

CHAPTER ONE

FOUNDATIONS OF A RURAL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (1938 - 1946)

The establishment of a library at the New England University College took place in conjunction with the opening of the College in February 1938. But like the College itself, the library has its origins in a period prior to foundation.

The prospect of setting up a university in northern New South Wales had been fitfully entertained since late in the nineteenth century. Armidale attracted particular recognition in this period as a major educational centre: its strategic location, its role as a religious centre, and its robust climate combined to give rise to various schools - both State and private.¹

The emergence of post-secondary educational institutions in Armidale - a teacher training college in 1928 and a university college a decade later - was decisively related to two factors. Firstly was the force of regional loyalties in northern New South Wales, which were crystallized in the activities of the New State Movement during the 1920s.² Secondly, the educational environment in Australia and else-

¹ Bruce Mitchell, 'Origins of the New England University College', *Armidale and District Historical Society Journal*, no. 25, 1982, pp. 115-132. W.G. Walker, 'The Contribution of the Churches to the Development of Armidale as an Educational Centre', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 54, pt. 2, June 1968, pp. 152-160. D.H. Drummond, *A University is Born. The Story of the Founding of the University College of New England*, Sydney, 1959, pp. 1-4.

² Grant Harman, 'New State Agitation in Northern New South Wales, 1920-1929', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 63, pt. 1, June 1977, pp. 26-39.

where was undergoing a vital change. Universities were ceasing to function as a separate type of institution designed for the specially privileged and becoming part of a system of education open to all classes in a modern democratic society. A significant mark of this change was the need for growing numbers of tertiary-trained teachers to serve in the expanding secondary schools. This relationship between university education and the preparation of teachers forms a thread of continuity in the history of the University of New England. In the early years it influenced the pattern of enrolments, since student teachers were attracted to the University College in pursuit of higher qualifications.³ At a later time, it underlay the College's move towards independence, insofar as a willingness to provide correspondence courses for country-based teachers employed by the Department of Education encouraged the State Government to grant autonomy to the College in 1954.⁴

In 1934, a provisional Council was formed in Armidale for the creation of a university college in the north. Three years later, this movement received a catalyst of political importance when a local pastoralist, Thomas R. Forster,⁵ presented to the University of Sydney a substantial property - consisting of a capacious home, *Boooloominbah*, set in 183 acres of land - on condition that it be used

³ For example, in 1939, N.E.U.C.'s second year of operation, 24 of the 42 First Year students held scholarships from the N.S.W. Department of Education, and 14 out of 21 Second Year students. N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1939, p.2.

⁴ A. Barcan, *A History of Australian Education*, Melbourne, 1980, p.331.

⁵ Forster was a son-in-law of Frederick White, the original owner of *Boooloominbah*, and he purchased the property from the Trustees of the White Estate. Bruce Mitchell, 'Forster, Thomas Richmond', in *A.D.B.*, vol. 8, p. 553.

for the establishment of a university college.⁶ A year later, a public appeal raised a sum of £10,000 in support of the proposed institution.⁷

The value of private benefactions to the proposed university college was not confined to the general institution: it extended to a major section, the library. In August 1934, a deputation of local citizens met at the Armidale Teachers' College with the State Member for Armidale and Minister for Education, D.H. Drummond. Its aim was to further the campaign for a local university. On that occasion, Drummond revealed that he had already been giving thought to the library needs of such an institution. The Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, W.H. Ifould, had advised him that an amount of approximately £2,000 would be required 'to launch an efficient and sufficient Library'.⁸

In February 1935, Drummond wrote a personal letter to Mr. (later Sir) William Dixson, a well-known collector and public benefactor, seeking to elicit his support for a university college library in Armidale. Drummond would have expected a sympathetic response. His portfolio as Minister for Education (first in 1927-30 and later 1932-41) had a direct affinity with library development since it included responsibility for the Public Library of New South Wales on which Dixson had already bestowed significant benefactions. In 1929 he had donated pictures for the establishment of the Dixson Gallery in the Public Library, and in 1935 a sum of £4,000 for the Library's entrance doors. He had also made known by this time his intention

⁶ Drummond, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁷ The precise significance of this sum of £10,000 lay in a provision of the University and University Colleges Act 1900. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸ *ibid* , p. 12.

to bequeath to the Public Library his entire collection of books and other materials.⁹ In addition, while Dixson had no apparent links with the New England region, he had undergone his secondary education in the country¹⁰ - an experience that may have disposed him towards the support of a rural university.

Drummond's first approach to Dixson did not bear immediate fruit. However, in September 1937, as the foundation of the College appeared assured, Drummond made a second overture. On this occasion Dixson responded with a gift of £2,500 for the establishment of a library.¹¹ Eighteen months later, Dixson was invited to the Admission of Matriculants' ceremony at the University College. He declined, but presented a further cheque of £2,500.¹²

The name *Dixson Library* was acquired early in honour of its founding benefactor, though the records are silent on whether any formal dedication ceremony took place. By February 1938, the College Warden, E.H. Booth, was referring in private correspondence

⁹ B. Cook, 'Dixson, Sir Hugh', in *A.D.B.*, vol. 8, pp. 309-310.

¹⁰ At all Saints' College, Bathurst.

¹¹ Dixson to R.L. Blake, 8 October 1937: 'You will, of course, understand that I am giving this money for the specific purpose of establishing a Library for the New England University College, as I know that for such an institution a good Library is an absolute necessity.' D.L.A., 51.

¹² Dixson to E.H. Booth, 19 April 1939. D.L.A., 51.

No tables of average book prices exist for this period to provide an indication of the actual value of the Dixson gifts. However, a scanning of sources like the *English Catalogue of Books* and the National Book Council's *Book Lists*, which report book prices, suggests an average price for an academic book of around 15 shillings. Thus, a crude estimate of the purchasing power of £5,000 in the late 1930s would be 6,500 - 7,000 books.

to the *Dixson Library*;¹³ and, by January 1939, the College Calendar gave public credence to the title by publishing regulations under the heading of 'DIXSON LIBRARY (Founded by the Gift of William Dixon, Esq.)'.¹⁴

The Dixon gift was of decisive importance in the College Library's early years. It facilitated two kinds of developments - collection-building and staffing. The gift constituted a foundation grant which was in effect 'earmarked', thereby affording the library a source of funds independent from the allocation to the whole institution. Private benefactions have been conferred on other university libraries in Australia, but they have not generally been available at the beginning to provide an additional form of support for the library. A common result has been slow or uneven development. The University of Sydney Library, for example, enjoyed 'a most auspicious start' in terms of book funds, but within three years the 'grand wave of bibliothecal enthusiasm subsided as suddenly as it developed'. Only at a later time was this initial setback redressed by a bequest from Thomas Fisher.¹⁵ In the early years of the Dixson Library, the provision of funds was fairly consistent, though the actual amounts may possibly have been lower because of the Dixon gift.¹⁶

¹³ Booth to F.A. Todd, 14 February 1938. Dixson Library Papers, U.N.E.A., A352.

¹⁴ *New England University College*, January 1939, p. 10.

¹⁵ Harrison Bryan, 'An Australian Library in the A.M. - Earlier Years of the University of Sydney Library', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 55, September 1969, pp. 206 - 210.

¹⁶ Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Australian University Statistics*, various years.

The first requirement of the Library was a foundation collection, in particular books which students would need to consult in their courses. This was, at the time, a novel and even radical notion. Hitherto, academic libraries had generally been considered the province of those settled in the ways of scholarship. They were designed for the teachers rather than the taught. From the outset at New England, however, the idea of a 'students' library' influenced the College's philosophy of education. Booth was active in buying books for teaching purposes, at one point even being gently chided by the Fisher Librarian, Mr. H.M. Green - through whose offices the Dixson Library placed its early orders - for requesting an excessive number of books.¹⁷ When revising library regulations in 1940, Booth insisted that 'the student interest requires protection' against the proprietorial tendency of academic staff in relation to library materials.¹⁸ He stated his belief that 'the University has been established for the benefit of the students'.¹⁹

The Dixson gift proved vital to the rapid establishment of a 'students' library'. Dixson himself had placed no restrictions on the use of his benefaction, except that he reportedly wished it 'to be employed for books and journals which will be used'.²⁰ By the end of the Library's initial year of operation, book purchases had absorbed half of the donated funds, and the Library was judged to be 'already well

¹⁷ Green to Booth, 23 February 1938. U.N.E.A., A352.

¹⁸ Booth to Green, 27 June 1940. U.N.E.A., A352.

¹⁹ Booth to Green, 10 September 1940. U.N.E.A., A352.

²⁰ Booth to R.S. Wallace, 19 May 1938. S.U.A., 3091.

equipped with books immediately required'. Students were not considered 'at a disadvantage for want of books',²¹ though such an assessment must be viewed in the context of the unusual isolation experienced by library users at New England. Unlike their urban counterparts, who typically had more than one major library at their disposal, the College's students and staff had to rely exclusively on the holdings of the Dixon Library. The handicap of distance that distinguished Australian educational life from that in Europe was felt more intensely in the rural remoteness of Armidale. The comparison advanced by Dallen in an international context applied with peculiar force to a country area on the national scene:

*We should not be satisfied here with a small library merely because our country and our University are young. On the contrary, we require a larger collection of books than any of the University libraries of the Old World; for in Europe, if a book is not immediately forthcoming, one has only to send for it to a library near at hand. Here we are remote from the great centres of culture. Our Universities and our libraries are far apart, and all have special needs of money and books.*²²

No register survives to reveal the precise titles acquired

²¹ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1939, pp. 11-12.

²² Robert A. Dallen, *The University of Sydney. Its History and Progress Illustrated*, second ed., Sydney, 1938, p. 30.

in this early period, but the main orientations of the collection lay in science, economics and the humanities. The College had commenced teaching in 1938 with a single Faculty - that of Arts and Economics - and, a year later, established a Faculty of Science. At that stage, fourteen different subjects were being taught.²³ By October 1942, a list of the Library's periodical subscriptions - which totalled eighty-nine - revealed holdings in science (18%), economics (18%), history and current affairs (23%), and - in smaller proportions - English, Classics, Psychology and Modern Languages.²⁴

Evidence of an indirect as well as direct kind suggests that book selection was judiciously carried out. Indirectly, a relatively small vote was available for individual subject areas, which is likely to have induced an attitude of care and caution. In addition, the small and residential nature of the College encouraged staff sensitivity to students' needs.²⁵ Of direct testimony is the judgement of a lecturer in English Literature, who visited the College in 1946: he subsequently wrote to Dixon to assure him that his gift 'is being or has been expended wisely and enthusiastically - for a young institution the library is particularly well chosen.'²⁶

²³ Booth to R.G. Howarth, 2 May 1939, indicating that the additional Dixon gift of £2,500 would 'have to be divided up among fourteen different subjects' U.N.E.A., A352.

²⁴ List of Periodicals in the Dixon Library, 27 October 1942. U.N.E.A., A352.

