

Buildings and Architecture

The following is an example of a section devoted to a particular area of interest such as has been proposed for College and Research Libraries. This section was mainly prepared by Ralph E. Ellsworth, Chairman of the Committee on College and University Library Buildings of A.C.R.L.

ALMOST EVERYONE writing in to the A.C.R.L. Committee on College and University Library Buildings for information on postwar college and university library construction asks one of two questions:

1. Are there new materials or engineering techniques that we should know about?
2. Are there new ideas about how libraries might be planned?

In response to the first question, it seems too early for anyone to speak with certainty. There probably have been many new materials developed which are not yet known to civilians. New methods of welding certainly will make for a freer use of steel in construction. The wartime expansion of the aluminum factories, which has been accompanied by the breaking of the aluminum monopoly, may have the effect of making aluminum cheap enough to be a real competitor of steel for construction purposes. New types of paints and varnishes should offer real possibilities for better wall and furniture surfaces. Various new conceptions of chair construction exhibited recently in the New York City Museum of Modern Art may result in library furniture that will be comfortable. Further refinement in fluorescent and even newer types of lighting can be expected, and it would be strange indeed if better ventilation equipment is not available after the war. In other words, the possibilities look good but it is too early to say at this time what materials may be available.

In response to the second question, three of the larger libraries are developing methods of interior construction and arrangement that break sharply with traditional practices. All three buildings are using unit type construction based on varying sized modules. The three libraries are those of the State Uni-

versity of Iowa, Princeton, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Following is a thumbnail sketch of the Iowa plan.

All floors throughout the Iowa building will have a uniform ceiling height of 8 ft. 6 in. Each floor will contain rows of columns 19 ft. 6 in. apart in one direction and 13 ft. 6 in. in the other direction, thus providing a module size of 13 ft. 6 in. by 19 ft. 6 in., or a dimension in the clear of 12 by 18 ft. Column thickness will be 18 inches.

Between any two columns can be hung a partition, a bookshelf, either single or double faced, or a partition with door or glass upper. Lighting and ventilation fixtures will be built into the columns and ceilings in such a way that the space in each module can be used interchangeably for reading tables, book storage, faculty offices, seminars, conference rooms, microfilm readers, phonograph record players, map rooms, etc.

Instead of a separate stack room in a special section, there will be various reading areas, each surrounded with shelving to take care of appropriate books. Book storage can be set up at any desired location. Space above the normal 7 ft. 6 in. can be used for dead storage or can be wasted; or the space could be filled with a blackboard panel upon which could be written with chalk pertinent observations on the books shelved below.

The front center of the building will contain fixed fixtures such as lobby, stairways, elevators, cloakrooms, and a floor control desk on each floor. Two corridors running from front to rear will divide the building into three parts. Off each corridor will be the faculty offices and seminars. Reading areas, conference rooms, book storage, and carrels will be located between the seminars and the outer walls.

The floor construction, as well as that of the walls, can be dry. That is, instead of being reinforced concrete or hollow tile it will be made of thin steel boxes (6 to 8 in.) resting on beams supported by the columns. Such floor construction offers the possibility of prefabricating lighting fixtures, ventilation ducts, sound deadening properties, and painted sur-

faces. The wall construction will be of the panel type, made either of steel, asbestos cement, or some one of the various types of flexible wall material. All the major library construction companies presumably will be ready with their own special methods of putting up this kind of library.

The term "remutable" is used to characterize this kind of construction. The term "libratory" has been suggested by a member of the Iowa faculty to characterize the type

of program being developed for the building.

In breaking with traditional practices, the directors of the three libraries mentioned above should be humbled by the knowledge that three other men—Angus Snead Macdonald, Alfred Morton Githens, and Earl U. Rugg—conceived this type of construction and, indeed, put it into a library building in 1940 at the Colorado State College of Education at Greeley.

