



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE COMMITTEE

**REPORT ON
PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL PLANS
FOR A
NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE
IN
STATE SQUARE**

February 1989

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 28 April 1987 the Sessional Committee known as the New Parliament House Committee was re-appointed with the following membership:

Mr Speaker
Mr Firmin
Mr Lanhupuy
Mr Leo
Mr Setter.

On 17 May 1988, Mr Firmin was discharged from further attendance on the Committee and the Minister for Transport and Works, the Hon. F A Finch, was appointed to the Committee in his place. On 25 May 1988, Mr Lanhupuy was also discharged from further attendance on the Committee and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr T E Smith, was appointed in his place.

- 1.2 For some time the Government had considered a proposal to establish a State Square in Darwin in the area of Mitchell Street surrounded by government office buildings, Government House, the Legislative Assembly buildings, the Nelson building and Chan building. The State Square project was, amongst other things, to incorporate a new Supreme Court building and a new Parliament House. The new Parliament House was to be constructed on the site of the present Parliament House and the Nelson Building.

- 1.3 Shortly after his appointment as Chief Minister on 14 July 1988, the Hon. Marshall Perron MLA announced that his Government intended to proceed with the State Square project and that the project would include the construction of a new Parliament House.

1.4 The New Parliament House Committee met on 21 July 1988 and the Speaker, the Honourable Roger Vale MLA, was appointed Chairman of the Committee.

1.5 Paragraphs (3) and (4) of the Committee's Terms of Reference read as follows:

"(3) the Committee act for and represent the Legislative Assembly, as the client for the new Parliament House, in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of the new Parliament House and all matters incidental thereto;

(4) the Committee reconsider and, as necessary, amend the Parliament House Competition brief which, when revised, shall be used as the basis for the design and construction of the new Parliament House, unless otherwise ordered by the Assembly or unless the Committee resolves to reconsider any section of the revised brief;"

1.6 At the meeting on 21 July 1987, your Committee had placed before it a copy of conceptual plans for a New Parliament House prepared as part of the proposed development of the State Square. Your Committee determined that prior to its consideration of the conceptual plans, in accordance with its Terms of Reference, it should reconsider the appropriateness of the Parliament House Competition Brief which had formed the basis of the competition held for a design of a new Parliament House in 1984. Your Committee also determined that in addition to considering the conceptual plans it would undertake a re-evaluation of the first 6 placed entries in the 1984 competition.

1.7 Your Committee held nine meetings. During its deliberations, your Committee held discussions with and took advice from:

Mr Ron Findlay	Department of Transport and Works
Mr Malcolm Smith	Department of Transport and Works
Mr Roger Linklater	MLE Architects
Mr Peter Doig	Meldrum Burrows & Partners (Melbourne)

Your Committee expresses its appreciation of the invaluable assistance received from these witnesses.

THE ARCHITECTURAL BRIEF

2.1 In considering the revised architectural brief, your Committee determined that the following principles should be adhered to:

- "(a) that the core areas of the building be designed to accommodate up to 40 Members;
- (b) that conceptual plans make immediate provision for 25 Members; and
- (c) that any plans to be agreed to by the Committee have a capacity for expansion for future growth."

2.2 Your Committee also considered that, whilst plans agreed to should have a capacity for expansion and future growth, the brief upon which final plans were to be drawn should be kept as tight as possible and that, wherever possible, room sizes should be reduced to eliminate waste space.

2.3 In determining the provision of accommodation in the parliamentary building, your Committee achieved a significant reduction in the space proposed in the original brief. This reduction was achieved by:

- (a) omitting the proposed theatrette;
- (b) omitting the future provision for a squash court;
- (c) reducing the entrance foyer size and the size of the service rooms off the reception hall;
- (d) reducing the size of Government and Opposition lobbies off the chamber;
- (e) reducing the size of the following areas:
 - (i) Chief Minister's office;
 - (ii) Leader of the Opposition's office;
 - (iii) Ministers' offices;
 - (iv) the office of the Clerk;
 - (v) Members' Refreshment rooms - this area was reduced by omitting a number of proposed rooms including the Members' Amenities room; and
 - (vi) Maintenance rooms.

2.4 It was, however, agreed that instead of providing an office in the building from which the Parliamentary Counsel could work on sitting days, the whole Parliamentary Counsel's Office would be permanently located in the New Parliament House.

2.5 The size of the parliamentary building was further reduced when your Committee was considering the conceptual plans. These reductions were achieved by removing unnecessary verandahs and omitting or reducing open space areas.

- 2.6 In all a reduction of approximately 2500m² was achieved. Your Committee is of the opinion that these reductions will in no way interfere with the future working capacity of the building or with its aesthetic quality.
- 2.7 The Committee was informed that the original estimates for the basic building were in the order of \$46 million (1988 dollars). With the above savings in space the overall cost should be accordingly reduced. The full extent of savings will be known following design development.

