

UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/4231
29 September 1959

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fourteenth session

THE UNITED NATIONS LIBRARY

Gift of the Ford Foundation

Report of the Secretary-General

Consultations with the Ford Foundation

1. The Secretary-General takes great pleasure in announcing to Members of the General Assembly the receipt of a gift from the Ford Foundation for the construction of a new building to house the United Nations Library. Action to this effect was taken by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation at its meeting in June 1959. The Ford Foundation has indicated that its objective in making the grant was to assure the United Nations of a building of the highest quality, aesthetically designed, furnished, and equipped in conformity with the most modern library standards. To meet these costs the Ford Foundation is presenting to the United Nations the sum of \$6,200,000. Interest accruing on this amount will be used, if necessary, to defray costs of the project. Unused funds will be returned to the Foundation.
2. On the basis of data provided to the architects by the Secretariat and the library consultants of the Ford Foundation, the firm of Harrison and Abramovitz, principal architects for the United Nations buildings, conclude that the grant of \$6,200,000 plus accumulated interest should be adequate to cover the cost estimates of the project, including costs of demolition of the present library building, architects' and consultants' fees, preparation of the site, construction of the new building, equipment, furniture and artistic decoration, and ample provision for contingencies. The Secretary-General concurs in this judgement.
3. The Secretariat plans for a new building and for the securing of funds for its construction began soon after the Library was moved into its present quarters.

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The subsequent years, during which consultations took place relating to the request for funds provided opportunity for the Secretariat to develop plans for the type of library building that would meet the requirements of the United Nations, as well as to elaborate practices and policies for the functioning of the Library in harmony with the basic principles laid down by the General Assembly in 1949.

4. During the period from 1952 to June of this year a succession of consultations - especially activated during the last two years - took place with the officials of the Ford Foundation. Several brochures, including prospective designs for a new library building by the architectural firm of Harrison and Abramovitz, were prepared for the use of the Ford Foundation in the evaluation of the project. Two factors stood in the way of an earlier approval by the Ford Foundation of the request; first, a belief on the part of the Ford Foundation officials that the financial responsibility for such construction should be assumed by the Members of the United Nations and, secondly, that such a grant would run contrary to the normal policy of the Foundation not to invest funds in building construction. Despite these considerations, the Foundation officials took positive action in the light of the significant and constructive role played by the Library in the total United Nations effort in the pursuance of the high objectives of the Charter. They noted that the Library, with its excellent collections and highly qualified staff, has been increasingly useful to delegations and to the Secretariat in providing a sound factual basis for the resolving of issues before United Nations organs and for the numerous programmes maintained on a world-wide basis by the United Nations. Furthermore, the Library was attracting an increasing number of serious scholars and writers from the academic world, non-governmental organizations, the world of journalism, business and industry.

5. In approving the request, the Ford Foundation attached no conditions. It asked only that the building to be constructed should be of the highest quality, designed, furnished and equipped in accordance with the most modern library standards and that there should be assurance that the analysis, presented by the Secretariat in making its appeal for the development of a unique, specialized international library would, in fact, be implemented. The Secretary-General is glad to report that the concept of the Foundation and that of the Secretariat with respect to the quality of the building and the continuing trends in the effective development of the library as a central tool in the United Nations effort are identical.

6. This very substantial gift, supported by identical views as to its constructive objectives, provides a basis for deep satisfaction to the Secretariat, which undoubtedly will be shared by all Members of the General Assembly.
7. The Secretary-General is pleased to recommend the acceptance of this gift by the General Assembly.

Inadequacy of the present library building

8. The present home of the Library was regarded from the beginning as inadequate. When the Secretariat moved into the new Headquarters in 1950, the present building was the only - although unsatisfactory - space for the housing of the Library. That building, architecturally out of harmony with the other United Nations buildings and designed as an office building, lacked the possibility of effective alteration for library use and its floors were not sufficiently sturdy to sustain heavy stacks. It has been necessary to make a vertical dispersal of the collections and services over nine levels, including three basement levels, two of which are scarcely usable because of high temperatures and humidity and one of which is accessible only by stairs. There has been a horizontal fragmentation of the collections and services into many small rooms designed as offices. Furthermore, the building, limited in size, provides no further opportunity for expansion and prohibits the growth of the Library to that level which would seem commensurate with the fulfilment of its purposes and with the increasing use to which it is being put by the enlarging membership of the United Nations and by serious scholars and writers interested in the United Nations and in international affairs.

Function of the Library as determined by the General Assembly

9. In the first years of the United Nations special attention was given to the function of the Library, both by the General Assembly and by the Secretariat. Highly qualified outside librarians were secured as consultants who gave invaluable advice regarding the role that might be played by the Library. It was recognized that the central role of the Library as a vital tool for delegations and for the Secretariat in the execution of their tasks would, if properly implemented, ensure the creation of a highly specialized international library of unique character. It should not aim at the creation of a general library or at competition with general libraries, but, within the broad scope of the specialized subjects of

United Nations and specialized agencies' concern, it should develop unexcelled collections in these fields. As an outcome of these early discussions the General Assembly defined the Library's basic responsibility in 1949 as follows:

"The Library's primary function is to enable the delegations, Secretariat and other official groups of the Organization to obtain, with the greatest possible speed, convenience and economy, the library materials and information needed in the execution of their duties. The materials to be assembled and the services to be maintained will be determined by the needs of these groups." 1/

10. As a natural - indeed inevitable - outcome of the nature of its collections, the Library was conceived to be also an international centre for study and research in world affairs. This concept of its wider usefulness to users was recognized in the same basic policy directives in 1949.

"The services of the Library will also be made available, as far as feasible, to the specialized agencies, accredited representatives of mass media of information, international governmental organizations, affiliated non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, scholars and writers. No one needing to use full sets of documents and publications of the League of Nations, the United Nations or the specialized agencies will be denied access to the Library." 2/

The development of the collections, services and staff of the Library

A. Collections

11. The Library has developed within the terms of reference provided by the General Assembly a collection of about 200,000 volumes in many languages, principally composed of books, maps, periodicals and governmental and inter-governmental documents of legal, political, economic and social interest. In areas of particular concern, such as political questions, world-wide economic and social development, population studies, statistics, boundary disputes, constitutional matters, international law and social legislation, the collections are impressive. They are particularly notable for their comprehensive, multinational, multilingual character and, by reason of their arrangement, for their usefulness as working collections.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fourth Session, Fifth Committee, Annex, vol. I, agenda item 39, document A/C.5/298, para. 4.

2/ Ibid., para. 5.

12. The Library's holdings of the documents and publications of the United Nations itself, the specialized agencies, the League of Nations and other international organizations are the most complete and best organized in the world.

