Chapter 6
From Stronghold to Threshold: New Library and New Opportunities
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Introduction

This chapter takes the University of Aberdeen’s new University Library and Special Collections Centre as a case study and outlines some of the thinking and decision processes involved throughout the project – from design brief to construction and occupation. (For further information and illustrations, see University of Aberdeen 2012.) It includes discussion on some of the change activities which the library staff undertook in the period leading up to the move into the new building. My own involvement in the project coincided with the submission for planning permission, and my own background included having spent over 20 years at the British Library and having been involved in the Library’s move from the British Museum to the new building at St Pancras in London. The chapter describes the approach taken in planning the internal layouts and location of activities in a completely new building, the noise management strategy, the promotion of the project and the engagement and consultation with audiences who might and would use the building, the selection of on-site open-access stock, the ways in which library staff were involved with the project, and some management issues involved in what were essentially multiple interlinked projects, particularly at the point where the building was being fitted out in preparation for its occupation and opening.

The title of the chapter reflects the overall aims of the project at Aberdeen: to build a library that is open and welcoming to all members of the community, including to the public; a library that does not have barriers (controlled access) at its front door but, instead, has a welcoming open public space at its entrance; a library that does not feel like it has been constructed to keep books in and people out; a library that supports the declared vision of Aberdeen’s Library, Special Collections, and Museums: ‘To inspire to enquire’.

There are particular challenges in a project which involves a complete new design and build in comparison with one which involves a staged approach to renovation. Renovation affords the opportunity to reflect at each stage and consider what has worked well and what elements might need further refinement. A re-development can be manageable over a number of years as a series of relatively small and staged projects. A new build, particularly one which includes new types of space, will involve challenges as well as opportunities. For example, the very
The basic question of what proportion of the space will be collaborative versus silent is not necessarily an easy one to answer. Also, some elements of design and layout will reflect the individual preferences and philosophy of those leading elements of the project – a potential challenge when key individuals join or leave a project.

**Background to the University of Aberdeen**

The University was founded in 1495. Today its students number 16,000 and there are around 3,000 staff, of which 1,400 are academic. Academic activity is divided amongst three colleges: the College of Arts and Social Sciences, the College of Physical Science, and the College of Life Sciences and Medicine. It is a broad-based university, includes a medical school, and operates from two campuses in the city of Aberdeen in Scotland: Old Aberdeen and Foresterhill. It has seven museum collections, which are recognized as nationally important, and its library collections include over 1.2 million books – of which over 200,000 are rare and 231 incunabula – and 4,000 archive and manuscript collections. Prior to the commencement of the project there were five separate library sites: the Queen Mother Library (the main library on the Old Aberdeen Site), the Law Library within the law building in Old Aberdeen, the Medical Library at Foresterhill, Special Libraries and Archives, and the Rowett Reid Library (nutrition). In due course this estate will be reduced down to three sites: in addition to merging the Queen Mother Library and Special Libraries and Archives into the new University Library building, the Rowett Reid Library will be combined with the Medical Library; the Law Library will remain in its present location in the Law School.

The decision to build a new library had two drivers. The first grew out of a proposal to create a Humanities Research Centre with the University’s Special Libraries and Archives at its core, and the second from the need to replace the main Queen Mother Library, which had been built when the University had about 4,000 students, and before the widespread use of computers in teaching and learning. That library had been substantially modified since its original construction as a science library and, following a number of studies of the feasibility for further modification or extension, the decision was taken to replace both it and Special Libraries and Archives with a single new building, one with the additional remit to provide an open and public space to host a broad range of exhibitions and events for the University and for the wider community. The addition of an exhibition gallery in the public area of the library would enable the University for the first time to exhibit some of the great treasures housed in Special Collections.

