

Brown, Carol R. *Interior Design for Libraries Drawing on Function & Appeal*. Chicago and London: American Library Association, 2002. 143 pp. ISBN 0-8389-0829-2. \$38.00.

Melinda F. Matthews, University of Louisiana at Monroe

This masterwork and thorough investigation presents a dos and don'ts of library interior design. There is significant and poignant discussion of children's divisions in public libraries and other age-appropriate considerations. Children's spaces must be apparent to children when they come in the library. Children need not be in adult library places and libraries should have children's bathrooms. Twenty-seven black and white pictures adorn the book, aiding the explanation of interior design. Supplementing the black and white images are nine color photographs. Careful distinctions are made between academic and public libraries. The following briefly provides the short important details necessary to fabricating the insides of libraries pointed out in the excellent book. The author stresses in chapter that planners need to understand the primary users of the library and design a library with particular care for those users.

Basic considerations focus on where to locate public service desks, the height of shelving units, and so forth. Shelves are shorter to accommodate looking at seated customers. Libraries are different than bookstores because of the computer labs and classrooms. Libraries are similar to bookstores because of the need for nice places to read. Items are placed in libraries for best access by customers like a reference desk near the computers. Computers for customers and computers in the stacks to look up forgotten call numbers must abound. Circulation is by the front entry for patrons to bring back books or check out books near the library doors conveniently. Current serials are by windows in order that patrons can sightsee. Glass borders are used to aid librarians in

looking for patrons who might need assistance. Departments that are louder are together such as circulation, children's areas, browsing, and computers. Periodicals and study rooms are near each other. The parking lot where books and supplies may be delivered should have a nearby elevator that goes directly to the technical department upstairs. Restrooms should not be by the staff lounge because germs should not be around eating areas. Reference librarian offices should be next to the reference desk for easy access. Computers with online catalogs are on tables where people may sit and type. Children's sections in public libraries or school libraries have various chairs for various grades. Libraries should have signs for leaving libraries when emergencies arise.

Brown's book is different from many other books on library design when discussing planning. Her first consideration is functionality and then aesthetics. Other studies show the basics of planning such as budgets, how many computers, whether to have an archives department, carrels, study desks, and classes. Brown includes some atypical considerations such as placing the Circulation Desk up to twenty-five feet in front of the main doors for people to check out books. Square size is best for a library. Squares are not as pleasing to the eye. Circulation must allow for six workers and still have enough room for reserve materials. Cataloging and Acquisitions Departments should have enough room to allow for a minimum of six workers (whether or not there are that many employees in those areas) with extra tables for working. Libraries should have accommodations for housing book trucks. Libraries should determine the height of windows, doors at entry, and how many doors are necessary in the libraries. Carpets, bathroom tiles, counters, and furniture should appear clear and in good working order. The majority of furniture companies can furnish a new library. Brown stresses

implementing an accurate time plan for a new library's first day. The first day for a new library might be without some of the furniture because of inadequate planning with the furniture company on needing all the furniture requested by the first day of the new library.

Interior design issues refer to planning the general stacks, tables, chairs, windows, computers, and other items. It is best to start on ideas for the inside of a library. The architect and interior design agent need to determine ceiling and window height before they can consider these issues. The ceiling-to-book shelf ration has a great impact in directing social patterns. A small ratio encourages quick movement whereas a large ration encourages studying and comfort. A picture of Davis Library, Plano, Texas is of periodicals on short bookcases among chairs. Columns can be utilized to have wiring for electricity. Atriums might be frowned on due to a possible place for bookcases. Water such as flowing fountains or indoor ponds should be reconsidered when children are the primary patrons. The water can also damage the books. Care should be given to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Four feet or more between people is ideal. Sofas are not as good in public libraries because people who do not know each other will not sit right next together on a sofa. Rectangle tables should be offered for one person and circular tables for numerous people. Research shows tables for four are chosen more often than tables for six. Shelving units should line the walls with computers and service pointers in the middle. Chairs facing one-another encourage for conversing. There is need for extra room surrounding computers for papers, writing, and books for computer uses. Public libraries provide tables and seats among bookcases for a less school-like environment. Academic libraries have bookshelves together for efficiency. Young

people's collections are away from scholarly or adult collections so as not to interfere with each other. Circulation, reference desks, and computer divisions are around each other so questions may be answered by available librarians.

