



Fit for what purpose?
Planning libraries for the users of the future
15th seminar of the LIBER Architecture Group
Madrid, Spain, April 2010

Session 9: Collaboration between librarians and architects

No fairy tale:
The Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum
- successful collaboration between
architects and librarians

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Agenda

- The project: Some facts about the JWGZ
- The mission: Planning an information centre for the 21st century
- Parties involved: Architect, university, building authority ... librarian?
- Stage 1: Competition
- Stage 2: Preliminary planning - Confidence-building buildings
- Stage 3: Detailed design - Communication
- Stage 4: Construction - Gruff people and tough meetings
- Stage 5: Completion and evaluation
- Conclusion



The project

- Central University Library
- Computer- and Mediaservice
- Integration of 12 branches (mainly humanities)
- 20,000 sqm usable space
- 75.5 million Euros
- Competition and preliminary planning 2003-2005
- Construction time 2005-2009





The mission

- Integrating library, media and IT services
- Presenting as many books as possible in open shelves
- Supporting blended learning
- Enabling the acquirement of information competence
- Offering various kinds of seats inside the building
- Creating a spacious reading room as 'heart' of the library
- Facilitating communication and identification



Parties involved

- Building owner: Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
- Contractor and supervision: Senate department of Berlin
- Project management: External consulting engineers

After competition:

- Architects: Max Dudler and two responsible project managers with their team
- Site management
- Utilities management engineer

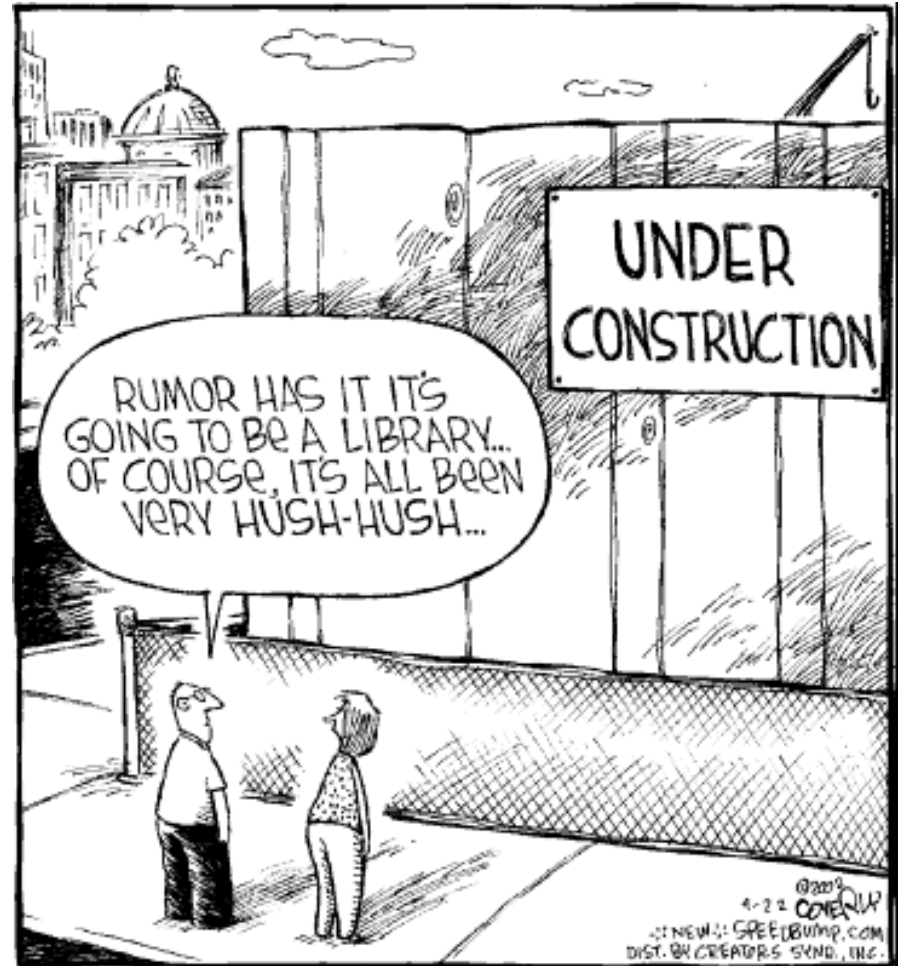


Librarians?