**Selection of the Design Team**

Some university libraries are designed as part of an overall ‘masterplan’ design for a campus (e.g. the new library at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh).
Others may be the subject of a separate discrete design process. The University of Aberdeen chose the latter and ran an international competition to select the design team. Almost 100 expressions of interest and 40 full applications were received. Six were shortlisted and the Danish firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen was selected. The firm has a strong track record in designing library and cultural spaces, including the award-winning extension to the old Royal Library in Copenhagen, the ‘Black Diamond’ (1999). The initial brief for Aberdeen included the housing of all of the library, archive, and manuscript collections in a single building, but initial cost estimates proved prohibitive and the decision was taken to house low-use materials in a closed-access external store and to prioritize space and activity in the new building.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

The appointment of a design team and the further development of the plans should ideally be undertaken alongside engagement with stakeholders. These individuals and groups will not only include students and staff of the institution but also representatives of neighbouring communities and the local planning department. Local communities are likely to be impacted, particularly during the construction of the new build but also, perhaps, in the longer term as a result of increased visitor numbers to the area. They may seek reassurance on provision for contractor access, working hours, likely noise and disruption levels, and impact on local transport and parking. The planning department discussions in particular will help identify at an early stage any aspects of the design which might conflict with local planning regulations or trends in decision making.

At Aberdeen a number of groups were formed, including an internal Users’ Group (students and academics), a group including staff from Special Collections, and a group including staff from Library Services. The Vice Principal and senior academic responsible for the project were joined by representatives from Estates and Communications at a series of local meetings of the neighbouring community councils, and these have continued throughout the project. An *Access and Audience Development Plan* was commissioned to assess the potential for the public to use and visit the Special Collections Centre, and this proposed aims and objectives for the development of new and existing audiences as well as informing decisions on the type and level of provision and activity, and the means of encouraging public involvement and engagement with people from the local community and beyond.

**Project Governance**

A new build is essentially a large number of large interlinked projects. Governance is key to ensuring that the critical path is met and that the overall project is delivered
on time, and project governance and management needs to be multi-layered. At Aberdeen, the following structure was adopted:

- **Library Project Board:** chaired by a senior academic and with representatives at director level from all the key areas (University Court, senior Administrator, Finance, Estates, IT, Library, Student’s Association). This group reported to the University Management Group, the Operational Board, and to Court, and is ultimately responsible for the delivery of the project.

- **Library Project Management Group:** an operational group chaired by the University Librarian and with representatives from the library, IT, academic, and student communities. The university’s Disability Adviser played a key role. Key areas requiring large financial decisions or which required formal operational sign-off by the Project Board were first discussed here.

- **Individual groups** for each of the main procurements/areas of work:
  - Construction
  - Furniture
  - Shelving (fixed and mobile)
  - Removals (modern collections and special collections)
  - Access and security systems
  - IT and AV
  - Stock selection
  - Move planning
  - Donor recognition.

- **Work packages:** small groups of library staff tasked with working on operational matters.

Weekly informal ‘catch-up’ meetings were held between the Chair of the Library Project Board, the Librarian, and the estates Project Manager. Further weekly meetings were held between the Librarian, senior library managers, the estates Project Manager, and the library’s IT relationship manager (through whom all IT/AV matters were routed). All notes from the library’s meetings were shared with the representative of the architects as well as with other key individuals on the project, including the university’s Disability Adviser, and this was the group that managed small changes to design layout and acted as the focus of refining the interior design with the architect.
Project Planning and Tendering

Project planning for a completely new build, particularly one which also involves new shelving and furniture, needs to take account of the various timetables implicit in the necessary procurement processes. It is essential that all procurement activity complies with procurement regulations and national legislation. Early identification of the various thresholds and likely procurement paths and timetables is an essential part of the planning process. Those individual procurements with a whole-life cost (this includes costs plus maintenance) of more than £156,442 will need to go to full European tendering (Official Journal of the European Union 2012), a process which will take between 100 and 120 days from the point that the initial notification is placed. Drawing up the tender specification is itself a complex process and it must result in a fair and transparent process. Institutional procurement officers will work with individuals elsewhere in the university to draw up statements of requirements and will offer guidance, but it should always be remembered that they will not only be working with the library – they may well have customers elsewhere across the university – and that the library project needs to be scheduled with other work that they are undertaking.

