ABOUT THE BOOK

For the young colony of Victoria, the 1850s was a time of optimism and hunger for social change. Buoyed by gold-rush wealth and the freedom to create a new kind of society, key thinkers in government, arts and industry set about creating an ambitious urban vision for Melbourne as a modern city combining the best of old Europe with the spirit of progress, democracy and opportunity for all.

One of the grandest innovations at this time was the building of Australia’s first public library in 1853. The Melbourne Public Library (as it was then known) was envisaged as a pantheon of the world’s knowledge, open to any citizen over the age of 14 – provided they had clean hands – and offering free access to self-education unmatched by any other public institution in the nation.

Building a new world: a history of the State Library of Victoria 1853–1913 traces the story of the Library and the other institutions that came to share its landmark site – the art gallery, design schools and museums. This colourful tale of a century of institutional and architectural reform provides a fascinating insight into the development of Melbourne as Australia’s cultural capital.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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BUILDING A NEW WORLD
A HISTORY OF THE STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA 1853–1913

HARRIET EDQUIST
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The State Library of Victoria was the first of a number of cultural institutions to have shared this site in the city of Melbourne that now takes up an entire block. The Melbourne Public Library, as it was then called, and the museum, gallery and art schools, were established in the mid-19th century by a group of colonial liberals including judge Sir Redmond Barry and architect Joseph Reed. They aimed to create a civic centre that was secular, democratic and enlightened, offering free access to self-improvement through learning.

Since 1913 the Library’s domed reading room has been the symbolic heart of our great institution. The Dome Centenary in 2013 has provided the opportunity to celebrate the scholarship, creativity and learning that this icon has inspired for generations of Victorians. It has also provided the opportunity to undertake new research into the Library’s history, to acknowledge our achievements, and to tell our story in new ways. In this spirit, this is the first ebook to be published by the Library.

This book coincides with the Dome Centenary exhibition in the Library’s Keith Murdoch Gallery, *Free, secular and democratic: building the public Library 1853–1913*, curated by Harriet Edquist, Professor of Architectural History at RMIT and Director of RMIT Design Archives. Both the book and the exhibition trace the first 60 years of the State Library of Victoria from its founding in 1853 to the opening of the magnificent domed reading room in 1913.
During this year-long program of activities the Library awarded a number of special Dome Centenary Fellowships for projects that explore and imagine the dome’s potential as a creative space. Many Library visitors saw the beautiful exhibition, *Enchanted dome: the Library and imagination*, curated by Ann Carew, which showcased representations of the dome in art and literature from the 1950s to today. There have also been special acquisitions, events and donations that have demonstrated the key role the Library plays in the cultural life of Victoria. We would like to thank exhibition sponsor Bates Smart Architects, Dome Centenary sponsor Cabcharge, and members of the State Library of Victoria Foundation for their support.

We hope you will be inspired by the creativity, ambition and grandeur evoked in this history of our Library.

Sue Roberts
Chief Executive Officer and State Librarian
November 2013
INTRODUCTION
This photograph was taken just after the completion of the domed reading room in 1913.
In the year 2000, for the first time in 150 years, the State Library of Victoria, formerly the Melbourne Public Library, became the sole occupant of the site bounded by Swanston, La Trobe, Russell, and Little Lonsdale streets. For most of its history the Library had shared the site with the National Gallery of Victoria and its schools of painting and design, the Museum of Victoria and, from 1866 to 1875, three Exhibitions. But in 1968 the National Gallery moved to a new building in St Kilda Road; in 1992 the applied science and technology collections of the Museum relocated to the former pumping station site at Spotswood and were renamed Scienceworks, while in 2000 the remaining museum collections opened in Carlton Gardens as Melbourne Museum. How all these institutions, now flourishing happily in their own very large, custom-designed buildings, came to occupy one site for so long is a fascinating tale.

For 60 years, from 1853 to 1913 these cultural institutions, together with the three Exhibitions housed among them, not only shared a building, or series of buildings, but also an ideology and intellectual history.

The story begins in the early 1850s with the decision to build a free public library in Melbourne. The free public library was one of the great inventions of the 19th century. It developed simultaneously in the United States of America (Peterborough, New Hampshire in 1833 and Boston, Massachusetts in 1854) and in England (Salford in 1850 and Manchester in 1852). Within this context the Melbourne Public Library, legislated for in January 1853 and founded in 1854, was very early indeed.

Intended to provide the working people of the colony with useful information and the skills needed to build a prosperous future, the Melbourne Public Library was the centrepiece of what came to be known as the ‘Institution’, a combination of library, art gallery, gallery schools, industrial and technological museum, natural history museum, and intercolonial exhibitions. From the beginning it was based on the model of the South Kensington Museum in London, now the Victoria and Albert
Museum, which, under the leadership of Superintendent and Director Sir Henry Cole and with the blessing of Queen Victoria’s husband Prince Albert, gathered together on one site London’s applied art and science collections as educational resources for the training of artisans.

The cultural institutions housed on the Swanston Street site have all been the subject of extended studies. A straightforward chronological outline of the development of the Institution was first provided by its fifth Chief Librarian, Edmund La Touche Armstrong, in The book of the Public Library published in 1906 and, with Robert Douglass Boys, in the sequel volume in 1932. The complicated history of the buildings that occupy the site was unravelled in Lovell Chen’s 2009 conservation management plan. All of the major figures discussed here have biographical entries in the Australian dictionary of biography and several including Redmond Barry, Edward La Trobe Bateman, Bernard Hall and Baldwin Spencer have been the subject of biographies or major studies.

By contrast, this account of the first 60 years of the Institution is a broad survey of major events, people and collections. In trying to understand the institutional history of this period in Melbourne I have benefitted from both Stuart Macintyre’s study of colonial liberalism and Melbourne’s radical intellectual roots, and Kathleen Fennessy’s study of colonial Melbourne’s institutions between 1860 and 1880. However, I have approached the task from the point of view of an architectural historian and this has thrown a rather different light on everything. It is a cultural survey framed by architecture.

Of the major figures who appear here, Joseph Reed, the architect of the first Library building and director of the architectural practice that designed each subsequent phase for 60 years, is the least known, understood or acclaimed. Although recognised now by local architectural historians as Melbourne’s most successful 19th-century architect in private practice and probably its most influential, Reed is still bereft of a
Building a new world

published biography. George Tibbits and Miles Lewis have added much to our meagre knowledge of him in their chapters in Philip Goad’s history of Bates Smart architects, the firm Reed founded and which still flourishes today. But Reed deserves to be better understood, and one aim of this study is to review his contribution to Melbourne through an account of his work at the Public Library.

It is impossible, however, to consider Reed at the Library without coming across Edward La Trobe Bateman whose innovative design work, influenced by the great British design reformer Owen Jones, was unearthed from complete obscurity by architectural historian Anne Neale. Thinking about Reed and Bateman at the Institution led to larger questions about the state of design discourse in Melbourne in the mid-19th century, particularly discourse around design reform. Fortunately this issue also lay at the heart of the South Kensington experiment, so the two themes of my narrative – the institutional and the architectural – neatly came together.

Like Knight and Kerr’s Parliament House (1856 ff.) and JJ Clark’s Treasury Building (1858 ff.) Reed’s Public Library bestowed on Melbourne a knowledgeable and confident essay in European civic architecture and suggested a vision for the future development of the city. However, its architectural development rapidly became a work in progress, forever buffeted by competing demands and inadequate funding. Twice the architects issued beautifully rendered master plans in an effort to instil in the government some ambition for the Public Library’s successful completion as a coherent urban site, but to no avail. Yet, from 1853 to 1913 all the major buildings that exist today on the block bounded by Swanston, La Trobe, Russell and Little Lonsdale streets were completed. It was the task of the next 100 years to fill in the gaps, provide frontages where they were missing and smooth spatial anomalies in the internal spaces with links between the eastern and western buildings.
The logic that kept the whole thing together and propelled the trustees even as late as 1899 to add a national museum to the crowded site was the logic of the South Kensington Museum. This logic, as Michael Conforti has noted, directed that London museum’s ‘educational objectives towards broad audiences in a systematic and engagingly useful way’, the first museum in the world to do so:

With its historical roots in the liberal political philosophy of the nineteenth century and its early programs evolving from the publicly directed commercial spectacles that were the international exhibitions of the time, the V&A (or the South Kensington Museum, as it was called until 1899) represented a historical paradigm for public engagement through creative educational programming.  

Redmond Barry’s role in guiding the Institution’s formative years in Melbourne and shaping its character from 1853 until his death in 1880 had strong parallels with Henry Cole, parallels that were probably cultivated as Barry corresponded with Cole and cast an often envious but also judgemental eye over his growing empire in London. Indeed what is of interest is that Melbourne did not lag behind London, but developed its library and museum complex more or less in tandem with the London model, albeit on a less ambitious and more pragmatic colonial scale. Moreover Barry’s death did not change the trustees’ view of the purpose of the Institution whose fortunes they guided, and it continued to provide, in the centre of Melbourne, the possibilities of access to education to all the public on a scale and with a richness no other public institution here could match.

At the conclusion of his study of the high-principled liberals David Syme, George Higinbotham and Charles Pearson and their efforts to
realise a liberal polity in Victoria, Stuart Macintyre identified what he saw as a distinctly Melbourne intellectual tradition:

The city and its culture is portrayed as doubly Victorian, the product of expectations of progress and improvement, filial in its respect for past achievement, earnest and didactic in tone, meliorist in outlook, believing in enlightenment and happiness for all. It is a tradition that asserts the validity of social and political engagement, and the capacity of its bearers to articulate and organize for the good of the whole. The ideological intensity finds expression in journals, parties, societies and clubs, for in Melbourne ideas are spurs to action.\textsuperscript{7}

Macintyre casts the Public Library in its first decades of existence as somewhat alien to this tradition, a ‘fiefdom’ of Barry and a ‘monument to received good taste’.\textsuperscript{8} The notion that Barry’s influence at the Library was conservative and hindering fails to recognise that the ideas he brought to the Institution were those of the progressive 19th century, a fact recognised by his fellow trustees, colleagues and the public. Indeed, the Institution’s purpose from the outset was framed by those very liberal philosophical traditions that Macintyre’s study showed lie at the heart of Melbourne’s intellectual tradition.

This virtual 3D reconstruction depicts the evolution of the library site from 1856 to 2013. It was developed using collection material from the State Library of Victoria, Public Record Office Victoria, the Bates, Smart & McCutcheon Pty Ltd Collection at the University of Melbourne Archives, and information from the conservation management plan by Lovell Chen Architects & Heritage Consultants.
THE EARLY YEARS
1853–70
De Gruchy & Leigh, lithographers, *The Public Library, Melbourne*, c. 1858, colour lithograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H3949
No-one knows who first suggested a public library for Melbourne, but the idea must have occurred to numerous people when the colony obtained separation from New South Wales in 1851, a condition it had desired almost from the time of European occupation in 1834 and certainly by 1840. The discovery of gold, together with a large immigrant population, gave the means and reason to lay down the cultural infrastructure for a future city. It would have seemed obvious that the small pre-gold town, suddenly filled with tens of thousands of immigrants, would be rapidly transformed and that its ambitious urban grid plan laid down by Robert Hoddle in 1837 could now be adorned with public buildings commensurate with a colonial capital. On 20 January 1853 the Executive Council of Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe passed an appropriation Act containing provision for a public library. For a building, £10,000 was granted and for the purchase of books, £3000. On 20 July by a proclamation in the Government Gazette, La Trobe appointed five trustees to guide the Library’s fortunes: William Stawell, Redmond Barry, James Palmer, Hugh Childers and David McArthur. Of the five Barry was the senior trustee and chair of the board and soon ‘became the recognized Head of the institution [who] worked zealously, judiciously, and indefatigably for its advancement the whole of his life’.

Barry’s history is well known and he enjoys something of an iconic status at the State Library of Victoria today, his bronze statue still guarding the entrance. Born in Ireland, he studied law and was admitted to the Irish Bar in 1838. He arrived in Melbourne in 1839 and practised as a lawyer.
An open architectural competition was announced offering prizes of £150 and £75 for the two best designs.

successfully enough to be elevated to the new bench of the Supreme Court of Victoria in January 1852. Barry is best known for his indefatigable enthusiasm for every social, cultural and philanthropic activity he could possibly be involved in – the Melbourne Mechanics Institute (later the Athenaeum), Melbourne Club, Melbourne Hospital, Philharmonic Society, Philosophical Institute and Royal Society of Victoria. He was first Chancellor of the University of Melbourne as well as chair of the Library’s trustees. He made things happen.

Having secured funds and approval for their role in its direction, the trustees set about securing a suitable place to build the Library and the site bounded by La Trobe, Swanston and Lonsdale streets, adjacent to the Melbourne Hospital and opposite the Supreme Court and gaol, was approved by the government on 17 October 1853. An open architectural competition was announced offering prizes of £150 and £75 for the two best designs. On 16 January 1854 Joseph Reed’s Italianate design was declared the winner and William Burgoyne’s neat Greek revival scheme runner up.¹¹

Percival Ball, Sir Redmond Barry, 1886–87, bronze, State Library of Victoria forecourt

The statue of Sir Redmond Barry was erected by public inscription and unveiled on 23 August 1887. It was modelled by James Gilbert and completed by Percival Ball after Gilbert’s death in 1885.

F Harding, Surveyor General’s Office of Victoria, Reserve for Public Library laid before Victorian Executive Council and approved 1853. State Library of Victoria, Australian Manuscripts Collection, MS 13020. The site was bounded by La Trobe, Swanston and Little Lonsdale streets but did not yet extend to Russell Street.
Joseph Reed, the architect of the Library and close colleague of Redmond Barry for almost four decades, is far less well known than Barry, yet Reed ought to be known as one of the pioneers of Melbourne’s intellectual tradition.12

The son of Nicholas and Amy Reed, Joseph was born in 1823 in Constantine, Cornwall.13 His was a ‘good family’ and his early education at Helston Grammar School under the direction of Derwent Coleridge, son of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, emphasised languages and art which may account for Reed’s facility in both these areas; he may also have developed there his interests in palaeontology and botany. His skills were sufficiently recognised for a commission in 1842 to draw the large parish survey map of Tregothnan, Cornwall, the distinctive quality of which was its inclusion of a small landscape with human and animal figures and other local details.14

Reed’s education was sound enough to prepare him for articles in the busy London office of architect Thomas Bellamy where he clearly received excellent professional training. In the late 1840s he returned to Cornwall to take up the position of clerk and architect to George Henry Boscawen, the second Earl of Falmouth at the Tregothnan estate near Truro, famous for its botanical gardens and arboretum. This position
had been held by London architect Lewis Vulliamy whom Reed either replaced or represented as his contractor.

The nature of Reed’s work for Tregothnan is unknown but when Boscawen died in August 1852, the *Cornish England Newspaper* noted that ‘one of the latest additions made to the house at Tregothnan was a room for the reception of his splendid library’. This may well have been work Reed supervised and perhaps designed. The library housed Boscawen’s collection of musical works, one of the most extensive in England, the Earl’s musical taste being ‘of the most exquisite kind, and among his varied accomplishments he numbered that of performing on the violin in a style which rendered him *facile princeps* among English amateurs’. A love of music is something Reed shared with his employer.

Reed left England on the death of Boscawen in 1852. He was in Melbourne by the middle of 1853 with letters of introduction and no doubt his connection with the Earl, together with his own broad sympathies, facilitated his entry into the colony’s professional elite. By 1856 he was a member of the Garrick Club founded the year before by those interested in the theatre, and a decade later was heavily involved in Melbourne’s music culture as an associate of the Victorian Musical Association; he became a member of the Royal Society of Victoria having designed their new building in 1859. Reed was also active in his own professional body being an elected member of the first Victorian Institute of Architects in 1856 and first president of its successor in 1871.

As a new arrival in Melbourne, Reed joined forces briefly with fellow immigrants John George Knight and Thomas Kemp on their competition entry for the design of Government House. Reed soon branched out on his own and on 1 November 1853 submitted his entry to the Public Library competition. His success there was followed by success in competitions for the Bank of New South Wales in Collins Street, the Wesleyan Church in Lonsdale Street and the Geelong Town Hall. While the Library design and
Reed was clearly not only a gifted architect but also an efficient businessman who knew how to run a successful professional office.

