Editorial

by TRIX BAKKER

This year again there was a very interesting and successful seminar of the LIBER Architecture Group 'Changing Needs, Changing Libraries' which took place in Utrecht, The Netherlands from 22-24 March with a pre-seminar tour which covered libraries in Ghent as well as in Brussels, Antwerp, Leuven and Maastricht on Monday and Tuesday, March 20/21. The seminar was organised in cooperation with the Utrecht University Library and the University Library Ghent. Pictures are very essential to the papers, you'll find these at: http://www.zhbluzern.ch/LIBER-LAG/lageps.htm#utrecht as well as the abstracts and CVs of the speakers. In total there were 147 participants (librarians and architects).

Starting the seminar with all the diverse and tempting impressions of the libraries we had visited the previous two days, the programme was for me complementary to all these buildings and interiors we had seen. After the opening session followed a session on 'Changing needs, changing architecture'. Graham Bulpitt had a very interesting presentation from the point of view of higher education developments and their impact on the experience of students and researchers whose demands and requirements are changing, which has many implications for building design. The second speaker Marco De Michelis gave an impressive overview of trends in contemporary architecture. You'll not find an article of his presentation, but you can scroll through the 54 slides with all the library buildings he talked about.

The next session was on 'Planning principles'. Andrew MacDonald explored the key qualities of good learning space, whether in new or refurbished buildings. He made his presentation vary lively by showing pictures for each quality. Ideally good library space should be functional, adaptable, accessible, varied, interactive, conducive, environmentally suitable, safe and secure, efficient, suitable for information technology and have ' oomph' or 'wow', capturing the minds of users and the spirit of the university. These indicative set of qualities help to define what planners should be striving for in their new libraries and they form a set of criteria against which design solutions can be assessed. MacDonald ended by saying: "… it is reassuring for all those involved in the planning process that successful new libraries continue to provide the physical 'place' and to encourage an even greater use of both traditional and virtual services, often stimulating a two- or threefold increase in demand."

Tina Hohmann illustrated her presentation about 'New aspects of library design' by recently constructed libraries, such as the Dresden and Göttingen State- and University Library, the Seattle Public Library and the Idea Store, Whitechapel, in London. These libraries offer their visitors access to information, guidance (information skills), possibility for communication, working environment, and an inspiring atmosphere. Their design is based on the following main principles: access and orientation, formal and informal communication, comfort, and sustainability.

The second day had two sessions on 'Refurbished buildings'. René Strehler gave a presentation on the new Law Library of the University of Zurich, which was integrated in the courtyard of the Law Institute, and was opened to the public in 2004. The library was a project of the engineer and architect Santiago Calatrava. It has a glass cupola above the old courtyard and a rear flat roof where the administration is located. Due to all the glass on the roof some very efficient ecological and energy saving measures were taken. The second part of his article is written as a commentary on the slides that will lead you through this beautiful library.

Sylvia van Peteghem's presentation was more a story than a historical report on the planned restoration of Henry van de Velde's famous book tower of the University Library Ghent, which is now a fact. The book tower was designated a protected monument in 1992 but was not treated as protected heritage since then. The book tower was recognized as unique in international architectural standards, authentic but worn-out. In 2003 a study was made by order of a private person about what had to be restored and how much it would cost. The estimated costs are 41 million euro. The publication of this study at the end of 2003 was the start of an active network with newspapers involved, a competition ' Branding the Book tower' – won by architecture students who wrote a children's book that tells the story of a very unhappy Book tower -, a special Leonidas chocolate gift box with the book tower on it, etc. In October 2005 the board of directors of the university adopted the tower project and on the 17th July 2006 an open call for a multidisciplinary design team that will perform a solid and lasting renovation in cooperation with the university was published.

Catherine Tresson had a very detailed presentation of the transformation of the former industrial mills, the Grands Moulins de Paris, on the left bank of the Seine into a library that is functional and adapted to its purposes. The library worked in close collaboration with the architect Rudy Ricciotti from the earliest sketches onwards. The characteristics of the building profoundly influenced the programme that had to be adjusted, and also affected other aspects, including the arrangement and features of the furnishings as well as the building's system of signs. Work began in 2004 and the library is scheduled to open its doors at the beginning of 2007.Alison Wilson presented 4 projects of small Cambridge college libraries (Pembroke, Peterhouse, Corpus Christi and Newnham), serving between 300 and 600 readers, with a stock of 30,000 to 100,000 books. These colleges had opted for refurbishment and extension of existing libraries. For architects challenges were the sensitive contexts, restrictions on changes to listed buildings, confined sites, and the limited space available. Pembroke has as result of this project, completed in 2002, more than doubled the number of reader places and gained shelving for an extra 15,000 books, as well as a much-improved environment for teaching and learning. At Peterhouse the storeroom was transformed into a library extension with extra shelves for an extra 24,00 books, 19 reader places and 7 PCs. Corpus Christi is moving its student library to a Victorian building which has been internally redesigned by Wright + Wright. The yard will be turned into a small court leading to the library. The new library, named the Taylor Library, will open in 2007. It will have three floors with a void on two sides to accommodate 60,000 books and 100 study places. At Newnham, one of the larger college libraries in the University, with a collection of over 85,000 books, an extension added in 1962 was demolished and a new extension was built by the architects John Miller + Partners. For the collections there is extra space for another 30,000 books, and 60 extra reader spaces have been provided, making a total of 110. The building opened in 2005 and has received the David Urwin Design Award and a Civic Trust commendation.