Planning for the various constituent parts of the project needs to take account of the fact that a finite number of people will have the expertise to deliver certain elements of the project. It is therefore essential that in the early stages a schedule of all parts of the project is drawn up which indicates the procurement method, the likely timescale for each procurement, including time to draw up the statements of requirements (this may be longer or shorter depending on whether the institution has recently issued a similar tender, or whether detailed advice is available elsewhere). The timetable needs to take account of the individuals required to complete the process and, as is likely, needs to be constructed as part of the overall timetable for all procurements so as to make the process manageable for those involved.

Some tenders may need to be divided into separate lots to allow for the possibility that more than one supplier may in fact deliver the most effective solution. At Aberdeen, both the shelving and the collection move procurements were split this way. Approximately 50 per cent of the shelving was to be mobile, and splitting the contract allowed for the most cost-effective solution to be delivered; around 30 per cent of the moves were of the University’s Special Collections, for which more stringent handling procedures were required. Whilst splitting a procurement in this way may lengthen the timetable, it is a more effective and efficient solution than running a separate tendering process for each lot.

Consultation and Engagement of Key Stakeholders

An academic library has multiple audiences, each of which will be differently engaged with the physical building. Generally speaking, for academics in the
fields of sciences and medicine, the library is a place rarely visited: effectively all of their interaction with the service is online and their engagement with the library is most likely through working with subject staff to deliver training to students on the use of some of the richer online resources. For those working in the humanities and social sciences, there is a deep sense of ownership of the physical library and with the use of monographs and special collections. For some, the status of the institution can be measured by the size of the collection. For students, the engagement is slightly different. For many, irrespective of their field of study, the library is often absolutely central to the space provision on campus. It is their office. It is where they seek out like-minded companions and it is there that they often seek out help and guidance. Even if they only intend to use the computer terminals, or, in some cases, their own books, there is a significant number who prefer to carry out their studies in a library rather than in the peace and quiet of their own dorm room. There is a feeling that the library encourages a sense of discipline. The more pleasant and more appropriately equipped the environment the more likely they are to use the facility. Any discussions which suggest that the library as a physical space is no longer relevant in a modern university can be squashed with the emerging figures: those institutions which have undertaken either new builds or refurbishments have seen considerable rises in numbers wishing to use the new facilities. At Aberdeen there has been a 70 per cent increase in footfall in the first term since the new University Library was opened compared with the same term the previous year, and average occupancy has increased 105 per cent.

Many university collections hold material of local and national importance and the universities are, as such, the custodians for these unique collections. Increasingly, universities see these collections as a vehicle to enable them to engage with the wider public and, in particular, as a vehicle for fundraising.

When considering a new build, engagement with stakeholders can broadly fall into the following areas:

- The academic community is the key group that needs to ‘own’ any new development and to be convinced that it will deliver real value to the institution. Ultimately it will have the power to approve or to veto the development, so there needs to be a very clear statement as to what any new build will deliver which is simply not possible with existing facilities.
- Students are perhaps the easiest audience to convince of the need for a new library but are the most likely to be disrupted during the development both early on – if the new building is very close to existing facilities as was the case in Aberdeen – and certainly during the transfer of operations from one building to another. Some of those who will be most disrupted by the process will not necessarily reap the benefits of the development and they are likely to be the least engaged and the most intolerant of disruption. Understanding the communication channels open to those students is a key part of any new development.
• Alumni can be both vocal and supportive; particularly those who remain close to the university and use its library. As a constituency within the user-base of the library they are the community most likely to be affected as the move from print to electronic media takes place, especially where print materials are moved into closed-access storage as part of any project which seeks to maximize space for study and activity. At Aberdeen this challenge was addressed through the implementation of ‘walk-in’ access to those electronic resources, where licences permit this. This group also has the capacity to be supportive, both as ambassadors for the institution and in terms of offering financial support. Different institutions engage differently with their alumni, and with differing degrees of success. The presence of an active ‘Friends’ of the library group is one way in which alumni interest can be captured. The extent to which senior management of the library engage with the ‘Friends’ will almost certainly be reflected in the level to which that group will support the work of the library.