- Not necessarily involved
- Sometimes not wanted
- Are considered as incompetent

But in this case:

- Personal relationships
- Positive experience
- Sense of responsibility





... Parties involved II

- Building department
- University library
- Computer- and Media service
- Equal partners with special responsibilities
- Regarded as clients by architects and engineers
- Settling things before negotiations with third parties
- Library hired a building consultant for this project
- Stand-in for the building department during a vacancy



Stage I: Competition





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Discussions about

- Incomprehensible spaces
- Many stairs
- Too little seats
- Too many windows
- Nearly no IT
- All furniture to be designed by the architect
- Conventional ideas about libraries



Stage 2: Preliminary planning





Confidence-building buildings



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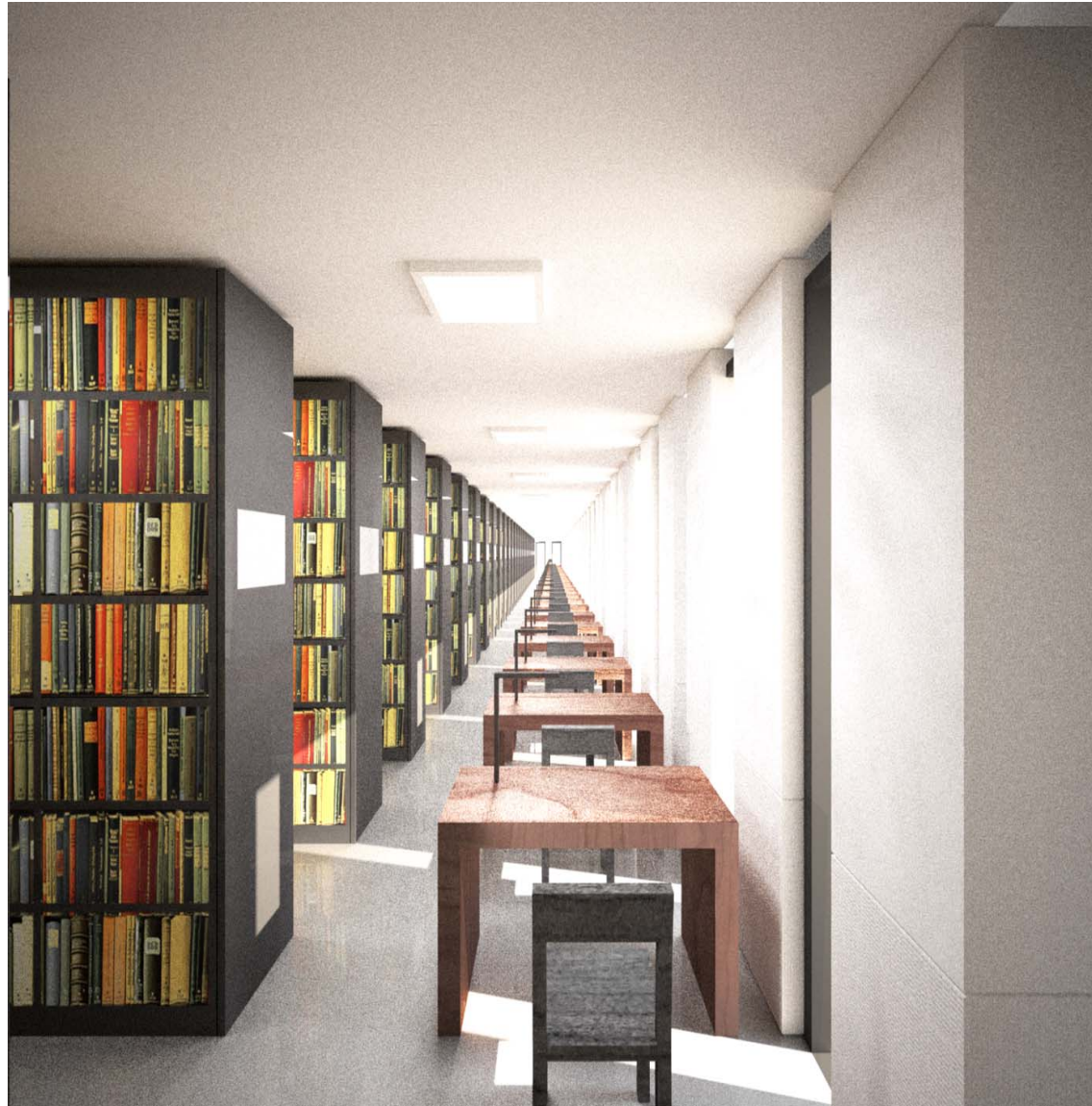
- Visiting different libraries and projects of Max Dudler
- Talking about design and functionality
- Illustrating ideas and concepts
- Discussing even details
- Travelling and having meals together