The Town Hall were similar in many respects, the Bank demonstrated Reed's familiarity with the more ornate style of the Venetian Renaissance and the Wesleyan church with the intricacies of the Gothic Revival. Reed's ability to work in both the Classical and Gothic modes with equal conviction and originality would remain one of the strengths of his practice throughout the 19th century.

From these competitions Reed began to establish useful client networks, for example, Library trustee Redmond Barry for whom he designed a house at Carlton Gardens. Barry was also Chancellor of the University of Melbourne and Reed became the architect for this institution in 1858, a privileged position his firm enjoyed for 50 years. Reed was clearly not only a gifted architect but also an efficient businessman who knew how to run a successful professional office. Evidence of his labour still defines certain areas in Melbourne such as Collins Street with the Town Hall, Scots Church and St Michael's Church, the University of Melbourne, and Trades Hall, the Royal Society and Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton. In 1862 Reed brought Frederick Barnes, who had signed the drawings for the Public Library, into a partnership named Reed & Barnes which flourished for the next 20 years.
Joseph Reed, architect, *The Public Library, Melbourne*, 1854, lithograph with tint stone, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H3948
Governor Sir Charles Hotham laid the foundation stone for the Melbourne Public Library on 3 July 1854. On that occasion, James Palmer, Speaker of the Legislative Council, delivered a speech on the role of education in forming civil society; the library was the ‘quarry’ in which the working population would acquire the knowledge and expertise to participate in the new industrialised world, transforming scientific theories into practice. Steam power and the electric telegraph had ‘annihilated time and space’ and Palmer was alive to the immense challenges facing the colony to participate in this new industrialised and globalised economy; broad education of the working population was one obvious answer. Hotham in his turn observed that the public library annihilated class distinctions and provided one of the important spaces in the developing city where the possibilities of a democratic civil society could be negotiated.

For the Melbourne Public Library was to be free, as the Argus noted at its opening in February 1856, ‘it is probably as yet by no means sufficiently known that any well-conducted person has now nothing to do but walk up the stairs and take down the books he wants, conditionally only on his replacing them unharmed when he has done with them’. The reporter continued:
We particularly approve of the liberty which is given to visitors to the Melbourne Library to pass from shelf to shelf and take down any volumes they require, without the troublesome interposition of librarians or messengers. We have heard one or two persons express the opinion that it is scarcely safe to grant this right indiscriminately to all and sundry; but we entertain no fear on the subject ourselves, and experience is every day showing that the public is a more trustworthy and rational animal than it was formerly the fashion to suppose, and does not require an array of keepers to prevent it from tearing and destroying its own property.²³

The building which housed these aspirations to civic virtue was an elegant Palladian structure illustrated in a lithograph of 1854. Like the Geelong Town Hall it was adorned with a portico to the front, a feature that in Melbourne was almost unique to Reed’s practice. Reed’s competition drawings do not appear to have survived and it has generally been supposed that no early records of the building remain apart from this lithograph produced in his office.²⁴

But there are two letters from Reed to Barry that throw some light on the building’s early progress and more importantly, Reed’s first and subsequent design intentions. In a hastily written note accompanying his

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Reed sought to impress on the chair of the trustees the economy and flexibility of his design

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competition entry in November 1853, Reed sought to impress on the chair of the trustees the economy and flexibility of his design. He pointed out that the composition of the walls would be good rubble bluestone, cement plastered; the Corinthian capitals in the Library would be framed up in timber and plastered while the roof would be covered in plumbing zinc. On a similarly economical plan the ground floor would be devoted to offices and by placing them under the same roof as the Library, money would be saved. In addition a picture gallery could be inserted on the stair landing. The choice of pavilion design was also clearly based on its capacity for extension without loss of its integrity.25 It was all very practical and blunt.

Joseph Reed, letter to Redmond Barry with an estimate of expenses, 1853, manuscript; reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 84/P0000, Unit 1
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The general plan is a parallelogram, 150 feet by 200 feet. At the Centre there is a projecting portico in front, and a grand Stair Case 45 x 40 in the rear.

The Architecture is Classic, the Ionic order being Carried out after the best examples. In the exterior order, Pedestal has been followed and in the interior the Samoscy Cup and entablature have been adopted as most suitable.

The Exterior Order is on a Centuried, the Exterior Order stands on a Pedestal, and is surrounded by an Altar, with Balustrades. An Acanthus Portico with Balustrades.

Under the Portico is the Principal Entrance, a door which opens into the Vestibule. On each side are doors leading into the right and left are doors leading into the Museum, and to the rooms for the Committee Rooms & Offices.

The entrance door is an Arch, leading to the Grand Stair Case, which consists of one grand flight.
A year later when building was well underway Reed wrote a very different letter to Barry explaining his design in more sophisticated architectural terms, focusing on its classical pedigree, geometric proportion and discerning use of the style:

The general plan is a parallelogram 150 feet by 50 feet. In the centre there is a projecting portico in front, and a grand staircase 45 x 40 in the rear. The architecture is classic, the Ionic order being carried out after the best examples. In the exterior order, Vignola has been followed and in the interior the Scamozzi Cap[ital] and entablature have been adapted as most suitable. The exterior order stands on a continued pedestal, and is surmounted by an Attic with balusters. An Hexastyle Portico surmounted by a pediment (the tympanum of which might at a future day be filled with appropriate sculpture) occupies the centre of the front – It is approached by flights of steps, with pedestals for statues or lamps standing in front. The windows have cornices, pediments and other appropriate dressings.26

In this scheme Reed positioned the stairs so they led directly under the portico, creating a strong central axis. In the 1854 lithograph they were parallel to the front elevation. The change was no doubt a response to the urban site which may not have been revealed to the competitors. Once the site was chosen, Reed re-calibrated his design to account for its Swanston Street setting. Inside the building more changes had taken place.
Under the portico is the principal entrance door which opens into the vestibule – On the right and left are doors leading into museums, NB if required these rooms can be subdivided into committee rooms and offices. On the side opposite to the entrance door is an arch leading to the grand stairs which consists of one grand flight to the first landing where it divides with two flights. The top landing is continued around and forms a handsom[e] gallery – well adapted for the display of paintings.

Having ascended the stairs one entered the Library:

From the landing a door opens into the Library itself, which is about 145 x 48 feet within the walls ... The room is decorated with 44 Ionic columns and is thereby apparently divided into three compartments – a centre, and two wings – The centre is made a principal feature being lighted by a handsom[e] lantern supported on twelve columns – In the wings it is proposed to introduce lights in the cove of the ceiling. 27

This was a further change from the original 1853 letter which specified the Corinthian order for the Library. The change was purely architectural. At the beginning of his letter Reed had distinguished between the treatment of the Ionic in Venetian architect Vincenzo Scamozzi’s L’idea dell’architettura universale (1615) and in Bolognese architect Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola’s Regola deli cinque ordini d’architettura (Canon of the five orders of architecture) published in 1562. This fairly abstruse distinction relates to the treatment of the volutes on the capital. Vignola’s volutes lay in a single plane but Scamozzi’s version produced a perfectly four-sided Ionic capital. Scamozzi’s Ionic became popular in Britain, the Netherlands and the United States of America where it adorns the White House. Perhaps in Reed’s mind it was identified with the traditions of democracy. 28
The Ionic capital designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi from *L’idea dell’architettura universale* (1615), reproduced from a facsimile published Ringwood, 1964, State Library of Victoria, SF 720 SCA5
The ground in front of the building is 48' broad and 300' long, and requires 7 rows. The side ground 30' x 240', requiring 5 rows. The plants chiefly to be controlled will be:

Crateagus Oxycantha
Arbeia u. Serrata Mult.
Morula
Nuo
Nile
Swainsona Loranthus
Cassia u. several Priu
Pirus
Aceraceus Arris
Populus nigra
Gleditschia Triacanthos
Robinia Pseudararica
Pitteliana sev. 70.
Grevenia
Hakia

and many more kinds.

I have the honor to be,

The honor
Judge Harry.

your obedient servant,

Fred. Mueller
In May 1855 Barry requested the Government Botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller, to supply plants for the garden to the front and side of the Library. Mueller replied on 16 May with a list of specimens the Botanical Gardens could supply and the quantity needed; included was a heterogeneous assortment of exotics and native trees and shrubs, from roses and pines to grevilleas and hakeas. However it is not clear whether this planting went ahead and in subsequent decades the forecourt was the least resolved aspect of the Library site.
The Library was completed in three stages: the central portion opened on 11 February 1856, the south wing on 24 May 1859 and the north wing in December 1864. As seen in a lithograph by De Gruchy & Leigh it was a handsome two-storey building, faced in sandstone from Kangaroo Point, Tasmania, on a bluestone base.

The order of the portico had changed from Vignola's Ionic to fluted Corinthian and from hexastyle to octastyle and the elevation was flanked by projecting pavilions, both changes to the 1854 design. Recessed bays connected these elements and were articulated by a giant Corinthian order that alternated between freestanding columns and pilasters, giving the facade a liveliness and sculptural depth not apparent in the earlier scheme. Three months after the opening of the south wing, a visiting German medical student, Hermann Beckler, described the interior with its museum-like display on the ground floor:
Coming from the street you open a gate in the surrounding wall. After a few steps you come to a temporary wooden staircase; a few more steps, then over another wooden staircase and after a few last steps you reach the door of the building ... From the main door you enter a large entrance hall, plain in style, roomy, clean and bright from the abundant gas lighting. On the walls I saw, in passing, large display cases with illustrations of natural history subjects ... From the entrance hall you come to a spacious staircase with wide stone steps covered, like the hall, with mats. A printed notice asks the visitor to take off his hat before entering the library ... and to enter his name on the list of visitors. The walls of the staircase are covered with charts, statistical tables and notices relevant to library visits. On the ledges of the wall are a few simple arrangements of Aboriginal arms and implements ... One signs one’s name, takes off one’s hat and goes in. And there before one is a large library.29

The lithograph by de Gruchy & Leigh was contemporary with a flurry of schemes which represented the trustees’ plan for an integrated, multi-institutional complex on a site extending to Russell Street. In February 1858 the land containing the Swanston Street frontage was finally granted to the trustees and in August Barry wrote to the Chief Secretary asking that the remainder of the block of land to Russell Street be handed over for a Museum of Natural History, Geology, Science and Art. This land was appropriated for the trustees in 1860 although the actual deed of conveyance was not executed until 1864.30
On 12 May 1859, two weeks before the opening of the south wing, the *Argus* published a description of the trustees’ proposed master plan. Although Reed later modified the plan in his ambitious 1860 scheme, this earlier version provides an interesting insight into the developmental process of the library–museum complex. The intention was to finish the existing building facing Swanston Street as a square, with the lateral pavilions connected by a two-storey ‘arcade’ across the east elevation, the ground floor for works of art, offices and a school of arts while the upper range was to hold the extension of the Library.

A second building was then proposed for the western part of the site facing Russell Street and then occupied by police barracks. It was to be connected with the first building by a stair hall on two levels, taking account of the fall of the land from Russell to Swanston streets. Much of the description is unclear but the general outline provides for another square building comprising separate pavilions around a quadrangle. The entrance hall from Russell Street was to be covered by a large dome. The ground floor rooms around the quadrangle were to be ‘solely devoted to the students in the schools of design &c., the residences of the teachers and other offices’, while the building facing Russell Street was for a museum.31
The upper floor, however, was the great space, devoted to the picture and sculpture galleries. There was to be one large and one smaller gallery on each side. The large gallery was to face the courtyard and the smaller one the street, and they were to extend right around the courtyard’s north, east and south sides creating an enormous gallery space, ‘on the same principle as the celebrated one in the Uffizi Palace at Florence’. The reference here to Florentine painter, architect and writer Giorgio Vasari’s cortile at the Uffizi suggests that the galleries were to be grand and urban in character. Not surprisingly Vasari’s famous historical work *Lives of the most eminent painters, sculptors, and architects* (1550, 1568) was among the early books in the Library’s collection. Along the south gallery would be paintings, and the north would hold sculpture. The author of this article (undoubtedly Barry) concludes in an effusion of enthusiasm:

> Should this scheme be ever carried out, we may safely say that not only will there be nothing equal to it in the Southern Hemisphere, but that even in the most celebrated capitals of the Old World few palaces for the reception of works of art will be found to surpass it. The whole plan is worthy of a great nation, and will confer lasting honor upon the designer, Mr. J. Reed, the architect, under whose direction the library is being built.33

Barry was right, for even the South Kensington Museum at this time comprised a group of unrelated buildings unencumbered by a master plan, and had this colonial project gone ahead it would have transformed Melbourne forever. A few months later, after Reed had made further adjustments, a view of the proposed new library, gallery and museums complex was painted by Russian-born Swiss artist Nicholas Chevalier. The Swanston Street frontage was that illustrated by De Gruchy & Leigh, behind which a matching slightly smaller block with extended end pavilions...
The early years 1853–70

Below: Nicholas Chevalier, *The Public Library*, 1860, watercolour, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H27931

Bottom: Joseph Reed, architect, Melbourne Public Library ground plan, 1859, ink on paper, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H2010.69/9
was to house the galleries and museums. The whole site was dominated by a huge Renaissance-style dome and lantern on a tall drum, probably modelled on Michelangelo’s St Peter’s Basilica in Rome and Wren’s St Paul’s Cathedral in London.

Where the *Argus* scheme described a spectacular cortile adjacent to a smaller domed entrance hall, the revised scheme was organised around a domed central space which appears to be largely ceremonial. The idea of placing a domed space within a courtyard may have been inspired by the British Museum where a new circular reading room was built in the courtyard of the building between 1854 and 1857; certainly the London institution provided a useful precedent for combining a library and a museum. On the other hand, the plan of a central circular space within a rectangle has a closer precedent in KF Schinkel’s unbuilt design of 1835 for the State Library in Berlin and his Altes Museum of 1823–30.34

The completion of the south wing of the Queen’s Reading Room in 1859 was of sufficient importance in Melbourne’s cultural universe that Barry commissioned photographer Barnett Johnstone to photograph the interior.

The completion of the south wing of the Queen’s Reading Room in 1859 was of sufficient importance in Melbourne’s cultural universe that Barry commissioned photographer Barnett Johnstone to photograph the interior. As the photographer later recalled:
The day was fixed, and Sir Redmond, the Attorney-General, the Mayor of Melbourne, and one or two more, were present. The Chief Librarian (at the far end of the table) and his assistants and some workmen were placed at the table, and told that they must sit perfectly still for six minutes. The gentlemen accompanied me to the ‘dark room’, a cellar in which I had put my things, and there, on my knees, for there was no table, to the astonished delight of my distinguished audience, I developed the negative.35

That workmen were positioned in this historic photograph is interesting. As the construction of the Library was coming to an end Barry had compiled the names of the workmen employed on the building listed under their trades. These representatives of the building trades were the first in the world to strike for, and win, the eight-hour working day in 1856. Fiercely anti-democratic in politics as he was, opposing universal suffrage, the vote by secret ballot and women’s entry into the University, Barry nonetheless recognised the particularly Australian condition of the men who had built his favourite institution, and recorded their names for posterity.

Workmen employed during the construction of Queen’s Hall, listed by trade, 1862, manuscript, State Library of Victoria, Australian Manuscripts Collection, MS13020
Johnson, who had applied unsuccessfully for the position of Chief Librarian, had arrived in Melbourne in 1855, and after working as a journalist and bookseller set up as a dealer in photographic equipment in 1858. He returned to England in 1863, taking his glass plate of this scene with him.

Barnett Johnson (later Johnstone), Queen’s Reading Room, Melbourne Public Library, 1859, albumen silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H3679
In 1860 the ‘newer portion’ of the Library, that is, the central and southern sections, was closed for refurbishment and when it re-opened it was ‘redecorated in a style which has hitherto been unseen in Melbourne’. This new scheme was designed by Edward La Trobe Bateman. Among the ambitious and skilled people who came to Melbourne in the early 1850s were three artists from London associated with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood of painters – Thomas Woolner, Bernhard Smith and Bateman. They arrived in late 1852 and Bateman joined the goldfields expedition of English author William Howitt, with little success.

