

Disadvantaged Architecture; The Abandonment of Audio/Visual Impairment in the Built Environment

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Introduction - A Brief History of Discrimination

So much of our surrounding environment is designed, manufactured and intentionally constructed. Within those designed spaces every little detail is considered, right down to the handles on a door and the screws that attach them. There is also a process of creation where concepts are thought out, client meetings held, plans are drawn and colour schemes are chosen. All of this, and more, make up the stages used in architectural practice and although some stages may merge or be bigger than others, the process stays pretty much the same for every project. With all of this considered and discussed extensively by the design teams at all architecture firms, it seems strange that they should then ignore the issue of accessibility in their designs.

Accessible design is so often seen as "... simply a matter of technicalities - design guidance and legal requirements." (Boys, 2017:9) It translates into a series of basic inclusive features that are introduced into designed environments. Wherever there are stairs, a ramp is integrated, one that meets the standard regulations for its incline. Or, if the change in levels is too large, a lift is incorporated into the design. The impression given within architectural practice is that disability is the counterpart to ability. The two are acknowledged within the built environment but they never truly merge into one. They remain separate yet, somehow in the eyes of the architect, equal. It is an attitude that exists due to an extensive and long history of discrimination towards individuals with varying physical and/or mental abilities.

America, like most nations on earth, has this painful past and during the 1960s, laws and public opinion had led to disabled individuals being "...feared and ridiculed for their perceived defects and pushed to the margins of society." (McKeever, 2020) The consistent dehumanisation and humiliation of these individuals meant that they were "...excluded from public schools, involuntarily sterilized, sent to live in state-run institutions, and even denied the right to vote." (McKeever, 2020) They were deemed second class citizens, pushed to the outer perimeters of society so the rest, the ones that could walk or talk without any hindrance, could continue to live their lives without ever having to acknowledge the existence of someone unable to perform such tasks without issue. This world was not a welcoming one and that became clear when attempting to navigate through public spaces or use public transport. Neither was designed to

accommodate disabled individuals, with their voices and protests for change regularly being ignored.

In the 1970s attitudes began to change, and advocates for disabled rights began gaining new powerful voices, from soldiers who had returned home with permanent and life-altering injuries during the wars in Vietnam and Korea. They had left as able-bodied individuals, under the impression that they were fighting for their freedoms, only to return home, most of them no longer with the same physical or mental abilities, to realise that they had lost a number of those freedoms they were fighting for. It was a harsh reality but one that made way for drastic change and the eventual passing of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973. In essence, it stated that "...no program receiving federal funds could discriminate against a person with a disability." (Cone, 2013)

Although it was a huge win, the government passed Section 504 without defining key elements of it, such as what was considered a disability and what was considered discrimination. A further four years would pass by without any instrumental changes, resulting in the infamous '504 Sit-In' of 1977 where a federal building in San Francisco was occupied by peaceful protesters who stated that they would not leave until the terms of the bill were defined. After 28 days they were. This was a huge victory but was short lived as no matter how many laws were introduced, they were repeatedly redefined or ignored.

"In the mid-1980s, advocates came to the conclusion that the critical next step was to push for comprehensive civil rights legislation for people with disabilities." (McKeever, 2020) This legislation would be a definitive statement against the discrimination disabled individuals were continually facing, even after the passing of Section 504. A draft bill was created in 1988 and after two years of alterations and amendments, the Americans with Disabilities Act (hereon referred to as ADA) was passed by President George H. W. Bush Sr in 1990.

The ADA was designed to be the end of the line for the harassment and abuse so many disabled individuals continually faced over their lifetimes. Unfortunately, this was not the reality and to this day, there is still a deep divide between those that are deemed to be able-bodied and those that are not. This is something that is almost actively encouraged by our built world and the architects that create it. Accessibility in architecture has not only been reduced down to standard regulations, i.e. a ramp, but is repeatedly seen as a

specialism or concept for certain projects that are deemed appropriate for such conversations. It is introduced as a topic when the users of the space are directly affected by the issues of accessibility, rather than it always being there as part of professional practice. An example of this is Glasgow's Hazelwood School, a specialist school designed for children with visual impairments. It is an inspiring building whose architects, Alan Dunlop Architect Limited, took great care with, making sure the school's custom features, like the cork wall with textures carved into it (see Fig. 1), were there to aid both children and staff when making their way through the hallways. These walls are not only functional, but are aesthetically impressive too. However, this project seems to be a one-off, never to be repeated, but its features and care towards the users could revolutionise architectural practice. There "...is quite a lot we can learn from certain disabilities, from certain alternative ways of perception, of communication and we can bring them into design." (*Design For The Disabled*, 2012) Creative and inspiring structures can be designed as a result of considering disability in architecture, but only if the practice begins to treat the subject as the norm.



