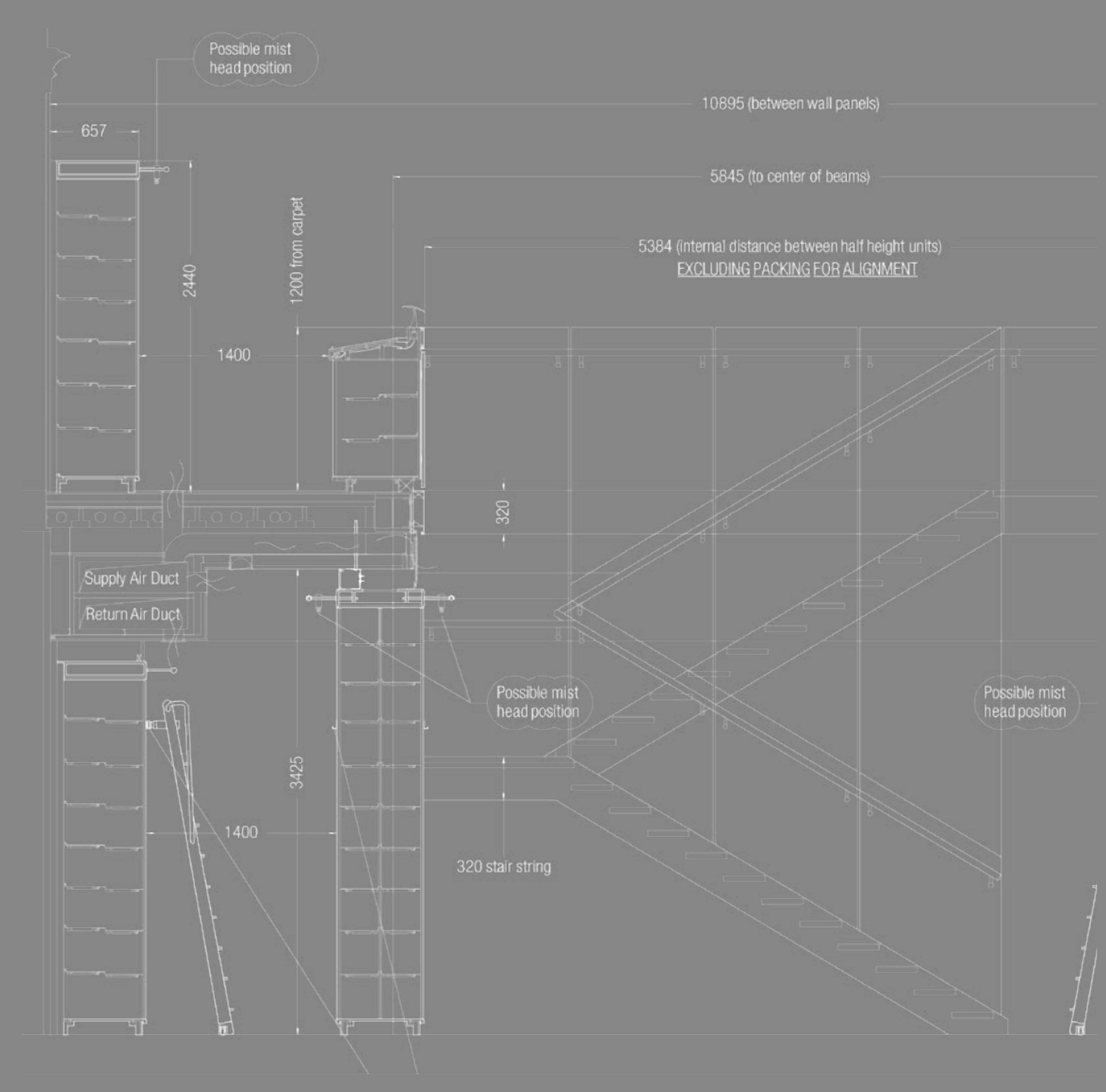


Libraries



Luke Hughes

Furniture in Architecture



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Introduction

Over the last 30 years, *Luke Hughes* has been involved with more than thirty major academic and institutional library projects across the UK, USA and Asia.

Libraries have always been more than mere repositories of books - conveying something of the patrons that commissioned them and the institutions that run them - think of the Hapsburg Library in Vienna, the Vatican Library, the Library of Congress, the British Library, Oxford's Bodleian, the Cambridge University Library, the Wren Library at Trinity College, Cambridge, the Sterling Library at Yale. The very fabric of these libraries speaks of the values of those institutions, not only to readers and users but also to occasional visitors, prospective parents, past alumni, or potential donors.

Despite all the recent changes in technology, the promise of a digitised library devoid of books has proved to be as much of a chimera as the paper-free office. Nevertheless, contemporary libraries have evolved to be more social, with more 'zoned-spaces', and they need to accommodate an increasing proportion of casual visitors, even if the need for access to on-line publications has radically altered the way libraries are now used. In another twenty years, technology will enable more changes but people will still want to sit and work comfortably in well-lit, inspiring surroundings.

Our aim, as ever, is to bring our experience of libraries old and new, with their many different architectural styles and purposes, to the task of keeping them relevant for the next 50 -100 years - or longer.

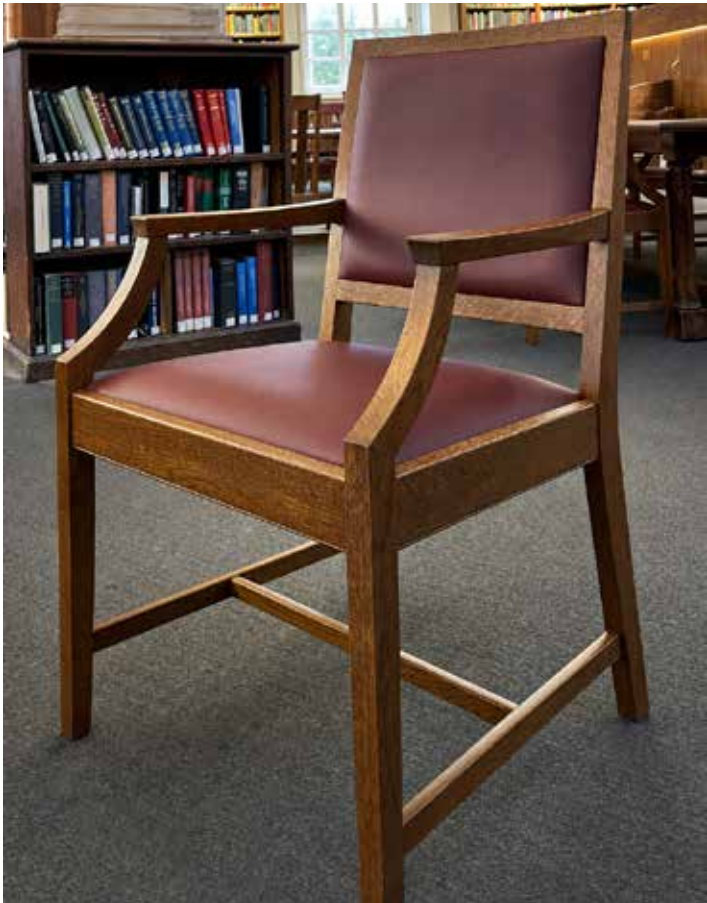
Major Academic Libraries

The Radcliffe Camera at the Bodleian Library, Oxford

The Radcliffe Camera, one of the most iconic library buildings in the world, was built in 1737-49 to designs by James Gibbs. Nearly 300 hundred years later, the combination of the circular dome, drum, urns and balustrade remains as the chief distinctive mark of the Oxford skyline.

