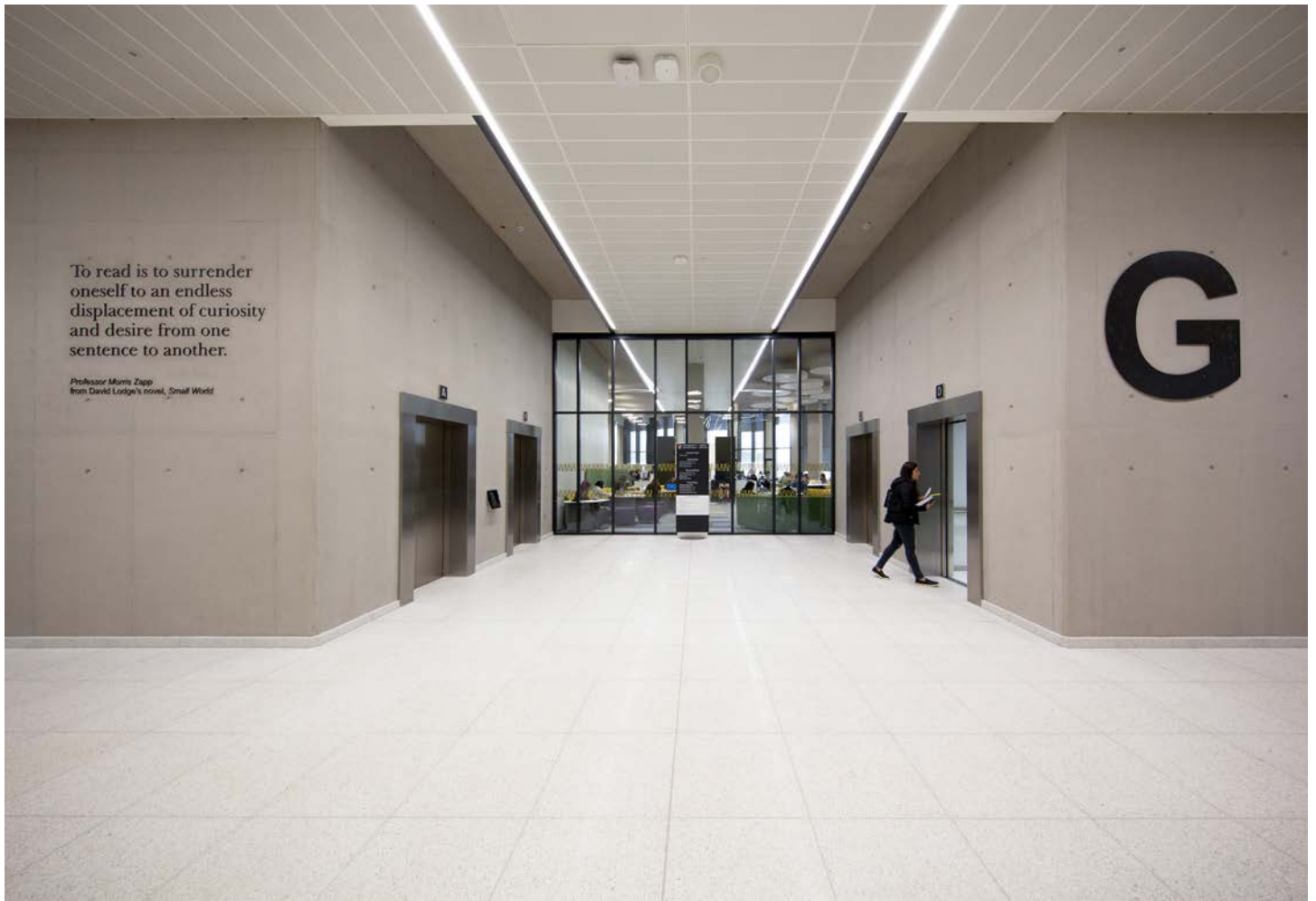


University of Birmingham Library





Client

University of Birmingham Library

Creative Partners

Associated Architects

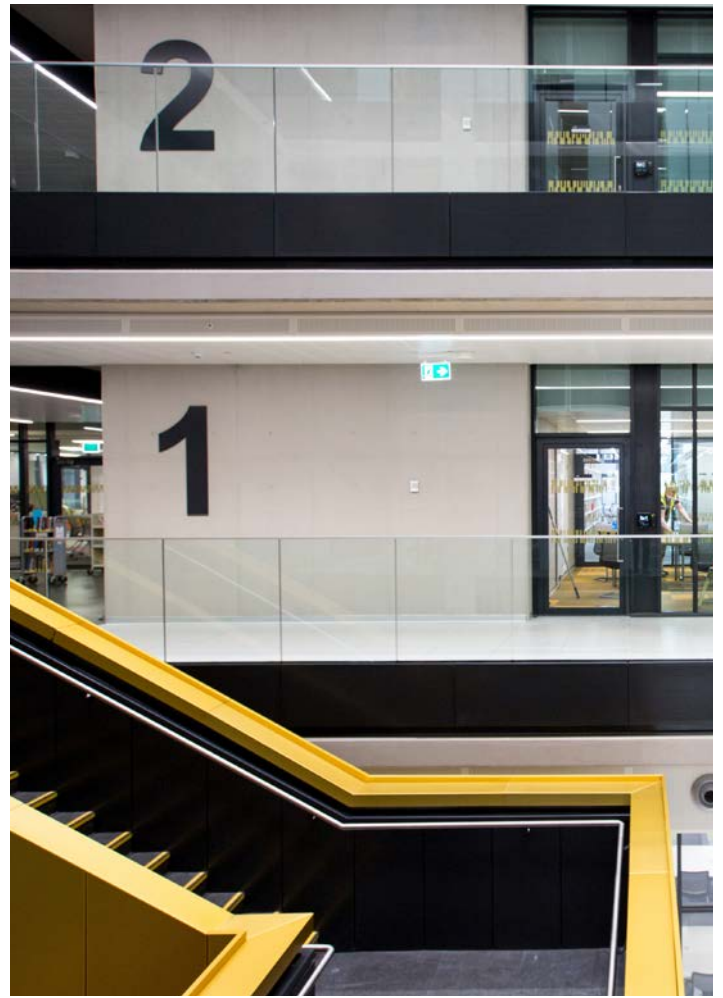
Contractor

Carillion

The University of Birmingham commissioned a new state-of-the-art library facility, as part of a £300M investment in the Edgbaston Campus. A Library that provides outstanding facilities for a new generation of students, researchers and visitors.

The library splits 17,000m² of floor space over six levels, around a large central atrium, with 62km of shelving filled with thousands of books.