²⁵ See the comments by one of N.E.U.C.'s first lecturers, James Belshaw, in J.P. Belshaw, 'The New England University College', *U.N.E. Convocation Bulletin and Alumni News*, no. 46, July 1979, p. 9.

²⁶ F.W. Robinson to Dixon, 13 July 1946. D.L.A. 417.

The second benefit of the Dixson benefaction was that it prompted the early appointment of staff to the Library. The designation of a Library Assistant came a year after the initial selection of executive and academic staff for the College, although the title itself was not brought into use until 1943. This early appointment of trained library staff offers an additional contrast with conventional practice in Australian universities up to the beginning of the Second World War. For example, Sydney University relied upon administrative or academic staff to direct the library for almost the first century of its existence - from 1852 to 1946;²⁷ and even newer institutions, like the University of Queensland, founded in 1911, did not appoint a professional librarian until 1939.²⁸

The explanation of this contrast between New England and the older universities lies in the fortuitous timing of the establishment of the Dixson Library. Its founding coincided with a number of major developments in the social recognition of libraries and librarianship. Only one of these had a direct impact on the Dixson Library, but they all contributed to a heightened consciousness in the community about the value of library services.

The first landmark was the Munn-Pitt Report, published in 1935, which directed national attention to the condition of Australia's

²⁷ Harrison Bryan, *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, September 1969, pp. 205 - 227.

²⁸ D.B. Scott, 'A History of the University of Queensland Library', *A.L.J.*, vol. 10, April 1961, pp. 68-79.

libraries and recommended changes for their improvement.²⁹ The Report devoted a chapter to university libraries, which were criticised comprehensively, but its central focus was upon local libraries. While other English-speaking countries had given considerable attention to the role of free public libraries in providing for popular education and culture, Australia had virtually ignored the need. Munn and Pitt argued that a rate-supported system of local libraries should be developed, staffed by properly trained librarians and organized to serve the whole population.

The Report proved to be a catalyst in various moves to stimulate the growth of libraries in Australia. Firstly, it found immediate expression in the Free Library Movement, which was formed by a group of interested citizens in 1935 to promote the establishment of a system of public libraries as outlined by Munn and Pitt.³⁰ Secondly, the Report inspired the formation in 1937 of a new association, the Australian Institute of Librarians, which helped to raise the professional status of librarians through a process of examination and certification.³¹ Finally, the Report afforded a rationale for

²⁹ Ralph Munn and Ernest R. Pitt, *Australian libraries: a Survey of Conditions and Suggestions for their Improvement*, Melbourne, 1935.

³⁰ G.C. Remington, 'The Free Library Movement', *Australian Quarterly*, vol. 9, June 1937, pp. 87-93.

³¹ J. Metcalfe, 'Past, Present and Future of the Institute', in Australian Institute of Librarians, *Proceedings of the 6th Conference, Sydney, 1947; and Other Papers*, Sydney, 1947, pp. 46-58.

D.H. Drummond, who was personally sympathetic to library development,³² to establish a Libraries Advisory Committee in 1937. The Committee's report³³ culminated in a Library Act in 1939, providing for a system of rate-supported free libraries maintained by local government authorities with state subsidy.

For Australian academic libraries, perhaps the deepest significance of the Munn-Pitt Report and its aftermath was that a distinct commitment arose, on the part of the legislature of each state, to the acceptance of libraries as a social and educational service to which public money could properly be directed. As one Australian librarian has argued, this acceptance proved of critical importance to the subsequent development of university libraries.³⁴

The Libraries Advisory Committee recognised a particular need that was relevant to the Dixson Library at this time. It noted the importance of a supply of trained staff to serve in an expanding

³² Drummond inspected libraries in various countries during a six-month overseas trip in 1936, and actively supported the need for an improved library system in Australia. See Drummond, *Report of Enquiries Made into Various Aspects of Education During a Visit to the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States of America, and Canada; and Proceedings of the 1936 New Education Fellowship Conference at Cheltenham, England*, Government Printer, Sydney, 1937, pp. 17-20.

³³ Libraries Advisory Committee, *Public Library Services* (Report to D.H. Drummond, Minister for Education, New South Wales), Government Printer, Sydney, 1939.

³⁴ Harrison Bryan, 'The Development of Academic and Research Libraries in Australia', in Harrison Bryan and Gordon Greenwood (eds.), *Design for Diversity: Library Services for Higher Education and Research in Australia*, St. Lucia, Queensland, 1977, p. 13.

library system. It recommended that a training school be established in the Public Library of New South Wales.³⁵ This development took place in April 1939 and resulted in an immediate link being forged with New England since the School enrolled the Dixson Library's first Library Assistant in its initial intake.³⁶

At first there were no designated staff for the Library, although the Warden believed that qualified assistance was warranted and only deferrable because of financial constraints.³⁷ During 1938 and 1939, the administration of the Library formed part of the duties of Dr. James Belshaw, the first lecturer to arrive at the College.³⁸ He was assisted by the Warden's Secretary, Jean Dyce.³⁹

In March 1939, Booth secured approval from the University of Sydney to create the position of Library Assistant. He proposed that, in the first instance, a clerical assistant be engaged in a temporary capacity, and that, after one year's satisfactory service, the appointee be confirmed as a library assistant. This condition included attendance at the library training course being established at the

³⁵ Libraries Advisory Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

³⁶ Interview with Edna Belshaw (née Drummond), 12 May 1982.

³⁷ Booth to Registrar, Sydney University, 4 March 1939. S.U.A., 3082.

³⁸ Booth to Green, 9 March 1938: 'Dr. Belshaw will be acting as Librarian as he has been rash enough to be the first to put in an appearance'. U.N.E.A., A352.

³⁹ Interview with James Belshaw, 12 May 1982. Various pieces of library-related correspondence were signed by Jean Dyce, including some during Booth's occasional absences from Armidale. U.N.E.A., A352.

Public Library of New South Wales.⁴⁰ The State's Principal Librarian, W.H. Ifould, had visited Armidale in February 1939 and indicated to Booth that he was willing to help with the training of Dixson Library staff.⁴¹

The position of Clerical Assistant was offered to Edna Drummond, the eldest daughter of D.H. Drummond, at a salary of £3.0.0. per week.⁴² She was already employed in Sydney at the time, and remained there from April to December 1939 in order to undertake training at the Public Library.⁴³

The conditions of Drummond's appointment revealed Booth's insistence on the need, in a new university college seeking to command respect, for high academic standards. This insistence extended to the employment of qualified staff in the College's library.⁴⁴ In March 1939, Booth described a training course for the proposed assistant in the Library as 'an urgent matter', and commented that library staff 'with no training would have been useless'.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Booth to Registrar, Sydney University, 4 March 1939. S.U.A., 3082.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.* The basic wage in June 1939 for women in N.S.W. was £2.2.6. outside of the metropolitan areas, and £2.3.0. for Crown employees in all districts. *Official Year Book of New South Wales*, no. 51, 1947-48, p. 733.

⁴³ Booth to Registrar, Sydney University, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Interview with Edna Belshaw, 12 May 1982. When two junior staff were appointed in early 1945 'to help the Library Assistant with the conduct of the Dixson Library', they were to be given the opportunity of attending a Library Assistants' School in Sydney as well as, over an extended period, of proceeding to a degree. N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1945, p. 17.

⁴⁵ Booth to Registrar, Sydney University, *op. cit.*

The Library School attended by Drummond was conducted by the Public Library's senior staff, many of whom played a substantial role in the development of Australian librarianship. A particularly forceful presence was John Metcalfe, who had joined the Public Library in 1923 and later became its Principal Librarian. He left a lasting imprint on the imagination and outlook of many of Australia's future librarians, including some who later served in the Dixon Library - for example, Edna Drummond (later Belshaw) and Edith Tattersall.⁴⁶

For the 1939 School in which Drummond was enrolled, Metcalfe performed the actual work of organisation, not only setting out a syllabus but preparing 'at very short notice and with considerable labour a series of lectures'.⁴⁷ The coursework was 'intensive'.⁴⁸ The students met each weekday from 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.; attended three lectures per day and undertook practical work and assignments during the remaining time.⁴⁹

The rapid progress in library development during the late 1930s fell victim to the new social and political priorities imposed by the outbreak of war in September 1939. The coming of war also dealt a severe blow to the promise of the New England University

⁴⁶ Both Edna Belshaw (interview, 12 May 1982) and Tattersall (interview, 4 May 1982) recalled Metcalfe's impact on their professional lives. Cf. the comment by Harrison Bryan on 'the effect that that powerful, restless, enquiring mind [of Metcalfe's] had on those exposed to it': 'John Wallace Metcalfe, 1901 - 1982', *A.A.R.L.*, vol. 13, March 1982, p. 61.

⁴⁷ W.H. Ifould, 'Library Developments in New South Wales', in Australian Institute of Librarians, *Proceedings of Second Annual Meeting and Conference, Melbourne, 1939*, Adelaide, 1940, p. 63.

⁴⁸ This was the description used by Booth of the training course, when he proposed that Edna Drummond attend it. Booth to Registrar, Sydney University, S.U.A., 3082. It was also her recollection (interview, 12 May 1982).

⁴⁹ Ifould, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

College: it was nearly closed at one stage in order that its few buildings and facilities might be released for the establishment of a base hospital.⁵⁰

During the College vacation (December 1939 - February 1940), Drummond began the classification of the Dixson Library's collection. She carried this out in Sydney at the Public Library with the assistance of two of its cataloguers.⁵¹ The work of organisation progressed rapidly and, upon her return to Armidale, she rearranged the Library in preparation for the academic year 1940.⁵²

The Library was first housed in the main building, *Kooloominbah*, in a single room at the eastern end of the ground floor.⁵³ This room, which afforded 537 square feet of space, soon proved inadequate for an expanding collection and student population (Fig. 1). By April 1940, the Library had annexed an adjoining room (comprising 300 square feet) which was formerly used for lectures (Fig. 2). However, this measure provided only temporary relief: within a year, the *College Report* commented on the 'very crowded' condition of the Library and foreshadowed the need of additional space for 1942.⁵⁴ This need was met by the

⁵⁰ J.P. Belshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁵¹ The two cataloguers, Misses Vidal and Hedburg, were each paid £17.9.6. by N.E.U.C. for providing Edna Drummond with six weeks' assistance. Booth to Ifould, 6 February 1940, U.N.E.A., A352.

⁵² N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1940, pp. 16-17.

⁵³ The room dimensions and other descriptive information in this paragraph are contained in a submission made by Dr. R.B. Madgwick to the Commonwealth Office of Education, 24 September 1947, S.U.A., 3091. The timing of the stages of expansion is indicated in *N.E.U.C. Reports*, 1940, 1941 and 1942.

⁵⁴ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1941, p. 18.