• Early engagement with neighbouring communities is essential in order to ensure that any concerns are understood and addressed. Where a new building has any element of a public function, their perception as to whether the new facility is genuinely ‘for them’ may affect their engagement with the project. Handled effectively, the engagement will be positive and supportive. Otherwise, it may undermine and extend the planning process. Engagement throughout the life of the project goes hand in hand with delivering the promised results.

Refinement of the Design Through Research

Developing a new building is essentially an iterative process. Many new-build projects will develop over a period of almost a decade from initial brief to the delivery of the completed project. During this time new developments in the delivery of library services will emerge, and these may require re-thinking certain spaces planned for the new building. New key individuals will become involved in the project and may bring new ideas.

As a project develops it is essential that ongoing research is undertaken in order that the project remains fresh and informed of the latest developments, especially where these can be incorporated within the project. Depending on the nature of the construction, it may be possible to reconfigure the interior organization of spaces in order to reflect the most up-to-date information in that area.

In finalizing the plans for the new building at Aberdeen, considerable research was undertaken both in the UK and in Europe, with visits to numerous new builds and to buildings which had recently been refurbished. The purpose of the visits was to observe how the new spaces were being used (or not), and to talk to those who had been involved in the projects, to understand their approach and, most
importantly, to ask if they would have done anything differently. Numerous photographs were taken which then informed the discussions and the decision-making process at Aberdeen. One result was a number of generic observations on the use of particular types of furniture:

- Round desks encourage collaboration and conversation
- Rectangular desks encouraged more formal individual working
- Shelving can effectively be used to create ‘rooms’ and to break up and separate study spaces
- There was a trend towards the increased provision of collaborative working spaces, spaces which would allow small groups of students, typically up to eight, to work together, often including a PC and a fixed wall-mounted computer screen
- Funky furniture was rarely seen in use and, whilst often striking in design, often appeared not to be practical. In some cases it appeared to represent a significant investment for no practical purpose.

Most large projects will, from a certain point, operate a ‘change control’ process to manage requests for changes that might require alterations to the physical structure of the building or its services. Such a process will frequently involve the architects and the engineer. The apparently simple process of inserting or removing a partition may affect wiring, air conditioning, and acoustic management, all of which will need to be considered from a feasibility perspective and, if feasible, costed and approved before it can be included in the final build specification.

**Working with Feedback, and with the Characteristics of the New Building: Space and Noise Management**

Although a new build will have been designed with the specific purpose of being a library, there may be the opportunity to further refine the interior layout of the building as part of an iterative process as library staff fully engage in the project and as they develop a vision of the new opportunities that a new building will offer. This will be especially apparent if new activity or new types of space are to be incorporated.

