SCOTLAND'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

Contents

Cover Image: Arngask Library (Corbet Institute) in Glenfarg (listed at category B, LB5831)

.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are an important part of Scotland's educational and social history and they are among our finest public buildings. There are around 560 library buildings in Scotland and around 360 of these were purpose built. Many of these libraries are now listed buildings. The majority of those which are listed were constructed between 1883 and 1914.

The mass construction of public libraries had a significant and wide-reaching impact on society. By providing free access to books, information and life-long learning, the public library became an institution of scientific progress and the buildings themselves were monuments of civic pride. Architectural fashions have changed a lot since the first public libraries were built in the mid-19th century, as have ideas about what a library should contain.

Public libraries continue to play an important part in communities today. They are one of the few indoor public spaces that remain free of charge and open to all. The second half of the 20th century saw the modernisation of library services and new purpose-built libraries continued to reflect civic pride whilst incorporating open-access layouts and accessible facilities. In the 21st century, advancements in technology have required these spaces to adapt and change further.

Scotland's first public library strategy, *Ambition & Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020*, was launched in June 2015 by the Scottish Library and Information Council.[1] The aim of this strategy is to continue to create vibrant library spaces within local communities, focusing on people, place and partnerships, as well as the impact of climate change and the need for sustainability into the future.

The purpose of this booklet is to aid our understanding of the development and significance of library buildings in Scotland. This research aims to help us, and other stakeholders, make decisions about these buildings when change is proposed.

[1] Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), at https://scottishlibraries.org/advice-guidance/national-strategies/new-public-library-strategy-in-development/

EARLY LIBRARIES IN SCOTLAND BY *ANTONIA J BUNCH*

The term 'public library' tends to conjure up an image of either a moderately imposing late Victorian or Edwardian building in a town centre, or something smaller, possibly even modern, in a suburb or rural community. The majority of these were created as a result of the Public Libraries Act of 1850 (extended to Scotland in 1853) or subsequent Acts of Parliament. These permitted local authorities, if they so wished, to use part of the income received from the local rates (now council tax) to establish libraries for the use of the whole community. There were, however, several much earlier initiatives dating back over almost two centuries, which although not public libraries in the modern sense, were usually available to more than a restricted few and, often, borrowing was possible. By the mid-19th century, many towns in Scotland had publicly available libraries whether the result of philanthropy or collective funding.

Dundee claims to have had the first 'Burgh' library when, sometime before 1599, a common library was in existence in St Mary's, the Burgh Church, probably created during the Protestant ministry (1560-98) of William Christison. Until 1636 the library was under the joint control of the minister and the Town Council. Subsequently, the Town Council seems to have taken control decreeing that the books should be inspected yearly and that no books should be lent out without the authority of the Kirkmaster. This is certainly an early reference to lending. Over the next two centuries, the library continued to grow but, the collection was all but destroyed in a disastrous fire in 1841. Only the catalogue and a few volumes were saved. These are now in the Rare Books Collection of Dundee Central Library.

Several of the earliest public libraries were created through gift or bequest. Clement Little, an Edinburgh advocate, died in 1580 leaving his library of theological books to the town and Kirk of Edinburgh. They were housed in the attic of the manse of St Giles with the premises adapted for use, principally by the addition of an external stair so that users would not disturb the minister. The library was to be available to ministers, elders, deacons and all serious students as well as kinsmen of Clement Little. Subsequently it was transferred to the Town's College which, in 1582, became the University of Edinburgh.

Libraries, primarily for the use of the clergy but usually extended to others, especially students, were established for example, in Stirling (1617), in East Saltoun, East Lothian (1658), in Dunbar where the Presbytery kept a library in the grammar school in the early-18th century, and most notably in Dunblane (1688). The library at East Saltoun was founded by Norman Leslie, minister of Gordon in Berwickshire. Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, was the minister at East Saltoun from 1665 until 1669 and on his death in 1715, he left a bequest for various charitable purposes in the parish including 'for the increase of the library'. Robert Leighton (1611-1684), bishop of Dunblane from 1662 until 1669, bequeathed his library

(over 1,200 books) to the Cathedral of Dunblane along with £100 to build a 'chamber' to house the books. Some 2,000 books were added in the 18th and 19th centuries. The two-storey, purpose-built building, which still houses the collection is a significant piece of early Scottish library architecture.

More truly 'public' in the contemporary sense were the libraries of Innerpeffray and Kirkwall (Figures 1 and 2). Innerpeffray Library near Crieff claims to be the first free lending library in Scotland. David Drummond, Lord Madertie stated in his will, drawn up in 1680, that he had 'erected a library...for the benefit and encouragement of young students... as also I have built a schoolhouse'. The will set aside money for an endowment and on Madertie's death in 1692 a trust fund was established to maintain the library and schoolhouse. The library was housed in the loft of the chapel of Innerpeffray for some 70 years until Robert Hay Drummond, Archbishop of York, who had inherited the estates, built the present library in 1762. It is a two-storey, U-plan building, the upper storey, housing the library, taller than the lower.

Figure 1 (left): Innerpeffray Library, built in 1762 © HES
Figure 2 (right): Interior of Innerpeffray Library © HES

Shortly before his death in 1683, William Baikie bequeathed his books and manuscripts to the minister of Kirkwall 'for a Public Liberarie' to be kept within the town. Several additions were made over the next two centuries. Initially the collection was kept in St Magnus Cathedral, then in the Tolbooth before being incorporated into Orkney Subscription Library in 1815. When the burgh of Kirkwall adopted the Public Libraries Act in 1890, the books were auctioned and were bought by Archdeacon James Craven of Orkney who donated them to Aberdeen University Library in 1914.

Continuing the association of the church in library provision, John Gray, minister of Aberlady in East Lothian, bequeathed his collection of books to his hometown of Haddington. He died in 1717 but they were not handed

over until the death of his widow in 1729. From the start the library was to be open to all residents of the town and it was housed in the burgh school in Church Street for over 150 years. The building still exists but has been turned into flats. The collection is now in the National Library of Scotland.

In 1699, the Reverend James Kirkwood proposed a scheme for every parish in Scotland to have a library. Although several were established, most notably in the Highlands, none lasted for very long and by the end of the 18th century, few were in existence.

Libraries of a very different sort were much more successful. The very first circulating library in Great Britain was established in the High Street in Edinburgh in 1725 by the poet and bookseller, Allan Ramsay. This was a commercial venture; readers paid to borrow books. These libraries were very much criticized by the church for alleged obscenity but they became very popular over the next two centuries. The last of them, run by Boots the Chemists, closed only in the 1960s.