Fig. 1 Cork wall used for navigation within Hazelwood School District (2011)

For this dissertation, I will discuss the abandonment of disability in architecture concerning the term 'Palimpsest'. This word describes the process by which "writing material (such as a parchment or tablet) is used one or more times after earlier writing has been erased" (Merriam Webster, s.d.). In architectural practice, the term would translate into the process of 'remodelling' and in the case of my first case study, the process erased many elements of the original structure that were built for individuals with visual and physical disabilities.

The Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Stanley Tigerman

Designed by Stanley Tigerman in the late 1960s and eventually constructed in 1978, The Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (see Fig. 2) was a monument to inclusive and accessible design. The library stood as “...an ambitious design that manages to be particularly sensitive to the needs of its patrons...” (Miller, 1978:76). Something that so many buildings before it had not managed to achieve, and even after the libraries construction, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act had still not been defined. It seemed as though Tigerman was designing in retaliation to the lack of action by the government of the time.

To achieve success with the libraries design, Tigerman approached the project with three key principles. “First, the plan is linear because a linear plan can be followed and memorized more easily without sight. Second, all furniture is built-in so it can be learned and avoided. Third, everything is soft-cornered to reduce the hazard from collision.” (Miller, 1978: 79) (See Fig. 3) These principals were the result of Tigerman working “...closely with the American Federation of the Blind in developing ...design



Fig. 2 Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (1978)

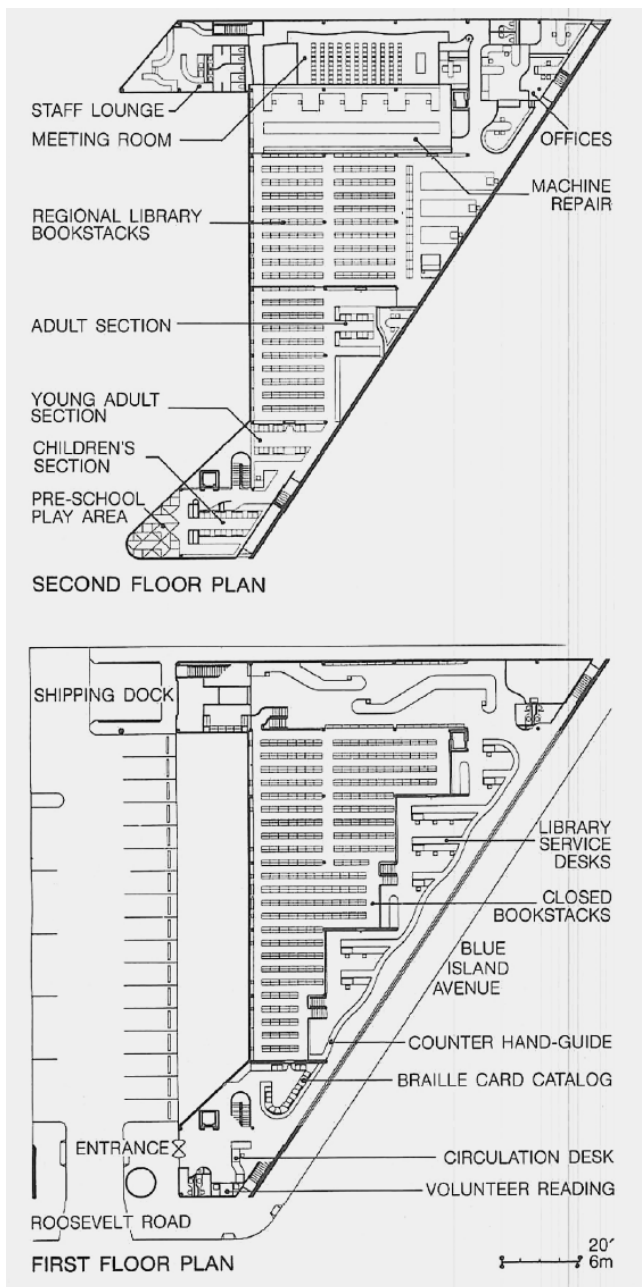


Fig. 3 Plan for Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (1978)

elements in the building.” (Miller, 1978:79) He did not come into the project with preconceived notions of what would work for disabled people, nor did he stick to the standard list of legal ‘must-haves’. Instead, he allowed his research into the real and valid experiences from those who had visual and/or physical impairments, to create the building's identity and make sure all the internal structures would meet their needs.

Even the exterior forms were specially designed in reference to visual impairment with the wave-like window acting as more than just an aesthetically powerful motif. Once “...spatially understood, users can find and/or memorize the distance to the public entrance...” (Serlin, 2019:98, 99), usually by counting the steps it takes from the end of the window. It is also “...a special window to be looked out of by those in wheelchairs, hence the low height, or by staff members, hence the periodic bulges...” (Miller, 1978:79) (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 4). The carefully designed

elements have more than one use because they consider more than one user. The design connects these users throughout the building, seeing their differences as opportunities to create features that are aesthetically and functionally unique.

