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Library Building: My Experience

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Abstract

This opinion paper is the product of narrating the practical experiences of the author during the construction of Oduduwa University library complex. In the study, who should be on the planning team, visitation of other libraries to see their brief and architectural design before the University librarian write the Architectural brief was emphasized. Other areas that the work looked into included deriving estimation for projected years, points that should be kept in mind in planning the building, Choosing Suitable Site, need for the building to be tropical architecture, space allocated within the new library building, commissioning and problems encountered. The paper concludes that the National University's Commission and Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria should ensure that professionally prepared standards are made available for library buildings, to reduce the risk of having standards made for them by people and Librarians should resist any attempt for the funds budgeted for the project to be diverted, misused or stolen. The study recommends that during the library projects the librarian should ensure that independent experts unknown to the contractors, staff, and other professionals on the planning team be invited at various stages of the project for peer review. This is important since the librarian is not an Architect, Civil or electrical engineer as it is not wise to blindly trust professional advice, at times their advice could be coloured with personal and selfish interest.

Keyword: University Library building; Tropical Architecture; Architect's brief; Planning for library building; library building design-Nigeria

Introduction

This paper is based on my experience in planning a new library building at Oduduwa University, Ipetumodu, Osun State, Nigeria. I make no claim that it is comprehensive but it will contribute its quarter to the growing body of literature on library building and it will be of immense assistance to those planning to or currently engage in the new library building. In institutions of learning, the library remains the heart of such a learning centre. The administrators, dons, and dunces put together can never be more knowledgeable than the library. Libraries are beyond walls and shelves and the books that stand in rows. All academic activities orbit around the resources that are collected by the University library for all academic and administrative endeavours within the academia. A University is as good as its Library, the library is the largest single academic resource of a university, it's therefore centrally located and its building is easy to identify; no wonder, then that the Library is always referred to as:

- * The nerve centre of the academic life of the university.
- * The pivot on which all academic activities in any educational institution revolves
- * The fulcrum of any true university.
- * The independent learner's powerhouse
- * Hub of a functional education system
- * The treasure trove of knowledge and information
- * The knowledge hub of the universe. (Ekouye, 2007)

Building a library is not petty. It consumes time effort and huge funds to get off the ground, can elicit momentous and scratchy organizational modifications, and arrive with an enduring maintenance price. No one desires to put in the time, effort, and capital only to fail. (Curtis, 2020). Library building house library staff, readers, information resources, and equipment, each of these has a distinct need which the building must meet. The building on the other hand is expected to have a useful life span of about one hundred years or more and a projected capacity for another twenty-five years. This means that a mistake of a wrong location of toilet or walls, of poor ventilation and vulnerable staircase and exits, etc will remain with the library staff and readers for many years to

come. No matter how adequate the planning is, there will be some defects. The best that the most efficient planner or team can do is to reduce to the barest minimum. The construction of an academic library buildings is expensive and complicated. It runs through the whole gamut of obtaining approval, in principle, from the authorities to erect a new building through the planning process and the presentation of the architect's brief, to the management before the final occupation of the building. (Ifidon, 1999)

Brief literature review on Library Building

ALA, (2020) opined that building new libraries can be an intimidating mission, and which librarians do not embark on regularly. Awala-Ale (2013) opined that library building has changed over centuries in response to five major influences: the form in which information is recorded, the nature of library use and readership, technological development in both architecture and librarianship, the availability of funds and recognition of traditional architecture as part of the cultural heritage. Amosu(1974), Nwamefor (1974), Akhdime(1979) Nwoye (1981) ,Nwafor (1987), Oni- orisan(1987), Nwali (1990), in their various contributions to the professional literature on library planning and architecture described their experiences in planning their library buildings and made useful suggestions on the pitfall to avoid when carrying out such an exercise. The specific literature on university library buildings in Nigeria describes the “problems of constructing”, De Pina, (1971);“ Planning of a New Library” Amosu, (1974); Problem of Short- Sighted Planning of a Nigerian University Library Buildings” Nwamefor, (1975) ; Historical Development of University Library Buildings Adeyemi, (1980); The Concepts of Modular versus .Fixed function Building” Oni-Orisan, (1980); Problem Associated with Air Conditioning and Buildings in the Tropics” Egbor, (1980); the concept of the Spine Library” Nwafor, (1981); Architectural layout of university library Buildings”, Zeine,(1985); “Designing out Noise in Library Buildings” Nilsonand Lembal, (1985) Harvard- Williams and Jago, (1987) and Ozowa, (1996); “The designing of university library buildings a case study of one Federal and State-owned Universities “ Agboola, (1993); “ A critical appraisal of two brand new and temporary adapted university and college library buildings in Ogun state” Agboola, (1999); University library buildings in the tropics: The case of Nigeria. A research report” Ifidon, (1987); Management of information institution in a depressed economy: “Appraisal of

