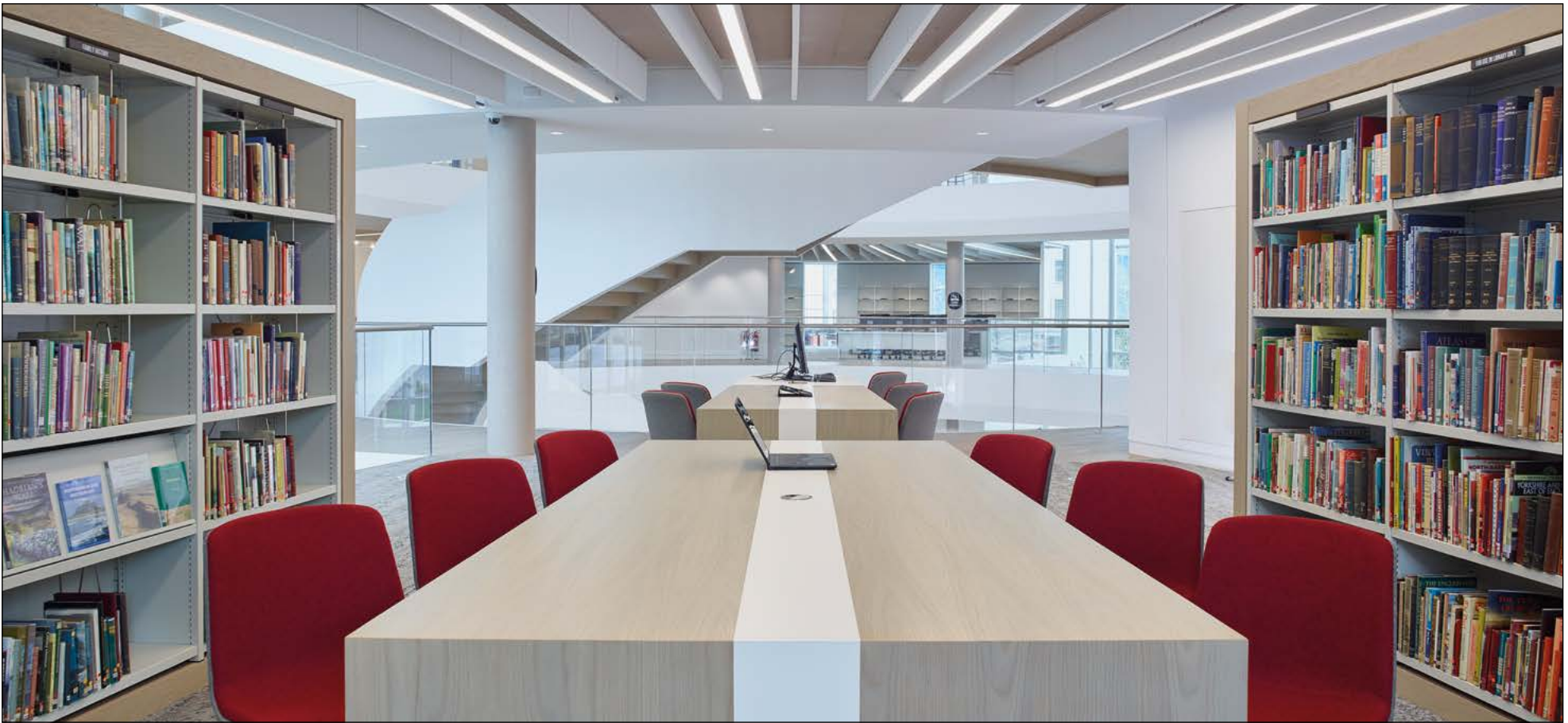




The Word – South Shields Library

Sector:	Library and Local Studies
Product:	Sysco static library shelving; Compactus manual mobile shelving; plan chests; deep drawers
Storage of:	Books; Maps; Local Studies Materials
Completed by:	Bruynzeel Storage Systems Ltd



The Word – aka the National Centre for the Written Word – opened to national acclaim in October 2016, attracting 175,000 visitors in the first four months alone. It boasts an impressive range of facilities including exhibition and digital media spaces, children’s storytelling area and a rooftop terrace with views across the Tyne.

