

1985

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

R E P O R T
relating to the
CONSTRUCTION OF A
COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS BUILDING,
PARRAMATTA
(Tenth Report of 1985)

Canberra 1985



Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

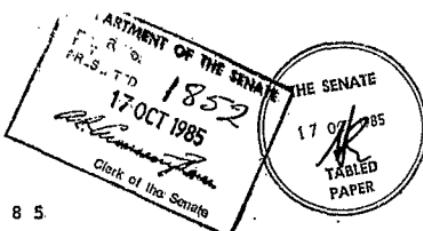
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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
(Twenty-Eighth Committee)

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Percival Clarence Millar, Esq., M.P. (Vice-Chairman)

Senate

House of Representatives

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	Colin Hollis, Esq., M.P.
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	Keith Webb Wright, Esq., M.P.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE ACT 1969
ORDER UNDER SUB-SECTION 18(4)

I, SIR NINIAN MARTIN STEPHEN, the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, acting with the advice of the Federal Executive Council, in pursuance of sub-section 18(4) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969, hereby, by this order, declare that the public work described in the schedule be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report.

SCHEDULE

CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS
BUILDING, PARRAMATTA

L.S.

Given under my Hand and the
Great Seal of Australia
on 27 June 1985

N.M. STEPHEN

Governor-General

By His Excellency's Command,

Stewart West

Minister of State for
Housing and Construction

CONTENTS

	Paragraph
THE REFERENCE	1
THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION	4
BACKGROUND	9
The Federal Court of Australia	10
Administrative Appeals Tribunal	13
The Family Court of Australia	16
Accommodation for New Jurisdictions	20
THE NEED	24
Accommodation for the Family Court	25
Leased Premises at Parramatta	28
Security	31
Courtrooms	33
Other Areas	35
Summary	39
Committee's Conclusion	40
THE PROPOSAL	41
Site	42
Proposed Arrangements	46
Security and Circulation	49
Inclusion of the Federal Court and the AAT	51
Significant Features of the Design	55
Octagonal Shaped Courtrooms	57
Level 1 Courtyard	58
Landscaping on Level 4	59
Number and Size of Courtrooms	61
Capacity for Expansion	65
Facilities of Staff and the Public	67
Physical Security	70

	<u>Paragraph</u>
Car Parking	72
Summary	76
Committee's Conclusion	77
CAR PARKING	
Parking for Commonwealth Law Courts Building	78
Parking for Commonwealth Office Development	81
COMMONWEALTH OFFICES	84
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS	
Law Courts Building	89
Office Building	92
CONSULTATIONS	94
COST AND TIMETABLE	95
Committee's Recommendation	97
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	98
 APPENDICES	 <u>Page/Paragraph</u>
 APPENDIX A	
List of Witnesses	A-1
 APPENDIX B	
Construction Details	B-1
Site	1
Building Structure	2
Exterior	3
Interior	6
Landscaping and Planting	7
Mechanical	8
Electrical	12
Lifts	18
Fire Protection	20
Lighting Protection	22

APPENDICES (cont)

Page/Paragraph

APPENDIX C

Illustrations

Locality Plan	C-1
Basement	C-2
Level 1	C-3
Level 2	C-4
Level 3	C-5
Level 4	C-6
View from North	C-7
Typical Courtroom Layout	C-8

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

CONSTRUCTION OF A COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS
BUILDING, PARRAMATTA

R E P O R T

On 27 June 1985 His Excellency the Governor-General in Council referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and report to Parliament the proposed construction of a Commonwealth Law Courts Building, Parramatta.

The Committee has the honour to report as follows:

THE REFERENCE

1. The proposal is for the construction of a special purpose building to provide consolidated, permanent accommodation for Federal and Family Court functions in the Parramatta area.
2. The proposed building will provide facilities for various Commonwealth jurisdictions, as follows:
 - Federal Court - one courtroom, Judges Chamber and support services;
 - Family Court - eight courtrooms, judges chambers and counselling rooms;
 - Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT); and
 - Commonwealth Reporting Service (CRS).

3. The estimated cost of the work when referred to the Committee was \$15.48 million at April 1985 prices.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

4. The Committee received written submissions and plans from the Attorney-General's Department (A-G's) and the Department of Housing and Construction (DHC) and took evidence from representatives of the two departments at a public hearing held at Parramatta on 8 August 1985. The Committee also received correspondence from a number of individuals and organisations with an interest in the proposal.

5. A list of witnesses and the organisations which they represented is at Appendix A.

6. Prior to the public hearing the Committee inspected leased premises occupied by the Family Court of Australia at 34 Charles Street, Parramatta, and the site for the proposed building.

7. The Committee gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Parramatta City Council in providing the venue for the public hearing.

8. The Committee's proceedings will be printed as Minutes of Evidence.

BACKGROUND

9. The Attorney-General's Department is responsible for the provision of law courts and associated administration areas for:

- the Federal Court of Australia;
- the Family Court of Australia;
- the Administrative Appeals Tribunal; and
- various tribunals and temporary inquiries.

10. The Federal Court of Australia This jurisdiction was created by section 5 of the Federal Court of Australia Act 1976 as part of a major restructuring of the appellate jurisdiction of the High Court and a re-arrangement of the exercise of federal judicial power. The court commenced operations in February 1977 and has a principal registry in Sydney with district registries in all capital cities except Hobart.

11. The Committee understands there are currently a Chief Judge and 28 judges with appointment under the Federal Court of Australia Act. Some judges have primary commissions on the Federal Court; others have primary commissions with some other court, tribunal or body, e.g., the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory.

12. In Sydney there are 11 judges of the Federal Court, and courtrooms and chamber facilities for those judges, and for visiting judges all located in the Central Business District.

13. Administrative Appeals Tribunal This Tribunal was established under the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975 and commenced operation in July 1976.

14. The AAT reviews on merits administrative decisions made by Commonwealth Ministers, authorities and officials under certain Commonwealth laws in areas such as social security, Commonwealth employees' compensation, air navigation, freedom of information and veterans' appeals. Responsibility for the latter area commenced in January 1985. The Committee was advised that although the Australia-wide workload of the AAT has shown a slight decrease, from about 2,000 cases in 1983/84 to 1,800 cases in 1984/85, it has been found that a large peak lasting two to three years occurs following additional responsibilities being conferred. This peak tends to drop off and reach a plateau as the Tribunal provides the necessary precedent decisions.

15. The AAT has a registry in every capital city. In Sydney there are three presiding members and a number of part-time members.

16. The Family Court of Australia The Family Court became operational in 1976 and was created under the Family Law Act 1975. The Act replaced previous Australian laws relating to divorce and the nullity of marriage and superseded State and Territory laws of maintenance, custody and property where they related to marriages and the children of marriage.

17. Parties to a marriage may apply to the court if there has been a separation of those parties for a continuous period of 12 months for a divorce or dissolution of the marriage. Most of the court's time is taken up with matters that need to be resolved at marriage breakdown, in particular, financial affairs and the custody of children. About 90 per cent of cases are uncontested and require parties to approach the court for consent orders. The remaining 10 per cent are contested cases. Before proceeding to a defended hearing before a judge the parties are required to undergo counselling by court counsellors in cases of children's matters. Court counsellors seek to bring settlement between parties in relation to children's cases, and prepare reports on issues brought before the court relating to children. All financial matters such as property and maintenance must come before a registrar or deputy registrar who conducts conferences attended by parties and their legal representatives. The registrar attempts to identify areas of dispute and examines supporting evidence in order to assist parties to reach an agreement. Registrars have recently been given powers to sit in court and may now make directions in a number of areas such as the preparation of a matter for hearing and the referral of parties to conciliation conferences.

