“Southwark Council wanted a building that would contribute to the regeneration of the area. The resulting design was such a success that people were sometimes surprised that it is simply a local library and not something grander. The pre-patinated copper, steel mesh and coloured glass, chosen for their vandal-deterring properties, give the building its sweetie-like appearance. Giant letters on the roof clearly announce its function as a library.
The building was Alsop and Störmer's imaginative response to the original brief, which was: 'to create a building of architectural merit that will bring prestige to the borough and a welcome psychological boost to the area. It should be a thoroughly modern building that is ahead of its time, but also one that does not alienate people by giving an appearance of elitism, strangeness or exclusivity. Local people must be able to relate to the architecture and design, as well as the services provided and they should feel pride in, affection for and ownership of the building'.
The judges said of the library, ‘This is a building full of bravado and as such it has captured the hearts of a disaffected part of the population. All the best buildings are popular with their users and the young people of Peckham flock into their library every day. In the end, this is a building to make you smile: more architecture should do that’.
At a small cost, this L-shaped box of copper and coloured glass transformed this part of an underprivileged borough. Turner-Prize-winning artist Tracey Emin, one of the Stirling judges, spent 12 years of her life in Peckham and was pleased to see money being spent here at last. She liked it because it didn't feel like a library and she particularly liked the pods.” — architecture.com
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