Central to the success of the new library is its design, completed by Newcastle-based architects FaulknerBrowns. “What was profoundly interesting about this project was the ambition of South Tyneside Council to push the boundaries of what is relevant for a library, and how you attract all groups in society,” said Steve Dickson of FaulknerBrowns.

“Our solution was relatively simple. The aim was to create a sculptural, human-centric aesthetic. We approached this by designing a circular building, based on the leaves of a book, radiating out from a central point. All the active and performance-led activities are located in the central Forum. The intimate and more contemplative areas are located towards the exterior.”

“We used the shelving to divide these two attitudes,” said Dickson.

FaulknerBrowns were conscious of striking a balance between library as repository and as a creative learning space. “The original brief encompassed a wide variety of information technologies. Although this strategy slightly reduced book numbers, it increased the opportunity to engage with new customers. In the final plans, stock reduced by approximately 12 per cent. However, the skill of the library team ensured their stock was focused and pertinent.”

Bruynzeel Storage Systems won the tender to supply all the shelving for the new library and local study centre. “Bruynzeel supported us with an efficient, effective steel solution for the shelving, with a clean and simple aesthetic,” said Dickson. The main static shelving in the public areas of the library features Bruynzeel Sysco steel shelving encased in American white oak veneer cladding, including the base. The shelves are 300mm deep, with five shelves per bay. The height of the bays is 1914mm, giving a maximum

The Word extends the role of a public library



Teenage book loans are up by 232%



top pick level of approximately 1500mm – creating a visually pleasing design with good sight lines throughout the building.