The building originally housed the Science Library of Dr John Radcliffe, physician of the late Stuart years. In 1863, it was adopted as a reading room for the Bodleian Library.

Readers' chairs commissioned more than 100 years ago had seen better days. The design of the *Luke Hughes* 'Folio' chair was deemed perfectly suited to the architectural splendour of the interior. A set of 150 were commissioned to furnish the library for the next century.



The Folger Shakespeare Library,
Washington DC

The Folger Shakespeare Library, which houses the world’s largest Shakespeare collection, was re-opened in June 2024 after a four-year renovation headed up by the Philadelphia-based architects, Kieran Timberlake, transforming its historic home on Capitol Hill in Washington DC.

For the first time, all 82 copies of the Folger’s First Folios, the first published collection of most of Shakespeare’s plays (of which there are only 235 copies still in existence around the world), printed in 1623, are displayed together in one showcase.

The library was established by Henry and Emily Folger, Gilded Age philanthropists who spent their oil fortune obsessively collecting First Folios and rare Shakespeare materials. The original building designed by Philip Cret, was opened in 1932. Most of the Folger’s holdings - which include some 277,000 books and 60,000 manuscripts - had been housed in a vast underground storage facility. To share more of its treasured hoard with the public, the library has created new galleries, adding 12,000 feet of public space underneath the Great Hall and library.





Luke Hughes Designs are responsible for the new furniture in the re-vamped Reading Room, Council Room and other public areas.

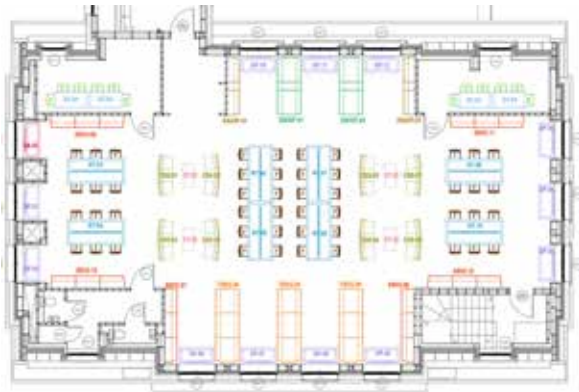
Selwyn College, Cambridge

Selwyn College, founded in 1882, has been expanding its accommodation, conference facilities and library into 'Ann's Court'. October 2021 saw the completion of that court with a new building, designed by Porpyrhios Associates, for which *Luke Hughes Designs* created the library furniture and fittings.

The aim was to create a new college library interior which can be a source of pride for the college and a delight to work in - for staff, fellowship, students and visitors - expressing something of what the college wants to project about itself for the next half-century or more. The form of the design language relates to the classical architectural form of the building.

“This is a once-in-a-generation project for Selwyn: the creation of a building that complements our history and serves the future needs of our community. It has transformed the northwest of the college – and inside there is now a library fit for the 21st century and beyond”.

Roger Mosey, Master, Selwyn College



The scope of university library furniture included the classic Folio stacking chairs for the readers and cable-managed library reading tables, carrel work-spaces, our streamlined modular bookcase system providing shelving for 30,000 books and periodicals, teaching and computer rooms,

task and ambient lighting. It also included some curved sofas that can be easily re-arranged for poetry readings, evening seminars or small chamber concerts.

Yale University
Sterling Library - L&B Reading Room

Luke Hughes has been commissioned for nearly twenty projects for Yale University.

The projects list includes the furniture for the three dining halls at the Yale NUS campus in Singapore, all the dining furniture for Franklin College at Yale and in the Sterling Library, the furniture for the circulation areas of the Bass Law Library, the Manuscripts and Archives Room, the reception furniture in the Nave entrance area and, most recently, the re-creation of the furniture for the Linonia and Brothers (L&B) Reading Room at the Sterling Library.

The Reading Room was named in honour of the 'Linonia Society' and the 'Brothers in Unity', two debating societies founded in the 18th century that built substantial collections containing modern literature in an era when Yale did not offer English as a field of study. After the Sterling Library opened in 1931, those collections were donated to the new library.

The renovation project, led by Apicella & Bunton Architects, was completed in April 2024 and has returned the 90-year infrastructure to its original splendour while also adding all the conveniences of 21st century services.

Luke Hughes has designed and supplied most of the furniture, including all the readers' tables (now suitable for modern connectivity and wheel-chair accessibility), the 'Folio' readers' chairs, the deep upholstered leather armchairs and the furniture for the conference room and Librarian's office.



Georgetown University
The Lauinger Memorial Library

A recent *Luke Hughes* library furniture project has been the design and supply of the new reading tables and library lights for the Pierce Reading Room in the Lauinger Library at Georgetown University (in Washington DC).

The Reading Room now includes a new Digital Lab with a large format wall for interactive learning and special events and has proved outstandingly popular with the students.

Luke Hughes was commissioned to design and make the readers' tables and library lights (in stainless steel, linoleum and walnut), incorporating all the modern requirements of power and data that are now considered essential in modern library environments.



Built-in connectivity is crucial for readers' tables.



Keystone Academy, Beijing

Keystone Academy is a Chinese private school in Beijing, founded in 2014. This world school's three central keystones are, bilingual immersion in Chinese and English; building character and community throughout a residential setting; and promoting Chinese culture and identity in a world context.

Classrooms, offices and learning environments at Keystone are designed with students and teachers in mind. High ceilings, large windows, and intelligent layouts make for inviting spaces that facilitate student learning at every turn.

