



EXETER COLLEGE LIBRARY

George Gilbert Scott's library has been conserved and refurbished.

Built in 1856-7, Scott's L-shaped library was designed with decorative elements inspired by late 13th-century models. By 2019 its roof, stonemasonry and timber needed repair and its historic interiors were obscured by later additions. It was cramped, inaccessible and study space was at a premium.

Architects Nex- and Donald Insall Associates have collaborated on the conservation of the historic fabric and fittings, improvements to the building's environmental performance and stylish interventions which enhance the circulation, access and study facilities.

The judges commended the quality of the stonemasonry repairs and the conservation

of Scott's timber bookcases and display case. They were impressed by the way in which Scott's interiors were revealed and sensitively refurbished. In the main library, where later accretions – including steel girders and a glazed internal lobby – were removed, it's now possible to experience the space as originally conceived. In the Annex, the replacement of a 1950s mezzanine floor with a beautifully crafted cantilevered timber balcony means that Scott's windows are now wholly visible for the first time since 1957.

The tight spaces of the existing building were unlocked by the creation of a new entrance tucked between the library and the party wall of Convocation House. A new lift is encased in cast-iron with a diamond-shaped pattern that nods to the leadwork on Exeter



College Chapel, also designed by Scott. The oak joinery of the staircase (pictured on the front cover) evokes traditional library spaces but is contemporary in character.

This project respects Scott's design intention, taking inspiration to equip the building for the future.

