

## Strategic plan 2007-2027

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*This paper is a revised version of that submitted to the Library & Archives Committee in March 2007, which was a response to the request from the College Council in March 2006 (item cc2006.75) for a paper outlining possible refurbishment to the Library and the evolution of the role of College libraries over the next twenty years.*

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Since I was first asked to write this paper College's development plans have been reconsidered and, unless a significant donor comes forward, I understand it is unlikely that a new Library will be built for the next 20 years. At the request of the Library & Archives committee, this paper has been written as a strategic plan, designed to set out the purpose of the College library and the development of its facilities and services over the next 20 years. It is designed to get the best out of our existing buildings while preparing for an eventual move into a new building. The plan reflects current thinking about the development of information resources and provision as far as is possible over such a long period of time.

This plan is not intended as a static document, but as a set of guidelines and is open to revision. It is complemented by a similar strategic plan for the College Archives.

### 1. Purpose of Selwyn College Library

"The provision of an effective Library lies close to the heart of an institution dedicated to education and research."<sup>1</sup>

1.1 The purpose of the Library is to provide:

- Comfortable, secure and appropriate study spaces and facilities such as I.T. and photocopying, for College members and visitors;
- Relevant print and electronic resources to support student learning, with priority being given to undergraduates in their first two years.

1.2 It will achieve this through providing:

- Buildings which are appropriate places for study, to house the collections and for staff to work in,
- the cost-effective management of resources
- the acquisition, organisation and dissemination of materials
- regular review and care of the collection
- support for readers at all levels
- the development of motivated, knowledgeable and skilled staff

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pem.cam.ac.uk/development/campaign/phase2.html> (Pembroke College alumni webpage)

## **2 Key assumptions**

- 2.1 A College Library represents in physical form the College's values, history and commitment to scholarship and is of especially importance in attracting new applicants and visitors.
- 2.2 It is unlikely that a new College library will be built for 20 years, although there remains the possibility that a benefactor may come forward.
- 2.3 The new Library will not replicate the existing building. Instead it will be a multi-purpose centre for the study and the exchange of information at all levels, including space for the Archives and special collections and other facilities not possible in the present building.
- 2.4 Cambridge is, and intends to remain, a university of world-class status. Selwyn Library will continue to provide facilities and resources to all members, especially undergraduate students, and visitors.
- 2.5 Student numbers are unlikely to increase significantly in the next ten years.
- 2.6 Inflation in the cost of materials will continue to exceed any growth in the Library's income.
- 2.7 The Library will continue to offer paper and electronic resources as appropriate in each subject area. The growth of electronic resources will not be matched by an equivalent decline in the publication or use of traditional paper-based library resources for the next five years, except possibly in some of the sciences.
- 2.8 I.T. provision will be key to undergraduate study, with the expectation that library services should be available from the desktop as quickly and easily as possible and with 24-hour support.
- 2.9 The increasing amount of electronic-only material will mean that the College will buy into electronic resources purchased centrally and/or co-operatively instead of purchasing as an independent institution.
- 2.10 The Library does not have the space, staffing or funds to accept donations of material which are not strictly within the terms of its Collection Development Policy.

## **3 Critical success factors**

- 3.1 The Library's priority is to provide the resources which match undergraduate student requirements<sup>2</sup>. Adequate funding and regular collection review by Directors of Studies are both essential to ensuring that resources remain relevant. Changes to curriculum content or to the range of subjects taught in College affect the Library.
- 3.2 The Library depends on the maintenance of good relations with students to ensure that it runs smoothly, and that the regulations to support this are understood and observed.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sel.cam.ac.uk/library/collections/collectionspolicy.html>

- 3.3 The Library depends on effective liaison with the CCLF (Cambridge College Libraries' Forum), Faculty Libraries and the University Library, especially as services become more centralised. Cuts in services to or closures of any other Library will place extra demand on the College.
- 3.4 The Library depends on good working relations with other College departments and it is important that staff work with them as positively as possible.
- 3.5 Library provision is an integral part of the facilities offered by the College to students with disabilities and advance warning of admissions enables it to respond effectively.

#### **4 Major risks to success**

- 4.1 Lack of visibility within the College
- Impact: The Library becomes under-resourced and is not integrated fully into College plans.
- 4.2 Reduction in funding
- Impact: inability to provide core services or adequate resources.
- 4.3 Reduction in staffing
- Impact: inability to maintain efficient collection and circulation procedures and timely throughput of newly acquired materials,
  - reduction in opening hours
  - inability to assist readers with disabilities
  - inability to deal effectively with external enquiries
- 4.4 Disaster
- Impact: a fire, flood or infestation could incur expensive recovery costs while disadvantaging readers.