University libraries are now home to an increasingly wide range of activities: everything from large-class teaching to silent individual working. They need to include spaces where students can work collaboratively on projects, and spaces in which those who wish to study silently can do so. Ideally, the control of noise should be such that instinctively, when entering a space, it is obvious how one should behave in that space. In a building where each floor is isolated from its neighbours it can be possible to place compatible activities on floors, and to isolate collaborative working from silent working. For buildings which are more open in nature a different solution needs to be identified.
The new library at Aberdeen is very open, and a floor-by-floor approach to noise management was not appropriate. Schmidt Hammer Lassen buildings are quite distinctive: they are often rectilinear externally and not infrequently are clad in glass, and they often have striking open and organic interiors. Aberdeen’s University Library is no exception. The area housing modern collections has a seven-storey glass tower above a double-height ground floor which houses a café, an exhibition Gallery, public space for talks, etc., a print/retail outlet, and an automated book returns and sorting system. Special Collections occupy the lower ground floor which extends east and north beyond the tower to provide space for rare book and archival storage and, at the north extremity, a purpose-built conservation centre. The key architectural feature of the tower is an asymmetrical atrium opening in each floor which is a soft triangle in shape and which, on the first floor, is large and towards the east (entrance) side of the building; on each successive floor, the opening becomes smaller, and is gradually rotated until, on the seventh floor, it opens out through a glazed ceiling to the sky at the west side of the building. It allows air to circulate and light to flood down through the building. Its asymmetry serves to dissipate noise rather than to reflect it, and, when looking down from the upper floors, gives the appearance of a series of terraces. Each floor plate is square and the building is supported by pillars and by a north and south core through which all access and services pass through the building. The building is cantilevered at its east and west façades from the first floor upwards.

Modern collections had previously been housed in the Queen Mother Library. That building, having been extended and modified over a number of years, had a very complex and unsystematic layout. Added to this, earlier collection management decisions had resulted in an arrangement whereby stock in any one subject might be located in one of three sequences, and was the subject of much adverse feedback. Journals were distributed amongst the subject collections and also attracted negative feedback on the grounds that they were difficult to find.

In thinking about planning the space for modern collections in the new building a number of factors were therefore considered:

- Feedback on the difficulty of finding stock in the Queen Mother Library
- For floor loading reasons it was not possible to put shelving on any of the cantilevered spaces at the east and west façades of the building
- For reasons of fire safety, no shelving could be placed in any area near the atrium which did not have a ceiling immediately above it (a small proportion of floors 1–6)
- The north core of the building is the route by which all visitors to the library would arrive on to any floor, either via the stairs or via the lifts
- The main WC provision is adjacent to the lifts on the north core, as is the water fountain provision on each floor. The WCs are fitted with a modern energy efficient fast hand drying system which, whilst speedy, is also noisy
- At the time of planning, the noise levels near the atrium opening were unpredictable, but it was always assumed and accepted that there would be some noise drifting through to the upper floors
• The desire to preserve sight lines: the height of the building and its position in Aberdeen mean that it affords unrivalled views not only of the historic Old Aberdeen campus but also of the city, the sea, and the surrounding countryside, and preserving those views was important.

• Simplicity and orientation: the tower in Aberdeen has a square footprint and the overwhelming consideration was to keep the arrangement of the building simple. If an activity were to be repeated across more than one floor then the aim (almost always realizable) was to locate it in the same place on each floor where at all possible for ease of orientation. Similarly, the flow of stock on the bookshelves needed to be consistent across all floors.

• The need not to avoid having two ‘conflicting’ study spaces adjacent to each other.

In order to manage this particular set of factors a horizontal approach to noise was adopted. The area nearest the north lift – the main entrance to each floor – was populated with collaborative work spaces, the staff office, the help point, and a self-service point containing self-issue machines and multi-function print/scan/copy machines. Bookshelves were used to buffer the sound towards the south of each floor; smaller study areas were, where feasible, created in amongst the bookshelves, and silent study rooms were created at the south-east and south-west corners on most floors.

Reducing Open-Access Stock

A common feature of many library development projects is the need to reduce open-access stock in favour of study and research space. Information, available through the library management system, on resources which may be duplicated both in print and electronically can aid the process, as can a detailed examination of circulation records for the identification of low- or no-use stock. In the UK, the collaborative United Kingdom Research Reserve (UKRR 2012) consortium can enable member libraries to manage print journals as part of a collaborative distributed national research collection. Where time permits, it is also possible to establish the extent to which collections might be being used uniquely on-site but not borrowed. At Aberdeen, a three-year examination of on-site collection use was undertaken by requesting that all volumes consulted within the library were placed on specially marked trolleys rather than being returned back to the shelves by library staff. These items were then scanned as ‘consulted’ before being returned to the shelves. Over time, the vast majority of those volumes which at first were used only on-site were ultimately borrowed, and it was concluded that circulation information was, for modern collection, a reliable predictor of overall use.
Library Staff Engagement