13. The map collection is comprehensive in questions of boundaries, place names and flags.

14. The Woodrow Wilson Memorial Library, established by a gift of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation in 1950 as part of the United Nations Library, is one of the world's most complete and valuable sources of information about the League of Nations and about international affairs during the years of the League's existence.

B. Depository library programme

15. In addition to the usual reference and lending functions of a library, the United Nations Library has the responsibility of making the documents of the United Nations and the specialized agencies accessible to the world. To accomplish this it has developed, within limits established by the Publications Board, a world-wide system of depository libraries which receive United Nations publications without charge on condition that they make them publicly available. The conduct of this depository library programme, in all of its aspects other than the physical distribution of the documents, is the Library's concern.

C. Indexing

16. Towards the same end of making the information contained in United Nations and specialized agency documents readily and generally accessible, the Library performs a variety of highly technical indexing tasks which are not usual library responsibilities. For example, it prepares and publishes a monthly check list and subject index of all of the United Nations and specialized agency documents produced or received at Headquarters. This United Nations Documents Index is the key to the extensive resources of legal, political, economic and social data contained in these documents. Throughout the world it is an indispensable tool for those who work either with United Nations or specialized agency documentation.

17. Similarly, the Library compiles and publishes an exhaustive index to the United Nations Treaty Series, indexes to the proceedings of each session of the Assembly and other major organs, and a variety of ad hoc indexes and bibliographies essential to the work of the Secretariat and delegations and most useful to the whole political and scholarly world.

D. Staff

18. The development, organization, and utilization of these collections can be credited to the capable staff of professional librarians and skilled clerks who meet the highest standards of competence and who, in addition, have had varying experience in their national civil and foreign services. Many, in addition to excellent academic library training, have had training in law, economics and related subjects. The staff is composed of nationals of some twenty-six Member countries and together they are competent in about thirty-five languages. They constitute the most cosmopolitan library staff in the world.

Its role in the library community

19. The Library holds a special position among the research libraries of the world. By avoiding the development of large general collections, it concentrates its efforts upon the speedy acquisition of all available useful current materials in germane fields and by the arrangement and, as necessary, the listing and indexing of this material for maximum usefulness with maximum speed. It thus supplements the collections and services of the great general libraries of the world.

20. It is a mark of the success of this effort that other libraries now look more and more to the United Nations Library for assistance and advice, not only in the management of their own United Nations documents collections, but also in areas of particular United Nations competence. For example, the New York Public Library, heading a group of major research libraries in a programme for the co-operative filming of the official gazettes of about two hundred countries and territories, has found that the United Nations gazette collection, because of its scope and relative completeness, is the necessary principal source of original documents to be filmed.

Users of the Library

21. Since 1956 demands upon the Library by all of its users have increased sharply. A 36 per cent increase in the membership of the Organization, greater scope of political questions, requirements of the programmes of technical assistance, research into new problems such as the peaceful uses of atomic energy

and the exploration of outer space, and growing public interest - all of these developments have had a marked impact upon the Library. From the 1951-1955 base, service demands upon the Library increased more than 50 per cent by 1958, as the following table illustrates:

	<u>1951-1955</u> (average)	<u>1956</u>	<u>1957</u>	<u>1958</u>
Reference queries	61,000	67,518	87,303	103,870
Loans	66,000	68,678	79,514	91,637

Under the pressure of this increased demand for services, the Library's book funds, staff, and - most of all - its physical plant have been strained to the breaking point.

22. The trend of increasing use of the Library will undoubtedly continue. The further increase in the membership of the Organization and the increasing public interest in the work of the United Nations and its handling of past issues, combined with the early establishment of several scores of missions of Member States across the street from Headquarters, will result in increased use of the Library. Such an increase is welcomed and should be encouraged.

23. Staffs of delegations make regular use of the Library in the preparation of position papers in connexion with the work of the General Assembly, the Councils or other organs of the United Nations. With the rotation of delegations to various United Nations bodies, and with the change in composition of mission personnel, the existence of extensive collections relating to United Nations matters and services by an experienced staff, provides invaluable assistance to the delegations.

24. The great majority of delegations to the United Nations represent smaller countries. The great Powers and certain other countries are able to provide their representatives with large and well-trained staffs and to support their work with research departments in their foreign offices. Perhaps as many as two-thirds of the Member Governments, however, have difficulty in establishing comparable research facilities. For these in particular the United Nations Library provides a necessary research instrument.

25. The Library as a research centre also makes its vital contribution to the work of the Secretariat. In preparing background materials and vital information for the General Assembly, Councils, Commissions and Committees, in carrying out

special projects resulting from resolutions of these organs and in compiling data for United Nations publications, the Secretariat is engaged in continuous research of world scope over a broad range of subject matter.

26. There has also been an increased use of the Library by representatives of the three hundred international non-governmental organizations either in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council or accredited by the Office of Public Information. These organizations have made an important contribution to the cause of economic and social progress both in terms of advancing public understanding of issues and in terms of material assistance given to specific social and humanitarian projects.

27. The Library is also a centre for study and research by representatives of specialized agencies, journalists, scholars in the legal, political, social and economic fields, and by members of staffs in the field of business and industry.

28. This increasing group of users, both official and unofficial, calls for generous library facilities, for a well arranged ready storehouse of facts and information and for a dynamic reference and bibliographical centre.

Temporary arrangements for the Library

29. In the period between the evacuation of the present building and the completion of the new structure, the Library and its staff would be accommodated in the Secretariat Building. Use would be made of the Secretariat lobby for reference and periodical services, while branch libraries would be expanded and increased in number in various offices and departments of the Secretariat.

A careful selection of the most-used materials would be made for current use, while less-used materials would be stored in basement areas and elsewhere. Budgetary provision would be necessary to cover this change to temporary quarters. A proposal to this effect, involving a revision of the Secretary-General's 1960 budget estimates, will be presented separately.

Development plans

30. In order to provide library resources and services adequate to meet the growing needs, the Secretary-General has estimated that a considerable increase up to an approximate doubling of the present rate of acquisition of library materials would be necessary to achieve a desired eventual total collection of

about 400,000 volumes.^{3/} He also proposes that, in due course, an increase of 25 to 30 per cent in staff will be necessary to allow, particularly, for an approximate doubling of the present indexing and related bibliographical work. This expanded indexing programme might include the completion of the check list of documents of the United Nations, 1946, publication in French and possibly in other languages of current indexes now issued only in English, and preparation of subject bibliographies and special indexes which are not only essential to the Organization's daily work, but which also fulfil its obligation to make the documentary record of its activities more generally accessible.

