

Coming: more space for books and students

By GREG McCONNELL
If you haunt the Steacie Science Library and experience the thousand little annoyances of its over-crowding, you might be interested in what the New Central Library might do about them.

Long passed is the vital preliminary planning stage when students might have had a say in deciding these plans; but the planners don't seem to have done a bad job.

Let's take a tour. Imagine yourself entering the library from the bookstore level going in under the present illusory sign. You cross a covered passageway, one foot above a reflecting pool with—a little touch of elegance—small fountains keeping the water moving.

Straight ahead is the reserve reading room. It will seat about 200, and Bill Newman, assistant director of libraries, hopes to see it open 24 hours, 7 days a week next year.

If you are after one of the books on the main shelves, however, don't go in. The reserve reading room will not connect internally to the rest of the library. Rather, climb aboard the escalator in the passageway and go up into the main lobby.

Now look up, look way up. Three storeys of balconies surround you, and a ceiling of criss-crossed beams and glass skylights look down on you. The balconies behind your head are arranged up and out like the walkways in the Ministry of Love. That's real space.

You will find the first floor occupied by a periodicals reading room, card catalogues, reference and technical services, and check-out. Going up by escalator into the 3rd and 4th floors you will see smoking lounges, carrels, tables, and, of course, books. Sorry, but the 5th floor will be occupied by tenants.

Bob Howard of campus planning confirmed that the building's design does allow for an 8 inch shift on the foundations, because of the weight of the cantilevered southeast corner. Classrooms and seminar rooms will fill these balconies.

Made of special fibre-glass mould and Finnish plywood, the custom-designed carrels and tables match the lounge chairs and couches in modern design. There is an example of each in the lounge of the Temporary Office Building, if you care to check them out.

Fred Ash of the physical plant outlined the colour scheme. The carpet is yellow in order to offset the possible depressing effect of the ever-present concrete. As well, each floor will have a different accent colour, from blue to orange to a bright red on the 5th floor.

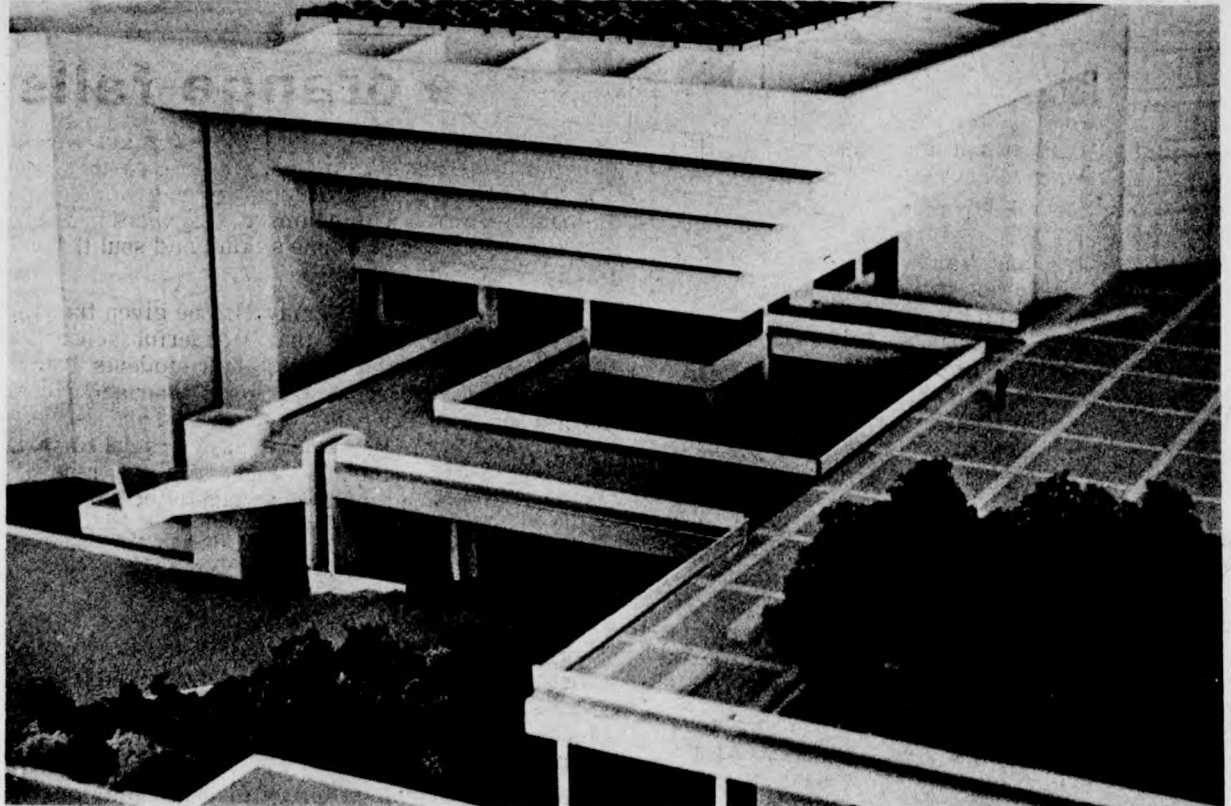
Newman, said that he expects to begin moving in June, and that the facilities will be ready for September.

Although the budget has not been finalized yet, Newman said he expected the staff to increase from 160 to 200 permanent employees. He mentioned that Steacie could not hold the number of staff needed for fast service.

As for Steacie next year? Its fate is still undecided, he said. Even if a science library did remain, it would not occupy all the space presently used for the library. Will College E find itself in temporary quarters at Steacie?

The new building is only stage one of three envisioned by the master plan. Phase two will be an expansion of the northwest corner, and phase three will result in a higher tower behind the building.

The second stage will feature the completion of the general library and the beginnings of a research library with a 'closed stack' system. 1975 might see work started on this section.



The dramatic main entrance to the new library isn't built yet but here is what it will look like.

Excalibur - Tim Clark

The third phase, planned for the 1980s, is an expansion of the research facilities.

The last two stages will also bring offices for graduate students and faculty. The new library will have 264 special lockers between the carrels for graduates.

The following figures show the extent of expansion:

	STEAECIE	CENTRAL LIBRARY
Area:	approx. 60,000 sq. ft.	265,000 sq. ft.
Capacity:	long surpassed	531,000 volumes maximum (main stacks)
Student seating:	430	1,470

It is an impressive building, with its space, its escalators, and its comfort. With the possible exception of the isolated reserve reading room, you will likely walk out fairly pleased.

As for costs, D.A. Dawson, assistant director of campus planning, refused to give a detailed breakdown except to say that of the \$9-million total cost, \$6.5-million went for construction costs. He felt, however, that they were reasonable, and that extravagance had been avoided.

Ross Howard, sole student of the library Committee, was critical, however, of the planning process for university buildings. Although he explained that he had been on the committee only since January, he said that the committee had had very little say in the planning for the new library, even when it had no student on it.

At any rate, the essay season is approaching its climax; and planning consultation or no planning consultation, it may be somewhat comforting to know that relief is in sight.

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