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL PLANS

- 3.1 Prior to considering the proposed conceptual plans of the New Parliament House which had been prepared by Meldrum Burrows and Partners for the NT Government, your Committee considered it advisable to reconsider the first 6 placed plans from the 1984 New Parliament House Architectural Competition. Your Committee did this for two reasons:
- (a) to be reminded of the special concepts contained in those plans; and
 - (b) to make a valuation of whether the plans, which had been prepared for a site fixed on Mitchell Street, would still be viable in the State Square proposal.
- 3.2 Your Committee determined that because of the different land axes contained in the State Square proposal and because of the proximity of the proposed Supreme Court and Government House, none of these winning designs would be acceptable.

3.3 The plans first considered by your Committee had been prepared by Meldrum Burrows and Partners for the N.T. Government. Your Committee considered these plans and suggested to the architect and officers of the Department of Transport and Works certain amendments, the purposes of which were to:

- (a) have the plans conform with the requirements of the revised architectural brief; and
- (b) reduce the footprint of the proposed building by eliminating areas which were considered to be unessential.

3.4 Towards the end of this consideration, doubt was raised as to whether or not the plans which were being considered by your Committee were the most appropriate for the State Square project and for Parliament House, both aesthetically and in terms of future expansion. Your Committee therefore requested that, if possible, it be provided with alternative solutions. The Minister for Transport and Works concurred in this arrangement and your Committee, at a subsequent meeting, had laid before it the following:

- (a) plans based on the Meldrum Burrows and Partners' conceptual plans, revised by officers of the Department of Transport and Works;
- (b) an alternative architectural solution, including a proposal for future directions of the State Square project, prepared by architects of the Public Works Department of Western Australia engaged as consultants by the Department of Transport and Works; and

(c) an alternative architectural solution prepared by Meldrum Burrows and Partners.

3.5 These plans were considered in detail by your Committee in conjunction with the first considered plans prepared by Meldrum Burrows and Partners.

3.6 Your Committee considered that the solution contained in the Department of Transport and Works' revision of the first Meldrum Burrows and Partners' proposal was the most appropriate for a Northern Territory Parliament House and for the site. Your Committee then considered those plans in detail; suggested certain amendments to officers of the Department of Transport and Works; and finally approved of the resultant drawings, including elevations.

3.7 Your Committee is of the opinion that these plans are acceptable and that the design is one which will result in a Parliament House which will not only afford Members accommodation and facilities on a par with Members of Parliament elsewhere in Australia, but also will provide the Territory with a building which will take advantage of the site upon which it will be built; which will be aesthetically attractive; and which reflects the Northern Territory tropical environment whilst highlighting the harbour views.

3.8 Your Committee, acting as client for the New Parliament House in all matters concerned with the planning, design and construction of the New Parliament House, still has this client role to undertake during the developed design and construction stages of the building. Your Committee believes it essential that it carries out its role as client diligently to ensure not only the best possible outcome but also that problems which have eventuated in other such Parliamentary buildings are minimised in the

Northern Territory Parliament House. For example, the conceptual plans need full development. This design development stage includes, not only the development of individual areas within the plans but also design for the provision of mechanical, electrical and other services throughout the building. Other such stages include detailed architectural documentation and interior design.

3.9 To ensure that the Legislative Assembly and your Committee will be able to carry out their roles as client efficiently and effectively your Committee proposes that the Legislative Assembly passes the following motion, similar to a motion passed in 1984:

"That -

- (1) The following be declared stages in the design and construction of the new parliament house:
 - (a) design development;
 - (b) detailed architectural documentation; and
 - (c) interior design, including:
 - (i) approval of proposals;
 - (ii) approval of documentation; and
 - (iii) final acceptance of fit-out and finishes;

- (2) Work shall not be commenced or carried out on a declared stage in the design or construction of parliament house unless the New Parliament House Committee or one of its sub-committees, has passed a resolution authorising the commencement of work on that stage; and
- (3) The New Parliament House Committee shall report any such authorisation to the Legislative Assembly when the Assembly next meets."

3.10 Your Committee is concerned that no unnecessary delays occur in the construction of the new Parliament House. It therefore considers that it would be of assistance to its operations if it were empowered to appoint sub-committees to carry out certain of its tasks, for example, that mentioned in the above motion.

3.11 Your Committee therefore recommends that its terms of reference be varied by -

- (1) the insertion of the following paragraph:

"(5A) the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees of three or more of its Members and to refer to any such sub-committee any matter which the Committee is empowered to consider. The quorum of a sub-committee shall be two Members;"; and

- (2) by inserting in paragraph (8), after the words "the Committee", the words "or any sub-committee".