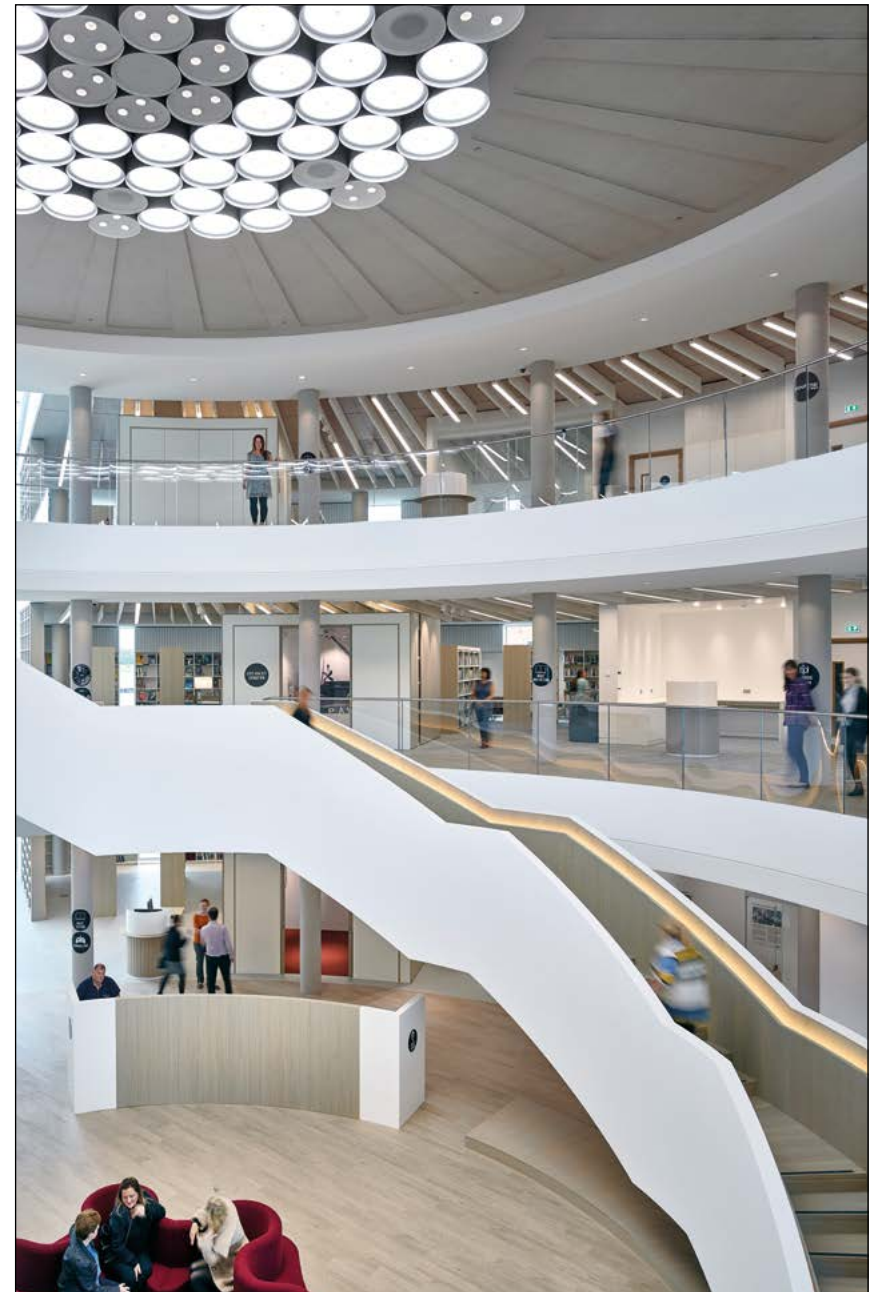
The function of the shelving is just as important as its look and feel, however, particularly for end users and the client. Principal Librarian Julia Robinson was attracted by the advantages of the new shelving systems from a practical, working perspective. "I love the shelving. It's exactly the right height. The trend a few years ago was for very curvy shelves. This is a dream come true compared to that style – so lovely and straight! When you get to the end of the row, you know exactly where you are in the index system. With the curved shelving we had previously, it was all mixed up. The shelving was too low, and you never knew where you were in the Dewey system. You'd get to the end of a shelf and not know where to go next!"

The radial design of the interior, based on the leaves of a book, has also been very well received. "I love the way the shelves line up with the windows too, so the view is never obscured," said Robinson.

The Bruynzeel Sysco range is adapted for purpose by utilising double sandwich panel uprights and solid backs to all bays to prevent book migration. Additional accessories include W clamp dividers and display shelves to ensure the best possible solution for public browsing. In total, Bruynzeel supplied over 1,000 linear metres of shelving across three floors, including Compactus manual mobile shelving and four plan chests in the Local Studies area.

The Word is a significant marker in the redevelopment of South Shields, a testament to the hard work and commitment of the local authority and the professionalism of the stakeholders it commissioned to complete this remarkable building. Whatever they did to improve facilities, it worked. Visitor numbers have quadrupled. Engagement is off the charts: teenage loans are up 232%; dwell time is up 300%.

Could The Word mark a turning point for public libraries? Dickson is convinced. "I believe we have reinvented the model. We have put in facilities for people who would not normally use the space. We've created a democratic form to match the last democratic building in our towns and cities."





The Word South Shields Library

"Bruynzeel supported us with an efficient, effective steel solution for the shelving, with a clean and simple aesthetic."

Steve Dickson, Architect, FaulknerBrowns



Additional specifications:

- American white oak veneer cladding
- Solid backs to Sysco shelving to stop book migration
- Display shelves
- Compactus manual mobile shelving for Local Studies
- Plan chests for flat storage
- Double sandwich panel uprights
- Integrated LED lighting on static shelving



Bruynzeel Storage Systems Ltd

Sheddingdean Business Park,
Marchants Way, Burgess Hill,
West Sussex RH15 8QY
Tel: 0800 220 989
enquiries@bruynzeel.co.uk
www.bruynzeel.co.uk