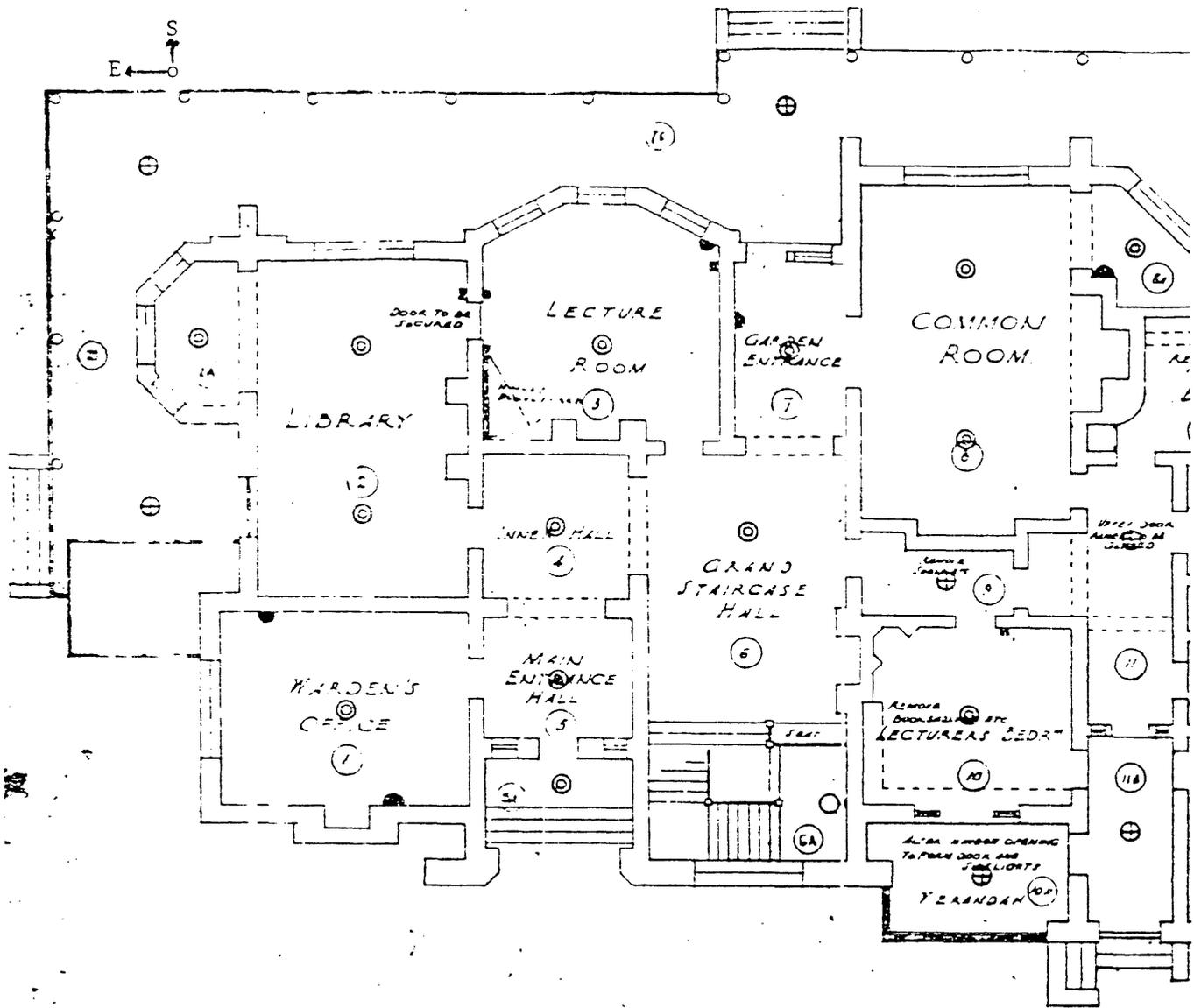


Fig. 1: Original Room in Booluminbah Housing the Dixon Library (at south-eastern end of building)

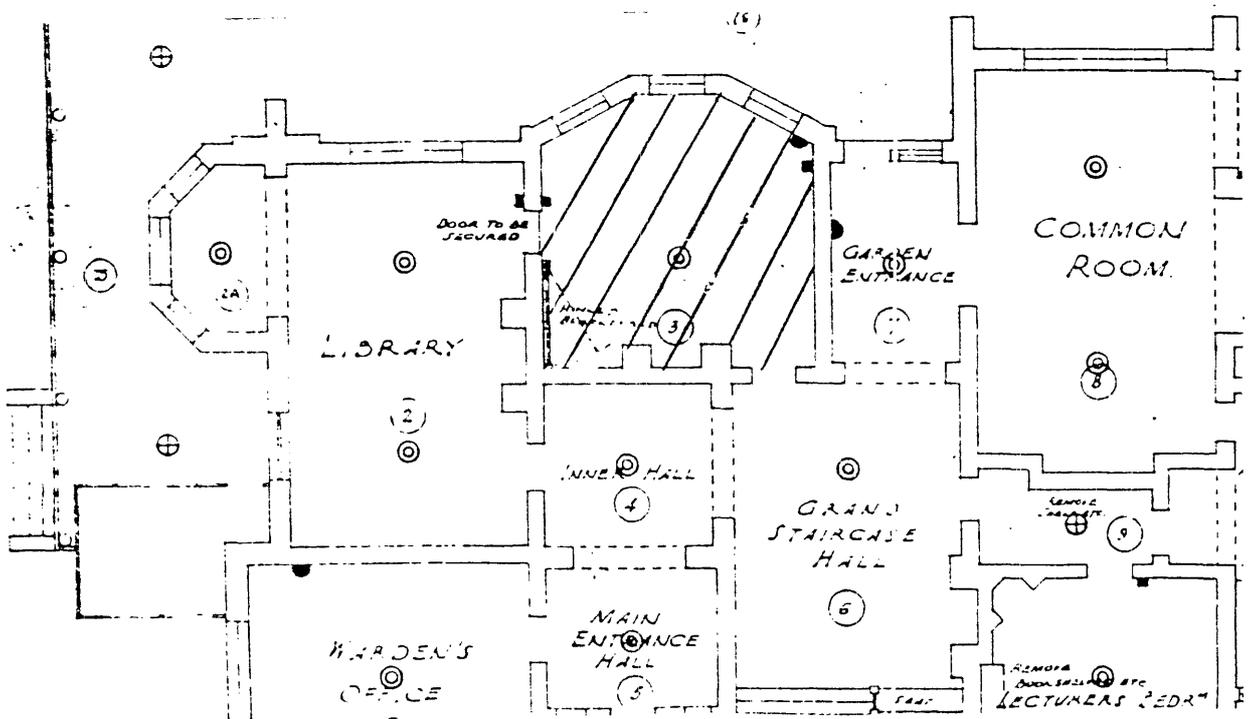


Fig. 2: Lecture Room Provided for Library (marked with diagonal lines)

conversion of a lecturers' study room (amounting to 397 square feet) into a storage and display area for periodicals. The converted room also came to serve - with the addition of a glassed-in verandah that was not weatherproof - as office space for the Library's staff (Fig. 3).

From the outset the Library was viewed as an institution organised for ready use by readers. It was conducted on the principle of 'open access', which rendered the collection visible and available to Library users. This principle was quite radical by the prevailing standards of academic librarianship. Traditionally, book stacks were closed to most readers and individual seating on a large scale adjacent to collections was unknown. At New England, however, several factors favoured an 'open access' arrangement.

Firstly, the physical conditions of the Library made any other system 'impracticable'.⁵⁵ There was insufficient space for the maintenance of a closed stack system. At the same time, the physical conditions of *Booloominbah* nullified to some extent the value of an 'open access' library. The rooms were poorly lit in parts, and this handicap became accentuated as the Library grew more crowded and the shelves fell into disorder.⁵⁶

Secondly, the small and residential nature of the College lent itself to an 'open access' operation. In 1941, student enrolment was 122, and the academic staff comprised 13 fulltime lecturers and assistant lecturers, as well as part-time lecturers, tutors and demonstrators.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1941, p. 18.

⁵⁶ See Edith Tattersall, *Report on Library Accommodation*, April 1952, pp. 1-2, U.N.E.A., A292.

⁵⁷ Figures submitted by Booth to H.M. Green, 22 January 1942, for inclusion in the *Commonwealth Year Book* 1942-43. U.N.E.A., A352.

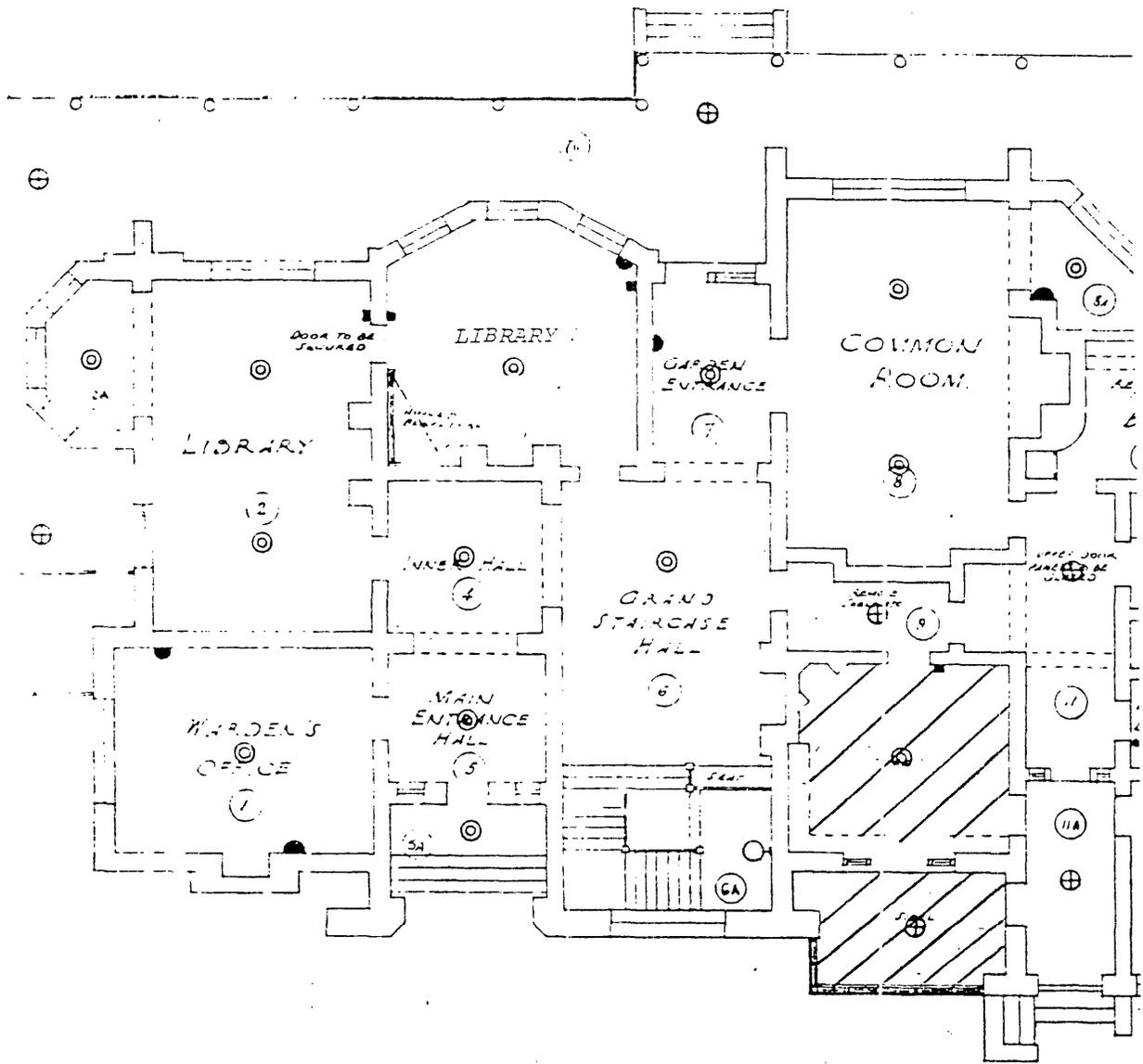


Fig. 3: Lecturer's Study Room and Verandah Added to Library (marked with diagonal lines)

