



Shirley Library Case Study



When the Solihull Council went to tender with this project, they had a very specific vision that they wanted brought to life. They knew that in order for the new library location at the Parkgate Shopping Centre to be a success, the end product needed to ‘wow’ the community and create such a sense of wonder that it coaxed them out of their old habits and into the new library space.

As such, the idea was to recreate a piece of Shirley inside the library and the interior design concept ‘Suburban Shirley’ was born. Vinyl roadways, green grassy carpet interfaces, cloud-shaped lighting rafts and many other special touches were used to create this suburban feel.

The Design Concept was brought on board to handle the bespoke elements of the project – specifically the shelving and other display units. The shelving had to have a timeless, traditional feel, complete with ornate corning and be finished off in a chalky cream colour.

As no standard library shelving range meets these specifications, we were able to manufacture the shelving from scratch to meet our client’s very unique requirements.

Using our vast experience and shelving manufacturing prowess, we created a painted wood shelving system that not only met the design brief but also took all library shelving standards (width, depth, load, book stock) into consideration, delivering a custom-made yet modular system.

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We were able to integrate castors into all island bays while still keeping a seamless cornice aesthetic between the separate bays. In fact we carried the ornate corncing across all the units we manufactured, to ensure continuity and cohesion across the library floor.

A highlight of the shelving design is the 'streetscape' cut-out that sits above and runs the entire length of the built-in wall shelving. Integrated into this expanse of shelving is a children's study area, which cleverly and effortlessly breaks the shelving up, creating a new focal point and interest zone.

The Design Concept also built the circular seating with integrated book storage that wraps around the 'magical apple tree'. The Information Pod at the entrance of the library, is another bespoke item we are very proud of. Rather than an intimidating staff counter, this pod creates an informal yet interactive meet and greet area and guides people to the various library zones using wayfinding designed to look like street signs. The Info Pod also has an in-built ticketing machine which is used by the Council's Walk-in Service that is co-located with the library.

Other bespoke elements which we provided include the Multimedia Display Unit; Newspaper Stand; Touchdown Laptop Counter, Self-service Kiosk Housing; Community Room Bookstore Units and the Children's Kinderboxes.

This project shows off and highlights The Design Concept's ability to create library-specific shelving and furniture from scratch. We are not restricted to a specific product range but rather pride ourselves on being able to manufacture unique elements which will add to the originality and charm of your public space.



“Thank you for your contribution to the new Shirley library, it looks magnificent.”
Andy Church,
Senior Quantity Surveyor”