31. To achieve these objectives the Secretary-General will, in due time, recommend the necessary budgetary support.

Planning for the new library building

32. The presentation to the Ford Foundation was made on the assumption that the present unsatisfactory building would be razed to the ground and that the new library building would be erected in its place.

33. Attached hereto are preliminary sketches of the new building prepared by the firm of Harrison and Abramovitz. They show that the exterior of the building will be beautifully designed and in conformity with the other buildings that comprise the United Nations compound. This building will complete the group of buildings around the Plaza and will add much to its attractiveness.

34. It is intended, should the General Assembly approve, that it would be a building of six stories in addition to a penthouse, three aboveground and three below, measuring approximately 90 feet by 220 feet, with a net floor area sufficient to house 400,000 volumes and a total of 285 readers, together with the necessary staff to serve them and to perform considerably expanded indexing and other bibliographical services. In its provision of reading rooms, study rooms, carrels, its entrances and lobbies and in its furnishings and equipment it would be as functionally efficient, as comfortable and as beautiful as expert planning could devise.

^{3/} It has been estimated by the Library staff and by independent consultants that 400,000 volumes is about the optimum size for the type of special collection of current materials envisaged, and that once that approximate level has been reached it should be maintained by the constant weeding of out-of-date materials. Such weeding is accepted as an essential part of the Library programme.

35. The building which is contemplated would be of modular construction designed for utmost flexibility of space. It is being planned with special attention to the relationships of the several classic functions of a library and to the special functions of this Library, for economical operation and for ease of access.

36. The first, or ground, floor would have a main entrance on the United Nations Plaza leading into a lobby and a connexion with the Secretariat Building by way of a glassed-in gallery that would also serve as an exhibit hall. The first floor would house the attractive main reading room, including the reference services, a collection of as many as 10,000 reference books and reading areas for about 100 persons; the public catalogues, designed to accommodate 2,000,000 cards required for 400,000 volumes; the loan desk; and the Acquisition and Catalogue Sections which require convenient access to both the public catalogues and the reference collection.

37. The second floor would house the bulk of the United Nations and specialized agency documents collection at present numbering about 30,000 volumes and growing by about 100,000 documents each year, their index catalogue, and the major portion of the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Library of League of Nations documents and related materials. Here, too, would be the reading rooms for these collections, accommodating ninety readers, a small microfilm storage and reading room, a number of carrels and ten study rooms for scholars doing extended research.

38. The third floor would carry the balance of the United Nations and League of Nations documents collection, the Index Section and the executive offices. It would also form the galleried upper portion of the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Library, designed as a two-storey room in a style appropriate to its memorial character.

39. The penthouse above the third floor, accessible by stairs only, would house the mechanical equipment and provide space for an attractive lounge.

40. The concourse, or first basement level, would have an entrance on First Avenue by means of which the Secretariat staff could enter the Library or, through an underground connecting corridor, the Secretariat Building to the northeast. It would house the bulk of the reference collection, the periodical reading room with provision for seventy-five readers and adjacent stacks, the maps collection and reading room to accommodate twenty readers, a staff workroom,

a microfilm storage and reading room and a small listening room for the use of language training records. The entrance lobby of the auditorium, accessible from both the Secretariat Building and the Library proper, will also be on this level. The auditorium itself will be of a stadium-type design, two stories in height, the stage or platform being on a level with the second basement.

41. The auditorium would accommodate about 200 persons, for lectures, seminars, panel discussions, briefings and film showings. Neither the present Library Building, nor any other United Nations building contains such accommodation. Provision of an auditorium for these purposes represents a necessary and integral part of the Library in making it the international centre that it is intended to be.

42. The second basement would be given chiefly to stacks designed to house the main book collection. It would also contain the lower portion of the auditorium.

43. The third basement would house the balance of the main collection, in free-standing stacks, and the mechanical equipment of the building.

44. This concept of utilization of the space available would allow for maximum concentration of related services on single floors and for easy vertical communication between related collections and services. It is believed that in this regard the proposed building would be a model of compact arrangement of space that is yet sufficiently commodious and flexible to accommodate the Library collections and services that the United Nations will require for the foreseeable future.

45. The development of the basement portion of the plan would call for the displacement and re-equipment of technical and storage facilities designed for and utilized by the Visual Services of the Office of Public Information. These facilities could be conveniently relocated in the hangar area in the basement of the General Assembly Building. The cost to the United Nations of this relocation, which, in conjunction with the proposed construction in the same area of a television studio and processing centre, is to be presented as a separate estimate, will be partially offset by certain costs which would have otherwise been required in the renovation of the present library facilities.

Joint consultations regarding the new building

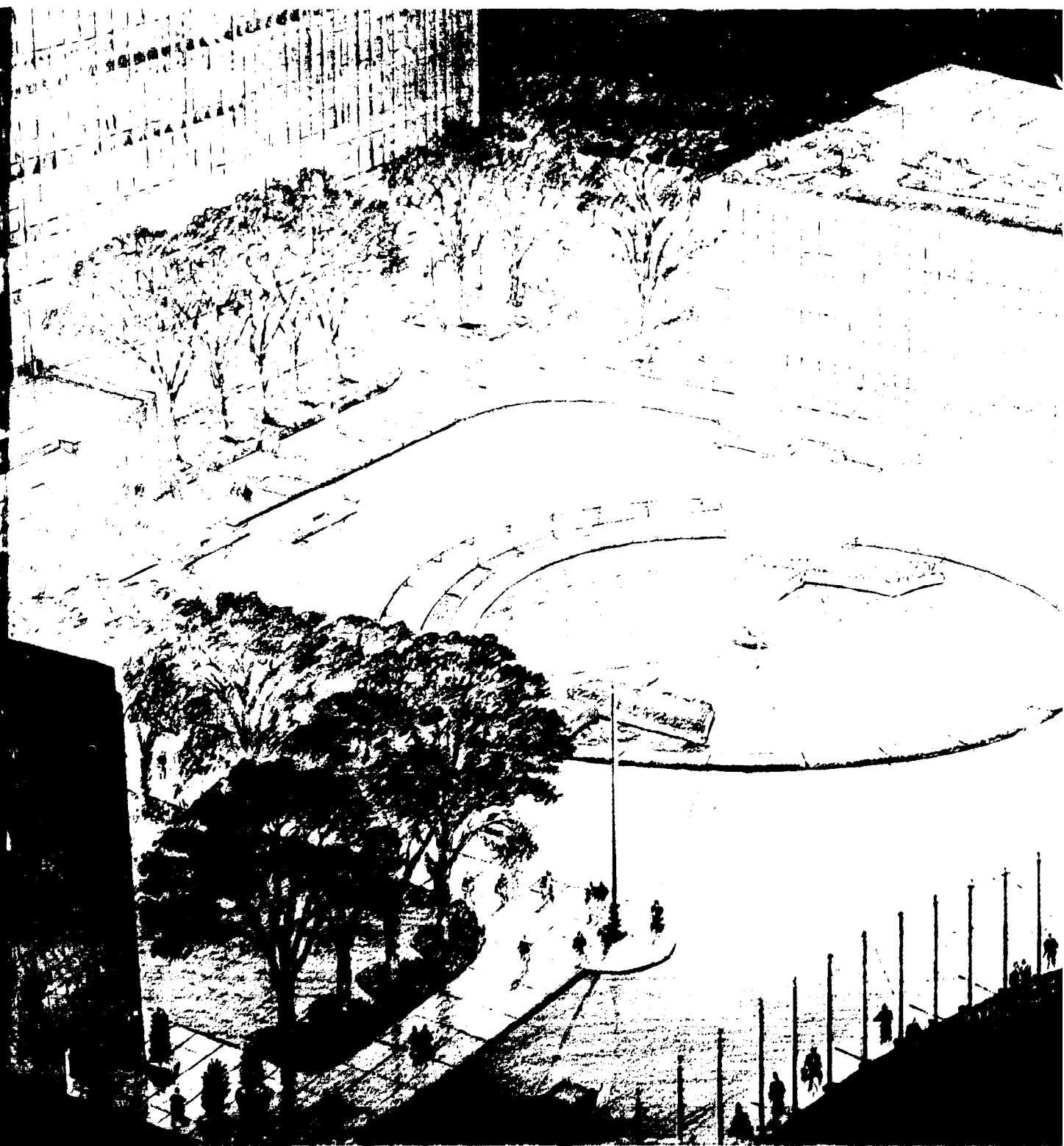
46. The Ford Foundation, in giving favourable consideration to the request of the United Nations, secured the services of four distinguished librarians to

