

MRL Refurbishment

A tale of planning, funding and timing – and a little bit of innovation

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We've all been there

“Organic” buildings



Late 1960's

First dedicated Library Building

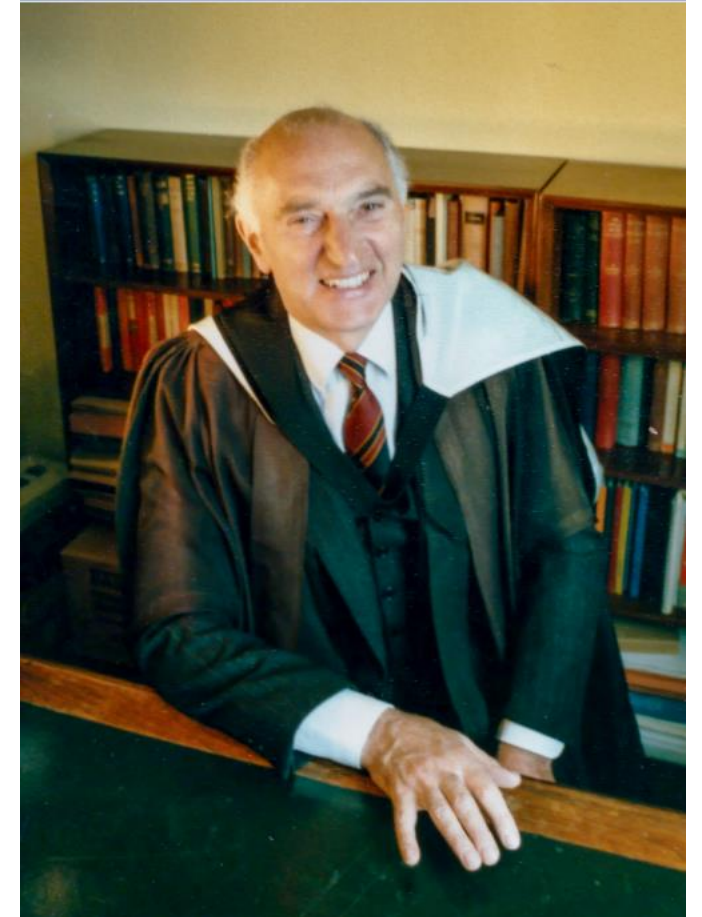
2 Floors in the center of the campus

Down a set of metal stairs

Square concrete box, designed to house the growing collection of a liberal arts University, with some student work-spaces

Lots of space dedicated to stock handling and staff

A temple to the physical collection



Then the expansion years

As student numbers, and expectations grew ... so did the building.



Mid 1980s	2000	2010
<p>Put on a new floor, with accessible entrance, on the top of the Library.... Making an “interesting” visage</p> <p>Looks like the building is on stilts.</p>	<p>The South extension much longer than the old Library put on behind the original building. More space for stock(!) and some additional study spaces, with the first “IT suite”.</p> <p>One Library service but 2 sperate 3-sided buildings unconnected by building functions or environment.</p>	<p>6 new group study rooms “pritt-sticked” onto the end of the old building.</p> <p>Narrow but can have groups of 4-6 and equipped with “multi-media” stations (PC/Screen/CD/DVD players) supporting the emerging need for student group projects.</p>

Welcome to West Downs

Home of the “Innovation Space”





2021 opening of a new University building

Incorporating Library & Learning Spaces

Innovation space?

- *Incorporates a Hypervision 3D image display*
- *A 2-sided immersive projection wall*
- *Large multi-person touch screen*
- *Large enough for safe VR experiences*
- *Designed for student directed use (NOT a teaching resource)*
- *A testbed for what we might achieve for future developments*



MRL left behind

With the new WDC – the MRL challenges were much more noticeable



The real basics

The building has problems



Heating in old building
unable to retain constant
temp across all spaces



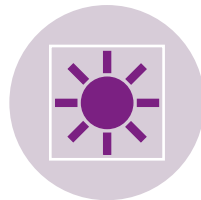
Single glazed windows in
old building



Sewage – say no more



Re-wiring of old building



Solar gain in the south
extension meaning
heating never worked



Need for a single building
management system

Original business case

Seeking internal funding

Pivot previous direction – from resource store to student space

Focus on students

Portfolio changes – and changes in our student demographics and approaches

Self-directed learning

Move to support new assessment requirements

What's the institutional strategy(strategies)