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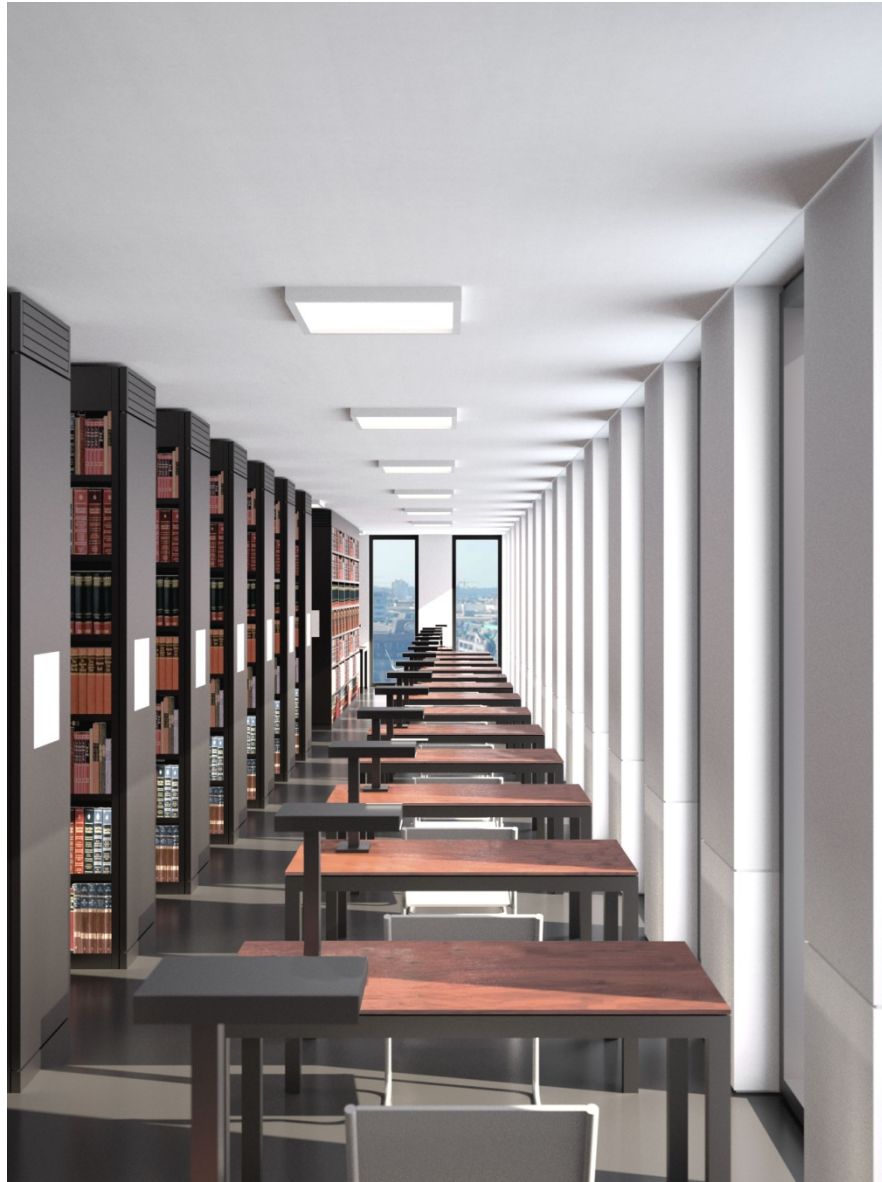
Stage 3: Detailed design





