

# Temporary Science Library Services from the Vere Harmsworth Library

## Introduction and Summary

Subject to approval by Curators and with consultation work now ongoing with the Rothermere American Institute, the History Faculty and the relevant academic divisions, the Bodleian's science library services will be delivered from the Vere Harmsworth Library from Hilary 2020.

The VHL is the only Bodleian site with significant capacity (after some minor works) for RSL stock and readers that meets the key requirement of being close to the centre of the science site.

The move will also bring benefits to the VHL. These include additional staff to enable longer opening hours and to support collections projects who will be available whilst science library services are on site, as well as the provision of additional group study rooms and the installation of a stock security system that will remain in the VHL after the RSL has reopened in its refurbished building.

We are very grateful to the VHL/RAI for taking on the RSL staff and users as guests in their space, and we are keen to ensure that the presence of science library services does not cause them inconvenience. However, the potential impact of additional numbers of science students, stock and associated services on the current users of the VHL and the wider RAI building (in which the VHL is closely embedded) is acknowledged.

The Bodleian is therefore undertaking work in advance of the decant to ensure that any potential inconveniences to current users of the VHL and the RAI building are identified and mitigated. This work includes a consultation on these possible impacts and their amelioration with VHL staff, the Institute, the History Faculty and across the relevant academic divisions.

This document is part of the consultation and provides an overview of:

- 1) The current plans for the refurbished RSL.
- 2) The arrangements for the temporary relocation of collections, contents, readers and staff during the construction period.
- 3) The potential impacts identified to date on current users of the VHL Library and the RAI and current proposals to mitigate these.
- 4) Key dates.
- 5) The progress of the RSL refurbishment project to date

The Radcliffe Science Library (RSL) is the principal science library of the University of Oxford. Part of the Bodleian Libraries, it supports teaching and research by providing access to print and digital science collections, specialist advice from subject librarians and library services and facilities including quiet study seats, training facilities, and group study rooms.

However, opened in 1901 with a 1930s extension and with substantial basements excavated in in the early 1970s to store back runs of print journals, the library building does not meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century science students and researchers.

The Parks College project will allow the transformation of the Radcliffe Science Library into a modern, welcoming, comfortable and flexible space. The RSL will remain very much an undergraduate and graduate library within the Bodleian family, open to all members of the University and the Bodleian as it is now, but will also be the library of Parks College

This refurbished library, on a smaller footprint, will allow the Bodleian to better meet the changing needs of students and researchers in the sciences. The redevelopment will enhance access to Library resources, collections and specialist library staff through the transformation of the current library and technology to provide a world-class facility.

The works required to transform the current RSL building and basements and neighbouring space into Parks College will be extensive and extremely disruptive. The building will not be a suitable space for staff or readers during the construction phase.

The Radcliffe Science Library building will therefore close fully for the duration of its refurbishment and conversion to Parks College.

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## 1. The Refurbished Radcliffe Science Library

The Radcliffe Science Library (RSL) is the principal science library of the University of Oxford. Part of the Bodleian Libraries, it supports teaching and research by providing access to print and digital science collections, specialist advice from subject librarians and library services and facilities including quiet study seats, training facilities, and group study rooms.

RSL staff have been at the forefront of innovations and new services across the Bodleian and beyond in support of their academic communities, from the implementation of early online catalogues through to today's 3D printing and virtual reality headset services.

However, the library building does not meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century science students and researchers. With extensive provision of online resources and with large off-site storage facilities available to the Bodleian, the University's scientific academics and students no longer need a building that at its core still reflects the needs of their Victorian forebears.

Much of the current RSL's space and physical collections are underused. At its busiest times the RSL is only filled with students to about a third of its potential capacity and fewer than 50% of the RSL's textbooks were borrowed or consulted between October 2017 and July 2019.

The RSL's study spaces and reading rooms are inflexible and uncomfortable, the library's training and group study rooms are inflexible spaces, too few in number, and are buried away in the depths of the building. Subject librarians (central to the Bodleian's services in support of the academic community) are scattered across disparate offices at different ends of the building rather than being visible and readily accessible to their academic communities.

The new RSL, on a smaller footprint, will allow the Bodleian to better meet the changing needs of students and researchers in the sciences. The refurbished library will be a much more modern, welcoming, comfortable and flexible space, open to all members of the University and the Bodleian with access via a separate library entrance.

The library will hold a significant collection of undergraduate and graduate textbooks for students to consult or borrow. Opening hours will be at least what they are now and the library will have an improved variety of individual study spaces with an increased number of group study rooms as well as much improved training spaces. It will also retain current facilities such as IT provision, accessible study rooms, and vending and break out spaces.