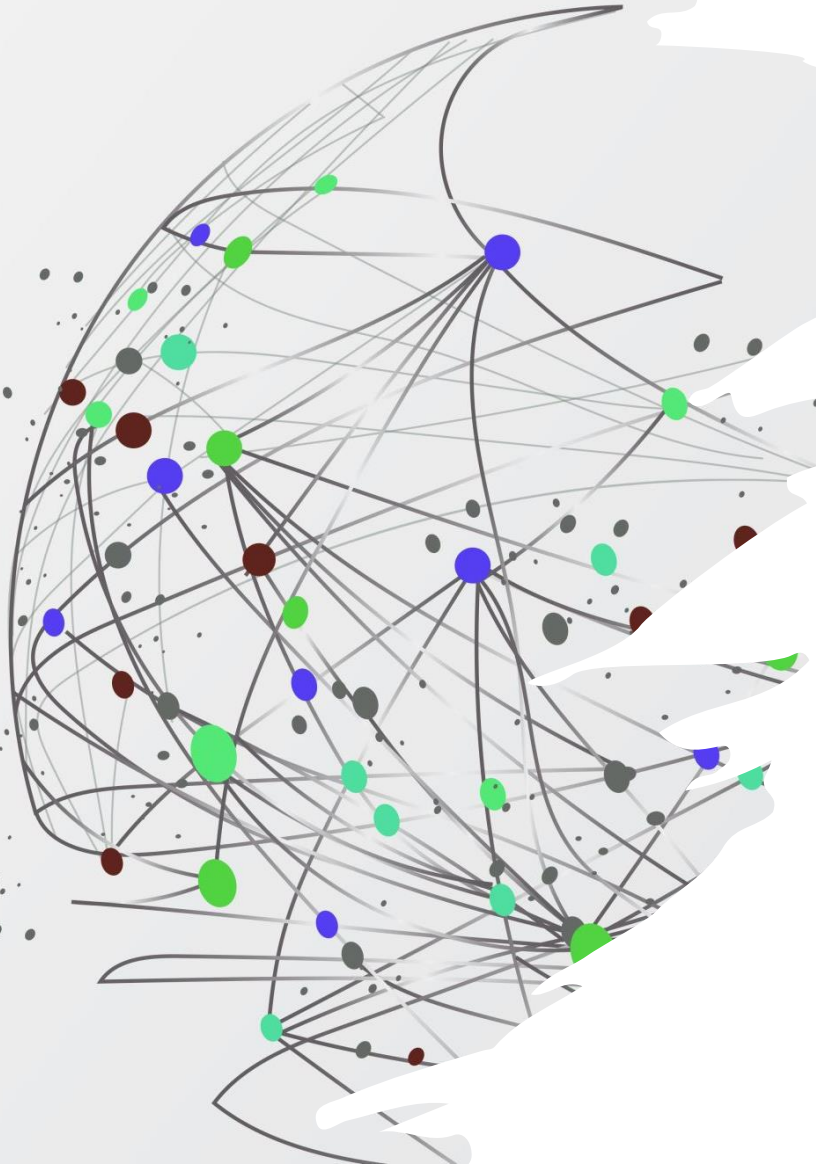
Sustainability and Carbon targets

Future proofing

Above all – supporting Mixed-modal learning

And successful – to a point

- Case that no ability to undertake core maintenance had left the building out of date in all underpinning systems
- “Original feature” lift no longer conforming to BS standard, meaning parts and repairs are custom-made, if even possible
- Energy waste hitting carbon targets – AND utility bills
- Awarded internal capital investment of 250k – 500k each year for four years
- Would deal with underpinning issues – but not transform student (and staff) experience



Enter the Office for Students

2022-2025 Capital Funding

Refurbishment of the Martial Rose Resource Centre

This project will see a complete overhaul of the existing Martial Rose Library building at the heart of the campus, enabling the university to provide an inspirational, state-of-the art learning and collaboration environment for students and staff. It will support the growth of courses in strategically important subjects such as health and wellbeing, a priority for the university and the NHS regionally. The new building will enable academic staff to reimagine learning, adopting new methodologies and preparing students for the workplace. Students will have access to high-quality and dedicated spaces to discover, collaborate, enrich and create knowledge

Resulted in the full level of grant available to an institution £5.8m. Add that to the already spent, and committed University funding, we are just shy of an £8m library refresh.