Cobal collaborated with Associated Architects to design contemporary wayfinding signage, which compliments the impressive new facility. The outcome is a clear, simplistic and considered wayfinding scheme, that communicates an inspiring identity.



Concept

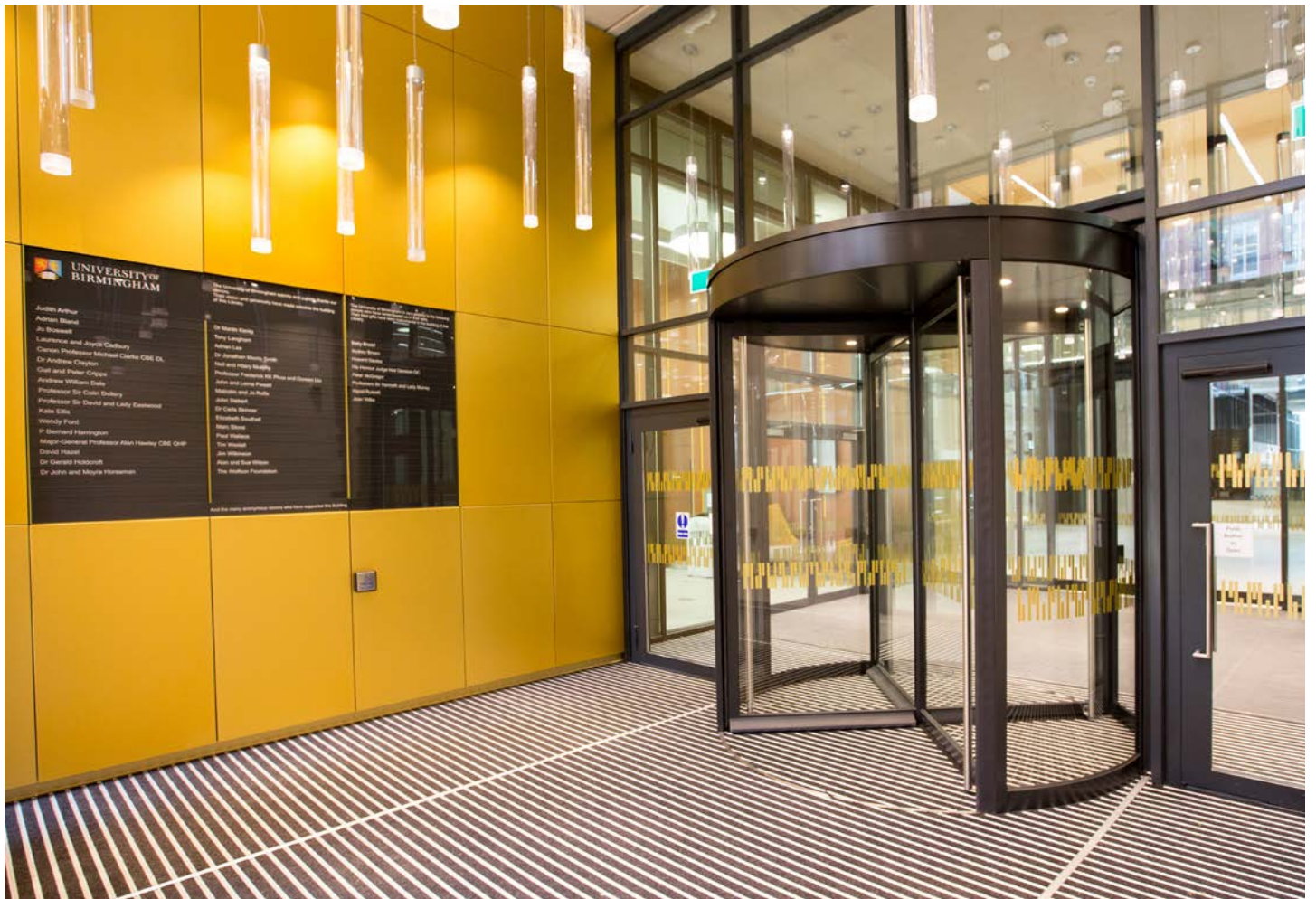
The draft design concept provided to Cobal stressed that the signage should be very much in keeping with the contemporary design and quality of the rest of the building. It was also to be clear, effective and simple to follow. Furthermore, it needed to be readily adaptable to facilitate the changes that would undoubtedly be required in the future.

