory of the seminar presentations. The programme of the Leipzig seminar thus offered quite a few library visits: *Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig*, *Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Jena*, *Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfurt*, *Herzogin-Anna-Amalia-Bibliothek, Weimar*, *Universitätsbibliothek der Bauhaus-Universität Weimar*, *Deutsche Bücherei, Leipzig* and *Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden*. The following is a short report about the libraries visited during the week. The reports are combined with quotations from the libraries' presentation of their building projects and in some cases also with facts and figures.

UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK LEIPZIG

The visit to the University Library in Leipzig was also a visit through German history after the Second World War. Before the guided tour the director and the architect showed photos of the building as a ruin 12 years ago with trees growing between the bricks in the place, where the white marble and the fully restored entrance hall now impress the visitor.

The building project was presented in April 2001 as follows: „Two thirds of the main building of the University Library in Leipzig, ‚Bibliotheca Albertina‘, stood in ruins in 1945. The evacuated stocks and catalogues however were saved. By 1955 the stockrooms destroyed in the war had been partly rebuilt. For the next 40 years however there was no possibility of financing the further reconstruction of the building. After one and a half years of planning the reconstruction and extension works to the library building were begun in autumn 1992. In 2002 ‚Bibliotheca Albertina‘ will function as the main and

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depository library and as the central library for humanities. Shelves for closed stacks with a capacity of about 3,2 million volumes will be installed. In the open access areas there will be room for 440,000 volumes and 720 readers. There is sufficient space for shelving according to subject. Unlike the original building, the inner court yards in the east and west wings now have transparent roofs. Additional stock rooms up to the second floor have been built in the inner courtyards. It is intended that literature for the subjects history, philosophy, social sciences, political studies and philology will be immediately accessible via open stacks. The special collections with their own stocks and a special reading room can be found in the east wing where reconstruction is already complete. In May 2000 the new exhibition room in the ‚Bibliotheca Albertina‘ was opened.”

The building project was presented at an early stage during the LIBER Architecture Seminar in Barcelona in 1993, and now the seminar had the opportunity to see the result. The modern use of the inner courtyards was a very interesting solution. Like in many other libraries, constructed round year 1900, this library also had an arrangement with two inner courtyards. In the reconstruction these courtyards have been changed to information- and reading areas in an inviting environment. The windows to the inner courtyards were changed to entrances to areas for the public in the former stack areas, now with open shelves and readers' areas. The glass roofs over the inner courtyards were a modern replication of the glass roof in the entrance hall. Modern design was used with respect for the qualities in the original architecture. The closed stacks in the basement were extended with easy access for the staff between the old and the new part. The most impressive feature in this reconstruction of the library was the big entrance hall in white marble, which was the place where – as mentioned before – trees were growing 12 years ago. The reconstruction of the library is not quite finished yet.

THÜRINGER UNIVERSITÄTS- UND LANDESBIBLIOTHEK, JENA

In the centre of Jena a new university library was officially opened December 2001: „In 1945 the library suffered substantial losses. The library building, together with a considerable part of the collection, and catalogues of special collections were destroyed. Until today the library is spread over the whole city in several, sometimes inadequate buildings. The new building at an historical site, the Library Square, puts an end to a long period of provisional housing arrangements. Since December 12th, 2001 central services and the arts

collection of Thuringian University and Regional Library are housed in a modern and functional building.”

The library had only been open for half a year at the time of our visit. The main entrance is organised very invitingly out to a main street and opposite to a green area. The visitor is coming into a big atrium with fine possibilities to understand how the building is organised: it consists of two fingers and four floors. At the ground floor the visitor finds the circulation desk, information desk, lockers and a small cafe with a view to another green area.

The different levels are organised with a combination of open shelves and reader seats, with seating facilities in a big variety. The readers have the choice between silent spaces next to the windows or busier places close to the stairs. PCs are conveniently located on each floor close to the staircase and the lift. The carrels for studying are mainly concentrated on one floor. The library is also equipped with a special multi-media department with all the facilities to use these special media.

Facts and Figures

13.300 square metres on four floors, connected by lifts and several staircases

1,5 Mio volumes

610 readers' seats (1 third of them with IT facilities), 90 of which in carrels, 1 multimedia reading room with facilities for all audio-visual media

5 rooms with 10 seats each for working groups

2 exhibition areas

1 combined lecture hall and conference room with about 130 seats

UNIVERSITÄTS- UND FORSCHUNGSBIBLIOTHEK ERFURT

The University Library building in Erfurt was finished in December 2000. It is situated on the university campus outside the town centre, and it is the first of several buildings in this part of the campus. For the moment the surroundings are just open landscape. The programme for the building is: „The building is divided into a public area with shelves and working places for users and an administrative area for all internal functions. Because of the three patios (with light from above) the complete public area is visible from the ground floor. Orientation is easy for the user; each floor is divided into three areas for the collection, readers' seats and information retrieval. There is but one entrance for both working area and open access area. Thus, only a few members of staff are needed to keep the library open for the public until late at night.