The RSL will remain very much an undergraduate and graduate library within the Bodleian family, open to all members of the University and the Bodleian as it is now, but will also be the library of Parks College

### 1.1 The Library Footprint

A floor by floor outline of the current plans for the refurbished RSL can be found in Appendix I and online at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/building-our-future/planning-and-consultation/rsl-parks?wssl=1> but in summary, the new RSL will be focussed across five of the current "levels" of the building:

- **Current RSL Level 3 (upper basement).** This area will contain much improved and more flexible shared teaching and training rooms to be used by the library as well as the museums and colleges (ensuring maximum use of this space across the entire calendar year). It will also contain a breakout space for readers and others, a seminar room, a set of accessible study rooms (as now), the College's "Tech Hub", and a group study room. Library staff and readers will have use of all of these spaces.
- **Current RSL Level 4 (ground floor entrance).** This area will be refurbished to provide for library staff accommodation, making our team much more visible to readers, as well as breakout space and eating and drinking facilities for readers. It will also provide space for small displays and events. The library's entrance (separate to the College's entrance) will be located here as will a joint Bodleian/museums reception desk and space for our 3D printing and virtual reality and associated advanced technology services.
- **Current RSL Levels 8 & 9 (top floors of Worthington and Jackson Wings).** These two wings will house the RSL print collections and main study space facilities (in both cases more than are currently used in the RSL). This will include a range of more casual study spaces, an increased number of group study spaces, fixed IT workstations, and more traditional quiet study spaces. There will also be a staffed help point on this floor, with self-issue and printing/scanning facilities to hand. The current shelving will be retained, but more comfortable and more flexible furniture will be installed.

## 1.2 Collections – Print and Electronic – Evidence and Serendipity

Science students in Oxford still use textbooks in print and in electronic formats and the Bodleian aims to ensure that all students have access to the books and other materials that they need at the times when they need them in the format that they prefer.

The Radcliffe Science Library contains a large collection of print textbooks in support of MPLS and MSD undergraduate and graduate students. However, fewer than 50% of the RSL's textbooks were borrowed or consulted between October 2017 and July 2019. Excluding Geography, only 21,000 individual textbooks were borrowed or consulted between October 2017 and July 2019 in the RSL. The Bodleian also has very significant collections of e-books in the Sciences, but many of the books on MPLS reading lists are not available online to Oxford students.

The Parks College project provides an opportunity to provide a more focused print collection based on actual evidence of use whilst also continuing to provide opportunities for browsing and serendipitous discovery. In total, the new RSL will contain c26,000 books on its shelves – more than have been used in the last two years. The project will be accompanied by a significant investment in online textbooks.

With the agreement of the Department, Geography provision has been permanently transferred, in full, to the SSL. The new RSL will hold print copies of all other RSL books lent or consulted in the two years leading up to July 2019 - c21,000 volumes in total. In addition to this, the RSL will hold print copies of any reading list textbooks that are not included in the above.

On top of this, at least 2,000 additional books will be on the RSL's open shelves as part of a "curated" collection selected by Subject Librarians with input from the academic community. This will include, for example, all items purchased or added to the RSL's collections via legal

deposit in the last two years. The library will also contain material in direct support of the College's key themes.

Only the latest editions of textbooks will be held on the shelves unless older editions are specifically requested by Subject Librarians or academics (in which case some consideration may also/ alternatively be made to the use of the chapter scanning facility in ORLO). Copies of out of date editions or duplicate copies which have not seen recent use will be disposed of, but one copy of every edition will always be permanently retained by the Bodleian.

On balance it is estimated that approximately 786 lm of shelving will be required to hold these combined print collections in the new RSL.

The RSL's open shelf collections will be supplemented by daily deliveries from the Bodleian's Book Storage Facility which will include books that can be borrowed as well as reference-only materials. However, as items sent to the BSF will be those that have not been used in two years, we do not anticipate a greatly increased demand on our book delivery service.

The open shelf collection will be supplemented by increased expenditure on electronic access, increasing the proportion of MPLS and MSD reading list titles made available electronically. These will be fully accessible from anywhere with an online connection and access will not be restricted to just library computers.

Actual use of the new RSL open shelf collections will continue to be regularly monitored. Items not used during a two-year period will be moved to the BSF. Conversely, science books held in the BSF requested on multiple occasions to the RSL will be transferred to RSL open shelves (this can be done within a day). As now, the collection will be regularly updated with items newly added to reading lists, items purchased in response to reader requests, and new legal deposit books in relevant subject areas.

### 1.3 Reader Spaces

Regular counts of readers are undertaken in all of our libraries during term time. Use of the RSL in 2017-18 peaked at 123 readers in May. Mean usage through the year was 90 readers and the minimum was 48.

