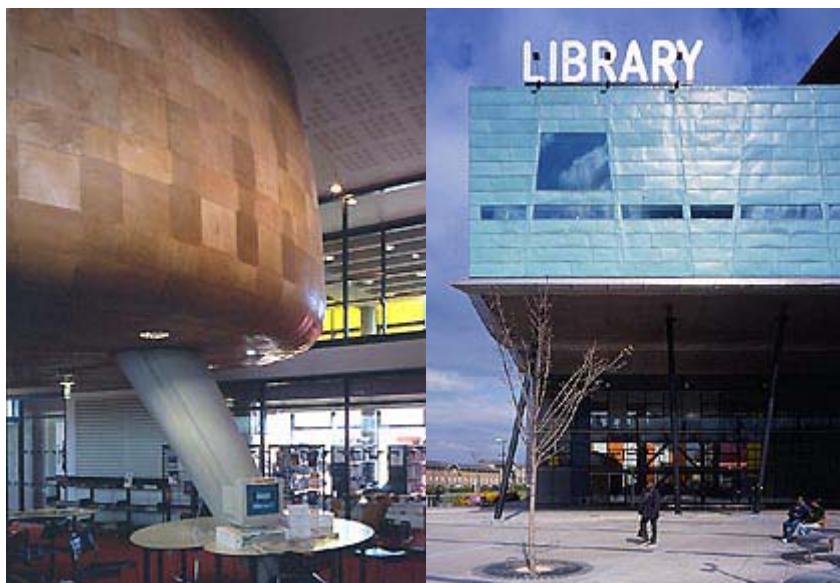


## £5.0m Peckham Library

Peckham Library, designed by Will Alsop from Alsop & Störmer, was opened to the public in March 2000. The building received the 2000 Stirling Award for architectural innovation. Together with the London Eye and the Tate Modern, Peckham Library also won the Civic Trust Award in 2002 for excellence in public architecture. It has proved to be a hugely successful building in use, and with over half a million visitors a year, by far the busiest of Southwark's lending libraries.

The library is a cornerstone in a major regeneration programme of the centre of Peckham that also includes a new town square, health centre, celebratory arch and new low rise housing. The building was designed to be striking, to make people curious about what lies inside, and to challenge the traditional view of libraries as staid and serious environments. This aim has certainly been achieved; the building is set in its own plaza, and is essentially a giant inverted "L", with the main public part of the library cantilevered dramatically eighteen metres across the plaza, supported by thin, spindly columns set at bizarre, diagonal angles.



Within the top two floors is the main library area which includes a dramatic double height space with three enclosed 'pods' comprising a meeting room, a children's activity centre and an Afro-Caribbean study centre. These 'pods' are elevated upon columns affording usable, accessible space below whilst providing private areas suitable for quiet study above the main library floor. Applied Acoustic Design worked closely with the Alsop team to specify a suitable external construction for these pods to minimise noise transfer to / from the main library. In order to control internal reverberation, minimise acoustic focussing effects due to the egg like shapes, AAD paid close attention to the selection of internal finishes to the pods. In the main library itself, the ceiling was designed to incorporate sound absorption to soften the acoustic environment, allowing media based activities to take place alongside areas that also require the traditional library "hush".

A further acoustic design challenge was the need to control potential noise from the busy public plaza space, which if left unchecked might disturb occupants in the lower two storey "leg" overlooking this space. This was achieved by ensuring acoustic finishes to the underside of the upper part of the 'L' were sound absorbent, a task that was aided by the use of a free form mesh screening in front of the affected windows. The opening window area (essential to accommodate natural ventilation) has also been carefully controlled, with appropriate levels of sound insulation specified for the glazing elements.

Client: London Borough of Southwark  
Architect: Alsop and Störmer  
MEP Consultants: Battle McCarthy  
Contractor: Sunley Turriff