All the surfaces inside the library were hard (See Fig. 5) “...to encourage utilization of the blind person’s increased perception of sound...” (Tigerman McCurry, s.d). Something so often overlooked is how we process sound, not only when concerning disability but also for those without any audio impairment. The “...brain processes sounds 10 to 100 times faster...” (Vega and Walter, 2012) than what is seen by the eyes. The specific amount of



Fig. 4 Internal flooring, furniture and window of Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (1978)

time that is referred to here may be minuscule but an encouragement of the sense has a huge impact. The noises within the structure stay clear and defined enabling someone who relies on their hearing most, to separate them rather than hearing a muffled combination of everything going on.

This understanding and care towards those with varying abilities stemmed from Tigerman's interest "...in exploring architectural features that encouraged or at least facilitated sensual and even erotic spatial encounters." (Serlin, 2019:89) His approach was more than wanting to make a building look interesting or beautiful, he wanted to "...bring pleasure to people." (Belogolovsky, 2019) Although at times Tigerman's designs took on rather

comedic and literal aesthetics, as is the case with the 'Animal Crackers' house which looks like a box of biscuits with the same name. In the case of the Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Tigerman's "...motivation was never solely to design a library as a programmatic response to the legal mandates..." (Serlin, 2019:104). He genuinely believed that designing respectfully and truthfully to the needs of the building's users was unadulterated architecture, that creating a building that went beyond the standard checklist would inevitably create a greater sense of pleasure. This came through most in the children's area of the library where play tunnels and raised levels were added to create a space of fun and privacy. (See Fig. 6)

In addition to taking a sensitive and respectful approach to the building, Tigerman played with a sense of irony, something he was so famous for. The components of the building all have specific colours assigned to them such as "perimeter: red; structure: yellow; mechanical equipment: blue..." (Tigerman McCurry, s.d) which all makes sense to those with the ability to see, or more specifically, see colour (see Fig. 7). But for those who



Fig. 5 Help Desks inside Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (1978)

cannot, it is ultimately unnecessary “... because the last thing a blind person can “see” is bright color bathed in light...” (Tigerman McCurry, s.d). The point Tigerman was trying to make here was that “...blind persons are as entitled to metaphorical symbolism as are the sighted.” (Tigerman McCurry, s.d) An individual may not be able to see the structure for themselves but that does not mean that the irony was lost on them, in fact, it was the complete opposite.

The inclusion of a diverse range of occupants is what made the building so noteworthy and to this day remains one of

Stanley Tigerman’s most famous works. Unfortunately, over time technology began to make the world a little more accessible and products such as Kindles took away the need for physical spaces dedicated to housing braille, large print books and taped recordings. Computers and phones now had built-in systems that allowed text sizes to be increased with ease or for the text on those screens to be turned into audio via specialist software. Disability was starting to be accounted for, or at least individuals with varying abilities now had ways of adapting these advancements to suit their needs.



Fig. 6 Children's Area inside Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (1978)



Fig. 7 Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (1978)



Fig. 8 Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd. (s.d.)

Lakeside Bank, Pappageorge Haymes Partners

After almost a decade of disuse and inevitable ageing, The Illinois Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped was sold off to Lakeside Bank in 2012. The bank then turned to Pappageorge Haymes Partners to remodel what was once a library into its flagship branch. This is where the concept of ‘Palimpsest’ takes place and the success of it, in this case, can only be determined by the “...new commercial occupant.” (Pappageorge Haymes Partners, s.d.) The remodelling works well for them, incorporating the banks' identity and key colour scheme of blue and white, but the identity of the original structure has been almost completely removed. (see Fig. 7 and Fig. 8)

Pappageorge Haymes Partners used a “...closely supervised renovation process...” so that all the alterations made sympathised “... with the building’s primary forms and essential character...” (Pappageorge Haymes Partners, s.d.). This statement, however, infers that the meaning behind Stanley Tigerman's design, the research, quality and humanity within it was deemed second to the aesthetics or forms of the structure. Taking



Fig. 9 The carpet flooring inside Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd. (2019)

away from the sense of irony that Tigerman put into almost every design he produced is one thing, there does have to be an element of professionalism with regards to a bank, but the remodelling went further than the removal of key elements found on the original exterior.

The “...conversion eliminated or else damaged beyond recognition many of the features that Tigerman created specifically for library users with sensory and mobility impairments...” (Serlin, 2019:92). The hardness of surfaces were taken away and carpet was quickly introduced to soften the space (See Fig. 9). Non-permanent features were added like plant pots and

graphics were applied to both the internal and external glasswork (see Fig. 10). The latter of which could be deemed a nod to Tigerman’s iconic use of irony within the built environment.

“Sadly the play structure and tunnels at Lakeside Bank, like the built-in seating arrangements installed throughout the library, disappeared with the swift dissolution of the wrecking ball, extinguishing not only any traces of the building’s former clientele but also anything that presumably reminded its new owners of the disabled experiences marked by such design features.” (Serlin, 2019:100) It is a strong statement but one with a disappointing amount of truth to it. Pappageorge Haymes Partners and Lakeside Bank were “...more interested in preserving the visual aesthetics ...” (Serlin, 2019:106) of the original building rather than getting involved in the meaning and context of it.