Reader counts include all readers in our spaces, irrespective of what they are doing – so not just readers using study spaces. Never-the-less, the refurbished RSL will contain at least 135 reader study spaces. This figure takes account of the removal of Geography collections (and therefore students) from the RSL, use by Parks College students, anticipated increases in student numbers across MSD and MPLS, and a “new building” factor.

These reader spaces will include traditional fixed quiet study spaces as well as noisier spaces in a more relaxed study environment. In addition, the library will provide access to an increased number of group study rooms which will be converted into quiet study spaces if required at peak periods. More generally, the introduction of more flexible furniture will allow reader spaces to be reconfigured as required to suit demand and reader preferences.

## 2. Temporary Relocation - Collections, Services, Readers and Staff

The works required to transform the current RSL building and basements and neighbouring space into Parks College will be very extensive and extremely disruptive. The building will not be a suitable space for staff or readers during the construction phase.

The RSL building will close fully for the duration of its refurbishment and conversion to Parks College and alternative facilities and alternative accommodation for the RSL's collections, readers, staff will be required during this "decant" period.

Construction will start in April 2020. However, the decant will be undertaken over the Christmas vacation 19/20 to avoid extensive disruption and inconvenience to readers caused by the emptying of the library during term time and to avoid any disruption arising from preliminary works in the basements.

The RSL is therefore expected to close to readers at the end of Michaelmas Term 2019 and open in summer 2021.

The current construction programme shows works finishing in May 2021 and the occupation of the building is assumed to take place in the following month.

### 2.1 Principles Behind the Decant

RSL users find the existing site convenient for short periods of study between lectures, since it is well placed on the junction of Parks Road and South Parks Road and a short distance from the geographical centre of the science area. Travel time is therefore key when considering alternative locations for a temporary RSL. In addition, we would not wish to reduce collections to a lower size than will be returning to the RSL or to separate readers and their collections, or to otherwise significantly reduce service levels to the science community.

Decant planning is therefore founded on the following principles:

- The Radcliffe Science Library building will close completely in order to undergo refurbishment.
- Some changes will be permanent, for example the relocation of certain staff or some of the collections.
- Temporary provision for RSL readers should be at a single location, as close to the science areas as possible.
- Temporary library arrangements will be based on the future provision (collections and study spaces) that the RSL will make within Parks College.

### 2.2 The Decant Location

The current plan is that temporary Bodleian provision for MPLS and MSD students will be established within the Vere Harmsworth Library, offering science readers sufficient seats, open shelf collections, and a service point run by dedicated science library staff. This, of course, is subject to approval by Curators and consultation work with the Rothermere American Institute, the History Faculty and the relevant academic divisions.

Other options have been considered:

- Simply suspending all RSL services would have an unacceptable impact on science teaching and research.
- Building temporary accommodation would be very costly even if a suitable site could be identified following the current decant arrangements for Tinbergen departments. Given the funding challenge and the spare capacity within the existing Bodleian Libraries system, this option has been discounted.
- There is sufficient shelf space within the Gladstone Link to accommodate the proposed RSL open shelf collection but reader seats in the Gladstone Link and the adjacent Radcliffe camera are already all occupied at peak times. There is some seating capacity, but no shelving capacity, in Duke Humfrey's Library and these sites are all too distant from the science area to meet users' needs.
- We have considered alternative (non-Bodleian) library provision in the Science Area and there are no libraries in the Science Area outside of the Bodleian that are large enough to accommodate the current users, stock and services of the RSL. However, the Bodleian has approached neighbouring University departments to ask if they have any spaces that could be used as study space by students if required at anticipated peak periods.

## 2.3 The Vere Harmsworth Library

The Vere Harmsworth Library is located in the Rothermere American Institute, and, having been established as the Library of the Institute, is closely identified with the RAI. The RAI, and the VHL as a fundamental part of it, is the foremost centre for the study of US history, politics, and literature outside the United States.

The VHL is up to a 5-minute walk from the RSL and less than one minute from the approximate centre of the science area on South Parks Road. It has 127 reader seats which provide significant additional capacity for much of the academic year. It has 3,612 linear metres of open shelving, and a further 1,544 linear metres of shelving in a stack below the main library floor. A number of science students already use the VHL, especially in Trinity Term, because of its convenient location.

### 2.3.1 Reader Spaces

The VHL's existing seating will need to be supplemented to accommodate both libraries' users. It is anticipated that there will sufficient capacity to accommodate both groups for much of the academic year.

Bodleian census figures over the last three years suggest that at peak in May a shortfall may be expected. However, it would be reasonable to expect science library usage to drop off further during a period of disruption, as users who do not require access to on-site collections and services choose to work at other locations. In addition, 54 new reader seats will be provided to meet projected demand and in the event of demand exceeding the expanded seating capacity in the VHL science readers will be directed to alternative Bodleian and other sites with spare seating.