University Library Building in Nigeria”Awala – Ale,(2006). A significant characteristic feature of these literature is that they portray just how much interest had been generated on university library buildings and services. (Awala-Ale , 2013)

Mazikana (1993) states that in Africa several buildings housing library and archival resources are unsuitable, as they were built at a time preservation and conservation was not an important matter. This view is in line with Akussah (1991) (cited in Popoola (2003) who suggests that Africa has not been able to train students sufficiently in the area of designing new buildings, a situation which has led to the quandary of unsuitable library buildings. Ifidon(1999) observe the relationship between library building and material life span thus:

“The starting point in developing a strategy to maintain material that is affected by its surroundings is to ensure that the building in which it is housed meets the basic requirements for the storage of library and archive materials. It may seem obvious but this consideration is often low on the agenda. The building must be situated in an area that is identified as secure –(ie) not close to any military installations or the petrochemical industry. It must be situated well away from sources of water, especially rivers and lakes. All vegetation nearby must be removed and a clear perimeter area established around the building. Ideally, there will be no basement or sub-level storage and then (again, ideally) single-storey building will be above literal ground in case of local flooding. The building must have one identified entrance (for both in and out) and all windows must be protected against intruders - this must also include controlling access by rodents and insects. A fine metal wire mesh over the openings will offer some protection. The provision of blinds to exclude direct sunlight is recommended. All doors and other direct means of access must have good seals when closed. There must be ready availability of basic fire-fighting equipment and some form of out-of house inspections. Lighting should be fluorescent and able to be controlled aisle by aisle. Other electrical sockets should be minimal and placed for the ease of cleaning staff. In most cases, it will not be possible to install any air-conditioning systems because of set-up, running and maintenance costs. The use of windows to increase ventilation will need to be considered against the risks. Precautionary measures, as mentioned above, will reduce the overall risk, but regular monitoring by appropriate staff is essential. Any other option to reduce high humidity and temperature levels should be investigated. It is suggested that the fabric of the building may provide some source of control”

Alebgeleye (2003) opined that natural or man-made disaster put library building and collections in danger the man-made reasons may vary from the poor design and quality of the buildings Adedibu et al (2009) stated that library managers should search for the possibility of providing the library buildings with smoke detectors, fire alarms and fire pulls. Issah et al (2012) call for fire extinguishers in strategic spots in the library, as well as habitual maintenance of drainage, and plumbing system and there should be a regular building inspection to remedy the factors which constitute hazards to the library buildings. Lyall, (1993) calls for a disaster plan that

covers library buildings and regular preventive maintenance of library buildings. Ifidon (1999) listed the standard guide for university library as follows:

- a) Seating provision for 25% of the university community;
- b) 10% of the seating provision of (a) above for external users;
- c) Seating provision for 100% of senior and junior library staff members
- d) Space provision for 100% of the book stock;
- e) The useable area is derived from an application of the following formulae:
 - i 2.5m² per undergraduate student user; in junior library staff and external user;
 - ii 7.5m² for each postgraduate student;
 - iii 10m² for each senior staff member – whether library staff or teaching staff;
 - iv 0.52 per reader for 25% of the total potential readers in respect of items of library equipment;
 - v An addition of 40% of the useable area will give the gross area
 - vi An idea of the cost factor can be given at the appropriate foreign exchange market rate per square metre (m²).