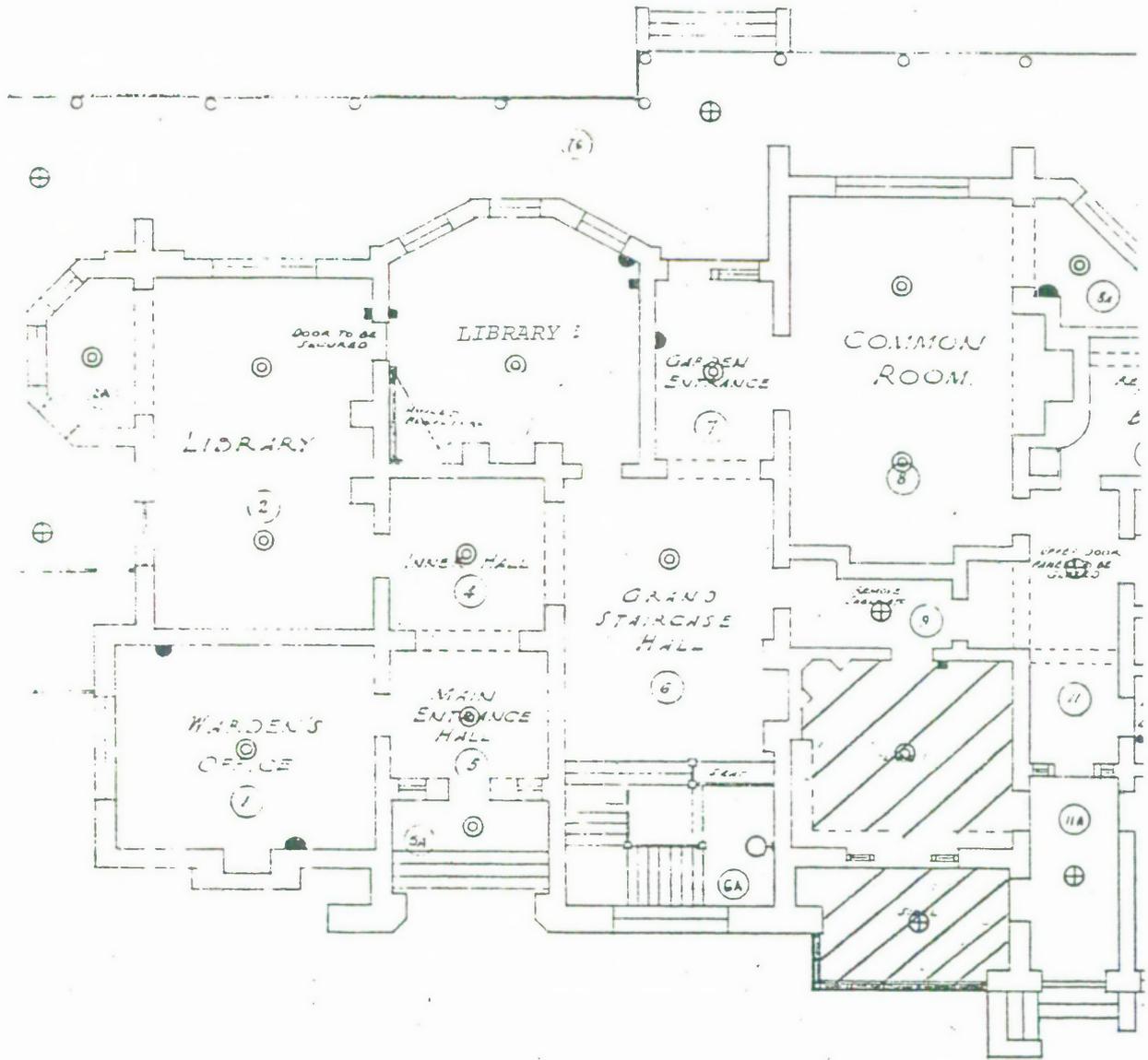


Fig. 3: Lecturer's Study Room and Verandah Added to Library (marked with diagonal lines)

The social environment of lecturers and students in intimate communication proved especially conducive to learning,⁵⁸ and helped to compensate for the relative thinness of library support in these early years.

Thirdly, the College itself showed an explicit commitment to a library service designed for students. Its entry in one official publication of this period emphasised the use of 'modern library practice' at New England: 'All books are accessible to students on open shelves.'⁵⁹ Booth in particular favoured the idea of student accessibility: he would not countenance the Library being locked afterhours,⁶⁰ and the early statistical returns reveal an extraordinary opening span - 84 hours per week in the years 1939-1943, compared with the next greatest, Melbourne University's 68 hours, or Canberra University College's 35.⁶¹ The unsupervised use of the Library which this policy entailed gave rise to 'large numbers of library books' being removed without the creation of loan records. These books were described by Booth as 'stolen' and students were publicly warned that they faced 'strong disciplinary measures' if discovered.⁶² By 1944, the Library's opening hours are recorded as 49 per week⁶³ - a marked reduction that was apparently related to

58 J.P. Belshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

59 Entry prepared for inclusion in the *Commonwealth Year Book* 1942-43. U.N.E.A., A352.

60 Interview with Edna Belshaw, 12 May 1982.

61 Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Australian University Statistics*, 1939 - 1943.

62 Public notice signed by Booth, 22 October 1941. U.N.E.A., A352.

63 *University Statistics*, 1944.

growing student numbers and the problem of misuse.⁶⁴

As the Dixon Library's space pressures mounted, the most suitable solution was seen to be new accommodation outside of *Booloominbah*. This solution did not achieve realisation until the late 1950s, but it was already envisaged in 1941. The University College's Advisory Council, which was its governing body, had approved plans in that year for building developments that included provision for the Dixon Library. It was hoped that government funds might shortly be available for the first block of the main buildings, a section of which was to be allotted for the Library.⁶⁵

Wartime shortages prevented an immediate start on this programme of construction. They also registered other effects upon the Library's service, notably in the unpredictable interruptions to the supply of material like periodical issues,⁶⁶ as well as in the obstacles to purchases from 'enemy' countries.⁶⁷

The Library's space problems intensified as the collection grew from 8,080 volumes at the end of 1941 to 10,095 two years later.

⁶⁴ By 1944, student enrolments numbered 178, and the paucity of accommodation in the Library would have exacerbated the inadequate security. N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1944, pp. 11, 23.

⁶⁵ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1941, p. 18.

⁶⁶ A revision of the budgetary estimates for the financial year ending 30 June 1941 led to a reduction by £110.0.0. in the Dixon Library's vote, 'owing to overseas conditions, and the difficulty of obtaining Periodicals and Journals ...'. S.U.A., 3089.

⁶⁷ On 25 June 1940, the Commonwealth Department of Trade and Customs advised Booth that N.E.U.C. was permitted to import certain German publications in accordance with a license issued under the Trading with the Enemy Act. The publications, however, would 'be subject to censorship on importation'. U.N.E.A., A352.

In September 1944, the Warden reported that the crowded conditions of the Library were adversely affecting the University College as a whole. He suggested, perhaps with an exaggeration appropriate when reporting to a funding authority, that the state of the Library actually influenced the decisions of prospective students, forming 'one of the main reasons ... discouraging students from applying for university education here.'⁶⁸

In April 1943, Edna Drummond was granted the title and status of Library Assistant. The promotion, however, was made conditionally - on the understanding that she would undertake to matriculate and pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree.⁶⁹ She resigned in November 1943, 'in view of her approaching marriage to the Lecturer in Economics and History, Dr. Belshaw'.⁷⁰

In January 1944, the position of Library Assistant was filled by Jean Forsyth, who had just completed a course of training at the Public Library of New South Wales similar to Edna Drummond's and had gained additional experience in Fisher Library at the University of Sydney.⁷¹ A year later, two enrolled students, Joan Woodcock and Patricia Clarke, were engaged as support staff in the Library. They were given the opportunity, over an extended period, of proceeding to a degree; and, in addition, should they be selected, of attending the

⁶⁸ Booth to Commonwealth Universities Commission, 4 September 1944. S.U.A., 3091.

⁶⁹ N.E.U.C., Advisory Council Minutes, 17 April 1943.

⁷⁰ N.E.U.C., Advisory Council Minutes, 22 November 1943.

⁷¹ N.E.U.C., Report, 31 March 1944, p. 19.

In making this appointment, Booth consulted with the Fisher Librarian (H.M. Green), the Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales (W.H. Ifould), and the Vice-Chancellor of Sydney University (R.S. Wallace). N.E.U.C., Advisory Council Minutes, 22 November 1943.

library training course offered in Sydney.⁷² This is the first recorded instance of the use of student assistants - a feature of the Library's staffing arrangements henceforward which reflected the ease with which students could gain part-time employment on a residential campus; and, perhaps as well, the sense of obligation which the University College felt about providing student employment in an isolated rural community.

Throughout these early years, the Dixson Library relied in various ways on the support of more established libraries. Since the College was officially 'a branch of the University of Sydney',⁷³ the Dixson Library enjoyed the advantages of gifts and loans from the Fisher Library⁷⁴ as well as administrative advice.⁷⁵ At the same time, the Dixson Librarian was never 'in any way responsible to or under the direction of the Fisher Librarian'.⁷⁶

Furthermore, the Dixson Library sought assistance from the

⁷² N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1945, p. 17.

⁷³ Booth to Honorary Secretary, Lecturers' Association, N.E.U.C., 23 June 1941. S.U.A., 3091.

⁷⁴ 'Because the College is a branch of the University of Sydney, the Dixson Library holds a somewhat privileged position towards the Fisher Library, and draws freely upon it for inter-library loan'. E.M. Tattersall, Preliminary Report on Requirements for the Dixson Library Building, with Special Reference to the Plans of the Lamont Library Building, April 1953. U.N.E.A., A292.