How did we pull it off

Challenges and solutions

- The OfS submission process is complex, requires a LOT of detail and has very short timescales
- Only one bid per institution – need to get “the Library” or innovation spaces up the list
- Had undertaken a lot of the early work to review what we would want (and yes want not need at this stage)
- Had a (very light) architects plan for the spaces
- Already had the maintenance issues well recorded (whinge to Estates every time there is an issue – and get that recorded!)
- Had started to change the narrative of what “Library” could be
- Consolidation of expenditure into one high quality experience over the mini-set-ups Faculties had been trying to get off the ground ...
- “Heart of the campus” is not just a geographic concept
- Had already been telling the story of the “Art of the Possible” (thanks in part to West Downs and the Innovation Space)
- Very willing to be flexible and take the risks involved of a live and VERY short project timescale



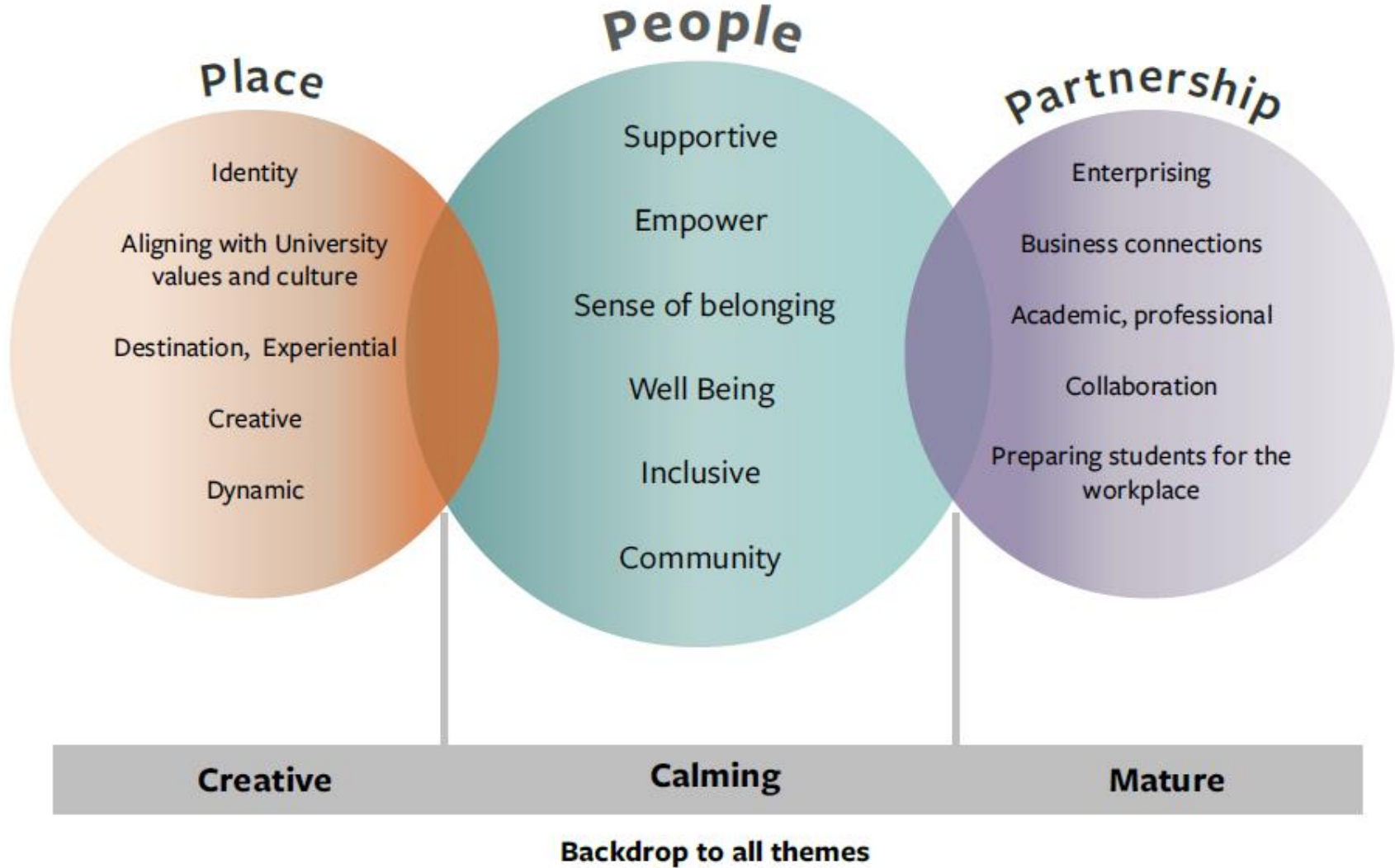
To put it bluntly

We were shovel ready

So what are we delivering?

