

18 CULTURAL AMENITIES

It is most desirable that all university activities should be located in the same locality. Apart from the increased traffic and transport problems created by separation, universities overseas have found that many of the benefits of university life and training are lost if part of the academic work is segregated from the main centre of activity.

The university authorities have considered the possibility of moving the University from its present site to one further out, where sufficient land for its proper development could be acquired at reasonable cost, but have come to the conclusion that the existing capital investment on the present site renders any such move impracticable. Moreover, the present site, despite the limitation in size, has many advantages for both full-time and part-time students.

It is generally accepted that a university in itself does not fulfil all the requirements of higher education, and with this

in mind the university authorities have stressed the advantages of concentrating in one locality those institutions necessary for complete tertiary education, namely:

- (a) The University.
- (b) An Institute of Technology.
- (c) Hospitals for medical training.
- (d) A dental hospital for training dentists.
- (e) Schools for training teachers.
- (f) Research institutes.

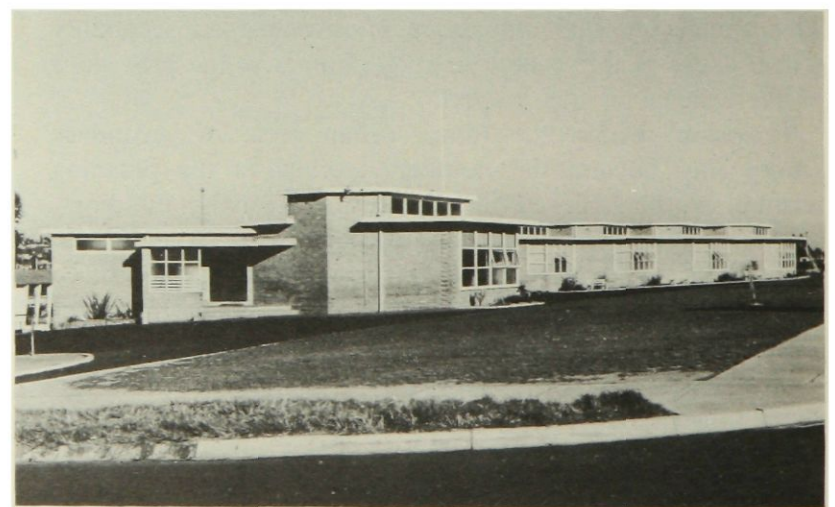
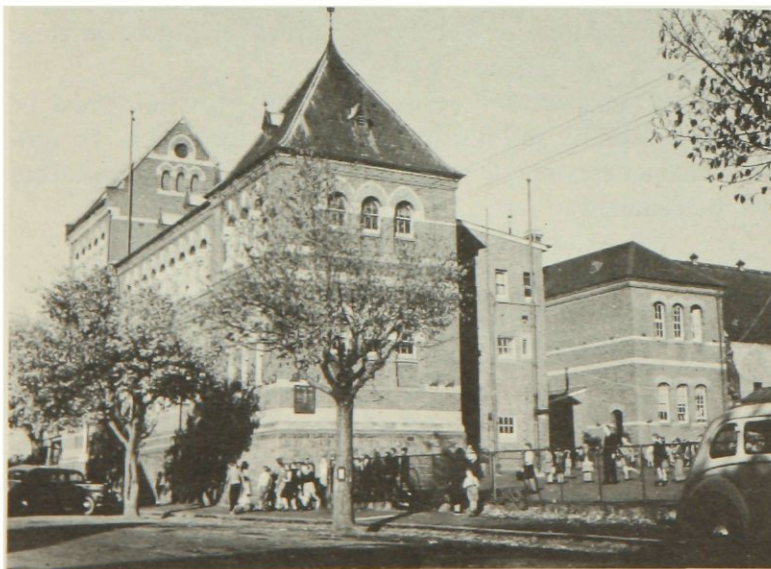
Already grouped near the University are the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Walter & Eliza Hall Research Institute, Women's Hospital, Teachers' Training College, University High School and five University Colleges. The Children's Hospital and the Dental Hospital are being built in the vicinity. Thus there is already a well-established centre devoted to education, medicine and research, the value of which would be destroyed if the University were moved to a more distant site.

For a number of reasons, therefore, the University should be retained on its present site and nearby property acquired when necessary to meet future needs.

To permit of this, the planning scheme provides special Use Zone No. 15 with a total area of about 240 acres, in which the principal land uses are those directly associated with tertiary education, and medical, dental and research institutions.

Within this Special Use Zone, however, there is no possibility of providing for the 100 acres estimated as being necessary for the future recreational needs of the University. However, immediately adjacent thereto is Royal Park, with an area of 480 acres. In view of the additional areas which

"Schools located on inadequate sites"



"Good buildings well equipped and with ample playgrounds"

have been reserved in the planning scheme for open space, it would not be unreasonable for sufficient playing fields to be reserved in Royal Park exclusively for University use.

CULTURAL FACILITIES

Some people overseas believe that Australians are mainly interested in sport to the virtual exclusion of cultural pursuits. It is true that this young land has not the cultural traditions of European countries, and that its climate entices people out of doors throughout most of the year, so that more time is devoted to sporting activities than is usually the case in Europe. But the large attendances at symphony concerts, at the ballet and at the outdoor performances of classical music, and the audiences that gather to hear celebrated artists, show the appeal they have for a large number of the people. The public library, the picture gallery and the museum also have a surprisingly large and constant patronage.

As in many other aspects of urban life, public demand has caught up with the facilities available. Parliament has already had the foresight to reserve, by legislative enactment, sites for two new cultural buildings. At the corner of St. Kilda Road and Sturt Street an area of 8½ acres has been reserved as a site for a National Art Gallery and Museum, and 6½ acres have been reserved on the Domain for a National Museum. When eventually the gallery and museum are transferred to these new locations, the 4½ acre site now occupied by them in conjunction with the Public Library and Technological Museum will become available solely for the latter purposes and will afford ample space for expansion.

However, no facilities exist and no provision has yet been made for the needs of music, drama and the ballet. As an example, although Victoria has a fine symphony orchestra, it has no home, no proper facilities for rehearsal, and there is no proper auditorium for its musical presentations.

The Melbourne Town Hall is the only place of sufficient capacity to accommodate the thousands of people anxious to hear good music, but its acoustics and appointments are far from satisfactory. It is a multi-purpose hall, and therefore is not suitable for the proper presentation of music, which requires an auditorium designed for and primarily devoted to that purpose.

There is also no place where opera and the ballet can be suitably presented.

If Melbourne is to take its place culturally with other cities of comparable size and importance, there must be a centre devoted to musical and dramatic art, which would not only provide for the production of first-class musical performances, but would encourage opera, the theatre and the ballet.

An ideal site would be in the Alexandra Gardens on the opposite side of St. Kilda Road to the site reserved for the National Gallery. Although a musical and dramatic centre on this site would occupy some parkland, this would be more than compensated for by the use to which the area would be put and by the generous provisions in the scheme for more parkland and open space. From the viewpoint of transport and convenience, it would be hard to find a more suitable site. As the area is already reserved for public use, it has not been considered necessary to make any special reservation in the scheme for this purpose.

"The University and its environs"

