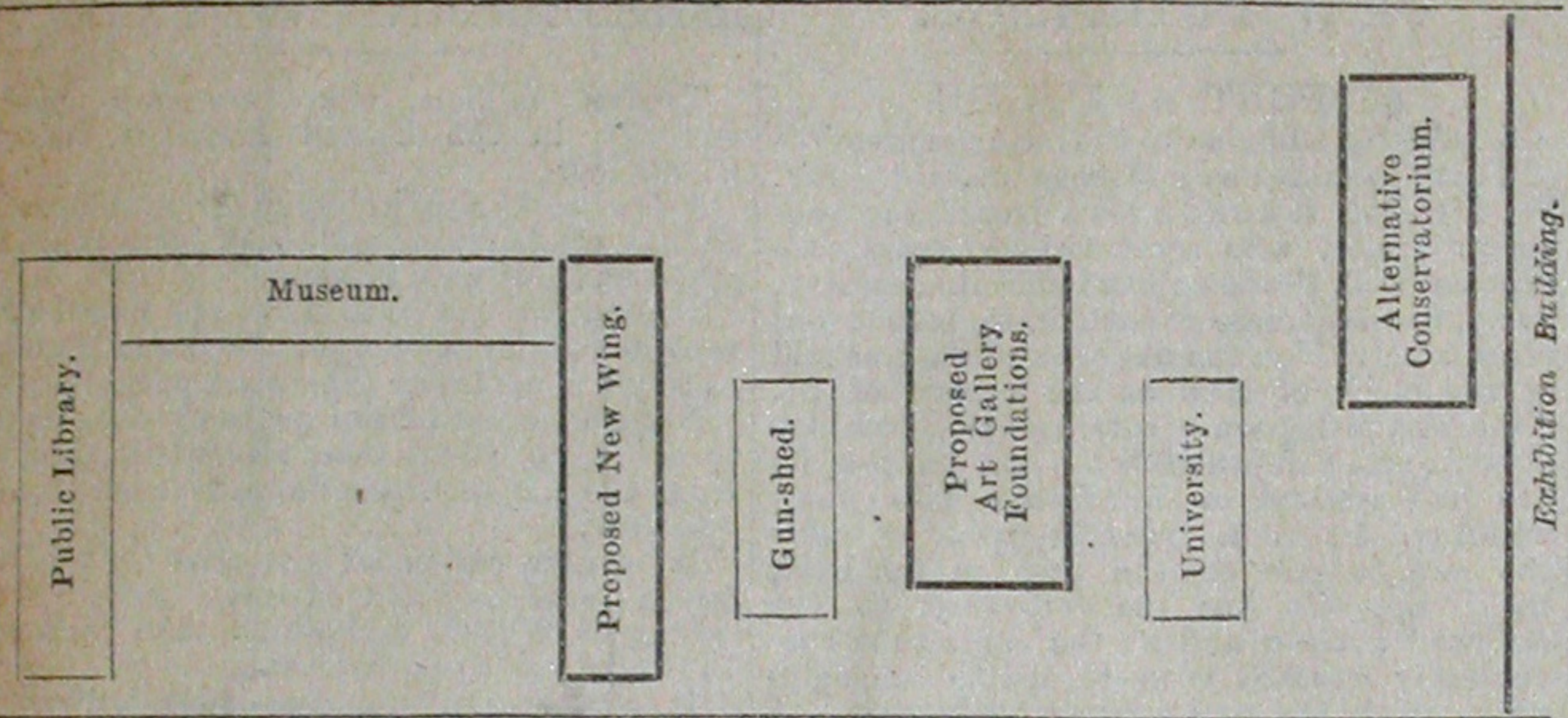


The Register 20th Nov. 1897.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS ON NORTH-TERRACE.



NORTH-TERRACE.

The above plan represents the various proposals with reference to the construction on North-terrace of new buildings for the National Art Gallery and Conservatorium of Music. The matter is fully discussed in the editorial columns of *The Register* this morning.

The Register Nov. 20th 1897.

ADELAIDE: SATURDAY, NOV. 20, 1897.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND THE ART GALLERY.

Second thoughts are often best, and this remark is applicable to the proposed additions to the public buildings on North-terrace. We are not alluding now to the railway station accommodation, regarding which all that need be said at the moment is that whatever is done ought not to be piecemeal or unsystematic. We have too frequently had illustrated in South Australian Government structures the fatuous policy of putting new patches upon old fabrics. The matter to which attention is particularly called at present is that affecting the blocks of buildings which extend at intervals from the Public Library to the Exhibition corner. The relative situations of these edifices are defined in a plan which we publish to-day. In this diagram are presented what is, what is proposed to be, and what ought to be. So far as they go the buildings indicated are fairly good of their kind—excepting of course the tin gunshed, which is an eyesore in marked contrast to the other beautiful buildings on North-terrace, and excepting also the glaring red-brick structure which was put up some time ago to serve the purposes of a Museum. That pile of masonry is entirely out of

harmony with the design of the adjacent buildings, of which the Museum was intended to form an artistic part; but that misfortune must be tolerated, and it is possible that some scheme may be devised for laying out a plantation of palms and grass plots which would relieve the monotony, if not impart beauty to the more or less unattractive brick walls. It would, however, be manifestly a great mistake to add to the motley appearance of the architecture of the locality. Some time ago the Government, with sufficient justification in the circumstances, decided to put up a home for the national art collection between the University building and the gunshed; but it is perfectly clear—and the admission does not imply any disparagement of the plans—that the erection of the intended structure on that spot would increase the patchy aspect of the Government blocks on the terrace. Rather than do this it would be far better to carry out as far as possible the double-winged original design of which the present Public Library building was erected as the first part. It may be urged that that plan was departed from by the construction of the Museum, but two mistakes do not constitute a right act. Does any insurmountable difficulty prevent the building of the eastern wing to correspond with the western, thus obviating the necessity of erecting a detached Art Gallery? We think not. On the contrary, strong arguments may be urged in favour of the alternative now suggested.

