



Building and Equipment Trends: II

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A SIN OF WHICH JUNIOR college librarians cannot be accused is rushing into print to crow about their new buildings. For the past ten years, there is no dearth of entries in *Library Literature* on library buildings—if you are looking for information on public, college, or university buildings. There is relatively little on junior college buildings. Necessarily then, much of this article is based on the California scene, and personal observation in new junior college libraries in the state. Perhaps the needs of the junior college are not sufficiently distinct that its library cannot fit into the general college pattern.

In 1958 a survey of a selected sample of junior college librarians provided some interesting results: in only 24 per cent was the library separately housed; 53.4 per cent of the librarians felt the buildings or quarters were inadequate.¹ This survey was aimed primarily at colleges of less than 500 enrollment and so was probably not representative. However, the building activity in junior colleges in California (most of them four to five times the size of the surveyed colleges) within the past few years indicates the general need for more adequate buildings. Of the eight libraries for which descriptions were found,²⁻⁹ only one⁷ had a building with other than library uses. To my knowledge, no new junior college library has been built in the last few years in California which was not a separate building (besides those with published descriptions, one thinks of Long Beach City College, Cerritos College, East Los Angeles College, and Cabrillo College).

The various aspects of planning libraries have been adequately covered in numerous publications, Sheehan¹⁰ for the small college and the various American Library Association buildings and equipment institutes¹¹⁻¹² with more general approaches. Librarians are normally interested primarily in the internal layout of the building;

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siting and external architectural details are matters over which they have little control or influence.¹³ The site will be determined by congeries of educational considerations, varying at each school, but, it is hoped that the result will be a central location. For most junior colleges, in these days of growth, a unified architectural format has been established and the external appearance of the library will fit into the total picture. The librarian need seldom complain that architectural demands overwhelm functional library demands these days, but libraries are still being designed to be striking, if not monumental (Cerritos College Library and the College of San Mateo Library are two outstanding examples). Elizabeth Martin frankly states that Foothill College Library was designed to be "monumental, indicating by its appearance its importance in the college community."¹⁴

Harriet Genung¹⁵ has indicated the interaction of a long term planning committee at Mt. San Antonio College with the architects. This committee, consisting of faculty, administration, librarians, and trustees, established the requirements for the library building and followed through on the many sets of plans drawn up, discarded, and revised over a period of years. This sort of planning is almost classic in that it follows very closely the recommendations of the experts.¹⁶⁻¹⁹ June Biermann indicates a similar planning period.²⁰ This is certainly a desirable situation, and from the emphasis in the literature on the desirability of such planning, it is evidently one which has not always been obtained in the past.

Detailed planning on the individual campus has resulted in very different appearing libraries, each one the result of institutional educational desiderata. San Mateo's library is a large, flat-roofed pavilion, glass enclosed to two stories on all four sides and prominently placed on campus.²¹ Perhaps only on the cool northern California coast could such a vast expanse of glass have been attempted. Except for offices and work spaces it is completely open inside, with the reading rooms two floors in height, overlooked by a mezzanine stack area built over the offices and work spaces. With a present enrollment of over 4,300²² and a seating capacity of 550, the number of seats provide for only half of those recommended in the Standards for Junior College Libraries.²³ Offices, workrooms, and staff rooms seem to be adequate. With the very light and open construction, the use of rich dark woods in the furniture makes for a happy contrast. The standard steel stacks, with a capacity of 60,000 volumes would appear to provide sufficient space for considerable growth of the student body. Failure to provide

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separate enclosed spaces in which to use the several microfilm readers which the library possesses seems to be a mistake. They are placed in a portion of the reference stack area, and while they can be used in such an area, better lighting conditions could be provided. The large student typing room is a most useful adjunct to the reading area.

The entire ground floor of the San Mateo Library is devoted to audio-visual uses with an extensive program either in affect or planned. Provision has been made for TV and FM studios, dark rooms, preview rooms, faculty and student reading rooms and extensive listening spaces. In addition, teaching machines, reading accelerators, and table model slide and filmstrip viewers are at hand for use in the library, with records and music scores available for circulation.

In contrast with San Mateo, the Mt. San Antonio planning program resulted in a completely windowless, fully air-conditioned structure.²⁴ Two stories in height, it is set on a slightly rising grade so that the entrance to each floor can be at ground level, the upper floor being devoted entirely to library purposes, and approximately half of the lower floor being devoted to audio-visual services. Here again the audio-visual services are most complete, in great measure designed to serve a future rather than a present program.