#### **5 Strategic goals**

References here to time-spans should be interpreted as short-term (1-3 years); medium-term (3-7 years) and long-term (7-20 years) goals.

##### **5.1 Appropriate buildings with facilities for study and to house the collections.**

In the past 10-15 years, a number of Colleges have built new or significantly refurbished their libraries: for example, Trinity Hall, Newnham, St John's, Pembroke, Peterhouse and Corpus Christi. Selwyn Library was built in 1928 as a war memorial, and a ground floor extension was added in the 1980s. It is now showing its age, and lags behind others especially in its furnishings, equipment, heating, ventilation and noise control and its use of spaces within the building.

At present the Library offers 66 study spaces for an undergraduate population of 360. This represents a ratio of 8:1 and is the average number of spaces for all Cambridge colleges. However, this figure represents only the number of chairs available and

thus assumes all readers are willing to work within a restricted desk area. Realistically, the Library is full with 40 readers.

#### *Short-term*

The refurbishment of the Library due to take place during the summer vacation 2007 will improve the existing building by:

- installing a toilet,
- opening up the first floor room to provide approx 10-15 more study spaces,
- redecorating and recarpeting and
- repairs to the roof.

#### *Medium-term*

Investigate feasibility of reconfiguring the ground floor room to provide an entrance foyer with separate space for the issue pc, photocopier, returns box and student socializing. Refit the rest of the room to provide improved IT facilities.

The Library's disaster plan and equipment store (held in the Porter's Lodge) should be reviewed and updated every 3 years.

#### *Long-term*

A new building offers the opportunity to provide the College with:

- a multi-purpose centre for learning and information exchange
- an undergraduate collection of approx 15,000 books (about half the size of the current collection), principally in literature, arts and humanities with some general reading matter
- seminar rooms
- spaces for individual and group study, made available for conference use during vacations
- appropriate space for the College Archives and special collections
- an exhibition area with facilities to host alumni events
- refreshment/cafe area

## **5.2 The cost-effective management of resources**

#### *Short-term*

The College Library operates within its budgetary limits and it is unlikely that extra funding will be available.

#### *Medium/Long-term*

Any decrease in book purchasing is likely to be outpaced by contributions to centrally or co-operatively purchased electronic resources; regular increases in funding will become inevitable.

Other sources of funding for special projects such as book conservation should be investigated.

## **5.3 The acquisition, organisation and dissemination of library materials**

#### *Short/Medium-term*

Demand for traditional resources (electronic and print) remains high at present, but undergraduate students will increasingly require electronic resources. These will be provided on a University-wide basis, and the Library should continue to work with the

CCLF, the University Library and others in developing a co-ordinated approach to this provision.

Each subject should be regularly reviewed and weeded with Directors of Studies to ensure it is kept up to date.

*Long-term*

Collection development should envisage moving a reduced print collection to a new library.

The Collection Development Policy should be reviewed every 5 years, ensuring that it remains relevant to College needs.

*Medium-term*

Rare books: The College's rare books and special collections are currently housed in rooms in Old Court. This collection is currently under review with a view to consolidation and some possible relocation. Once this has been carried out, funding for a conservation programme should be sought and the collection promoted to bring it to the attention of College members and external researchers.

Extension stack: The special collections here should be reviewed, reclassified with catalogue records upgraded, conserved and promoted as appropriate.

*Long-term*

All revised and conserved collections will be moved to the new building and housed in appropriate conditions.

**5.4 To provide external researchers with supervised, appropriate conditions for studying its collections**

*Short/medium-term*

No change to the current arrangements is likely. External researchers consult books in the Library under supervision, and books from Old Court have to be brought across by a member of staff. Consultation is only possible during staffed hours.

*Long-term*

A new library building would incorporate appropriate study space for external researchers adjacent to the special collections and which can be more easily supervised.

**5.5 Support for readers at all levels**

*Short-term*

Ensure that staff provide readers with an appropriate level of guidance on the use of the Library and its resources through induction tours, literature, the website and informal contact.

*Medium-term*

Any further shift towards electronic provision should be accompanied by library staff playing a greater role in advising readers on the effective and responsible use of these resources.

Improvements should continue to be made through liaison with JCR and MCR, questionnaires and informal contact with students.

Review provision to students with disabilities. Services to readers with disabilities are heavily dependent on staff or student assistance. Students with impaired mobility are not able to reach the first floor (history, archaeology, classics) and wheelchair access to all shelves is not possible with current shelving.

## **5.6 The development of motivated, knowledgeable and skilled staff**

### *Short/medium-term*

In the light of new service demands and expected changes to processes, ensure that staff are equipped with appropriate skills and work within an efficient management structure.

Ensure that staff work in a safe and comfortable environment compliant with current legislation.

### *Long-term*

Flexibility in recruitment, training and deployment of staff will be essential.

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