

NEWENGLISHDESIGN

Wi-Fi
Books
Room Hire
Computers
Art Room
Technology / Printers
Performance Space
Gallery
Study Space
Coffee
Library Shop
Beeston Heritage

IN YOUR LIBRARY

PROJECT TITLE

Beeston Library

CLIENT COMPANY

Inspire – Culture, Learning and Libraries



SUBMISSION DATE

28 November 2018

DESIGN COMPANY

Newenglish Design

For Publication



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beeston Library was a tired and dull example of a public service that was failing to address the needs of the local community. The dated and uninspiring interior made the learning environment unpleasant for both public and staff alike. We were commissioned, based on previous successes, to create an interior personality for Beeston Library that was unique, uplifting and modern, a place that the community would want to visit time and time again, that they could call their own, irrespective of age.

The interior environment and graphics were also required to help guide users intuitively around the building and allow them to find what they were looking for with minimal staff intervention. Using a simple and bright approach, we have transformed the feel and perception of the library for both users and staff. The solution has seen a positive change in use of the services, particularly in comparison to nationally declining figures in library use.

As part of the refurbishment the original 1930s entrance to the library was reinstated and new external signage was created and positioned to take full advantage of the sightlines from the two main routes, ensuring maximum visibility. Signage was bold and unique, giving a little taster of what to expect from the interior treatment.

At a time when library budgets were being hard hit, any investment needed to see positive results – and we have.

**VISITORS
INCREASED
BY
34%
TO 184,473
SEPT 17 - AUG 18**

The impact on staff has also been hugely positive, with improved morale and engagement with their working environment and the public.



**“A PLACE TO
EXPLORE YOUR
IMAGINATION
AND FALL IN
LOVE WITH
BOOKS”**

**CUSTOMER
SATISFACTION
98%**

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT BRIEF

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

- Tackle negative perceptions of libraries as being old and stuffy
- Engage with the people of Beeston
- Increase book loans
- Increase internet usage
- Increase visitor numbers
- Increase new members to the library - re-engage with reading and loans from the library
- Increase community engagement through other events and activities
- Introduce a gallery to the library
- Create a breakout area for customers to have a coffee
- Become a place that's fun
- Create a modern relevant resource for the community

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- Decreasing local authority spending on public services - limited budget
- Poor perception of libraries, questioning their relevance today
- Negative news stories around library closures

SCOPE OF THE WORK

Our task was to create an interior treatment to reflect the Inspire's vision for the library. The graphics and signage needed to inspire all ages from 0 (babies) to 90+.

Working within the confines of a 1930s and 1960s building structure with a first floor and staircase that was hidden from initial view, we needed to ensure that the flow around the whole building was clear and intuitive.

UPFRONT STRATEGIC THINKING

Understanding the local demographic was an important part of creating the right visual atmosphere, we then skillfully combining this with the aspirations of the client, whilst also working within a tight budget.

Main interior



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW CONTINUED

Interior wayfinding



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Beeston Library was struggling, with a dated persona that was leading to lack of interest and engagement with the community.

Undoubtedly a time for change, and with the budget secured, from Nottinghamshire County Council, Inspire set out to reinvent Beeston Library.

Our task was to create an interior personality for the library, with graphic interventions to walls, book cases, wayfinding signage throughout the library including meeting and activity rooms on the 1st floor.

We were asked to visually indicate that Beeston Library is a modern, relevant and inviting place for all. The library is located in the heart of this suburb of Nottingham, next to a school and a few minutes walk from a large supermarket.

Our task was to create an interior personality that was unique and felt special, a place that the community would want to visit time and time again, that they could call their own, whatever their age or background.

Signage needed to promote independent navigation around the library, making it easy to find what you're looking for.

OUR DESIGN SOLUTION PROMOTED INDEPENDENT NAVIGATION AROUND THE LIBRARY

We wanted the library to be a place of discovery and learning that is relevant to today's generation. 3D printing machines are available for all to use, a new and relevant technology that is not available elsewhere to the majority of the community.

We wanted the library to be a place for the curious of all ages, that reflected culture in its widest sense.

Childrens library



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW CONTINUED

OVERVIEW OF MARKET

At a time of budget cuts across the local authority and scrutiny of budget spending by the local community, it was important that the library was a place that was 'owned' by the community. Any large scale spend needed to be seen to be a good use of the council's strained financial resources.

The media story nationally around libraries has been very negative on the whole, stories of library closures, poor staff morale, lack of investment and libraries being seen as almost irrelevant in the age of the internet and eBooks.

KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- to challenge perceptions of libraries
- re-engage with lapsed library users
- engage with a new audiences
- engage with young people

WHAT WE NEEDED TO INTEGRATE WITHIN THE LIBRARY

- Registrars office
- Gallery
- Performance space for hire
- Meeting rooms for hire
- Art room
- Discovery room with 3D printer and digital sewing machines
- Ability to have seated events in the main library space

1ST FLOOR ACTIVITIES

The first floor is dedicated to a cultural and community venue with a performance space, art rooms and a range of meeting rooms.

THE GALLERY

The library needed to attract touring exhibitions and provide a professional space for local artists to hire - bringing high quality art to the community. A gallery space was included and needed defining visually.

We collaborated with the architect, library managers, and the supplier of the bookcases. Our job was to weave a creative theme that fulfilled both the needs of the library users and supported the day to day practicalities of the library staff.

KEY DATES

**LIBRARY RE-OPENED TO THE PUBLIC AFTER
THE REFURBISHMENT IN SEPTEMBER 2017**
DESIGN FEE £8718

PRODUCTION £24,439

Discovery room - 3D printing, digital sewing machines

**"WOW 3D PRINTING IN
THE LIBRARY, THATS
NOT WHAT I EXPECTED"**

Customer, Beeston Library



**VISITORS TO
'FUN PALACE'
INCREASED BY
OVER**

500%

FROM 900 TO 5,000

**THE NEW ART ROOM HAS
OPENED UP OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ART WORKSHOPS:
THE BIG DRAW FAMILY
WORKSHOPS**

**SOLD OUT
5 WEEKS
BEFORE
THEY WERE
HELD**

**BOOK LOANS
INCREASED
BY**

27%

**THAT'S OVER
235,000 MORE
BOOKS BEING
READ**

RESULTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The impact on the local community of the refurbishment and subsequently improved service shows in significantly increased visitor numbers, new membership and event attendance statistics.

The anecdotal customer feedback and official customer surveys are all extremely positive. The service was awarded Customer Service Excellence (the independently accredited Government Standard for UK Public Sector organisations) across the whole service since the refurbishment.

Between the reopening in August 2017 and the end of October 2018, more than 226,000 visits had been made to the transformed library. Visitors come for a variety of reasons - from borrowing a book or using a PC, to taking a course or enjoying one of the library's fun packed events. Visitors to the 'Fun Palace' event increased by over 500% compared to a normal Saturday.

The Art Room has opened up opportunities for art workshops for the community. The Big Draw workshops sold out five weeks before they were held.

Comparing figures

The following figures compare 2015/16 (last full year before refurb) and September 2017 - August 2018 (the first full year operating after reopening):

Increase in library use	+34%
Increase in visitors	+62,721
Increase new members	+42%
New members Sept to Oct 2018	485
Increase in event attendance	135%
Increase in events	37%
Room hire income	+300%

BOOK LOANS AND I.T. USE

The positive impact on book issues and public computer use (including access to internet) can be attributed to both increased numbers of people visiting the library, as well as improved graphics and signage to engage visitors and allow them to locate what they are looking for.

Increase book loans	+27%
Increase in computer/internet use in hours	+7%
Computer/internet use in hours	29,727

RESULTS – CONTINUED

135%
INCREASE IN EVENT
ATTENDANCE

ROOM HIRE
REVENUE

+300%
FROM £4800
TO £19,000

NEW MEMBERS
+42%

**BEESTON LIBRARY
WENT FROM THE
4TH BUSIEST
LIBRARY
IN THE COUNTY
TO THE 2ND
BUSIEST**

CAUSE AND EFFECT OF THE DESIGN SOLUTION

Through improved wayfinding signage and the use of self service checking in and out of books, staff were able to provide the new service offers and continue to provide excellent customer service whilst visitor numbers increased by 62,721.

The impact on the local community of the refurbishment and subsequently improved service shows in significantly increased visitor numbers up 34%, new library and Inspire membership up 42% and event attendance up 135%.

The anecdotal customer feedback and official customer surveys are all extremely positive with Beeston's overall customer satisfaction increasing from 92% in 2016 to 98% in 2018. Inspire consolidated its Customer Service Excellence award (the independently accredited Government Standard for UK Public Sector organisations) across the whole service since the refurbishment. Beeston is also a key delivery hub for Inspire Learning who achieved a GOOD Ofsted rating since the refurbishment in November 2017. Inspire Learning have increased headcount by 5 FTE to deliver the 98 courses to 511 learners at Beeston Library.