The Mt. San Antonio College Library is probably one of the largest (if not the largest) junior college library in the country. Projected total seating capacity of 1,050 (15 per cent of projected enrollment of 7,000) does not satisfy the Standards, but certainly places this library in the large category. The great advance in seating here is that two-thirds of the study spaces consist of individual carrels. The library is modular with most interior walls moveable in case rearrangement is desired. The library is bisected by a central corridor which has information stations and the author-title catalog. Subject libraries of Physical Sciences, and Biological and Applied Sciences, are to one side, with the Social Sciences and Humanities Libraries on the other. Subject catalogs are located in each of the four subject libraries, and each library has a separate entrance and exit controlled by turnstiles at the charging stations. Stacks (for a potential maximum of 100,000 volumes) are of metal as are the furniture and carrels. Because of the moveability feature of the interior arrangement, the library is broken up into many smaller rooms with no really large reading room. Generous use of glass walls gives the library an appearance of being very open.

An IBM circulation control system is used for charging books with

all items returned to a central area for discharging and distribution. The system is integrated with IBM machines used in other offices on campus. Office and work spaces at Mt. San Antonio Library are provided with the same generosity as are other facilities. One detail of planning and construction which is seldom seen but which is very useful is that in each subject library a small closet is provided for library book carts. How often, in how many places, are these very necessary adjuncts of library work simply in the way!

From this most incomplete study of new junior college library buildings can we come to any conclusions as to trends? Perhaps not really, but we can summarize some of the new and old ideas which go into new buildings. For one thing junior college libraries are expected to be among the architecturally most important buildings on campus. Almost all of the descriptions of junior college libraries mention the prominence of site and the importance of architecture. Fortunately these features are now combined with a functional approach to interior design not only in junior college libraries but also in the four year colleges and universities.²⁵

Trinkner has written: "Within the past four years several new library buildings of modern design have been added to the campuses of Florida colleges. . . . In contrast with the past concept of locating library quarters in some part of the administration building or part of a classroom building, the library has reached the phase of having an individual well-planned building designed as a campus center."²⁶ All but one of the eight libraries described in the literature and noted in this article are completely separate structures.

Some aspects of interior design, arrangement, and furniture are of interest and perhaps indicate possible trends. Only Mt. San Antonio College Library varied from the traditional circulation, reference and large reading room arrangement. The use of many smaller study rooms combined with widespread use of glass walls to keep an open appearance seems to be a notable advance. To overcome what might result in lack of supervision and control of such spaces, they have used generously the concept of individual carrels to insure quiet study. Large open reading rooms, although often impressive, have the disadvantage of needing to be carefully supervised just because there are many lively and vivacious teen-agers in one room.

The use of rich dark wood in furniture and paneling at Foothill College, College of San Mateo, and Los Angeles Pierce College follows current fashions in industrial and home design. This is a trend in many

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new libraries being built today.²⁷ The lower reflection combined with the use of light wall paints and strong light values gives a most desirable study atmosphere. Foothill College and Los Angeles Pierce College have installed book stacks of these dark woods while the other libraries in our small sample have used standard metal from one of the conventional suppliers. Only Foothill College has used carpeting throughout the library.

Air-conditioning was installed in four of the libraries—St. Andrew's Presbyterian College,²⁸ Mt. San Antonio College,⁸ Simmons,²⁹ and Jones County Junior College.⁷ It seems logical that Foothill College and the College of San Mateo should not be air-conditioned since it is hardly needed in cool northern California coastal areas, but Los Angeles Valley and Los Angeles Pierce Colleges are in the San Fernando Valley and it is hot there during many months of the year. If, as seems likely in California at least, we have year round operation in higher education, air-conditioning may become almost a necessity.

The only feature which most of these libraries appear to have in common is the inclusion of some audio-visual facilities within the building. Each varied in its approach from the music listening rooms of Simmons and Jones County to the very complete audio-visual departments of Mt. San Antonio and San Mateo. Only St. Andrew's Presbyterian College made no audio-visual provisions as part of the library service. This and the movement to separate library buildings are probably the only real trends which this paper has uncovered.

One conclusion we can make is that, as for college, university, public, and special library buildings, each junior college library building is a law unto itself, dependent on the community within which it is constructed and must exist for the guidelines which control its every feature. If there are any features which pertain to the junior college library alone, they have not yet been identified. A junior college library building answers to the imperatives which control any building. Paul Schweikher has stated it for us: ". . . a building must have structural stability; it must be weathertight; it must be equipped to control light, air, and temperature; and it must be planned to fit its use."³⁰

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