Concept themes

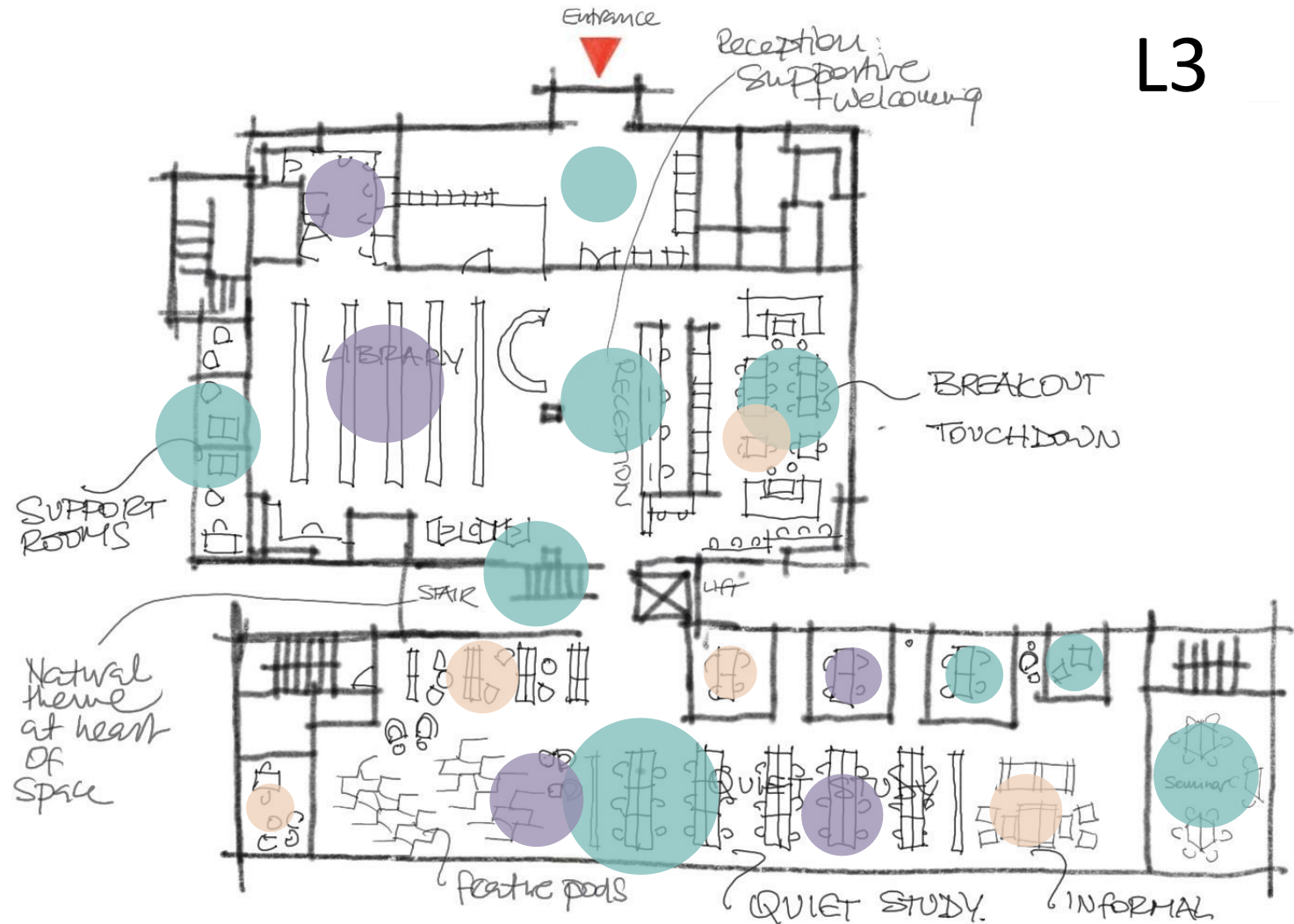
Inspired by core values



Concept theme locations

- + Level 3: Emphasis on supporting people
- + Concept themes used either individually or blended to help inform look and feel of a zone