Figure 3: Leadhills Miners Library © HES

Not to be confused with circulating libraries were the public subscription libraries, established from the mid-18th century onwards; many of them survived well into the era of rate-supported libraries and some even amalgamated with them. People in the community would group together and pay a subscription to purchase books which would then be available to all subscribers. The earliest of these were the miners' libraries at Leadhills (1741) (Figure 3) and Wanlockhead (1756) (Figure 4); a third miner's library

was established at Westerkirk in 1792. Although built later, all three library buildings are still in existence and can be visited. By the end of the century, there were 41 public subscription libraries throughout Scotland. Initially a room to contain the books would be hired or donated but eventually purpose-built premises might be created. To give one example, in 1795 the successor to the original Kelso Subscription Library (1751), The Modern Library, was housed in a new building, the books on the ground floor and the librarian's house in the basement. The premises remain in use as the Royal British Legion Club. These libraries had largely a middle-class membership but in the early-19th century, at least 51 libraries were founded with a predominately working-class membership. Sometimes called trades societies or reading societies, the idea was to form a library of 'useful' books thus foreshadowing the libraries of the Mechanics Institutes which would in turn influence the free public library movement.

Figure 4: Wanlockhead Library © HES

A scheme of 'itinerating libraries', devised by Samuel Brown of Haddington began in East Lothian in 1817. These could be said to be the precursors of the modern mobile library. The plan was to establish a division of 50 volumes in every town or village and after two years move them on to another venue. Several other areas copied the scheme and at first the system was very successful but declined when a charge was introduced.

Alongside all these libraries, the Mechanics Institutes can also claim to be the forerunners of the modern public library. They had their origins in classes established in Glasgow in 1800 by Dr George Birkbeck for artisans and mechanics; the movement spread rapidly throughout Great Britain.

Libraries were considered essential in this context; the books were either donated or purchased by mutual funding. Their existence played a prominent part in the report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the establishment of libraries freely open to the public (1849). This led to the passage of the Public Libraries Act, 1850. Ironically, although piloted through the House by William Ewart, the MP for Dumfries, it did not apply to Scotland until 1853.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SCOTLAND

Early Reform (1850-1883)

The creation of a formal system of public libraries began in the mid-19th century largely through legislative reform. Scotland already had a number of libraries and book clubs based in towns and cities that had existed from as early as the 16th century. These included private libraries, circulating and subscription libraries, mechanics' institutes and collegiate libraries, however, many of these library services were not freely open to the public and to everyone.

From the 1820s and 1830s there was a general desire in society towards social improvement, often directed by members of the middle-class towards the working classes. There was increasing concern that the Industrial Revolution had transformed British towns and cities, creating concentrated groups of working-class people with little to do in their limited spare time beyond drinking in their local pub. Many middle-class campaigners felt the working classes should be encouraged to use their free time to enjoy 'morally uplifting' and self-improving activities, such as reading and attending lectures and concerts.

In 1845, two Members of Parliament, William Ewart (MP for Dumfries) and Joseph Brotherton, were involved in the passing of the Museums Act which gave town councils powers to raise a half-penny rate to establish 'free' libraries attached to town museums.[2] This legislation opened up further discussions surrounding free public libraries and in 1849 a Select Committee on Public Libraries was formed. The Select Committee argued the case for free library provision and presented extensive research on free library provision in Europe and the United States of America, carried out by Edward Edwards, a cataloguing assistant in the British Museum Library.

The Public Libraries (Scotland) Act

The foundation of the public library system as we know it today began with the passing of the Public Libraries Act of 1850, which was extended to Scotland and Ireland in 1853. The Act gave town councils (of towns with a population of more than 10,000 people) the power to raise a half-penny rate (through taxation) to provide for a library building, its maintenance and upkeep, and to hire library staff. However, the purchase of books was not initially included in this.

[2] Black, A., Pepper, S., and Bagshaw, K. (2009) *Books, Buildings and Social Engineering, Early Public Libraries in Britain from Past to Present.* Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, p.28.

As it related to Scotland, the Act of 1853 was amended and superseded by the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act 1854. This increased the rate to one penny in every pound and allowed the money raised to be extended to the purchase of books and other reading materials.[3]

In practice, the Act was unsatisfactory as it placed limitations on the minimum size of town population required, the amount of money that town councils could spend and the ways in which this money could be spent. Library legislation relating to Scotland was amended and updated several times (in 1867, 1871, 1877, 1884 and 1894), however, broadly speaking, the legislation remained largely the same until the Public Libraries Act of 1919.

The first public libraries

Airdrie town council was the first to adopt the Public Libraries Act in Scotland in 1853. The first rate was levied in 1854 and the book collection of the local mechanics' institute was bought for £40 to form the basis for the town's new free public library. By 1856 the library was operating from the town hall (this building no longer survives). Airdrie's public library was popular and plans for a purpose-built library were put forward in the 1880s, and it was constructed in 1893.

The second town to adopt the Act was Dundee in 1866. Subscriptions had already been collected for a memorial to Prince Albert, and a public library was opened in 1869 as part of the Albert Institute, designed by George Gilbert Scott. This building included a museum, art gallery, library and reading room (Figure 5).[4]

[3] Crawford, J C. (2013) 'The Scottish Library Scene' in *Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Volume III 1850-2000*. Edited by Black, A and Hoare, P (2nd ed.), p.241.
[4] Aitken, W. R (1971) *A History of the Public Library Movement in Scotland to 1955*, p.54.

Figure 5: McManus Galleries (formerly the Albert Institute), Dundee (1865-7). Designed by George Gilbert Scott © HES

The development of public libraries in Scotland was initially very slow. Some towns and cities, such as Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Arbroath, even resisted the early adoption of the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act because it was felt by some that local taxes were already a burden and there was no lack of books available through the existing system of libraries.

By 1878, following Airdrie and Dundee, only four other burghs had adopted the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act. Paisley did so in 1867 (see Figure 6), Forfar in 1870 and Galashiels and Thurso (both in 1872).

Figure 6: Paisley Library designed by John Honeyman (1871). The first purpose-built library building in Scotland funded through the Public Libraries (Scotland) Act © HES

The towns that first adopted the Public Libraries Act were promoting the idea of the public library as the cultural, moral and educational improvement of the town, and these new free institutions were used to generate a sense of civic pride and urban progress.[5] It was common for temporary libraries to be set up in existing buildings, such as town halls. For example, Thurso town council adopted the Act in 1872 and a small library was set up in the town hall, however it wasn't until 1910 that a purpose-built library was constructed (see Figure 7).

The external design of early public libraries, particularly in towns and cities, often combined elaborate decoration and grandeur with the established styles used for other civic buildings, ranging from neo-classical to Scots Baronial. Those built in small towns and villages were often more modest and were designed to complement their surroundings.

[5] Black et al. *Books*, p.29.