The third and last day began with a session on 'New libraries'. Andreas Degkwitz had a very colourful presentation about the Information, Communication and Media Center (ICMC/IKMZ) of the Brandenburg Technical University of Cottbus designed by the Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron in 2001 and opened in November 2004. In this curved and 32 meter high building - covered by a double shell, glass façade embossed with stylised graffiti - the library and the multimedia center are housed. In the building you'll see a spiral staircase extending from the 1st to the 6th floor, and a striking colour scheme (in vibrant yellow, green, magenta, red, and blue) for parts of the floor covering, columns and walls. The individual specialized libraries are distributed over the floors with open stacks. Within the ground plan none of the floor plans are the same and there are only a few truly separate areas. This allows for many work and communication forms for single users and user groups. Degkwitz concluded by saying: "The juxtaposition of 'living' spaces, good technological equipment and integrated services creates a sympathetic atmosphere and a culture of new thinking, which encourages and inspires everyone who is in touch with it." And so be it …

Next there was a session on 'Processes of Architecture competition: The Lausanne example' (in behalf of a Learning Center of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne) with one presentation by 4 speakers. The presentation described the process and steps towards the actual realisation of the Learning Center as a place for living and studying, mainly for students but also researchers and the general public: from the programme definition to the collaboration with the Japanese architecting firm Sanaa (Tokyo) which won the project competition. The competition was open to architects worldwide and advertised in specialised publications. From 189 applications from 23 countries and 5 continents, the Experts Committee selected 12 groups, based on their international reputation and experience in library projects and developments to participate in an architectural competition with presentation of projects. The selection process by the Experts Committee took place in November 2004. In December Sanaa turned out to be the winner. Since then Sanaa has been adapting the pilot project. In April 2006 a call for tenders for Total Service Contractor Services has been launched. The selected company, hand-in-hand with the architects and engineers, and supervised by the Building Commission, will be commissioned with the final construction design project, starting October 2006. The administrative authorisations should be obtained by the end of this year, and construction works are scheduled for 2007-2008. Apart from this presentation Marie-Françoise Bisbrouck presented her methodology for the project study, including a description of how the jury made its choice for the prize-winning project by Sanaa, "an eminently 'poetic' work. … In short, quite a 'Zen' project!"

The last session was on 'Campus development'. Only 1 of the 3 papers were sent in, but don't miss the presentations of François Montarras (campus development of the University Denis Diderot - Paris VII) and Art Zaaijer (campus development of the Uithof, Utrecht University) which are both quite a tour around the campuses. Marta Viragos presented the campus solution for the Debrecen University Libraries in Hungary. The University of Debrecen, established on January 2000, is one of the largest universities in Hungary with 15 faculties covering a wide range of disciplines, 1700 teaching/research staff and 27,000 students. In January 2001 the University Library became a University and National Library. Near the main campus are 6 member libraries of the library organization. Since 2002 there are a new Social Science Library and a Life Science Library built on the main campus.

The last 2 articles of this issue are included for special reasons. The article of Anne Muller and Yola de Lusenet was sent on account of a workshop of TAPE (Training for Audiovisual Preservation in Europe) in Amsterdam in April 2006. Besides a short reflection on this workshop it offers an overall description about the 3-year project TAPE and

where it aims at: to contribute to preservation of the audiovisual heritage in Europe through raising awareness and training by expert meetings, research, publications and workshops.

Ulrich Niederer's article is written in honour of Elmar Mittler who stepped down as chair of the LIBER Architecture Group at the end of the seminar. Elmar has put a lot of energy in making these seminars more and more successful, and bringing librarians and architects together to build inspiring and multifunctional libraries.

The next issue will cover the 34th LIBER Annual General Conference 'Turning the library inside out' which took place at the Uppsala University Library, Sweden, from 4-8 July, 2006.

WEB SITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

LIBER Architecture Group. http://www.zhbluzern.ch/LIBER-LAG/default.htm

TAPE - Training for Audiovisual Preservation in Europe. http://www.tape-online.net/

University Library Ghent. http://www.lib.ugent.be/index_en.html

Utrecht University Library. http://www.library.uu.nl/library/12483main.html