⁷⁵ For example, in June 1940, Booth solicited from Fisher Library comments on the formulation of library regulations at N.E.U.C.. In August the Fisher Librarian - whose response was delayed by illness - produced ten pages of detailed comments and suggestions. Green to Booth, 19 August 1940. U.N.E.A., A352.

⁷⁶ Tattersall to F.H. Rogers, 3 February 1956. U.N.E.A., A292.

Public Library of New South Wales, not only in terms of the training course provided in Sydney for Dixson Library staff,⁷⁷ but also by the requesting of loans from the Public Library's Country Reference Section. The latter practice took two forms - institutionally, by which the Dixson Library staff borrowed from the Section for the purpose of local use; and individually, whereby College students borrowed 'under the same conditions as other country residents'.⁷⁸ This limited arrangement proved to be the prelude to a comprehensive service associated with the Public Library when New England embarked upon external studies in the mid-1950s.

Despite the priority which it continued to attach to a new library building, the University College was not able to gain government funds for building expansion. In early 1944, the N.S.W. Minister for Education endorsed a plan by which £300,000 would be granted to the College over five years as part of a post-war reconstruction scheme.⁷⁹ Additional buildings - such as a second science block - were subsequently erected to cope with the growing teaching and residential needs on campus; but no money was made available for library construction.

In November 1945, Jean Forsyth resigned. On account of the perceived disparity in salaries at that time between university staff and people employed outside,⁸⁰ the University College anticipated

⁷⁷ This course was undertaken by the College's first two librarians - Edna Drummond (in 1939) and Jean Forsyth (1943). It also inducted into librarianship the College's fourth librarian, Edith Tattersall (1941).

⁷⁸ J. Metcalfe to Booth, 11 September 1942. U.N.E.A., A352.

⁷⁹ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1944, p. 23.

⁸⁰ James P. Belshaw to the Registrar, Sydney University, 16 July 1946. S.U.A., 3091.

difficulties in appointing a new Library Assistant. It therefore converted the position into that of Librarian and advertised it at a higher salary. After one abortive appointment, the College boosted the salary yet again and offered status and conditions similar to those of a lecturer. On this occasion Mr. Norman Gould was appointed.⁸¹

Gould had taught most recently at the Armidale High School and possessed a background in librarianship as well, having attained a certain professional reputation through his establishment of 'a model library' at the North Sydney Boys' High School.⁸² He accepted a reduced salary - from £570 to £400 per annum - in leaving teaching for the position of University College Librarian.⁸³ When, in July 1946, James P. Belshaw, the Deputy Warden,⁸⁴ raised the need for salary increases, he noted the view of the College's Advisory Council that the Librarian 'should be treated as being of the grade of a lecturer'.⁸⁵

This appointment marked the introduction of academic equivalence for librarians at New England. The motive for this seems to have been largely practical. While the move may have embodied a belief that librarianship was an academic function - rather than an

⁸¹ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1946, p. 17.

⁸² *ibid.*, John Metcalfe commented that Gould had 'pioneered school librarianship in N.S.W. at the North Sydney Boys' High School in the 'thirties ...'. Metcalfe, 'Library Development in New South Wales, 1943 - 1946', in Australian Institute of Librarians, *Proceedings of 5th Conference, Hobart, 1946*, Melbourne, 1947, p. 62.

⁸³ Belshaw to Registrar, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Belshaw was effectively Acting Warden of N.E.U.C. from July 1945 (following Booth's resignation) to the beginning of 1947, though he still signed himself 'Deputy Warden'.

⁸⁵ Belshaw to Registrar, *op. cit.*

administrative or technical role⁸⁶ - the evidence suggests that it was mainly a convenient means of raising salaries and status generally within the College itself at this time. Not only the Librarian but also other positions - for example, the Registrar⁸⁷ - were conceived in these terms. Moreover, a pragmatic reason existed for the College to press for library salary correspondence with teachers, since this would presumably have helped to retain the services of Norman Gould.⁸⁸

In part the establishment at that stage of academic equivalence for library staff reflected the undeveloped - or at least undefined - state of librarianship as a profession: its own lack of an identity prompted the need for its members to be related to some other profession.

By the end of 1946, the Dixson Library was firmly established. It weathered the early years of struggle marking its parent institution, Australia's first rural university which had been founded coincidentally with the onset of world war. The Library's beginnings, however, benefitted from a number of factors - notably, the general atmosphere of support for libraries, which had gathered force from the mid-1930s

⁸⁶ For a discussion of these distinctions, see D.H. Borchardt, 'The Academic Status of the University Librarian', in Library Association of Australia, *Proceedings, 8th Conference, Brisbane, 1955*, Sydney, 1956, pp. 117-124.

⁸⁷ The N.E.U.C. Advisory Council believed that 'the Registrar should rank with the senior members of the teaching staff'. Belshaw to Registrar, Sydney University, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Belshaw couched the argument for a salary increase for the Librarian very much in terms of the disadvantage experienced by Gould in leaving a teaching position for the post of College Librarian. *ibid.*

onwards, and the specific advantage of a private grant with which to institute the development of the collection.

In certain respects the Library revealed from the outset a 'modern' character; as shown, for example, in its provision of 'open access' and its explicit organization of services for the sake of students. Not only did it derive this character from the forces at work and the changes taking place in Australian librarianship during this period; but, in the context of history, it serves as an isolated case study of these forces and changes.

CHAPTER TWO

GROWTH AND CONSTRAINT (1947 - 1955)

The beginning of 1947 brought changes to the leadership of the University College and its Library. In January, Dr. R.B. (later Sir Robert) Madgwick became Warden in succession to Edgar Booth who had resigned in September 1945. Madgwick possessed an academic background as an economic historian and, in addition, a record of senior experience in the Australian Army Education Service. He was conscious of the part played by libraries in the programmes of the Education Service, arguing that they were 'possibly one of the most important influences in maintaining the morale of Australian troops'.¹

In general, the academic administrators of the College were favourably disposed towards the Dixson Library. This outlook, however, did not necessarily lead to an appreciation of the concrete implications for a library of modern university development - in particular, the problems of space and service generated by a continually expanding collection and reader population. The internal structure of decision-making played a major part in this combination of philosophical goodwill and practical remoteness. In the 1920s, such a dual attitude had received comment from the University Grants Committee in Britain. The Committee noted the universal respect given to the library's 'profound central importance in the academic life of the University', but pointed out the readiness with which the library's grant could be cut in times of financial stress.² When an Australian government report was released

¹ R.B. Madgwick, 'The Australian Army Education Service - Another Point of View', *Forum of Education*, vol. 8, October 1949, p. 61.

² Great Britain, Treasury, *University Grants Committee Report 1928-9*, p. 38.

in the 1950s, it incidentally afforded an insight into this problem by identifying the lack of co-ordination in Australian universities between academic policy-making and financial planning and allocation. Decisions in finance committees and governing bodies, which bore academic implications, were made 'with little or no academic guidance and on the basis of little or no effective discussion within the academic body'.³

In most institutions, a Library Committee existed, but it mainly comprised academic staff and lacked any structural connection with financial committees.⁴ At New England, its principal task was to apportion among academic departments those funds already allotted to the Dixson Library.⁵ On this account the Vice-Chancellor or Warden was a key figure in the attention accorded the library, though Madgwick himself recognised the ambiguities of this position:

[An Australian vice-chancellor] is usually appointed as an academic, and then every possible care and precaution is taken to ensure that he does not remain one [W]here the vice-chancellor is mentioned in the incorporating act or in the relevant by-laws or statutes, he is variously described in terms which suggest that he is not only responsible for the teaching and research of his university, but is, in a curious way, the senior member of the academic staff.

³ Australia, Committee on Australian Universities (Keith A.H. Murray, Chairman), Government Printer, Canberra, 1957, p. 95.

⁴ For example, at the University of Sydney. See Bryan, *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, September 1969, pp. 207-8, 213-14.

⁵ Interview with Edith Tattersall, 4 May 1982.

He is commonly left in no doubt that in fact he is not, for all too often he is precluded by traditional practice, or even by by-law, from being chairman of the professorial board, which is the senior academic committee of the university. He may chair every other senior committee other than the finance committee, from which he is properly debarred.⁶

Madgwick appears to have nourished fairly exalted hopes for the Dixon Library. His actions reflected a belief that the Library performed an essential role in the educational life of the University College. He applied repeatedly for funds to build new premises for the Library; even, on one occasion, requesting the entire construction sum of £250,000 from the Managing Director of General Motors-Holden, Mr. Earl C. Daum, and offering to rename the building the *Holden Library*.⁷ He was generous in the provision of special funds for the Library, especially in the area of collection building.⁸ He agreed to provide an annual allocation for the Librarian to apply against the purchase of bibliographical tools as well as books and journals on librarianship.⁹ At the same time, his professional background did not necessarily give him insight into the practical conditions that govern library performance and development.

⁶ R.B. Madgwick, 'Reflections of a Retired Vice-Chancellor', *Australian University*, vol. 6, April 1968, p. 16. See similar comments in Murray, *Report*, pp. 95 - 96.

⁷ Madgwick to E.C. Daum, 4 October 1955. U.N.E. Administrative Records, 'Library - Buildings'.

⁸ Interview with Tattersall, 24 June 1982.

⁹ Tattersall to Madgwick, 30 October 1947. U.N.E.A., A352.

On one occasion, he responded to the Library's space pressures by permitting journals to be housed in a less than secure location in *Booloominbah*. When the Librarian objected, Madgwick expressed his willingness to cover the cost of replacing any lost issues, apparently not realising that journal issues were frequently irreplaceable.¹⁰

Madgwick's appointment coincided with a change of Librarian. After a year at New England, Norman Gould resigned - in his own words, 'only for compelling reasons and with regret'.¹¹ He became Librarian at the University of Queensland, though he left that position after a short period on grounds of ill-health.¹² In February 1947, Edith Tattersall was appointed as Dixon Librarian. She was a graduate of the University of Western Australia, and had been initiated into librarianship under the direction of the Librarian of the University of Western Australia, Miss M.E. Wood. It was there that Tattersall's interest and outlook were formed, in particular the belief that library materials should be on open access and as available to users as possible. In 1941, she received training at the Library School of the Public Library of New South Wales. The following year she moved to the Tasmanian State Library, where she gained practical experience in the organisation and workings of a library. This experience proved a valuable preparation for her later undertakings at New England.¹³

¹⁰ Interview with Tattersall, 24 June 1982.

¹¹ Norman Gould to Tattersall, January 1947. U.N.E.A., A352.

¹² Scott, *A.L.J.*, April 1961, p. 79. Valerie Pullen (née Woodcock), former student assistant, letter to the author, 12 July 1982.

¹³ Interview with Tattersall, 4 May 1982.

