The History of Children’s Library Design: Continuities and Discontinuities

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Sources and Methods

- The Library Association Record 1899 – 2002
- Contemporary library and architectural press
- Local Studies collections: library records and photographs
- Visits to children’s libraries
- Websites illustrating children’s libraries
Periods and Themes

• Before 1914:
  School and Shelter

• The 1920s and 1930s:
  Home and Constructive Play

• 1945-1980:
  Open Plan and Modern Office

• After 1980:
  Domestic ‘Comfort Zone’ and Pop Culture Playground
Before 1914:
School and Shelter
Plan of the ideal children’s library, 1913
The 1920s and 1930s: Home and Constructive Play
1945-1980: Open Plan and Modern Office
“...the community is rough and tough” but children read poetry at Kirkby
Children’s wing, Winnetka Library, Illinois
Brentford Library before....

... and after
Mount Sorrel
Selsey Public Library
Bromley Children’s Library, 1977
After 1980: Domestic ‘Comfort Zone’ and Pop Culture Playground
Güterslow Public Library, Germany, 1989
Waterthorpe Public Library, Sheffield 1989
The Book Jungle, Sutton Children’s Library
(Source: Designing Libraries website)
The Sailaway
Settle into a peaceful reading perch in the stern of a ship.

The Compass
From this central service point, navigate the world of information and discover The Trove with our librarians.

Copper Beech Garden
Gather under a leafy skylight oasis for a quick snack and a good read.

Galaxy Hall
Auditorium space for up to 75 children to enjoy performances and events.

Tree Trail Gallery
View children’s artwork and educational displays along this pathway of starry lights under an archway of trees.

Enter The Trove...
through what appears to be a break in the wall, where bookshelves have hummed to reveal treasures beyond.

The Castle
Activity room for crafts, tutoring and after-school activities for up to 25 children.

Play Cottage
This mini-performance and play area for tots features a puppet stage, dollhouse and "kitchen."

StoryTrove
Program and play space for up to 45 babies, toddlers and their families.

The Cave
Flat screen viewing area for small groups to enjoy a movie under a sound dome.

CyberTrove
Technology center with 15 computers for children K-6th grade, with free access to games, word processing, online tutors and learning services.

The Trove at the White Plains Public Library
Children's Library
Children's library in the Idea Store, Whitechapel
(Source Designing Libraries website)
Starry sky at Folkstone's Childrens Library
(Source: Designing Libraries Website)
Continuities and Discontinuities
Thank you for listening

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