In Melbourne Bateman was soon accepted into an established circle of pre-gold colonists, which included his cousin Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe, and his wife Sophie, Georgiana McCrae, William Howitt’s brother Godfrey Howitt and his wife Phoebe and later arrivals Nicholas and Caroline Chevalier. Bateman was supported by this circle, La Trobe commissioning views of his cottage ‘Jolimont’ and Phoebe Howitt exhibiting his sketches of Australian scenery along with Woolner’s medallions of La Trobe and her husband, at the 1854 Melbourne Exhibition. The illustrations were intended for a proposed book *The bush homes of Australia* that Bateman never finished.
Barry and Godfrey Howitt were colleagues at the University of Melbourne and presumably it was through their recommendation that Reed and Bateman were appointed to work on the campus design, Bateman on the landscape and systems garden, and Reed on the architecture. Through this circle of professional friends and colleagues Bateman and Reed established their interesting and innovative partnership, working together on a number of projects in the 1850s and 1860s including Wesley Church in Lonsdale Street in 1859. Reed, an architect of broad interests and capacity, was no doubt attracted to Bateman’s design skills and recommended him for the Library in a position not foreshadowed in the original scheme.

Bateman was a gifted designer who worked across a number of disciplines – interior design, book illumination and landscape architecture. He seems to have been formally trained in none of these but developed his skills in various offices, including the engineering firm of his brother JF Bateman, the most eminent hydraulic engineer in Victorian Britain and, most significantly for our story, in the London office of Owen Jones from at least 1847. Jones had trained as an architect in the office of Lewis Vulliamy whose role at Tregothnan in Cornwall Joseph Reed had assumed and this raises the possibility that Reed knew Vulliamy and also Jones; if not he would certainly have been aware of their work.

Owen Jones was one of the leading design theorists of the 19th century, advancing ideas of ornament, flat patterning and architectural polychromy that paralleled the work of radical architect AWN Pugin and art critic John Ruskin and laid the theoretical foundations of the movement for design reform in Britain. As Superintendent of Works for the Crystal Palace Exhibition in Hyde Park, London in 1851 Jones was responsible for the interior decoration and layout of exhibits. An early champion of chromolithography he published luxurious illustrated volumes influenced by medieval and non-Western art and in 1856 published the Grammar of ornament, one of the most important Victorian texts on the theory of
Bateman was a gifted designer who worked across a number of disciplines – interior design, book illumination and landscape architecture.

ornament. Bateman contributed to Jones’s illustrated books and to the *Grammar of ornament*.

According to Mary Howitt, wife of William and mother of Anna Howitt to whom Bateman was briefly engaged, Bateman assisted Jones at the Crystal Palace being ‘endowed with an exquisite feeling and skill in decorative art, extremely rare at the time*.41 Bateman was therefore well aware of current ideas about design reform emanating from the Jones office and the Pre-Raphaelite circle of artists, such as John Millais, whom he counted as friends.

It is not surprising that Bateman looked to this experience for the Library interior, being bold enough to adapt Jones’ design theories to a classical building, using decorative forms and colour schemes found in the *Grammar of ornament*. He adopted a Greek theme comprising stencilled anthemion and key pattern friezes above the capitals and further stencils on the entrance piers to the stalls. The colour scheme of the room was Pompeian which was entirely novel at the time. His efforts were well received by the press, which noted their originality and refinement:
... the general tone of the painting is a light cream colour for the lower portion and a light blue for the ceiling, broken up by introducing gilding and ornaments in Etruscan red. The relievo ornaments, such as moulded guilloches, &c., are picked out in gold and various colours.\textsuperscript{42}

Bateman’s design has been found to still exist today in Queen’s Hall, beneath layers of later paint.

The success of this scheme led to Bateman’s continuing employment as Reed’s interior consultant for the Library, decorating the ground floor exhibition rooms as well as the new building erected for the Intercolonial Exhibition in 1866.

Owen Jones, 
_The grammar of ornament_, Day and Son, London, 1856, State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection, RARESEF 745 J72

Owen Jones published _The grammar of ornament_ in 1856 to improve the taste of contemporary designers by revealing the universal design principles that lay behind all historical ornament.
Paint scrapes taken in Queen’s Hall by Lovell Chen, Architects & Heritage Consultants.
The scrapes reveal traces of the original decorative scheme designed by Edward La Trobe Bateman for Queen’s Hall in 1860. The patterns, found in *The grammar of ornament* by Owen Jones, harmonise with Joseph Reed’s decorative architectural detail, which Bateman also coloured.
CATALOGUE

of

The Public Library,

MELBOURNE,

Victoria.

LONDON:

J. J. GUILLAUME, COLONIAL BOOKSELLER, CHESTER SQUARE.

1854.

Price Half-a-Crown.
The early years 1853–70

As soon as funds for the Library had been approved, Barry set about buying books, as the position of Librarian had not yet been established. He invited the public to furnish the trustees with catalogues and suggestions for purchases but having received no response went ahead and prepared his own list of works he deemed absolutely necessary for civilisation. Organised under several headings they included natural history; architecture; travels and voyages including Cook, Marco Polo and Flinders; speeches from Cicero to Burke; periodicals; atlases; religious works of all faiths; fine arts; classics; botany; biography; reference books; British classics; political economy; metaphysics and logic; commentaries; history chronicles and French works. They were to be the best editions, in perfect or good condition, the best translations, and well bound with the seal of the Library stamped on the outside. Money (£2500) was sent to London and the bookseller JJ Guillaume was appointed as Library supplier. With each consignment of books Guillaume had agreed to prepare a printed list which was published as a small pamphlet, listing the books alphabetically by author and title, so the Library was sure it received all the books it had ordered. In the years before the publication of the Library’s first catalogue in 1862, these lists were useful records of that part of the Library’s collection sourced from Guillaume.
Of particular interest with respect to the reformist ideas that Reed and Bateman brought to the design of the Library’s interiors, was the emphasis on books on contemporary British and European art and design theory. Early acquisitions included works by art critics and theorists John Ruskin, Lord Lindsay, Charles Eastlake and Owen Jones, their German contemporaries Franz Kugler and Gustav Waagen, French colour theorist Michel Chevreul, and Italian art critic Giovanni Cavalcaselle. Scottich designer Christopher Dresser’s *The art of decorative design* and *Studies in design* entered the collection after their publication in 1862 and 1874–76 respectively.

The Library purchased concurrently from other sources. As soon as the funding was settled, Barry lost no time at all in securing one of the Library’s great treasures, John Gould’s *The birds of Australia*. On 15 December 1853, John Wilson, acting as the trustees’ agent, sent an order to Gould for both *The birds of Australia* and *The mammals of Australia*. In 1854 Gould replied that a very fine copy of the *Birds* ‘handsomely bound in green morocco’ had been shipped together with parts 1 and 2 of *Mammals* which was not yet complete. In addition he sent part 1 of the supplement to *Birds*, which included newly discovered species.

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**Barry lost no time at all in securing one of the Library’s great treasures, John Gould’s *The birds of Australia*.**
In 1853 the Library benefited from a donation of books from Charles La Trobe who was leaving the colony and this pattern of purchase and donation continued. The opening of the Library in 1856 brought forth numerous donations including a valuable group of books from Fred Adamson including Labillardière’s *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen*, the first general description of the flora of Australia, published between 1804 and 1807. Indeed botanical history was well represented in these early years, Beckler noting in 1859 that the Library contained the complete works of John Claudius Loudon, George Don’s *General history of the dichlamydeous plants*, Adrien de Jussieu’s *Elements of botany*, Nees von Esenbeck’s *German flora*, William Hooker’s *Journal of botany* and numerous volumes of world flora, and many more volumes on botanical subject matter.

Edward MacArthur, briefly administrator of the colony after the death of Charles Hotham, donated the very timely catalogue of the British section of the 1855 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris while from the Melbourne Society of the New Church came 53 volumes of theological and scientific works by Emmanuel Swedenborg. In 1858, through the services of the French consul, a gift of 100 rare volumes from Napoleon III entered the collection. In addition more specialised works were purchased during the 1850s from booksellers such as William Wescott in Hobart and the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce, which provided numerous Victorian and interstate newspaper files while in 1856 the trustees considered buying directly from French and German booksellers. When the Library opened in February 1856 it was with a collection of 3846 books, for the choice of which Barry was largely responsible.

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**In May 1856 Augustus Tulk was appointed the first Librarian.**

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Melburnians could take off the shelves not only Gould's *The birds of Australia* but important works of art, archaeology and architecture including J Stuart and N Revett's *The antiquities of Athens* (1762), AWN Pugin's *Specimens of Gothic architecture* (1840), JC Loudon's *An encyclopedia of cottage, farm and villa architecture and furniture* (1853) and JJ Winckelmann's *Histoire de l’art chez les anciens* (1803). They could follow the history of Australia in *The voyages of Captain Cook* (1784), M Flinders’ *A voyage to Terra Australis* (1814) and Sir LT Mitchell's *Three expeditions into the interior of eastern Australia* (1839) and place them in a global context with the works of Alexander von Humboldt (1820–29) and JFG de La Perouse's *A voyage round the world* (1799). George Sale's
translation of *The Koran* (1836) and J Shakespear’s *Hindustani-English and English-Hindustani dictionary* (1834) formed the basis of what became a broad collection of dictionaries and religious texts from around the world, while CV Walker and Dr A Lardner’s *A manual of electricity* (1841) covered the sort of useful knowledge the Library was designed to provide. Most of these volumes are still available in the Library today.

In May 1856 Augustus Tulk was appointed the first Librarian. Born into a well-to-do Surrey family of prominent Swedendorgians, a fact which possibly inspired the donation from the Melbourne Society of the New Church, Tulk was educated in England and Europe where he gained a prodigious fluency in European and Scandinavian languages. In July 1854 he arrived in Melbourne on his own brigantine the *General Guyon* loaded with mining machinery but his attempts at quartz mining in the Ballarat area were not successful and he moved to Melbourne. For the remainder of his life he worked tirelessly for the Library, adding to Barry’s somewhat conventional tastes his broader interests, linguistic capacity and deeper knowledge of the book trade.

The layout of the Library was described by Reed in his 1854 letter to Barry: ‘the bookcases are arranged to stand perpendicular to the walls thus forming recesses for lenders [each] will be furnished with a table

Philip Lindo, *Portrait of the Late Mr Augustus Tulk*, 1852, oil on canvas, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H292

Philip Lindo, a London-born artist who studied and worked in Germany until the 1860s, painted this portrait of Augustus Tulk in 1852, when Tulk was living in Dusseldorf.
and seats'. Each recess contained books relating to a particular subject which was written in gold letters on a panel affixed to the outside while subdivisions were printed on smaller labels on the shelves.

The arrangement of the books followed the stall system that had developed in 17th-century English libraries. In Europe the wall system whereby shelves were attached directly to the walls separated by a gallery if necessary, was preferred. The wall system came into England at the Bodleian in Oxford in the early 17th century but the great 18th-century English libraries, such as Wren’s Trinity College Cambridge, kept to the stall system. By the mid-19th century, however, long rooms with wall-shelving and galleries were standard across Britain, Europe and the United States.
of America. William Burgoyne’s competition scheme included wall shelving and it is probable that Reed’s original plan did as well; indeed he used the wall system at the gallery level above the alcoves, thus combining two different library types. Barry no doubt insisted on what was then the old-fashioned stall system as it mirrored the library of his alma mater Trinity College, Dublin. Also following tradition he added the busts of historically prominent men at the end of the stalls, so while the result was formal and dignified, by the 1860s it was also somewhat old-fashioned. Old-fashioned or not, the accessibility of the Library was one of its most alluring features, Beckler noting to his brother Carl back in Germany, ‘An excellent book collection is at the disposal of anyone interested, be he a learned man or the most humble worker ... The best book in the library is too good for nobody’.51

Prepared in 1861, Tulk’s first catalogue, published in 1862, was 27,000 volumes indexed by author. It was a handsome volume with a cover, title page and decorative initials and finals designed by Bateman ‘executed with remarkable skill and taste ... illustrating a spray or flower of a tree, shrub or plant indigenous to Victoria’, the first such book published in Australia.53

Bateman’s classical friezes can be seen above the Ionic capitals and on the piers at the entrance of the alcoves.
Building a new world

He was a pioneer in the use of native plants in design as Barry recognised and his commission by the Library was a testimony to its commitment to design reform:

Mr Bateman also possesses considerable skill in a rather abstruse branch of his profession – one not so commonly exercised in the present age – I mean illumination. He adapts in a manner peculiar to him, as I conceive, for the illustration of that branch of art, objects of nature instead of the ideal and fancy. He

The catalogue of the Melbourne Public Library for 1861, printed for the trustees by Clarson, Shallard & Co., Melbourne, 1861, State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection, RARELT 018.1 M48C

In 1861, the trustees published the first printed catalogue of the Public Library. Handsomely produced, it featured Bateman’s cover, initials and tailpieces demonstrating his brilliant fusion of flat decorative pattern with the naturalistic form of Australian plants.

Tulk’s first catalogue was published in 1862 with 27,000 volumes indexed by author.
bestows great pains on his works as regards their truthfulness, and the greatest reliance is to be placed on the fidelity and genuineness of his treatment of any subject.54

The Melbourne Public Library, noted Barry in his introduction to the catalogue, ‘ought to be characterised by a comprehensiveness which would stamp it not merely as national, but universal’ and should cater to the wants of ‘every profession, trade, calling, and occupation’. Furthermore it should reflect the heterogeneous nature of colonial society by containing ‘expositions of every view of questions interesting to the public’ in all languages, and the ‘means of reference to the works of contemporary writers of the most active minds in all parts of the world ought to be found on the shelves’.55 It was not merely a reproduction of a British model of a library but an institution fit to serve the development of colonial industry as well as colonial minds. Accordingly, Barry and Tulk made great efforts to gain donations from European libraries and from literary, philosophic and scientific institutions, as well as patents which ‘would economize manual and other labour, prevent wasteful expenditure of power already employed on the great industrial operations of the country, guide aright the intellectual ability and energy now misdirected or occupied upon the painful elaboration of ideas – through ignorance of complete information on the subject of progress in mechanical and scientific improvement’.56 In other words these books and patents were research tools for those employed in Victorian industry.

In this optimistic period of expansion, the trustees decided to institute a system of ‘travelling libraries’ that by 1860 serviced libraries within ten miles of the General Post Office and by 1867 extended operations to the whole colony. According to Edmund La Touche Armstrong (Chief Librarian from 1896 for 29 years), the travelling libraries were so successful that the idea was adopted in America and other countries.57
Reed’s 1853 and 1854 plans for the Library included dedicated spaces for a museum and a picture gallery and in 1859 parliament voted £2000 for the purchase of art works. The trustees decided on the pragmatic and educational goal of providing a concise history of art constructed from artefacts they could afford – casts of historical sculpture, as well as coins, medals, prints and photographs.

This decision was not surprising. Sculpture and casts had been included in the Crystal Palace Exhibition and one of the uses proposed by Henry Cole for the de-commissioned Exhibition building in London was to house a cast collection: ‘the formation of a complete collection of copies of the most admired and instructive sculptures of all ages and nations ... such a collection might be made with great ease and at a comparatively small expense’.

The Exhibition building was moved to Sydenham in what is now South East London and the new Crystal Palace Company took over its direction. It housed a large collection of casts of major European monuments, some sourced from the Covent Garden studio of Domenico Bruciani in London. Among them was the Parthenon Frieze, which Owen Jones had coloured according to his research into ancient polychromy, an innovation Melbourne never followed. The colour scheme, however, was similar to that used by Bateman in the Queen’s Reading Room.
While the primary aim of the Melbourne cast collection was for the instruction of the public at large, a subsidiary aim was to provide models for a School of Design, as was the case in England. The first group of casts was sent in two shipments in June and August 1860. They had been purchased from Brucciani and duly arrived, although much damaged in transit, Barry complaining that ‘our museum looks at present like a field of battle, such is the mutilation’. However sculptor Charles Summers was brought in to repair the damage and on 24 May 1861 the Governor, Sir Henry Barkley, opened the new Museum of Art at the south end of the south wing of the Library.