Figure 7: Former Thurso Library, Caithness (1910). Designed by Barbaretus Sinclair Macdonald © Oriel Prizeman

Philanthropy (1883-1919)

The most significant period of construction of public libraries took place in the late Victorian period up until the end of the First World War. This was largely the result of philanthropic gifts offered by wealthy benefactors, and legislative changes to the Public Libraries Act. The most notable amendment to the Act specified that only a simple majority of ratepayers (rather than a two-thirds majority) was required for adoption proposals of the Act. This made it easier to establish new libraries where previously adoption of the Act had been actively rejected.

The increase in the establishment of public libraries was also influenced by the growth of literacy rates following the Elementary Education Act 1870 and the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872. Furthermore, celebrations marking Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1887 encouraged some local authorities to adopt the Act in her honour.[6]

The most well-known philanthropist was the Scottish-American steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) (Figure 8). He believed in the importance of education and self-improvement, particularly through the use of public libraries, believing "No millionaire will go wrong…who chooses to establish a free library in any community that is willing to maintain and develop it".[7]

[6] Black et al., *Books,* p.33.
[7] Andrew Carnegie quoted in Aitken, W R, *History of the Public Library Movement*, p.76.

Carnegie libraries

The first of over 2500 public libraries in the world to be funded by Andrew Carnegie was opened in his hometown, Dunfermline, in 1883 (Figure 9). Carnegie gave an £8,000 grant and the town council agreed to adopt the Public Libraries Act. The combination of Carnegie's grant scheme and the development of library legislation sparked a rapid increase in the numbers of libraries being built across Scotland.

The Scottish roots of both Carnegie and of his secretary, James Bertram, who reviewed every library design, and who was closely associated with James Duff Brown, meant that the early development of public library design in Scotland had a significant impact which extended throughout the United Kingdom and the United States of America.[8]

Figure 8: Bust of Andrew Carnegie in Central Library, Edinburgh © Dianne King (Canmore)

Figure 9: Dunfermline Carnegie Library (1883), designed by James Campbell Walker © Oriel Prizeman

[8] Prizeman, O. (2012) *Philanthropy and Light: Carnegie Libraries and the Advent of Transatlantic Standards for Public Space*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Carnegie made adoption of the Act a requirement to access donations. Carnegie's early grants included £50,000 to Edinburgh, £10,000 to Ayr (Figure 10), and smaller grants to Aberdeen, Grangemouth, Inverness, Kirkwall and Peterhead.

Figure 10: Ayr Carnegie Library (1893), designed by Campbell Douglas and Morrison © Oriel Prizeman

The architectural design competition for Edinburgh Central Library, sponsored by the town council, was won by George Washington Browne. The competition brief stipulated that the library was to be a grand building of any style, with principal rooms maximising natural light. The building opened in 1890 and was the first public library built in the city (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Edinburgh Central Library (1890), designed by Sir George Washington Browne © Oriel Prizeman

In the thirty years to 1884, eleven towns had adopted the Public Libraries Act. By 1904 around 60 towns had adopted the Act, many of these also accessing Carnegie's grant scheme.[9] As well as helping to fund new libraries, Carnegie also gave money to several earlier foundations to improve existing services, such as Airdrie's first purpose-built public library (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Airdrie Arts Centre, built 1893, was Airdrie's first purpose-built public library and partially financed by Andrew Carnegie © Oriel Prizeman

Other philanthropists

A number of other patrons also bequeathed money and endowed libraries in the late-19th and early-20th century. Peter Coats, a Paisley thread manufacturer, funded the construction of the Paisley museum and library in 1871 (Figure 6).

The largest public library to be built in the years before the First World War was the Mitchell Library in Glasgow. It was established in 1874 with a £70,000 bequest from Stephen Mitchell, a tobacco manufacturer, and provided the city with a free public reference library. It remained outside the public library system until 1899, when Glasgow adopted the Public Libraries Act. The library existed in several adapted buildings before a

[9] Aitken, W R, *History of the Public Library Movement*, p.349

purpose-built library, designed by William B Whitie, opened in 1911 (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Reading Room at The Mitchell Library, Glasgow © HES

Some cities such as Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen built branch libraries. These were usually in the suburbs and were designed to cater for local communities. Glasgow received a £120,000 grant from Andrew Carnegie, the largest grant provided by Carnegie in Scotland, which paid for around 15 branch libraries in the city centre and its suburbs.[10] In Edinburgh, eleven branch libraries were established across the city, including the McDonald Road Library, Stockbridge and Corstorphine (Figure 14 and 15), many of these were funded by the publisher, Thomas Nelson.[11]

Figure 14 (left): Corstorphine branch library in Edinburgh. Built in 1904 and taken into the city's jurisdiction in 1920 © Oriel Prizeman
Figure 15 (right): McDonald Road (Edinburgh East) branch library (1902) © SCRAN

[10] Black et al, *Books*, p.142.
[11] Edinburgh Public Libraries Committee (1951) *Edinburgh Public Libraries, 1890-1950*, pp.22-30.

The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, set up in 1913 by Andrew Carnegie, took over the funding of library buildings and began offering financial aid to counties wishing to set up their own libraries. The Trust offered book grants and one of the conditions attached was the adoption of modern practices, including open access lending departments.[12]

A 1915 report produced by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust highlighted that there remained a lack of library facilities in rural areas. It also raised concerns about the high maintenance costs of buildings. In Hawick, for example, Carnegie gave £10,000 towards a new library building, however for a town of 17,000 people, only £300 was produced from the adoption of the Act. In this instance, the gift was too large in proportion both to the size of the town and to the amount of money levied from the rate. The cost of maintaining the building soon swallowed up the entire income of the library, resulting in an expensive building with little money with which to purchase books (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Hawick Library (1904), designed by J N Scott and A Lorne Campbell © Oriel Prizeman

The outbreak of war in 1914 to 1918, and the death of Carnegie in 1919, all but ended the programme of Carnegie-funded libraries. The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust continued as a charitable body and lobbied on wider issues of literacy. The 1915 report raised important issues relating to the longevity of library buildings. The Public Libraries Act of 1919 sought to address these issues.

[12] Black et al., *Books*, p.233

Interwar Developments (1919-1945)

The Public Libraries Act of 1919 was a significant step towards a Scottish national network of public libraries. It consolidated all previous library legislation up to that date and changed how money could be raised and spent through taxation.

This Act essentially transferred powers for libraries from town councils to county councils, allowing them to set-up library services across their geographic area. This legislation, alongside the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918, created a county library service. As a result, many small existing libraries became part of a local network, thereby improving library provision in rural areas. Schools also often acted as library centres after hours.

Furthermore, the 1919 Act meant the provision of libraries was less dependent on the money of wealthy patrons to top up any shortfalls in funding. However, the economic impact of the First World War meant library building did not return to pre-war levels until well into the 1920s.

Many Scottish cities and towns had at least some library provision by 1919. However, some required new premises either because older buildings were no longer fit for purpose or because a library had not been previously adopted under earlier legislation.

