

CROWNING GLORY

Manchester's Central Library and Town Hall Extension comprise the finest civic estate outside of London. Tired after a century of use the site has recently been subject to a large scale rehabilitation with BDP producing a lighting scheme that retains a studious 1920s feel while instilling a sense of the present.

THEE TO HONOUR WHEN THOU DOST EMBRACE HER · SHE SHALL GIVE TO THINE HE





Sitting at the very heart of the city the Manchester Town and Hall and Library comprise one of the finest civic complexes in the UK. The Gothic Revivalist Town Hall, its Neo-gothic extension and the decidedly Classical Central Library, based on the Parthenon in Rome, are grand testaments to Britain at the height of her imperial powers. The later two buildings were opened by King Emperors (George V opening the library in 1934 and his son George VI opening the town hall extension in 1938) the cornerstones making pointed reference to their dominions in India.

The library occupies a critical position in the cultural consciousness of Manchester and it is woven into the biographies of the city's heroes. A young Anthony Burgess, the Mancunian writer of *A Clockwork Orange*, was seduced by an older woman amid the rows of varnished cabinets that constitute the library's index and Morrissey studied for his A Levels in the Language and Literature Library, a room that used to be located in the building's roof, the tables reverberating with each strike of the town hall clock. 2014 saw the culmination of a four-year, £50 million refurbishment project to restore and upgrade the Library and the Town hall extension, with the building re-opening in March in time to celebrate its 80th birthday, in the finest fettle of its life, ready to welcome an estimated two million visitors a year.

Designed by E Vincent Harris, the man responsible for the Ministry of Defense building in London as well as the Leeds Civic Hall and the Kensington Central Library, the Portland stone structure has undergone many piecemeal changes since its construction, but nothing to equal the breadth and scale of this project.

The principle focus of the refurbishment was the restoration of heritage features such as the library's impressive domed reading room. The room is the building's crowning glory and its restoration has been attained while retaining the space's iconic echo, the acoustical nature of the room prompting the moving of a chair or the dropping of a book to sound like the detonation of a nuclear device. The room's vast expanse of white ceiling has been cleaned, the art deco light fixtures restored and the words from Proverbs "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her and she shall promote thee," have been reconfigured in an eye catching gold leaf. The Library Theatre, the fine repertory theatre that sat beneath the reading room has been removed, the company moving to Home, a new cinema and theatre venue



Chelsom refurbished the Art Deco light fixtures in the Central Library and Town Hall Extension. When fixtures were too damaged to be refurbished they were replaced.

due to open in the city in 2015. In its place a media lounge and local heritage centre has been created. In conjunction with the British Film Institute the ninth incarnation of the Institute's 'Mediatheque' has been installed, with a number of viewing pods offering full access to the BFI's invaluable archive.

Perhaps the most impressive factor in the refurbishment process was, despite the transformational nature of the project, the desire of those responsible to retain the original essence of the Grade II* listed buildings, preserving heritage whilst developing facilities to benefit future generations.

Manchester City Council were also keen to install innovative and modern systems that would reduce the carbon footprint of the site, while delivering state of the art sustainable facilities. Facilities that benefitted Council workers in the town hall extension were also required.

Alongside Laing O'Rourke, Ryder Architecture for the Central Library and Ian Simpson Architects for the Town Hall Extension, BDP provided lighting design, environmental engineering and acoustic consultancy with the aim of bringing the buildings up to modern environmental standards, while respecting their heritage. BDP wanted to not only create a lighting scheme that enveloped all the idealistic aims of the project but also wanted to set a visible new standard for environmental performance and carbon emissions in historic buildings in the process, changing the misconception that this is too difficult to achieve.

This is not to say that the refurbishment process has had only a positive effect on the area, the decision by the Council to close the famous Library Walk, a pathway gracefully cut between the Central Library and the Extension, for the sake of public safety in the evening, is considered by some to be a travesty. The charismatic pathway is now encased in a glass and metallic bubble likely, in time, to be considered a carbuncle and a scar on Manchester's architectural legacy, with the blame being placed entirely at the Council's door.

THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

The Library has a floor area of 14,192m² and it is the second largest public library in the UK, but ironically, before the restoration only 30% of the space was accessible to the general public. 70% of the building is now available for public use ensuring the atmosphere of the structure is one of busy vibrancy rather than the traditional hushed silence.

The approach of the lighting designers

The staircases that trace the curving walls are completely new additions to the structure, gracefully guiding visitors between floors. The tubular suspended pendants were created by Concord and markout the landings between floors.





Shakespeare Hall is the impressive entry point to the Central Library. Formerly a cluttered space the area has now been opened up revealing its true shape while the impressive ceiling has been cleaned and repaired.

PROJECT DETAILS

Manchester Central Library, Manchester, UK
 Client: Manchester City Council
 Architect: Laing O'Rourke, Ryder Architecture
 Lighting Design: BDP

LIGHTING SPECIFIED

Chelsom: All Existing Heritage Refurbished Wall Mounted, Suspended Globes & Surface Mounted Lighting
 Concord LUMISTRIP LED - LED Tape
 Continuous Linear Lighting Track and Spot: Whitecroft Quest LED, Philips Styliid Compact
 Recessed Spotlights: Whitecroft Mirage MX, Havells Sylvania Fixtures Ltd Incorporating Concord Marlin
 Tubular Suspended Pendants: Concord Pendant
 Linear Suspended Lighting: Whitecroft Glide, Trimpak, ACF Duralie & Stiletto Five
 Handrail Lighting: Wila Mini Puck
 Recessed Downlights (various sizes): XAL Combo Round
 Surface Mounted Bulkhead Lighting: Glashutte Limburg Ceiling (supplied by Concord), Whitecroft Centurion PP65
 Wall Mounted Task Lighting: Artemide Tolomeo Faretto LED
 Emergency Lighting: Ventilux
 External Window Lighting: Arclight Heritage
 acdc Plaza external floodlighting:

revolved around the refurbishment of heritage luminaires where possible in order to maintain the original character of the building. This process was led by the Blackpool based Chelsom. In conjunction with this painstaking process, new energy efficient lighting systems were also installed in areas that have been modernised. BDP were well aware that the building's listed status was likely to impose many constraints on the development of a lighting concept and this proved to be the case. Some of the original luminaires were beyond repair and required replicas to be manufactured by Chelsom, as well as this existing wiring points had to be used in many of the heritage areas. This limited the positioning of luminaires and prevented fixtures being positioned in optimal locations, on top of this all changes required the approval and input of English Heritage. The library had a wide variety of luminaires that had been added over the years on an ad hoc basis, an approach that prompted

the building to appear disorganised and cluttered.

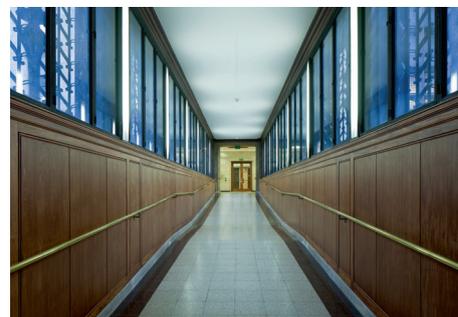
The new scheme has restored much of the original design intent in heritage areas while the fixtures have been fitted out with modern lamps and control gear to increase the efficiency of the installations, creating a stimulatingly lit environment, which responds to and integrates with the historic architecture.

In newly formed areas light plays a huge part in the perception of the space. The light scheme has been developed in response to the likely requirements of the visitor in each space. For example a considered use of darkness was particularly important in areas such as Archives+ and the Mediatheque, where media screens and display items require a lower level of ambient lighting to create contrast and highlight. Recessed spotlights by Havells Sylvania and recessed downlights by XAL have been used to highlight the space and its heritage architecture, while sleek looking tubular

suspended pendants by Concord hang by the lift shafts and newly installed staircases, working well within these reconstructed areas, while also not being too out of place when compared with some of the heritage fixtures from the 1920s. The staircase rails feature Wila Mini Puck handrail lights acting as good guidance markers.

Heritage luminaires beautifully uplift the refurbished Shakespeare Hall, the main entrance point to the library, beautifully highlighting the ceiling that bears the city's medieval livery.