At present the establishments under the control of the Board of Governors of the Public Library and its allied institutions are too widely separated; the literary and natural history sections are on one part of the terrace and the art branches are con-

ducted on quite another portion. If the proposed Art Gallery should be built on the site now prepared for it the division into two portions will be replaced by a division into three, and what that means in unnecessary cost of administration any man of business may readily determine. The new building which has been planned is intended to accommodate only the pictures—not the art classes; but if the eastern wing of the original design were executed all the establishments under the Board of Governors would be self-contained, and would be under one central control. Another element in the calculation is the fact that, should the Government at any future time decide to build after the original design on the Public Library Block, the new Art Gallery for which tenders have now been called would be comparatively useless. Ministers might fairly, therefore, in recognition of the peculiar circumstances of the case, withdraw the call for tenders for the building until they shall have had time to reconsider the whole question in its changed aspects. It seems to us that by a mutual arrangement between the Public Library authorities and the University, with the sanction of the Minister controlling the department, the public convenience might be better served in this way. In addition to the objections already presented against the selected site for the Art Gallery may be urged the fact that the University wants that land for use in connection with the expenditure of part of the late Sir Thomas Elder's munificent bequest for the promotion of the higher musical education of the rising colonists of South Australia. Some days ago it was announced that the University management intends at a cost of £10,000 to erect a building to serve the purpose of a Conservatorium of Music. The Council has, however, no site suitable to such a structure. The one marked on the plan which we publish is a long way back from the line of the Terrace, and overlooks the Exhibition Building, where shows and other entertainments are held, and the clatter naturally associated with the exhibition of dogs, poultry, and live stock—intensified by the whirring and whistling of machinery in the adjacent hall—would be ill calculated to assist the students at the Conservatorium to concentrate their attention upon the abstruse details of their subject, much less to discriminate between the delicate shades of harmony and discord. In relation also to the possible expansion of the Exhibition Buildings from the east to the west there are objections to occupying the alternative site which the University Council has suggested for the Conservatorium. Of course it would be possible for that body to purchase some hall already

"The Advertiser" 26th Nov. 1897.

LETTER FROM PROFESSOR IVES.

Professor Ives has sent the following letter to the Minister of Education:—

November 23rd, 1897.

Dear Dr. Cockburn—I learn that an influential deputation is to do itself the honor of waiting upon you in order to express its belief in the desirability of your Government making some slight alterations in their plans for public buildings on North-terrace. I am sorry that my duties at the University will prevent me from joining the deputation, as I should like to have done, but I cannot refrain from expressing some thoughts on the subject that are occupying my mind at this moment.

You are aware that owing to the handsome bequest of the late Sir Thomas Elder to the University School of Music one of the most momentous events in the history of musical art in Australia is about to transpire—that a Conservatorium of Music is to be inaugurated. We English-speaking people have long sat quietly under the reproach of being unmusical. Whether we have deserved the accusation or not I will not stop to discuss. There seems to me, however, no reason why colonial offsprings of the great nation should not make full use of the talent and intelligence they undoubtedly possess. Our bright skies and clear atmosphere are specially favorable for the production of singers, and that our colonists have musical talent in other directions if there be proper opportunity for its development is amply proved by the great success of such artists as have been able to go to Europe and receive proper instruction. Going home to study, however, is costly work, and few music students are able to afford it. And so it seems to me to be our duty to provide the best possible means for the development of musical talent here. The generous bequest of the late Sir Thomas Elder gives opportunity for an excellent start to be made in this direction. In the new Conservatorium it is proposed to provide a teaching staff of high rank and I am sanguine enough to believe that if judiciously controlled the new institution will attract students from all parts of Australasia—that it will in fact become the most important centre of musical education in the colonies. I understand that the suggestions of your petitioners if acquiesced in will make it possible for the building in connection with the Conservatorium to be placed in as prominent a position on North-terrace as their importance justly entitles them to. And I am further informed that this may be effected by the mere exchange of a few feet of frontages. I do hope you will be able to consider the matter favorably. Through the many years I have had the privilege of your acquaintance I have noticed with pleasure the numerous occasions upon which you have had the courage to think originally, and to do that which seemed to you to be best for the community at large. I am no politician—we musicians have generally more sentiment than sense in our composition—but I am quite sure that not only will the Conservatorium become a great educational factor in Australia, but that its concert hall will become especially popular with the people of Adelaide. By means of its concerts, &c., the new branch will perhaps do more than it has been possible to do in the past to bring the University into closer touch with the social life of the community. And as I further understand that advantages will accrue to other sides of artistic life by the carrying out of the original plans for the Art Gallery and that further facilities for the rapidly increasing requirements of that useful establishment, the School of Mines, will be afforded by the proposed arrangements of plans, it seems to me that on the ground of expediency they may recommend themselves to your judgment of what is best for the general good of the people.