

New developments at Central Library

✘ Edinburgh's Central Library is embarking upon a brand new chapter this week as work begins to adapt the building to fit 21st century needs and expectations.

The "next generation" plans will see a variety of changes within the landmark George IV Bridge library, including improvements to the entrance hall, the introduction of self service facilities in the Lending library and the joining together of two of the Library's most important collections, the Edinburgh and Scottish.

These steps are the latest developments for the Central Library, which has undergone many such metamorphoses in its illustrious 121-year history.

The Central Library was the first free public library in Edinburgh, built in the late 19th century thanks to Andrew Carnegie, who donated £50,000 for the purpose.

Work is set to begin tomorrow to settle the Edinburgh Room's collection in its new home within the area presently occupied by the Scottish Library, the part of the Central Library which has changed most over the years.

Users of both collections have been canvassed about the change and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, especially since many of those surveyed make use of both collections for research purposes. The new shared collection space will reopen in early April.

A number of options are being considered for the mezzanine space once the Edinburgh Room has relocated, including the possibility of it housing some or all of the Ernest Levy Archive.

Later this spring, work will commence on transforming the Entrance Hall, making it much more welcoming. The barrier currently in place will be removed, thanks to a new security system, and a new reception desk will greet library visitors as they come in. The hall will also be furnished with touch screens to help people orientate themselves in the building and keep up to date with events and activities happening in the Central Library.

Finally, queuing to borrow a book should become a thing of the past in the Lending Library when new self service machines are installed in early summer. The machines will enable up to 12 items to be borrowed in any one transaction and library staff will be on hand at all times to assist people in how to use them, as well as providing help and guidance on joining the library and all other library queries.

Councillor Deidre Brock, Culture and Leisure Convener, said: "Edinburgh's beautiful Central Library has stood proud on George IV Bridge for 121 years, retaining her Victorian elegance while adapting constantly to the developing needs of library users."

Liz McGettigan, Library and Information Services Manager, said: "These latest developments herald the start of the 'next generation' for the Central Library, making the library and its collections easier to use and more welcoming to visit."

FURTHER INFORMATION available about the [Next Generation plans](#) for Central Library

There are also pages with further information on the [Council's own website](#)

Self Service is already available at the following Edinburgh libraries:

Portobello
Newington
Blackhall

McDonald Road

Stockbridge

South Neighbourhood Office (Captain's Road)