When Leith merged with Edinburgh in 1920, a new public library civic complex was constructed which included a town hall (later a theatre) behind (Figure 17). This was added to Edinburgh's branch library network. Sinclairtown Library in Kirkcaldy, built between 1933-35, and Fountainbridge Library in Edinburgh, built between 1937-40, are two prominent interwar public library buildings (Figure 19).

Figure 17: Leith public library with a town hall (now a theatre) behind, built 1929-32, rebuilt after war damage, completed in 1961. Designed by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope © Canmore

The Library of the Faculty of Advocates, founded in the early 1680s in Edinburgh, had been an unofficial national library for Scotland, however by the 1920s the upkeep of such a major collection highlighted the need for a formal national library. In 1925, the National Library of Scotland was formally constituted by an Act of Parliament. A new purpose-built library was part-funded by a £200,000 donation from Sir Alexander Grant of Forres and matched by government funding. Designed by Reginald Fairlie in 1934-36, the National Library of Scotland is an interwar classical-modern public library, completed in 1958 (Figure 18).

Figure 18: National Library of Scotland © HES

Figure 19: Fountainbridge public library, built 1937-40 (formerly known as the Dundee Street branch library), Edinburgh © HES

Modern Libraries (1945 to today)

Funding for libraries declined after the Second World War and many authorities turned away from purpose-built buildings, often combining libraries with shopping facilities, schools or sport complexes. A library for Glenrothes was opened in the old Preston School in 1954 before moving into Carleton School temporarily. In 1960 Fife County Council took tenancy of one of the shops at Woodside Shopping Centre for use as a public library (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Woodside Library, part of Woodside Shopping centre in Glenrothes c.1960, Fife © SCRAN

By the mid-20th century, the rate limitation was abolished and for the first time a publicly funded library service became a statutory obligation. This culminated in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. This created a two-tier system comprising a small number of large regional authorities, providing major services such as education, and smaller authorities that dealt with local services, including libraries.

In the years immediately following the Second World War a lack of money meant constructing new library buildings was not always possible, and alternatives, such as mobile services, became a common feature of Scotland's public library service. In Edinburgh, for example, new communities were springing up and library services were needed to serve these people. A mobile library van service started in 1949, serving eleven sites weekly across the city.[13]

Inverkeithing Library and Hillhead Library in Glasgow are good examples of late-modern, purpose-built public library buildings in Scotland (Figure 21 and 22). They were designed with open access facilities in mind and with spacious, Scandinavian-inspired interiors.

[13] *Edinburgh Public Libraries*, p.30.

Figure 21: Inverkeithing Library (1969-1971), designed by Frank Mears and Partners © HES

Figure 22: Interior of Hillhead Library, Glasgow (1972), designed by Robert Rogerson and Philip Spence © HES

The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) was formed in 1991 and is the independent advisory body to the Scottish Government on library and information-related matters.[14]

In the 21st century, public library provision has been undergoing radical change, largely as a result of budget cuts to local authorities and the overall progression towards a digital world. Recent debates surround the use of historic and more recent library buildings and how they can continue to be used as free-to-access public spaces for a wide range of community uses.[15]

[14] SLIC, https://scottishlibraries.org/about-us/what-we-do/
[15] Historic England, *The English Public Library, 1850-1939*, p.12

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Early public libraries were often architecturally elaborate and were constructed as monuments to civic pride and social progress.[16] The libraries built in large towns and cities were particularly grand, both internally and externally, incorporating decorative elements celebrating self-improvement and wisdom. These buildings were visually prominent and designed to impress.

Libraries constructed between the 1850s and 1890s were designed in a variety of architectural styles across Scotland. The earliest and larger, purpose-built libraries were typically classical, reflecting the style of other important civic buildings, however it was very much dependent on the architect and regional location of the building.

In Scotland especially, local architects typically designed the library and used locally sourced stone as their main building material to complement the existing town architecture.[17] Architects tended to design libraries all over the country without an attachment to a local area, but some specialised in a particular region.

Notable Designers

James Robert Rhind

James R Rhind (1853-1918) was an Inverness architect who successfully competed and won the design competitions for most of the Carnegie libraries in the Glasgow area. He designed Bridgeton Library (1903), Dennistoun Library (1903), Maryhill Library (1903), Hutchesontown Library (1904), Woodside Library (1905), Govanhill and Crosshill District Library (1906) and Parkhead Library (1906) (see Figures 23-26).

Rhind's library designs are largely in an Edwardian Baroque style and include features such as glazed domes, arch-headed windows and decorative allegorical statues representing figures such as Knowledge, Art and Truth. Rhind often designed doorways with more architectural embellishments. Some of these branch or district libraries, such as Maryhill and Bridgeton, were designed as two-storey to blend in with the surrounding tenements (Figure 23 and 26).

[16] Black et al, *Books*, pp.269-272.
[17] Carnegie Libraries of Britain, at https://carnegielibrariesofbritain.com/typical-features-2/exterior-features/stone-and-stone-faced-buildings/

Figure 23 (left): Bridgeton Library, (now Glasgow Women's Library), Glasgow © HES
Figure 24 (right): Govanhill and Crosshill District Library, Glasgow © Oriel Prizeman

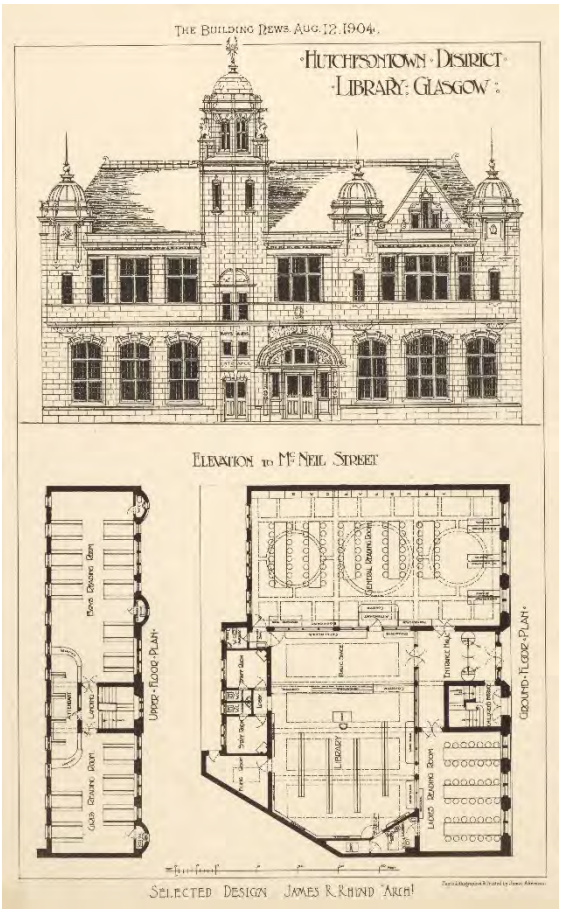


Figure 25 (left): Plans of Hutchesontown District Library. From The Building News *August 12, 1904 © Canmore*
Figure 26 (right): Maryhill Library, Glasgow © Oriel Prizeman

George Washington Browne

Sir George Washington Browne (1853-1939) designed a number of Carnegie libraries. His most famous commission was the Central Library on George IV Bridge in Edinburgh in 1887-90 (Figure 11), as well as smaller library buildings such as Annan Library (Figure 27). The partnership of Washington Browne with John More Dick Peddie between 1895 and 1907 resulted in four purpose-built Carnegie commissions, including Jedburgh (1898), Castle Douglas (1902), Bo'ness (1904) and Kelso (1905) (see Figures 28, 29 and 55).