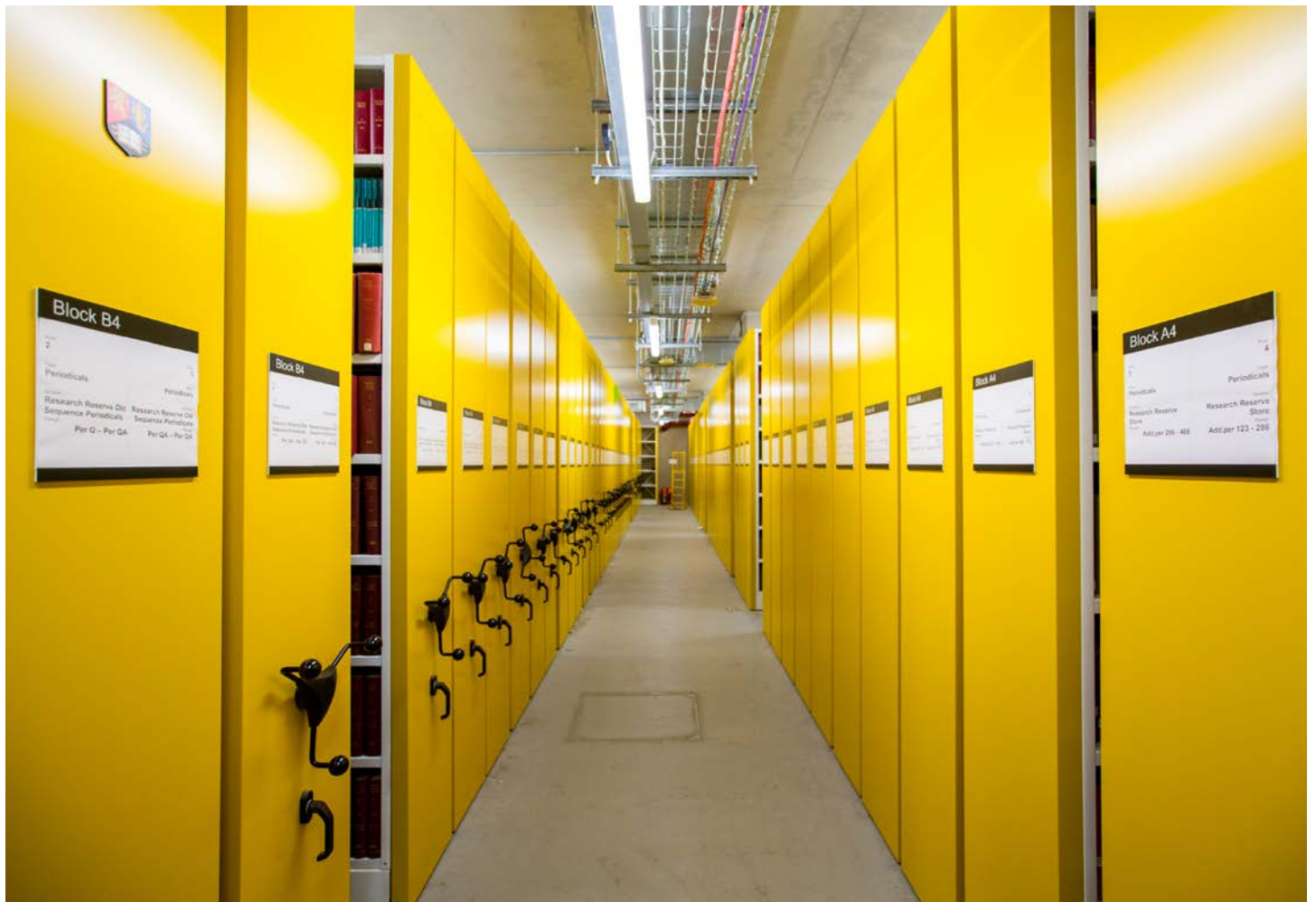
One of the main prerequisites was that the signage should be able to maintain its 'day one' appearance, given that it was to be located in a fast paced and constantly changing university environment.

