



THE BASIL GRIFFITHS LIBRARY

STUDENT CASE STUDY

OVERVIEW

Named after contemporary local educator, The Basil Griffith Library opened in 2016. It occupies a small office on the 2nd floor of SADACCA, the Sheffield & District Afro-Caribbean Community Association. They have been in operation for over 60 years, previously known as the West Indian Association.

Inspired by the history and aims of SADACCA, as well as the writings of Malcolm X, the library houses a collection of books that champion the Black experience in the diaspora, providing representation for Black British writers of African and Caribbean descent..

THE LIBRARY ALSO FACILITATES A TUTORING SERVICE AND READING CLUBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, AS WELL AS A WOMEN'S LITERARY DISCUSSION GROUP



ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES



SADACCA's space forms the 1st floor of red brick terraced street, Wicker, but the front entrance sets the building apart from the rest's of the street design, in the form of a magnificently detailed stone building. It was built in 1853 by John Shortbridge, a prominent Victorian Architect involved in the construction of the Wicker Viaduct.

Intricate stone carvings of the facade include '1853', crossed arrows, a hand holding a hammer and cog, fish, a bearded ram's head and an elephant's heads. The structure was built to be the steelworks office, and the internal design of space has remained somewhat the same.

The building consists of a maze of rooms, varying in size, with some rented out as office space for small businesses, and others acting as events spaces.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

HOW IS THE SPACE USED BY THE COMMUNITY? WHAT DOES IT SERVE THE COMMUNITY?

During the labour shortages in the UK following WWII, travel to Britain from around the Empire and Commonwealth was unrestricted, leading to a sharp rise in numbers during the 1950s. Some 100,000 people left the Caribbean for Britain, and it was during this period that the African and Caribbean community began to settle in Sheffield to fill the gaps in the labour market.

The Caribbean population in Sheffield is one of the largest in the UK with 9,100 people. The largest communities are based in Sharrow, Burngreave and Netherthorpe. In Sheffield, there are many African and Caribbean restaurants, hair stylists, food stores and community centres - such as SADACCA.

The Vision for the Basil Griffith Library was that of John Kamara. He is a young North Londoner who relocated to Sheffield after attending university in the city. John realised the lack of Black representation in the school curriculum and felt the need to give back to the Caribbean community by providing this for the young people of Sheffield.



SADACCA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OLIVIER TSEMO, SHEFFIELD'S LORD MAYOR MAGID MAGID AND LIBRARY MANAGER JOHN KAMARA AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF SADDACA'S BASIL GRIFFITH LIBRARY

USE

HOW HAS THE COMMUNITY USED THE SPACE IN THE PAST, TODAY AND HOW WILL IT BE USED IN THE FUTURE?

PAST

The building operated as offices of the steelworks before SADACCA called it home in 1980. It was built for Hartford Steel Works, then Shortridge, Howell and Co., who sold it to Clyde Works in 1868 - this transaction is documented on a plaque by the front door. Clydeworks' offices also extended along Wicker, above the shops, in the same way SADACCA's space does now.

PRESENT

SADACCA provides a vast range of activities: Healthcare Services, Childcare facilities, Adult Education programmes, Saturday School, Boxing Club, Dominoes at the Bar, Recording Studio, Dance, Free Legal Advice, Elderly Luncheon Club, Women's Sewing Group, Study support.

More Specifically, The Basil Griffith Library embraces the multi-ethnic history of Sheffield through programmes such as Beards & books. Here, young people can bond with the elderly over reading; learning about African and international history while supplementing their mainstream education.

FUTURE

John hopes to see continued engagement from the young people involved with the library, so that as they grow, they give back to their community in a similar way. The building that SADACCA utilises could be more efficiently run, and there are opportunities for exciting work to be done in some of their empty spaces.



REFLECTIONS

HOW HAVE COMMUNITIES OF DIERSE ETHNIC HERITAGE HAD A VOICE IN THE PLANNING AND DESIGN OF SITES THAT ARE SIGNIFICANT TO THEM?

This very much relates to SERVICE, where John Kamara, as a community actor, has provided a service to his community through the setting up of the Basil Griffith Library. It is the multi-generational approach to the programmes that will encourage young people to continue their commitment, or service, to the library as they grow older. This is a circular process of giving back to the community.

SADACCA was formed by a small number of Caribbean immigrants in 1955, searching to improve their standard of living in the UK. They fought tirelessly with the prejudiced council to achieve this listed building as their home in 1980. This spirit lives on in people like John who are continually pushing for ways to better the lives of his community.