Communication

- Problems with utilities management
- Discussions about space allocation and budget
- Technical considerations concerning the façade
- IT became more important
- Library and architects continued to discuss their issues
- University and architects together dealt with building authorities and court of audit



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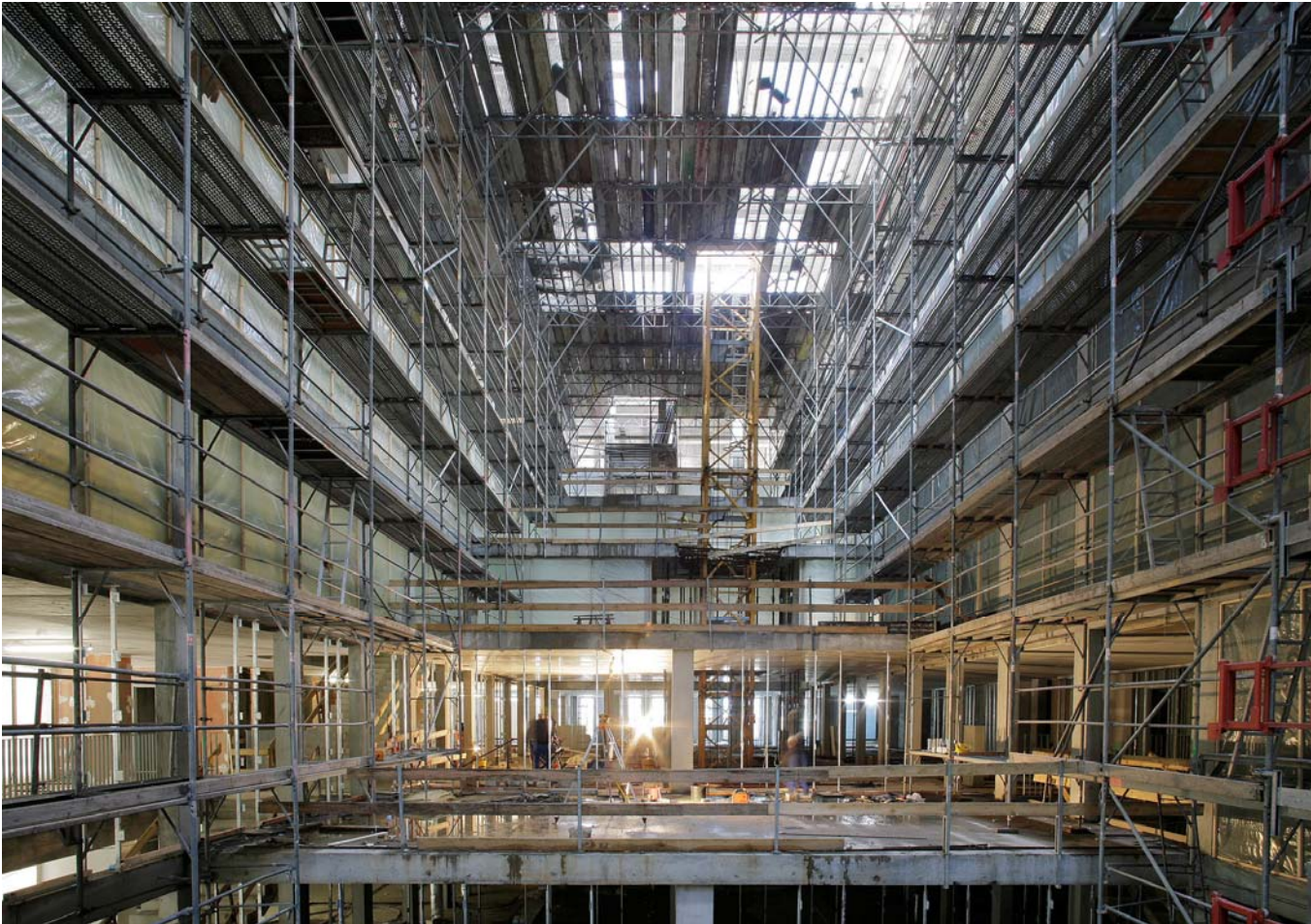
Stage 4: Construction