In the case of the Lakeside Bank, although it still meets the guidelines for the Americans with Disabilities Act, the remodelling purposefully chose to eradicate the existence of so many inclusive features, “... erasing any evidence of the building’s material commitments to disability...” (Serlin, 2019:106). They did not see the value in these thoroughly researched and thoughtfully considered aspects of the original building that made it such an iconic design.



Fig. 10 Plant pot and glasswork graphics inside Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd. (2019)

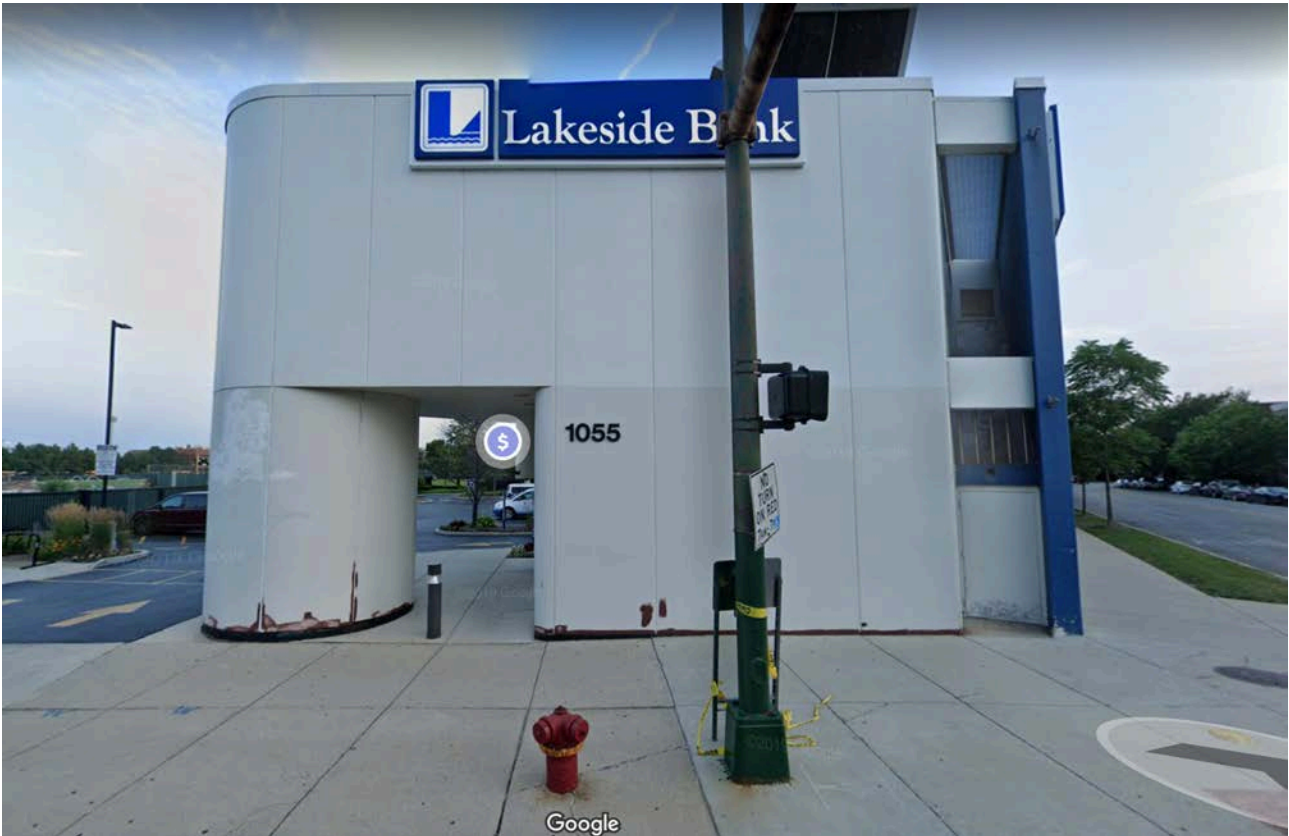


Fig. 11 Screenshot of Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd rust (captured 2019)



Fig. 12 Screenshot of Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd porthole window rust and damage (captured 2019)

It could be argued that the features Pappageorge Haymes Partners decided to remove would not have been appropriate for the new client or their customers. However, if Tigerman’s architectural approach was considered in the process, some element beyond just the forms of the library could have remained. Not every element of the original design could be kept, but some could have been preserved as a reminder of the history of the site, or possibly even utilised in a new way to create harmony between the old and the new.

Lakeside Bank’s flagship branch has been in place for less than a decade but signs of neglect and age are starting to appear. The porthole windows and metal cladding are rusting away, leaving noticeable marks of distress on the

building's surface (see Fig. 11 and Fig. 12). These signs of neglect are a relatively easy fix and if maintained, may never show up again. But somehow, even after an expensive remodelling process, the new proprietors seem to have left the building to show its age so clearly. It is strange that both Lakeside Bank and Pappa George Haymes should want to rid this structure of its powerful past as a place for all, but allow it to bear the scars of unnecessary vandalism and damage that remain visible to all.