18. The Committee was advised that excluding the Family Court of Western Australia there were 36,405 applications for divorce filed in the court in 1984. In the same year there were 33,280 applications filed for relief, e.g., financial matters, children, injunctions and enforcement.

19. The running costs for the court, including the Family Court of Western Australia for the 1984/85 financial year was about \$33.5 million. The Commonwealth funds legal aid in family law matters and in 1983/84 the cost was about \$31.5 million.

20. Accommodation for New Jurisdictions Commonwealth involvement in jurisdictions involving a large volume of contact with the public is relatively recent. For example, before the establishment of the Family Court, divorce and consequential matters of property settlements and the custody of children were the provinces of State courts. The assumption by the Commonwealth of new or additional jurisdictions and the desire by litigants to have their cases expeditiously progressed through new processes, required the provision of court and administrative facilities to an appropriate standard. The provision of accommodation for these functions was achieved in the main by converting conventional office space in leased premises into court and hearing rooms and administrative support areas.

21. The Commonwealth has a long-term objective of constructing purpose-designed, separate and clearly identifiable Commonwealth law courts buildings in each capital city and at Parramatta. The Committee has so far examined two proposals which aim at achieving this long term objective. In 1980 the Committee examined the proposed construction of Commonwealth Law Courts at Hobart. The building, estimated to cost \$8.4 million at March 1980 prices, was designed to accommodate the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court, the AAT, the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and administrative support functions.

It was opened in 1984. In 1984, the Committee examined the proposed construction of Commonwealth and Family Courts at Perth. This building, estimated to cost \$28.5 million at December 1983 prices, has been designed to house jurisdictions and support facilities generally similar to those occupying the Hobart Law Courts; its scale and costs are greater than Hobart.

22. Commonwealth-owned and purpose-designed court buildings are located in the following cities:

Sydney - Commonwealth/State Law Courts

Canberra - High Court of Australia
- Family Court and Juvenile Court
- ACT Supreme Court

Hobart - Federal Court
- Family Court
- AAT and other Tribunals

Perth - Federal Court } Awaiting
- Family Court } construction
- AAT and other Tribunals }

23. The Family Court and the AAT have registries in all capital cities. The Family Court has registries in major cities. In all instances except those mentioned above the jurisdictions occupy leased premises.

THE NEED

24. It was submitted by A-G's that there is a need for a Commonwealth Law Courts building to be constructed at Parramatta. The need is based on the following factors:

- deficiencies identified in leased premises occupied by the Family Court; these premises are considered to be inadequate and cannot be expanded any further;
- Government policy that in the long term separate and clearly identifiable Commonwealth Law Court buildings be constructed in each capital city and Parramatta.

25. Accommodation for the Family Court . The deficiencies at Parramatta are generally common to all Family Courts accommodated in leased premises. The magnitude of these deficiencies became evident to the Committee during the inspection of the building.

26. A-G's admitted that when the Family Law Act came into force court processes were designed to be informal; the court was to be a friendly, helping court; it should not be set apart and remote from the community. This projection of friendliness and informality favoured the use of domestic rather than judicial premises. Courts were also closed to the public and the media. The Committee was informed that A-G's now consider that formality rather than informality in court proceedings is more appropriate. It is necessary for the court to preserve a dignity which allows its authority to be implicit. Court proceedings are now open to the public which means that seating capacity to enable parties not before the court to witness proceedings is limited.

27. A-G's pointed out it is difficult to provide appropriate levels of security for the judiciary, members of tribunals, members of the legal profession, staff and the public in leased premises. Equally important, functional aspects such as speech privacy in courts, interviewing and counselling areas are usually unsatisfactory due to poor acoustics and sound attenuation. Courts lack a clear identity in multi-storey office buildings which have been adapted in an attempt to satisfy the functions of court processes and administration requirements. A further undesirable feature of continuing to use leased accommodation in the long term is the rapidly escalating cost of leases. It would be unwise for the Commonwealth not to renegotiate leases of premises, fitted out at considerable cost, when leases expire. The Commonwealth is compelled to pay market rentals for all such leased premises.

28. Leased Premises at Parramatta The accommodation provided for the Family Court at 36 Charles Street, Parramatta, comprises seven floors and part of the eighth floor of an 8-storey building. Other tenants of the building are the Australian Legal Aid Office (ALAO) and the CRS. Subject to the availability of funds, space will be taken up in an adjacent building for the ALAO and the CRS to allow the court to take over the entire eighth floor.

29. Parramatta was selected as the location for the Family Court because it is central to a large catchment area embracing the western suburbs of Sydney and its proximity to major traffic routes. The building occupied by the court was the only one available of sufficient size in Parramatta.

30. Of particular concern to the Committee is the degree to which members of the public, the legal profession and the occupants of the building are inconvenienced and possibly distressed by the arrangement and standard of functional areas and facilities which are available. A-G's provided the Committee

with a paper which gives numerous examples of deficiencies. It is not necessary to detail all the deficiencies mentioned in the paper. The following general observations and descriptions relating to deficiencies in a number of key areas, where contact with the public is involved, illustrate the magnitude of the deficiencies in security and standards.

31. Security A-G's advised that in general terms adequate levels of security for court officials, the legal profession and the public are difficult to provide in buildings not specifically designed for use as law courts. Security screening of all persons entering the Parramatta Family Court building is now carried out following the bombing of the building in 1984. The security screening is carried out in the reception lobby which is very limited in capacity. During busy periods, especially before court sittings commence, the lobby becomes crowded with people awaiting screening. Crowding of the reception lobby is compounded when people who have been screened must await the arrival of one of the two lifts which serve the eight floors.

32. Desirably, separate entrances into court buildings should be provided for judges and senior court officials. Two lifts available to serve all eight floors, and the absence of a second entrance into the building, raise the possibility of parties sharing a lift with a judge who is hearing their case.

33. Courtrooms Undesirable features common to courtrooms provided in leased premises have already been addressed. At Parramatta there are five courtrooms located on the first, second and third levels. Of considerable concern is the inconvenience and possible distress caused by arrangements relating to the courtroom on the third level which is used for 'duty lists' involving up to 60 matters being heard at one sitting. Two duty lists are heard daily.

34. Delays and disruptions to the orderly and expeditious sequencing of duty list matters before a judge occur due to insufficient seating available for all litigants and practitioners. As a consequence, the waiting area outside the courtroom is often filled to standing room only. The overcrowding in the waiting area is likely to compound what, for some people, is a very stressful period. The disorderly flow of litigants and practitioners into and out of the courtroom, apart from being indecorous, is likely to lead to confusion, delays and exacerbate emotional distress.

35. Other Areas. The only available room in the building for legal practitioners to consult with their clients is located on the third floor. When the room is in use, it is necessary for other private consultations to be conducted in public areas. This would be difficult, particularly on list days on the third floor. The first and second floors, which also contain courtrooms, do not have any rooms set aside for private consultation.

36. The arrangement of other areas which involve court officials having contact with members of the public is also unsatisfactory. To save costs the building was occupied and fitted out progressively. The fourth and fifth floors contain judges' chambers which, for security reasons, should be inaccessible to the public. Security is compromised by the location of the counselling section, which must be accessible to the public, on the sixth level.

37. Facilities for the public in the counselling section are unsatisfactory. The small size of the waiting room often forces parties to confront each other. Children are often present during these forced confrontations although a small child minding area is provided on the sixth level.

38. Counselling rooms are small and there is more counselling staff than offices. Noise transmission between rooms was cited as a constant problem facing counselling staff and occupants of adjacent offices.

39. Summary The foregoing highlights a number of deficiencies in the Family Court building at Parramatta. It is proposed to alleviate congestion and improve the standard of facilities available to the general public in the short term by relocating the ALAO and the CRS to another building thereby providing more space. Problems inherent in adapting leased premises for the various processes required for the Family Court will nevertheless remain. The often unenviable tasks carried out by judges and senior court officials in attending to court processes involving contact with members of the public are not assisted by the location, design and standard of functional areas, the level of amenity offered and by the atmosphere these deficiencies project.