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 Parliament House is the most significant building in the Northern Territory, representing the pre-eminent arm of Government. It is located on the site of the existing Legislative Assembly building and is the Northern point of a triangle formed by Government House and the Supreme Court.
- 4.2 The building layout is functional and efficient, and provides discretely separated public and private access to the various units of accommodation within it. Public access to the Chamber, Galleries, Committee Rooms and Reception Hall is direct with limited control. Access by Members and staff to their accommodation is controlled.
- 4.3 The Chamber, Reception Hall, Library and offices associated with these units are located on the ground floor. Chamber Galleries for the public and media together with the Committee Rooms, Spouses' Room, Parliamentary Counsel and the Clerk's offices have been placed on the first floor. The second floor contains Members, Guests and Staff Dining and Lounge facilities and houses the Department of the Legislative Assembly's Hansard, Administration and Table offices.
- 4.4 The Chief Minister's, Leader of the Opposition's, Ministers' and Members' office accommodation have been placed on the perimeter of the third floor. Secure and covered carparking together with the Printing Office, Paper Store and Airconditioning Plant Room are to be found in the basement of the building.

4.5 The panoramic view from the site has been exploited, and care has been taken to maximise the views available from the reception hall and the areas available to the public adjacent to it. An informal square has been formed between the three buildings, the Parliament House, Supreme Court and Government House. The square unifies the separate buildings and controlled and well planned landscaping will enhance the appearance of each of them whilst accentuating the tropical environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Your Committee recommends:

- (a) that the Legislative Assembly accept the design of Meldrum Burrows and Partners as revised by officers of the Department of Transport and Works and contained in Appendix "A", as the scheme to be adopted for design development documentation and construction;
- (b) that officers of the Department of the Legislative Assembly and Department of Transport and Works, in conjunction with the consultants, prepare a revised brief for the commencement of design development and that the revised brief be based on the revised architectural brief accepted by your Committee;
- (c) that, by separate motion, the Legislative Assembly declare appropriate stages in the development of the New Parliament House and that work should not be commenced or carried out on a declared stage unless the New Parliament House Committee passes a resolution on the commencement of that stage. (For the wording of the proposed motion, see paragraph 3.9).

- (d) that, to ensure that there be no delays in the construction of the New Parliament House and to assist your Committee in its operations, the following variation to the terms of reference of your Committee to permit your Committee to appoint sub-committees, be adopted:

"That the Terms of Reference of the New Parliament House Committee, appointed on Tuesday, 28 April 1987, be varied by:

- (1) the insertion of the following paragraph:

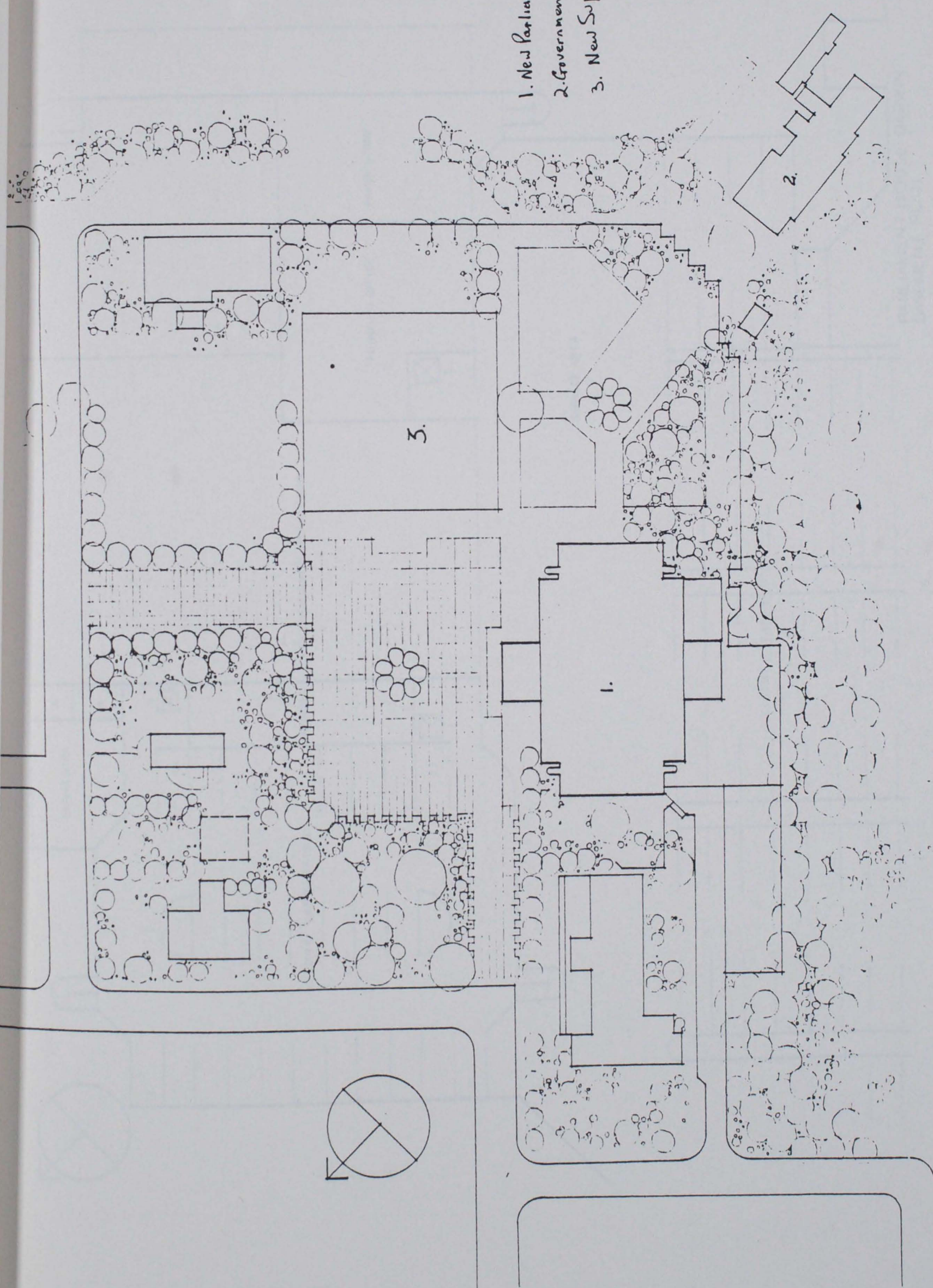
'(5A) the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees of three or more of its Members and to refer to any such sub-committee any matter which the Committee is empowered to consider. The quorum of a sub-committee shall be two Members;'; and