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It probably can be taken for granted that librarians who are planning new buildings are reading the current issues of such magazines as *Pencil Points*, *Architectural Forum*, etc. As an example of the type of information that can be found, the following articles might be pointed out:

"Taking Stock for the Future" by Lopez in the January *Pencil Points*. This is a summary of new building materials and equipment. Among other things, it raises a question of whether or not existing building codes will stand in the way of new methods and materials. The article summarizes what all the leading manufacturers are prepared to do. Notice the picture of a windowless building on page 113 of the same issue.

"Building in One Package" in the January issue of *Architectural Forum*. This is a story of the organization and construction techniques of the Austin Company. It gives new information on ventilating and lighting questions. Notice also the advertisement of the Detroit Steel Products on page 188-89. This is only one type of dry construction. Another type is pictured in the Johns-Manville advertising on page 162.

The *American School and University Year Book* is, of course, worth careful study. In the 1944 issue there are a number of valuable articles. The ones beginning on pages 25, 36, 60, 228, and the RCA advertisement on page 184 are especially good.

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As soon as conditions permit, Princeton University will erect a new building to house its library and to provide conference rooms, administrative headquarters, and individual studies for the teachers and students in the humanities and social sciences. The family of Harvey Firestone, including his five sons, has made a major gift to the fund for the erection of the structure.

The library will be located in the northeastern section of the campus, about where the school of science stood before its destruction by fire in 1928. The structure will form the northern wing and complete, architecturally, a group of important buildings, the other components of which are the university chapel and two classroom buildings, McCosh and Dickinson Halls.

The new center, which because of its concept of bringing together teacher, student, and books has been called a "campus workshop," has been a matter of discussion and planning

by faculty and trustees for two decades. It will not only "remedy a shortage of storage space which threatens to stunt the essential growth of the Princeton library, but . . . also provide physical facilities for the development of Princeton's philosophy of education, which is based upon the intimate intellectual association of teacher and pupil and the encouragement of self-education."

The new building will have shelf space for two million books, nearly double the capacity of Princeton's present libraries, and will lend itself to almost indefinite expansion. While all fields of study in the university will benefit from it, the workshop concept applies particularly to those departments that do not now have the physical facilities, such as their own buildings or laboratories, which bring the student and teacher into contact.

Carrying out this idea, it will provide accommodations, in each case near the book collections in their respective fields, for faculty

and students in classics, economics, English, history, modern languages, Oriental languages, philosophy, politics, religion, and various other divisions. Each student who needs one will have his own individual study carrel for his independent and thesis work. There will be about 500 such workrooms.

The bookstacks in the Firestone Library

will be largely underground. This plan makes possible a system of vertical circulation of books from the stacks to the seminars, conference rooms, special libraries, and other rooms above, a unique feature which is expected to result in efficiency and economy of operation. O'Connor and Kilham, of New York City, are the architects.

Summer Program at G. L. S.

THE Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago is condensing its 1945 summer quarter courses to a period of nine weeks, from June 25 to August 25. During these two months students in either the advanced curriculum or the bachelor of library science curriculum may enroll for three regular courses, or approximately one third of the requirements for either program.

The needs and interests of college and university librarians, school librarians, and public librarians are all well represented in the list of fourteen advanced courses scheduled for the summer. These offerings include both basic courses for new students and also additional courses for former students continuing their programs of study.

In the B.L.S. curriculum, open to college graduates, a second group of courses in the three-summer cycle is scheduled. These courses are open both to former students and to beginners.

The six-weeks Workshop for School Librarians (June 25 to August 4) will again be directed by Mildred L. Batchelder, school and

children's library specialist of the American Library Association. The activities of the workshop will be directed at the consideration of special problems and projects of experienced school librarians and teacher-librarians, but all registrants will participate in the sessions of the workshop in secondary and elementary education conducted by specialists in these fields in the department of education.

Tentative plans for the tenth annual institute of the Graduate Library School have been made for the summer of 1945. A program is under consideration on the principles and techniques of personnel administration, to be discussed by specialists from libraries, government, and industry. The tentative dates are August 27 to September 1. Final decisions regarding the institute will depend on transportation facilities available. Later announcements will be made if the institute is to be held.

Correspondence regarding any phase of the school's program is invited.

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