40. Committee's Conclusion Leased premises occupied by the Family Court at Parramatta should be replaced with a purpose designed law courts building.

THE PROPOSAL

41. It is proposed to construct a Commonwealth Law Courts building at Parramatta to accommodate the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court, the AAT and occasional sittings of tribunals and inquiries.

42. Site The site selected for the proposed building is on the corner of George and O'Connell Streets, Parramatta, and is owned by the Commonwealth. It is about 3,960 square metres in area and is part of a larger site of 18,150 square metres. [See Locality Plan - Drawing B-1, Appendix B.]

43. In 1975 the Committee inquired into, and reported on, the proposed construction of an Australian Government Centre to be located on the site (Committee's Fourth Report of 1975, Parliamentary Paper No. 87/1975). The proposal examined by the Committee in 1975 was for the construction of an office complex designed to accommodate 2500 Commonwealth employees and with capacity for development ultimately to accommodate 4500-6000 employees. Although the Committee's report recommended construction of the work, it was not proceeded with and the site, acquired by the Commonwealth for the office building, has remained unused. It is now proposed that a Commonwealth office building be constructed on the remainder of the site not required for the Commonwealth Law Courts building. The office development, which is not part of the reference under consideration, is discussed later in this report.

44. The site is within convenient walking distance from the city centre, the legal precinct, state court house, public transport and proposed parking stations.

45. Parramatta Park and the gatehouse leading to Old Government House, which are entered in the Register of the National Estate, are adjacent to the site.

46. Proposed Arrangements The building will have a gross floor area of 12,209 square metres over four levels and a basement. Within this space, the design allocates dedicated and separate space to the various jurisdictions consistent with their staffing, the processes involved in discharging their responsibilities, and a number of security requirements.

47. The allocation of space will be as follows:

Basement Secure parking for judges and court officials;
Secure holding area;
Goods loading and storage;
Staff rooms and amenities;
Plant rooms.

Level 1 Family Court - Registry
Counselling
Records
Staff amenities
Sub-station and switch room

Level 2 Family Courts - Eight courtrooms
- Interview rooms
Opas memorial library
Court orderlies
Australian Federal Police
Legal Practitioners room
Plant room

Level 3 Federal Court - One courtroom
Registry
AAT Three hearing rooms
Registry
Part-time members' room
Family Court - Deputy Registrar accommodation
Common room
Barristers and Solicitors room

Level 4 Judges and members' chambers and associated common and conference rooms Commonwealth reporting service Plant room

48. Plans of the basement and Levels 1 to 4 inclusive are in Appendix B, Drawings B-2 to B-6. Drawing B-7 is a perspective of the building.

49. Security and Circulation Security requirements necessitate that judges and members of tribunals are provided with secure circulation, both vertically, e.g., from the basement car park to their chambers to courtrooms, and horizontally within secure areas.

50. Judges and other 'secure' staff will enter the building from the O'Connell Street entrance which will be provided with a secure lift and fire stair. Those arriving by car will enter from O'Connell Street through the secure car park and lobby in the basement. The secure lift and stairs in the lobby will provide direct access to chambers, courtrooms and staff areas. Prisoners will be brought by prison van to the prisoner holding area in the basement from where they will be escorted in the goods/prisoner lift to the appropriate level. The public will enter the building from the George Street entrance directly into the public foyer area. Public access to Levels 2 and 3 will be by way of two lifts to be housed in a separate lift/clock tower located adjacent to the entrance.

51. Inclusion of the Federal Court and the AAT The Committee questioned the proposed collocation of the Federal Court and the AAT with the Family Court. A-G's stated that collocation of the three jurisdictions is consistent with general policy concerning the provision of court buildings constructed by, and for, the Commonwealth. A number of benefits will result from collocating the three jurisdictions in the proposed building at Parramatta.

52. It is envisaged that a small number of staff will be detached to Parramatta from the Federal Court registry in the Sydney CBD. Judicial needs will be met by detaching a judge to Parramatta as required. At present practitioners from the Parramatta catchment area, which takes in much of Sydney's western suburbs are required to travel to the CBD. There would be advantages to practitioners, clients, bankrupts and debtors resident in the Parramatta area, by the Federal Court being provided with facilities at Parramatta.

53. Similarly, there would be advantages to practitioners and litigants in providing facilities for the AAT in the proposed building. In evidence, it was stated that with the recent inclusion of veterans' appeals in the AAT responsibilities, a large percentage of applications from NSW veterans may involve medical practitioners and other witnesses from the nearby Concord Repatriation General Hospital. The AAT estimates that about 32 per cent of all veterans' appeal matters will be in NSW, and that 60-70 per cent of these will be processed through the Parramatta registry. In terms of the number of cases, it is expected that between 300-320 cases would proceed to hearing and that about 670 applications will be lodged at Parramatta within three or four years. In addition, about 30-40 per cent of social security matters, originating within the Sydney area, will eventually be handled from Parramatta.

54. In summary, collocation of the AAT in the proposed building is for the convenience of applicants and witnesses and would result in increased efficiency.

55. Significant Features of the Design Construction details of the briefing are at Appendix C. Externally, the building will have a number of features which attempt to relate it to a number of adjacent historic buildings and areas. These features are the clock tower, containing the public lifts, and the rounded south-west corner. The Committee questioned the need for both features. DHC advised that if the lifts to the tower were

incorporated in the building, and the tower not constructed, a saving of \$100,000 would result. DHC also stated that local reaction to the tower is favourable and its inclusion in the design is seen by local residents as a positive way of relating the building to the surroundings of Parramatta. The rounded south-west corner, which is semi-circular in plan is intended as a strong point of relationship to adjacent buildings. The semi-circular plan continues on the inside of the building creating a discrete area on each level to house plant rooms, the secure lift and stair cores.

56. Significant design features on the inside of the building include:

- octagonal shaped courtrooms and hearing rooms;
- a landscaped circular courtyard in the centre of the building on Level 1;
- extensive areas of landscaping on Level 4.

57. Octagonal Shaped Courtrooms The octagonal shape was developed following an assessment of the amount of space required, to achieve structural economy, and to facilitate access from secure and public areas. In order to facilitate the conduct of court hearings, predetermined spatial relationships exist between the judges bench, associates, bar table, witness, monitor and the public. These relationships allow the various parties to clearly see and hear each other, yet provide appropriate separation. The greatest width in courtrooms is required at the centre, along the line of the bar table. The judge's bench requires less width and the public seating may be arranged around several sides at the rear of the court. In essence, the octagonal shape provides maximum width where required and avoids providing floor space which may be otherwise unused. Drawing B-8 shows a typical courtroom layout.

58. Level 1 Courtyard The landscaped courtyard on Level 1 will be enclosed in glass at each level and open to the air. This design feature is aimed at achieving a number of objectives. First, the courtyard and the circular void above it will allow natural light into the internal spaces on Levels 1, 2 and 3. Secondly, without the courtyard, the public waiting areas at all levels would be enclosed by solid walls and cut off from natural light which could result in a claustrophobic environment. Thirdly, it will provide a point of distraction and relief from anxiety about court appearances.

59. Landscaping on Level 4 Level 4, which will house eight judges' chambers, four chambers for members of the AAT, and the CRS will be provided with extensive areas of un-enclosed landscaped terraces. The total area of Level 4 occupied by judges' chambers and the CRS is 2,150 square metres; the area of landscaped terraces will be 550 square metres.