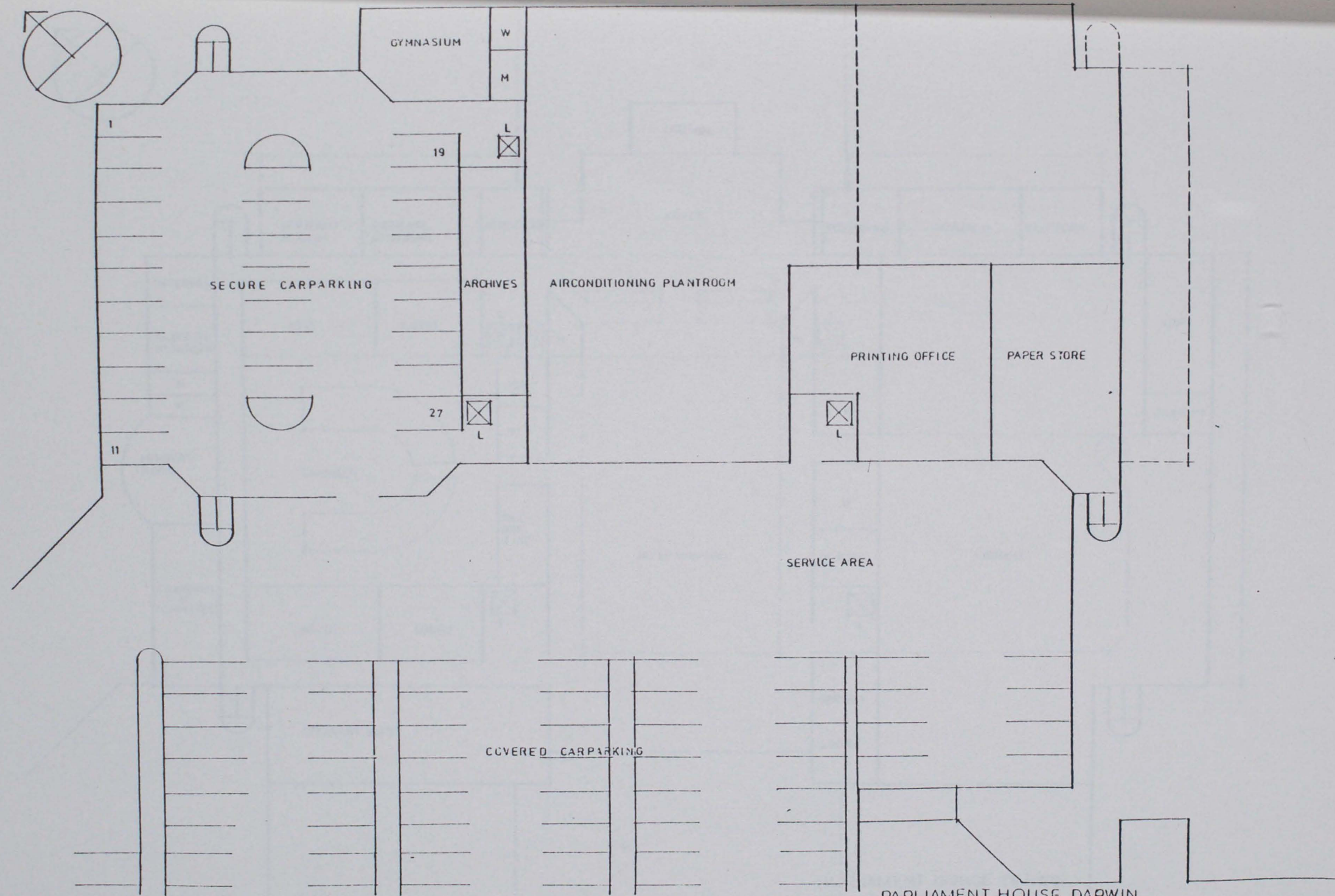
- (2) by inserting in paragraph (8), after the words 'the Committee', the words 'or any sub-committee.'; and

- (e) ~~that~~ an inter-departmental committee of representatives of the Conservation Commission, the Department of Transport and Works, the Department of Lands and Housing, the Darwin City Council and the Legislative Assembly should be established to ensure the co-ordination of the landscaping of the Parliament House grounds with the areas surrounding them.