Figure 27: Annan Library, designed by George Washington Browne © Oriel Prizeman

Figure 28 (left): Castle Douglas Library, George Washington Browne practising as Peddie & Washington Browne © Oriel Prizeman
Figure 29 (right): Kelso Library, George Washington Browne practising as Peddie & Washington Browne © Oriel Prizeman

Alexander Cullen

Alexander Cullen (1856-1911) was the architect to Lanarkshire County Council and designed many public buildings, including tenement housing, hospitals, police stations and libraries. Cullen won the design competition for a combined municipal office and library in Hamilton in Glasgow (see Figure 30). Construction of the library section began in 1906 and the library was opened by Andrew Carnegie in September 1907. Following the death of Cullen in 1911, the municipal offices were completed in 1914 and the town hall section was added in 1928.

Figure 30: Hamilton Library, Cadzow Street, Hamilton, Glasgow (construction began 1906-07), designed by Alexander Cullen of Cullen, Lochhead & Brown © HES

After the relocation of library services in around 2010, the former Coatbridge Library has been converted into residential accommodation (Figure 31).

Figure 31: Former Coatbridge Library, opened by Andrew Carnegie in 1906, designed by Alexander Cullen © Oriel Prizeman

Regional Variations

Until the mid-20th century most public libraries were constructed in stone that was often locally quarried. Regional distinctions in library design can be identified such as the use of granite in Aberdeenshire (Figure 32 and 33), red sandstone in Glasgow and the surrounding areas, and brick construction with stone dressings in some branch libraries (Figure 34 and 35).

Figure 32 (left): Torry Branch Library, Aberdeen (1902), designed by Arthur Clyne, Brown and Watt © Oriel Prizeman
Figure 33 (right): Fraserburgh Library, Aberdeenshire (1905), designed by William Stephen Fergusson Wilson © Oriel Prizeman

Figure 34 (left): Former Baldridgeburn branch library, Dunfermline (1909), designed by Hugh and David Barclay © Oriel Prizeman
Figure 35 (right): Coldside Library, Dundee (1908) © HES

Small-scale and multi-use libraries

Purpose-built libraries were the most common building type, however other buildings, such as village halls and reading rooms, were also constructed. Carnegie's grant scheme was also used by small, rural communities. 57 buildings in Scotland received funding from Carnegie but were not stand-alone libraries. For example, in 1883 the parish of Tarves in Aberdeenshire was the first rural district in Scotland to adopt the Act and a purpose-built reading room and village hall was established in the village of Tarves in 1892 (Figure 36). The Hermitage Library and Hall in the Scottish Borders and Clashmore Hall in Dornoch were both built as combined community halls with reading rooms (Figure 37 and 38).

Figure 36: (left) Melvin Hall, Tarves. Built in 1892 as a Carnegie-funded reading room and village hall © Oriel Prizeman
Figure 37: (right) Hermitage library and village hall (1910) © Oriel Prizeman

Figure 38: Clashmore Hall, Dornoch (1907), built as a village hall and reading room © Oriel Prizeman

Sometimes the Public Libraries Act was adopted to establish a multi-use building. In 1897 the burgh of Stornoway sought funds to build a town hall and public library (Figure 39). In Dunfermline, a village hall and reading room was established in 1909 at Baldridgeburn, becoming a branch library for the town (Figure 34).

Figure 39: Former town hall and public library, Stornoway, constructed 1907, rebuilt 1928 © Oriel Prizeman

Typical Design Features

Regardless of architectural style and the size of the building, public libraries included a number of typical design features. These included features such as ventilating turrets, roof lanterns and lots of windows.

Light

Earlier public libraries were constrained by the cost of artificial light, instead relying upon maximising natural light where possible. Especially in large buildings, roof lanterns, skylights and glazed domes were typically used to provide the maximum amount of natural light into the space below, supplemented by tall windows in the walls. Even as electricity and the cost of lightbulbs made artificial lighting easier, glazed domes and rooflights remained popular features of libraries.

Figure 40: Glazed dome over the former reading room at Rutherglen Library. This is one of the best-preserved glazed domes in Scotland © South Lanarkshire Libraries

Figure 41: (left) Main staircase and rooflight, National Library of Scotland © HES
Figure 42: (right) Upper level reading room, National Library of Scotland © HES

Ventilation

As well as providing light, glazed domes and tall roof lanterns were impressive vaulted structures to help maximise the circulation of fresh air.[18] Ventilation turrets are common features on library roofs, ranging from the highly decorative to 'hidden' ones on flat roofs (Figure 43 and 44).

Figure 43: Detail of turret on Montrose Library © HES

Figure 44: Turret on Inverurie Library (1911) © Oriel Prizeman

[18] Carnegie Libraries of Britain, at https://carnegielibrariesofbritain.com/typical-features-2/ceiling-vaults-and-their-decoration/; also Prizeman, O. (2012) *Philanthropy and Light: Carnegie Libraries and the Advent of Transatlantic Standards for Public Space*. Farnham: Ashgate, pp.166-168.

Interiors

Ceilings were typically high and light colours, ornate plasterwork and timberwork were used to decorate.

Glazed timber partitions and decorative stained glass are common features, many of which survive today. West Calder Library and Montrose Library retain a number of interior features, including wall and floor tiles, glazed partitions and decorative stained glass (Figure 45 and 46).