Collaboration

Cobal coordinated a series of workshops with the client, design and construction teams, where the design brief and project objectives were reviewed, revised and clarified. Throughout this process, it was evident that the bulk of the signage would need to be supplied on a clear acrylic substrate with sub-surface graphics that would not become damaged.

Cobal identified aspects of the specification that could be improved. The timely delivery of samples and alternative design concepts greatly simplified the decision-making process.



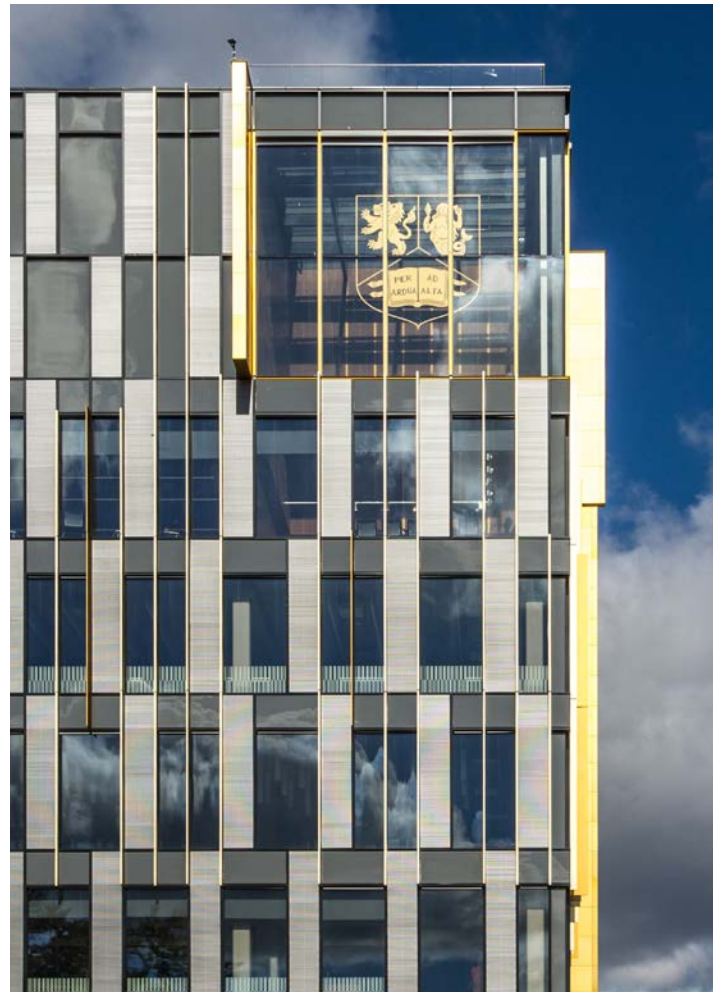


Challenge

A below-ground reserve store houses over 1.5 million items, allowing Library users to access materials from a single location. A key requirement was to combine signage that rarely changes with that which is subject to regular change. A prime example in this case was the library shelf-end signage. Here, permanent information was to be printed onto the reverse of clear acrylic to protect the graphics and the changeable data would be applied by the client.

Outcome

Cobal devised and supplied editable templates and the two elements were combined in a simple elegant acrylic holder. This solution delivered a combination of two very different sign groups that was not only practical but provided an aesthetic look and feel that was consistent and coordinated.