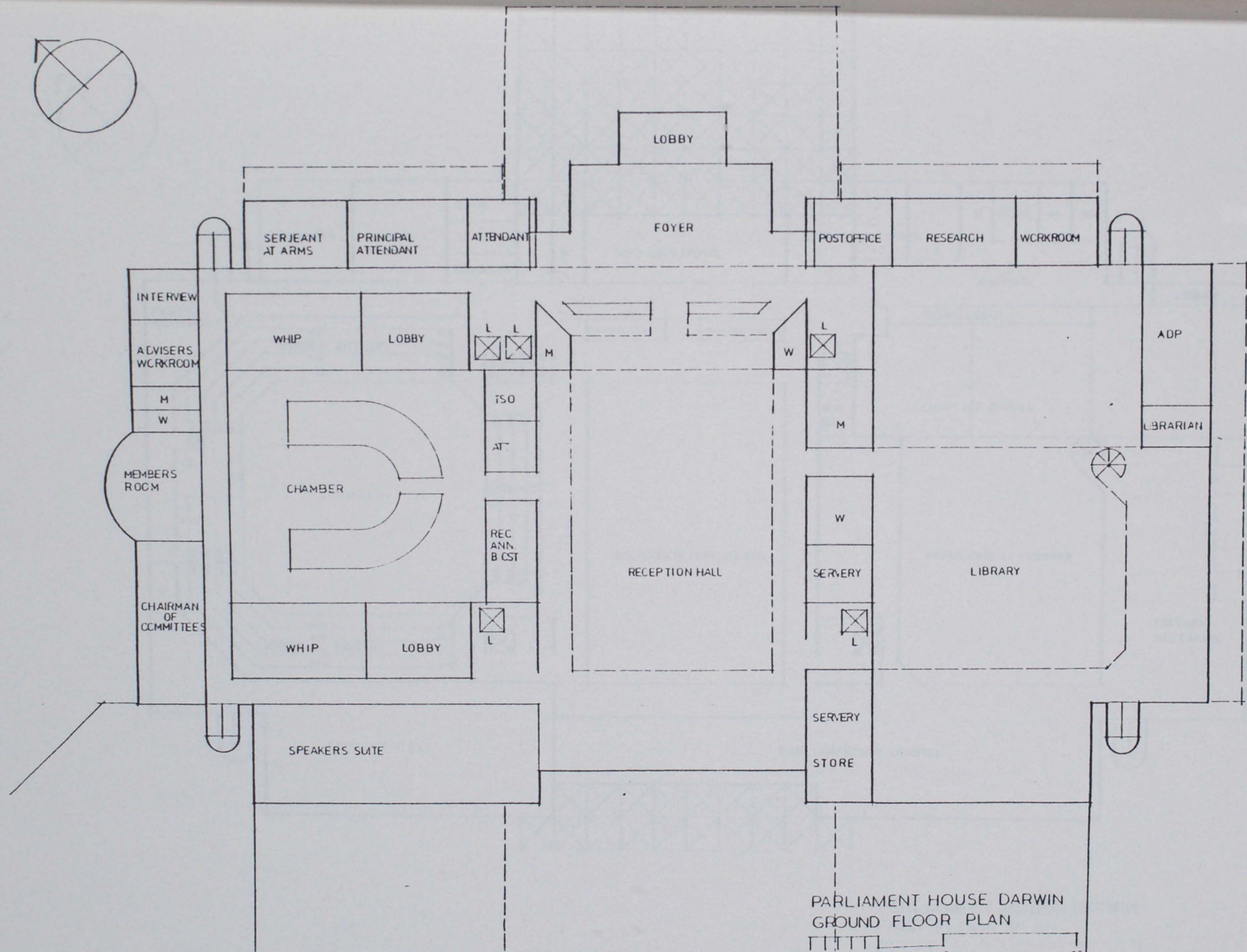
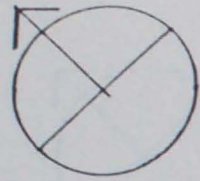
ROGER VALE
Chairman