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Staff appreciate the transparency of the building between public and administrative areas.. The aesthetics of the building has also a functional quality: the pleasant daylight illuminating the room from above; generosity and clarity of line in open access as well as reading room areas, these are - despite size and variety of the media - to be experienced as a library. The beechwood of the wall lining and the reading desks makes the room appear bright and friendly, inviting the user to stay and study.”

The building is divided into three parts. One part is organized with open shelves and readers' seats. The other half of the building, the backside, is reserved for offices and technical equipment. In the basement are closed stacks. The entrance to the building is easy to find. Inside the building the visitor is met by a big combined circulation desk and information counter. One big staircase on the left side is leading to the upper floors. The floors are divided into smaller parts with a combination of open shelves and reader seats. The library was not yet fully in use, so it was not possible to get a final impression of a working library. A small reading room with 10 seats for special collections was not ready for use, either. The plan is to equip this reading room with high security facilities and procedures. – Wood was extensively used in the building.

Facts and Figures

Collection size: 940.000 volumes

Area: 9.500 square metres

Readers' seats: 360

Year of opening: 2000

Construction: new building

Total Costs: 73 mio DM (36.5 mio Euro)

Building costs: 56 mio DM (28 mio Euro)

Furnishing costs: 4 mio DM (2 mio Euro)

Furnishing firms: Kesseböhmer; Eichmüller; Mauser; ekz, Vitra, Fischer, Dietiker...

Planning: Koch & Partner, München

HERZOGIN-ANNA-AMALIA-BIBLIOTHEK, WEIMAR

This library is not a typical university library but a very special research library that is open to the public. Its holdings come to nearly 1 mio volumes, but also 100,000 prints as well as paintings, sculptures, sheet music, maps, globes etc. Its main focus is on German literature from the Age of Enlightenment to late Romanticism, and its modern research collection concentrates on literary

history and culture of that period, roughly 1750 to 1850. Due to its history which began in the late 17th century, its holdings comprise a very large part of rare books and manuscripts. Though its history goes further back in history, it was the Duchess Anna Amalia who installed the library in its present main building in the second half of the 18th century, and Goethe, Secretary of State to her son Carl August, was responsible for the library for 35 years!

The main building, the „Grüne Schlösschen“, can house some 100,000 volumes, mainly in its unique and beautiful library hall from the Rococo period and the adjacent old tower (with a most impressive spiral staircase, whose core was cut from one oak. Ask for the legend about it!) Building conditions have grown worse, with dampness and cracks in the floors as main indicators. Planning for a major renovation and extension project was started in 1997, and work was taken up in 2001.

The project allows for a substantial extension which will bring together all holdings, as well as a generous and modern reading room for 135 researchers and an open access area for 80,000 volumes. All the technical services will be concentrated here, too. Due to the very sensitive historic buildings that form a square in the centre of Weimar, the extensions are mainly underground, with interesting solutions for the public areas. They are distributed around the square; all are interconnected by underground paths and by the transport system. The opening of the extensions is planned for 2004. The various extension buildings will cost ca 24 mio Euro.

The main building will be renovated after the extensions, in 2005/6. It will contain all the special collections as well as a reading room for these holdings; and the Rococo Library Hall and the Old Tower will again be opened to the public. It will also house the director's office. – Whereas the costs for the extensions are guaranteed in full by the county; the costs for the renovation still depend very much on private funding and sponsorship; they are not yet secured.

The architects for the extensions are Barz-Malfatti and Schmitz, Weimar, and Rittmansperger & partner, Erfurt. No further figures are available, but the homepage has a lot of additional information.¹

UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK DER BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITÄT WEIMAR

Next to the existing library building the erection of a new library building had just started with the excavation in the ground. The programme for the new

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main building of the university library is the following: „In the city centre – on the site of a former brewery between Frauenplan, Steubenstraße, Schützen-gasse and Brauhausgasse - a modern library of about 4,500 square metres including the main lecture hall of the university will be built within the next years. Building has begun in 2001. The building consists of two wings with both service areas (issue desk, open access areas, reading rooms, multimedia facilities as well as a lecture hall for user education) and working places for the staff. The building has two storeys with also two basement floors for the textbook collection and closed stacks. The new building will be connected to the so-called Limona-Building, housing since 1995 a heavily used branch library. The project is managed by Meck (Munich).”