Furniture is supposed to appear nice and assist in library services. Purchasing large amounts of tables at one time is less expensive than two purchases a year or more apart. Library furniture, unlike home furnishing, is developed for durability and libraries should pay the higher cost for this reason. Veneers, stone, and solid wood are most expensive. Steel bookcases fluctuate in price in different years. Oak is mainly utilized due to cheapness while cherry and maple are used less. Libraries should have desks in similar areas on each floor and look similar.

Circulation service desks should be composed of first-rate woodwork. Some circulation areas have many check-out stations like Middleton Library in Baton Rouge Louisiana. Service area counters in a circle at Circulation aid customers. Libraries can utilize furnishing from millwork or a furniture company. Libraries need to determine the necessary number of seats, book trucks, and ready reference materials. Library heads should involve librarians in the design process. Libraries must have wheelchair accommodating. Wood, unlike steel, can harm books. Nurseries should have short bookcases while other libraries should adjust shelving to appropriate heights for their users. Nonfiction is on taller shelves, while fiction, DVDs, tapes, books with larger type are on shorter shelves. Where earthquakes happen, bookcases should be reinforced to the ground or the wall. Legal publications need longer shelves. When designing public computing areas, consider things like having space for more than one chair at a computer, will there be speakers and scanners, how many printers, etc. Tables need to

last for many years. Genealogy areas require long tables for many books. Tables like circles are for children and people talking about a project. Lamination can cover tables. Tables made for other businesses can be used in libraries. Wood chairs are superior in keeping clean. Chairs without arms are superior because they are not pulled under tables possibly hurting hands. Chairs for staff lounges are for one individual, while many university libraries have sofas for students to sleep at night. Wood arms on chairs last longer than cloth covered arms. Leather is too costly. Harder seats for elderly individuals aid standing up. Avoid empty lines on chairs which gather debris and discourage patrons from sitting. Benches are outstanding for lobbies. Stools are with children's computers. Try out chairs from vendors before purchasing. Book carts and catalog equipment are needed. Libraries should have offices, lounges, and meeting areas. Some thought should be given to public service counters that can be relocated or rearranged. Areas for workers' outdoor wear are excellent. There should be plenty of room around Circulation reshelving. Reference areas have cubicles or several desks. Group librarian meetings should occur around a long table. Long tables are for technical areas, too.

Signage, color, and lighting are the key ingredients to interior design. A library can have too many or too few signs. Signs are not needed around service desks because people will not notice them and desk workers will explain policies. Signs should look similar to get noticed. Color is about the physical appearance and composition of carpets, floors, and counters. Colors on carpets and the floor reflect other colors in walls, desks, and furniture. Before the 1960's, wool was utilized for carpets due to its strength and lack of catching fire. Nylon is now used for library carpets due to being less costly.

Rugs should be under bookcases so bookcases may be taken elsewhere. A single color gets soiled faster than several colors together. Dark rugs show less soil. Purples, greens, and blues are peaceful. Red, yellow, and orange are dynamic and vibrant. Medium colors cause no reaction. Blue symbolizing geniuses should be for university libraries. Yellow is for children's areas. Tiny spaces look larger with vibrant colors, while large spaces look smaller with heavy colors. Libraries need trained light specialists to have the right lights so problems will not occur from amateurs. Direct sunlight can damage books. Establish a switch in Circulation that can light up all floors. Be sure to have the means to install new lights in high areas.

There are two appendixes that can assist planners. The first is a questionnaire about needs and wants in relation to what is outlined elsewhere in this article. The second appendix lists libraries and private sector companies whose work is illustrated in this book. A final page describes the author's credentials in academic, public, and consulting fields. Without hesitation, *Interior Design for Libraries Drawing on Function & Appeal* is one of the best sources on library inside plans for individuals gathering data on the topic. It is more than vital for public, academic, and design libraries' collections.