60. In view of the relatively large area devoted to functions which seem remote from administration of the law, the Committee sought a justification for its inclusion. A-G's stated that for their part, the landscaped terraces are an architectural feature which aims to solve the design requirements of their brief to DHC in terms of the tone, appearance and functionality of the building. DHC advised one of the design requirements was to avoid locating judges' chambers facing the streets, for security reasons. The landscaped terraces will enable judges' chambers to be located internally, away from outside walls. The Committee was also advised that the dimensions of Level 4 were largely determined by the size and configuration of Level 2 which will house the Family courtrooms. The space on Level 4 devoted to landscaped terracing is therefore surplus space for which a purpose has been found consistent with security requirements, the need for natural light and an appropriate level of amenity.

61. Number and Size of Court Rooms. The Committee also questioned the number of court and hearing rooms to be provided and their sizes. A-G's explained that the number of courtrooms to be provided was based on the following factors:

- the need to adopt a 20-year design horizon for the building, i.e., the number of court and hearing rooms to be provided should satisfy demands for 20 years after the building is completed - the building is planned for completion in 1988 and the design year is therefore 2008;
- forecasts of the number of court sitting days at the design year;
- up to 200 sitting days per court per year, with an occupancy rate of 80 per cent.

62. Table 1 below presents the number of court and hearing rooms to be provided for each jurisdiction and the basis on which the requirement was determined:

Table 1 - Past and Projected Sitting Days and Courtroom and Hearing Room Requirements - Parramatta

Year	Sitting Days Family Court	Req'd Court Rooms	Sitting Days AAT	Req'd Court Rooms	Days Federal Court	Req'd Court Rooms
1981	731	-	-	-	-	-
1982	809	-	-	-	-	-
1983	871	-	-	-	-	-
1984	876	5	-	-	-	-
1988	918	6	96	1	66	1
1991	951	6	401	2	198	1
2001	1038	7	442	2	219	1
2011	1158	8	500	3	241	2
2021	1292	8	557	3	269	2

63. A-G's advised that the eight Family Court rooms would enable ad hoc inquiries such as Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry to take place as well as to enable the concurrent sitting of a Full Court of Appeal of the Family Court.

64. A typical courtroom will have a floor area of 100 square metres and will provide seating of 36 members of the public. Problems with duty list hearings experienced by the Family Court in the existing building, which have arisen due to a combination of limited seating, inadequate waiting areas, lack of interview facilities and a general lack of privacy, will be overcome by the provision of the following features:

- more public seating in courtrooms - at present public seating is available for 8 people; the new courtrooms will seat 36.

- provision of interview and private conference facilities for litigants to enable private discussions to take place - 16 interview rooms will be provided on Level 2 (Family Court rooms) and three each for the Federal Court and the AAT on Level 3. In addition, eight private conference rooms will be provided for the Family Court on Level 3 for conciliation conferences;
- separating the points of entry to the courtrooms to avoid congestion;
- providing adequate waiting areas with public seating to courtroom levels.

65. Capacity for Expansion If the requirements of the courts expand beyond the capacity inherent in the 2008 design year, part of non-judicial activities to be accommodated in the building could be relocated to other accommodation. The space vacated would provide for expanded court facilities. The Committee was advised that the structure of the building and the design and location of services have been designed to allow conversion of non-court areas to provide additional courts. The CRS, which will be housed on Level 4, could be relocated to another building; the deputy registrars, to be housed on Level 3, could be relocated to the vacated space on Level 4. This re-arrangement would enable two additional courtrooms, ante rooms and four interview rooms to be located on Level 3, and the remaining space on Level 4 would provide two additional judges' chambers and rooms for their personal staff.

66. Office areas will be divided with non-structural partitions for future planning flexibility.

67. Facilities of Staff and the Public A-G's advised it is planned that the building would house initially 121 staff belonging to the three jurisdictions and the CRS. By 2008-2010, the design horizon, 163 staff will work in the building. The Committee was advised that the proposed allocation of space for recreation and staff amenities complies with present codes. Staff amenity areas to be provided include:

Basement - Gymnasium, amenities area, change rooms.

Level 1 - Amenities area, rest room.

Level 4 - Kitchenette for the CRS, common room and kitchenette for judges.

68. A number of special areas for use by the public will be provided. These include:

Level 1 - medical and first aid room, press room, public rest room, children's play area. The latter will comprise play and sleep areas with en suite and a separate room with en suite for parents. The play area will be available for the caring of children of parents attending conciliation conferences, counselling, etc.

Level 2 - beverage vending machine.

Level 3 - public rest room.

69. Space will be provided for members of the legal profession as follows:

Level 2 - legal practitioner's room and toilets.

Level 3 - barristers' and solicitors' change room and en suite.

70. Physical Security Proposed arrangements for separating public and judicial areas have been mentioned in paragraphs 49 and 50 above.

71. A-G's advised the Committee of a number of additional measures designed to provide physical security to the building and its occupants. The building will have treatment of glass at lower levels to withstand attack from bombs or similar projectiles. Outside lighting will provide clear views around the building during night time. Access to the basement will be restricted. It will not be possible for vehicles to be parked close to the outside of the building. A system of duress alarms will be provided throughout the building which will activate alarms in a control panel and to police officers within the building. Courtrooms have been designed with security in mind, such that when an alarm is activated the inside of a courtroom can be viewed from the outside.

72. Car Parking A secure parking area, with capacity for 31 cars, will be provided in the basement. These parking spaces will be made available for judges and other secure staff. No parking spaces for the public or for legal practitioners will be provided as part of this proposal.

73. A-G's advised that based on their experience at the existing Family Court building at Charles Street, there would be a requirement for 90 parking spaces for staff and 90 spaces for the public at the new building.

74. The Committee was also advised that the Department of Local Government and Administrative Services (DOLGAS) and Parramatta City Council had agreed that the question of car parking for Commonwealth employees and the public should be addressed as one issue for the two developments on the site, i.e., the Commonwealth Law Courts building and the Commonwealth Office

building. (As mentioned in paragraph 43, it is intended to construct a Commonwealth Office building on the balance of the site.)

75. The Committee's views on the adequacy of parking to be provided for both developments are addressed in paragraphs 78 to 83 below.

76. Summary The design of the proposed Commonwealth Law Courts building at Parramatta will enable the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court and the AAT to serve the Parramatta catchment area until 2008. Allowance has been made in the design to provide additional space for courtrooms and judges' chambers by relocating the CRS. A number of striking features in the design such as the clock tower, the internal courtyard, and the landscaped terraces on Level 4 have been designed to harmonise the building with its historic surroundings, to provide a relaxed, informal and unauastere atmosphere, to satisfy security requirements and at the same time provide amenities for judges. Facilities for staff and the public such as amenities areas and a children's play area will conform with existing codes and reflect existing policy for their inclusion in Commonwealth Law Court buildings. Physical security measures on the outside and inside the building will be provided at appropriate levels. Sufficient car parking for judges, senior court officials and other court-related users will be provided. No car parking spaces will be provided under this proposal for other staff and members of the public.

77. Committee's Conclusion The proposed design of the building is satisfactory but there is a lack of car parking spaces for staff and members of the public.

CAR PARKING

78. Parking for Commonwealth Law Courts Building The Committee was advised that the Commonwealth and Parramatta City Council have agreed that the question of car parking requirements for the Law Courts and Commonwealth Office buildings to be constructed on the site should be considered as a single issue. An agreement has been negotiated between DOLGAS and the Council whereby as part of the construction of the office development an amount of money would be paid as a contribution to overcome the problem of parking which exists at Parramatta and which will be exacerbated by Commonwealth developments on the site. The agreement reached between DOLGAS and the Council covers the Commonwealth Law Courts building as well as the office development.