One of Tattersall's first tasks was to apprise Madgwick of the conditions in the Dixon Library. He pronounced them 'makeshift' and 'extremely unsatisfactory'.¹⁴ In May 1947, he presented a building programme to Sydney University for transmission to the State Government. He requested funds for the financial year 1947-48 'as a matter of grave urgency'.¹⁵ By this time, provision for the Dixon Library was being seen as independent of other needs, and a separate building was envisaged. Noting that the population of staff and students had now reached approximately 280, Madgwick drew attention to the crowded conditions for readers: '... the total library accommodation consists of two small rooms with a total seating capacity when hopelessly overcrowded of 20'.¹⁶

Several months later, the Warden pursued the possibility of national government assistance and made a detailed submission to the Commonwealth Office of Education. He sought a grant of £40,000 from the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Vote to provide a new library building, basing his case on the 54 students now enrolled at the University College under the Post-war Reconstruction Training Scheme. He argued that existing library conditions were 'militating against the effective tuition' of these students and adding difficulties to what was, for them, 'already an extremely difficult period of adjustment'.¹⁷ The restrictions on readers were matched by pressures on the arrangement of the Library's collection, and on the Library staff which by now

¹⁴ Madgwick to Commonwealth Office of Education, 24 September 1947. S.U.A., 3091.

¹⁵ Madgwick to Registrar, Sydney University, 20 May 1947. S.U.A., 3091.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Madgwick to Commonwealth Office of Education, *op. cit.*

comprised three people¹⁸ and occupied offices and work-rooms measuring 397 square feet.¹⁹

In September 1948, Tattersall described the physical layout of the Library. She estimated the total stock at 15,000 volumes, of which half was located outside the two reading rooms:

Of these [7,500] volumes, about 2,000 volumes are shelved in the "periodicals room" where they are occupying space badly needed for library office work. An estimated 1,000 are shelved in lecturers' studies in the History, Philosophy, Psychology, and Zoology departments. The remaining 4,500 volumes are stowed on the floor of the library office, and in cupboards in the main hall, in the students' reading room, in the hall near the dining room, and possibly elsewhere.... With the stock dispersed in this way the Library cannot function efficiently.²⁰

The plans that had been prepared for a new Library building were intended to accommodate the needs of an expanding bookstock and reader population. In relation to the Library's holdings in 1947 of approximately 15,000 volumes, stack space was requested for over 70,000 volumes. The plans also specified a Reading Room for 90 - 100 readers - to allow for, it was anticipated, a student enrolment of 400 - 500 - together with a number of small rooms for senior research

¹⁸ The Librarian and two junior assistants. *New England University College*, November 1947, p. 15.

¹⁹ Madgwick to Commonwealth Office of Education, *op. cit.*

²⁰ Tattersall to Registrar, N.E.U.C., 8 September 1948. U.N.E.A, A292.

students, and office space and work-rooms for the Library staff.²¹

The Library's capacity to provide a service of academic support was critically dependent on building space. Physical congestion posed fundamental difficulties for library service - causing overcrowded shelves and a confused accumulation of books on the floor; denying library users adequate seating for study purposes; cramping work space for staff needs; and affecting ventilation and lighting provision.²² However, no external remedy for these problems was forthcoming, and the Library had to investigate some form of internal relief involving the University College's own recurrent funds.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, a number of options were considered for the expansion of the Library's premises. In March 1947, the Librarian proposed to the College Registrar that the verandah adjacent to the reading rooms be enclosed to provide space for either book stacks or readers. This form of extension had been foreshadowed as early as 1941,²³ but it did not gain favour with the College administration for over a decade - chiefly, it appears, because of the blight it would impose on the appearance of *Booloomindah*.²⁴

²¹ Madgwick to Commonwealth Office of Education, *op. cit.*

²² Each of these handicaps was highlighted later by Tattersall in her Report ... April 1952. U.N.E.A., A292.

²³ N.E.U.C., *Report*, 31 March 1941, p. 18.

²⁴ For example, Madgwick to Tattersall, 3 July 1951: '... I wish to make it perfectly clear that I will not recommend to the Advisory Council enclosing the verandah outside the Library'. U.N.E.A., A292. Tattersall recalls that the College Registrar, Mr. W.M. Robb, was also strongly opposed to this move. Interview with Tattersall, 4 May 1982.

In September 1948, the Librarian recommended an alternative plan of expansion: to partition off the lobby outside the existing library, and incorporate a further room which was then being used as a lecturers' common room but had, coincidentally, served originally as a library for the White family (Fig. 4). It was envisaged that the lobby could accommodate a service desk for loans while the additional room could allow for the extension of book stacks.²⁵

At the same time, Tattersall reported that the existing office accommodation for Library staff was unsatisfactory, in terms not only of inadequate space but of a lack of privacy for the Librarian who was by now sharing her office with junior assistants. This pressure was relieved to some extent by the provision of a room situated across from the Library staff's work area. Called the 'dungeon' because of its very high windows, the room was converted into the Librarian's office.²⁶ (Fig. 4).

The proposal to annex a lecturers' common room incurred strong opposition from lecturers themselves and was not implemented at that time. Two years later, Tattersall renewed the proposal and, at Madgwick's suggestion, asked the Lecturers' Association at the College to withdraw its earlier objections. The Association, however, reaffirmed its opposition, but offered the advice that the Students' Lower Common Room be reserved for library use.²⁷ The proposal proved unacceptable in that form, but within a few months alternative premises were found for the lecturing staff. By May 1951, the Library was able

²⁵ Tattersall to Registrar, 8 September 1948. U.N.E.A., A292.

²⁶ Interview with Tattersall, 4 May 1982.

²⁷ Tattersall to Madgwick, 16 November 1950. U.N.E.A., A292.

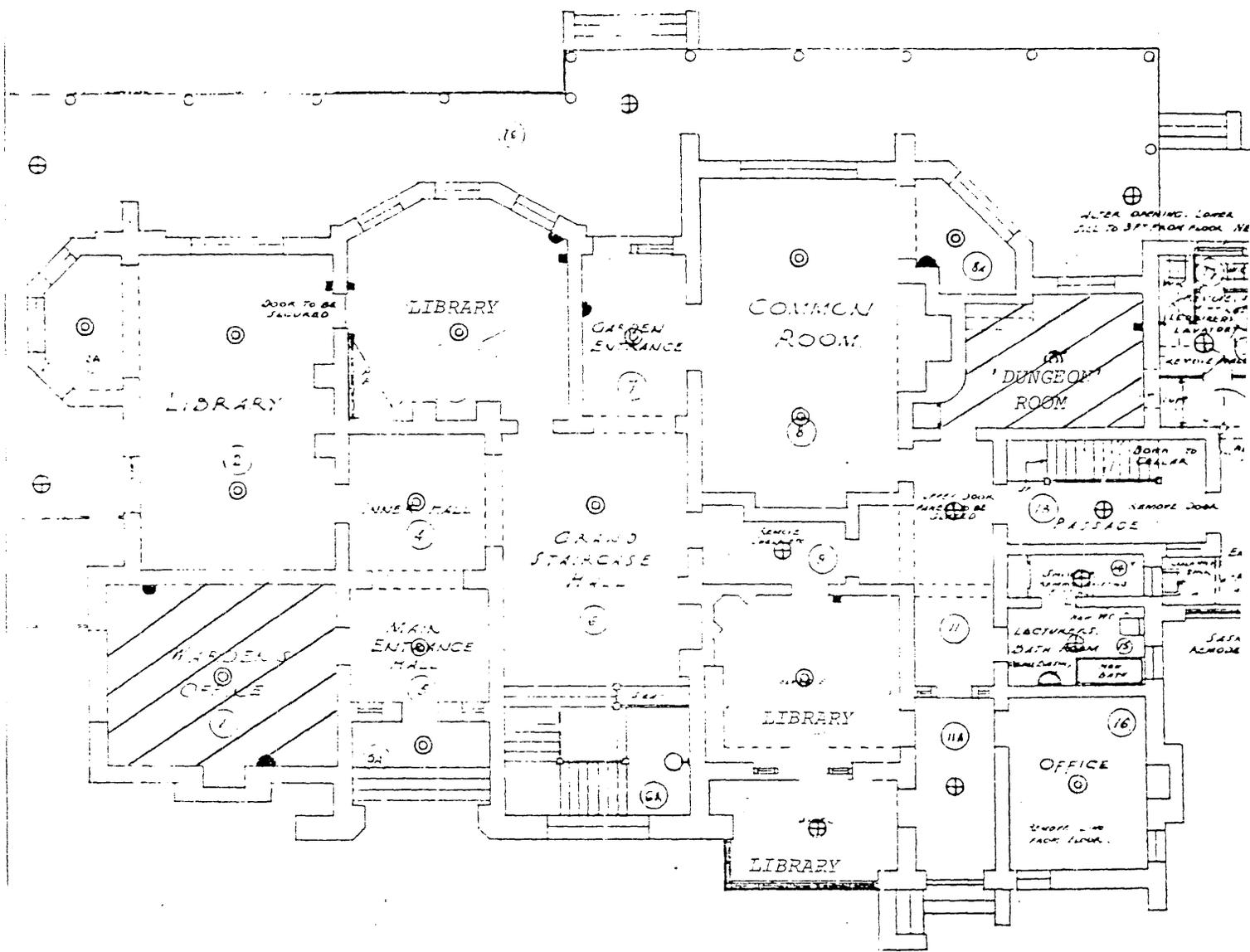


Fig. 4: Lecturer's Common Room Proposed for Library Use (described as 'Warden's Office' in Plan), and 'Dungeon' Room (marked with diagonal lines)