The sculptures were grouped chronologically with printed labels and cards affixed to their pedestals identifying them and noting their
On 24 May 1861 the Governor, Sir Henry Barkley, opened the new Museum of Art at the south end of the south wing of the Library.

significance. They looked well against the walls which Bateman had decorated ‘as an experiment’ in:

... a delicate light purplish grey ... divided into panels by lines and ornamental corners of a darker tint of the same colours. The ceiling is divided into panels of a light grey colour, the beams of a stone colour; the whole is decorated with Greek ornament, of the leaf and scroll pattern ... It is worthy of remark that the tint adopted for the walls gives a pleasing tone and a roundness and animation to the casts.\textsuperscript{62}

When Barry was overseas for a year from 1862 to early 1863 in his capacity as Commissioner for Victoria at the International Exhibition in London, he visited the Crystal Palace at Sydenham where he would have seen the fine arts courts designed by Jones, including one depicting a Pompeian house according to the latest archaeological research. Indeed, this may have been the inspiration for Reed and Bateman’s attempt to devise a more authentically classical interior scheme in Queen’s Hall.

Barry ordered more casts and copies from a variety of sources. When these new works arrived, the Melbourne public was able to view them over the Christmas period of 1864 displayed in the recently completed north wing of the Library, and decorated in a scheme of purple and mauve, the mauve dye patented in 1856 and made fashionable by Queen Victoria’s mauve silk gown worn at the 1862 Exhibition.
Amongst the other replicas that formed the nucleus of the Museum of Art were examples of modern terracotta work based on ancient Etruscan earthenware, two of the vessels having figures painted after neo-classical English sculptor John Flaxman.

One of Flaxman’s relief sculptures was in the first consignment of Bruciani casts. The South Kensington Museum provided copies of works in its collection that had been produced by the electrotype process invented by Moritz von Jacobi in Russia in 1838, including replicas of a 16th-century Venetian ewer, a 16th-century French dish and an early 17th-century Belgian tazza. A 17th-century German ivory, silver and parcel-gilt tankard and cover was reproduced in the new materials of fictile ivory (plaster) and gilt and silvered copper (electrotype).63

Barry was interested in contemporary architecture and its classical and historical origins were represented by a group of photographs provided by the short-lived Architectural Photographic Association in London which included views of Egypt and Palestine by Francis Frith, and Robert Macpherson’s views of Rome and Italy.

The Museum purchased a complete set of publications by the Arundel Society which had been established in 1849 to promote awareness of the history of art, particularly Italian fresco-painting of the 14th to 16th centuries.

Francis Frith, *The great pillar etc Baalbec*, c. 1856–59, albumen silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H86.112/7
The trustees also put together a large collection of reproductive prints to illustrate the history of art, the first purchase being a complete set of publications by the Arundel Society which devoted itself to promoting awareness of Italian and northern art.

To enhance the educational value of these works they assembled an art library and the collection built ‘a close association between the art object and the art book’, such that ‘the great proliferation of art books and art journals during the 19th century meant that there were very few works in the early Museum collection that could not be “paired” with one of the volumes in the Library’s Fine Arts section’. One such volume was the luxurious *Outlines from the figures and compositions upon the Greek, Roman, and Etruscan vases* (1804) by Sir William Hamilton and others which could be paired with the replicas on display.

As the *Argus* noted in 1861, for the ‘native-born population’ not familiar with the art and architecture of Europe, such copies were a vital part of their education:

[The Public Library] is gradually accumulating a valuable collection of reproductions of works of art selected from those which the wise liberality of the Imperial Government has caused to be assembled in the South Kensington Museum. These include photographic copies of Raffaello’s cartoons at Hampton Court; of the original drawings by the same master, in the Louvre, at Paris ... of the best specimens of statuary in the Vatican, and of the architectural antiquities of Rome, Athens, Egypt, and Syria. To these must be added chromo-lithographic facsimiles of remarkable fresco paintings, casts in fictile ivory and plaster of the productions of Cellini ... and electrotype reproductions of specimens of the choicest metal work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Objects like these are invaluable to those who are engaged in the study of art, or who may hereafter have occasion to make themselves acquainted with the principles of design, in order to apply them to the practice of the useful arts, and their importance can scarcely be overrated in regard to the effect which they will have upon the minds of our native-born population.
Commission on the Fine Arts was established in 1863 with Barry as chair and at its first meeting it determined how the £1000 put at its disposal was to be spent. It selected advisers in London, including the eminent Director of the National Gallery Sir Charles Eastlake, and the fruits of their first labours were put on display during Christmas 1864 in a temporary picture gallery in the Queen’s Reading Room, two-thirds of which had been reserved for the event. Having viewed the sculpture gallery downstairs, visitors could ascend to the first floor to inspect the 11 new paintings that had just arrived from London including *A fern gatherer – West Highlands* (1864) by Robert Herdman and John Bedford’s *La belle Yseult* (1863), both small works selected by Eastlake showing the influence of John Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites.

Having viewed the sculpture gallery downstairs, visitors could ascend to the first floor to inspect the 11 new paintings that had just arrived from London …
64 J Building a new world
The exhibition included 43 paintings by Australian artists submitted in a competition called by the trustees. Of these, one was chosen for the collection, Chevalier’s *The Buffalo Ranges* (1864).

For many years the collection of local works fell far behind that of often indifferent British and European paintings, a situation alleviated somewhat when Sir Archibald Michie, one of the barristers who defended the Eureka rebels in 1855, donated two works exhibited at the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition, Henry Gritten’s *Jackson’s Creek, Sunbury* (1866) and Eugene
von Guérard's *Spring in the valley of the Mitta Mitta with the Bogong Ranges in the distance* (1863).

In 1869 the trustees acquired two landscapes by Louis Buvelot one of which was *Summer afternoon, Templestowe* (1866) that had also been exhibited at the Intercolonial Exhibition.

The Christmas exhibition demonstrated for the first time the particular logic animating the trustees as they set about assembling their collections. It was a popular event attracting large crowds.

Art critic James Smith noted in the *Argus* on 7 January 1865, ‘No holiday-time is now complete in its sight seeing without a visit to the art collection deposited under the roof of the Public Library’.67 The editorial of the newspaper expanded in a somewhat ironic tone:

> The truth is, indifference to the claims of science and art is one of the standing scandals with which it has been the habit of our foreign critics to assail our reputation. Because we are a democracy, and because we are a gold-producing country – because we have universal suffrage, and sport a Minister of Mines, we are lost to all sense of the sublime and beautiful. We are too young to have any genius of our own, and too callous and hardened by our pursuits to care about contemplating the genius of our neighbours. A serious rebuke to this very unsavoury slander was doubtless offered by the tangible figure which we made in the catalogue of the Great [1862] Exhibition. The Victorian Court was a heavy blow to the scandal-mongers ... In the matter of the liberal arts alone what other community so young has done so much towards multiplying the agencies of an art education? If we wanted an argument or a witness against our traducers, what better testimony, for instance, could we show than our University and our Public Library?’68
The editorial concluded with an upbeat affirmation of Victoria’s place in the world, echoing the points James Palmer made at the opening of the Library in 1854, namely that Victorians could now participate in world events almost as they happened: ‘Nothing, indeed, is more surprising than the readiness and the facility with which we acquire and make our own the chefs d’œuvre of European genius ... A Londoner or a Parisian can obtain but little which is not accessible to the humblest citizen of the Antipodes’.69 Tightly bound into the globalised networks of British imperialism, Victoria’s institutions mirrored their models closely and none more so than the exhibitions Melbourne hosted from 1854, in particular the Intercolonial Exhibition held at the Public Library 1866–67.

‘The National Picture Gallery at the Public Library, Melbourne’, from The Australian News for Home Readers, 25 January 1865, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, IAN25/01/65/8

Christmas 1864 saw the opening of a temporary Picture Gallery in Queen’s Hall that displayed the first 11 works selected by advisers overseas and 43 paintings submitted by Australian artists, including Chevalier’s The Buffalo Ranges. Thomas Clark’s portrait of Victorian Governor Sir Henry Barkly can be seen in the right foreground.
DREAMING OF SOUTH KENSINGTON 1866-80
Edmund Thomas, *First Melbourne Exhibition November 1854* (detail), 1854, tinted lithograph on cream paper, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H24511
The cultural phenomenon of the 19th-century international exhibition was, as Paul Greenhalgh observed, 'saturated with Liberal ideology' with its 'peculiar mix of free trade, material progress, philanthropy, imperialism and capital.'70 Indeed, Greenhalgh argues, conceived in 1848, the Crystal Palace Exhibition at Hyde Park London in 1851 can be seen as counter-revolutionary, devised to defuse the political turmoil threatening absolute rule all over Europe.71 Imperial power and achievement were at the centre of these displays and ‘virtually the first organizational task that the Royal Commission controlling the Exhibition set itself was the orchestration of the colonies, dominions and dependencies into a huge imperial display’.72

It is most probable that many British immigrants who clamoured into Victoria during the gold rush in the 1850s would have been among the 6.5 million visitors to the Crystal Palace. They would have brought to the colonies new ideas about the rewards of empire, their rapidly shrinking world and the expanding and modernising social order of which their migration and mobility were a part.

So when it was announced that an Exhibition for Agricultural and Industrial Products was to be held in Paris in May 1855, and that foreign goods would be welcome, the Victorian government responded with its own commission to ‘devise and carry out the details necessary to facilitate the transmission to France of articles of the produce or manufacture of our Colony of Victoria intended for exposition [at] Paris’.73 Those appointed to carry out this scheme included a number of men already active in Victorian politics and public life with Redmond Barry as chair, Andrew Clarke as honorary secretary, and John Foster, Godfrey Howitt, Ferdinand Mueller and Alfred Selwyn among the commissioners.74 These men met regularly, went about their tasks in an orderly and methodical manner taking responsibility for the various departments under which goods were to be collected and exhibited. Conscious of their role in colonial history
they recorded their deliberations in a minute book which opened on 7 June 1854 and indeed continued to record commissioners' deliberations for the exhibitions of 1861 and 1866.

The Crystal Palace Exhibition provided both the organisational model for the Melbourne Exhibition of 1854 and the physical model of display. On the site of the former Mint in William Street, Melbourne, contractors SH Merrett and Thomas Merrett built a small gas-lit replica of Joseph Paxton’s vast exhibition hall in London and inside one could view John Hooper’s cardboard model of the Crystal Palace and colonial engineer Captain Pasley’s complete set of models and books documenting Paxton’s great building.

The Crystal Palace Exhibition provided both the organisational model for the Melbourne Exhibition of 1854 and the physical model of display.

In 1861 the more ambitious Victorian Exhibition was held in the same venue preparatory to the 1862 International Exhibition at South Kensington to which many of the Melbourne exhibits were sent. Indeed ‘a more extensive and varied collection’ than the Victorian display ‘had
never before been sent from any British colony to Europe’. For Barry this was an opportunity to disabuse the British of the idea that colonial Victoria was a backwoods and while he thought the London exhibition itself was not up to the standards set by the late Prince Albert in 1851, he was satisfied that the Victorian court had been awarded 114 medals and 91 honourable mentions.

Joseph Reed and George Knight had also travelled to London in 1862 and no doubt inspired by what they saw and pricked by the spirit of competition the three men worked together on the much more ambitious Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866–67 in Melbourne. Barry was chair of the commissioners, Knight secretary ‘upon whom devolved the main supervision of the arrangements’ and Reed architect of the purpose-designed buildings constructed on the Library site. Knight had experience for he had assembled the Victorian exhibits shown at the Dublin Exhibition in 1865.

The Intercolonial Exhibition attracted more than a quarter of a million visitors from 23 October 1866 to 23 February 1867.
The Intercolonial Exhibition attracted more than a quarter of a million visitors from 23 October 1866 to 23 February 1867, and was Victoria’s preparation for its appearance at the 1867 International Exposition in Paris. Fired by a sense of national enterprise the commissioners worked hard to get the collaboration of all the other colonies and managed to snare New Caledonia, Mauritius and the Dutch East Indies as well. While New Zealand was not an official participant it was represented by a collection of objects. The opening was spectacular:

... when C E Horsley ... brought down his baton at the opening ceremony to bid 500 performers join in the national anthem, the large audience, the effectiveness of the extensive display, the flutter of brilliant banners, the profusion of uniforms, all overtopped by the great pyramid representing the total weight of gold produced in Victoria, gave the existing colonies of that date a pride they had not known before.78

It fostered nascent ideas of federation. For example, the medal designed by sculptor Charles Summers showed Victoria receiving her sister colonies with their contributions, beneath a Latin inscription: ‘they all look different and yet alike: as sisters would’. This technically innovative medal, the first to use local manufacturing techniques, is striking both in its extreme elegance and its iconography.

By contrast the medal struck for the 1854 Exhibition had carried a very different message, depicting a seated Britannia with trident and Union Jack receiving homage from a colonial miner, shepherd and farmer. At the mayoral fancy dress ball held in September 1866, George Knight wore an outfit representing ‘the union of the Australian colonies in the forthcoming exhibition’, a feat he was requested to repeat at the return ball in October.79
Indeed Knight appears to have been a keen observer of the national temper as in the *Official catalogue* he quoted a long article from the *Australasian* describing the exhibit sent from the Dutch East Indies whose territories it forecast would be as important to North Australia as Sydney and Melbourne ‘when the regions around the Gulf of Carpentaria are fairly settled’. It was a prescient quotation for Knight was to spend the last two decades of his life in Darwin, an advocate for its economic development, commissioner for the territory at the 1888 Exhibition in Melbourne and eventually Government Resident.

This enthusiasm for colonial union presaged the Intercolonial Conference held in Melbourne in March 1867 where Henry Parkes advocated federation and delegates from the conference called for the establishment of a Federal Council. So while recent commentators point to the imperialist fantasies of the great exhibitions in Europe, with their vast displays of colonial wealth that underwrote their metropolitan expansion, the colonies themselves used the exhibition phenomenon to fabricate their own ambitions for nationhood.
Building a new world
THE GREAT HALL AND THE ROTUNDA

The decision to construct the Exhibition buildings on the Library site, the old Exhibition building in William Street deemed too small and decrepit for such an important event, was conceived as a way of carrying forward the master plan unveiled in 1860. The new buildings included a Great Hall, north and south wings connecting it to the Library, a Rotunda and a large iron annexe. The Great Hall would provide the foundations of a new Library and form the eastern boundary of the Swanston Street building shown on the master plan, a scheme adhered to until the late 1880s. It was 220 feet long and 82 feet wide and carried a lightweight open timber roof on masonry walls. The Great Hall and Rotunda were eventually demolished to make way for the Domed Reading Room.

A rotunda did not appear in the master plan where a square stair hall linked the Library to the eastern building, and the new round form may have been inspired by Exhibition pavilions in London and elsewhere. It was intended to house a grand staircase although this was never built.

Left top: Reed & Barnes, architects, Intercolonial Exhibition buildings, 1866, ink and watercolour wash on linen-backed paper, reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 3686/P0001, Unit 397, Item LM 1.42

Left bottom: Reed & Barnes, architects, Intercolonial Exhibition buildings, 1866, ink and watercolour wash on linen-backed paper, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H2010.69/17
The Rotunda was a substantial building, 22 metres in diameter, with a temporary iron dome. One wonders if Reed intended it to foreshadow the ambitious domed space of his master plan; certainly it functioned as a silent rebuke to that unfulfilled dream for the next 40 years. In addition, north and south wings were constructed along La Trobe Street and Little Lonsdale Street respectively and a number of iron annexes to house the avalanche of goods that poured in spread out eastwards towards Russel Street.

Reed & Barnes, architects, *Public Library Museums and National Galleries of Victoria, For use of Exhibition*, 1870, ink on linen, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H2010.69/19

Site plan showing all buildings on the block bounded by Swanston, La Trobe, Russell and Little Lonsdale streets, that is, the existing Melbourne Public Library and the complex of buildings erected for the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866–67: the Rotunda and Great Hall, the north and south annexes as well as the iron annexe and continuation of the iron annexe on the eastern half of the site.
Melbourne was proud of its new Exhibition buildings and the progress of construction was reported regularly by the press. In a carefully composed illustration, engraver Samuel Calvert showed the building under construction, masons shaping the foundation blocks in the foreground, bricklayers building walls in the middle ground and carpenters and others erecting the timber roof over the Great Hall in the background. It was as much an advertisement for Melbourne’s thriving building trades as a progress report on construction.