My experience

Determining Who Should Be On The Library Committee Team For The Central Library Project?

Ifidon (1987) had earlier pointed out that ideally planning for a new library should begin well in advance before the building commences, the planning team comprises the University Librarian, other librarians, Director of works & physical planning unit, Deputy vice-chancellor (Academic), the Bursar, the Architect, Engineers (Civil, Electrical & Mechanical), Surveyors (land & Quantity), Town Planner and User Group. The planning team embarks on a visitation of other libraries and even sees their brief and architectural design before

the University librarian writes the Architectural brief. In our situation, it was observed that the afore-stated list of who should be on the team by the learned professor of library Science was faultless hence was adopted. Except that other librarians, Architects, experienced professors, and specialized groups from other institutions (Universities) were invited from time to time at different stages of the projects for peer review. This approach was indeed priceless and invaluable to the success of the project.

Information Gathering

Members of the planning team embarked on a visitation of other libraries and even to see their brief and architectural design before the University librarian wrote the Architectural brief but the adopted design came from the United States, it was presented by management: the planning team had to ensure that only the aesthesis was adopted but the space provision was entering what was designed by the architects using the architecture brief. However, the planning team ensured the structure is tropical architecture

Preparation of Our Architect's Brief

An architect's brief referred to as a written building programme, is essentially the university librarian's statement of requirement which is necessary to carry out the university's educational functions. It is a guidepost to the architect and the other members of the planning team, who are laymen in librarianship. The aims are to make members of the team gain a deeper insight into the complexities of building, planning to have ideal about the cost factor ,be able to evaluate better the needs of the library to University Educational objectives, and help the University Librarian reduce his constraints thereby speeding up the construction of the building.

In our case, regular meetings were called between the librarian and other specialized members of the project team, at other times a joint meeting were called to enable the University librarian to discuss specialized aspects of the project with them at different stages of the projects. There were instances of heated arguments and disagreements, but often time the librarian understanding his role, always lookout for ways to resolve the issues without compromising the functionality and ensuring the quality of the building.

Deriving Estimation for Projected Years

From the series of stages that are involved in the planning of a new library building, it is obvious that the number of years the building is being projected is of crucial importance. The underestimation of the importance of this issue has an unpleasant consequence of moving into a new library building or extension that is already too small even before it is occupied. Usually, certain factors are involved in the calculation of the ultimate size of the library.

These are:

The size and composition of the student body, and in projected years

Faculty members and in projected years

Library staff members and in projected years.

The nature of the curriculum currently being run and planned revision year

Methods of instruction

Availability of bookshop devices and other places for study on the campus;

The acquisition policy of the library

Virtual library

However, in our situation seating capacity of about 2000 users based on the calculation for projected years was taken into cognizance during the calculation for space.

In planning the building, the following points were kept in mind:

1. The building should be flexible with moveable partition. This will provide a more flexible, adaptable space for any likely purpose. The partition should be done with glass.
2. It must provide adequate provision for current student capacity and projected capacity. Seating capacity should be for at least 2000 users.
3. The planning of the building should encompass future expansion and the space provision for a future extension must be provided for in the master plan.
4. Provision must be made for teaching staff and P.G students

5. The majority of the stock will be open access. The limited access areas will be the quick service collection and the research collection comprising periodicals, a special collection and media resources; but if the case of pilfering increases in the future, the library may decide to put the collection in close access like that of OAU where all the books are caged except reference materials, with staff inside to issue out the books and collect same.
6. The Design should reduce library staff and readers' supervision to the barest minimum.
7. In making provision for library staff, special consideration must be given to increase in library staff; it should be borne in mind that areas should be located in such a way and manner, that minimum supervision is required to maintain good service.
8. The technical Service section should be free-flowing areas. This means the acquisition Section should be located as near as possible to the receiving area entrance. This should be followed by the cataloguing section.
9. The storage facility seems never adequate in a library building; therefore, these must be catered for.
10. The building should be both beautiful and functional with greater emphasis on the later.
11. A Proper atmospheric condition such as humidity control and filtered air are important so that staff and readers would think less about temperature, humidity, draft, lighting and visual and auditory distractions, and go about their work oblivious of their physical surroundings.