"The Central Library is one of the focal points of the city centre and has a unique character that BDP strived to preserve although it is obviously a complex task to try and bring such historic infrastructure into the 21st century and make it genuinely sustainable. The sensitive integration of modern technologies was an important part in this refurbishment project and required very careful planning and delicate execution," commented Chris Lowe of BDP,



Above left The City Library where XAL Combo Round recessed downlights have been used within the space. *Above right* The heritage aspects of the Central Library are considerable here books formally hidden in the massive library archive have been placed in public view. *Below left* Vela Round fixtures by XAL were used to fine effect in some of the extended office spaces creating lines of light that stretch across the room. *Below right* A heritage link corridor in the Extension.

the project's lighting designer who worked on the project through its different stages.

THE TOWN HALL EXTENSION

Manchester's Town Hall Extension is perhaps of even more architectural consequence than the Central Library. Designed again by E Vincent Harris the building gracefully bridges the Gothic Town Hall with the Library by retaining an essentially Gothic style, while also adding contemporary touches such as a steeply angled roof. Grade II listed, the building is something of a one off and is one of the best examples of English architecture in the years preceding WW2.

The building houses many of Manchester City Council's key functions and the interior was characteristic of the time it was created, stuffy, restrained and inherently undemocratic in nature, excluding everyone but those doing the governing. The aim therefore was to overthrow this and create a democratic building, an open, engaging workspace, a building of the people, by the

people, for the people.

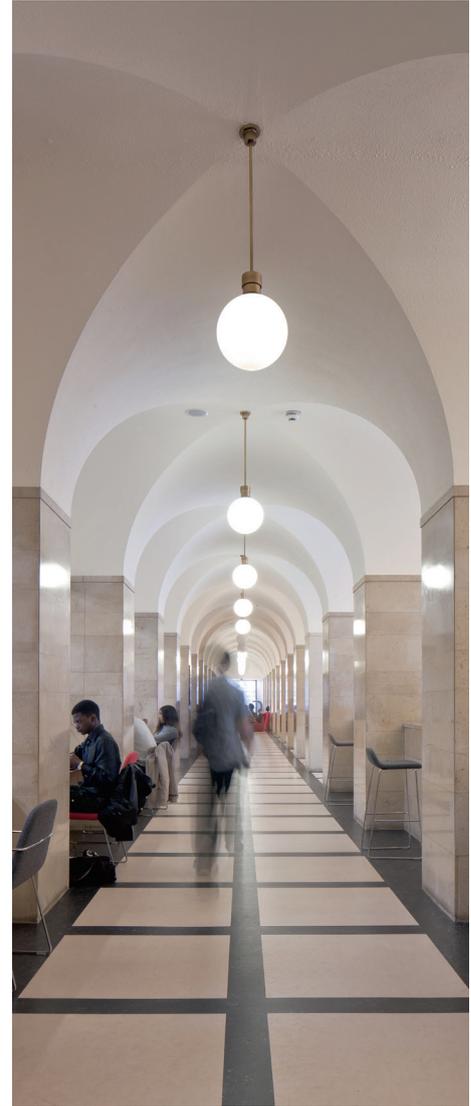
With a floor area of 31,073m², the extension houses office areas for council staff, a council chamber and associated member's committee rooms, a customer services centre at ground floor level and a city library at basement level complete with a cafe area.

As well as aesthetics, practicality and accessibility, this project was about reconfiguring the administration of the city and making the decision making process more accessible to the people. It was about creating a comfortable base for council workers, who reside in a building that was not originally designed with employee welfare as a primary consideration. The project aimed to recognise that buildings define the way their occupants work and interact and therefore the challenge was to take an eighty year old structure and convert it to meet modern, open and collaborative working requirements.

Like with the library the aims of the project had to be achieved while remaining sensitive to the much-loved original architecture and this was certainly the case when BDP began to create a lighting scheme.

One of the client's major design aspirations, like in the Library, was to restore the original lighting concept and preserve heritage luminaires where possible. The new lighting scheme plays a large part in the user's overall experience by providing a stimulating lit environment, which responds to and integrates with the historical architecture. Luminaires in heritage areas have again been refurbished by Chelsom with modern lamps and control gear to increase the efficiency of the installations whilst maintaining the original intent.