Giving new life to a building that is no longer functional is an admirable thing to do, but to erase the memory of what that building was designed for does a disservice to all parties involved; architect, building and user. As previously stated, the Lakeside Bank flagship does meet the regulations of the ADA, but that cannot be said for all buildings, even those that are new builds.

Hunters Point Library, Steven Holl Architects

Hunters Point Library, designed by Steven Holl Architects, completed its decade long construction in 2019, twenty-nine years after the Americans with Disabilities Act became law. After it opened to the public issues with its design started to appear and a lawsuit was filed against "...Queens Borough Public Library, The Board of Trustees of the Queens Borough Public Library and the City of New York for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act..." (Dezeen, 2019) shortly afterwards.

One of the main issues is the building's reliance on stairs to reach multiple levels within. Although there is an elevator, there is only one, which "...creates large queues, and doesn't stop at every level..." (Dezeen, 2019). Introducing such a feature is a small but valid step towards creating an inclusive space, but if it is unable to perform its designed task, then the elevator itself becomes almost redundant. The upper three levels are only accessible via stairs (See Fig. 13) which also happens to be the only place you can see the panoramic views of the East River, Manhattan and beyond. (See Fig. 14) Although originally written about the Lakeside Bank flagship, David Serlin states that "...one's right to access did not have to sacrifice one's right to aesthetic pleasure." (Serlin, 2019:105) This statement could very well apply to Hunters Point Library, as the great attention to detail and general beauty of both the surroundings and the building itself, seem to be



Fig. 13 Staircase inside Hunters Point Library (2019)

almost exclusively for the able-bodied.

They are exclusive experiences designed only for those that can walk up and down stairs without hindrance.

The attitude of the Steven Holl Architects in response to the issues and lawsuit must also be brought into question. "The few issues that have come up are wrinkles normal to the opening of any new building, especially when the building is receiving such a huge audience." (Steven Holl Architects, 2019 cited in Gibson, 2019)

Reducing the concerns of members of the

community down to ‘wrinkles’ is not only offensive but takes away from the validity of these individuals. A new build will have minor problems, that is to be expected, but issues regarding accessibility and the ease of navigation within the building are not statements to be ignored or disputed. The experiences of these individuals are important and real, ones that will inevitably lead to a greater and more fulfilling architectural experience.

Not every new build or remodelling of an existing structure chooses to ignore either its past or the experiences of disabled individuals. Some encourage these elements and even build upon them, improving facilities and considering the ever-changing variety of people who use the spaces.



Fig. 14 Hunters Point Library and surrounding views (2019)

Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales, Taller de Arquitectura Mauricio Rocha + Gabriela Carrillo

In 1807, after several years of changing architects, the Royal Tobacco Factory of New Spain was finally constructed. A year later, it was remodelled into a political prison for José María Morelos, leader of the Mexican Independence Movement at the time. Then in 1816 it officially became the Citadel of Mexico City. The structure had already undergone three changes in nine years, yet there were many more to come before it reached its final resting place, the Biblioteca de México "Jose Vasconcelos" in which the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales is located.

The Citadel went on to become the shared offices of the Ministry of Defence and the Interior, eventually being declared a historical monument in 1931. Thirteen years later part of the property was granted to the Library of Mexico which was fully established in 1946 with its first director being José Vasconcelos, the man who would later have part of the library named after him. In 1987 the library acquired the Citadel in its entirety which inevitably needed some improvements made to it. The task of remodelling the building was given to Abraham Zablowsky who "...proposed that the building retain the original helmet and that a novel structure of transparent steel and glass umbrellas cover the



Fig. 15 Abraham Zablowsky remodelling of Biblioteca de México "Jose Vasconcelos" (2014)

patios, without touching the old building, resulting in new reading areas while allowing unlimited views.” (Gobierno de México, s.d.) (See Fig. 15) The library reopened in 1988, but it would not be long before it would face yet another development.

The Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales translated is the ‘Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired’. Originally this library came in the form of one room within Biblioteca de México, which housed special facilities and resources for the blind and partially sighted. Overtime the room became “...cramped, receiving many more visitors than its insufficient space could provide for.” (Carrillo, 2020) This first iteration of a specially designed space did not take into account that many of its users would visit with other people, most likely their sighted children, who would need their own space to occupy whilst their parent or guardian was browsing the library archives.

In 2011 the library commissioned Taller de Arquitectura Mauricio Rocha + Gabriela Carrillo to remodel the library, tackling these issues raised by the users. This firm was not new to this sort of brief, having created Centro de Invidentes y Débiles Visuales, a facility that provided services to both the sighted and visually impaired found in Mexico City.