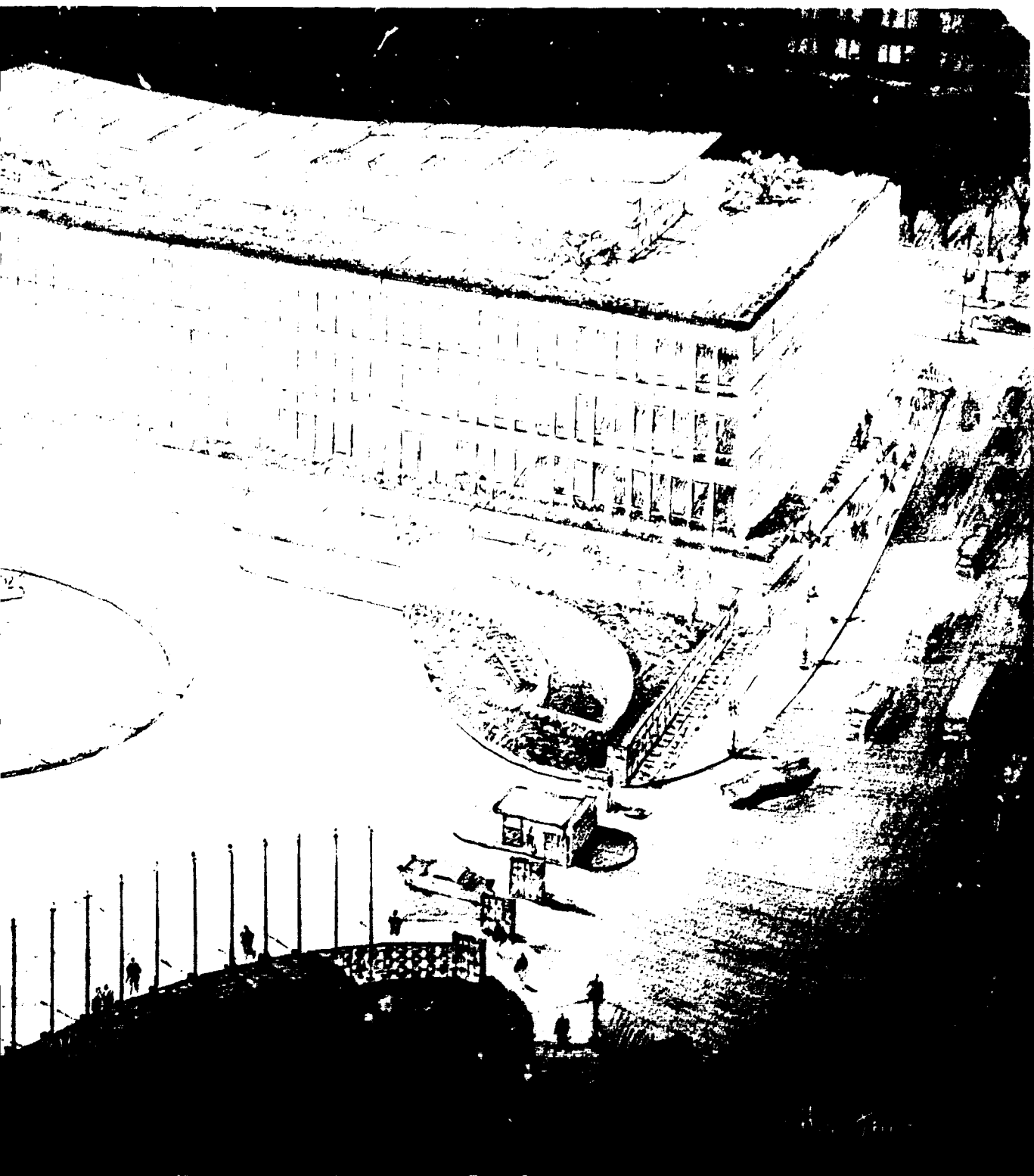
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assist it in evaluating the project. These librarians were Mr. Douglas W. Bryant, Associate Director, Harvard University Library; Mr. Verner W. Clapp, President, Council on Library Resources, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Frank B. Rogers, Director, National Library of Medicine, Washington; and Mr. Frederick Wagman, Librarian, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