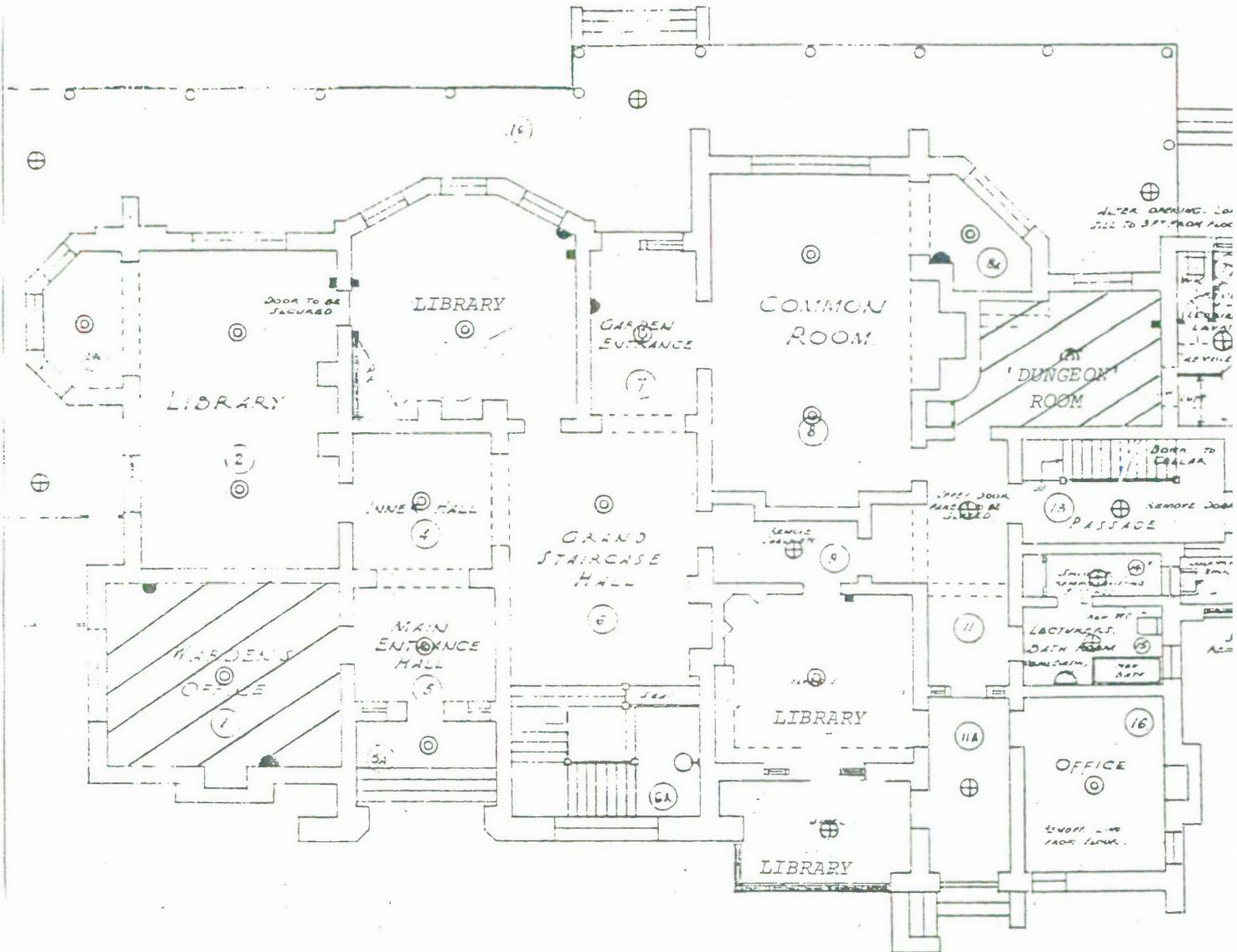


Fig. 4: Lecturer's Common Room Proposed for Library Use (described as 'Warden's Office' in Plan), and 'Dungeon' Room (marked with diagonal lines)

to extend into the lobby and occupy the additional room.²⁸

By the beginning of the 1950s, the Dixson Library had a collection of approximately 19,000 volumes. Its annual intake averaged 1,500 volumes. It subscribed to over 200 serial titles, and received many other serial publications by donation, especially from the Fisher Library in Sydney.²⁹ Not only the size but also the scope and character of the collection were changing from the College's early years. The Library continued to see its prime task as that of servicing subjects for degree courses, though it was conscious of collection gaps even in areas formally embraced by the curriculum. For example Mr. G.F. McIntosh received a special grant to buy philosophy books when he was appointed to the Department of Philosophy and Psychology in 1948. Prior to that time, the Department's funds had been largely spent on titles in psychology, and the philosophy collection was negligible.³⁰ In this instance, the problem of unbalanced book selection was linked to the operation of joint academic departments, but a deeper cause was the exclusive control over book funds exercised by academic staff up to the period of Madgwick and Tattersall. In the mid-1930s, Munn and Pitt had criticised the older Australian universities for the weaknesses in their library collections caused by professorial domination.³¹ It was during the late 1940s and early 1950s that a start was made at New England 'to preserve the balance of the collection, and to provide at least the basic literature in fields not covered by the teaching courses'.³²

²⁸ E.M. Tattersall, Survey of the Dixson Library 1947 - 1954, 21 June 1954. U.N.E.A., A292.

²⁹ *New England University College*, November 1951, pp. 21 - 22.

³⁰ Interview with Tattersall, 24 June 1982.

³¹ Munn and Pitt, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

³² *New England University College*, November 1951, p. 22.

For example, in 1952, the Librarian prepared a substantial bibliography of religious books which she recommended for acquisition. Madgwick endorsed her desire to 'build up this side of the Library', but reluctantly had her defer any purchases until more space became available.³³ In university libraries established at a later time, the aim of balanced collection development received major attention from the beginning, on account of the ripening professionalism and status of academic librarians in Australia.³⁴

Increasingly, the functioning of the Dixon Library was dominated by problems associated with space pressure. Even in June 1951, when the Librarian informed the Warden that the new arrangements were proving 'very satisfactory', she expressed concern at the lack of scope for expansion. The 1951-52 intake of books and journals, she believed, would again overcrowd the shelves. She went on to ask the Warden to reconsider his rejection of a temporary enclosure of the verandah outside the Library.³⁵

In December 1951, Tattersall wrote again, presenting a graphic picture of the severe congestion now afflicting the Library, and in particular its staff:

Our offices comprise two rooms, totalling about
480 sq.ft., which accommodate four staff members

³³ Madgwick to Tattersall, 11 June 1952. U.N.E.A., A292.

³⁴ For example, see N. Stockdale, 'The Establishment of a New University Library', in L.A.A., *Papers, 13th Biennial Conference, Canberra, 1965*, vol. II, Sydney, 1965, pp. 646 - 647.

³⁵ Tattersall to Madgwick, 28 June 1951. U.N.E.A., A292.

and their tables and chairs, together with filing cabinets, card cabinets and stationery cupboard, and also a mass of library material All this material should be placed in the reading-rooms. At present it is not accessible to users of the Library, and in addition it is creating an intolerable degree of overcrowding in the offices, occupying floor space and shelf space which we need for other purposes, and making our work more and more impossible every day. Many jobs in library work cannot be finished and filed away on the spot, and we have no shelf space to accommodate work in progress, with the result that our tables are always cluttered up with piles of unfinished work, and we are constantly writing on our knees, or dropping heavy volumes because there is nowhere to rest them There is scarcely room to open a drawer or push back a chair. If two or three of us happen to be working in the same office we can hardly move without having to squeeze past each other or edge sideways around tables and piles of books and stationery This state of affairs has existed for five years, becoming steadily worse all the time.³⁶

In April 1952, the Librarian presented a 'Report on Library Accommodation' to the College's Advisory Council. She recommended that, since the option of appropriating more space in *Bocloominbah*

³⁶ Tattersall to Madgwick, 4 December 1951. U.N.E.N., A292.

appeared closed, 'temporary accommodation' was needed, 'in the form of a hut, to be used as a library during the period of waiting for a permanent building'.³⁷ The Library Committee was first to consider this recommendation and endorsed it, but only on condition that no prospect remained of a permanent building. If the contract for that long-awaited facility were not cancelled, the Committee recommended an alternative form of relief - viz., that the *Boo'loominbah* verandah be enclosed to accommodate shelving for about 8,000 to 9,000 volumes. It believed that the Library could thereby operate satisfactorily for two years (1952-53), while a permanent structure was being erected.³⁸

When the Chairman of the College's Board of Studies, A.F. O'Farrell, advised Madgwick of the Library Committee's recommendation, he reported the Committee's view that enclosing the verandah was the only way in which 'suitable supervised storage' for the Library could be provided 'cheaply, quickly, and without necessitating additional library staff'.³⁹

By this stage there was no apparent alternative to such a measure, and the verandah was enclosed in January 1953.⁴⁰ But the Library's space problems had, in fact, prompted an expedient that was hardly conducive to the proper housing and preservation of library materials. The book stacks were assembled on the verandah's brick floor, and the walls of the enclosure afforded inadequate protection against the elements, especially frost and snow. When the books were later moved out of this area, many of them revealed traces of

³⁷ Tattersall, Report ... April 1952. U.N.E.A., A292.

³⁸ Library Committee, Minutes, 9 April 1952. U.N.E.A., A292.

³⁹ O'Farrell to Madgwick, 16 April 1952. U.N.E.A., A292.

⁴⁰ Tattersall, Survey ... 1947 - 1954.

mould. A later Librarian, Mr. F.H. Rogers, expressed dismay at the location of library books 'on an unheated verandah, their only protection from the severe New England winter being thin sheets of sordid-looking fibro'.⁴¹

Throughout this period, there was growing discussion in the College of the prospects and implications of institutional autonomy. The promise of independence gave a fillip to consideration of a new library building. In April 1953, the Librarian produced a detailed document, which she described as a 'preliminary report', on requirements for such a building.⁴² She was conscious that the future functions and responsibilities of the Dixon Library were uncertain. It could be expected that the newly independent institution would expand in its number of students, faculties and academic staff. Advanced research work may be undertaken which would call for strong library support. Above all, Tattersall foresaw that two distinct needs could impinge upon the future Library and the kind of services it might have to develop. One was the projected introduction of external studies, which would require 'a postal library service and possibly a separate book collection'. The other was the possible assumption of 'regional responsibilities such as collection of material on regional development or New England archives'.⁴³

⁴¹ F.H. Rogers, 'The Dixon Library, the University of New England', *A.L.J.*, vol. 6, July 1957, p. 103.

⁴² Tattersall, Preliminary Report on Requirements for the Dixon Library Building, with Special Reference to the Plans of the Lamont Library Building, April 1953. U.N.E.A., A292.

⁴³ Tattersall, Preliminary Report

In subsequent years, these two areas were to attract significant attention in the activities of the Library. But since the impact of their development - and that of other variables - was indeterminate at this stage, Tattersall argued that the new library building should be designed for 'maximum flexibility'. She envisaged that the basis of this flexibility would be supplied by the 'modular' principle of construction, involving the use of regularly spaced structural columns and non-bearing partitions, which had by this time been adopted in various American libraries.⁴⁴

From the late 1930s, changing conditions in American universities had imposed unbearable pressures on academic library buildings. Traditionally, book collections were small and grew slowly. Use was often slight and did not require provision for special service systems (for example, a reserve book room) or technological aids (such as photocopiers or air-conditioning). Thus almost any structure - including one built for other purposes like *Booloominbah* - could be suitable for the library so long as it could house the book stock and afford some space for staff and readers. The size of university libraries was often salient and their architectural style imposing - for example, Gothic at Princeton University and Victorian at the University of Pennsylvania - but these features highlighted the prestige of the library as the symbolic, but not necessarily functional, centre of the campus.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ D.E. Bean and R.E. Ellsworth, *Modular Planning for College and Small University Libraries*, Iowa City, 1948, p. 4.

⁴⁵ R.E. Ellsworth, 'Some Observations on the Architectural Style, Size and Cost of Libraries', *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 1, November 1975, p. 16.