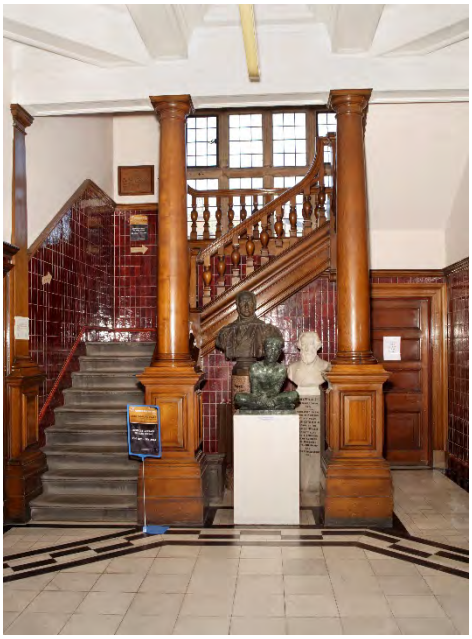


Figure 45 (above): Glazed partitions in Montrose Library © HES
Figure 46 (right): Tiled walls and floor, ground floor of Montrose Library © HES

Bookshelves

Most libraries have updated their library furniture, particularly after open access lending required additional space for books to be on display and easily accessible. Some libraries such as Possilpark in Glasgow and Edinburgh Central Library still have some of their original bookcases (Figure 47).[19]

Figure 47: Wire mesh-backed, double-sided timber bookshelves allow light through to help maintain airiness at Possilpark Library, Glasgow © Oriel Prizeman

[19] Carnegie Libraries of Britain, at https://carnegielibrariesofbritain.com/typical-features-2/fixtures-and-fittings/bookshelves/

Plan Form

The interior and plan form of a library was an important design consideration and it was very much dependent on the location and size of the building and the requirements of its users.

While there was no standard plan form and layout of libraries, a small number of ideal plan forms were initially developed through the Carnegie scheme which were largely adopted and adapted across the United Kingdom. Most 19th and early-20th century public libraries were compartmentalised, with separate rooms often allocated for different activities and purposes. The biggest change in interior design between early public libraries and those built after the 1890s was accessibility to the books and the need for surveillance.

During the first decades of public libraries, the public did not have direct access to the books in the lending library. The fashion was for a 'closed system' of library management. Borrowers had to ask the library staff to get the books they wanted. A system of book catalogues and indexes were used alongside indicator boards which listed the books that were in stock (Figure 49). Figure 48 shows how books were kept in the centre of the room surrounded by a counter separating the library staff from the public. Readers would then place their book requests with the library staff at the counter and wait for their books to be delivered (Figure 50).

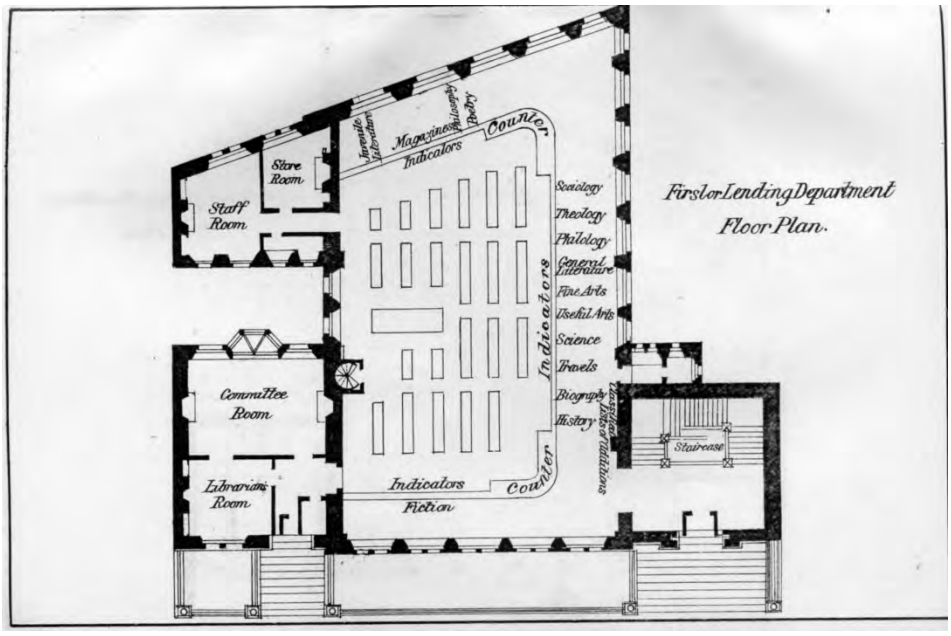


Figure 48: Plan of the lending department at Aberdeen Public Library (1892) © Silver City Vault (Aberdeen City Libraries)

One of the most popular indicator systems was Cotgreave's Library Indicator (Figure 49). The more books a library had, the more indicators were needed.

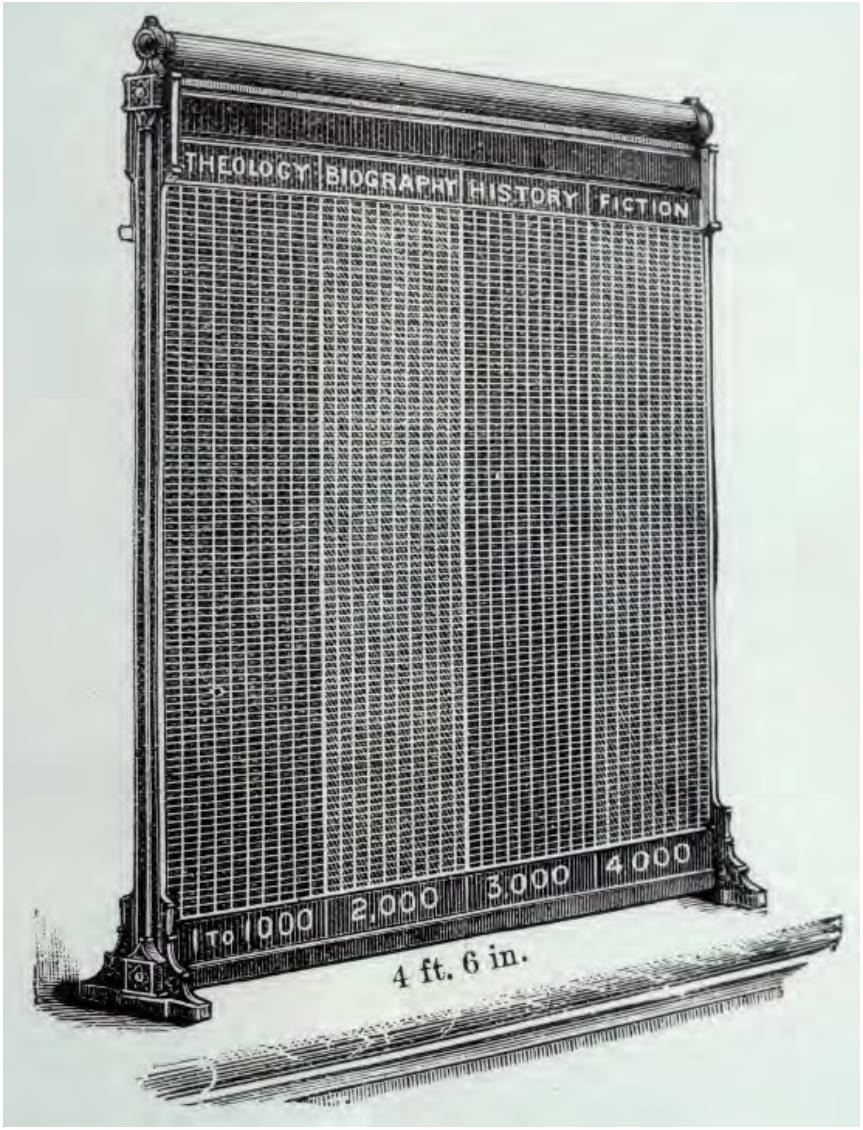


Figure 49: A Cotgreave Indicator was used in the lending room at Edinburgh Central Library when it first opened in 1890 © SCRAN