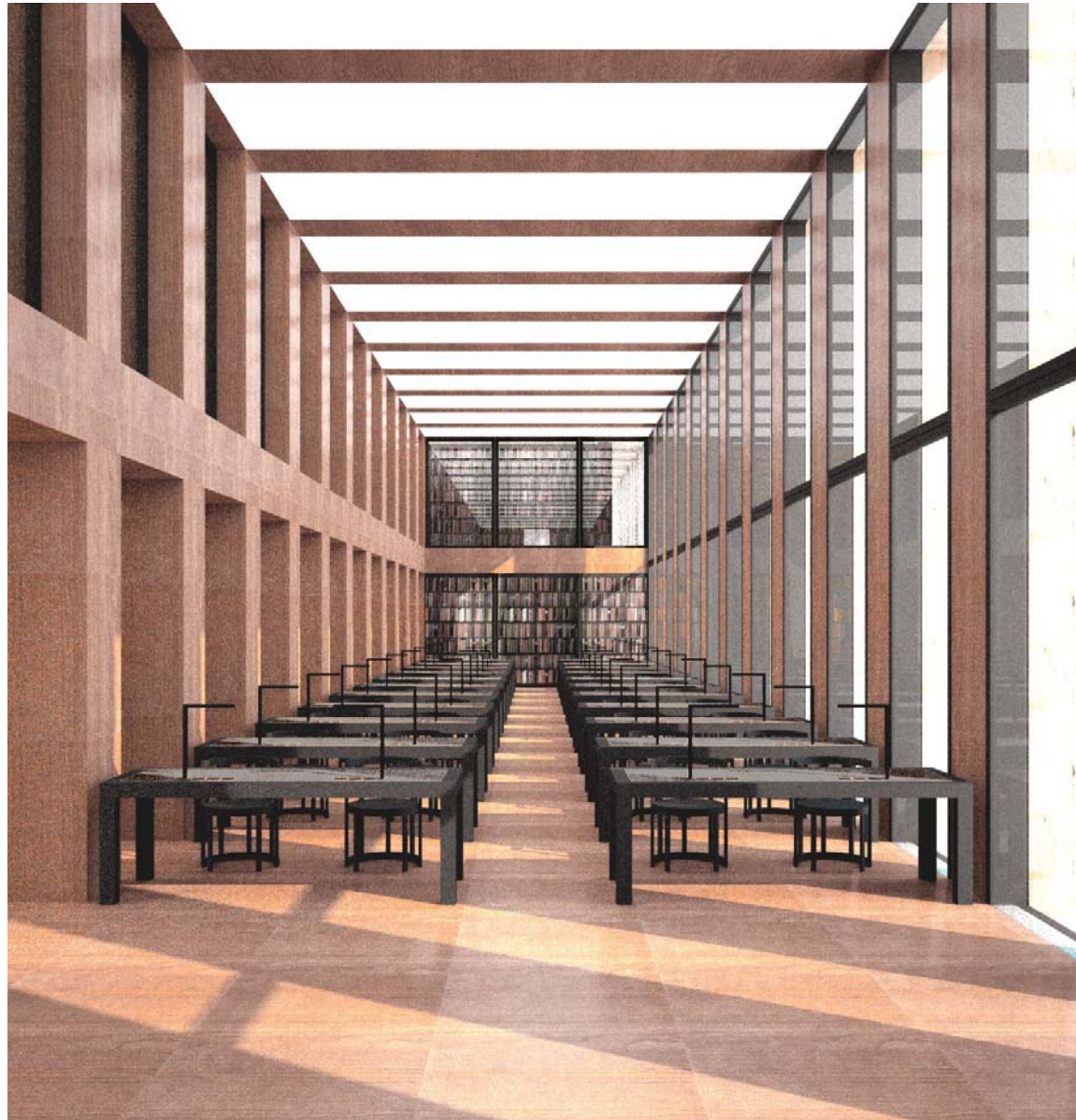
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Gruff people and tough meetings

- Controlling became more and more important
- Conflicts between project management, architects, utilities management and site management
- Everything had to be finally decided
- Building owner most important but most unpopular party
- Design errors became obvious
- Last phase of planning and reinforced surveillance