Choosing a Suitable Site

The chosen site is adequate for future expansion, and the accompanying space is (twice the size of the building) reserved for future expansion. The reserved space is independent of space reserved for car park, flowers, and trees. etc. A library is the heart of any university and should therefore be sited near the centre of activities as much as possible. The space is a walking distance from every department and students' hostel

Structure/Building

Essentially, library building in this part of the country should be tropical architecture, with cross ventilation this building is not an exemption. The interior should have flexibility so that the rearrangement of the library is possible. The following items were kept in mind:

1. **The entrance:** A single entrance/exit is essential and a single entrance from behind leading to the store (basement) that will be only opened when taking large delivery. Another emergency exit point should be provided. That will be permanently locked.
2. Traffic routes should be adequate so that minimum of disturbance accure when readers are going back and forth.
3. Lighting should be well placed and be most adequate for readers both day and night.
4. Lighting should be centrally controlled from the ground floor for the whole building.
5. The structure should be in such a way that the wall can be utilized for shelving, but it should take into consideration natural lighting.
6. Insect control should be taken into consideration. Taking into cognizance the menacing nature of termites and ants in this environment.
7. Entrance hall should be flexible such that it can be used for future exhibitions, without disrupting the setup. All the items in the reception area can be cleared temporarily for this purpose.
8. The floor should be of such material that will minimize noise. Terrazzo floor or modern noiseless tiles was recommended.
9. The interior of the building should be of color that is restful but yet embody a pleasing decorative effect.
10. Complete air-conditioning is desirable; the reciprocation machine with a remote air-cooler is recommended. I.e. the type we are currently using now.
11. The windows should be the type that allows cross ventilation.
12. The step should be user friendly.
13. Toilets should be on every floor
14. Space Allocated Within the New Library Building

Ground floor

This floor houses bookshelves containing all books. They are the subject arranged.

Circulation, reference, exhibition ground, readers services, HOD, collection,

development /binding some offices, Reading halls, stack area

, basemen, reprography, reception, offices and toilets

First Floor

This houses 1st e-library/ICT unit research /serial unit, reading halls (containing reading table / and chairs) , toilets, office of Heads of department, other offices, two deputy

librarian offices, University's librarian office, secretary to university librarian office

Second floor

Reading halls (containing reading table / and chairs),toilets,2nd e-library ICT unit

Finance (Budget)

Funds were released to the planning committee at various stages of the project, the

central planning committee meets several times to consider and ratify the budget

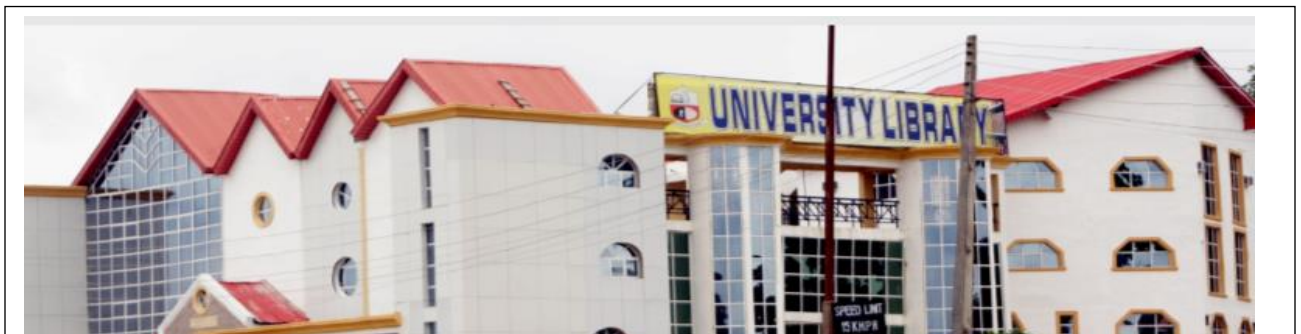
submitted by various contractors. As part of checks and balancing external Quantity Survivors

are invited periodically to review bills.