- 1. New Parliament House
- 2. Government House
- 3. New Supreme Court

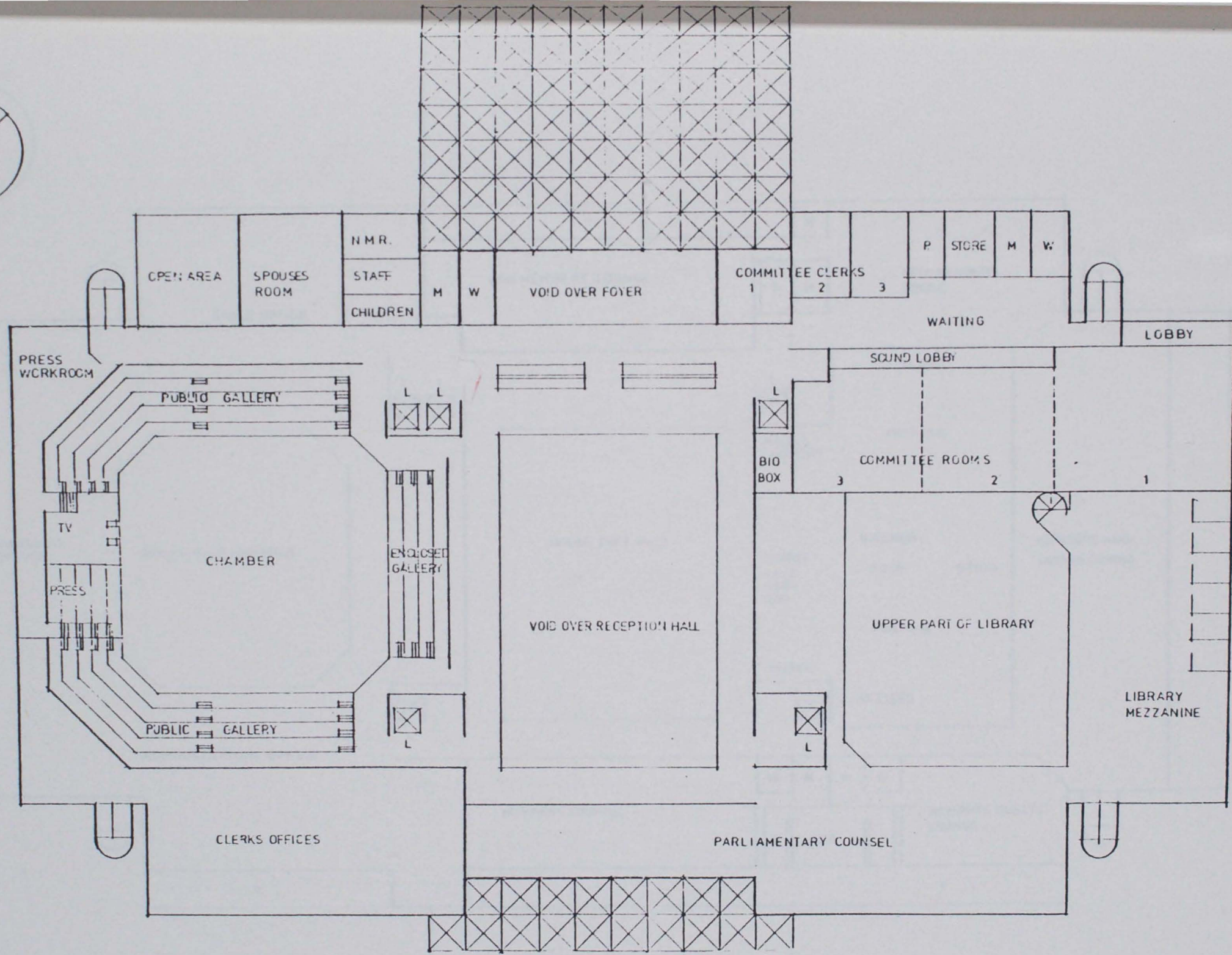
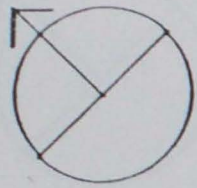




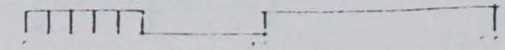
PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
BASEMENT PLAN