Conquering the impossible

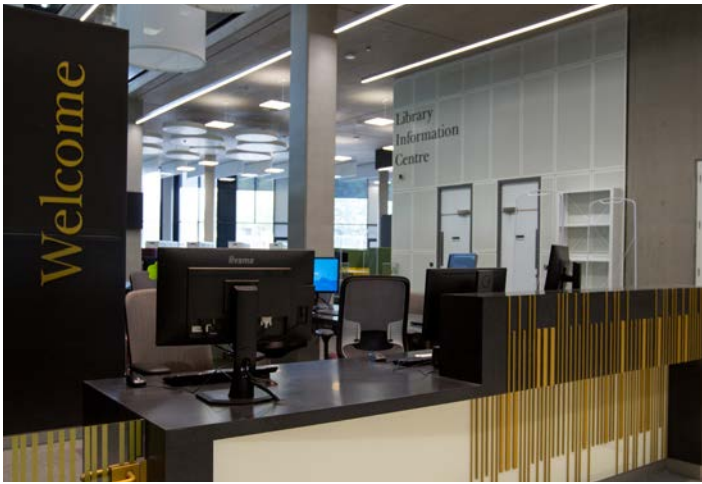
This distinctive project required the supply and installation of a large coat of arms motif, fixed in a prominent position at the top of the atrium. Artwork for this only existed at roof level in the old library, which was soon to be raised to the ground.

Despite access to this being impossible, the Cobal design team devised a plan utilising photography, software and meticulous attention to detail, enabling us to recreate the artwork that could be used in manufacturing.



“Planning and designing the signage for a large complex building like a University library presents real challenges in terms of legibility and user experience. Cobal approached the challenge with a professionalism and expertise; which helped ensure the success of the project. I was impressed by the rigour and the creativity of their approach. We would be pleased to use Cobal again and do not hesitate to recommend them to others.”

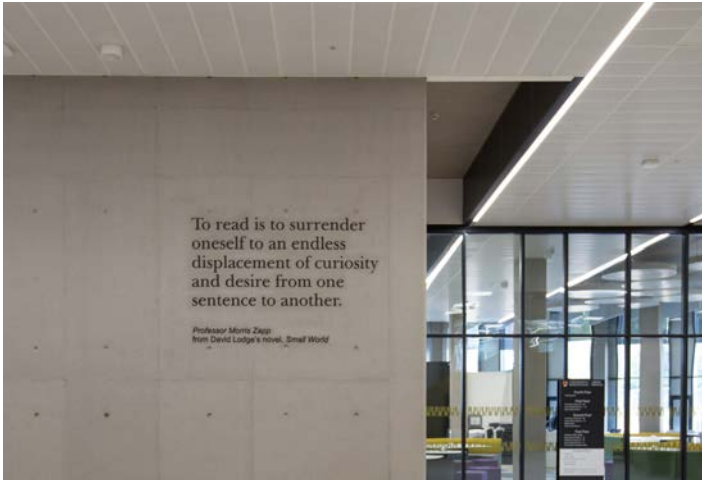
Stephen Ashton
Senior Project Manager



Departmental Wall-Mounted Acrylic Lettering



Aluminium Numeric Floor Level Indicators



Bespoke Wall-Mounted Acrylic Lettering



Freestanding Wayfinding Monolith



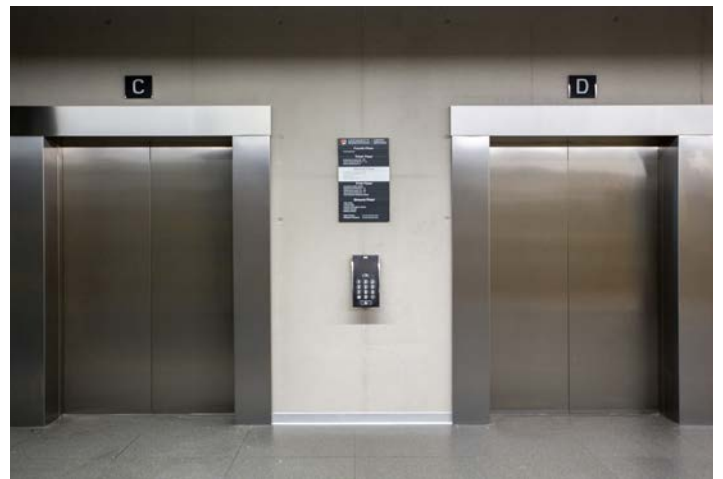
Freestanding Dynamic Wayfinding Monolith (Information Section)



Aluminium Numeric Floor Level Indicators



Optically-Clear Vinyl Manifestation



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