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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

PLANS FOR NEW BUILDING

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies

The Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, announced today that the National Capital Development Commission had begun the preparation of working drawings for the new National Library of Australia which is to stand in the Parliamentary Triangle, Canberra.

The Commission had completed the outline design of the building. A model had been prepared and would be placed on public display next month. The model, together with illustrations of other major National Capital projects, would be shown to the Queen and Prince Philip on March 11. After this the exhibition containing the model would be open to the public.

The Prime Minister said the Development Commission would complete the working drawings towards the end of the year.

Mr. Menzies said that the National Library of Australia had already grown into an institution of major national importance in the period since Federation. Under the National Library Act of 1960, it had been given wide functions on behalf of the Commonwealth in assembling and organising a national collection of library material of all kinds and making it available to persons and institutions in ways which would best further the national interest. He said that the National Library had special responsibilities for services to the Parliament, the Departments of the Commonwealth Government and to the Commonwealth Territories, and played an important part, as the National Bibliographical Centre, in the closest co-operation with the State Libraries and other major libraries and institutions both in Australia and overseas.

Mr. Menzies said the outline design for the first stage of the library was for a building of five storeys above a two-level basement. The facade featured a grouping of light, slender columns. The whole concept was one of extreme simplicity and flexibility to allow for future growth.

The building was being designed to hold 1,250,000 books. It would house the present National Library collection and expected acquisitions until the 1970's.

Consultant architects to the Commission for the project were Bunning and Madden in association with Mr. T.E. O'Mahoney.

Mr. Menzies said the outline design for the Library had been approved by the National Library Council, the National Capital Planning Committee and finally by Cabinet. He said the Library site was on the southern foreshore of Lake Burley Griffin. The whole project was one of the most important National Capital features yet undertaken in Canberra.

CANBERRA,
28th February, 1963.