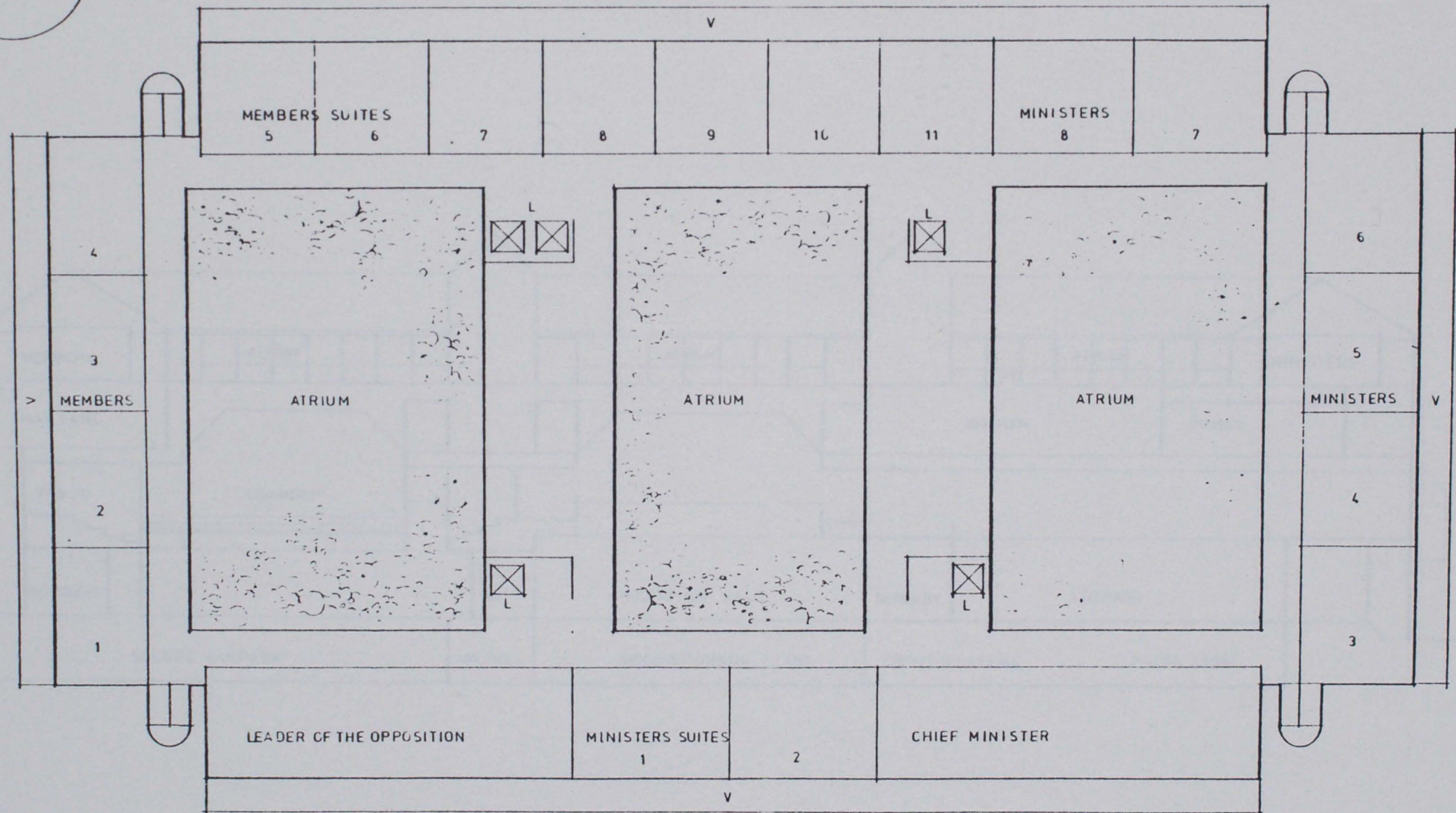
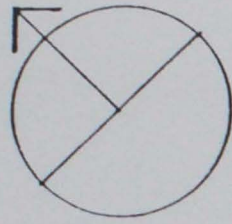


PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
GROUND FLOOR PLAN

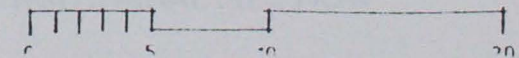


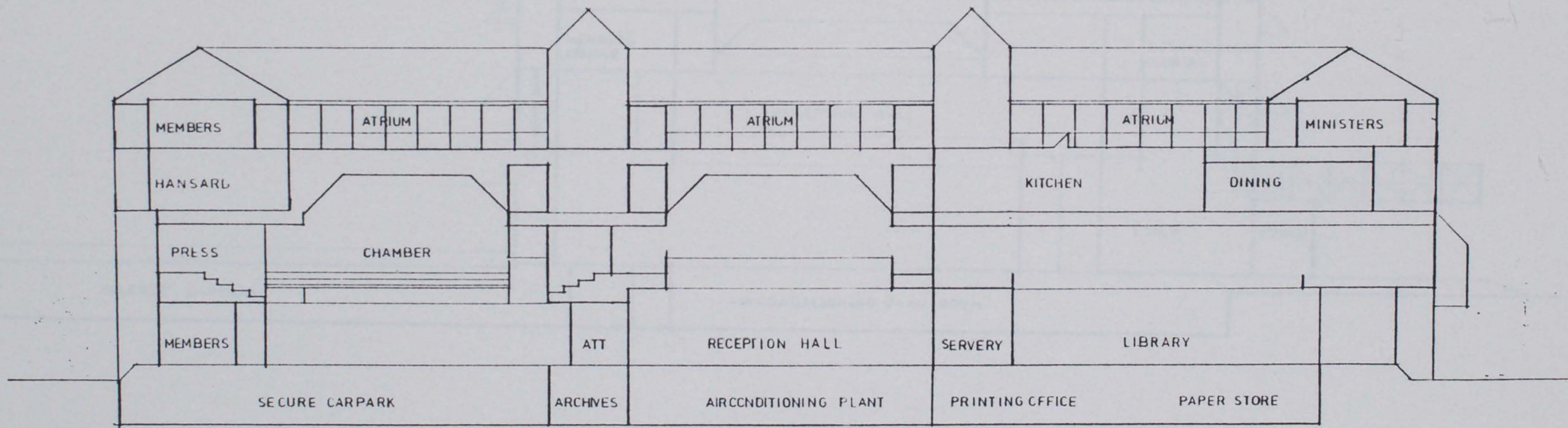
PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
FIRST FLOOR PLAN