Samuel Calvert, engraver, ‘The works at the Intercolonial Exhibition building, Melbourne’, from *Illustrated Melbourne Post*, 27 August 1866, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, IMP27/08/66/317
In a speech addressed to the workmen assembled on site, Barry delivered an historical sprint down the architectural history of halls and domes, aiming to inspire his audience with the spirit of emulation by placing their work beside its European forebears. However, as neither the Great Hall nor the Rotunda could compete with these in terms of antiquity, style or customary use, Barry focused on the one thing that could be compared – dimensions. The rows of statistics peppering his speech proved the worthiness of the Melbourne buildings in comparison with their European forerunners. While the Great Hall could not match the dimensions of the temples of Egypt or ancient Greece, it did rather well against quite a few English cathedrals. Size mattered:

The Rotunda of the grand staircase, which will be, when finished, probably as handsome as any yet built, not excepting the Scala Regia of the Vatican, measuring in diameter 71 feet. It exceeds, therefore, by six feet the great dome of the Pantheon in Paris, one of the most striking objects in that delightful capital, and it is as large as the dome of the cathedral of St Isaac’s in St Petersburg – that city of giants ...  

In addition to publishing this speech in the press, Barry promised the workers that steps would be taken to record their work for posterity: a roll of names similar to that recorded for the Library was prepared but in more, and somewhat bizarre, detail, showing trades, rates of pay, costs of materials, ‘and of provisions, tools, clothing, house-rent and other particulars, during the first six months of this year’. It was to be signed by each worker and attached to an illuminated copy of the contract for display at the Exhibition. In 1869 the trustees exhibited a publication at an exhibition in the Great Hall – Ye book of ye Great Hall – which might have been the publication referred to here.
The rows of statistics peppering his speech proved the worthiness of the Melbourne buildings in comparison with their European forerunners.
Thomas Ellis & Co., displays of products of Melbourne businesses in the Great Hall, 1866–67, albumen silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H84.309/11
THE INTERCOLONIAL EXHIBITION 1866

Melbourne’s Intercolonial Exhibition was a great success and was true to the European type. George Knight’s preface to the Guide to the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866 which recounted the history of Victoria’s ten-year engagement with exhibitions showed an intensely proud, materialistic and competitive colony keen to be seen on the world stage.86 This view was amply justified by the collections of exhibits which demonstrated that the ideology of the European exhibition was replicated in Melbourne, where trade, commerce and empire held the day. In the Great Hall, courts and annexes, colonial and international manufactured goods shared space with Australian raw materials ripe for export. The Rotunda housed novelties and fancy goods, clocks, medallions, needlework and artificial flowers. The north wing along La Trobe Street displayed carriages over which Brucchianni’s Parthenon frieze, which had arrived six years earlier, calmly paraded while the south wing was given over to the fine arts.

Melbourne reproduced another aspect of the European exhibition that was a product of 19th-century territorial expansion and conquest. Greenhalgh has observed that by the turn of the century, ‘the exhibitions became a human showcase’ as people were brought to exhibition sites from colonies all over the world to provide tableaux vivants, the embodiment of imperial desire and power.87 In Melbourne in 1866 Aboriginal subjects were not physically displayed but representations of them were. As well as organising a display of Aboriginal weapons, utensils, and implements, Barry commissioned several exhibits to record a people generally assumed to be on the road to extinction.88

One was an Aboriginal dictionary designed to systematise the various existing vocabularies compiled by Daniel Bunce, George Moore and LE Threlkeld and others.89 The Vocabulary of dialects spoken by the Aboriginal natives of Australia was in fact published in May 1867, some
Thomas Ellis & Co.,
Exhibit of Walsh Brothers of Collins Street-East and Levy Brothers of Melbourne in the Rotunda, 1866–67, albumen silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H84.309/9

Charles Nettleton,
gallery of casts from the studio of Bruciani, London, 1869, albumen silver photograph, commissioned by trustees of the Library, 1869, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H12957
months after the close of the Intercolonial Exhibition but found its way to the Victorian exhibit at the Paris International Exposition of 1867.90

Another was a commission to Charles Summers to take a series of life casts of 16 residents of the Coranderrk Mission near Healesville, ‘of both sexes, and at different periods of life’.91 These sculptures were never displayed in Melbourne but were sent, with the Vocabulary, to Paris. Copies were also presented to the British Museum in 1869 and the Vienna Exhibition in 1872.92

The idea that people could be classified according to types was prevalent in the 19th century and accounts for the third exhibit ordered by Barry and put together by German-born photographer Charles Walter. He assembled in one large display his photographs of all the residents of Coranderrk identified by name. They were located in a hierarchical arrangement that differentiated bloodline (pure blood and half-caste), age (elders including William Barak, and children) and gender (men on the left and women on the right). This organisation reflected the ‘type’ portrait used for collecting data about human, in particular colonial, subjects, imitating the arrangement and comparative approach of the biological sciences and based on current views of racial types. Indeed, Walter’s photographs were sent to Europe as evidence in scientific debates about human evolution within an international network extending to England, Italy, Russia and France.93
While these aspects of the 19th-century exhibition have been the subjects of recent scholarly interest, another significant characteristic of the exhibitions held in Victoria has occupied less attention in Australia. This was its advocacy of design, evidenced at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in Paxton’s glass and iron building, Jones’s interior scheme and some of the exhibits, particularly the medieval court designed by radical architect and Gothicist AWN Pugin. Melbourne recognised this by replicating the Crystal Palace, albeit at a small scale, in 1854 and including a fine arts court within which it displayed the work of modern artists Woolner, von Guérard, Buvelot, Becker and Bateman. One of the Victorian exhibits sent to London in 1862 was Bateman’s designs for ‘woollen fabrics, introducing indigenous flowers and foliage’, possibly the first art fabrics ever produced in Australia. So within the Reed-Barry-Bateman circle at least, the idea that the exhibition was a chance to promote innovation not just in manufacture but also in art and design was fostered. This was to find much more expansive expression in 1866.

Reed’s Great Hall and Rotunda were temporary and their facades fairly crude, so everything depended on the effect of their interiors. It was here that Bateman’s skill as a designer shone, and, according to Barry, he shone with the best. Compared with the London 1862 Exhibition, ‘which was

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**BATEMAN’S INTERIOR**

Frederick Grosse, engraver, ‘The Rotunda, Intercolonial Exhibition’ (detail), from *Australian News for Home Readers*, 20 November 1866, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, IAN20/11/66/1
ornamented by Crace and by some of those decorative artists who are considered as standing first in the ranks of their profession’, Barry thought that Bateman’s ‘execution is equal in many respects, and superior, in my opinion, in several, to theirs.’

The decorations of the hall are also of a very superior description. The clerestory windows are frosted with imitation ground glass, and are ornamented with scroll pattern work, stencilled on the glass in light scarlet and blue. The walls are painted ‘distempered buff’; and are divided into panels, with light blue and buff stiles, enriched with scarlet leafage with blue and red lines surrounding the panels; the main ribs are striped with red and blue. The whole has a most pleasing effect ...

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Reed’s Great Hall and Rotunda were temporary and their facades fairly crude, so everything depended on the effect of their interiors. It was here that Bateman’s skill as a designer shone ...

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Frederick Grosse, engraver, ‘The Rotunda, Intercolonial Exhibition’, from *The Australian News for Home Readers*, 20 November 1866, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, IAN20/11/66/1

This engraved image of the Rotunda, with its wide and high view, gives us a good idea of Edward La Trobe Bateman’s decorative scheme.
The Greek motifs used by Bateman including fret, wave, star and anthemion and his method of creating small fields of coloured and stencilled pattern between the roof trusses and rafters accorded with the theories of ornament propounded by Jones in the *Grammar of ornament* which by this stage was in the Library’s collection. It was also in Reed’s personal collection and was probably in frequent use in his office. On the frieze of the Rotunda’s cupola were panels with central heraldic motifs and above these the arched windows, frosted with imitation etched glass and grouped in threes, were ornamented with stencilled stylised plants.
Crowning it all was the iron roof, divided into timber panels and decorated in the Owens manner. The *Guide to the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866* called it ‘surpassingly clear and beautiful’. The colour scheme followed that of the Great Hall although the background colour was violet. There was nothing like it in Melbourne.

Edward La Trobe Bateman, *Memorial of the Intercolonial Exhibition, held at Melbourne, 1866–7*, lithograph and ink on paper, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H10581

Design reformer Owen Jones recognised the value of medieval, *Asian* and Middle Eastern principles of flat, non-figurative pattern design and *The grammar of ornament* is full of examples. In this illuminated address, Bateman adheres to these principles with the elaborate border illumination in full colour and gilt framing the interior text.

William Detmold, binder, Decorative binding to house Illuminated address to His Honor Mr Justice Barry, c. 1876, medium unknown, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H93.497
Bateman’s skill as a designer was also deployed for an illuminated address presented at the Exhibition to François de Laporte, comte de Castelnau, London-born French naturalist, explorer and widely-travelled collector who arrived in Melbourne in 1864 where he was appointed consul general for France. One of the Exhibition’s commissioners, he engineered New Caledonia’s contribution. Framing the text was an elaborate border illumination in full colour and gilt where Bateman showed his indebtedness to the principles of flat, non-figurative pattern characteristic of medieval, Asian and Islamic art illustrated in the Grammar of ornament. It was one of the most advanced examples of graphic design produced in Australia. Its influence can be seen in the Jones-inspired illuminated address presented to Barry on his departure to the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876.

The Exhibition’s Guide ushered the reader into the Great Hall by way of a medieval court ‘perhaps the last thing one might expect to encounter’ but one which, like the Exhibition buildings and Bateman’s illumination, showed the ambitions of Melbourne’s developing design culture.97

The medieval court was inspired by Pugin’s medieval court at the Crystal Palace, one of the few exhibits in that vast emporium that escaped the disapproval of Britain’s design reformers who considered the general quality of British industrialised manufacture on display to be appalling.
The Melbourne exhibit was put together by glass artists and manufacturers Ferguson, Urie and Lyon, and John Young, contractor on William Wardell’s St Patrick’s Cathedral that was designed in the Puginian spirit of reform. The court ‘was filled with statuary, fonts, and elaborately-ornamented wrought-iron articles suitable for medieval church purposes’, all destined for St Patrick’s.\textsuperscript{98} The court also housed an alcove representing an early English chancel furnished with an altar table, an illuminated oil painting and tablets representing biblical scenes and five stained glass windows. While the enthusiasm for medievalism might appear incongruous in colonial Melbourne it was deeply embedded in 19th-century design thinking. For Pugin, Ruskin and other reformers medieval architecture and design represented an historical period where the unity of religion, society and art had not yet been dislocated by the pressures of modernity, industrialisation and great urban agglomerations like London. They aimed to reproduce in their work characteristics they considered intrinsic to the medieval period, including honesty, integrity and a love of handcraft and it was these values that made the voyage to Melbourne with architects and designers infused with the spirit of reform.

Two further Exhibitions were held on the Library site before Reed & Barnes designed an alternative venue, the Royal Exhibition Building, for the 1880–81 Exhibition. In 1872 the Victorian Exhibition displayed local products bound for the 1873 International Exhibition in London, and three years later another Intercolonial Exhibition was held as a preliminary to the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876.\textsuperscript{99}
Charles Nettleton, sculpture and ceramics gallery, Melbourne Intercolonial Exhibition, 1875, albumen silver photograph on mount, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H5063

The global reach of the Exhibitions is shown here by this extensive display of Japanese ceramics.
Annotations possibly by Augustus Tulk indicate the proposed uses of the new space with costs: the east wing is to house the ‘Technological Museum’ (£2000), the north wing is for ‘Casts of Busts Statues’ (£500) and the south wing is for the ‘Picture Gallery’ (£500).
The effects of the Intercolonial Exhibition on the Library were profound. It bequeathed greatly increased accommodation for future expansion as had been planned from the outset by the trustees.

Collections of artefacts entered the National Gallery and museums, and the Intercolonial Exhibition elevated Australia’s presence in the globalised exhibition circuit. It had also taken pains to exhibit the way in which Victoria’s gold discoveries had provided the capital for rapid expansion through the introduction of improved technology, the result of scientific research. The link was made between research capacity and material progress. This galvanised the multi-institutional nature of the Library’s development just as the Crystal Palace Exhibition spurred on the development of South Kensington as a museum site. Under the auspices of Prince Albert, South Kensington became the location for a number of collecting and teaching institutions directed at the artisanal classes, based on his ‘notion of useful learning, whether in the physical sciences, engineering, manufacturing or the arts’.

Similarly, on the Melbourne site the trustees aimed to ‘create and promote a sympathy between the different branches of Literature, Science and Art, the continuity of which would not be so adequately maintained.
were the illustrations deposited in different places'.\textsuperscript{102} This view was echoed by Reed who believed there should be a ‘closer union between the different arts and sciences than existed at present in the colony’.\textsuperscript{103}

Under the provisions of the \textit{Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria Act 1869} the Public Library, Museum and National Gallery of Victoria were incorporated under one governing body that came into effect in 1870. Recommended by the Commission on the Fine Arts as far back as 1865, it was the most important development since the appointment of the first five trustees in 1853. There was an expanded board of trustees who oversaw sectional committees managing the Library, The National Gallery, The Technological Collection, The National Museum and Scientific Collections, and Finance (replaced the following year by a Building and General Committee and supplemented by the position of Treasurer). It was universally known as \textit{the Institution}.
In February 1869 the Technological Commission, acting on early suggestions following the Intercolonial Exhibition, had recommended the establishment of an Industrial and Technological Museum. The Technological Commission itself was unique in Australia as an admiring reporter from the *South Australian Register* noted. Prefacing his comments with a withering account of the internecine fighting amongst Victorian parliamentarians, he goes on to note that amongst the ‘petty chicanery of the lobby:

... they have made the most liberal provision for juvenile education of any Australian colony ... The educational schemes and appliances of the mother-country find ready imitation among them ... The latest novelty [is] a Technological Commission. It may be questioned if even in England this higher grade of education is being more systematically prosecuted than by the Victorian Government ... Mr Bindon [Chair of the Commission] and his energetic colleagues have been organizing lectures, establishing Schools of Design, projecting Industrial Museums, experimenting in the way of Fine Arts Exhibitions, cultivating friendly relations with the Mechanical Institutes of the colony, and considering how technological instruction may be introduced into Government schools.
The Industrial and Technological Museum opened in September 1870 and was a significant step towards realising the trustees’ goal of a South Kensington model of institutional adjacency. Harvard-educated industrial chemist James Cosmo Newbery was appointed Scientific Superintendent. Newbery brought order into the collections that had been assembled from disparate sources, such as the disbanded Geological Survey, the Intercolonial Exhibition which provided botanical specimens classified by von Mueller, and even McCoy’s National Museum at the University from which the mining models and specimens he had collected were extracted much to McCoy’s despair.

German-born and trained GHF Ulrich was appointed Lecturer in Mineralogy and Mining, and Curator of the Mineral Collection. The Rotunda was fitted up as a lecture room, and temporary laboratories established in the old police sheds which still remained at the back of the site. Newbery introduced lectures in chemistry, metallurgy, geology, physiology, astronomy and telegraphy, the last course popular among women who found employment as telegraphers in the burgeoning industry.

Above and opposite: Unknown photographer, Institute of Applied Science, 1872, albumen silver photographs, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H96.160/1785
Carl E Nordstrom, maker, Tramway model – inclined self-acting, 1858, mixed media, Museum Victoria, ST 000804
Australia’s first telegraph line, sponsored by the Victorian Government, was erected between Melbourne and Williamstown in 1854; two years later Victoria had 58 kilometres of telegraph line, and by 1867 there were 2697 kilometres of line handling 122,138 messages. The technology provided new employment opportunities for women as telegraph operators, and the museum stepped in and provided the necessary training in its telegraphy school.

Samuel Calvert, engraver, ‘Telegraphy School, Technological Museum, Melbourne’, from Illustrated Australian News, 18 June 1872, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, IAN18/06/72/132
The Rotunda was fitted up as a lecture room, and temporary laboratories established in the old police sheds...