L3



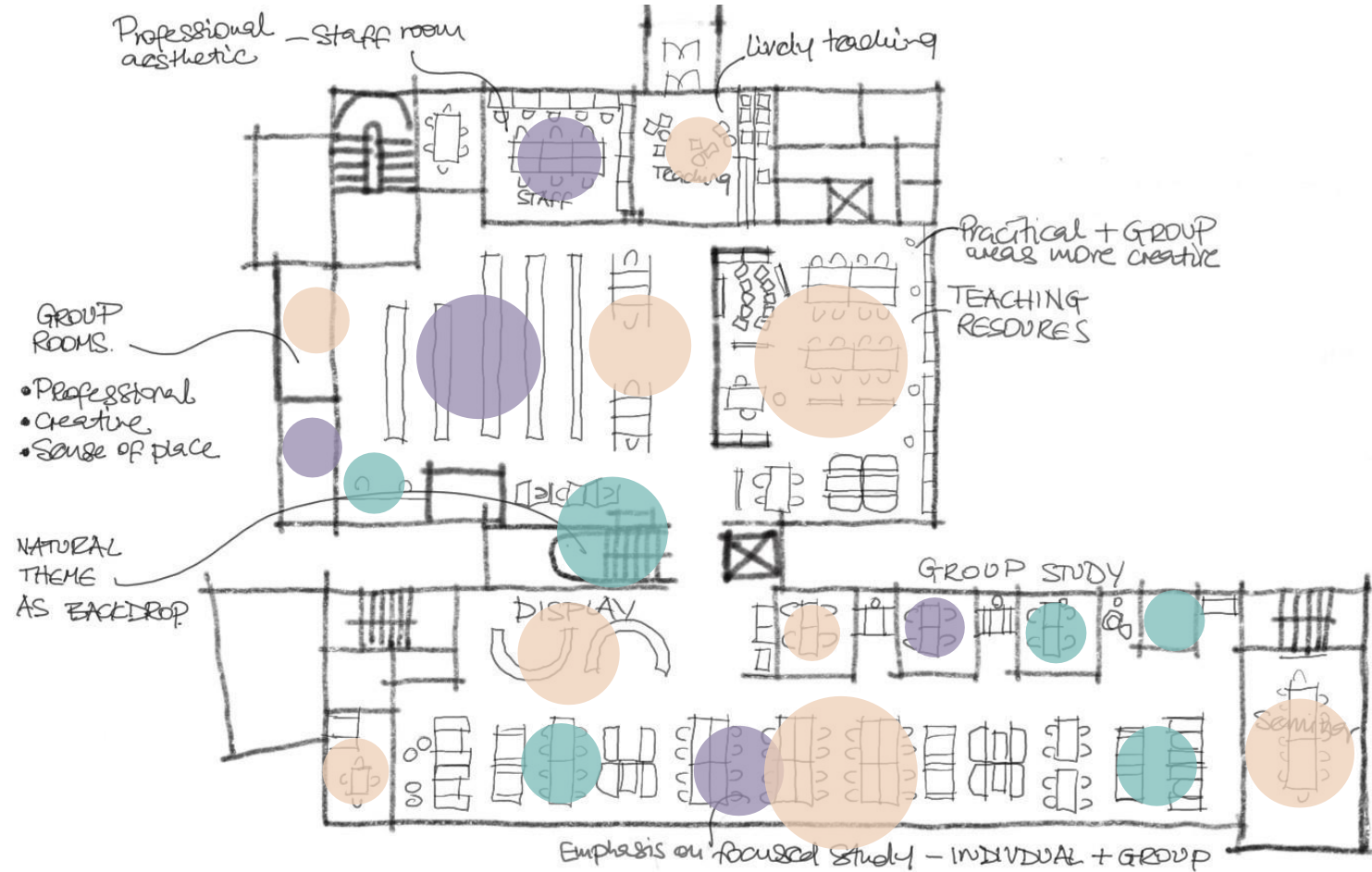
Key

- People
- Places
- Partnerships

Concept theme locations

L2

- + Level 2: Focused and practical creative study
- + Balanced mix of concept themes, with emphasis on providing best experience for students



Key

- People
- Places
- Partnerships

Concept theme locations

L1

- + Level 1: Preparing students for the workplace
- + Emphasis on professional theme with support & creative accent tones to suit different task settings



Key deliverables

As well as somewhere to store resources and have a help point of course

12 new
collaborative
spaces

3 Large seminar
rooms

2 “retreat
rooms”

Dedicated
virtual
interview rooms

MakerSpace

Digital
Humanities

Self-service
Kitchenette

So where are we?

Timescales

- Work started in half the building Oct 23
- Handover of this is 3rd June 24
- 6 week “transition” period when we move the service point over And remove every book in the Library for just under a year
- Expected construction completion April 2025
- A little extra (external) work over the summer 2025
- Full reopening and an exhibition on the life of Martial Rose for Sept 2025

- And then of course the celebrations.... And as demonstrated one of our 3D holograms in the Innovation Space ... celebrations are good – if you have plans and are sensible ...

Fiona Greig, Director of Knowledge & Digital Services

