

CASE STUDY

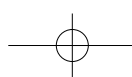
Designs bring new energy to public libraries

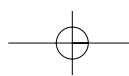


When the library team at Middlesbrough County Council wanted to refurbish the Central and eight branch libraries, it turned to library designers, Demco Interiors, to bring a fresh design eye to the project. The imaginative and colourful interiors have brought a vitality and energy to the libraries and attracted many new visitors.



INSPIRING
LIBRARY
DESIGN





Identifying a need

Building assessments were carried out to identify those libraries most in need of refurbishment and eight older branch libraries selected. With forward thinking, a corporate design was used across the branches so that, if and when necessary, items and furnishings could be moved across locations.

The colour scheme of purple, pink, green and dark red was “pretty startling” and mirrored the colour scheme already familiar on their mobile libraries.

Chrys Mellor, Head of Libraries and Information and Jen Brittain, Operations Manager, agreed that they had their doubts when they first saw the colours in the library but had a completely different take on it once all the furnishings were back in place.

Advice to other librarians

Based on their experience Chrys and Jen would advise other librarians to keep an open mind about colours and not to necessarily play safe, but to “try and envisage how colour will work once their library is fully fitted out”.

Jewel in the Crown

Although the branch libraries are much loved and highly regarded the Central Library was inevitably the Jewel in the Crown of the project. A Grade II listed building which had originally been the Town’s Law Courts, it was badly in need of updating. Restoring the integrity of this lovely old building was paramount, and Demco’s brief was to create a welcoming destination with light and ambient colour schemes and furnishings.

Demco’s design input

A pilot project was carried out and then put out to tender with a resulting shortlist of seven to eight companies which included, not only library suppliers, but architectural firms with design interests.

It was Demco’s ability to put different ideas and mixes into the pot that was valued by the Middlesbrough team. As Chrys adds “they knew we were ‘up for it’ in terms of exciting designs and colours”.

Operations Manager, Jen Brittain had to have utmost confidence in her team, including suppliers. “Our relationship with Demco was definitely two way” she says “we worked together thrashing out ideas and colour schemes”.

Sustainable furnishings for a fitting future

Demco’s prestigious Bomefa 150 shelving was used in the Central Library. The steel shelving of the Bomefa system was particularly relevant as it reflected Middlesbrough’s heritage as a steel town. The system is also set to be a classic amongst shelving systems, with timeless design and unmatched in quality of manufacture and materials. Sustainability was very important in the selection process; as Chrys says “we’re not going to be able to do this again for many years”.

Demco also provided counters, soft seating, workstations, graphics, AV display and storage plus bespoke seating and counters. Interesting workstations came from Demco’s Swedish partner, Eurobib; blue with beech and graphite details.



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