Figure 50: Issue counter with catalogues in foreground. Anderston District Library, 1907 (built 1904, now demolished) © Mitchell Library, Virtual Mitchell

Reference rooms

The role of the reference department was to collect, store and provide books and reading materials that were not openly available unlike those in the main lending library. These research collections were usually rare or expensive and were intended for use by serious students and scholars.

Usually large in size and found on the upper floors or at the rear of the library, reference rooms are highly decorative and situated away from general noise. These rooms have tall windows and large domed roof lanterns to let in the maximum amount of natural light.

Reading or Newspaper rooms

The reading room was the most popular department of the public library. It was usually located on the ground floor, often close to the entrance, and as far from the reference room as possible to ensure quiet.

The reading room contained sloping lecterns and spaces for reading newspapers, magazines and journals. The lecterns had the daily newspapers fixed to them with the name of the publication above (Figure 51), and they were designed to be read while standing. Some libraries, such as Bridgeton and Anderston in Glasgow, provided long fixed tables and stools where patrons could sit (Figure 52).

Figure 51: Lectern in Edinburgh Central Library, 1936 © SCRAN

The newspapers covered most local, national and international news as well as sporting events, however gambling and the racing results were usually censored.[20] Any newspapers or pamphlets of societies deemed undesirable, such as socialist societies, were not on offer. The literature provided was that which was deemed socially acceptable. This space was predominantly for men, because separate spaces were usually provided for women and children.

Reading rooms also offered information for those seeking employment. Some reading rooms in larger libraries had the job pages from newspapers posted in glazed cabinets outside the main room.

[20] Black et al., *Books*, p.61.

Figure 52: Reading room at Anderston District Library (now demolished) © Mitchell Library

As the 20th century progressed, the price of newspapers and magazines fell relative to wages. This allowed people to be able to buy them and read them at their leisure, making reading rooms largely redundant. Combined with the open-access system of libraries of the early-20th century, reading rooms became more flexible spaces and used as additional space for bookshelves.[21]

Ladies' rooms

Depending on the size of the library, women were often separated from men in their own designated ladies' rooms. Smaller libraries with little extra space would partition a section of the main reading room off for use by women. These separate spaces, sometimes called a magazine room, held copies of the daily newspapers, as well as magazines and journals published especially for women. These spaces were often equipped with soft furniture, a fireplace and a private toilet.

Children's rooms

The demand for children's facilities was piecemeal before the 1890s, but by 1900 children had been identified as a group that could benefit from more public library provision. This coincided with the overall increase in literacy, particularly following the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872.

[21] Black et al., *Books*, p.56.

In earlier libraries, such as at the Central Library in Edinburgh, the children's or juvenile's room was often in the basement. The layout very often reflected the spaces for adults and included features such as timber reading slopes under the watchful eye of the librarian (Figure 53). Gradually, children's areas became more home-like and included comfortable furniture, child-height bookcases and colourful interior decoration (Figure 54).

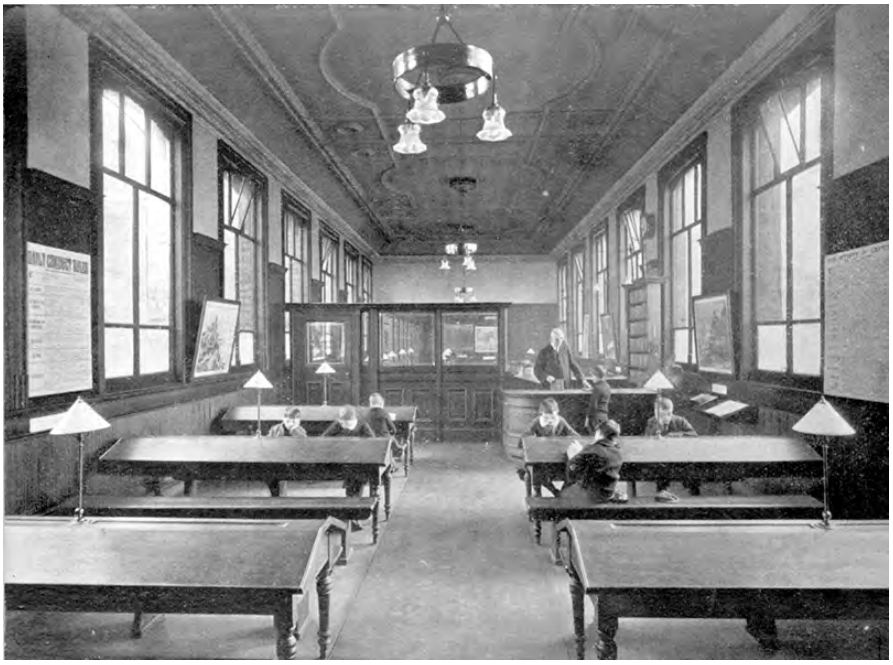


Figure 53: Junior section at Kingston Library, Glasgow in 1907 © Mitchell Library

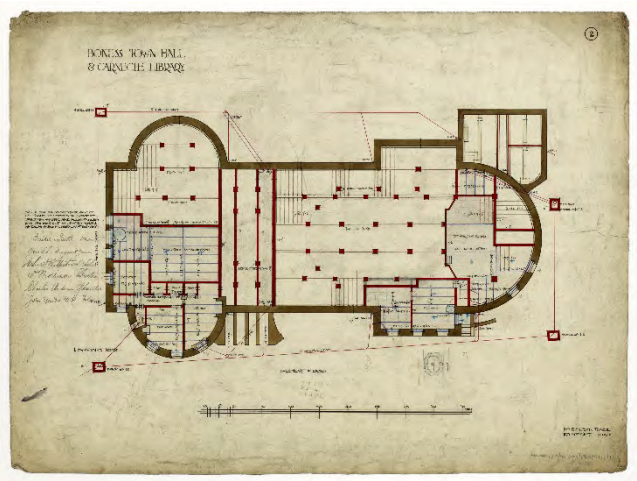
Figure 54: Junior section at Hillhead Library, Glasgow in 2014 © HES

