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Sutton Library
Thornton Science Park

Using library spaces to engage science and engineering students
1. History of Thornton site
2. Design and build of the library 2013-14
3. How it’s worked out since then
Thornton - history

• Shell – 1940-2013
• Fuel and lubricants research driven by demands of Second World War
• Research facility for neighbouring Stanlow refinery
Thornton - history

• Aero fuels development – Concorde
• Materials engineering
• Storage technologies
• Libraries onsite
Thornton Science Park today

• **66 acre site** gifted to the UoC by Shell UK. Formerly Shell Technology Centre, Thornton - a major R&D campus.

• Home of the University’s **new** Faculty of Science and Engineering

  • **Existing** Computer Science and Mathematics departments

  • **New programmes** in Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical Engineering, physics, chemistry & biotechnology

• Also a base for **SMEs** working in engineering and related industries.

www.chester.ac.uk
The starting point

• 1940 built headquarters building to be refurbished as a library and teaching space
• Initial architects design presented Autumn 2013
• Building project due to commence March 2014
• A configuration of space presented but was that what students really wanted / needed?
The importance of feedback

• Years 1 and 2 Maths/Computing undergraduate students moving to Thornton
• Student body some of the least engaged with the library - risk of perception that library wasn’t “for them”
• Important to find out not just what they wanted for the future but also what wasn’t working now
Student feedback

• 20 students drawn from **staff student liaison committees**

  • Students attended to discuss library design

• Discussion concluded by sharing answers to 3 key questions:

  • What is the **most useful** aspect of the Chester library?
  
  • What is the **least useful** aspect of the Chester library?
  
  • What **one thing** could improve your experience of using the library?

• Same questions asked to seminar groups of 1st year students during library teaching sessions.
Student feedback - key themes
Incorporating staff feedback

• Monthly planning meeting with Dean of Faculty / Department Heads

• Focus on ensuring resources / collections fit for purpose:
  • Implementation of pro-active ebook only ordering policy to maximise accessibility
  • Aimed to design custom textbooks to give to new engineering students as a study incentive