79. In evidence DHC advised that there are no set precedents for calculating the number of parking spaces required for a law courts building. It was assessed that if half the number of staff working in the law courts building elect to travel to work by car, there could be a requirement for about 90 parking spaces for staff. There would be also a need for 90 parking spaces to cater for the public. Therefore, about 180 parking spaces would need to be provided for the law courts building in addition to the 31 spaces to be provided in the basement.

80. Guidelines for the provision and control of parking at Commonwealth-owned and leased office buildings are contained in Chapter 19.E of the 'Australian Property Manual'. Section 19.E.3 of the manual states that:

In the construction of new office accommodation, the Commonwealth will observe, as far as practicable, the normal requirements of State and local government authorities for the provision of parking facilities and will negotiate the amount of parking to be provided and the method by which it is provided, in a spirit of co-operation.

81. Parking for Commonwealth Office Development
Representatives of DOLGAS advised that if the Council's formula relating gross floor area to car parking spaces which must be provided were applied to the Commonwealth office development, there would be a need to provide 1695 parking spaces. The Commonwealth office development will incorporate a 400-space car park in the basement. The shortfall in parking spaces will be made up by Council which will develop a site adjacent to the Commonwealth Law Courts and offices for public parking.

82. The submission to the Committee from A-G's states that the Council car park will have capacity for 865 vehicles on eight levels. The Committee understands that provision by the Council for this car park, and the 400 parking spaces in the basement of the Commonwealth office building, whilst not satisfying Council's code for the provision of car parking spaces, is considered by Council to be adequate for the offices and law courts developments.

83. The Committee points out, however, that if the greater proportion of the Council's car park is not made available to Commonwealth staff or visitors to the law courts building, there may be a shortage in parking spaces. Members of the public having business at the law courts building could be inconvenienced.

COMMONWEALTH OFFICES

84. The Committee received a brief paper from DOLGAS which provided a description of the Commonwealth Office building to be constructed on the balance of the site.

85. The office complex will comprise a 20-storey building with a 5-storey low rise section linked to the tower by a 5-storey atrium. The Committee understands that the building will cost

\$110-115 million. It will have a floor area of 55,000 square metres. In terms of cost and size the building will be one of the largest single office building developments in which the Commonwealth has been involved in recent years.

86. The building will be constructed for the Commonwealth by a private developer using the 'instalment purchase' method. At the public hearing on 8 August 1985, into the Commonwealth Law Courts proposal, a representative of DOLGAS stated he had been advised that:

".... the instalment purchase proposal for this particular Commonwealth office building is not a work within the meaning of the Public Works Committee legislation (Public Works Committee Act 1962) and ministerial and Cabinet approval, I am instructed, is to proceed without the need for a reference to this Committee." (Brackets added.)

87. The Committee subsequently received advice on 13 September 1985 from the Secretary, DOLGAS, that arising from further exchanges with legal advisers about the settlement of contracts for the Parramatta offices instalment purchase project, advice had been received from the Attorney-General's Department on 9 September which states categorically that the project does come within the provisions of the Act. It was subsequently learned that other Commonwealth Office proposals, on which work had commenced or which had reached an advanced stage of negotiations, are also subject to the provisions of the Act. Any delays as a consequence of these proposals being referred to the Committee for consideration and report, especially delays to the Parramatta proposal, could lead to cost-escalations. To avoid any delays and cost increases the Ministers for Local Government and Administrative Services, and Housing and Construction explained the situation to the Committee on 19 September.

They suggested it would be prudent to seek the agreement of the Parliament for the work not to be referred to the Committee on the grounds of urgency. The Committee was assured that the definition of a 'public work' as presently stated in the Act would be amended to bring all future instalment purchase proposals within its ambit. Two instalment purchase proposals which have not yet reached the stage of 'time-critical' negotiations would be referred to the Committee.

88. Following the meeting with the Ministers the Committee agreed it would be advantageous to proceed along the lines suggested by them. The Committee emphasised, however, that any remarks by Ministers in support of the urgency motion should mention that the Committee does not consider that it has given tacit approval for the proposed works, and that the Committee should not be held responsible for any subsequent criticism of the completed office building. These qualifications were contained in the remarks made by the Minister for Housing and Construction on 19 September and the House of Representatives resolved that construction of Commonwealth Office buildings at Parramatta, Fremantle, Wollongong, Dubbo, Rockhampton, Cairns and Mackay, proceed without having been referred to the Committee.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

89. Law Courts Building The proposal was referred to the Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment, the Australian Heritage Commission, and the N.S.W. Department of Environment and Planning, for consideration of environmental aspects.

90. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement was not required.

91. The Australian Heritage Commission considers that the proposed building has been carefully designed to relate to its surroundings. During the site inspection the Committee saw archaeological investigations of the site in progress. These investigations were initiated by DHC in consultation with the Commission to investigate remains of early European settlement for possible protection or recording as appropriate.

92. Office Building At the public hearing the Committee sought an assurance from DOLGAS that the same degree of consultation which had taken place between the Australian Heritage Commission and DHC and A-G's had taken place or would take place in relation to the Commonwealth office building prior to construction proceeding or contracts being signed.

93. On 17 September 1985 the Australian Heritage Commission advised the Committee as follows:

- - The proposal to construct the office building adjacent to a place that is in the Register of the National Estate is likely to affect that place to a significant extent;
- Under the provisions of section 30 of the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 DOLGAS is required to submit the proposal to the Commission before taking action to proceed;
- No submission of details of the design of the proposed building to house the Commonwealth Government Offices at Parramatta had been received by the Commission;
- In order for comments made by the Commission to be taken into account before the design of the office block is finalised the submission should be made at the sketch plan stage; and

- The submission of the sketch design of the Commonwealth Law Courts building was received by the Commission in April 1985. The Commission would have preferred a submission of the office block proposal at the same time.

CONSULTATIONS

94. Numerous Commonwealth, State and Local Government organisations were consulted during the development of the proposal. As well, staff associations and professional associations such as the NSW Bar Association and the Law Society of NSW were consulted.

COST AND TIMETABLE

95. The estimated cost of the proposed work is \$15.48 million at April 1985 prices.

96. DHC advised that it will take approximately 11 months to complete working drawings and specifications from the date of approval to proceed. Construction time is estimated to be 24 months from the time of tender acceptance.

97. Committee's Recommendation The Committee recommends construction of the work in this reference.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

98. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee and the paragraph in the report to which each refers are set out below:

	<u>Paragraph</u>
1. THERE IS A NEED FOR A COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS BUILDING TO BE CONSTRUCTED AT PARRAMATTA.	24
2. LEASED PREMISES OCCUPIED BY THE FAMILY COURT AT PARRAMATTA SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH A PURPOSE DESIGNED LAW COURTS BUILDING.	40
3. THE PROPOSED DESIGN OF THE BUILDING IS SATISFACTORY BUT THERE IS A LACK OF CAR PARKING SPACES FOR STAFF AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.	77
4. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROPOSED WORK IS \$15.48 MILLION AT APRIL 1985 PRICES.	95
5. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE.	97



(D.J. FOREMAN)

Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Public Works
Parliament House
CANBERRA

10 October 1985

APPENDIX A

LIST OF WITNESSES

Baskett, P.E., Esq., Assistant Secretary, Operations, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Diamond, W.J., Esq., Project Officer, Parramatta Commonwealth Offices Development, Department of Local Government and Administrative Services, Commonwealth Government Centre, Chifley Square, Sydney, New South Wales

Gallery, A.F., Esq., Chief Property Officer, N.S.W., Department of Local Government and Administrative Services, Commonwealth Government Centre, Chifley Square, Sydney, New South Wales

Glare, L.G., Esq., Deputy Secretary, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Halligan, D.P., Esq., Acting Registrar, Family Court of Australia, 36 Chalres Street, Parramatta, New South Wales

Howard, J.T., Esq., Registrar, Federal Court of Australia, 17th Level, Law Courts Building, Queens Square, Sydney, New South Wales

Howes, J.T., Esq., Acting Associate Director, Department of Housing and Construction, N.S.W. Region, Tower Building, Australia Square, Sydney, New South Wales

Massie, P.D., Esq., Registrar, Administrative Appeals Tribunal, 3rd Floor, AMP Building, 1 Hobart Place, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

McHugh, P.T., Esq., Project Manager, Department of Housing and Construction, N.S.W. Region, Tower Building, Australia Square, Sydney, New South Wales.