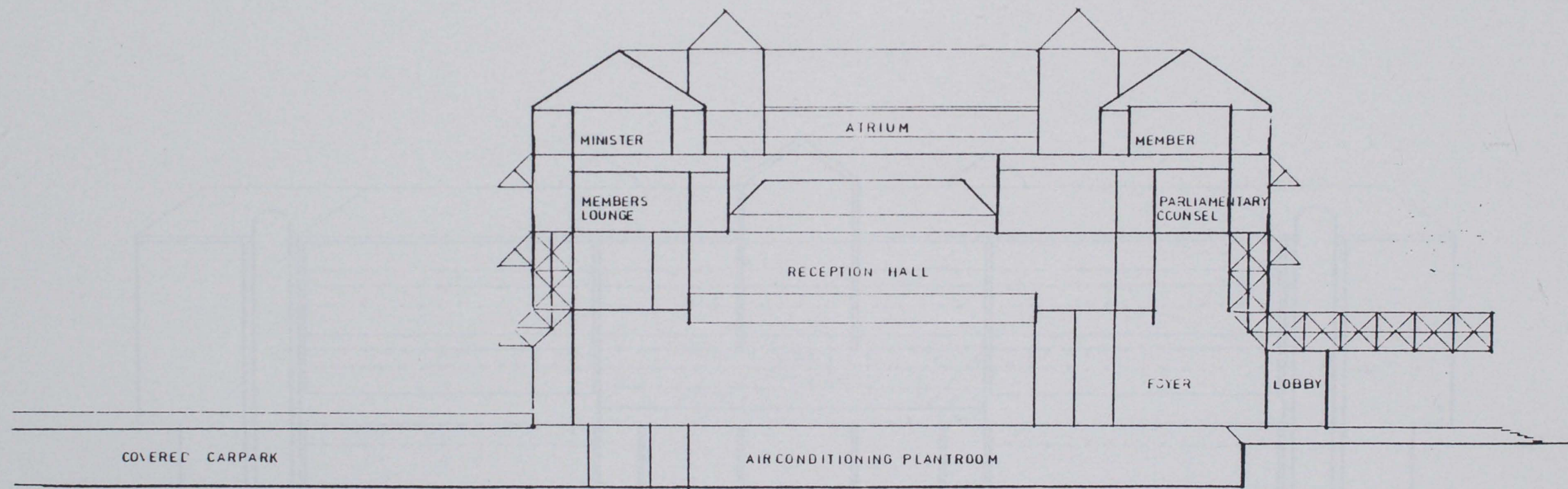


PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
THIRD FLOOR PLAN

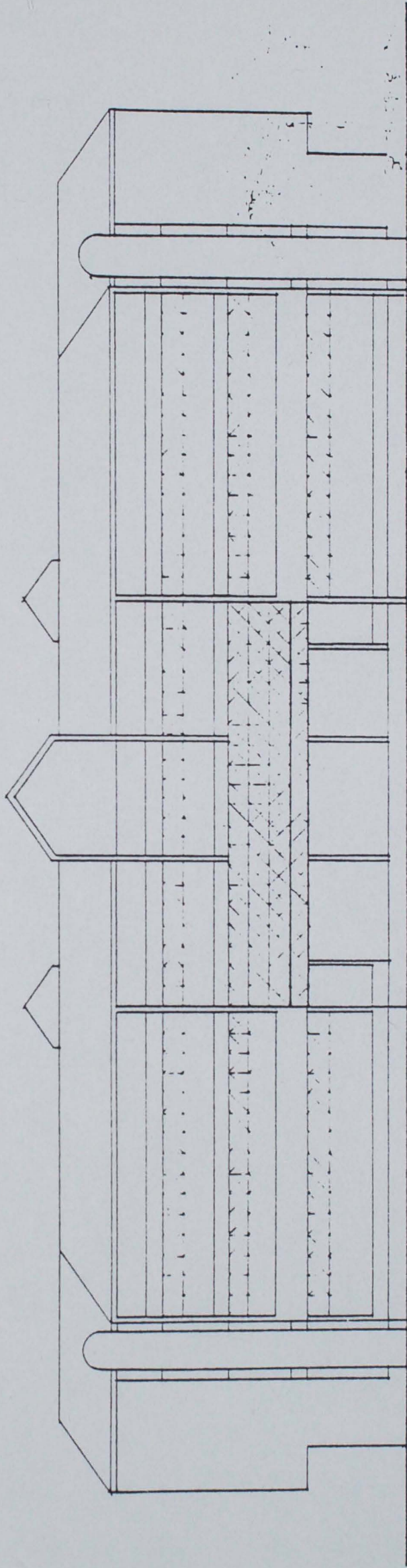




PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
LONGITUDINAL SECTION



PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
CROSS SECTION



PARLIAMENT HOUSE DARWIN
NORTH EAST ELEVATION

Government Printer of the Northern Territory