In addition, the Bodleian has approached neighbouring University departments to ask if they have any spaces that could be used as study space by students if required.

Plans are currently being finessed, but these new study spaces could be located as follows:

- **Ground Floor:** Two additional eight-seater tables displacing existing bookcases, four additional seats at existing tables and two additional seats along the north wall and four additional seats near the library entrance. [Total 26]
- **Mezzanine Floor:** Two additional eight-seater tables, one at each end of the room and two additional six-seater tables [Total 28]
- **Total:** Up to 54 study spaces

The current provision of carrels on the First Floor overlooking the mezzanine is for named DPhil students at the Rothermere American Institute and this arrangement will be retained.

### 2.3.2 Collections

Up to 750 linear metres of RSL open shelf material will be housed on VHL open shelves (about 60% of total RSL materials in the VHL) or local stack (to be accessed via a fetching service). Space for this collection is being created through:

1. Using the existing 400 linear metres of empty shelves in the VHL.
2. Completing the existing VHL collection plans to free up more empty shelving.
3. Moving to the BSF some materials that are currently available electronically.
4. Temporarily relegating very low use VHL materials to the BSF.

### 2.3.3 Opening Hours

It is hoped that the opening hours of the VHL will to a large extent, for the duration of the 18 months, be extended to match closely those of the RSL:

Term: Mon-Fri. 8.30/9am (TBC) - 10pm (3 to 3.5 hours longer than currently in VHL)  
Sat. 10am - 4pm (these times may be shifted slightly)  
Sun. 11am-5pm (these times may be shifted slightly)

Vacation: Mon-Fr. 8.30/9am (TBC) - 7pm (0 to 0.5 hours longer in Xmas and Easter vac and 2 to 2.5hrs longer in Long Vacation than currently in VHL)  
Sat. 10am - 2pm (4 hours longer than currently in VHL) - (these times may be shifted slightly)  
Sun. Closed

RSL facilities staff will be available to assist RAI staff in opening and closing the building and RSL staff will be available to staff the library.

### 2.3.4 Other Services

It is envisaged that RSL reader services staff will sit alongside VHL staff at a refurbished service desk, modified to be more open and accessible and continuing to operate as a reception point for the building.

It is expected that all readers will be able to continue to order BSF deliveries to a selection of sites including the VHL. RSL staff will assist with the logistics around an increase in book deliveries. A self-collect reserve will be operated opposite the enquiry desk.

An RSL PCAS photocopier will be transferred to the VHL and sited alongside the existing VHL machine and a number of RSL PCs will be transferred to the VHL to supplement the existing terminals.

RSL lendable stock held in the VHL will be borrowable by readers but VHL stock will remain “reference-only” as currently.

Salto access control gates will be installed at the entrance to the library. These will restrict access to authorised university and Bodleian reader cardholders while also providing entry statistics. The location and design of the reception point can enable overrides to permit visitors or groups of visitors (e.g. VIPs, conference participants) to enter the library. These gates will be retained by the VHL when the RSL moves out.

Four new group study rooms will be constructed on the upper floors of the VHL. One of these will be designated as a breakout space (eating/drinking/vending) for readers in order to preserve the RAI common room as a space for the RAI community. These rooms will remain in place and their ownership could transfer to the RAI, if they wished so, when the RSL moves out.

Four new group study rooms will be constructed on the upper floors of the VHL. One of these will be designated as a breakout space (eating/drinking/vending) for readers as RSL readers would not be allowed to use the RAI common room facilities. These rooms will remain in place and their ownership could transfer to the RAI, if they wished so, when the RSL moves out.

RSL Subject Librarians will not be based in the VHL, given space constraints. However, to ensure their ongoing visibility to readers, they are currently working to identify potential workspaces in their academic departments. They will also be allocated temporary Bodleian offices in the city centre.

RSL staff will be available to provide additional facilities support at VHL if required and to support a range of VHL stock management projects.

### 3. Mitigating the Impact on Vere Harmsworth Library Readers and the Rothermere American Institute

We are very grateful to the VHL/RAI for taking on the RSL staff and users as guests in their space, and we are keen to ensure that the presence of science library services does not cause them inconvenience.

However, the potential impact of additional numbers of science students, stock and associated services on the current users of the VHL and the wider RAI building (in which the VHL is closely embedded) is acknowledged.

As noted, there are a number of potential impacts that the proposed temporary changes will have on the existing Vere Harmsworth Library and Rothermere American Institute and these will need to be anticipated and allowed for in planning. Though some impacts would be negative if not properly managed, others would be of temporary or long-term benefit to the VHL.