Redgrave, L.D., Esq., Principal Architect, Courts, Department of Housing and Construction, 470 Northbourne Avenue, Dickson, Australian Capital Territory

Woolley, K.F., Esq., Director, Ancher, Mortlock and Woolley Pty Ltd, Architectural Consultant to Department of Housing and Construction, 40 Collins Street, Surry Hills, New South Wales

APPENDIX B

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

1. Site Investigations show that the sub-surface consists of alluvial deposits overlaying shale and sandstone at a depth of about 12-14 metres. The alluvial deposits are generally of loose to medium dense sands and clay sand with some surface fill up to 2 metres deep. The site is subject to a high water table.
2. Building Structure The building will have pile footings and will be constructed with reinforced concrete floor and roof slabs supported on concrete columns. Service core walls of reinforced concrete will provide necessary lateral stability.
3. Exterior The exterior walls will be clad with sandstone and precast concrete. The sandstone will be used as a base and have a contrasting stone base course. Bands and copings of sandstone will be used to define edges and special areas of the building and to give scale and clarity to its composition.
4. Windows and doors will be framed with pre-finished aluminium with tinted glazing. Windows will be double glazed with internal venetian blinds.
5. The roof terrace areas will have a waterproof membrane and trafficable exposed aggregate paving blocks. The roof to the tower and the 'secure' service core will be sheeted in copper to blend with the sandstone and precast concrete finishes of the facade. The remainder of the roof area will have pre-finished metal deck roof sheeting.

6. Interior Interior Finishes will be as follows:

LEVEL 2

Courtrooms:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Dado timber panelling with acoustic treatment
	Ceiling	Suspended plasterboard with some contouring
Public Waiting/ Interview Areas:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Dado timber panelling and vinyl wall cladding
	Ceiling	Suspended plasterboard with some contouring
Staff Office/ Legal Practitioners Areas:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Plasterboard partitions with acoustic treatment
	Ceiling	Suspended plasterboard with some contouring

LEVEL 3

Court and Hearing Rooms:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Dado timber panelling with acoustic treatment
	Ceiling	Suspended plasterboard with some contouring
Library/Staff Office/Legal Practitioners Area:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Plasterboard partitions with treatment
	Ceiling	Suspended acoustic tile

LEVEL 4

C.R.S. Office Areas:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Plasterboard partitions
	Ceiling	Acoustic ceiling
Chambers:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Plasterboard partitions with acoustic treatment and vinyl wall finish
	Ceiling	Plasterboard ceilings
Common/Conference Rooms:	Floor	Carpet
	Wall	Plasterboard partitions with acoustic treatment and vinyl wall finish
	Ceiling	Plasterboard ceilings
GENERALLY		
Toilet Areas:	Floor	Ceramic tiles
	Wall	Render with selected areas tiled
	Ceiling	Suspended plasterboard
Plant and Equipment Rooms:	Floor	Concrete
	Wall	Blockwork
	Ceiling	Off form concrete

7. Landscaping and Planting Planter boxes will be provided on the Level 4 terraces and for the landscaping of the courtyard on Level 1. Small groves of trees to George Street will reinforce the streetscape and will relate directly to Parramatta Park, and State Courts. A Coat of Arms will be provided.

8. Mechanical Mechanical engineering services will comprise air conditioning, mechanical ventilation and ancillary services.

9. The mechanical systems will provide adequate acoustic privacy by preventing cross transmission of noise between adjacent rooms through air conditioning ductwork.

10. The air conditioning plant will be designed for economy and flexibility of operation utilizing multiple air handling systems recognising life cycle cost principles.

11. Cooling will be by chilled water from a dual central chilled water plant and heating from gas fired water heaters.

12. Electrical Lighting will be in accordance with appropriate standards and will be designed to meet functional and aesthetic requirements of each specific area. Security lighting will be provided. Emergency evacuation lighting will be provided in accordance with appropriate standards.

13. Provision for the installation of a court reporting and recording system will be made. Telephone block wiring, clocks, signalling systems and security alarm systems will also be provided.

14. Duress alarm and monitoring systems to the courts will be provided.

15. A diesel generator will be provided in the roof plantroom for emergency power for essential services with the oil tanks located in the north-west corner of the site.

16. There will be a Prospect County Council Substation at Level 1.

17. Electrical, telephone and provision for security reticulation will be via riser shafts through the building.

18. Lifts There will be two 21 person passenger lifts for the public and staff servicing Levels 1-4 with a separate maximum waiting interval of 30 seconds in peak times.

19. There will be a secure lift for judges and tribunal members and a separate lift for the movement of goods and prisoners under escort.

20. Fire Protection There will be an automatic sprinkler system throughout the building with a pump and valve room at Level 1. Hydrants and hosereels will be located throughout the building and portable fire extinguishers provided as required.

21. An emergency warning and intercommunication system will be provided.

22. Lighting Protection Lighting Protection will be integrated with the building structure.

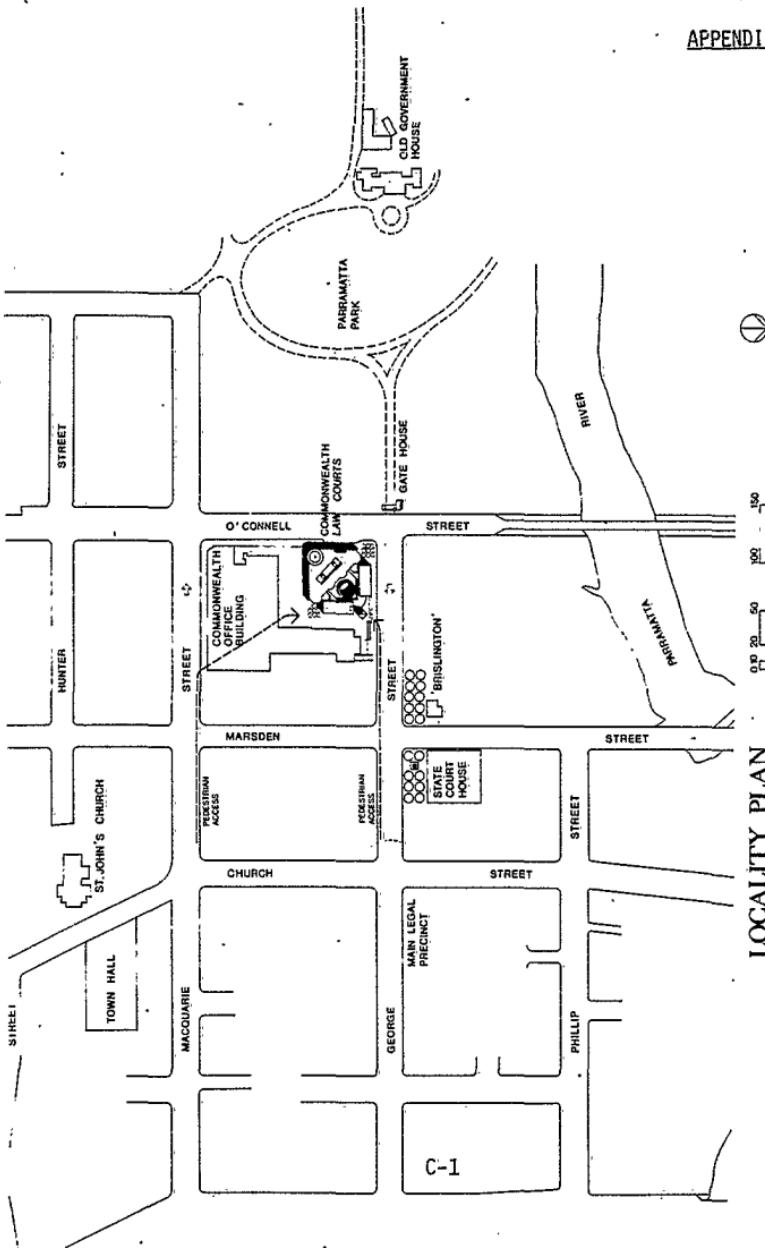
23. Civil Stormwater and sub-soil water is proposed to be discharged to an existing stormwater drain along the George and O'Connell Street boundaries.