Ensuring that library staff are engaged in a new-build project is essential. Library staff will be acutely aware of any shortcomings of the existing facilities and of the opportunities presented by a new build, and they will be a great source of ideas. But equally, a new build can be a daunting prospect for some staff, particularly for those not closely involved with the project. Reading architectural drawings can pose a challenge for some, and many find it difficult to conceive of the internal spaces even when the physical building is going up in front of their eyes. Managing wider staff involvement takes careful planning but is absolutely necessary if the transfer of operations between the old and new buildings is to proceed smoothly and restart confidently. Working to ensure that all staff feel confident from day one in the new building needs careful management, but is essential to the success of the new operation.

In planning for spaces in the new building, activities such as process reviews can assist in defining staff spaces and, in particular, help in identifying which staff need to work together. Lean, KaiZen, and 5S processes, whilst having their origins in the manufacturing industry, are designed to maximize production and processes, and to minimize waste. These are now widely being used across the HE sector. The advantage of using any such process as a tool in combination with developing a new library building is that they empower staff and can result in more efficient and effective workplaces and engaged staff. In the case of 5S (Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardise, Sustain 2012), the sorting process (and the subsequent discarding of unnecessary files, equipment, etc.) can help in minimizing furniture needed to store unnecessary materials, and in move requirements, both of which can contribute towards a reduction in costs.

Engagement in the physical space during construction can be a challenge, as there are often restrictions to site access in order to minimize disruption to the construction process. There is also the very practical matter of the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including shoes in the size of feet belonging to librarians! For those directly involved in the detailed planning it is essential that some form of access is granted, ideally along with key staff from estates and representatives from the architects. Towards the end of a project, access for wider groups of staff can greatly assist in the final planning for the occupation and operational management of the new building. All staff accessing the building should be encouraged to take pictures and to share these widely with colleagues.

Many operational matters will need detailed consideration in preparation for the commencement of services in the new building. A new building is highly likely to involve the installation of new equipment, e.g. entry gates and a book detection system; book issue and return machines (perhaps also with the addition of book sorting equipment); new IT and AV equipment; new printing technologies (e.g. multi-function devices); digital signage and display systems; a digital room bookings system; new assistive technology, all of which will require training and documentation. Other areas that may need consideration
include emergency procedures, disaster planning, opening and closing routines, management information, management of the constituent spaces in the new building, management of access to areas behind the scenes (particularly where swipe or proximity systems are to be installed), fit-out of the staff room, scheduling deliveries from remote stores and between library branches, records retention and management, and public address systems.

At Aberdeen, the process of engaging with staff was effected through the formation of a number of work packages in order to address many of the areas listed above. Staff at all levels were offered the opportunity to become involved in whichever areas interested or concerned them. Involvement in a work package which concerned something that did not form part of an individual’s current duties was positively encouraged in order to ensure that fresh thinking was brought to each group, and had the benefit of encouraging cross-team working. Each work package group had a member of the library’s senior management team as its sponsor who would keep a watching brief on progress and who could be available for consultation. Documentation relating to all work packages was kept on a SharePoint-based intranet and all staff were encouraged to set up daily ‘alerts’ so that they could be kept up to date with documentation as it was developed.

**Fundraising and Donor Engagement**

For many new university library builds there will be an opportunity to engage in a fundraising exercise. The extent to which this is successful will depend in part on the overall fundraising strategy for the institution, in part on the extent of special and unique collections, and in part on the extent to which there is a public engagement remit for the project. A fundraising strategy might engage with any or all of the following: alumni, individuals, university staff, trusts, foundations, and, in the UK, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Where trusts, foundations, or the HLF are involved, and particularly where the HLF are involved, there is likely to be an ongoing requirement to deliver programmes and to report against agreed activity outcomes. Care needs to be taken in estimating visitor numbers and in profiling engagement programmes. Engaging specialists to work with the university on an audience development plan, an interpretation and engagement plan and, for some applications, in assisting with writing the application itself may increase the chances of success.