The Bodleian is therefore undertaking work in advance of the decant to ensure that any potential inconveniences to current users of the VHL and the RAI building are identified and mitigated. This work includes a consultation on these possible impacts and their amelioration with VHL staff, the Institute, the History Faculty and across the relevant academic divisions that will be undertaken early in Michaelmas. A breakdown of the consultation can be found in Appendix II and areas of impact already identified and proposed measures to alleviate any impacts can be found in Appendix III.

### 3.1 Benefits to the VHL and the RAI

As noted above, the temporary transfer of science library services to the VHL will bring significant benefits to the VHL and to the Institute in the immediate and in the longer terms.

Examples include:

- Four additional group study rooms will be constructed and will be left in place for RAI use after the decant period.
- A Salto card access security system will be installed to enhance security of the library and to better usage statistics. This will remain in place after the decant period.
- Longer library opening hours will be provided by RSL staff based at the VHL.
- RSL facilities staff will be available if required to provide additional support.
- Additional library staff will be available to support a range of VHL stock management projects.
- There may be savings on space charges during the decant period. This is currently being further investigated.

## 4. Key Dates

Key dates and tasks are set out below. This assumes that the RSL will close by Christmas 2019, before the enabling works hoardings are established. RSL BSF transfers have already taken place and staff moves and final clearance of stock, furniture and equipment will happen after the closure.

- **Sept to Oct 2019:** decant of non-used RSL items to BSF.
- **Oct 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>:** Parks College public consultation event in the RSL.
- **Oct 2019:** VHL decant consultation.
- **Dec 9<sup>th</sup> 2019 to Jan 2020:** transfer of remaining collections to temporary accommodation with a fetching service available to provide access to books required by readers.
- **Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 (TBC):** RSL closes to readers.

- **Jan 2020 to Summer 2021:** RSL services in place at the VHL
- **Summer 2021:** RSL reopens in Parks College

## 5. Current Progress of the RSL Refurbishment Project

### 5.1 Collections

In anticipation of the closure of the RSL, to ensure the availability of the books, and to avoid disruption over Michaelmas, the c765 linear metres of stock not borrowed or consulted in the last two years was transferred to the BSF over the summer vacation. The remaining books in the RSL will be laid out on the top floor levels of the library in time for the start of Michaelmas.

This will provide readers with a collection that is easier to navigate as well as giving the library an assurance that the stock marked for open shelf use in the refurbished library will fit on the shelving that will be available.

### 5.2 Staffing

A consultation with RSL staff on the future staff structure in the new RSL was undertaken over August and September. During the decant period, several current RSL front of house staff will staff the service desk in the VHL. Other staff who will be returning to the RSL but for whom there will not be sufficient space in the VHL will operate a service desk roster remotely in addition to other duties (such as project support duties) from another Bodleian site. RSL Subject Librarians are working to identify spaces in academic departments where they can adopt a more embedded approach to information support.

### 5.3 Decant Planning

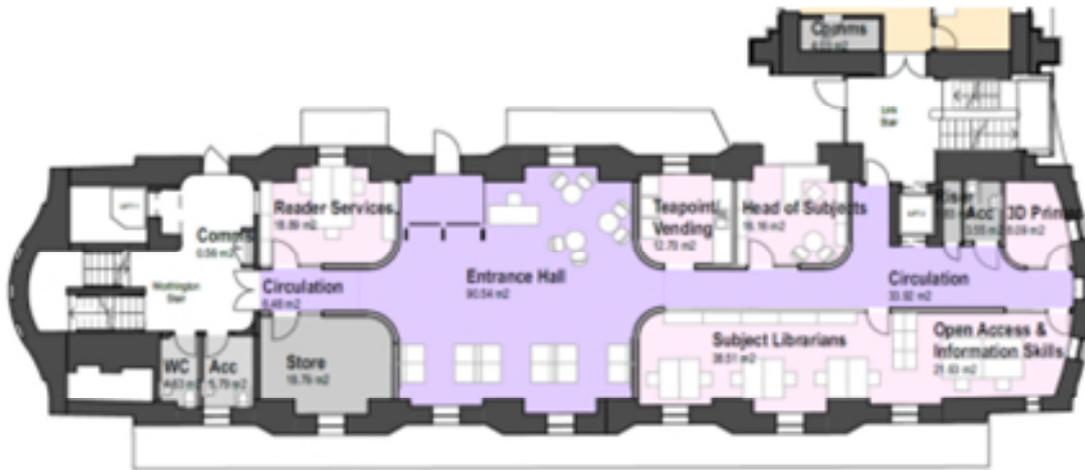
Over the summer vacation, RSL staff have been working closely with colleagues in Bodleian Estates (and more recently) in the VHL to plan the decant of the RSL's stock and services to the VHL. This work is ongoing as is a consultation with readers and others to mitigate any impact of the move on current users of the VHL. See above. A communications plan is also being developed for the students and others affected by the decant and associated works.

