



GREENHILL LIBRARY

Case **STUDY**

The BRIEF

As part of the London Borough of Harrow undertaking for a major regeneration of residential and commercial facilities within Harrow, the Gayton Library in St Johns Road was being relocated to Perceval Square, College Road in Harrow Town Centre.

Their brief was for the library to become a multi-purpose community, cultural and learning facility. The new services and infrastructure were to provide Greenhill residents, workers and visitors in the area, with a destination suitable for research, work and leisure. Expecting a significant increase in visitor numbers as well as the increase in services, the library brief expected modern, innovative, and flexible spaces to meet the existing and future needs of all users.

YPO® Harrow county Council utilised the 'YPO Framework - Library Solutions - 888' for this particular project. Following a successful bid, FGLL were appointed to work alongside the approved Architects and main contractors to bring the project to fruition.



The CONSIDERATIONS

The library was relocating to the ground floor of a residential apartment block, and so all parties needed to work in unison to minimise disruption to the residents of 51 College Road, plus local businesses, residents, pedestrians, and traffic.

The unusual shape of the building, in some areas a cavernous double height space with high level windows required careful design considerations to create a welcoming, uncluttered, and easy to understand layout.

The practicalities of library storage were a minimum of 1200m of shelving, plus, additional book storage for the home library service.

Versatility and adaptability were requested for the space to be fully serviceable and relevant for the present and future, requiring flexible space and furniture.

Need for exceptional Project Management and teamworking capabilities, dealing with the different

professionals involved with the project. Lighting, Electrical contractors, Design, Architects and Project Managers, namely: Ayer Associates, Akitva, Anslow Consulting, DJ Architects, Built by ITC



The DESIGN

Working to the Architects overall design for this project, FGLL gave consideration to the unusual shapes within the building and assisted in providing a distinctive character for each area, with styles, colour and textures.

The colour palette provided, complemented the exposed services and concrete columns, bringing vibrant colours in toned down hues to soften the stark industrial- open-plan feel. The Landscape shelving system was specified with coloured end panels used to identify zones. Bespoke-print end panels were also manufactured to provide visual interest, depicting furniture and services within the community centre.

Various soft furnishing elements were provided to encourage users to feel comfortable and welcomed in all areas of the library.



FGLL worked with the Architects to create a playful, joyous area where the excitement of reading can occur in a fun environment, with the treatment of primary colours, low level shelving and pockets of individual space. This was achieved with Landscape on sturdy break castors, which are robust against the knocks from young readers. The Architects developed a concept of a reading den inspired by rays of sunlight filtering through a forest, which FGLL technically designed to work in the space, developing the angles and joints for a structurally sound construction whilst keeping the intended magical, wistful style.

The young adult's zone was given a studios, yet fun treatment with the Tiered seating system, providing a modern and adaptable seating area, both comfortable and practical. Ideally suited to the changing layouts required within this user area.

1200 linear meters of shelving was achieved with a combination of static and moveable Landscape shelving systems, specified in two heights 1800mm and 1500mm (4 and 5 high shelving), to provide consistency and uniformity throughout the library. Not forgetting the need to encourage visitors to pick up a book, curved display end shelving was also included, inviting and practical.

As a designer, manufacturer, and supplier of library furniture, FGLL worked with the lighting contractor to adapt our standard shelving to incorporate bespoke lighting elements. Creating a unique look utilising our joinery skills and experience, with the minimum of fuss and expense.

Understanding the need for flexibility of the entire library, shelving, seating and study furniture was installed on castors, facilitating easier reconfiguration when needed, and future-proofed with additional furniture and adaptations you would expect from a specialist manufacturer.



The CHALLENGES

Working on a large project of this scale with many professionals involved in the structural changes of the existing residential building, is often a challenge. To achieve this FGLL formed a tight project management team to fully communicate internally and externally, for not only the project but for the bespoke library furniture. Building a rapport with all stakeholders involved, understanding their constraints and challenges as well as the unexpected challenges caused by the pandemic was achieved, forming close relationships with all.

As FGLL controls its own design and manufacturing, all internal teams worked throughout the pandemic to provide consistency, reliability, and safety, to meet all targets and the changing requirements.

There could not have been a tougher test of the FGLL project management systems, than those challenges faced during 2020 and 2021. Other than increased hygiene safety, all systems and processes met the challenge and fully demonstrated the benefits of working with a library designer and manufacturer.



The OUTCOME

- During an unprecedented time, FGLL systems and project management were tested and fully withstood all additional pressures the covid-19 pandemic brought about. The FGLL team continuously communicated and updated all involved, accepting site delays and disruption, implementing additional H&S requirements, all with no impact or financial implications for Harrow Council.
- Working with DJA a unique visual identity was achieved for the new library, meeting the brief and user suitability.
- The handover to the London Borough of Harrow occurred on time and in full, meeting all adjusted project timescales.
- The Greenhill Library, Harrow was officially opened to the public on 18th May 2021 – following the lifting of certain restrictions.

CLIENT COMMENTS

FGLL were challenged with the task of providing library shelving and furniture that would be adaptable, robust and long lasting, but in line with a bright modern building. In addition we asked for a minimum of 1200m shelving which was complicated by the building having some pillars and unusual shapes and angles. The shelving solution needed to be flexible allowing Harrow Libraries the opportunity of creating display shelving with minimum effort. The Landscape shelving range was identified as the best to meet our needs and it enabled us to have a choice of external finish as well as shelf style that would give a uniform feeling bringing the library together as a whole, while at the same time allowing for some colour to give an identity to each area.

The finished product has met all our requirements. The Landscape shelving provides the flexibility we were looking for. We opted for a maple finish which has added some warmth to the library in contrast to the overall modern industrial style elsewhere in the building. We have display shelves in every bay of 1800mm units and have casters on the 1500mm

units so we can reconfigure the shelving if required at a later date. The shelving range is recommended, but you need to ensure you have metal pegs on all normal shelves. The units are both attractive pieces of furniture while at the same time making the books the main feature.

The remaining library furniture is of a high standard and is both strong and robust while being visually appealing. It has enabled us to create a range of seating areas to suit different needs throughout the building, from formal study space, to comfortable seating for those wishing to spend time in the library.

We commissioned one bespoke piece of furniture for the children's library to give it a unique feature and have been pleased with both the design and quality of the reading den provided. The library has been favourably received by the local community and has given Harrow a flagship library to be proud of.

Lee Stallard
Operations Manager Harrow Libraries



fg library & learning

Complete, inspired design solutions