The first thing the architects proposed was that “...the new rooms be moved to the north facade of the library, placing it closer to an entrance patio which would later become an aromatic garden, and improving the natural lighting in the space.” (Carrillo, 2020) In this new location, the library would not only have more space but would also be far brighter than the original. Although Stanley Tigerman used bright colours as an ironic statement, bright light and definable forms are incredibly important in a space for the partially sighted. The contrasts created between forms make it easier for those with only partial sight loss to navigate in and around the space with ease and comfort.

In the original space, there were small sound booths, referred to as ‘cabins’, used to record or listen to taped recordings of text, however, they remained “... unused due to their small size and unpleasant odour...” (Carrillo, 2020). The cabins were poorly ventilated and uncomfortably small for their purpose so to create a better experience inside these spaces, the “...new booths are fitted with silent extraction, audio equipment that places the voice of the readers at an ideal volume and tone, and insulation that contains the sound...” (Carrillo, 2020) so as not to impose or disrupt the rest of the library. (See Fig. 16) Hearing is the most relied upon sense by those that have a visual

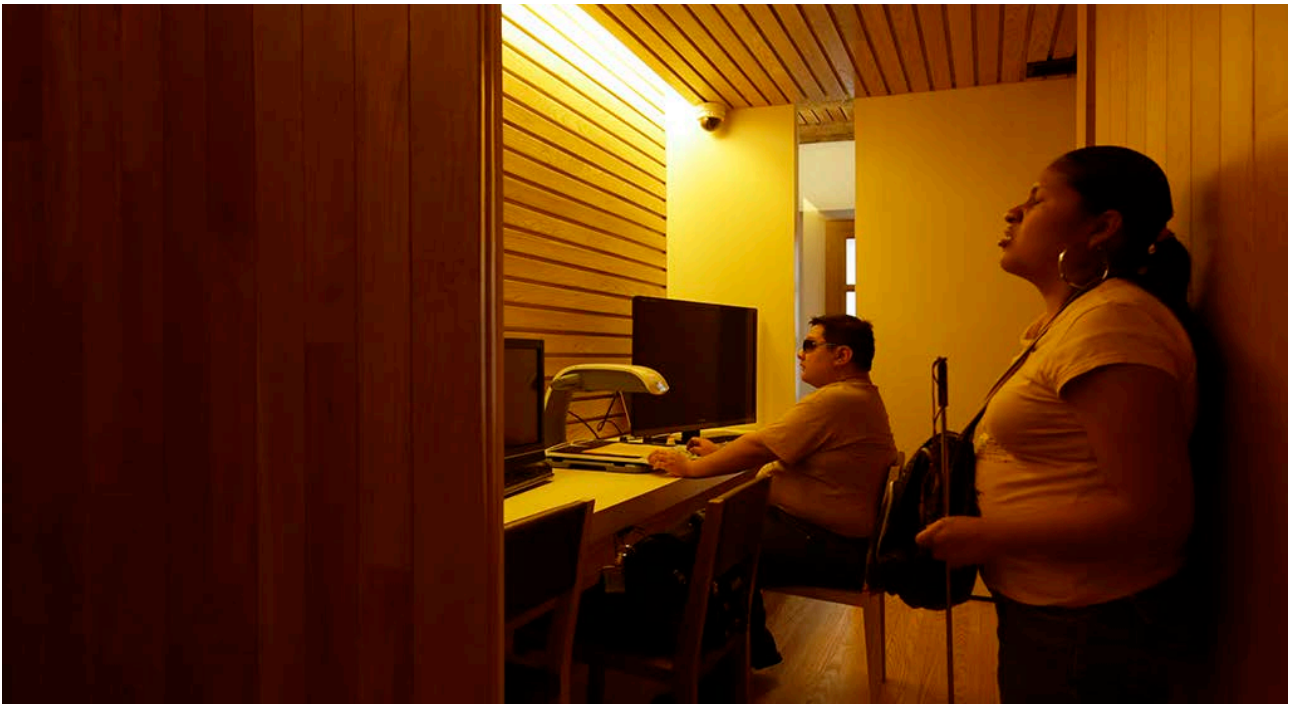
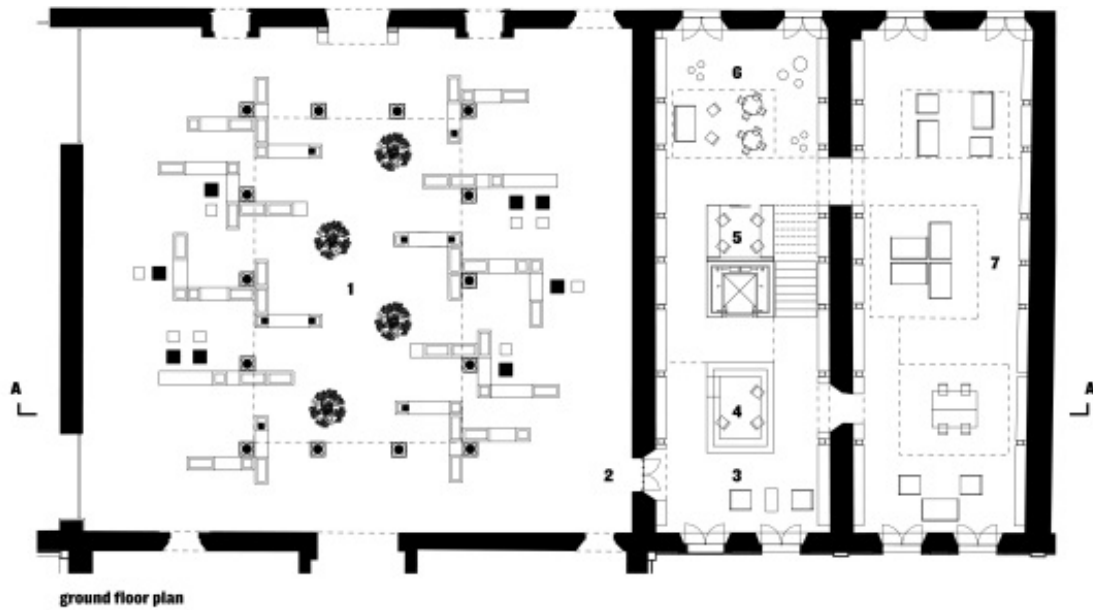