### 5.4 Communications

A communications plan is being developed for students and others affected by the RSL refurbishment, the decant, and associated works. This will include the consultation meetings and updates outlined in this document, updates on the relevant library and Parks Project Webpages, emails and announcements to students via existing mailing list and contacts/networks (for example Oxford Student Union) and communications cascaded via Divisional and Departmental communications teams.

# Appendix I – Current RSL Floor Plans (subject to change)

## RSL Ground Floor and Basement



### CTRC Seminar Rooms

Large Multi-Purpose Seminar Room with Reconfigurable Furniture and Movable Walls

### Breakout

Informal Open Plan Space to Support Seminar Room and Group Study Rooms

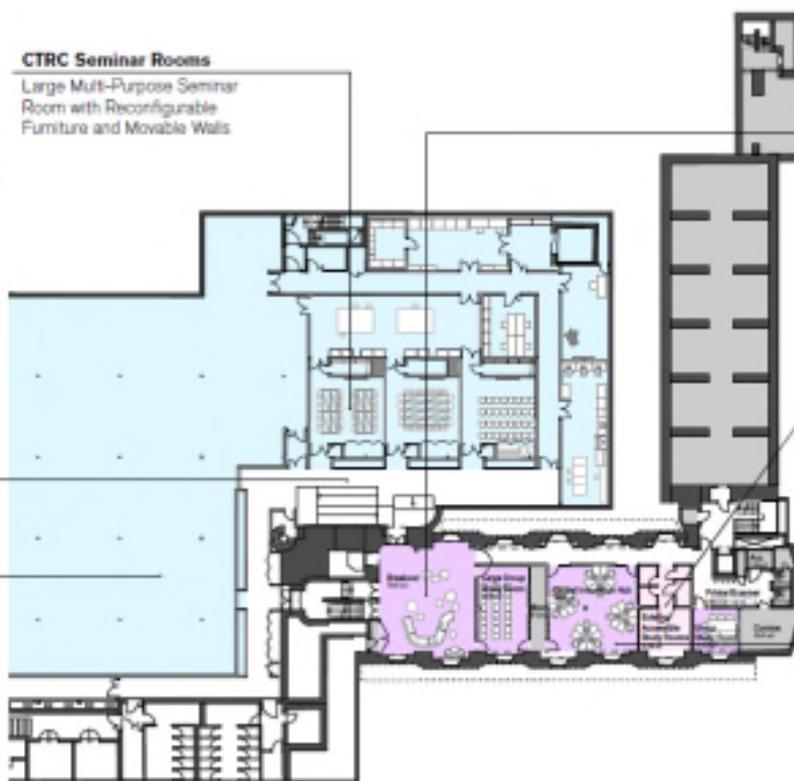
### Study Rooms

Existing Accessible Study Rooms and New Shared Group Study Rooms

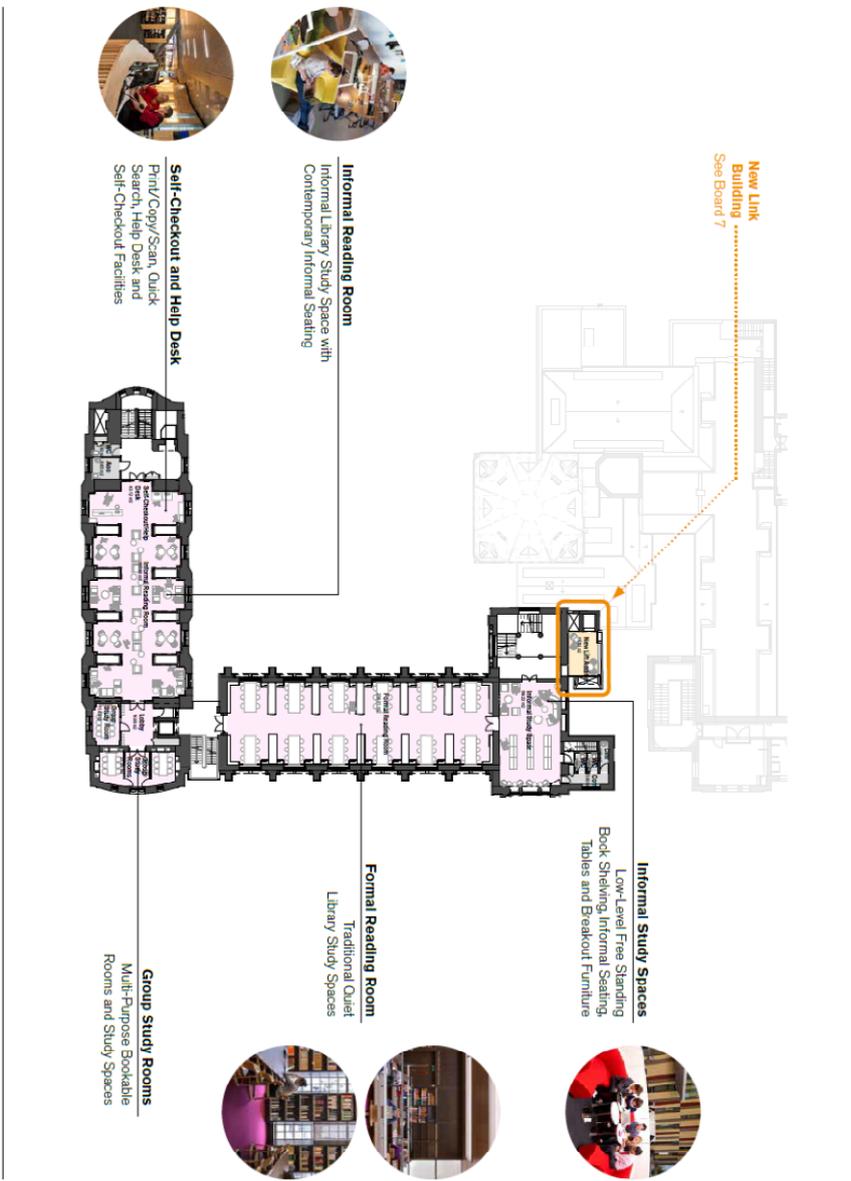
Corridor & Visible Store

Collections Store

Digital Innovation Hub



## RSL Top Floor



## Appendix II - VHL Consultation

The Bodleian Libraries will be consulting on these plans for temporary science library provision with all parties during Michaelmas term to ensure that the plans meet the requirements of current RSL users and to identify and mitigate any negative impacts on current users of the VHL and the RAI building.

Groups that will be consulted across the Humanities and Social Sciences (via papers presented or circulated) include:

### **Week 0, w/c 7 October**

09 October, email circulation – Social Sciences Divisional Library Committee

11 October, time tbc – Humanities Planning and Resources Committee

11 October – Social Sciences Planning and Resources Committee

### **Week 1, w/c 14 October**

16 October, 09:30 - CLiPS in Humanities/ROQ-Schwarzman Humanities Centre Library Users Group

14 October 16:00 - Open Meeting

16 October, 14:30 - History Graduates (Town Hall meeting)

17 October, 12:45 - History Group VI

### **Week 2, w/c 21 October**

21 October - CUL

24 October, 13:15 - RAI Exec

24 October, 14:00 - History CLiPs

25 October, time tbc - Humanities Divisional Board

### **Week 3, w/c 28 October**

28 October – Parks College Building Group

28 October – Politics GJCC