Donations at all levels need to be encouraged and donors will be keen to know how their donation will be of support. It is especially important that for a multi-million-pound project every donor needs to feel that they have made a meaningful and valued contribution. To this end, working with the university’s development office on defining opportunities for donation and in developing donor recognition schemes can greatly aid the fundraising effort. The willingness of key staff to write and to speak knowledgeably about the project and to be prepared to talk to a wide variety of groups in order to promote the project is essential for success.
Matching elements of the project with potential individual donors takes time and patience. Similarly, recognizing where a donor’s expectations might result in an unacceptable compromise in either build or operation of the library is important, but can often be resolved through discussion.

Moving In

The final ‘push’ for any new building will be the moving-in phase. This is the point where a great deal of planning comes together and it is absolutely essential that at this stage project managers are aware of all dependencies and that they have a full understanding of all the areas of flexibility within their own plans. University libraries need to be available during term time and therefore ideally a move will take place at the least busy time of year, typically during the summer months. Depending on the scale of the move it may be possible to occupy a building in stages and to transfer activities over as part of a phased process. It may be necessary to reduce the current service to a skeleton service or to close altogether during the move. Factors which can destabilize any well-laid move-in plans can include:

- Building-related delays, including weather or unforeseen construction difficulties
- A long-drawn-out tender or manufacture process which results in an essential element, e.g. shelving, being delayed. This can be avoided if tenders are completed in a timely fashion and include a guaranteed delivery date
- Access to the building: most buildings are not built to be occupied in a hurry and therefore careful phasing of all deliveries is essential in order to schedule accurately the furnishing and occupation of the new building and to minimize the queuing of deliveries
- Access through the building: the availability of lifts in a multi-storey building is essential during the occupancy project. If lifts are being commissioned at the same time as a building is being occupied then this can create bottlenecks
- Service continuity: to what degree is it planned to keep full services running during the moves? If a reduced service is on offer then has this been communicated in order to manage customer expectations? Are the staff available to deliver that service and to manage moves?
- Availability of staff to oversee packing and unpacking of collections and offices, particularly where special collections are involved
- Absence of robust planning for the move of collections, particularly where any element of cherry-picking is involved, or where any sequence re-ordering is planned. A good move consultant and a detailed plan, possibly backed up with a short test run, are essential, as is daily monitoring of the move progress against the plan.
In any building project there will be areas of work/moving which can be carried out concurrently and others which are dependent on the completion of an individual piece of work. A phased approach may be possible, particularly in a multi-storey building where, for example, contractors effectively follow one another down a building from top to bottom. This can allow for near-parallel activities and, whilst a more phased approach to furnishing and moving might be preferred, can nonetheless offer the opportunity to compress the final phase of a building project where necessary.

Above all, the key to a successful move and transfer of services is the extent to which the advance planning genuinely reflects the degree of accuracy, dependency, and flexibility of the various strands of activity.

**Key Success Factors in Aberdeen**

In summary, the success of a new library build project will depend on a number of key factors:

- A well-defined brief which has the buy-in of the academic community
- A well-chosen architect and design team which works with the university and where there is a shared vision
- A capable project team which can work holistically across the whole institution and with any externally appointed project managers
- The judicial engagement of relevant specialists to deliver component parts of the project
- The ability of the library team to engage sympathetically with the University’s development/fundraising team
- The ability of key members of the project to be able to engage with stakeholders at all levels
- The willingness of all involved to remain open to new ideas and opportunities without compromising the project
- The willingness of all involved to accept that the timetable may need to be flexible until the last possible moment
- The willingness of those who are leading the project to remain unceasingly positive about the project and to ‘know’ that it can and will be delivered.

**References**