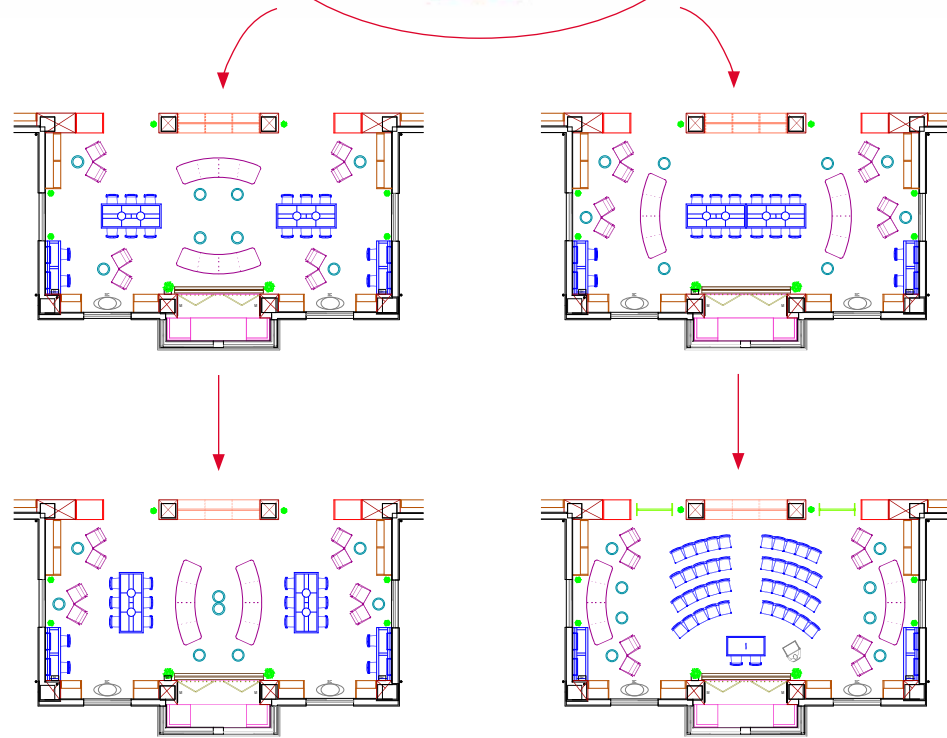
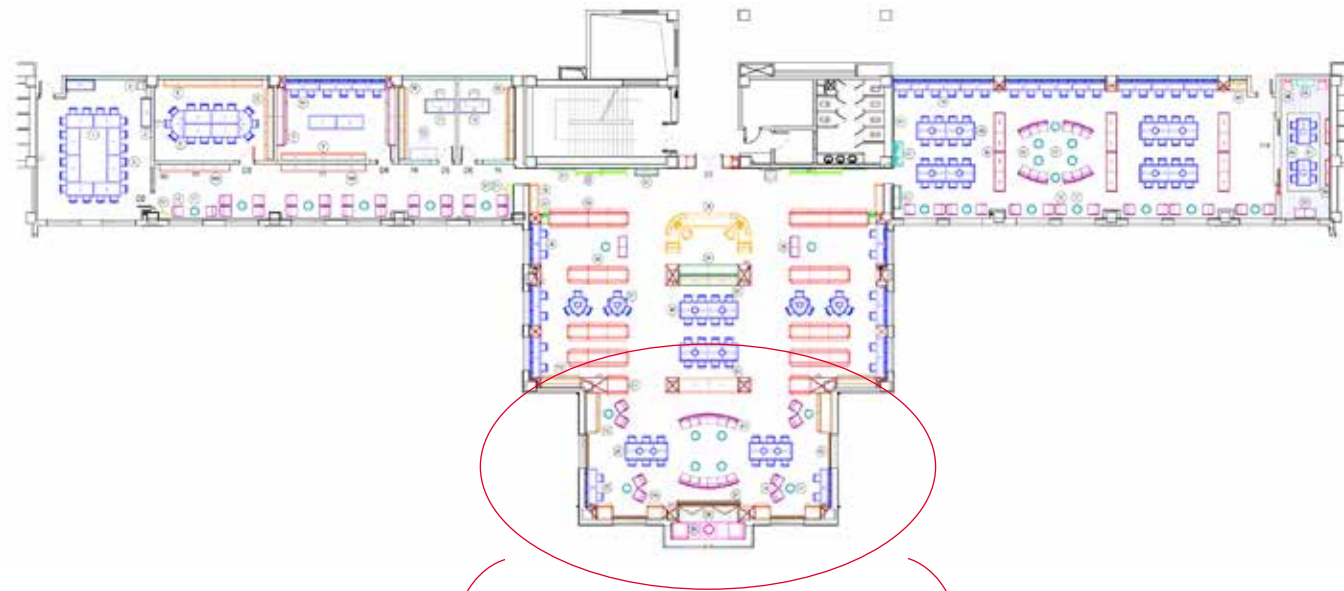
Luke Hughes was commissioned to create a library space that blended eastern and western aesthetics and sensibilities with a reflection of the 21st century - especially relevant in a digital world dominated by the world-wide web. Additionally, the library aims to convey the values of European and US university libraries as they have evolved over the last 1000 years whilst still projecting the ethos of Keystone Academy as a Chinese institution with an international flavour. The result is simple, understated and elegant.

With the visionary founding principal Malcolm McKenzie, the *Luke Hughes* team successfully helped to shape the interiors to support a new educational paradigm at the school.

"We commit to and value student learning that takes place independently and the library is a case in point where our students can explore areas of interest, make connections and enjoy unexpected discovery. Luke Hughes has turned our vision into a beautifully conceived, versatile, studious and stimulating environment."

Malcolm McKenzie, Founding Principal, Keystone Academy

Left: Keystone Academy Library, Beijing.



■ Tables ■ Chairs ■ Sofas ■ Bookshelves



This 820 m² library consists of a central circulation area which contains a quiet study wing, a group study wing, teaching rooms, the librarian's office and the 'Scholars' Room' which contains rare and historic books.

Flexible furniture layouts are used throughout, including the main library space which can transform to accommodate for various uses including lectures, poetry readings and music concerts.



"From the start, we wanted to make the library a place the students want to go, where it's cool to be seen; conducive to work, easy to gain on-line access but also somewhere to browse, ponder, graze, stumble on the unexpected ..."

Luke Hughes, Founder and Managing Director,
Luke Hughes



"We've consciously taken some of the furniture forms illustrated in silk paintings from the Ming and Song dynasties and given them a contemporary twist."

Luke Hughes

"Places where the qi (energy) not only draws you in but also speaks of other eras (and values) are so rare. The Jin-dynasty poet, Tao Yuanming, wrote in 'The Peach Blossom Land' about a shaman who stumbled on a magical village where, on entering, visitors lose their sense of time and forget to leave. That is what the library feels like."

Song Jingming,
Director of Libraries, Keystone Academy

City of London School

The historic City of London School sits in an enviable position on the banks of the River Thames, alongside some of London’s landmarks, including St Paul’s Cathedral, the Millennium Bridge, The Shard and Tate Modern.