The Museum’s unique role in offering public instruction in the applied sciences was, as the *South Australian Register* noted ‘borrowed from Professor Huxley’s brilliant series delivered before the working men of Nottingham’, great praise indeed as Thomas Huxley was one of the great reformers of science education in Britain and whose classes and laboratories were located in South Kensington’s Department of Science and Art. Like Huxley, Newbery had his laboratory at the Museum which was enlarged in 1876 ‘to cope with increasing duties which included student training and consultant services to the mining industry. He also collected food samples and analysed them for contaminants, thus laying the foundation for the 1905 Act for preventing adulterated foods’. In his introduction to its 1873 catalogue, Newbery wrote that the object of the Museum was:

... to illustrate the applicability of the animal, vegetable, and mineral products of this country to the arts and manufactures, and to exhibit foreign specimens both of natural products and manufactured articles to serve as standards of comparison.
He noted that since opening in 1870 four courses of popular lectures treating geology, botany, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, language, literature, art and manufactures had been delivered and attended by 8154 people, while in 1873 ‘systemic class instruction’ in various subjects was delivered by staff from the Schools of Chemistry and Mineralogy, Mathematics and Practical Geometry, and Telegraphy to 195 students. The Museum thus provided an alternative post-primary education to private schools and to the University; it was available to women unlike the University, and it was inexpensive, again unlike its alternatives. It became in a limited way an ‘intermediate institution’ of the kind James Palmer had described as necessary for the education of Victorians in his speech at the foundation of the Library in 1854, providing instruction in applied sciences until the Working Men’s College opened in 1887 and took over much of this role.
As well as signalling an expansion of the Institution’s membership, the new governance arrangements reflected the development of the National Gallery of Victoria and the Gallery Schools which, by this time, were ready to achieve more autonomy.

In 1866 the picture collection had been moved from the Picture Gallery in the Queen’s Reading Room to the newly constructed south wing for the Intercolonial Exhibition where it remained. In 1869, to gauge the level of support they had for the collection, the trustees organised loans for an ‘exhibition of works of art, art treasures, and ornamental and decorative art’ which was held in the Great Hall. Advertisements were put in the newspapers asking for loans and 1406 Melburnians heeded the call while 70,000 visited the exhibition.

The ‘runaway success’ of this venture induced the trustees to consider converting the Great Hall into a permanent gallery, but sense...
prevailed and parliament voted the funds necessary to build a new gallery. In 1873 construction began on a site to the east of the Great Hall and Reed & Barnes’ elegantly classical McArthur Gallery, with plain green grey walls opened in 1875. The McArthur Gallery is now home to the Library’s Rare Printed Collection.

The trustees chose this time to publish their first catalogue of the collection, illustrated with photographs and accompanied by commentary.

... parliament voted the funds necessary to build a new gallery. In 1873 construction began...

Unknown photographer, McArthur Gallery, National Gallery of Victoria, c. 1900, albumen silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H11787
from Marcus Clarke, at the time sub-Librarian and author of the recently published *His natural life*.111 As Sandra Burt has noted, ‘Clarke’s literary achievements were a kind of endorsement for the scholarship the Library could offer a still young and rapidly growing community’.112

Joseph Reed’s 1859 master plan had anticipated schools attached to the Gallery and in 1867 the trustees urged the Chief Secretary to appoint instructors to teach in them, but to no avail.113 It was only in 1870 under the new governance structure and following the success of the loan exhibition that Eugene von Guérard was appointed first Curator of the National Gallery and Master of the School of Painting. Von Guérard was not the ideal choice for emerging talents like Frederick McCubbin who was his pupil in the late 1870s; he would have preferred the Swiss-born and well-travelled Louis Buvelot but von Guérard was Barry’s favourite painter and had been drawing master to Tulk’s son in Dusseldorf in the 1840s, factors which may have swayed the selectors.

After von Guérard’s resignation in 1881 the position was taken by Irish-born George Folingsby, who had studied in Munich and Paris and won medals for his history painting; the National Gallery had bought his *Bunyan in prison* in 1864.

By 1880 Folingsby had fetched up in Melbourne and established himself as a portrait painter and examiner of art teachers. One of his first

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Marcus Clarke, *His natural life*, George Robertson, Melbourne, 1874, State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection, RARELT 819.93 C554FO

Clarke sent this review copy of the first edition of *His natural life*, known later as *For the term of his natural life*, to his friend the critic John Shillinglaw, who made detailed annotations in the margins and elsewhere in preparation for a newspaper review. Shillinglaw was at times horrified at the brutality of Clarke’s story about a convict transported to Australia, but it was, Clarke insisted, based on fact. He wrote it to illustrate ‘the inexpediency of again allowing offenders against the law to be herded together in places remote from the wholesome influence of public opinion’.

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 commissions was a portrait of Redmond Barry as Chancellor of the University of Melbourne. In 1882 Folingsby was appointed Master of the School of Painting and the first Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.

At the same time a School of Design was instituted under the direction of painter Thomas Clark although such an establishment was a long-held ambition of the trustees. Clark’s background in England was good: headmaster of the Birmingham Government School of Design from 1846 to 1851 where one of his pupils was Edward Burne-Jones, and drawing-master at the King Edward’s School of Design in the same city.

The idea behind the Design School was ‘to invite the skilled workmen (of whom so large and efficient a body exists amongst us), and also the young mechanic entering on the study and practice of his calling, to the means organised for their especial instruction and benefit’. The cast collection would provide models for training the eye and the hand so that ‘the man gifted with a quick eye, with a diligently-schooled habit of observation, with a hand obedient to the direction of well-grounded judgment, will be saved much unprofitable toil’. In 1859 Clark had advised the trustees on the purchase of the casts, corresponding with his friend Ralph Wornum, Keeper of the National Gallery in London on the matter, noting that ‘their object is to begin a collection with which they can commence a School’. However, the casts were never the success that Barry assumed they would be, the rigorous discipline of copying copies having little appeal to Melbourne’s design students.

George Folingsby, *Bunyan in prison*, 1864, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased by the Commissioners of Fine Arts for Victoria 1864, p.300.11-1
Clark was a popular if not particularly effective teacher and counted Roberts and McCubbin among his pupils.

On Clark's retirement in 1876 the position was taken by the somewhat dictatorial and unpopular OR Campbell until McCubbin replaced him in 1886, holding the position for the rest of his life.

If the cast collection was not particularly effective as an instructional tool, a more sophisticated argument for the improvement of design was put forward in 1871 by the Irish-born and well-published scholar Denis O'Donovan, who delivered a paper in the lecture series hosted by the Industrial and Technological Museum entitled ‘The uses of art & design in manufacture’. O'Donovan came to Melbourne in 1866 after some years in France and two years in London from 1864. His paper was probably Australia's first publication on the topic of industrial design, addressing the theoretical issues relating to design reform that had been raised by Owen Jones, John Ruskin and others and followed by Bateman and Reed at the Library. It covered the relationship of ornament to construction, truth to materials, fitness for purpose, and the different applications of illusionism and flat pattern to various surfaces. Its arguments for the importance of art and design in raising the standard of manufacture were completely aligned to the thinking of South Kensington.

Thomas Clark, *Sir Henry Barkly, GCMG, KCB, Governor of Victoria*, 1864, oil on canvas, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H2003.55
Unknown photographer, the Queen's Reading Room, Public Library, Melbourne, c. 1861–64, albumen silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H3970
Meanwhile the work of the Library continued, and in the decade between 1870 and 1880 Barry, Tulk and Henry Sheffield, who assumed the post of Librarian after Tulk died in 1873, continued to collect works covering the most ‘approved scientific and economic modes of advancing the industries and improving the social condition of the public’.¹¹⁷

Unlike the picture collection that was governed by no rigorous acquisition policy, the Library endeavoured to form coherent book collections and spent time and effort filling gaps in various departments. ‘Thus in 1870–1 the Library acquired books on Fine Arts in Italy, agriculture, pomology, general horticulture and cultivation of vine and wine’.¹¹⁸ The Proceedings of the Imperial Academy of St Petersburgh in 125 volumes took six years to source by an Amsterdam bookseller.

The Library exchanged books with learned societies such as the Smithsonian Institute of Washington, the Institute of Public Instruction in France, the Government of Belgium and the Lord Provost of Glasgow, ‘who provided books relating to water supply and navigation of the River Clyde which were considered especially valuable because of the works being undertaken in the Port of Melbourne’.¹¹⁹

This period also saw the acquisition of one of the most valuable illustrated books in the world, John James Audubon’s four-volume The birds of America (1827–38).

From the production of its first catalogue in 1862, the Library became a considerable publisher itself, and each department soon had its own catalogue of its collections. Similarly, the Exhibitions held at the Library were accompanied by official catalogues, guides, illuminated addresses and other printed matter.
Reed & Barnes, architects, Melbourne Public Library portico, front elevation, c. 1870, ink and watercolour on paper, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon Pty Ltd Collection, 1968.0013, The University of Melbourne Archives
THE PORTICO

With the internal workings of the Institution in place, attention was turned to the exterior of the building and the handsome portico was finally constructed in 1870.

Originally conceived in the Ionic order, the portico was completed in the Corinthian and was one of four designed by Joseph Reed in Melbourne. Others adorned the Baptist Church, Collins Street, the Town Hall and Trades Hall in Carlton. Reed was unusual among Melbourne architects in his commitment to the portico as a civic form and we might speculate on his reasons for using it.

The portico had a dual function: it both addressed the street and offered shelter to the bystander, implying ‘a rite of passage and mediation between the city and the interior rituals of the institution’. For Scamozzi, whose version of the Ionic capital Reed had chosen for the Library, the portico offered shelter to pedestrians, which was part of its civic role.

Historically, the portico had strong associations with British Palladian architecture and with the architecture of the United States of America. It was also used liberally in 19th-century Britain for new institutional buildings like William Wilkins’ National Gallery, to which Reed’s Library had some similarity.

But by the mid-19th century the portico’s temple form might also have conjured up specific associations with classical Greece, for at this time ‘Athens, rather than Rome, became the centre of attention and Athenian democracy the highpoint of civilization’. Liberals ‘saw the example of Athens as a model for the art of self-government where liberty, prosperity and artistic achievement flourished so long as Attic rigour prevailed over irrationalism and particularism’.

Whether or not Reed would have counted himself amongst Melbourne’s prominent liberal thinkers his architecture could find an echo with the ideals they strove to actualise in the public life of Melbourne.
REALISING THE VISION
1880–1913
Reed, Henderson & Smart, architects, perspective view from Russell Street of proposed new Library, Museum and Gallery building 1888 (detail), architectural drawing; ink monochrome wash and gouache on paper, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H30568/2
Redmond Barry died on 23 November 1880, having served the Library ‘of which he may justly claim the paternity’ well for almost 30 years: indeed he was, the Argus wrote, ‘something more than a personage; he was one of our institutions’. Barry therefore did not live to see the development of the eastern half of the Museum site, McArthur Gallery being the only building extending beyond the Swanston Street building in 1880. The Gallery was repainted in 1882 by Scottish-born artist John Mather who had arrived in Melbourne in 1878 and had been responsible for the interior decoration of the Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton Gardens in 1880. Contact with Reed on that building would no doubt have led to his commission at the Library which enlivened the room with Greek meander stencil patterns and graduated toning articulating its architectural features, much as Bateman had done in the Queen’s Reading Room and the Great Hall.

Above: Reed, Henderson & Smart, architects, Melbourne Public Library, National Gallery and Industrial Museum, view from Swanston Street (detail), 1888, architectural drawing: ink watercolour wash and gouache on paper on linen, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H30568/1

Left: Percival Ball, Sir Redmond Barry, 1886–87, bronze, State Library of Victoria forecourt. Photograph by Andrew Lloyd.
THE MASTER PLAN OF 1888

From 1883 new work was in progress, fulfilling at least some of the intentions of the trustees to use the foundations of the Intercolonial Exhibition to complete the west block. In 1886 Barry Hall and Verdon Gallery were built on foundations of the south wing of the Exhibition building along Little Lonsdale Street, although funding shortages meant that they were not given an elevation to match the architectural treatment of the Swanston Street frontage as shown in the master plan. Barry Hall ‘a lofty, well lighted and ventilated apartment’ added much needed library space to Queen’s Hall (formerly known as the Queen’s Reading Room) while Verdon Gallery was set aside for the art collection. Barry Hall is now home to the Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas.

The trustees next turned their attention to the eastern half of the site which dominated building works for the next 20 years. Swinburne Hall to the south of McArthur Gallery was constructed in 1887 and it housed painting studios (today it houses the Library’s Pictures Collection). In 1889 Reed, Henderson & Smart prepared plans for the completion of the buildings to the east: La Trobe Gallery (today housing the Library’s Australian Manuscripts Collection), Stawell Gallery (today the Cowen Gallery) and McCoy Hall (today the Redmond Barry Reading Room).
By this time it was clear that the coherence of the 1860 master plan was in jeopardy and there was a last-ditch attempt from the architects to present a vision of the Institution as a coherent urban form encasing the independently conceived galleries and halls.

Recalling Chevalier’s 1860 view, an architectural scheme was prepared which reproduced an elaborate engraving by Frederick Grosse of the Swanston Street block published in 1865. In this view the north and south pavilions were shown complete rising above the parapet line to form short towers, the tympanum filled with sculpture and the roof line adorned with statuary, lending the building height and sculptural variety on the skyline.

A similar block was appended behind, but the dome had gone, indicating that a revision of the internal plan had taken place, a museum rather than ceremonial hall lying at the heart of the building. The wide streets about the building were shown filled with the bustle of the well-turned-out pedestrians and smart carriages of a wealthy and confident metropolis enjoying the economic boom of the 1880s.

In 1888 a perspective view of the proposed Russell Street elevation was published. Its grand Renaissance design was an ambitious development of the former view. Crowning the hill above the city it presented a remarkable but ultimately unfulfilled affirmation of the power of architecture to articulate society’s cultural values.

The Gillies government was unswayed by these architectural visions of a great Institution but remained tightly focussed on procuring the individual galleries and halls that were constructed one by one as money became available. In 1889 they set aside £90,000 for the three new buildings. In April 1890 the tender of F Lockington was accepted and the buildings were finished in 1892, just as the greatest economic depression the city had ever suffered was about to cut a swathe through public spending for years to come. In the double-height, galleried McCoy Hall we can perhaps see the faint echo of the original Florentine cortile planned in 1859.
Reed, Smart & Tappin, architects, Public Library and Technological Museum site plan, 1892, architectural drawing, print, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H2010.69/44

Site plan showing ground floor plans of the Melbourne Public Library and National Gallery existing buildings, and the new buildings, the Technological Museum and the Stawell and La Trobe Galleries.


Reed, Henderson & Smart, architects, Melbourne Public Library, National Gallery and Industrial Museum, view from Swanston Street, 1888, architectural drawing: ink watercolour wash and gouache on paper on linen, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H30568/1

A perspective view from the corner of Swanston and La Trobe streets showing the architects’ scheme for the whole site bounded by Swanston, La Trobe, Russell and Little Lonsdale streets.

Reed, Henderson & Smart, architects, perspective view from Russell Street of proposed new Library, Museum and Gallery building 1888, architectural drawing: ink monochrome wash and gouache on paper, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H30568/2

Both views were published in the *Australasian Sketcher* 23 February 1888, page 20, with text on page 19.
In the meantime Reed’s architectural practice was undergoing significant changes. Frederick Barnes became ill and retired in 1883 and died the following year. Bereft of his partner of almost 20 years Reed brought former pupils Anketell Henderson and Francis Smart into the partnership now known as Reed, Henderson & Smart. Reed was at the height of his career having completed to great acclaim the Royal Exhibition Building in 1880, one of the few 19th-century exhibition buildings still existing and in use anywhere in the world. New work was plentiful and Reed probably stepped back a bit in the day-to-day running of the office.

Surprisingly, in March 1885 at the age of 63 Reed married Hannah Lane, a fellow musician 30 years his junior and they set off for Europe on an extended honeymoon of about 18 months. When in Scotland they dropped in on Edward Bateman, who had returned to Britain in 1869 and fetched up as landscape designer to the third Marquess of Bute at Mount Stuart, living at the Hermitage in Rothesay. He had corresponded with his Australian friends for many years and in a letter dated 22 August 1886 to Georgiana McCrae (whose grandson Gordon Hyndman was an articled pupil in Reed’s office) he recorded the visit of Joseph and Hannah to his house. He was clearly pleased to see them, and took his visitors to the Mount Stuart house and Rothesay castle before escorting them to the railway where they set off for Glasgow.

