

NEW BUILDINGS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH ARCHIVES OFFICES IN ADELAIDE AND BRISBANE

The Commonwealth Government first took action to establish an Archives system in 1943 by establishing a War Archives Committee. In 1946, the scheme was extended to cover all Archives created by the Commonwealth. The National Library and the Australian War Memorial were given authority to administer the scheme jointly and by 1950 a working organisation existed in Canberra. In 1950, the two Archival Authorities and the Public Service Board co-operated in a joint survey of Commonwealth Records throughout Australia, and following this survey a number of repositories were established in State Capitals. In 1952 the National Library became the sole Archival Authority, and in 1962 the Archives Division of the National Library became the Commonwealth Archives Office within the Prime Minister's Department.

One of the main features of the 1952 survey was that it was designed to remove dead records from valuable city space. To be able to do this temporary large scale accommodation had to be procured in Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and, somewhat later, in Adelaide. All of this accommodation was more or less unsatisfactory but at the time it was probably the only possible arrangement.

By the end of 1959, the repositories in Adelaide and Brisbane were showing signs of imminent saturation. The Adelaide building which had been built as a church nearly a century earlier, could perhaps have been extended but the area in which it was situated was becoming heavily industrialised, the original fabric of the building was poor, and it was therefore decided that it would be far more economical in the long run to start afresh.

The position in Brisbane was different. Here there was no possibility of either extending or even remaining for a very long period, as the building was a temporary war-time store located on park land which belonged by rights to a local government authority. Once the decision had been taken to vacate the land the Archives had no option but to seek other accommodation. In any case the repository building was inadequate and situated in a very highly industrialised area.

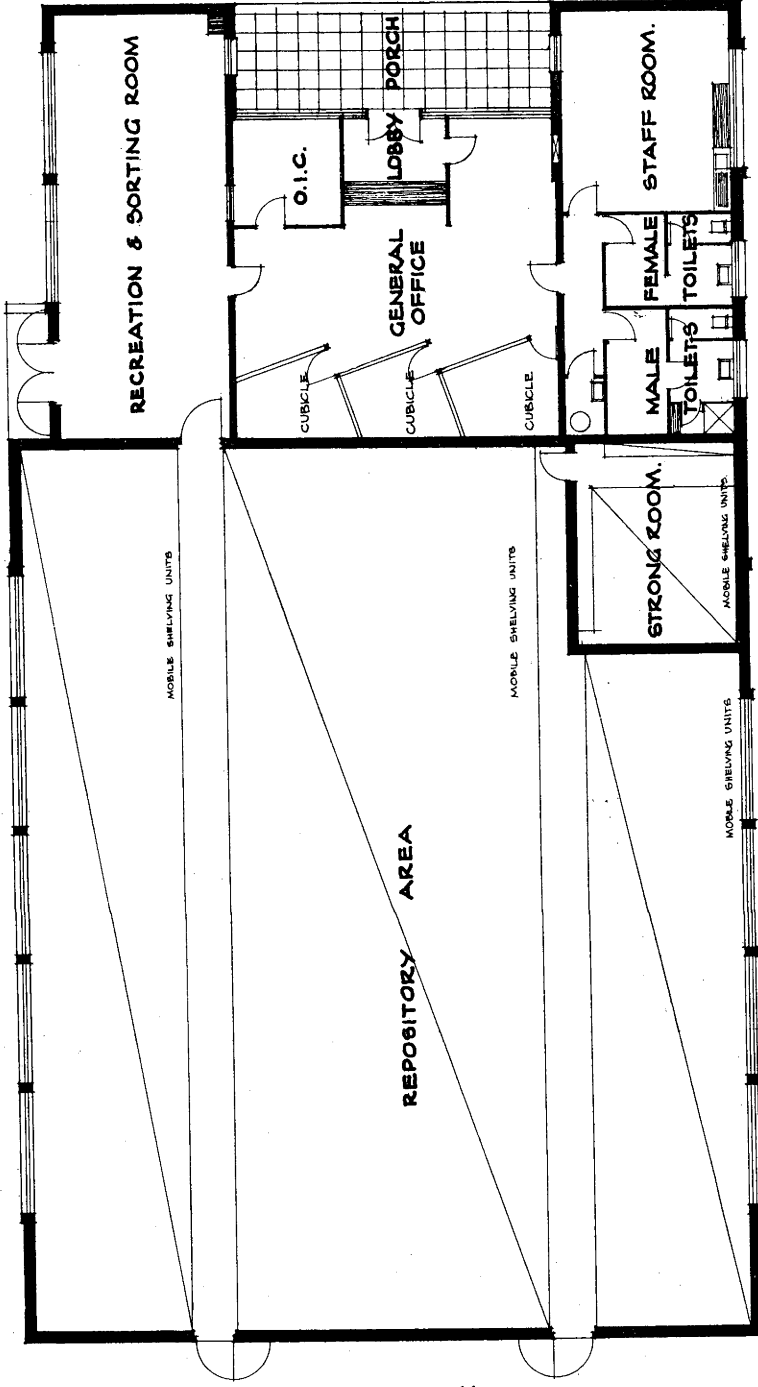
At this point, the Archives Division was transferred from the Commonwealth National Library to become the Commonwealth Archives Office under the Prime Minister's Department. The crises in Brisbane and Adelaide were really the first major problems facing the new administration and were tackled at once. By the end of 1961 a new site in each city had been secured and design work commenced immediately. Construction actually commenced in Adelaide in August 1962, and in Brisbane in November 1962. The Adelaide building was formally opened on 2nd July, 1963 by the Hon. A. R. Downer, Minister for Immigration, and the Brisbane building on 20th September, 1963 by the Hon. C. F. Adermann, M.P., Minister for Primary Industry.