24. Sewerage will be connected to an existing line off the Court site to the east.

25. Sanitary facilities and plumbing requirements will be in accordance with the relevant health requirements.

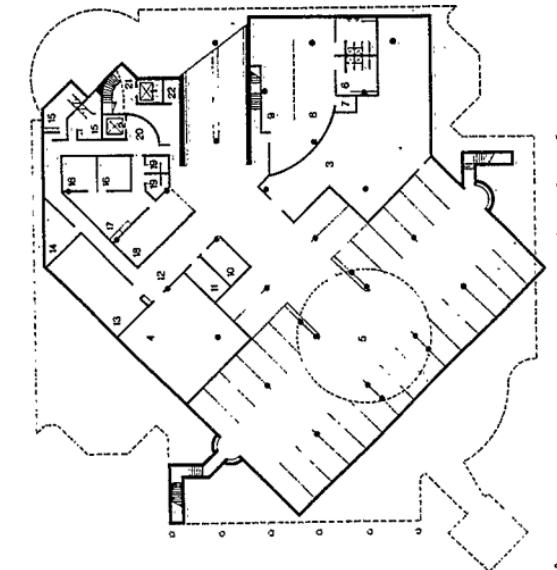
26. Water supply for domestic and fire fighting requirements is available from George and O'Connell Streets.

COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS - PARRAMATTA



LEGEND

1. Secure Lift
2. Callbox
3. Callbox, Level 1 A/H, Carpet Exhaust
4. Carpet Supply, Level 1 A/H, Basement A/H
5. Carpeting
6. Self Change
7. Disabled Toilet
8. Gym Amenities
9. Stairs
10. Waste Paper
11. Garbage
12. Loading Scale
13. General Store
14. Laundry
15. Cleaners Change
16. Former Hallway at rear
17. Holding Cells
18. Guard
19. Secure Parking
20. Secure Toilets
21. Secure Laundry
22. Gas Motor Room



BASEMENT

10' 0" 6' 0" 10' 0" 20'



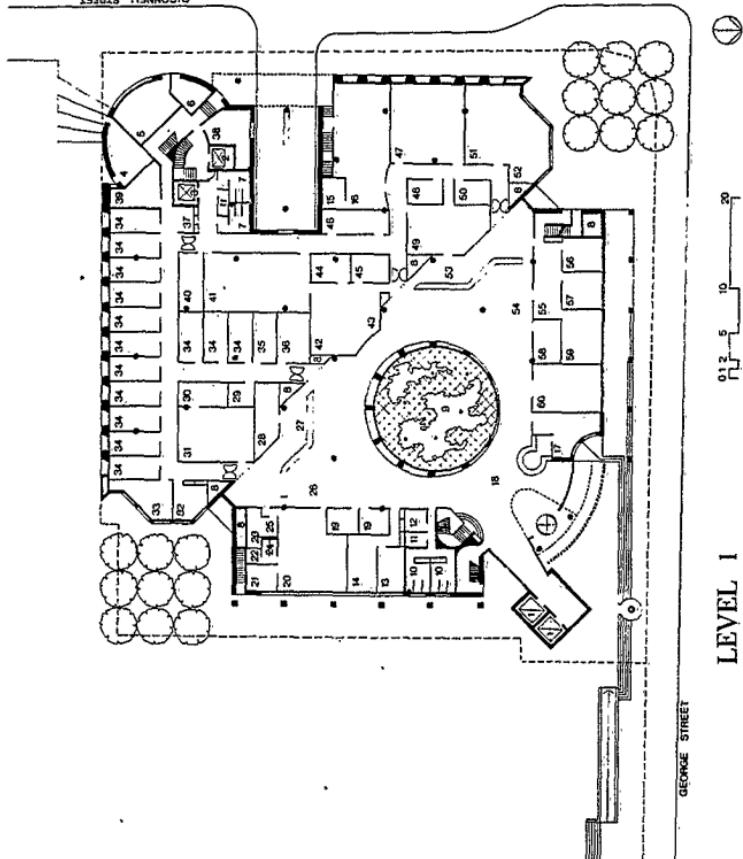
C-2

COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS - PARRAMATTA

SCEN

1	Public Lift
2	Goods Lift
3	Goods/Personal Lift
4	Switch Room
5	Call Station Room
6	Switch Room
7	Staff Toilets
8	Staff Toilets
9	Landscape Courtyard
10	Public Toilets
11	Public Toilets
12	COMMON FACILITIES
13	Medical Room and First Aid
14	Press Room
15	PABX Switchboard Operator
16	Small Rest Room
17	Staff Amenities
18	Public Reception and Lobby
19	FAMILY COURT
20	Guardianship
21	Visiting Agencies Room
22	Children in Pay Area
23	Switch Room
24	Parents' Ensuite
25	Parents' Ensuite
26	Public Waiting Room
27	Public Waiting Room
28	Records Room
29	Public Rest Room
30	Equipment Store
31	Assessors' Room
32	Assessors' Room
33	Director of Court Consulting
34	Court Counsellors' Offices
35	Observation Room
36	Public Waiting Room
37	Kitchen
38	FAMILY COURT
39	General Office/Registry
40	Store Room
41	Public Rest Room
42	Records Section
43	Office-in-charge
44	Collectors of Public Money
45	Assessors' Office
46	Assessors' Office
47	Typist/Office Personnel
48	Debtors Secure Storeroom
49	Lating Section
50	Document Inspection
51	Debtors Section
52	Debtors Section
53	Debtors Section
54	Public Waiting Area
55	Senate Security/Reception
56	Senate Security/Reception
57	Debtors Section
58	Debtors Section
59	Debtors Section
60	Registers Chambers
61	Conference Room