On 7 September Bateman notified Georgiana that Reed had asked him to come to Cologne and spend the winter with them in Europe: ‘To make sure of my leaving he has sent me money for the journey’. Reed had clearly grasped the fact that his former colleague was suffering financially.
Bateman was very grateful, dreading to spend another winter in Bute as he had suffered so much illness in the previous two. The European holiday was not so long as by November Bateman was home and the Reeds had sailed for Australia. The incident does, however, throw light on the affectionate regard that existed between the two men.129

Reed had left the office in the charge of Henderson and Smart who oversaw the construction of Barry Hall and Verdon Gallery and may well have designed Swinburne Hall. Henderson left the partnership in 1889 and there was a difficult division of the office that led to a residual unpleasantness.130 Reed brought in William Tappin forming Reed, Smart & Tappin in 1890, just as the next stage of building was about to commence. Perhaps Reed had taken his eye off the ball because the Director of the National Gallery, George Folingsby took a very dim view of the architects’ plans which he thought completely unsuitable ‘for the purposes they are intended, namely, for exhibiting Paintings and Sculpture, and for finding accommodation for the Students who are drawing from the casts of the Antique Statues. The building is too much subdivided, and shows twenty-two doors, entailing a great and useless waste of wall space’.131

Reed died after ‘ailing for some months’ in 1890 at the age of 67. He worked up to the last, as his obituary stated, ‘furnishing designs for a complete set of buildings for the trustees, intended to cover all the vacant ground on their reserve, which is bounded by Swanston, Latrobe, Russell, and Little Lonsdale streets, and at the time of his death he was engaged in superintending portions of the buildings that are now being erected at the cost of about £100,000.’132 He was the last of the original team who had brought the Library into being; Sir William Stawell, one of the original five trustees, had died in 1889 and now with Reed’s death, the old guard had gone. The next two decades brought in new people and ideas and a new level of professionalism in the collection and management of the Library, Gallery and museums.
Lindsay Bernard Hall, *Edmund La Touche Armstrong* (detail), c. 1925, oil on canvas, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H36548
The boom decade of the 1880s opened with the publication of the last of the Library’s book catalogues, a monumental two-volume work describing more than 109,000 titles. At this time ‘the collection was already one of the great collections of the world. Sixteen years before, W. R. H. Jessop in his Sketches in Australia had said, “... your library is a boast, in which a vain people could not go too far. The museum and the library have nothing to equal them in the southern hemisphere”’.  

Barry’s death in 1880 brought an end to his dominance in the affairs of the Institution, in particular the book collection, and ‘from this time one hears more of the Librarians than the Trustees’. In 1881 Thomas Bride took over the position of Chief Librarian from Tulk’s successor, Henry Sheffield. He introduced the card catalogue in 1892 containing about 200,000 cards arranged in alphabetical order and it became at once ‘an invaluable key to the collection’. In 1895 Bride resigned and Michael Dowden assumed the position briefly, dying three months later. Rather than look outside for a replacement the Library appointed one of its own, Edmund La Touche Armstrong who was confirmed in the position of Chief Librarian in 1896.  

Armstrong had joined the Library at 17 in 1881, gradually working his way through the ranks until appointed principal assistant in the Reference Library in 1895. His ascension to the top position was sudden but he held it for the following 29 years. He was committed to the South Kensington model of the four institutions on one site and ‘the display of knowledge, creation and achievement in the one complex’. In 1899 he introduced the Dewey decimal system of classification into the Lending Library and then into the Reference Library from 1910 to 1915. And he was a strong advocate for a domed solution to the new Library.
In 1881 von Guérard retired from the position of Master of the School of Painting and Curator of the National Gallery and George Folingsby was appointed. There followed ‘one of the most fruitful periods in the history of Australian art’ which saw the disparate genres of ‘figure painting, landscape and subject painting combine to produce some of our most memorable images’. Folingsby encouraged subject painting, in particular subjects taken from everyday life such as Frederick McCubbin’s *Home again* (1884) and Aby Altson’s *Flood sufferings* (1890).

While these paintings did not come into the collection until years later several British subject paintings were acquired in this opulent decade including a replica of LA Tadema’s *Vintage festival* (1888), Thomas Faed’s *The mitherless bairn* (1855), Lady Butler’s *The 28th Regiment at Quatre Bras* (1875), WQ Orchardson’s *The first cloud* (1887) and JW Waterhouse’s *Ulysses and the sirens* (1891). More astute perhaps was the purchase of a collection of prints selected by Hubert von Herkomer in London which included Rembrandt’s *Christ healing the sick* (1649), while the purchase of a ceramic bowl and plate by William de Morgan in 1885 indicated that the issues of design reform aired by Bateman 25 years before had not been entirely forgotten.
Following Folingsby’s death in January 1891, Lindsay Bernard Hall was appointed Director of the National Gallery and Head of the Art School and took up his position in March 1892, just as the economy careened into its worst phase.\textsuperscript{139} Destined to become the longest-serving Director of the National Gallery, Hall had begun his art training in 1874 at the School of Design, South Kensington which laid the foundations of his strong advocacy for technical expertise, craftsmanship and manual skill. He accrued further experience in Europe, studying in Antwerp, briefly, and at the Munich Academy in the early 1880s. By 1883 he was back in South Kensington in his own studio and over the following decade forged a promising career as an artist.

The bleak Melbourne economic environment of the 1890s would have been a shock but Hall was not inactive as a teacher, administrator and practising artist in these early years, a spacious studio being placed at his disposal by the trustees on the first floor of Swinburne Hall overlooking Little Lonsdale Street.

Hall was alive to the recent movements in design reform in Britain and Europe and in 1895 with a group of architects and designers including Francis Smart and William Tappin, principles of Reed, Smart & Tappin, he established the journal \textit{Arts and Crafts}. He was a close friend of Smart and collaborated with Tappin on the design of Aigburth, his house in Malvern.\textsuperscript{140} Based on British models the journal’s aim was to ‘aid the elevation on the one hand of the status of and workmanship of the Craftsman, and on the other in

\textbf{Aby Altson, Flood sufferings, 1890, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, accessioned 1967, 1744-5}

In 1891 Aby Altson carried off the second triennial travelling scholarship. Not long before, a disastrous flood at Bourke had made headline news and so, as \textit{The Australasian Critic} remarked, Altson’s topical subject ‘probably had quite as much effect as its treatment in securing the honour that has been bestowed upon it.’
the stimulation and improvement of the artistic perceptions of the people." Three issues were published between 1895 and 1898 covering such topics as the design of furniture, stained glass, architecture, needlework and metalwork, important contributions to the emerging Arts and Crafts Movement in Melbourne. In many ways it recalled the precepts put forward by Denis O'Donovan in his 1871 paper at the Industrial and Technological Museum.

A measure of Hall's commitment to the Arts and Crafts Movement was the cabinet he commissioned in 1895, probably designed by the architects William Tappin and Guyon Purchas. The inscription carved on it – Liebe Glaube Denke (love believe think) – recalled Hall's years in Munich. It was one of the earliest and most important pieces of Arts and Crafts furniture in Australia, its carved panels and hand-beaten metal door furniture demonstrating a delight in craftsmanship typical of the Arts and Crafts Movement. In 1896 Hall appointed Purchas to head up a new course in applied art at the Gallery but it was not a success and Purchas left after a year.

*Arts and Crafts*, George Robertson, Melbourne, October 1895, State Library of Victoria, Rare Books Collection, RARES 705 AR7

In 1900 Hall became associated with the T Square Club, an Arts and Crafts association established by Harold Desbrowe-Annear, an architect and lecturer at the Working Men’s College. Hall was its second President and most of Melbourne’s active young architects belonged to it. Hall’s interest in the applied arts, that is, the ‘value add’ that arts could bring to industry, ultimately had its roots in the South Kensington model of education and had been nurtured for 30 years within the walls of the Melbourne Institution.

Arthur Streeton, *The purple noon’s transparent might*, 1896, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased 1896, 33-2
If Hall had his own ideas about art education he also had strong views about the standard of the art collection gathered together over the previous decades by the diverse band of advisers let loose in London by the trustees. It did not have the excellence or coherence of the book collection which had been put together with care, a rigorous policy and collecting guidelines. One of Hall’s duties was to advise the trustees on the purchase of works of art and in 1900 he submitted a report outlining his concerns. He pointed out, for example, that Alfred ‘Taddy’ Thompson, adviser for many years, failed to make good purchases because ‘he did not begin to grasp what the idea of art was, and that its end and aim

Frederick McCubbin, *A winter evening*, 1897, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased 1900, 61-2
is “its own excellence” ... Art has nothing to do with the ethics of the Sunday-school – Bad workmanship is the only immorality known to it’. Moreover, the trustees purchased ‘without reference to the collection as a whole’ and had overlooked such artists as the Pre-Raphaelites, Fortuny, Meissonnier, Degas, Alfred Stevens, Millais, Whistler and Burne-Jones. Hall recommended for purchase Australian artists who had been neglected during the 1880s and Streeton’s Purple noon’s transparent might (1896) and McCubbin’s A winter evening (1897), among others, entered the collection.

Four years later Alfred Felton, industrialist, collector and friend of Hall died, leaving a large bequest to the Gallery that Armstrong hoped would soon ‘enable the Trustees to place the National Gallery of Victoria amongst modern Galleries of the first rank in the world of art’. Buoyed by this largesse, and no doubt piqued by their Director’s report, the trustees decided to send Hall to England with £4000 to spend on art works and his first purchases ‘were divided between those artists who had impressed him in his youth – Corot, Fantin-Latiur, Theodore Rousseau and David Cox – and great contemporary or near-contemporary masters, Rodin, Pissarro, Ford Maddox Brown and Edward Burne-Jones’. Hall admired Rodin whom he met on several occasions in Paris in 1905 and bought Minerva without a helmet at this time while he recommended Crying lion for purchase in 1909. He also bought JMW Turner’s Okehampton and Pissarro’s Boulevard Montmartre on the 1905 visit.
Auguste Rodin, *Crying lion (Le lion qui pleure)*, 1881, bronze, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest 1909, 379-2
Building a new world

Blenheim

Somerville Fruit Society 1904-6.4.04
per W. C. Sheppard

4986

Gravenstein, W. C. Sand 7.1.04

4963

Somerville Fruit Society 1904-6.4.04
per W. C. Sheppard

Coppers Market
Newbery died in 1895 when he was just 52 and mineralogist RH Walcott was appointed Acting Curator of the Industrial and Technological Museum. Newbery had achieved much in his years as Superintendent of the Museum and also as a scientist in private practice. He was a highly regarded consultant to the mining industry, achieving worldwide fame for an improved method of gold extraction and in 1891 was sent on a mission to Germany to research the latest developments in the brown coal industry.¹⁴⁷ He was appointed honorary superintendent of juries and awards for the 1880 International Exhibition in Melbourne showing that the links between the development of the Institution and Exhibitions were still strong after 30 years. Indeed the Museum was actively engaged in preparing scientific exhibits for various international exhibitions in the 1880s.

In 1885 Newbery commissioned May Vale to paint about 100 timber samples with representative flowers and foliage for each species, part of the Museum’s collection of economic botany.

Vale was an art student at the National Gallery and her work was supervised by Government Botanist, Ferdinand von Mueller who had first prepared timber samples for display in the Melbourne Exhibition of...
1854. The May Vale collection was sent to the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London, the 1887 Jubilee Exhibition in Adelaide, the 1888–89 Centennial Exhibition in Melbourne and the 1889 *Exposition Universelle* in Paris.\(^{148}\) Newbery was probably a more successful scientist than curator for after his death a decision was made to cull many of the exhibits in the Museum and replace them with better specimens and in 1897 some were sold and others given to the Working Men’s College.

The origins of the Museum are complicated...

As well as the death of Newbery, 1895 saw the appointment of Baldwin Spencer, Professor of Biology at the University as a trustee of the Library. Four years later he became Director of the National Museum in an honorary capacity. The origins of the Museum are complicated and involve the competing interests of two parties, the Philosophical Society of Victoria, and Professor Frederick McCoy, or in geographical terms, the city and the university.\(^{149}\)

May Vale, Timber sample — 173. *Quandong, Santalum acuminatum*, Victoria 1885, painted timber, Museum Victoria, ST 001128
In 1854 a Museum of Natural History opened in the Government Assay Office, La Trobe Street, with Prussian-born William Blandowski in charge as Government Zoologist. However, at the same time Irish-born McCoy had been appointed foundation Professor of Natural Science at the University of Melbourne. After extensive experience as a field naturalist and museum curator in Cambridge and Belfast, McCoy no doubt expected to be in charge of a museum where he could conduct his research. In June 1856 in a bid to ward off the predations of McCoy, the Philosophical Society of which Blandowski was a member approached the Library with a view to asking them to take on the museum. Since this fitted in with the long-term vision of the trustees for a multi-institutional complex on their site, and with the model of the British Museum in mind, they agreed. They even went so far as to ask Reed for plans of the south wing with a view to transforming it into a museum.150

Display case of 203 species of hummingbirds, c. 1857–76, mixed media, Museum Victoria, B 20934

Frederick McCoy bought in excess of 5000 birds from John Gould in England between 1857 and 1876 for his National Museum. Gould had astutely mounted a display of stuffed hummingbirds during the Great Exhibition of 1851, arrayed in cases such as we see here. He attracted more than 75,000 visitors and sparked the hummingbird craze that lasted for three decades. Major Davidson showed a case of hummingbirds from the West Indies at the 1854 Melbourne Exhibition.
McCoy prevailed, however, and in 1856 he transferred the collections from La Trobe Street to the University in a move that antagonised not only Blandowski but also those who believed a museum controlled by the University would not be a public one. In December 1857 McCoy was gazetted ‘Director of the Museum of Natural and Applied Sciences’. In 1862 he negotiated with the government to provide a new building on University grounds and the newly titled National Museum was designed by Reed & Barnes in the Gothic style used by Deane & Woodward for their recently completed Oxford University Museum of Natural History (1855–1860) which Reed may well have seen on his 1862 trip to England.
The Melbourne version decorated by Bateman opened in 1864 with an imposing interior and galleried hall lit by clerestory windows.

By now the collections comprised agricultural and mining machinery, the mining models McCoy had commissioned from Carl E Nordstrom in the 1850s as well as significant natural history material gathered from all over the world, including hundreds of birds from John Gould. However, in 1870 the government moved the mining and agricultural collections to the newly opened Industrial and Technological Museum leaving an embittered and fiercely protective McCoy with his natural history collection.

McCoy was a passionate and astute collector and he built up an outstanding natural history and geological collection. When he died in May 1899 he had been Director of the Museum for 43 years. Spencer, as McCoy’s successor, masterminded the transfer of the University collection to the Swanston Street site. McCoy Hall, completed in 1892 for the Industrial and Technological Museum, was repurposed and opened as the National Museum on 19 December 1899 and in 1900 it closed for a few months while Spencer re-classified the specimens.\textsuperscript{151}

As a part of this re-organisation, the unloved and un lamented casts and statues were removed from the north hall and the Australian Ethnological Museum took their place while a ‘fine collection of exhibits from Central Australia’ was purchased from Mr FJ Gillen.\textsuperscript{152} In 1896 Spencer and Gillen had undertaken ‘the most intensive field-work then attempted in Australia’ which resulted in the important publication \textit{The native tribes of Central Australia} (1899).\textsuperscript{153}

The geological collection was reunited with McCoy’s collection and much of the Industrial and Technological Museum was moved to the mezzanine of Queen’s Hall. Spencer was also involved in the new National Museum building fronting Russell Street, the tender for which was accepted in 1899 but the building of which was only carried out in fits and starts as government funding allowed; Baldwin Spencer Hall finally opened in March 1906.
Spencer’s legacy to the Institution was enormous, not only in his management of the Museum collections but also in the bequest of his personal ethnographic collection from Central Australia, including some of the earliest film and sound recordings ever made of Aboriginal ceremonial performances and song.  