### **Week 4, w/c 4 November**

5 November, 14:00 – CLiPS in English

### **Week 5, w/c 11 November**

18 November, 14:00 - CLiPS in Humanities/ROQ-Schwarzman Humanities Centre Library Users Group

### **Week 7, w/c 25 November**

26 November, time tbc - Humanities Graduate Joint Consultative Committee

### **MPLS/MSD Divisional Level:**

Paper to be presented or circulated (depending on meeting dates) to MSD CLiPS, EPSC, Graduate School Committee, and Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Paper to be presented or circulated (depending on meeting dates) to MPLS CLiPS, GPC, Education Committee and Graduate School Committee.

Presentation to MSD Graduate Student JCC Michaelmas meeting.

Awaiting confirmation: Presentation or paper to MPLS Graduate Joint Consultative Forum.

Awaiting confirmation: Presentation or paper to MPLS Undergraduate Joint Consultative Forum.

**MPLS/MSD Departments:**

RSL staff have identified and have agreed slots at a wide range of departmental student and academic committees and other meetings in Michaelmas across MPLS and MSD departments with students based in the city centre.

A paper will also be presented to the November meeting of GLAM Board.

## Appendix III - Potential Impacts on VHL

### RSL decant to the Vere Harmsworth Library: impact on the VHL and Rothermere American Institute

The Vere Harmsworth Library is located in the Rothermere American Institute, and, having been established as the Library of the Institute, is closely identified with the RAI. The RAI, and the VHL as a fundamental part of it, is the foremost centre for the study of US history, politics, and literature outside the United States.

There are a number of potential impacts that proposed temporary changes will have on the existing Vere Harmsworth Library and Rothermere American Institute and these will need to be anticipated and allowed for in planning in order to mitigate the potential risk to the Institute's reputation, to the library as an internationally significant research facility for Americanists, and to the community of scholars associated with the institute. Though some impacts would be negative if not properly managed, others will be of temporary or long term benefit to the VHL.