Luke Hughes were given the challenge of transforming the well-used but poorly organised student library. Design objectives included making the library brighter and more comfortable for study, research and recreational reading, as well as offering more flexibility in the library’s teaching spaces. The refurbishment offered the opportunity to open up some of the astonishing vistas across the Thames towards the iconic surrounding landmarks.

Despite being located on the busiest corridor in the school, the library space was lost behind partition walls and unwelcoming fire doors. Visitors or even students could easily walk past without realising such a valuable resource was so close.

In order to open up the space, the partition wall was replaced with bespoke glass display cases, seamlessly allowing views into and through the library. The display cases now showcase school archive material and student artworks, and bring striking views of the Thames deep into the school.



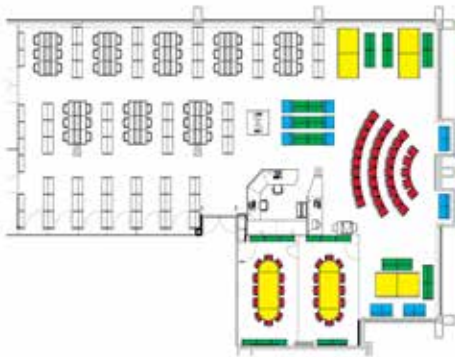
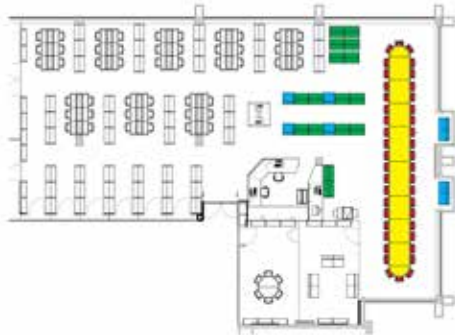
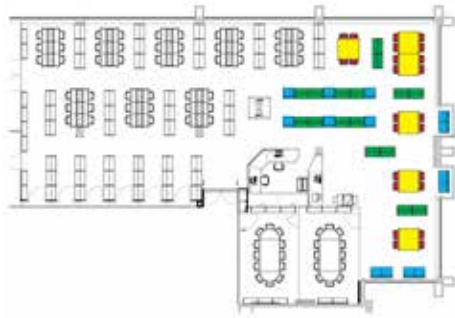
Letting in the light

Within the library, the main reading areas had suffered from excessive solar gain, with the majority of the furniture positioned along the large, south-facing windows. Furthermore, the stunning views from the windows were obscured by excessive clutter, creating dull spaces deeper within the library.

By positioning the main body of working desks and bookshelves further into the library space, students are sheltered from uncomfortable heat and glare. This created space by the windows for walkways and seating areas, allowing students and staff to enjoy the cityscape.

Flexible solutions

Flexible furniture maximises the use of valuable space within the library. Different areas can now be reconfigured for academic or social use, meetings, informal lectures or talks and even formal dining, all with the backdrop of the Thames and London's skyline.



Tables Chairs Bookshelves Sofas



“I will miss our creative partnership! It has delivered something much better than I could ever have imagined, and that is down to your ability to translate ideas into reality. The library is fantastic - Thank you!”

Sarah Fletcher, Principal, The City of London School



Institutional libraries

The UK Supreme Court was created in 2009 and is now housed in a flamboyant Edwardian architectural curiosity, the former Middlesex Guildhall in Parliament Square, sitting directly opposite the Houses of Parliament in London.

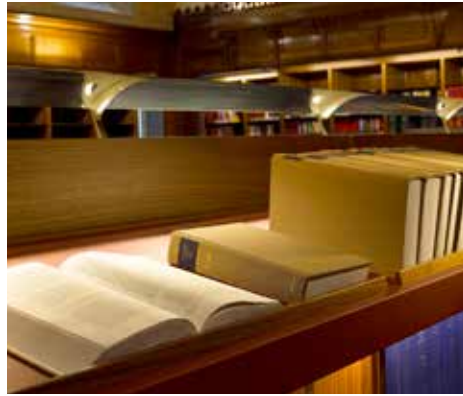
An earlier courtroom in the former criminal court led down to prisoners’ cells but has found new use as the symbolic heart of the building: the library. The floor was removed to create a dramatic triple-height space. Great care was taken to preserve the best of the architectural features; the library shelving was constructed without backs to allow the carved panelling to be seen through the new bookcases. Indeed, the design of the bookcases set out to achieve a modern look with a genuine sympathy for the original interior, even integrating the sprinkler system into the lighting fittings. The mid-height shelving around the central void was panelled in walnut, with carved lettering presenting uplifting epigrams in a truly artistic way.

“the project demonstrates that with specialist expertise, skill and flair even the most challenging historic buildings can be adapted to new uses without sacrificing their fundamental significance and integrity”

Philip Davies, Senior Director at English Heritage



UK Supreme Court Library

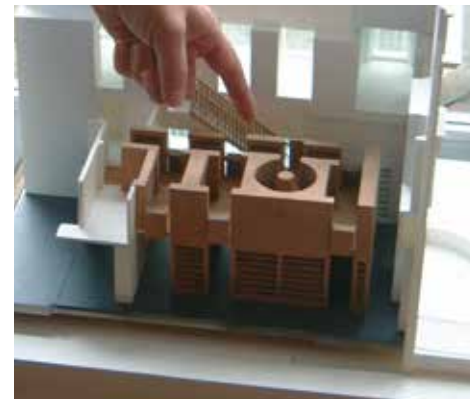


Original architect: James Gibson (1912)
Refurbishment architect: Feilden & Mawson
Lettering: Richard Kindersley





Scottish Supreme Court, Edinburgh
Architects: LDN



The Supreme Court Library in Edinburgh, completed in 2004, was another award-winning project, for which the particular challenge was to insert the whole library structure within the historic walls of the former Scottish Parliament building. Our role was to work with the architects, LDN, to design and manufacture the structure, furniture and all the library light fittings.

“A stunning piece of work carried out with intelligent design within an extremely difficult space ... clean, square lines are intended to make the library look as though it has been sculpted out of a single block of American cherry. This effect has been achieved with truly immaculate detailing...”

Judges’ report from The Carpenters’ Company Wood Awards, 2004

Other school libraries

The refurbishment of the Cripps Library at Oundle School dramatically increased the shelf space and numbers of readers’ seats, upgraded the heating and lighting, facilitated the retrieval of periodicals, and provided a dedicated ‘Rare Books Room’, a teaching room and a flexible conference area.

In addition, provision was made for many more temporary exhibitions from the school’s archive and historic collection.

All of this was achieved without intervention to the fabric of the building, merely by intelligent design of the furnishings and care in the coordination of the finishes.