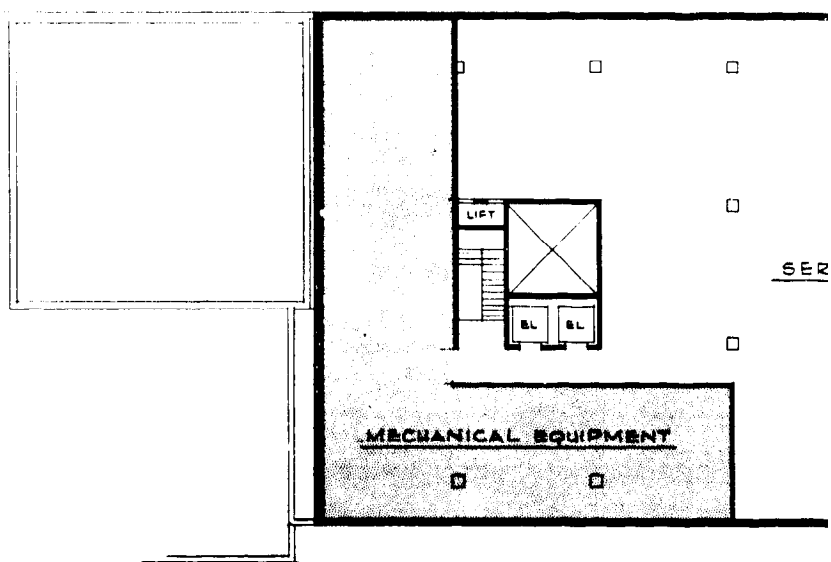
47. At the request of the Secretary-General the Ford Foundation has kindly seconded these librarians to engage in consultations with the Secretariat and with the architects in the tentative formulation of plans and in the establishment of cost estimates at present price levels, as mentioned in paragraph 2.

48. Following the acceptance of this gift from the Ford Foundation, the Secretary-General hopes that the Assembly may give him authorization to proceed with the necessary contracts for the completion of architectural plans and for the construction of the building within the financial limits indicated in paragraph 1 above.