Commissioning

The newly completed ultra-modern multi-million naira library of Oduduwa University was commissioned by the State of Osun Deputy Governor Mrs TitilayoTomori- Laoye on Thursday 24th November 2013 as part of the programme marking the maiden convocation and

4th founder's day of Oduduwa University Ipetumodu, Ile-Ife Osun State, Nigeria. Such public figure be involve in the commissioning, it gives publicity to the project





Problems Encountered

In general, no amount of planning for new library building can eliminate problems, however the librarian must always strive to be on top of the problems and see every problem as a personal challenge he must resolve for the smooth sail of the project. The problems are itemized in no special order:

1. Corruption: Corruption is a cancer-worm bestriding every facet of the Nigeria nation, greedy contractors with the collusion with staff to siphoned funds released for the project. The University librarians must resist this with all he is worth for the good of the project.
2. The exit of some members of the central planning committee before the end of the project
3. Disagreements among professional and specialists on the central planning committee at various stages of the project
4. The inability of contractors to meet deadlines
5. The greed of contractors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper concludes that the National University's Commission and Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria should ensure that professionally prepared standards are made available for library buildings, to reduce the risk of having standards made for them by people and Librarians should resist any attempt for the funds budgeted for the project to be diverted, misused or stolen.

Given this, the following are recommended:

1. Visiting other universities for information gathering, this is priceless, but the librarian should ensure he contact and inform the university librarians of these other institutions ahead and request that their architecture brief and other useful document be prepared for the team to see and even obtain a copy
2. The librarian should resist an attempt for any recommended library building design to be implemented verbatim, whether from within or without the country. Usually, in such circumstance, the problem and mistake in the imported building are replicated in the new one and there are other issues like climatic conditions which vary from one location to another. We also had a similar experience on this project but with wisdom and careful presentation of points, it was corrected.
3. Librarians should resist an attempt for the funds budgeted for the project to be diverted, misuse and stolen
4. The librarian must ensure that the library building project ends up a functional one, able to meet the required seating capacity for the institution as well as future developments.
5. The librarian must ensure the building is ICT compliant, easy to accommodate electrical and digital equipment for use and not the type that resists internet network
6. During the project, the librarian should ensure that independent experts unknown to the contractors, staff and other professionals on the planning team be invited at various stages of the project for peer review. This is important since the librarian is not an Architect, Civil or electrical engineer as it is not wise to blindly trust professional advice, at times their advice could be colored with personal and selfish interest.
7. The librarian should ensure that all report from those to be invited comes to him personally. External Quantity Surveyors should be invited periodically to review bills, this is important else the librarian will observe that the funds budgeted will quickly run – out.
8. The deadline for the delivery of the job must be strictly adhered to, however, little adjustments could be allowed if funds are available

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Ishola Bolanle Clifford is a lecturer in the Department of library and information science, Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. He backed his masters in library and information science from the University of Ibadan, Bachelor of library and information science from Ambrose Alli University

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Ishola was the Head librarian of Oduduwa University Ipetumodu-Ile-Ife, Osun state, Nigeria, before joining the services of the Department of library and information science, Federal Polytechnic, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria. He has contributed to the LIS Profession through the development of human, technical, physical, and information resources of several university libraries and contributed to academic discourse through Eight international and Twelve national journal publications and has presented papers at 14 national conferences, plus a chapter in a comprehensive LIS textbook.

He sees LIS Professionals as torchbearers that connect people with required information sources to ensure quality decisions making to continued human development/civilization. His areas of research interest are library administration/management, fee based-library services and the use of automation for human development. He can be contacted at sholacliff@gmail.com, 0703 2433 049

Brief History of Oduduwa University

Available on oduduwauniversity.edu.ng

A Brief history of Oduduwa University Library

Available on oduduwauniversity.edu.ng