“Thank you so much for your excellent design and development work ... it all looks fantastic and, more importantly, it really feels like a place where people will want to work – which is something we really approve of at Oundle”

Charles Bush, Headmaster



After

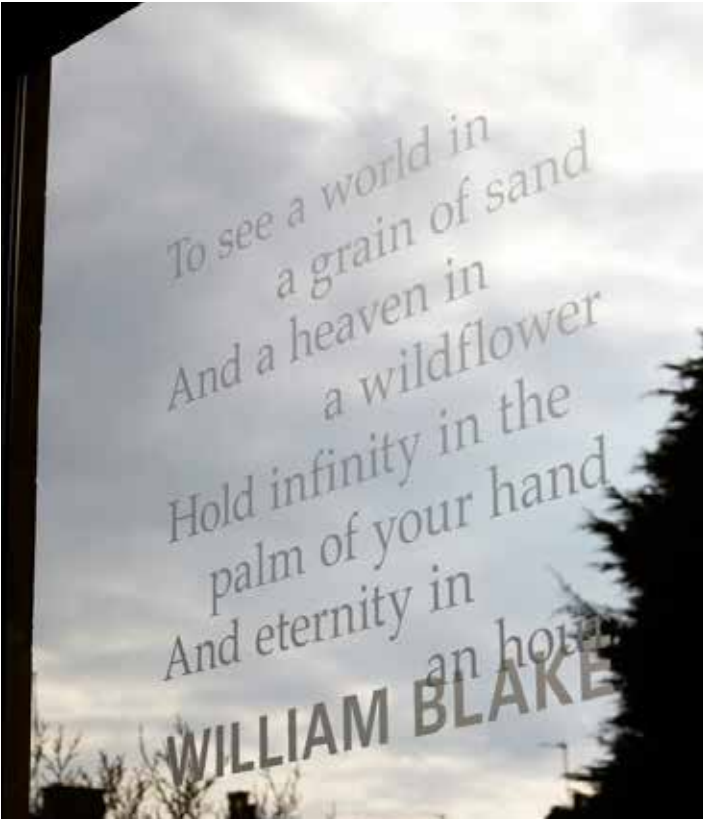


Before



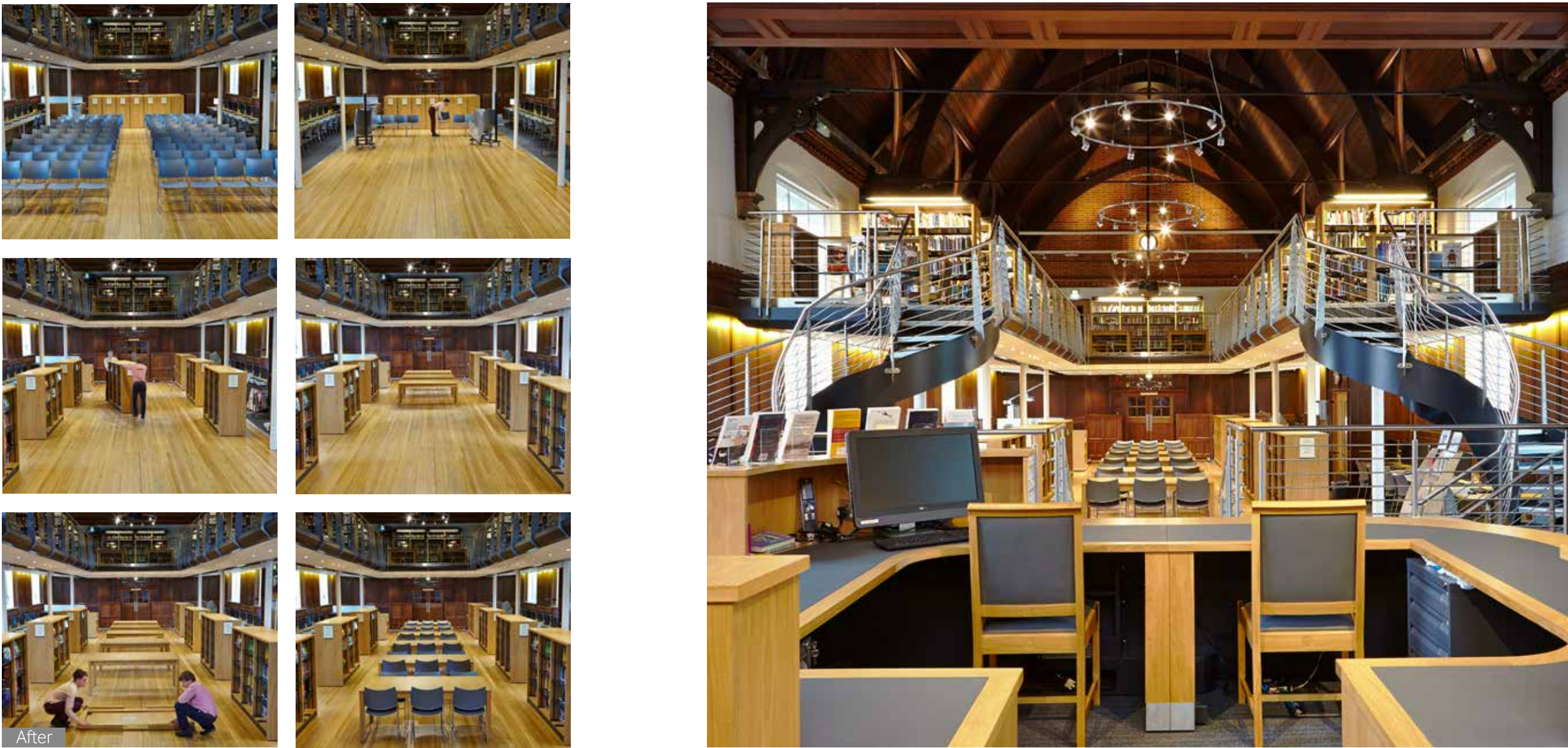
“Even the pupils say, ‘it looks much more like a proper library’; they think it is very sophisticated and walk around in awe. It takes a lot to impress a teenager.”

Leigh Giurlando, Librarian



As it headed into its 450th year, Highgate School sought to renovate the former Victorian speech hall and convert it into a new library named after a former pupil, the historian Sir Martin Gilbert.

Luke Hughes was commissioned to design and provide all the lighting and library furnishings and these now allow for the space to be swiftly transformed to suit many uses, including independent study, group learning as well as the original purpose of the building, public lectures.



Highgate School; original architect: Frederick Pepys Cockerell (1865)



Libraries in other buildings of architectural distinction

From the Neo-Classical to the Gothic Revival, from the Modernist to the Medieval, there can be, neither for us nor our clients, anything like a 'standard solution'.

In some respects, we consider the building to be just as much a client as the client is; it is our task to receive and refine the brief, and take all this into account.