Consequence	Impact	Level/ Risk	Mitigations	Level of impact after mitigation
Increase in reader numbers in the VHL	The VHL already reaches capacity with existing reader seating during busy periods. As a large proportion of the VHL stock is non-lending (legal deposit), it is critical that those readers who are visiting the library to use the VHL's library use only collections have space to work. Furthermore, a significant increase in usage will put greater strain on the building services, which will need to be allowed for.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional reader tables would be installed to deliver 48 additional reader seats. Advice is being taken from the University Fire Officer on measures required to ensure fire safety for increased occupancy.</li> <li>• The first floor study carrels will be maintained as reserved seating for RAI DPhil students.</li> <li>• Wifi provision will be assessed and additional access points installed.</li> <li>• Additional cycle parking may need to be provided (the location of new racks will also need to be discussed with the Chemistry Research Laboratory with whom the car park outside the Institute is shared).</li> <li>• Additional cleaning, waste disposal, and repairs will be budgeted for in the embedded space charge paid to the RAI.</li> <li>• In the event of demand exceeding the expanded seating</li> </ul>	Medium

			capacity in the VHL science readers will be directed to alternative Bodleian and other sites with spare seating. In addition, the Bodleian has approached neighbouring University departments to ask if they have any spaces that could be used as study space by students if required.	
RSL users using RAI common room facilities and garden spaces which they are not entitled to access	The RAI common areas are vital to creating the sense of community at the RAI, as well as being used regularly for RAI events, and so must be protected and reserved for the RAI. Extensive use of these spaces by RSL users would also increase noise which would impact users of the lower ground floor offices as well as the RAI's seminar rooms.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A breakout space would be provided for RSL readers within the VHL space, potentially within the ground floor group study room which will be supplemented with new group study rooms on the first and second floor.</li> <li>• Library policy, reinforced with clear signage, would clarify that the RAI common room and kitchen are not available to library readers.</li> <li>• Proposed works would allow for the partitioning off of the common room area with the addition of access control – a more flexible 'low profile' arrangement would be considered to facilitate event use of the space, with the option for a full height partition and door.</li> </ul>	Low-Medium
RSL users accessing other RAI areas of the building, for example seminar room 4 (currently unlocked) or hot desk space on the ground floor.	This may cause inconvenience to the smooth running of events and complicate closing up procedures for the building.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access control could be fitted to the doors to limit use to RAI users.</li> </ul>	Low
Increased opening hours of the VHL to match those of the RSL (additional	Longer opening hours, particularly late into the evening, risk impacting the security of the building and RAI Fellows,	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RSL library and FM staff would be inducted opening and closing procedures for the RAI building.</li> <li>• The time of OUSS patrols would be adjusted.</li> </ul>	Low

15 hours per week during term and 6 hours per week during vacation)	who have 24 hour access, if not properly managed. This would however also bring a benefit of longer hours for VHL readers, as well as longer public hours that could be used for events at the RAI.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSL facilities staff could transfer to the RAI to assist in security procedures – this could represent a cost saving to the RAI.</li> </ul>	
Increased use of the lift, particularly during book moves	The RAI lift is currently under repair and unable to cope with the current level of usage.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The repair and maintenance of the lift would be escalated with OUES to ensure that it is given a higher priority.</li> </ul>	Low (if fixed)
Increased staff numbers to be accommodated at the service desk	As this desk also functions as the reception for the RAI and building as a whole, any change to the set-up and working procedures of the service desk may disrupt the operations of the RAI. Anyone working there will need a sufficient understanding of the RAI in order to maintain an appropriate level of service to building users.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The existing desk would be remodelled to accommodate a member of staff of the RSL staff, with a second member of staff accommodated in a back room.</li> <li>RSL staff would be trained in RAI reception procedures (in the same way as current VHL staff are) so that they know what to do if they are approached about an RAI matter (for example, if RAI/VHL staff are temporarily not present).</li> <li>The desk would also be modified to improve its functionality as a reception point for the building.</li> </ul>	Low-Medium depending on new desk layout
Disruption to VHL collections.	As one of the largest and most significant research libraries for the history & politics of the United States outside the US, much of the RAI's reputation and its attraction as a research centre depend on the quality and size of the VHL's collection. Any threat to the integrity and accessibility of the VHL's collection would diminish its standing for the wider US Studies research community.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required internal moves would be carried out by the Bodleian Libraries book moving team.</li> <li>RSL collections could be accommodated using existing space on the VHL shelves and collection relocations already planned by VHL staff as part of ongoing collection rationalisation.</li> <li>No VHL books will be relegated, only journal backruns and some other source material for which online versions are available.</li> </ul>	Low-Medium