Just before this, in 1897, Sir George Turner’s government had tried to wrest the monopoly of the Library building works away from Reed, Smart & Tappin, instituting proceedings to win future architectural contracts for the Public Works Department. The Victorian economy was still in a mess and Turner ‘determined to redeem Victoria’s disgrace ... grimly cut costs, slashing public works, education and defence’, probably reckoning that his own Department would be a less expensive option than a private firm. The issue finally resolved around the legal rights of the trustees to appoint
the architects and the fees the government was liable for if they were successful and had to compensate the architects for unpaid work done. In 1889 Reed, Henderson & Smart had prepared plans for the completion of the buildings to the east. La Trobe Gallery, Stawell Gallery and McCoy Hall were built in 1892 to this plan and the architects were paid for their work. But they had not been paid for their plans for the unbuilt work including Spencer Hall and the south-west corner of the Swanston Street building, a schedule for which had been forwarded to the trustees in 1896. In the face of these obstacles the government backed down and the firm remained in control until World War I.\textsuperscript{156}

Reed, Henderson & Smart, architects, Melbourne Public Library, elevation, [1880s], ink on paper, courtesy Michael Bankes
Building a new world
1913–1926

Melbourne Public Library site plan: stages of construction 1863–1913

1856–1858
1859–1863
1866–1869
1870–1883
1887–1898
1899–1912

This graphic is based on site plans by Lovell Chen Architects & Heritage Consultants, 2008

Little Lonsdale Street
La Trobe Street
Swanston Street
Russell Street

Little Lonsdale Street

La Trobe Street

Swanston Street
Russell Street
Melbourne Public Library site plan: stages of construction 1856–1926
Based on site plans by Lovell Chen, Architects & Heritage Consultants, 2009
In the 20 years from 1886 Reed’s office had completed a library annexe, four art galleries and two museum halls occupying most of the eastern half of the site and completing the southern boundary. These buildings were functional, handsome and workable yet none of them exhibited the innovative interiors evident in the Exhibition buildings or what had become known in 1864 as Queen’s Hall that were the result of the collaboration between Reed and Bateman. It was only with the last building in the period covered here that architecture was again approached with a sense of ambition.

In 1900 the Chief Librarian Edmund La Touche Armstrong delivered a paper on ‘The Model Library’ where he stated his allegiance to the idea of a domed reading room:

... so far as I can ascertain, no radical improvement has been made on Panizzi’s idea, as carried out to some extent at the British Museum. He planned a great circular reading room, and provided for surplus volumes and future additions in store rooms within easy access. No greater tribute has been paid to the excellence of this idea than the fact that the newly-erected Library of Congress at Washington has been built on very similar lines. I think, therefore, we may accept this system as a basis for our model library.\(^{157}\)
In February 1905 Paterson Bros cleaned and redecorated Queen’s Hall and Barry Hall but this did not hide the fact that after 50 years of service they could no longer accommodate the Library which had undergone such extraordinary growth. In March, Armstrong suggested to the trustees that as a fitting way to celebrate the Library’s jubilee, a new building be erected, and the trustees agreed. Sketch plans were prepared by Norman Peebles, the architects’ chief draftsman, ‘for a great octagonal building, to contain over a million volumes, and to provide accommodation for 500 readers in the main hall’. Armstrong’s commitment to a domed reading room was confirmed while he was on leave in 1908 when he visited both the British Museum and the Library of Congress armed with the architects’ plans which he discussed with his British and American counterparts.

The idea of a great domed space at the heart of the Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria complex was the centrepiece of the 1859 master plan and had been fixed in Melbourne’s imagination for 50 years. Originally Reed & Barnes designed the dome to cover a ceremonial hall, and its main function was in fact an urban one for with its high drum and lantern it dominated the site and could be viewed from a distance. As it turned out, it was never built. What Melbourne did get however, was Smith and Johnson’s domed library at the centre of the Supreme Court in 1874, in the creation of which Barry was instrumental; it was supposedly based on the library of the Four Courts in Dublin that Barry knew well.

The earliest circular library in England was James Gibbs’ Radcliffe Camera at Oxford University, completed in 1748 and its robust Renaissance style was one model for Reed & Barnes. However, the cultural cachet of the British Library, its dome of glass and iron, its modern fire-proof iron shelves and floors all under the control of the ‘possessed’ librarian Panizzi, would have been worth copying. That the Library of Congress followed suit with a grandiose Renaissance display clothing the latest technological advances, was an added encouragement to indulge in this spatially inefficient but alluring library form.
To carry out the work for the new Library, a reconstituted firm of Bates, Peebles & Smart (the last being Charles, son of Frederick Smart who died in 1907) was engaged. From the beginning attention was focused on the dome that was, for a brief time, the largest reinforced concrete span in the world and a great technical innovation for its time. It was fabricated using a combination of two systems of reinforced concrete construction, those of John Monash’s Monier Company and the English Truscon system. Seen as technologically, if not aesthetically, innovatory and modern, the Library was well documented in the press and professional journals. For Sydney publishers George and Florence Taylor in 1911 it was an expression of Melbourne’s ambition and modernity:

Every half-minute with a roar and a rattle a ton of concrete is shot up from below, and a gang of men fall on it, and as quickly throw it into chutes conveying it to the great steel-laced ribs. Down the concrete flows in a never-ending stream, covering the spider web of steel and locking it from mortal gaze for perhaps ages to come.¹⁶¹

It represented the future:

**Our dream is ended by a shout from a young fellow with a cinematograph apparatus under his arm.**

He is picturing the roof to send it across the world, where millions of eyes will watch the great dome being built, and wonder when the strange and wonderful land of Australia will stop adding records to its already skyscraping pile.¹⁶²

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¹⁶¹ Bates, Peebles & Smart, architects, New reading room and stack rooms, western elevation, 1909, pen, ink and watercolour on linen-backed paper, reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office of Victoria, VPRS 3686/P0001, Unit 397, Item LM 1.72

¹⁶² Bates, Peebles & Smart, architects, New reading room and stack rooms, roof plan, c. 1909–13, ink and watercolour on linen, Bates, Smart & McCutcheon Pty Ltd Collection, 1968.0013, The University of Melbourne Archives.

These two drawings of the domed reading room were part of a series that would have shown all aspects of the building.
The opening of the Library’s new domed space on 14 November 1913 was a cause for celebration in Melbourne.

At a glittering ceremony attended by Melbourne notables and accompanied by part-songs performed in the tiered galleries, Lord Denman – no doubt inspired by the white airiness of the interior – described the modern Library as a ‘clearing house of thought’, its role being to ensure that the outlook of the citizenry remained ‘sane and bright’.163 It had taken the staff six weeks to transfer 30,000 books to the open shelves and arrange them under the Dewey Decimal system; the remainder were transferred to the storerooms. Armstrong was understandably proud of this feat and described his building in some detail:

The new Library is octagonal in form, and contains a basement, ground floor, first floor, and three galleries. It is built of brick, ferro-concrete, and glass, and is fireproof. The surrounding galleries and museums shut off the noise of the city, whilst ample provision is made for ventilation and light by courtyards on four sides of the octagon. The walls of the building are double, the space between them forming an annulus 16 feet in width surrounding the Reading Room. Four sides of the inner wall are solid, and four are supported by pillars so as to allow light into the first floor and basement. The dome of the Reading Room, which is believed to be the largest ferro-concrete dome in the world, springs from the inner wall on the first floor. It is 144 feet in diameter and 114 feet in height, and its floor space gives ample accommodation for more than 300 readers...

... On the four sides of the octagon not required for light, provision is made for stack rooms, two of which have been erected, and the total accommodation is estimated to provide for about two million volumes.164
The classically ornamented interior was arranged on a radial panopticon plan, commonly used in penal establishments with a librarian (rather than a warden) seated on a raised dais at the centre.

From here an eye could survey the whole room and maintain order with stern admonitions to 'Silence'. But many Melburnians mourned the loss of the direct access to books they had enjoyed in Queen’s Hall and Barry Hall, which had now been replaced by the separation of the stacks from the reading room, an innovation in library planning that had gained widespread acceptance in early 19th-century Britain, Europe and the United States but had somehow bypassed Melbourne.165

The completion of the new Library was to be the last major building at the Institution for decades to come. It realised the vision, albeit in greatly modified form, of the 1860 master plan insofar as the site now contained two main blocks housing the Library and the galleries and museums respectively; it was dominated by an impressive dome which added gravitas to its urban setting. But the architectural sophistication of Reed’s master plan had been abandoned and a piecemeal approach to planning substituted, so Melbourne never got its grand Renaissance pile which would have enhanced the northern end of Swanston Street so well and provided an antipodean counterpart to the monumental new street frontage designed by Aston Webb for the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1891.

Norman Peebles, designer, design for reading room chairs, 1912, ink on paper, reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 3686/P0001, Unit 397, Item LM 1.99

This full-scale, elegant line drawing is not only an important document in the history of the Library but also an important artefact in the history of Melbourne industrial design, furniture being a central component of that discipline. Architects had a strong involvement in furniture design in 19th-century Britain, spear-heading the Arts and Crafts Movement. In Melbourne, around the turn of the century, most leading architects designed furniture for at least some of their interiors.
Nonetheless as the war drew ever closer, the trustees had accomplished what they set out to do 60 years earlier, having provided the public of Melbourne with a world-class collection-based institution for learning. As the president of the trustees Henry Gyles Turner noted at the opening of the reading room ‘the edifice reflected the great progress of the intellectual life of the community since the time, 60 years ago, when the first Government vote was placed upon the Estimates for this purpose’.166 Looking back over the intervening century it is striking how relevant their ambition is today, with its outwardly focused, democratically inclined commitment to bring to its broad and diverse public free access to the world’s storehouses of knowledge.


John Gollings has been recording Melbourne in photographs for 40 years and has produced many of our iconic images. Like Nettleton’s in the 19th century, his camera has witnessed monumental change in the city and has created an invaluable archive of imagery that will become more potent over time. Here Gollings interprets the Domed Reading Room as a globe, animating once more the ancient symbolism that had informed the architects’ plans a century ago.
END NOTES


10. See Galbally, *Redmond Barry. An Anglo-Irish Australian*. Numerous articles on Barry’s work in the Library have been published in the *La Trobe Journal*.


12. The biography of Reed, one of Melbourne’s most important architects, has yet to be written. The best published account of his life and work in Australia can be found in the essays by George Tibbits and Miles Lewis in P Goad, *Bates Smart: 150 years of Australian architecture*, Thames and Hudson, Fisherman’s Bend Victoria, 2004.


20. ‘The University and the Public Library’, *Argus*, 4 July 1854, p. 5.


23. *Argus*, 20 February 1856, p. 4.

24. Armstrong, *The book of the Public Library*, p. 3 states there are no records of the history of the Library from the laying of the foundation stone to the opening of the Library in 1856. He is unaware of the Reed and von Mueller correspondence with Barry during 1853–1855 and indeed the letters noted here seem to have evaded historical scrutiny.

25. J Reed, letter to R Barry, Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, 1 November 1853, VPRS 84/P0000/1.

26. J Reed, letter to R Barry, 6 November 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 84/P0000/1.

27. J Reed, letter to R Barry, 6 November 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 84/P0000/1.


31 ‘The Public Library’, *Argus*, 12 May 1859.


33 *Argus*, 12 May 1859.


36 *Argus*, 31 October 1860 p. 5.


41 Quoted in Neale, ‘Decorative art and architecture: Owen Jones and Bateman in Australia’, p. 269.

42 *Illustrated Melbourne Post*, 22 March, 1862, p. 20.


46 A Inglis, ‘The collection of art books in the Melbourne Public Library’, in Galbally, Inglis, Downer & Lane, *The first collections*, p. 103.

47 Letter to the Librarian of the Melbourne Public Library, 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 84/P0000/1.

48 J Reed, letter to R Barry, 6 November 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 84/P0000/1.


*Argus*, September 1868.


*The catalogue of the Melbourne Public Library for 1861*, p. ix.


Inglis ‘The collection of art books’, p. 103.


*Official catalogue of the Melbourne Exhibition, 1854*, p. iv.

*Official catalogue of the Melbourne Exhibition, 1854*, p. iv.

*Illustrated catalogue of the International Exhibition of 1862*, quoted in Knight’s preface to the *Guide to the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866, opened at Melbourne October 24*, Blundell & Ford, Melbourne, 1866, p. 5.


Sutherland, *Victoria and its metropolis*, p. 466.


Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral vistas*, p. 82; Darian-Smith, Gillespie, Jordan & Willis (eds), *Seize the day: exhibitions, Australia and the world* http://books.publishing.monash.edu/apps/bookworm/view/SEIZE+THE+DAY/123/xhtml/chapter1.html


*Catalogue of the works of art, ornamental and decorative art exhibited by the trustees of the Melbourne Public Library and Museum*, Melbourne, 1869, p. 58.

Knight, ‘Preface’, *Guide to the Intercolonial Exhibition of 1866*.

Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral vistas*, p. 82.

For Barry’s commissions see D Cowley ‘Redeeming an obligation: Aboriginal culture at the 1866 Exhibition’, *La Trobe Journal*, no. 73 Autumn 2004, pp. 112–21; J Lydon, ‘The experimental 1860s: Charles Walter’s images of Coranderrk Aboriginal Station, Victoria’, *Aboriginal History*, vol. 26, 2002, pp. 78–130; and P Edmonds, “We think that this subject of the native races should be thoroughly gone into at the forthcoming exhibition”: the 1866–67 Intercolonial Exhibition’, in Darian-Smith, Gillespie, Jordan & Willis (eds), *Seize the Day*.


Cowley, ‘Redeeming an obligation’, p. 117.


Downer, ‘Noble savages or ourselves writ strange?’, p. 28.


Neale, entry on Bateman in Bunbury (ed), *This wondrous land*, p. 128.


100 C Rasmussen, ‘Valuable, practical information: founding an Industrial and Technological Museum’, in Rasmussen, A museum for the people, p. 79.


103 Argus, Saturday 1 February 1873, reference courtesy Chris Wood, 19 March 2013.

104 ‘The Technological Commission of Victoria’, The South Australian Register, 12 January 1870, p. 5.


110 Galbally, Redmond Barry, p. 168.

111 M Clarke, Pictures in the National Gallery Melbourne, reproduced in photography from the original paintings by the authority of the trustees, photographed by TF Chuck, the trustees of the Public Library, Museums and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1875.


115 A Inglis, F Moore & P Tuckett, ‘The auspicious commencement of so grand a design’, La Trobe Journal, December 2011, p. 35.

116 D O’Donovan, ‘The uses of art & design in manufacture’, in Lectures delivered in the lecture room of the Museum during the second session of 1871, Samuel Mullen, Melbourne, 1872.


121 Hill & Kohane, ‘Porticoes and churches’, p. 158.
122 Macintyre, A colonial liberalism, p. 155.
123 Macintyre, A colonial liberalism, p. 155.
127 F Grosse, The Public Library, Melbourne, 25 May 1865, p. 9 to accompany an editorial in The Australian News for Home Readers, David Syme’s newspaper for a British audience.
128 The Swanston Street view was described in Australasian Sketcher 23 February 1888, p. 19.
129 Edward Bateman to Georgiana McCrae, 22 August 1886; Edward Bateman to Georgiana McCrae, 7 September 1886; Edward Bateman to Georgiana McCrae, 10 November 1886; all in the McCrae Papers, State Library of Victoria, Australian Manuscripts Collection, MS12248.
131 G Folingsby, ‘Mr Folingsby’s report’, addressed to the President of the trustees, 11 June 1889, copy courtesy Gwen Rankin.
132 Obituary, ‘Joseph Reed’, Argus 30 April 1890.
137 Arnold, ‘Edmund La Touche Armstrong’, p. 82.
138 Galbally, The collections of the National Gallery of Victoria, p. 46.
139 For Hall’s biography see Rankin, L. Bernard Hall: the man the art world forgot.
140 Information of Gwen Rankin, email correspondence, 14 April 2013.
141 Arts and Crafts, ‘Publisher's notice’, 1895.
146 Galbally, The collections of the National Gallery of Victoria, p. 172.
147 Fowler, ‘James Cosmo Newbery (1843–1895)’.


*Argus*, Wednesday 20 December 1899.


Gwen Rankin alerted me to the relevant correspondence between the trustees, Reed, Smart & Tappin and the under secretary, reference to which does not appear in Armstrong’s history.

Quoted in Arnold, ‘Edmund La Touche Armstrong’, p. 83.

For an account of the development of the dome’s design see Lewis, ‘A house divided’ in Goad, *Bates Smart*, p. 98.


Back cover image: Sutcliffe Pty Ltd (photographer), Men on a portable scaffold suspended from the dome ceiling for repairs to the glass panes (detail), c. 1918, gelatin silver photograph, State Library of Victoria, Pictures Collection, H36621