There are, however, usually a number of generic principles, which, when sensitively assembled and combined with our tailored or bespoke solutions, create effective, long-lasting, highly practical, harmonious, and comfortable environments.

Over the last 30 years or so, Luke Hughes has developed hundreds of furniture and lighting products that have addressed these issues. If you do not find here images of what you are seeking, do please contact the design team who will immediately respond to specific enquiries.



Downing College, Cambridge
Architect: Quinlan Terry



Peterhouse, Cambridge
Architects: Freeland Rees Roberts





Keble College, Oxford
Original architect: William Butterfield (1878)



Pembroke College, Cambridge
Original architect: Alfred Waterhouse (1875)
Refurbishment architect: Freeland Rees Roberts





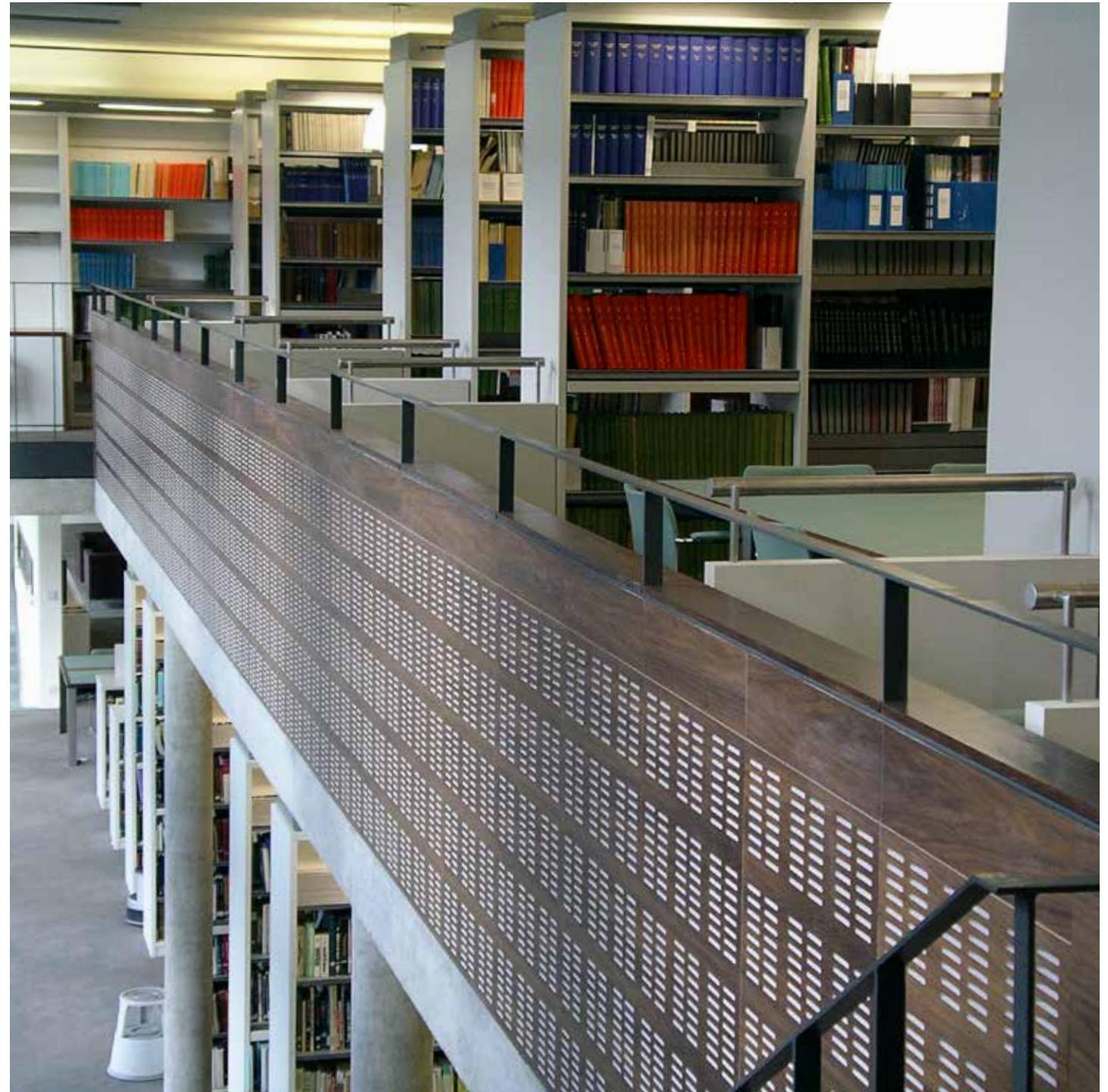
Law library, Christ Church, Oxford



Institute of Criminology, Cambridge
Architect: Allies & Morrison

The Radzinowicz Library in the Institute of Criminology in Cambridge is the premier academic criminology collection in the UK and one of the major collections in this subject in the world, serving not just the University but also the wider community of criminal justice researchers, many of whom are regular visitors.

All the furniture and lighting was designed and supplied by *Luke Hughes*, making this a good example of a contemporary library designed to a tight budget whilst still incorporating all our knowledge, thinking and experience.

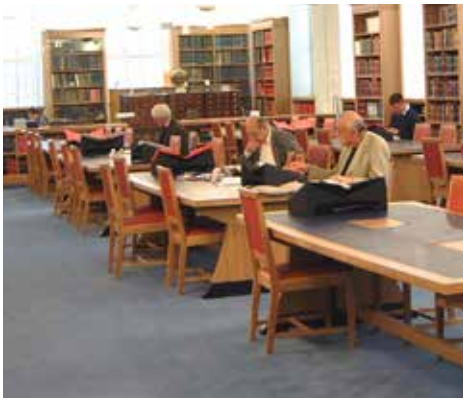


Cambridge University Library

Cambridge University Library is one of the world's great libraries and one of the six 'legal deposit' libraries in the UK (entitled to receive without charge a copy of all books, journals, printed maps and music published in Britain and Ireland). This has contributed to the library's large holdings of over seven million books and 1.5 million periodicals.

The collection is housed in a semi-classical building, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (famous for London's red telephone boxes and Battersea Power station) and built between 1931 and 1934.

The library has been extended several times, including the Aoi Pavilion (1998), which houses the Japanese and Chinese collections, and the Department of Manuscripts and University Archives (2000). *Luke Hughes* has regularly been commissioned to work within Scott's design aesthetic to produce modern, ergonomic, technically up-to-date furniture that retains the architectural integrity of the building.



Contemporary Libraries

Since moving to Covent Garden 35 years ago, *Luke Hughes* has designed and made furniture for libraries in the UK and around the world, including nearly 60 Oxbridge colleges.