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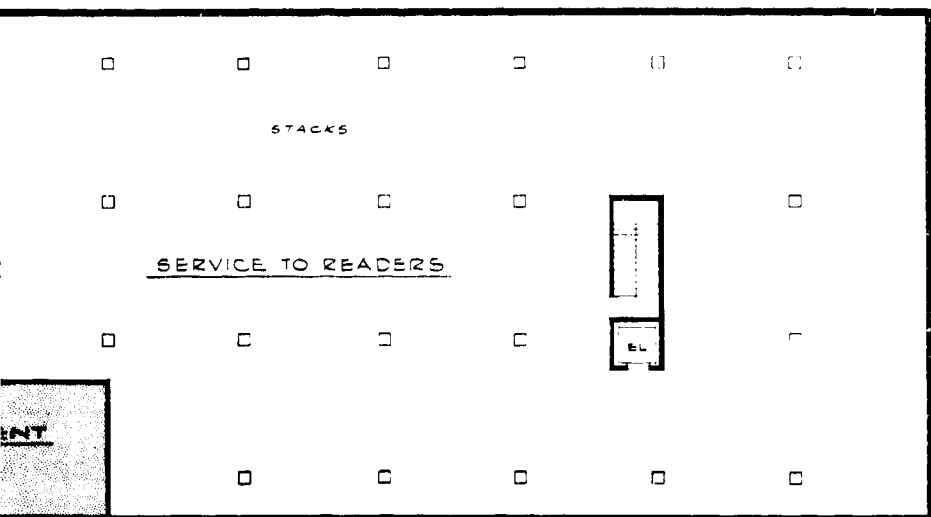
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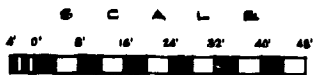
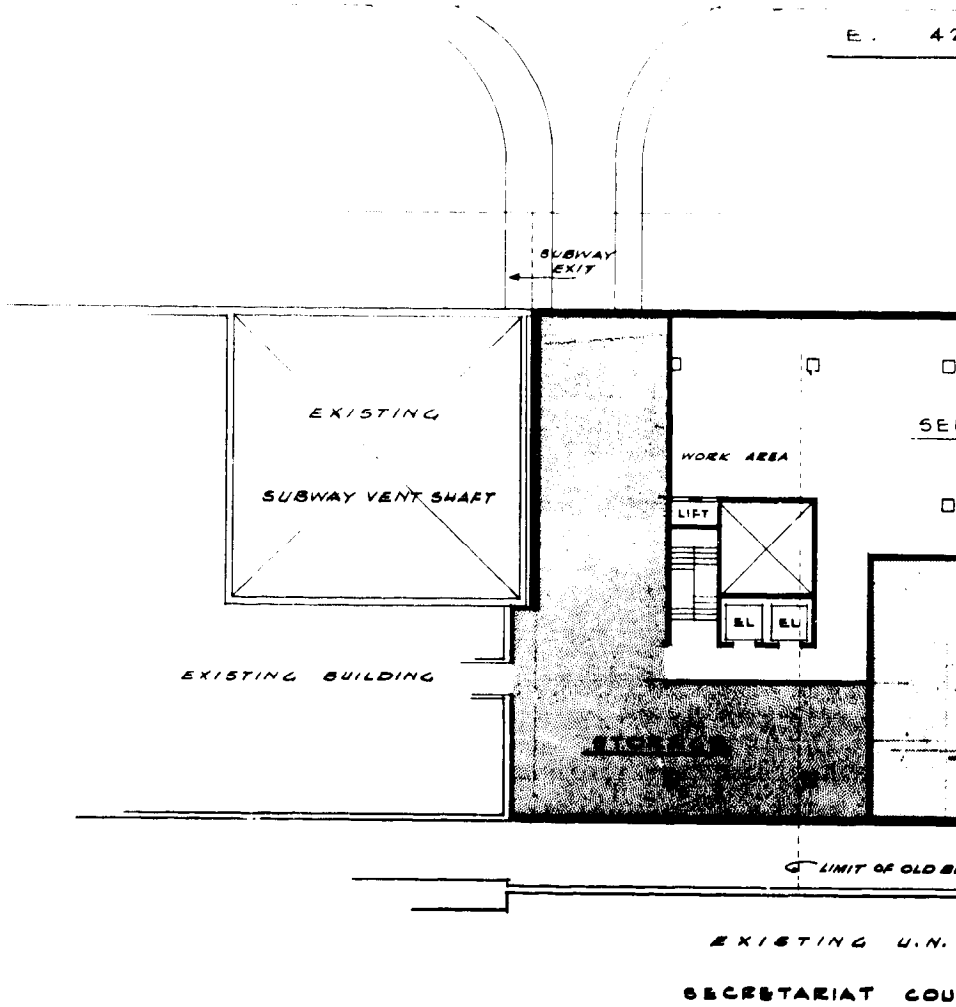
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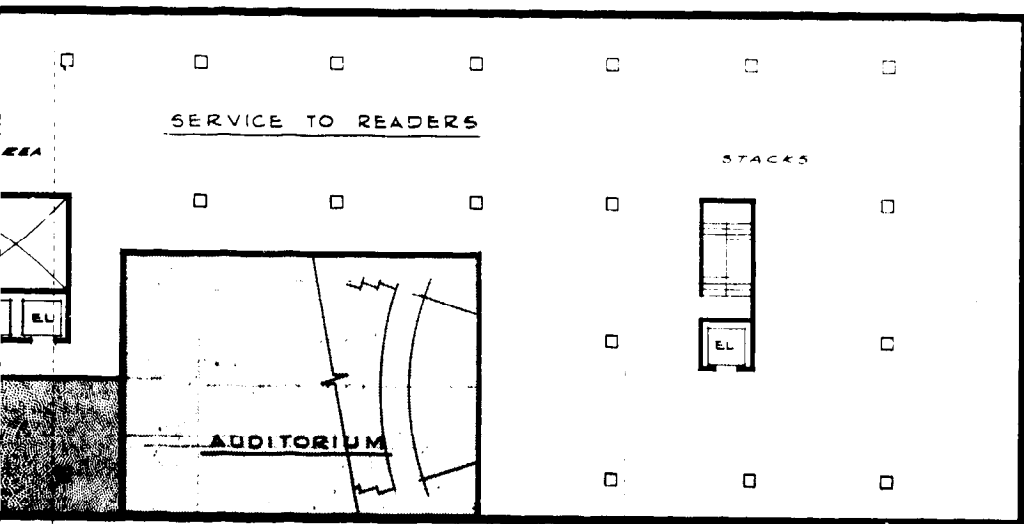
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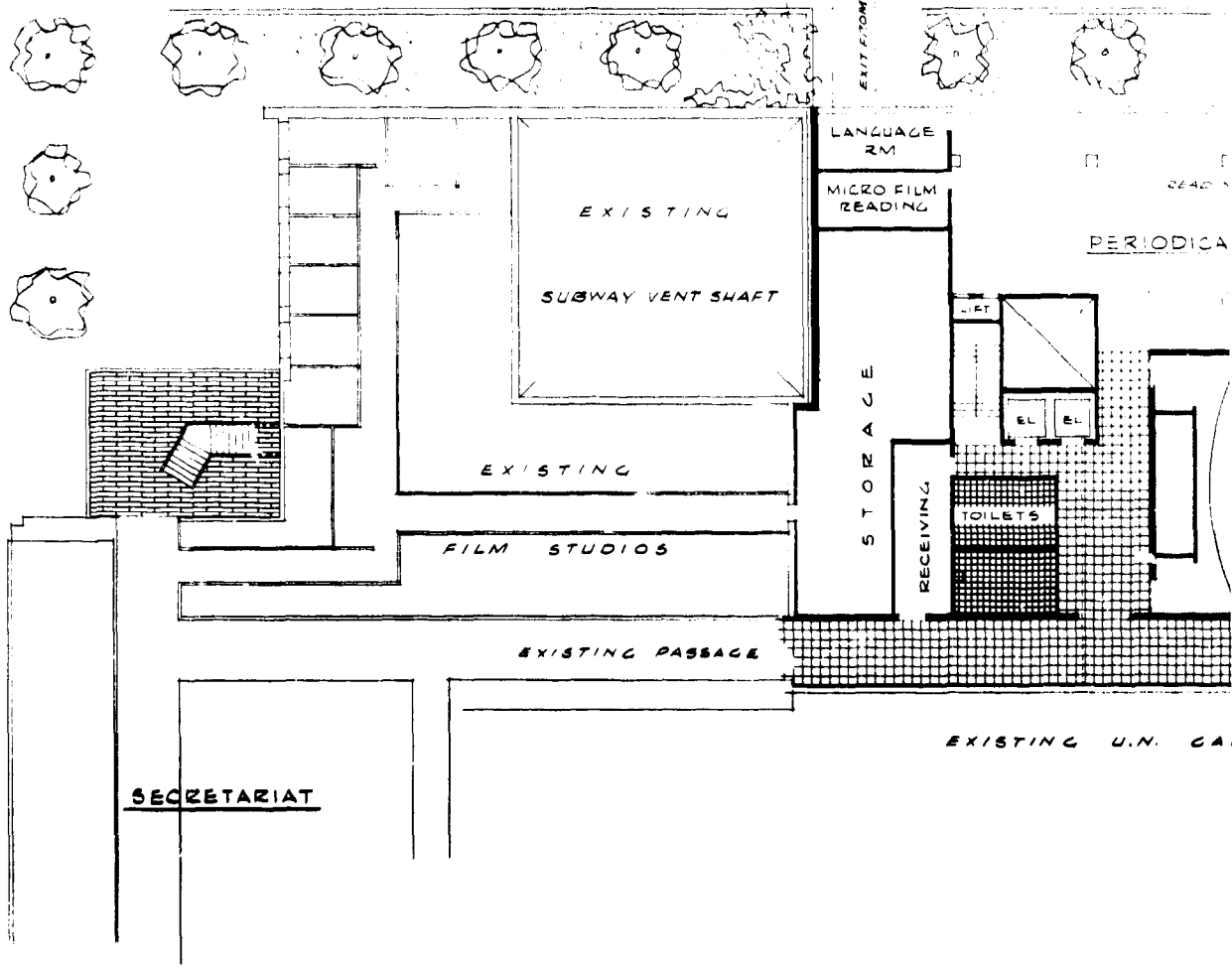