Fig. 16 Sound booths in Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales (2014)

impairment, so creating a well-considered space that is not only dedicated to listening to recordings but also contains the noise is an ideal solution to the problem.

The remodelled library has a very distinctive look, mostly constructed out of glass and wooden panelling placed in very rigid horizontal and vertical planes dividing the space up (see Fig. 17) This contrasts greatly with Tigerman's library concept where everything had smooth edges so as not to injure anyone who walked into any of the permanent features. This may seem like an oversight but the spatial divisions are often as simple as the pattern of the wooden panelling changing direction. There are few physical barriers between the spaces making navigation through the library simple and direct.

To aid further with navigation through the many areas of the library, thin yellow cutouts were added into the flooring of the main walkways. It was designed specifically for those that use a White Cane, an aid that scans the immediate surroundings for obstacles or protrusions, to guide them through spaces (see Fig. 18). The White Cane drops into the cutout allowing the user to follow the walkways with ease and comfort knowing that they will always be clear from obstruction. Turns and corners are easily identified and even stairs can be politely introduced. The use of yellow was not a purely aesthetic gesture either, instead, it has been used because it is one of the most visible colours to those with visual impairments, including colour blindness.



- ground floor plan
- 1 courtyard
 - 2 entrance
 - 3 waiting room
 - 4 reception
 - 5 children's booth
 - 6 toy library
 - 7 reading spaces

Fig. 17 Plan of the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales (2014)



Fig. 18 Navigation around the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales (2014)

Decorative elements are usually always for aesthetics. The mentality is that if something cannot be seen then it is not decorative. Yet, Taller de Arquitectura Mauricio Rocha + Gabriela Carrillo managed to bust this myth and instead of leaving the space as a subdivided hall of blandness, they created a sensory decorative experience with the addition of "...braille text quoting verses by significant writers and poets..." (Carrillo, 2020) along multiple surfaces like handrails and tables (see Fig. 19). The constant interaction with the surfaces is necessary to understand and remember the environment but that does not necessarily mean that only the position of a chair should be noted. Why not a quote as well?



Fig. 19 Reading braille on a handrail in the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales (2020)



Fig. 20 Children's area within Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales (2020)

A play area with a toy library was introduced into the, now larger, library (see Fig. 20). Low tables, chairs and shelving make it easy for children to enjoy the space without the need for constant assistance from their parents or guardians. Everything has been designed specifically for them, and there is even a soft floored area in the middle for larger group activities and play. This space, although separate, works with the rest of the library aesthetically and conceptually. There are no physical barriers in the space, instead, it is defined by the change in volumes and flooring patterns.

What makes this remodelling of an existing library designed specifically for the visually impaired, and what makes it so different from Stanley Tigerman's, is the fact that it is not truly separate from the rest of the public library. It may have its own section but it is not its own building. It works in harmony with the entire Biblioteca de México, choosing to acknowledge everyone and anyone within its design. Many of the features are there to assist the blind but those with varying visual abilities are considered too, even those without any difficulties. "Sensory design supports everyone's opportunity to receive information, explore the world, and experience joy, wonder and social connections, regardless of our sensory abilities." (Lupton and Lipps, 2018:9)

Conclusion - The Need for Accessibility

Inclusive and accessible design can be achieved in architectural practice with buildings like the Illinois Regional Library For The Blind And Physically Handicapped and interventions such as the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales prove that this is the case. It can be done, and done well, integrating anyone and everyone into the design process as well as the final outcome. But the latter of these examples breaks the norms of architectural practice. It is one of only a few examples where inclusivity and accessibility were improved upon. Hopefully, it will not be the last.