This might seem an eclectic mix, but there is a common theme: in any good building, the connection between the architecture and the furniture should be seamless, creating a sense of 'rightness', functionally and aesthetically. Most buildings have neither function nor purpose without furniture: inappropriate pieces grossly undermine great architecture. The skill lies in matching the two.

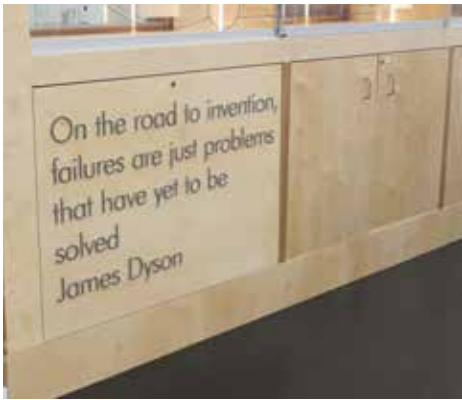
Many of the *Luke Hughes* design solutions for archive collections, libraries and information hubs have been specifically developed so that they can be readily adapted to suit the particular architectural style of the building.



Wolfson Institute Library, Cambridge



Dyson Centre, University of Cambridge
Muirhead Tower, University of Birmingham
National Maritime Museum



Readers' tables

Quite apart from the style and appearance of readers' tables, one of the constant challenges is the integration of power, data and lighting.

Solutions depend greatly on the budget available. Nevertheless, the *Luke Hughes* approach assumes that new technologies will continue to evolve and change the way we work; so, some degree of future-proofing is essential. In our view, it is vital to assume these will be replaced every ten years or so, and therefore to allow for adequate, discreet provision for cable routes and access flaps. In this way, upgrades and replacements can be easily and economically accommodated in future.



Lighting

The principal lighting challenge in libraries is providing sufficient task lighting to be able to read comfortably - either using a linear or a 'mushroom' solution - without compromising the legibility of laptop screens. Over the years, we have developed a wide variety of designs and, since the lights are made to order, finishes can be chosen to coordinate with the overall interior scheme.

Mood lighting is greatly enhanced by lighting the spines of the books and, again, we have a number of solutions for this to be achieved.

Ambient lighting around the rest of a library space needs to be addressed as well. One of our favoured solutions is to use the tops of bookcases to hide uplighters, and thus to bounce the light off the ceiling. This means that the bookcases can be delivered and installed with the wiring already incorporated - simply plug in. This needs site coordination with site-contractors and we have common-sense protocols in place to ensure this is done efficiently.



Shelving

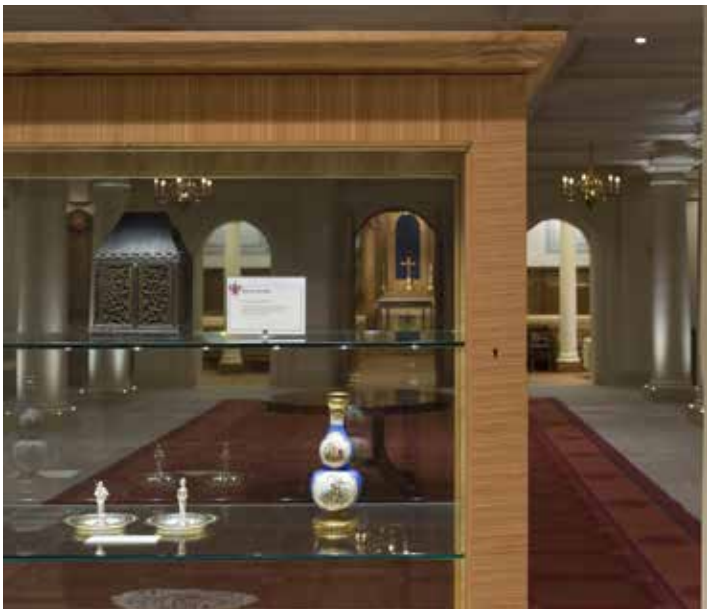
Shelving design, adjustable or not, can have a major impact not just on the architecture but also on the budget. Over the years, we have developed a series of cost-efficient well-engineered solutions that can be readily adapted within the main bookcase carcasses - regardless of style.



Display cases

Occasional display of books, archives and objects can play a major part in providing visual and intellectual interest in libraries, as well as lending tone to the nature of the building.

Security, climate control, lighting, mobility, acoustics and a 'sense of place' are some of the typical design parameters we expect to take into account.



Library chairs

Some of the chairs illustrated in this booklet have been developed specifically for the architectural styles of the buildings.

Our library chairs are designed to last, in normal use, for 50 years or more, and many have already been in use for 25-30 years.

We take care to coordinate the upholstery (preferably leather, due to its durability) to the colour scheme of the interior and even, when appropriate, to the writing surfaces of the desks.

Illustrated opposite are some of the actual models that appear in the preceding pages. Further details of our standard chairs can be found on our website or by contacting the design studio.



Butterfield
St Hugh's

Bradfield (arm)
Bradfield (side)

Downing (arm)
Downing (side)

Folio (arm)
Folio (side)



Academic clients

All Souls College, Oxford
Atlantic College
Bancroft School
Bedford School
Benenden School
Brasenose College, Oxford
Broomwood Hall School
Bryanston School
Cambridge University Arts Theatre
Cambridge University Boat Club
Cambridge University Botanic Institute
Cambridge University Library
Cambridge University Old Schools
Cambridge University Press
Cambridge University Union Society
Campion Hall, Oxford
Charterhouse School
Christ Church, Oxford
Christ College, Cambridge
Churchill College, Cambridge
Clare College, Cambridge
College of Law
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
Corpus Christi College, Oxford
Cranleigh School
Darwin College, Cambridge
Downing College, Cambridge
Duke University, USA
Emmanuel College, Cambridge
Epsom College
Eton College
Georgetown University, USA
Giggleswick School
Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge
Green College, Oxford
Harrow School
Harvard University, USA
Highgate School
Hughes Hall, Cambridge
Hurstpierpoint College
Institute of Criminology, Cambridge
Jesus College, Cambridge
Jesus College, Oxford
Kemble College, Oxford
Keystone Academy, Beijing
King's College, London
Lincoln College, Oxford
Liverpool Hope University
London School of Economics