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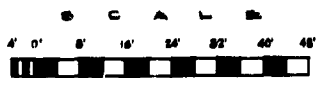
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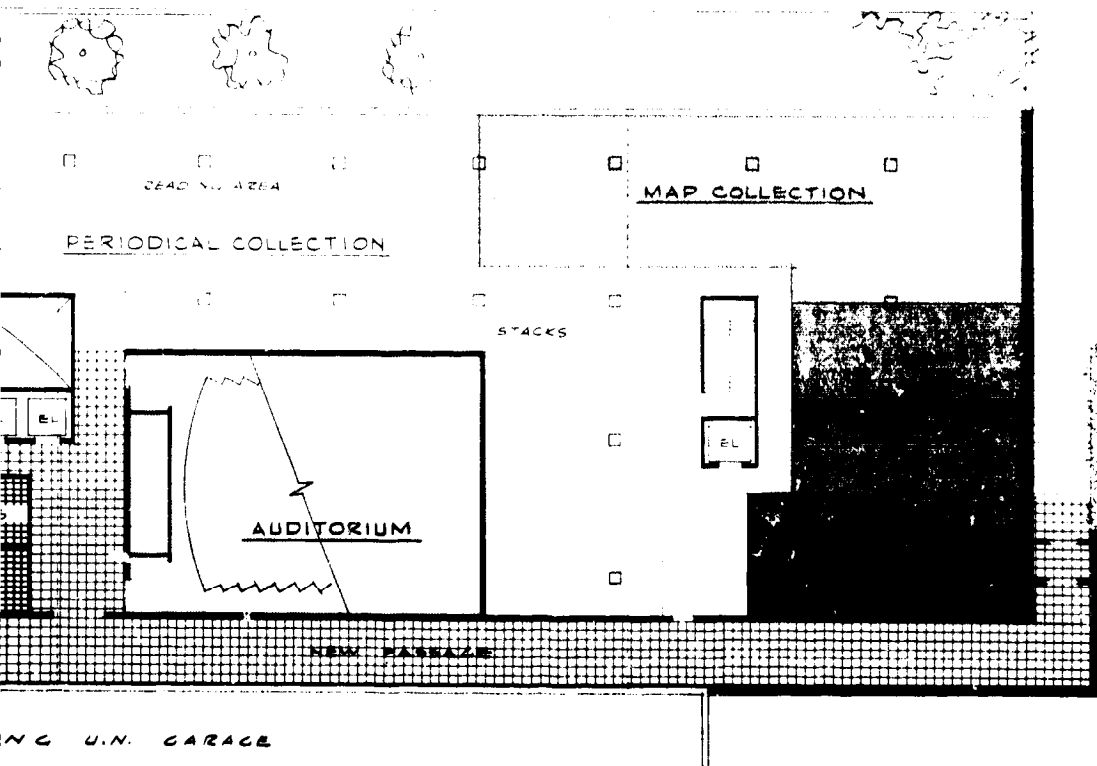
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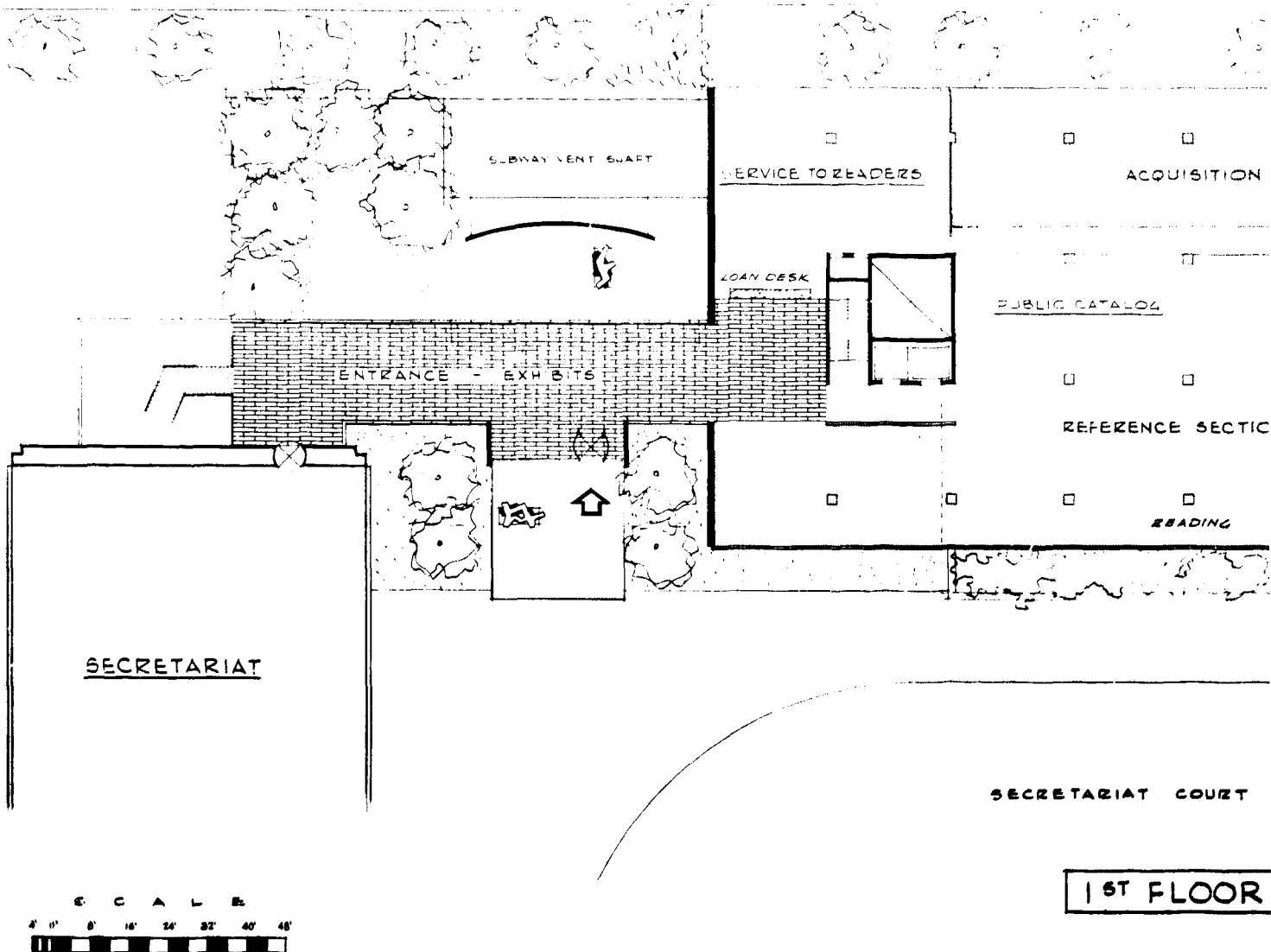
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THE UNITED NATIONS LIBRARY