By the end of October 2018, more than 226,000 visits and almost 300,000 loans have been made to the transformed library. Visitors come for a variety of reasons – from borrowing a book or using a PC, to taking a course or enjoying one of the library's fun packed events. The new layout, meeting and performance spaces mean the library can host a variety of different events. The library now hosts family theatre, events which typically sell out, for example Gingerbread Man and Square World sold over 50 tickets to capacity and attracted 62% and 42% new visitors to the library respectively. The new art room has opened up opportunities for art workshops – the Big Draw family workshops sold out 5 weeks before they were held.

Over 5,000 people flocked to the Fun Palace in October 2017, an increase of 4,000 on average visitor figures of 900 for a typical Saturday. The library was able to host such an event with multiple activities from internal and external providers due to the flexible layout of the library floor and the variety of rooms and spaces provided by the refurbishment.

The newly created BEEI multi-purpose events space with lighting, staging and sound equipment has allowed the development of a successful adult music programme of Folk and Jazz. The venue helped attract high quality international artists, while also further developing and engaging with new cultural audiences and showcasing Beeston library as a strategic cultural hub and live music venue. From Feb-June 2018, 421 adults attended 5 monthly Jazz gigs, with three selling out.

RESULTS – CONTINUED

THE NEW DESIGN OF THE LIBRARY MAKES IT MORE VIABLE DUE TO THE SPACE AND ALSO AN ATTRACTIVE PROPOSITION!"

University of Nottingham

The NEW Beeston library has attracted an unprecedented amount of external collaborations:

- Age Friendly
- Beeston Business Network
- Broxtowe District Council
- Canalside Heritage
- Dementia Friends
- Design Thinking
- Evolution dance
- Lakeside Arts
- Let's Talk Wellbeing
- National Video Game Arcade
- Next Door Dance
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Notts County FC
- Oxjam
- Pets for Therapy
- Rainbows Hospice
- Raspberry Pioneers
- RSPB
- Sheffield University
- Society of Chief Librarians
- Tiny Talk
- University of Nottingham

CAUSE AND EFFECT OF THE DESIGN SOLUTION

The new style café area at Beeston Library was an ideal area to work with Age Friendly Nottinghamshire and bring 'Time to Talk Days' to the library. The café area design being light, spacious, relaxing and communal allowed Age Friendly Nottinghamshire to hold open to all 'Time to Talk' days to break down the barriers to loneliness, isolation and mental health stigma.

The Gallery and Art Room led to a collaboration with Lakeside Arts at the University of Nottingham. They secured a joint GftA grant from Arts Council England for the Fabricating Spaces project working with 2 local artists to create an exhibition in Beeston. All groups worked in both venues sharing audiences, raising the profile of Beeston Library Gallery and making new connections.

DESIGN IMPACT ON STAFF

Before the refurbishment, library staff were constantly dealing with customer complaints and comments about the state of the building infrastructure (ie. roof leaks, lack of fresh air, poor lighting) and on its appearance (i.e. dull interior, very 1970s style, dark and uninspiring).

Since the refurbishment these comments were almost completely eradicated, having a dramatic impact on staff morale overall. It is also apparent that staff have become more engaged with their work environment and alongside the community. They value it as their space and are very proud of it.

Staff also find the library a safer place to work due to the layout of the space and increase in how bright and welcoming the library is as a whole. Although there were staff fears that the graphics especially may be vandalised, this was completely unfounded and the library still looks almost new 15 months since reopening, showing that we produced a place people can be proud of and want to look after.

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS:

The library refurbishment was well covered by the local press who attended a press preview and the official opening day. Coverage was achieved across broadcast and print media, as well as in Designing Libraries.

The library was officially opened on 9 September 2017 with an official unveiling by the Chairman of Nottinghamshire County Council. The event attracted around 3,000 visitors including invited guests, staff, stakeholders, visitors – and Robin Hood.

Beeston Library was chosen to host both the Inspire Awards and the Inspire AGM 2018, based on the nature of the space. A large floor area with capacity to hold 100+ seats and staging and screen rig was required for the Awards event. The open plan layout and portable bookshelves made this possible. BEEI meeting room was chosen for the AGM which required a large space for up to 100 guests, with access to other spaces for a performance and refreshments and the new BEEI meeting room. Beeston Library was selected to be just one of 10 libraries around the country to be photographed by the Society of Chief Librarians for their stock image library. Beeston library appears in a number of their publications.

RESEARCH REFERENCES

Where the figures came from....

All the statistics relating to Beeston library have been supplied by Inspire Culture Learning and Libraries. These have been gathered from data collected in the library. Through the electronic logging out of loans, these accurate figures can be obtained. Counters on the main entrances give a reliable visitor count.