In newly formed areas the light responds to the visitor's requirements for task, focus, architectural definition and pleasure. In the office spaces, which make up a large



Above left One of the office spaces in the Town Hall Extension linear light fixtures were installed to create an unencumbered design. *Above right* A corridor in the Town Hall Extension, the refurbishment of the original light fixtures was a key plank of the lighting design. *Bottom left* A committee room, the project aimed to ensure that the running of the city administration was streamlined by the refurbishment project. *Bottom right* The main council chamber in the Extension building.

percentage of the building's area, there was a multi disciplinary collaboration to integrate lighting into the multi-service rafts. This was achieved by providing bespoke luminaires suited to the task. In extended office areas the modern looking Vela Round fixture by XAL was used in duplicate creating a hypnotic repetition of circular discs crossing the room, while in other spaces the Concord Continuum was

used when a linear light was required. In the public service hub the original roof lights were refurbished, making the space light, bright and open. Light wells in the floor allow natural light to stream into the extended Central Library in the lower ground floor. Once again Glashutte Limburg 4836 tubular pendants were used in link corridors, matching their use in the Library.

The Rates Hall, which sits on the ground floor of the extension, now restored to its full beauty thanks to Ian Simpson Architects is one of the finest formal rooms in the country. The extraordinarily beautiful light fittings in the gently curving space have been perfectly restored by Chelsom, highlighting the polychromatic marbles that fill the room with dignified colour, while tall windows allow daylight to be cast on

JAPANESE

CHINESE

FRANÇAIS



The Rates Hall in its restored glory. Reconstructed fixtures from Chelsom light the hall's beautiful marble walls and carved ceiling.

PROJECT DETAILS

Manchester Town Hall Extension, Manchester, UK
 Client: Manchester City Council
 Architect: Ian Simpson Architects
 Lighting Design: BDP

LIGHTING SPECIFIED

Chelsom All existing heritage refurbished wall mounted, suspended globes and surface mounted lighting
 Concord LUMISTRIP LED LED tape
 Concord Beacon Muse track and spot
 XAL Combo Round Recessed downlights
 Concord wall mounted downlights (various sizes): Simes Lift Rectangular
 Concord Continuum continuous linear lighting
 Concord LS200 T5 cove uplighting
 Whitecroft Mirage MX recessed spotlights
 Projection Lighting Mini Washer
 XAL Vela Round circular pendants (various sizes):
 Concord Glashutte Limburg 4836 tubular suspended pendants
 Concord Glashutte Limburg 8894/5 surface mounted bulkhead lighting
 Wila Mini Puck handrail lighting
 Whitecroft i-track bespoke surface mounted linear lighting with integrated services
 Whitecroft Lighting Cascade Edge and Hygiene
 600x600 Lighting
 Concord Globe Pendant Luminaire Glashutte Limburg The Sphere
 Whitecroft Concert & Mirage Surface Mounted Downlighting:
 Surface Mounted Linear Lighting: Trilux E-Line T5 & Luceo,
 Whitecroft Stiletto Five, Radial & Trimpak
 Louis Poulsen PH 4½ - 3½ Free standing and Table Lighting

the civic crests and symbols that cover the ceiling. Hidden away and partitioned in the grim days of Manchester's 1980s, this most regal of rooms is now home to the council's customer services department meaning that the general public are able to come into contact with it everyday highlighting the democratic nature of this project.

The lighting design for the Manchester Central Library and Town Hall Extension successfully delivers an efficient, flexible and adaptable space with occupant comfort at the heart of the design.

The redevelopment has been well received

and Councilor Rosa Battle, Executive Member for Culture and Leisure, termed the work 'spectacular.'

The result is the creation of a building that honours knowledge and education and stands as a shining example of what can be achieved when an administration of government, be it local or national, puts its focus squarely on the bettering of the educational opportunities of its citizens, while also encouraging people to actually use once forbidding buildings to their full extent.

As you walk around some of the public areas

of the Town Hall Extension, visitors will notice a poster displayed on walls around the building that reads, 'No matter who you are or where you are from Manchester is and always will be, yours'. The placing of equality at the centre of this project will ensure that all the city's people feel welcome and comfortable in Manchester's civic heart.

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DEUTSCH

ITALIANO

ESPAÑOL