Thesis

Subject: A Library for a Large University like Harvard.

George B. Ford '00
A Library for a Large University.

The ideal university library should be placed in a central and prominent position relative to the other buildings of the university, for the library typifies the acquisition of knowledge and the training of the mind for which the college stands. Owing to its prominent position, the library should be of a dignified and monumental character, and, further, its details should be treated in a delicate manner in order to typify the refinement that comes from intellectual culture.

In examining the requirements of the plan, we find that it is, first of all, necessary to have a large central reading-room for the general reader. Opening out of this should be the delivery room. In order to give the greatest efficiency of service and the greatest comfort to the public, it is necessary that the delivery room should be placed so as to be in as direct communication as possible, entrance, the stacks, the reading-rooms and the work-rooms. The stacks should be so arranged as to receive the maximum
light. Further the shelves should be arranged so as to be most readily accessible. Aside from the main reading-room there should be other reading-rooms for special study. These should contain alcoves for the books of special departments. They should be designed with especial reference to comfort and good lighting. In addition to the above rooms there should be smaller rooms for periodicals and journals. Near the stacks-room is the delivery room should be several works rooms for the librarian, for cataloguing, etc. Around all of these rooms there should be a system of passages arranged so as to give the maximum ease of access to any part of the library without necessitating the disturbance of any of the readers.

Such are the general requirements of the problem. Below is my solution of this problem.

On approaching the building, one would be struck with the long low character of the building. The lowness is due to the fact that it seemed best for efficiency of management
and for good overhead light to have the public rooms only one story in height. The long character is due to the desire to have the building face on the longer side of a large rectangular court. The building is set on a high base so as to give the opportunity for a large, dry, and well-lighted basement for the handling and storage of tools. A high basement also gives a certain added dignity to a building. The style chosen for the treatment of the exterior was Greek, for the Greek is a peculiarly monumental style because of its dignity and simplicity. Further, the Greek style is especially adapted to a long low type of building owing to the use of many long, unbroken, horizontal lines. There is the large, main approach to the building under an imposing porch composed of six Doric columns surmounted by a Doric entablature and pediment. Around the sides and back of this porch, the walls
are left plain except for a high paneling at the base and a frieze at the top. In the center of the rear of the porch is the large main door. Above and behind this porch rises a low, flat dome which covers the main reading room. On either side of the porch, and somewhat behind it, is a colonnade of six Ionic columns, about two-thirds the height of the height of the central Doric porch. At the rear of this colonnade is a row of five tall windows opening upon the special reading-rooms. This colonnade is terminated by a hall-way which runs from front to back across the building. This hall-way is entered at front and leads through a monumental doorway under a hall-and-porch roof. Over the colonnade and vestibule is a low, roof. Above and behind this is the wall and low sloping roof of the special libraries. Beyond the special libraries and the hall-ways are the
semi-circular rooms for periodicals and newspapers. These are surrounded by engaged columns between which are windows like those under the colonnade. Above this room there is a low-sloping roof with a semi-circular skylight in the center.

In plan, the rooms cluster about the main central reading-room. This main room is octagonal in shape, 60 feet in diameter, and covered by a circular dome 87 feet high. In the drum, directly below the dome, are four large lunette windows which admit ample light to the interior. At the front and on one side are large arched recesses 30 feet deep, 12 feet wide and 48 feet high. In each of these is a small balcony supported by columns. The chief feature of the interior decoration of this room are the eight large columns that support the springing plane of the lunette windows. At the rear of the room is a large semi-circular niche 48 feet high, 30 feet wide & 28 feet
deep containing the delivery room and the des-
eye desk. Around the rear of the delivery room
are five large doors leading directly into the
semi-circular stacks room. The stacks room,
which is 40 feet deep, is divided into eighty tiers,
each 7 feet high. On each of these tiers are
shelves radiating from the center of the
semicircle of the room itself. The stacks are
lit by large windows at the end of each
cube and by a great circular skylight above.
Ease of access to any part of the
stacks is gained by many little iron stair-
ways. Opening out of the stacks, in
front, are two good-sized rooms for the li-
brarician and for cataloguing. Passing
through a large doorway on either side of
the main reading room we enter the special
reading rooms which are 49 feet long, 42 feet
wide and 41 feet high. These rooms are lighted
by five tall windows on either side and by a
large skylight overhead. Each of
these special reading-rooms has on either side, three alcoves partitioned off for special departments. A system of corridors, 7 or 8 feet wide, surrounds the main reading room and each of the special reading rooms. This is of great advantage in giving ease of access from one part of the building to another without disturbing the readers in the reading rooms. In the middle of this rear wall of each of the special reading-rooms is a door opening upon the end of a colonnade which surrounds the stacks-room. Beyond each of the special reading-rooms is a hallway 20 feet wide and 60 feet long running across the building from front to back, with entrances at either end. On one side, this hall opens upon the special reading-room and upon the ends of two colonnades. On the other side it opens upon a semi-circular periodical room. This latter room is 40 feet in diameter and 25 feet deep, lighted by nine tall
windows and by a skylight over head. Around the outside are five alcoves similar to those in the special reading-rooms.

In the solution of this problem, I have made three finished drawings:

1. Elevation at $1/8 = 1'$
2. Plan at $1/16 = 1'$
3. Section (transverse) at $1/16 = 1'$

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