By the 1930s, however, new needs and pressures had materialised. Library buildings had to be larger and capable of expansion to accommodate rapidly growing collections, bigger staffs, specialised service requirements related to teaching methods (for example, an undergraduate collection), and new kinds of spaces for researchers. The older architectural styles could not respond to these conditions without detriment to the integrity of the style.⁴⁶

At the same time, modern building technology incorporated several features that were of advantage to institutions facing rapid change. As a leading advocate of this technology in the library sphere explained:

The use of welded steel skeletons with non-bearing interior walls and an attached non-bearing exterior skin permitted the architect to mass the building into any shape he desired. The use of artificial lighting and forced ventilation permitted human occupancy throughout the entire building, not just around the outer edges. The use of non-bearing interior walls allowed planners to experiment with new space arrangements.⁴⁷

These features were incorporated into Tattersall's proposals for the Dixon Library. In addition, she reaffirmed the principle of 'open access' by which the Library had been guided from its inception. She addressed other issues such as stack and seating provision, the design of the main entrance and service lobby, staff workrooms and

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

other specialised facilities.⁴⁸

In preparing her report to the College, Tattersall had studied the styles and techniques of modern academic library construction - firstly, by reviewing the professional literature on the subject held at the Public Library of New South Wales; and secondly, by consulting in Canberra with the Librarian at the Australian National University, Mr. A.L.G. McDonald, who had recently visited the U.S.A. and studied contemporary trends in library buildings.⁴⁹ Australian librarianship, in the judgment of one university librarian, has been firmly based on American writing and teaching, even though the context in which the university librarian operates is more closely moulded by British influences.⁵⁰ Buildings serve as one area of librarianship in which American experience has predominated. Hence it is not surprising that Tattersall's 1953 report should have carried the subsidiary title, 'with special reference to the plans of the Lamont library building'.⁵¹ The Lamont was the undergraduate library of Harvard University and its opening in 1949 had become a stimulus and a model for university libraries in this period.⁵²

⁴⁸ Tattersall, Preliminary Report

⁴⁹ Tattersall to A.L.G. McDonald. 6 May 1953. U.N.E.A., A292.

⁵⁰ L. Jolley, 'Australian University Libraries 1966', in W.L. Saunders (ed.), *University and Research Library Studies*, Oxford, 1968, p. 2.

⁵¹ Tattersall, Preliminary Report

⁵² The Lamont was the 'first library building planned primarily to meet undergraduate needs'. H.R. Shepley, 'The Lamont Library: Design', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, vol. 3, Winter 1949, p. 5. One Australian librarian termed the Lamont 'the prototype of the special library for undergraduates ...'. Jean P. Whyte, 'Direct Service to Readers', in H. Bryan and G. Greenwood, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

Apart from its specific features, the Lamont provided at this time a comparison of prestige with which to reinforce Tattersall's arguments for a new and specially designed library building at New England. Furthermore, it was consonant with the declared ideals of the institution from the beginning that a 'students' library' should have been chosen as the appropriate model for the Dixon Library.⁵³

On 1 February 1954, the College was granted independence from the University of Sydney and became the University of New England. In itself, this event does not appear to have had any dramatic repercussions on the Dixon Library. Relations between the Dixon and the Fisher Libraries had always been cordial and, on occasions, close,⁵⁴ but there were no formal ties of dependence that had to be undone.

At the same time, the advent of autonomy did provide the occasion for an externally conducted review of the Dixon Library. In March 1954, the first meeting of the University Council authorised Madgwick (who had been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the newly independent institution) 'to secure the services of Mr. J.W. Metcalfe, Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, and Mr. A.L.G. McDonald, Librarian of the Australian National University, to inquire into and report on the Library facilities, administration and costs of the Dixon Library'.⁵⁵

⁵³ Madgwick was as insistent as Booth had been on the responsibility of a university to students. See Madgwick, *Australian University*, April 1968, pp. 23 - 28.

⁵⁴ At one stage the Dixon Librarian thanked the Fisher Librarian and his staff for the 'continuous services you have given us and for the substantial donations of stock we have received from you, and above all for the unfailing support and encouragement I have always found at the Fisher Library'. Tattersall to E.V. Steel, 27 January 1956. Fisher Library Papers, S.U.A., C.16.

⁵⁵ U.N.E. Council, Minutes, 8 March 1954.

On 21 and 22 June, Metcalfe and McDonald visited the University, accompanied by the Secretary of the Library Board of New South Wales, Mr. R.M. McGreal. Three days later, they made a written report to the Vice-Chancellor.⁵⁶ It was relatively brief - one and a half foolscap pages of single typing - and analysed library services and organisation under two headings, 'Staff' and 'Accommodation'. Metcalfe and McDonald judged the staff to be 'numerically adequate, if its work is properly organized, to deal with current book and periodical accessions and the existing number of academic staff and students'. At the same time, they suggested various improvements in the accommodation of the collection.⁵⁷

The consultants made little reference to the incumbent Librarian but their observations, at least under the category of 'Staff', represented an implicit criticism of her administration. Tattersall thereupon wrote a response to the report, which was in turn referred to Metcalfe and McDonald. Metcalfe declined to answer in detail the points made by Tattersall, though he did not retreat from the substance of the report.⁵⁸ McDonald, for his part, produced a considerable letter of comment. He noted that 'the report was intended to be of help to, rather than a criticism of, the librarian who is working under conditions which, to put it mildly, are not conducive to the conduct of an efficient library service'. McDonald took pains to clarify the contents of the report. In one respect, he even modified them, recommending that, in the light of Tattersall's remarks, a 'clerical-type assistant' be added to the staff to perform such duties as handling loan records and recording accounts passed for payment. The

⁵⁶ J. Metcalfe and A.L.G. McDonald, Report on the Dixon Library 25 June 1954. U.N.E. Council. Minutes, 2 August 1954.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ U.N.E. Council, Minutes, 15 April 1955.

University Council accepted this recommendation and resolved to appoint an additional clerk-typist to the Library.⁵⁹

From the standpoint of the Library, the main benefit of the consultants' report was a reinforcement from outside authorities of the urgent need for more space. At its August meeting, the University Council resolved that the improvements in accommodation recommended by the consultants 'be implemented as soon as possible'.⁶⁰

Only one month after independence, and again in July 1955, the Librarian produced documents for public discussion in the University. Each contained a consideration of issues of policy which could affect the new building.⁶¹ In an earlier report (April 1953), Tattersall had addressed a number of these issues, but she evidently believed that every opportunity should be given the academic community to consider the implications of library development. In the opening statement of her 1955 memorandum, she observed:

Any profitable discussion of the requirements for a library building must be preceded by some general discussion on the functions of the Library in the University and the services required of it.⁶²

59 *ibid.*

60 U.N.E. Council, Minutes, 2 August 1954.

61 Tattersall, Memorandum on Matters of Library Policy Affecting the New Building, 31 March 1954; and Memorandum on the Library Building Presented to a Joint Meeting of the Buildings and Grounds Committee and Library Committee, July 1955. U.N.E.A., A292.

62 Tattersall, Memorandum ..., July 1955.

The College had submitted her 1953 report on library requirements to a firm of architects.⁶³ Before plans were finally drawn up, however, the Librarian was keen that the University resolve several outstanding matters relating to library service. In both supplementary reports, she raised these matters. Should certain new services, she asked, be incorporated into the Library - for example, a bindery, or photographic and audio-visual facilities? What kind of provision should be made for the library needs of external students? Was the University contemplating a centralised library service or a system of branch libraries operating in conjunction with a central facility? Tattersall provided background information on these matters: she did not labour her own viewpoint but pointed out various options for consideration, affirming the one which seemed to her most desirable on balance.

Two of the issues she raised were of fundamental importance to the future development of the Dixon Library. The first concerned library service for external students. Here Tattersall proposed that a collection of essential titles in multiple-copy be established; that its minimum size be 10,000-15,000 volumes; and that it form 'an integral part of the Dixon Library, as it would be an administrative error and an uneconomic procedure to set up two separate library services within the one University'.⁶⁴ These recommendations were implemented at a much later stage, but the immediate solution to external students' library needs was to take a different form, which will be reviewed in the next chapter.

⁶³ Tattersall, Memorandum ..., 31 March 1954.

⁶⁴ Tattersall, Memorandum ..., July 1955.

The principle of avoiding a duplication of services also informed the Librarian's attitude to the development of branch or departmental libraries. Such libraries were a traditional feature of universities in the Western world, including the earliest ones founded in Australia. In the judgment of the Fisher Librarian, for example, Sydney University had found departmental libraries necessary because of the dispersed nature of the campus and the desirability of having books and journals handy to academic users. Yet he acknowledged that a small and compact university may not require such libraries, and that, 'other things being equal, it is best that books and periodicals should be kept in a central library'.⁶⁵

For New England, the question of departmental libraries represented what the Librarian described as a 'major policy matter' at this time.⁶⁶ In her submission of July 1955, she argued against their establishment, citing the 'uneconomic' duplication of certain material, of catalogues, and of staff and equipment, as well as the academic drawback of students' tending 'not to read outside their selected subjects of study'. She stated that, in resolving the matter, 'the guiding principle should be that of ensuring that the whole of the University library resources are kept freely available to all members of the University, and it should never be assumed or allowed, that the members of a particular department should have proprietary rights over the material which they nominate as relevant to their subject'. In applying this principle to departmental

⁶⁵ Green to Rooth, 19 August 1940. U.N.E.A., A352.

⁶⁶ Tattersall, Memorandum, July 1955.

libraries, Tattersall argued that certain safeguards should operate - namely, that such libraries would be open to all members of the University 'on the same terms and at the same hours as the main library', and that they 'should be administered by and staffed from the main library'.⁶⁷

The chief impetus for departmental libraries at New England, in this period following autonomy, came from the Faculty of Science. At its meeting of 30 September 1955, the Faculty partly endorsed the conditions stated by the Librarian, but spoke of staffing provision in terms of a full-time 'secretary-librarian'.⁶⁸ At a subsequent meeting of the University's Board of Studies, the Librarian argued against the development of departmental libraries. She stressed that, if they were established, they should be staffed by 'trained Librarians and not Secretary-Librarians'. The Vice-Chancellor pointed out that, irrespective of any approval in principle, budgetary considerations would not permit the development of departmental libraries 'for a long time'.⁶⁹

The decade following the end of World War II revealed a mixed pattern of performance for the Dixon Library. Substantial growth occurred, particularly in the area of acquisitions. In 1947, the collection stood at 15,106 volumes; by 1955, it had doubled - to 30,892. However, the period was also one of constraint and frustration, occasioned mainly by the intense pressure exerted upon the

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Faculty of Science, Minutes, U.N.E.A., A352. 30 September 1955.

⁶⁹ U.N.E. Board of Studies, Minutes, 17 October 1955. U.N.E.A., A352.

Library's limited accommodation in *Booloominbah*. Hopes of recovery and development in universities were stimulated by the programmes of government reconstruction launched in the post-war years. However, they did not find realization in the Dixson Library in this period, but waited upon developments in the wider scene of Australian universities in the late 1950s.