Since these two buildings are the first complete buildings to be designed in Australia specifically for archival purposes, the following technical descriptions may be of interest.

ADELAIDE

Location : 11-13 D'Erlanger Avenue, Medindie Gardens. This is a residential area and the building has therefore been carefully designed to harmonise with its surroundings. It is only 2½ miles from the Adelaide G.P.O.

Cost and Capacity : The capacity of the building is 24,000 cubic feet and the cost approximately £59,500.



COMMONWEALTH ARCHIVES REPOSITORY ADELAIDE S.A.

General Description : The building is constructed with Besser block cavity walls, steel deck roofing on timber purlins and is floored throughout in concrete. All floors are covered with vinyl tiles. The repository walls are unplastered internally.

Security : The building is divided into separate office and repository areas by a fire-proof wall with fire-proof door. The electrical current in the repository area can be cut off at a switchboard in the office area during silent hours. There is an adequate supply of manual fire extinguishers and an electric fire alarm has been installed. The windows in the repository area are situated high under the eaves and all windows are wired and fitted with window guards. The whole repository area is surrounded by a wire-mesh fence.

Shelving : The repository is shelved throughout in rolled upright shelving with eight shelves to the unit. The whole installation is mounted on the Compactus system giving a concentration of approximately 4.5 cubic feet of archives per square foot of floor space.

BRISBANE

Location : Wynnum Road, Cannon Hill. This too is mainly a residential suburb, though the repository building itself is within a storage area controlled by the Department of Supply. It is situated approximately six miles from the city.

Cost and Capacity : The cost of the building was approximately £80,000 and the capacity is 40,000 cubic feet.

Dimensions : The overall dimensions of the repository are 218' x 87' with a detached office area of 96' x 56'.

General Description : The repository building is of portal steel frame with brick walls and timber infil panels sheeted with patent steel sheeting. The roof is of corrugated galvanised iron, the floors are of concrete and there is a brick fire wall across the centre.

The administration building is of brick with steel trusses, aluminium and timber framed windows and galvanised iron roof.

Between the two, there is a connecting area including a loading deck.

Security : The building is divided into separate repository and office areas with all the electrical wiring for the repository controlled by a switchboard in the administrative area. There is a fireproof door between the two areas, a sprinkler system and an adequate supply of manual extinguishers.

All repository windows are of wired glass fitted with window guards and the whole area is surrounded by a security fence.

Lighting : Fluorescent lighting is installed throughout. Repository windows on the north and east walls are of non actinic glass.

Air Conditioning : An air conditioning plant is installed in the office area only.

Shelving : The repository is not airconditioned and in order to ensure free air circulation in a near-tropical climate the idea of using a compactus installation was abandoned. A further consideration was that the land was already Commonwealth owned and cost nothing and the building could be of less expensive construction in the area concerned. Doubling the size of the repository proper was therefore not a real financial problem.

CANNON HILL - BRISBANE
 ARCHIVES BUILDING
 COMMONWEALTH DEPT OF WORKS
FLOOR PLAN