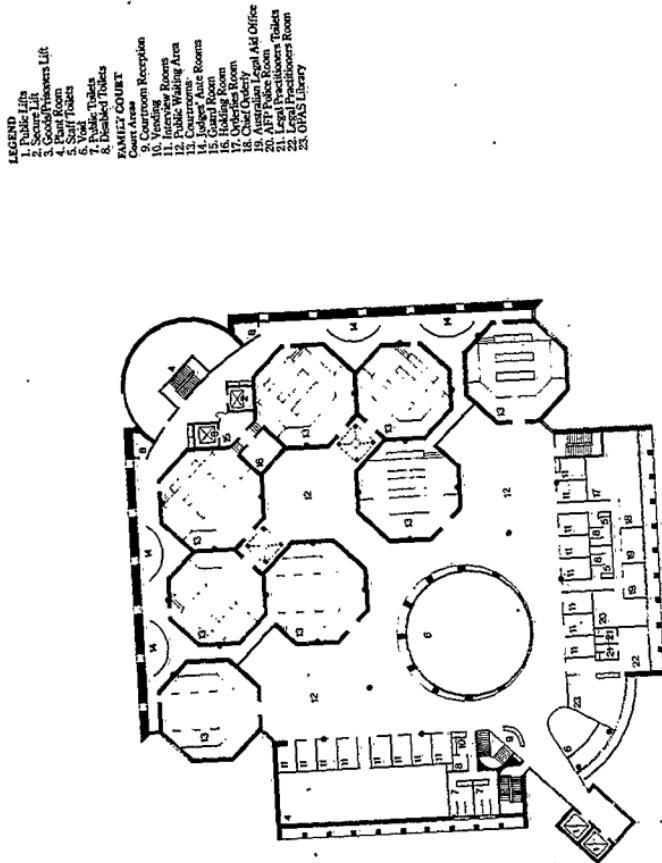
W. CONNELL STREET



C-3

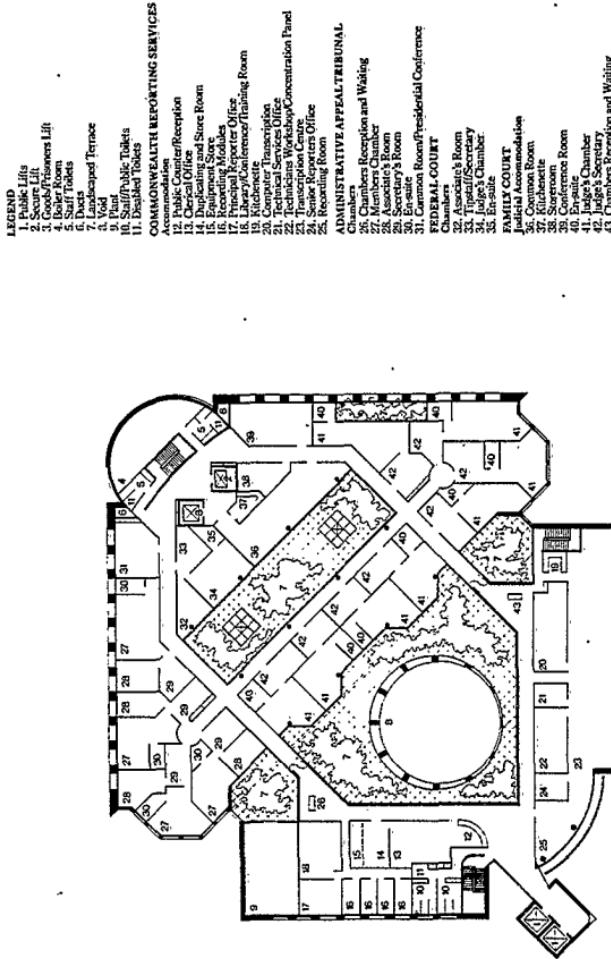
COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS - PARRAMATTA

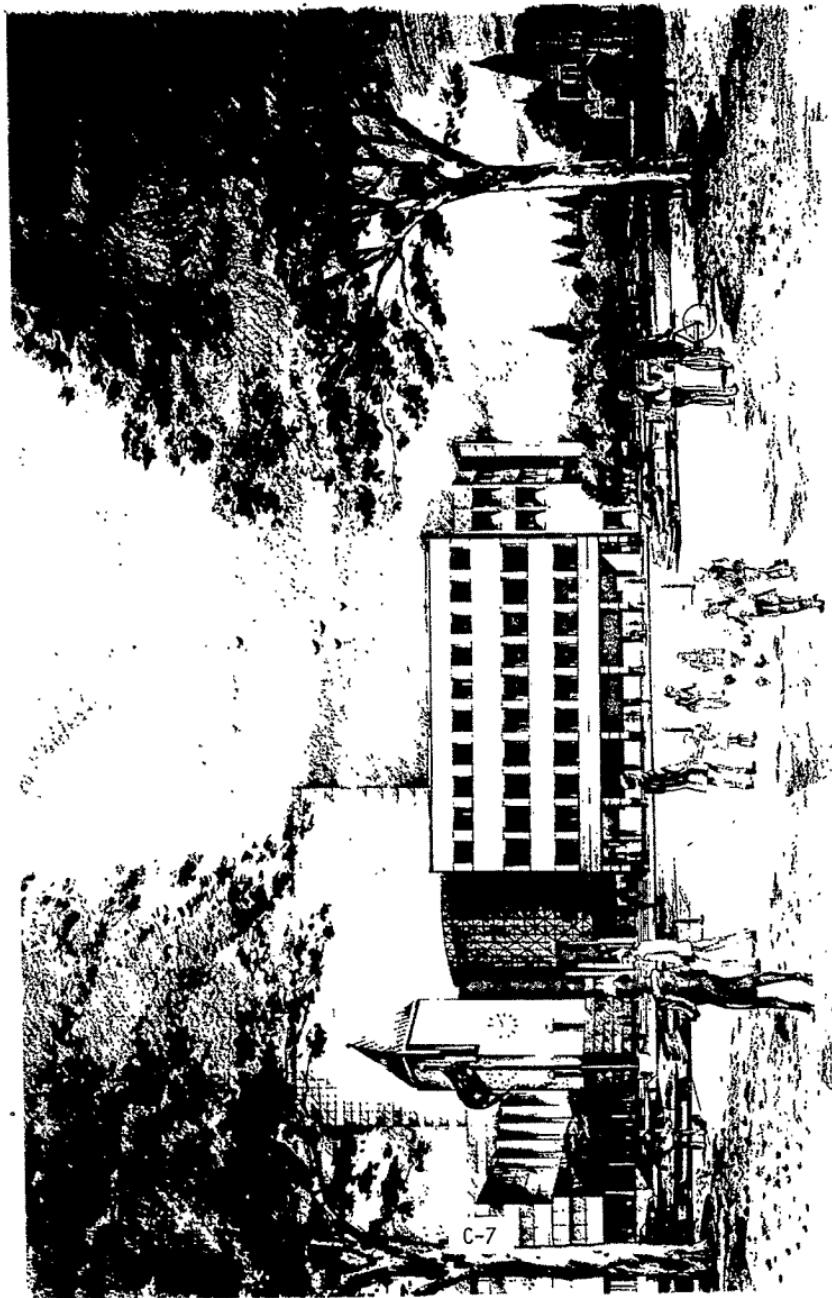
LEVEL 2



LEVEL 4

01 2 5 10 20

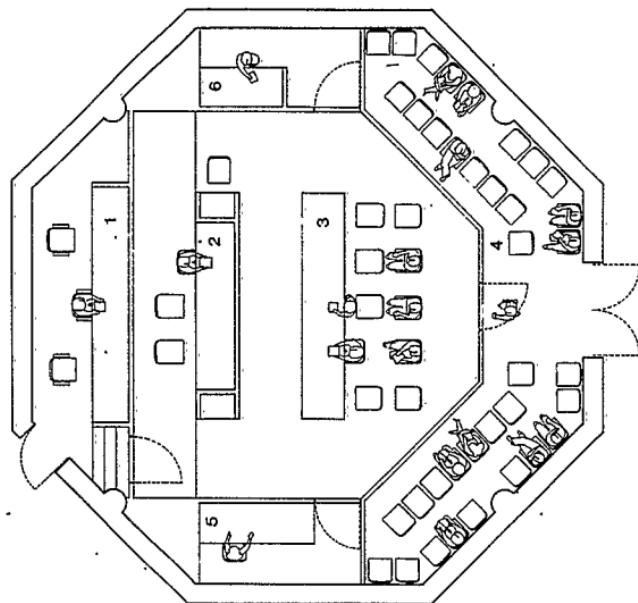




VIEW FROM NORTH 7

LEGEND

- 1. Judges Bench
- 2. Associates Table
- 3. Bar Table
- 4. Pulpit
- 5. Moot Court Booth
- 6. Witness



TYPICAL COURTROOM

COMMONWEALTH LAW COURTS - PARRAMATTA

9' - 0" - 2' - 0" - 3'