

CRYSTAL BALL GAZING:

Repurposing a 40 year old building to meet future demand



Wouldn't it be convenient if the architects of yesteryear could have looked into the future and foreseen the need for an appropriate power infrastructure to underpin the needs of today's laptop wielding, mobile phone toting, university students? It would certainly have lessened the challenges ahead of Curtin University Library as we embark on a mission to repurpose our existing 40-year-old building to keep it as the heart of the university campus, providing the functionality our clients need for current approaches to learning and research. Following extensive discussions, a new vision for the library building has been developed and work is now underway to bring the vision to reality.

For the interior, based on client feedback, we are zoning library spaces for noise and interactivity. Group study spaces are being increased and modernised with large computer monitors, laptop facilities, flexible furniture, and 'writable' walls. At the same time we are developing areas for private study which can be designated as silent or quiet depending on demand over the academic year.

To enable us to open longer hours safely, we are providing after-hours swipe-card entry to the building and linking our two most popular floors with

an open, readily accessible staircase.

We have found that we can make a big impact with relatively inexpensive furniture changes such as replacing small, dark older style carrels with lighter, wider ones designed for mobile technologies and the plethora of other belongings our clients bring with them. Booths and banquette seating are very popular. Low book shelves are replacing high ones to create a more open look and feel.

To accommodate client preferences for enjoying a book or interacting with colleagues over a cup of coffee, our cafe and its alfresco area are being integrated within the library – no need to borrow books or one of our laptops before taking them into these areas.

A major challenge in providing spaces and facilities like these within an existing structure is lack of space, so we are relocating staff and consolidating print collections to free up areas, particularly on our entry levels.

Being 40 years old, our building's infrastructure was not designed for the purposes to which we are now putting it in. So electrical boards, mechanical systems, and IT and AV cabling all need improvement, replacing, or upgrading.



WORK TO START ON THE JEWEL OF THE SOUTH



And finally, to maintain the library's presence as a central point for campus activity, we are enlivening our current facade, which is blank and uninviting. Through the use of lighting, colour, and projected images, the library will be a beacon on campus both day and night.

We can only hope that the future custodians of the building look back at our decisions and are pleased with the way we have anticipated the needs of the next generation.

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Images:

1. Curtin Library has replaced many of its small, dark, older style carrels with lighter, wider ones designed to accommodate mobile technologies and client belongings.

2. A view of the newly installed and very popular banquette seating in Curtin Library.

3. A view of the exterior of Curtin Library highlighting how the facade will be enlivened through the use of colour, projected images, and lighting.

4. Artist's impression of level 2 looking towards Curtin Library's east entrance with the new staircase linking levels 2 and 3 visible on the right.

Construction is about to start on the new Hallett Cove library, community, and enterprise centre. The community and the City of Marion have worked together for 20 years to turn the dream into a reality. Work is scheduled to be completed in late 2014.

The \$13.4 million complex is to be built opposite the Hallett Cove shopping centre at Ramrod Reserve and will feature:

- A modern library with an estimated 35 000 books, ebooks, magazines, and DVDs
- Flexible meeting rooms that will expand out into a community hall for up to 280 people
- A computer training suite with wi-fi and broadband facilities to enable users to connect with the digital economy
- Meeting facilities and resources for local businesses to learn and network with each other
- A children's toy library and early childhood resources and services
- A plaza that incorporates public art, which will become the community's 'meeting place'

The centre will serve a growing community in the Adelaide southern suburbs as well as provide 8000 small businesses with access to quality information and facilities to enable them to compete more effectively and drive jobs growth.

The City of Marion has invested \$10 million towards the cost of the \$13.4 million centre. The Australian Government through the Regional Development Initiative has contributed \$3.4 million.

The design of the Hallett Cove library, community, and enterprise centre has been inspired by the natural features of the coastal region. Visitors will be welcome into a spacious foyer where a polished concrete floor, wooden panels, and a modern reception are illuminated

by natural light. In addition to high-tech ventilation and solar panels to minimise electricity costs, the centre will recycle rainwater for toilet flushing and irrigating its grounds.

The services on offer – like the overall concept for the facility – have been based on the needs of the community following extensive consultation. An important part of the work of the enterprise centre will be supporting local business, particularly those that are small or home-based. The centre will have flexible halls that can be used for a variety of purposes such as expos, tradeshows, and product launches as well as for meetings. A dedicated ICT training facility will be available to up-skill businesses on the latest technology while the modern library will be a source of high-quality information.

Part of the centre will be a shared pedestrian, vehicle, and bicycle road. The building is surrounded by three roads/streets and part of these roads will be re-designed to create an impressive 'entry statement' making it more pedestrian and bike friendly. Extra street trees will be planted and cobblestone 'rumble strips' installed to slow traffic while pedestrian crossings and on-street parking is introduced. Inclusion of garden beds and bio-filtration beds that can clean the road water run-off before it enters the stormwater system will be a feature of the changes.

To find out more about our new library, visit makingmarion.com.au

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