Designing for more than one stereotyped user can lead to greater social change. Some of the most popular technologies and products have been as a result of the inventor designing for disability. The telephone, typewriter, audiobook, text messaging system, oxo vegetable peeler, and even fidget spinners all started as products to aid those who were visually impaired, deaf or faced other difficulties as a result of neurodevelopmental conditions and disorders like Autism and ADHD. Even dropped curbs were "...originally developed for wheelchair access..." but became, "...a huge benefit to anyone with a pushchair or wheeled luggage." (Killeen, 2017) All of these products, and more, are evidence for accessible design being the most effective, inclusive and respectful approach to any project, not just those that are product based. Issues relating to gendered toilets are oftentimes resolved by non-gendered or transgender individuals using disabled cubicles due to safety concerns. Although this is not an ideal solution, the root of the problem may one day be solved by making all toilets separate facilities that everyone can use comfortably and safely.

There is one final point to be made about designing with disability in mind. Architecture, as both a practice and course, encourages us to experience our built world through sight. What we see becomes our only interpretation of our environment. This way of thinking has an immediate and obvious negative affect on individuals with any degree of visual impairment, but these negative results may not be so exclusive. "The dominance of the eye and suppression of the other senses tends to push us into detachment, isolation and exteriority." (Pallasmaa, 2005: 19) Our experience of space has been reduced down to what our eyes and brains witness and process. The world has become a photographable reality filled with potentially perfect 'Instagrammable' moments. But architecture intends

to be experiential, igniting curiosity and interest in the space around us. Great architecture wants us to be in “...this space, this place, this moment...” (Pallasmaa, 2005: 72).

“We are in constant dialogue and interaction with the environment, to the degree that it is impossible to detach the image of the Self from its spatial and situational existence.” (Pallasmaa, 2005: 64) Our senses are continually stimulated, it is an involuntary reaction to our ever-changing environments but we often ignore that process, instead choosing what we see to be our most accurate perception of both time and space. Designing for disability is, in a way, designing for the senses. For what we can hear, touch, smell and even taste.

I believe that an approach that considers all, will inevitably create a world where every individual has the same opportunities to access, interact with and enjoy designed space. By continuing to ignore the experiences of those with varying mental and physical abilities, we will create an environment that fosters discrimination, harbours hatred and causes a massive divide in our experience of reality itself. No one individual or group needs their own world, but to be accepted into the one that already exists.

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Fig. 9 *The carpet flooring inside Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd.* (2019) In: *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*. 16 (1) pp. 94.

Fig. 10 *Plant pot and glasswork graphics inside Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd.* (2019) In: *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*. 16 (1) pp. 102.

Fig. 11 *Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd rust* (2019) [Google Maps, screenshot] At: <https://www.google.com/maps/@41.8669832,-87.6532039,3a,90y,180.42h,94.08t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1soqzWJVJKUecwWPJcAFBHKw!2e0!7i16384!8i8192> (Accessed 28/11/2020).

Fig. 12 *Screenshot of Lakeside Bank 1055 W. Roosevelt Rd porthole window rust and damage* (2019) [Google Maps, screenshot] At: https://www.google.com/maps/@41.8668671,-87.6530827,3a,75y,286.97h,113.41t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sH1CKWeQUDBeDT2IErfMy_A!2e0!7i16384!8i8192 (Accessed 28/11/2020).

Fig. 13 *Staircase inside Hunters Point Library* (2019) [Photograph] At: <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/11/26/hunters-point-library-steven-holl-architects-lawsuit-inaccessibility-issues/> (Accessed 03/11/2020).

Fig. 14 *Hunters Point Library and surrounding views* (2019) [Photograph] At: <https://www.dezeen.com/2019/11/26/hunters-point-library-steven-holl-architects-lawsuit-inaccessibility-issues/> (Accessed 03/11/2020).

Fig. 15 *Abraham Zablowsky remodelling of Biblioteca de México "Jose Vasconcelos"* (s.d.) [Photograph] At: <http://cdmxtravel.com/en/attractions/jose-vasconcelos-library-of-mexico-la-ciudadela.html> (Accessed 19/11/2020).

Fig. 16 *Sound booths in Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales* (2014) [Photograph] At: <http://www.arquitecturapanamericana.com/biblioteca-para-debiles-visuales/>

Fig. 17 *Plan of the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales* (2014) [Photograph] At: <http://www.arquitecturapanamericana.com/biblioteca-para-debiles-visuales/>

Fig. 18 *Navigation around the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales* (2014) [Photograph] At: <http://www.arquitecturapanamericana.com/biblioteca-para-debiles-visuales/>

Fig. 19 *Reading braille on a handrail in the Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales* (2020) [Photograph] At: <https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/building-for-the-blind> (Accessed 24/11/2020).

Fig. 20 *Children's area within Biblioteca para Ciegos y Débiles Visuales* (2020) [Photograph] At: <https://www.architectural-review.com/buildings/building-for-the-blind> (Accessed 24/11/2020).

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