Library staff

Librarian's accommodation was often attached to or incorporated into public library buildings built in the late-19th and early-20th century (Figures 55 and 56). As the number of public libraries grew and library practices evolved, librarianship became increasingly professionalised. The Scottish Library Association was formed in 1908 which brought library staff together in one professional body, and there were a number of branches throughout Scotland. The Association developed education for librarianship and provided schools and professional qualifications. It became affiliated with the Library Association in England in the 1930s and is known today as Scotland's Library and Information Professionals (CILIPS).[22]

Figure 55: Bo'ness Carnegie library (now town hall) (1904), designed by Peddie and Washington Browne © Oriel Prizeman

[22] CILIPS, https://www.cilips.org.uk/about/our-history/



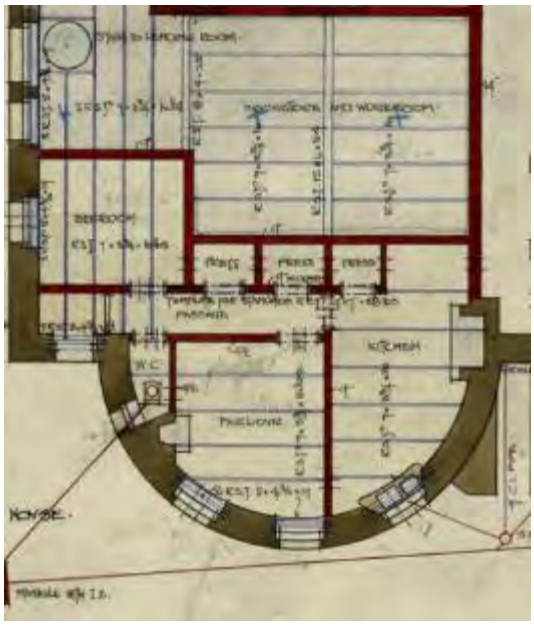


Figure 56: Basement floor plan of Bo'ness Town Hall and Carnegie library, with inset of Librarian's accommodation © HES (Dick Peddie and McKay Collection)

Open access

In 1894 James Duff Brown, the librarian at Clerkenwell Library in London, implemented a new 'open access' system whereby readers could directly access the bookshelves in the lending library.

A manual for librarians was written by James D Stewart in 1915 which discussed open access arrangements in both lending and reference libraries. It included sections on suggested layouts and offered advice on rules, regulations, shelf guiding, catalogues, charging systems and even lighting configurations.[23]

Open access became widely accepted. Although Langside library in Glasgow was designed as closed access, when it opened in 1915 it was the first library in Glasgow with open access lending (Figure 57).

[23] Black et al, *Books*, pp.231-235

Figure 57: Langside Library, Glasgow (1913-15), designed by George Simpson © Oriel Prizeman

During the 1920s and 1930s the majority of existing libraries changed from closed to open access. The internal arrangement of older buildings was increasingly altered, and newer library buildings were designed with open access in mind.

The extra floor space needed for open access lending required library staff to re-examine layouts. The 19th century tradition of separate spaces for different activities meant some rooms, such as ladies' rooms and newspaper rooms, gradually fell out of favour. As open access became the preferred system, the division between different sections of the library became less clear. From the 1920s onwards, many public libraries had become a large, single space with the different sections delineated (if at all) by the arrangement of stand-alone bookcases and furniture (Figure 58).

The transition to open access was largely complete by 1945.

Figure 58: Open-access lending in former reading room at Leith Public Library © HES

REFERENCES AND FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Printed sources

Aitken, W. R. (1971) *A History of the Public Library Movement in Scotland to 1955.* Glasgow: Scottish Library Association.

Black, A., Pepper, S. and Bagshaw, K. (2009) *Books, Buildings and Social Engineering: Early Public Libraries in Britain from Past to Present.*

Black, A., Hoare, P. (2006) *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Volume III, 1850–2000.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, J. D. (1920) *Manual of Library Economy* (3rd Edition). London: Grafton & Co.

Burgoyne, F.J. (1897) *Library Construction: Architecture, Fittings and Furniture*. London: George Allen.

Champneys, A.L. (1907) *Public Libraries: A Treatise on Their Design, Construction, and Fittings, with a Chapter on the Principles of Planning, and a Summary of the Law.* London: B. T. Batsford.

Crawford, J. (2006) *The Scottish Library Scene* in *Cambridge history of libraries on Great Britain and Ireland,* 1850-2000. Cambridge University Press, Vol III, pp.235-252.

Edinburgh Public Libraries (1951) *Edinburgh Public Libraries, 1890-1950: A Handbook and History of Sixty Years' Progress.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Public Libraries Committee.

Edwards, E. (1859) *Memoirs of Libraries: including a Handbook of Library Economy*. London: Trubner & Co.

English Heritage, *The English Public Library 1850-1939* (March 2014).

English Heritage, *The English Public Library 1945-1985* (September 2013).

Greenwood, T. (1891) *Public Libraries*. 4th Ed. London: Cassell & Co.

Historic Environment Scotland. Edinburgh's Post-War Listed Buildings.

Historic Environment Scotland. Glasgow's Post-War Listed Buildings.

Kelly, T. (1973) *A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain, 1845-1965*. London: The Library Association.

Prizeman, O. E. C. (2012) *Philanthropy and Light: Carnegie Libraries and the Advent of Transatlantic Standards for Public Space*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Thompson, A. (1963) *Library Buildings of Britain and Europe: An International Study, with examples mainly from Britain and some from Europe and overseas.* London: Butterworths.

Online sources

Canmore. Carnegie Buildings in Scotland, at https://canmore.org.uk/gallery/964478

Dictionary of Scottish Architects, www.scottisharchitects.org.uk

Cardiff University AHRC Project "Shelf-Life: Re-imagining the future of Carnegie Public Libraries", at https://carnegielibrariesofbritain.com/

CILIPS: Scotland's library and information professionals, at https://www.cilips.org.uk/

Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), at https://scottishlibraries.org/

Further sources of information

Historic Environment Scotland (2019) Scotland's Listed Buildings, at https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=34c90cb9-5ff3-45c3-8bc3-a58400fcbc44

Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=8d8bbaeb-ce5a-46c1-a558-aa2500ff7d3b

Acknowledgements

This booklet was compiled by Rachael Bowen and Chloé Porter of Historic Environment Scotland. A special note of thanks to Antonia Bunch for her contribution and to Oriel Prizeman for permitting use of her photographs of Carnegie libraries as part of the Cardiff University AHRC Project "Shelf-Life: Re-imagining the future of Carnegie Public Libraries" [AH/P002587/1].

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

Historic Environment Scotland

Longmore House, Salisbury Place

Edinburgh EH9 1SH

0131 668 8600

historicenvironment.scot

Historic Environment Scotland – Scottish Charity No. SC045925