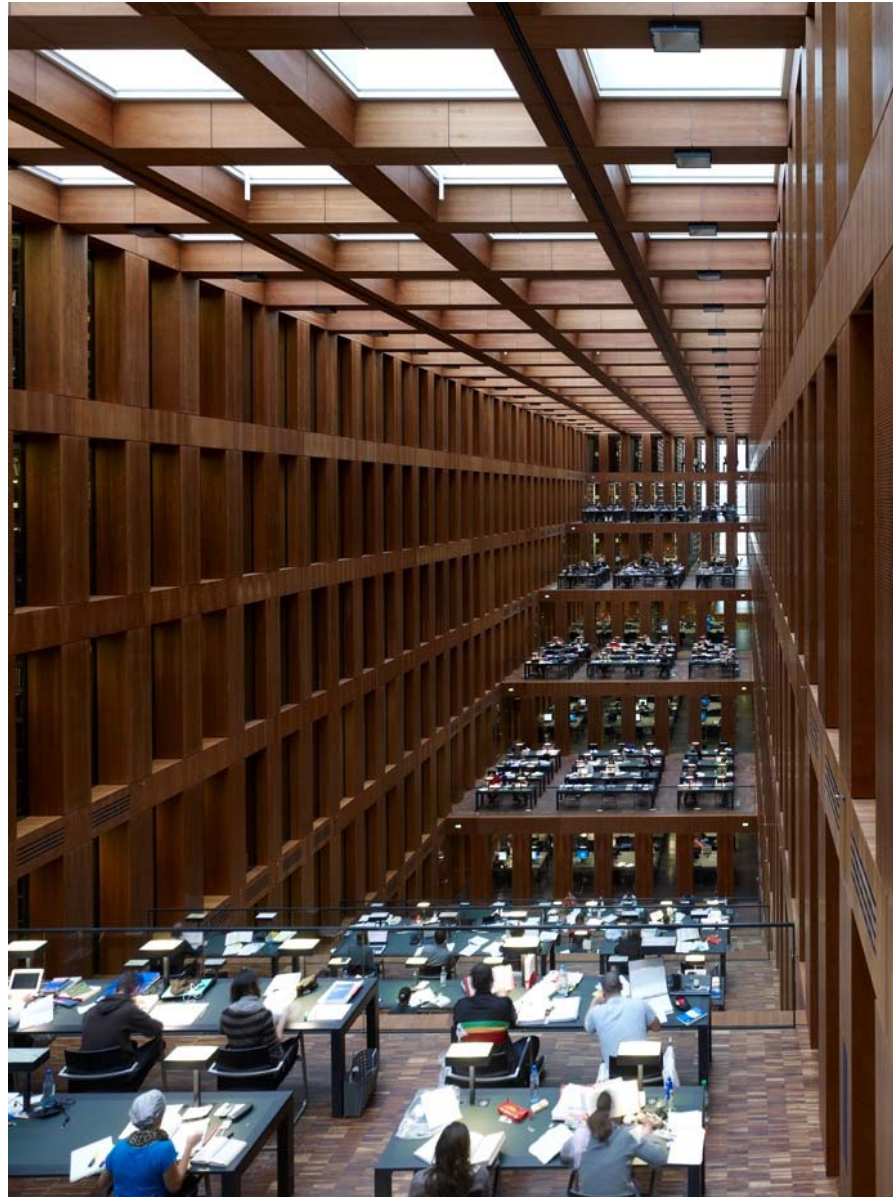
Work in progress

- New ideas
- Change of nearly finished areas
- Library began to discuss structural consequences (offices, reference and circulation desk)
- Counsel by sub-contractors (shelf-manufacturer, carpenter)
- Intensive sampling and prototyping



Stage 5: Completion and evaluation





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Success?

- Four architectural awards
- More than 5,000 visitors a day
- International advertence
- Increasing circulation
- Both, architects and librarians are content



Problems?

- Utilities management
- Too many users
- Accessibility / barrier free design
- Cloakroom / lockers too small
- Old-line librarians in modern building



Conclusion

- Collaboration is a process
- Communication is as important as competence
- Teamwork and confidence are crucial
- Conflicts have to be decided as early as possible
- People should learn from each other
- Study trips are not only informative but confidence-building



Thank you very much for your attention!



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