The building site is situated in the centre of Weimar with historical houses as neighbours and next to the branch library for architecture and medias. The impression from the presentation, given by the architect, was that of a well-organized building with a clear separation between the library and functions connected to a big hall for conferences and multimedia purposes.

DEUTSCHE BÜCHEREI, LEIPZIG

The Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig was built in 1916. Since 1990 the library has been part of The German National Library, Die Deutsche Bibliothek, with three main sites: Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main (founded 1947), the Deutsche Musikarchiv Berlin (1970) and the Deutsche Bücherei, Leipzig (1990). Unlike many other library buildings from the time round 1900, this building was not built in a neo-historic style, but in a modern style at the time: „Karl Schmidt und Karl Julius Baer built the Deutsche Bücherei in the war years 1914 to 1916, following plans from Oskar Pusch. The building was officially opened on September 2nd, 1916. Even today the new building leaves the observer deeply impressed because of its aesthetic beauty and its perfect functionality: the adaptation of the long facade of about 120 metres to the ovale curve of the Deutscher Platz, the clear structure of the main façade with its stylistic reminiscence of early Italian renaissance and late Art Nouveau, and lastly its representative interior furnishings.”

A nearly 100-year-old building cannot have modern features in all respects, but the layout is easy to understand, if you have visited the library just once. From the ground floor there is access to three big reading rooms. Further reading rooms are situated on the upper floors. A renovation of the building during the last years has been carried out with a lot of respect to the original interior to maintain the authentic style and with respect to the artwork in the

building. There is space for exhibitions on all floors, and the Deutsche Buch- und Schriftmuseum is in a separate part of the building. The library seems to be heavily used, with a lot of readers in the reading rooms. Facilities for using PCs were implemented several places in the building. Next to the main building, a modern closed stack facility was built in the sixties, in GDR times; it is connected to the main building with a yellow pipeline 10 meters above the ground that contains the transportation system.

SÄCHSISCHE LANDESBIBLIOTHEK – STAATS- UND UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK,
DRESDEN

The building project of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden was in the last stage of completion, when we visited it, just before the books and the librarians took over. The programme for the new building states: „The new building situated on the campus of Dresden Technical University will house the complete former Landesbibliothek and the university library with its central library, the information centre for German industrial standards, the textbook collection and 6 (out of 17) departmental libraries. Branch libraries of the former Landesbibliothek, the Deutsche Fotothek, the Phonotheek and the stenographic collection will also be integrated.”

The new library is being built in the centre of the university campus and next to a student-housing complex. The interaction between the students housing and the library was an important part of the planning. In order to give the students easy access to the surroundings the library is organized with two five storey buildings on each side with offices and meeting facilities, while the users' area is situated underground between these two buildings. The building is very big, planned to hold 4.3 million volumes and 990 reader seats. The underground areas comprise three, the lowest floor being reserved for closed stacks. In the centre of the underground part there is a big reading room, with carrels, single reader seats and open shelves around the reading room on all four sides. There is no main entrance to the reading room, but access is possible from all four sides. The areas reserved for books on open shelves are really tremendous. It is too early to judge if readers can easily find their way round. – Wood and concrete was used extensively throughout.

Facts and Figures

Design competition: 1995-1996; winner: Ortner & Ortner, Wien/Berlin

Financial planning: 1996-1997

Opening: presumably 2002

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Costs: 180 Mio DM (90 mio Euro) building, 20 Mio DM (10 mio Euro) furnishing

Area in total: about 30.000 square metres

Volumes in open access: 900.000

Volumes in closed stacks: 1Mio

Volumes in compact shelving: 2 Mio

Volumes in other closed stacks: 450.000

Sum total of maximum volumes (monographs and journals): 4.350.000

Readers' seats with PC: 125

Readers' seats: 716

Carrels (of which 2 for handicapped users): 46

Seats in reading rooms and rooms for working groups (of which 2 for partially sighted persons): 103

Sum total of readers' seats: 990

A Short Final Remark

All these buildings and projects are very interesting in more than one way, and the participants were able to see and learn a lot from these visits. Perhaps two general points can be taken:

1. all these libraries are fairly close together (though not all in the same county). It is really impressive to see how much importance is put on these libraries!
2. One of the main aims of all the building projects was to bring together branch libraries that were formerly dispersed, and to concentrate library services as much as possible. Whereas this was not met with unanimous approval in the project stage, general appreciation set in everywhere quite shortly after opening the new libraries.

REFERENCES

- 1 <<http://www.weimar-klassik.de/haab>>.