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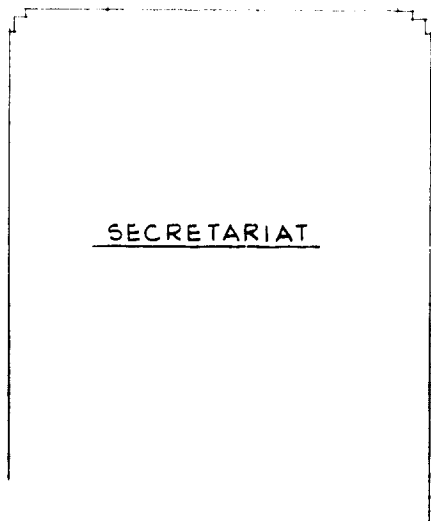
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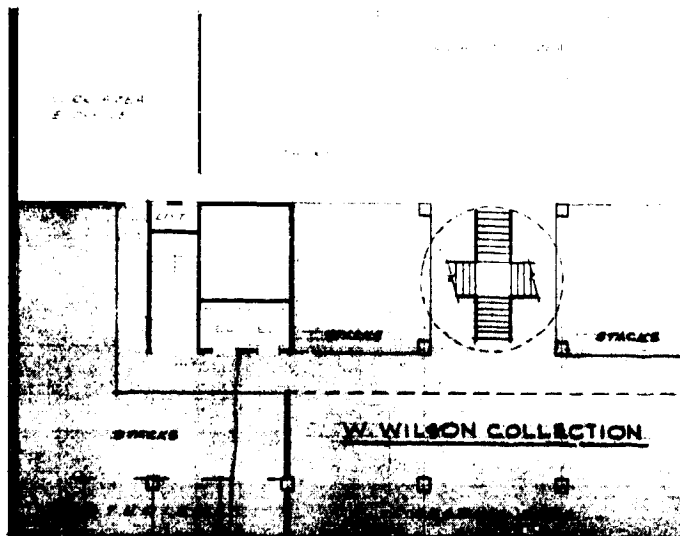
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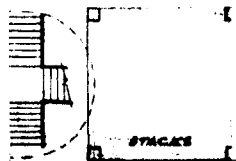
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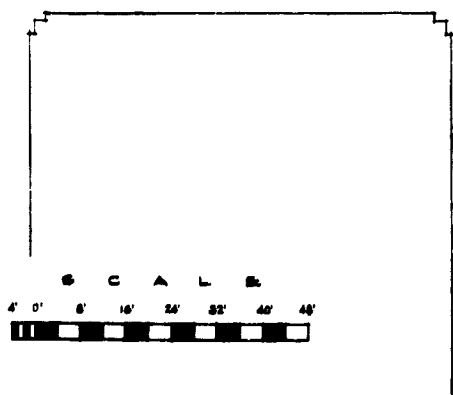
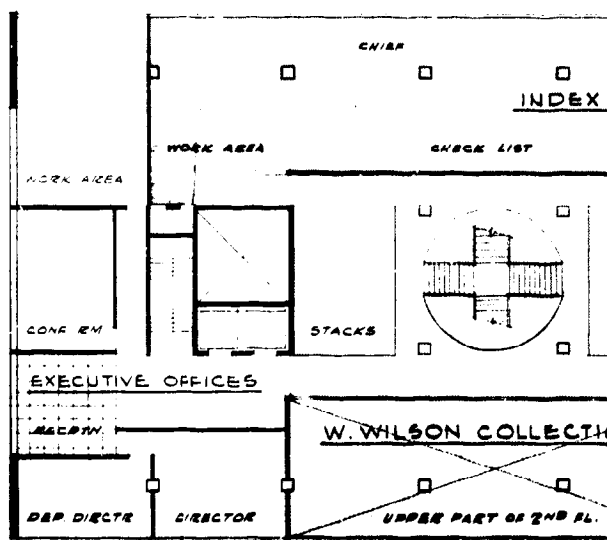
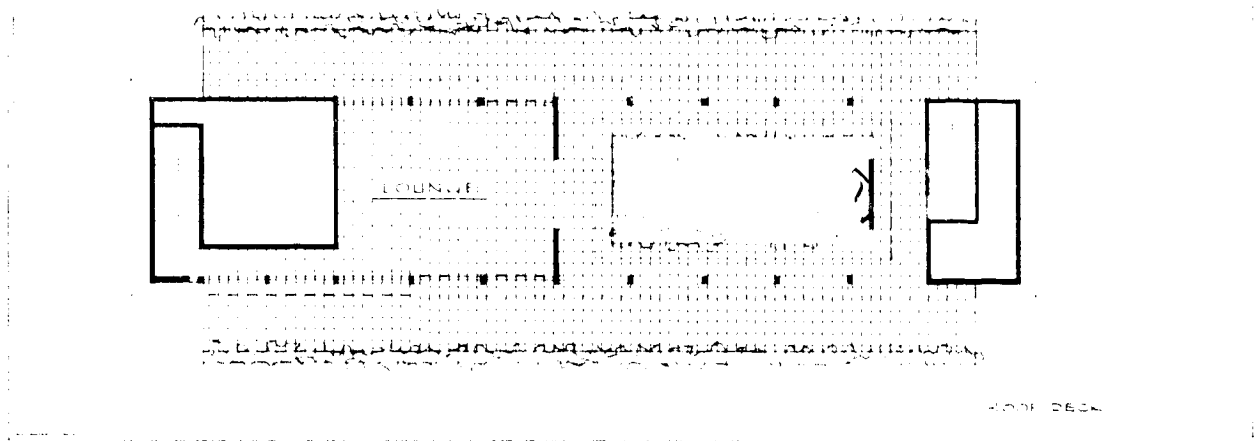
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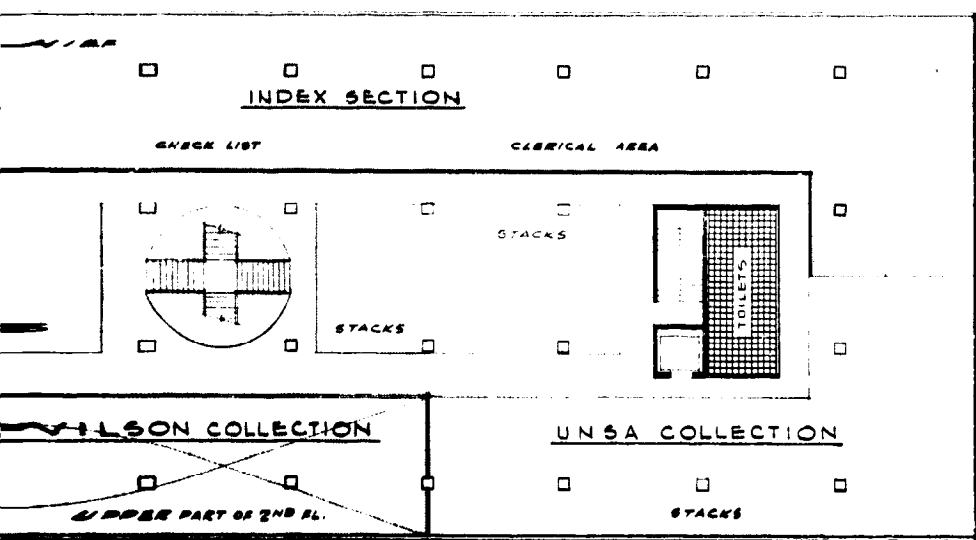
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THE UNITED NATIONS LIBRARY

[PENTHOUSE]



FIRST AVENUE

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LIBRARY

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