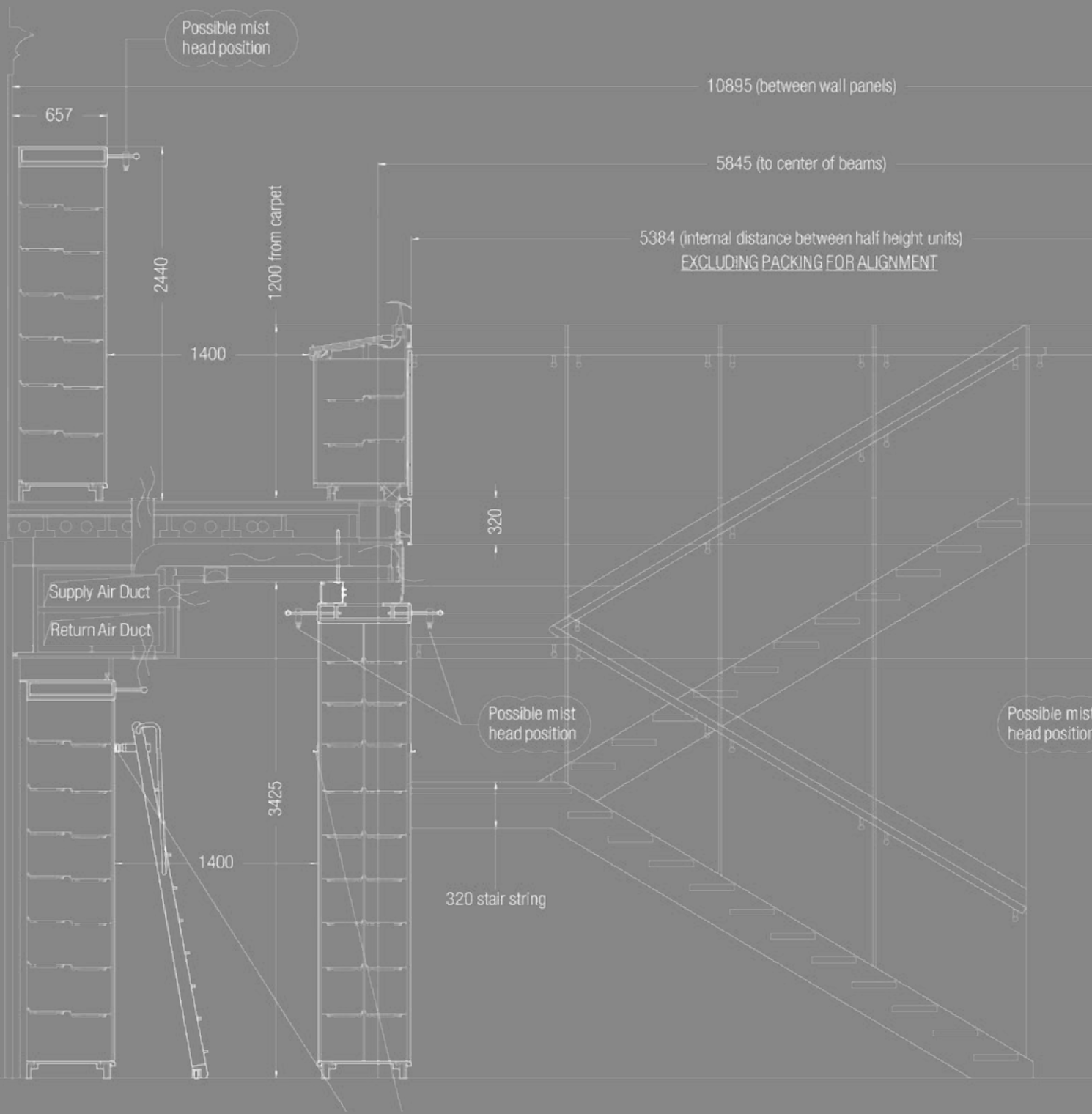
Marlborough College
Merton College, Oxford
Middlesex University
New College, Oxford
New Hall, Cambridge
Newnham College, Cambridge
Nuffield College, Oxford
Open University
Oundle School
Oxford Centre for Hebrew Studies
Pembroke College, Cambridge
Pembroke College, Oxford
Peterhouse, Cambridge
Reuben College, Oxford
Rhodes House, Oxford
Robinson College, Cambridge
Rocky Mountain School, Colorado, USA
Royal Academy of Music
Royal Grammar School, Guildford
St Anne's College, Oxford
St Antony's College, Oxford
St Benet's College, Oxford
St Catharine's, Cambridge
St Cross College, Oxford
St Edmund's College, Cambridge
St Edmund Hall, Oxford
St Hugh's College, Oxford
St John's College, Cambridge
St Paul's School
St Paul's Girls' School
St Peter's College, Oxford
Selwyn College, Cambridge
Sherborne School
Shrewsbury School
Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge
Stowe School
The King's School Canterbury
The Queen's College, Oxford
Trinity College, Cambridge
Trinity College, Oxford
Trinity Hall, Cambridge
University of Birmingham
University of Chester
University College, London
University College, Oxford
University of Dundee
University of Liverpool
University of Roehampton
University of Valparaiso (Indiana), USA
University of Virginia, USA

University of Warwick
Uppingham School
Wolfson College, Cambridge
Wolfson College, Oxford
Winchester College
Yale University, USA
Yale - National University of Singapore

Institutional clients

Art Workers Guild
Athenaeum Club
Beefsteak Club
British Academy
British Council
British Heart Foundation
British Museum
Buckingham Palace
Delfont Mackintosh Theatres Ltd
Department for Culture, Media & Sport
Eltham Palace
English Heritage
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Garrick Club
General Medical Council
Geological Society
Hampton Court Palace
Holyrood House
House of Commons
Institute for Government
Institute of Chartered Accountants
Institute of Electrical Engineers
Kew Gardens Herbarium
Kew Palace
Leighton House Museum
London Library
Mansion House, London
Middle Temple
Ministry of Defence
National Gallery, London
National Gallery of Scotland
National Maritime Museum
Oxford and Cambridge Club
The Paul Mellon Centre, London
Royal Albert Hall
Royal Collection Trust
Royal College of Paediatrics
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Royal Geographical Society
Royal Institute of British Architects

Royal Opera House
Royal Scottish Academy
Royal Society of Arts
Scottish Supreme Court
Society of Antiquaries
Somerset House
Special Air Service Regiment
Tate Modern
The Wallace Collection
Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds
Tower of London
TUC
United Kingdom Supreme Court
Victoria & Albert Museum
Windsor Castle
Worshipful Company of Butchers
Worshipful Company of Carpenters
Worshipful Company of Fishmongers
Worshipful Company of Haberdashers
Worshipful Company of Leathersellers
Worshipful Company of Mercers
Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers
Worshipful Company of Salters
Worshipful Company of Skinners



'Knowledge and experience gained over the years has informed a unique relationship between creative craftwork and high precision, industrial production.

Although designs are always respectful of context – striving to be accomplished, discreet and restrained – they are also rugged, robust, and built to last'.

Accordingly, if our advice is followed, we are pleased to offer a ten-year warranty. In fact, we have already supported many of our clients for more than forty years and consider we have a vested interest in ensuring our furniture gives decades of service.

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v- xxvi

Established in Covent
Garden since 1981

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