The recommendations of the Royal Commission as to housing the University are very modest. Perhaps timid would be a better word. They say -

"The Commission is not prepared to make a definite recommendation as to its housing. For the present it is clear Professors, Lecturers, Examiners and students will have to be content with temporary and provisional arrangements."

The Commission then proceed to discuss various sites and wind up with an expression of strong approval of the West Subiaco site. Crawley was at this time private property and had not been mentioned as a University site.

Parliament seems to have taken its cue from the Royal Commission, for during the whole of the debate on the University Bill through both houses only one member, Mr. Heitmann, Labour member for one of the Murchison constituencies, mentioned the necessity for capital expenditure on buildings and equipment. The Premier, Mr. Frank Wilson, would not go further than to express a hope "that in the next financial year I shall be in a position to report to the House as to the best site available and as to proposed buildings."

This refusal on the part of the Royal Commission and Parliament to face the obvious necessity of capital expenditure for buildings and equipment was due, there is no doubt, to a fear among University well wishers that if they had mentioned even the modest £50,000 with which Queensland University had been started, the whole project would have been endangered. Sir John Kirwan has informed me that at first in the Legislative Council the opposition to establishing a University was strong and it was only the persistency of Dr. Hackett which led to the necessary University Act being passed. Dr. Hackett was a shrewd parliamentarian and he doubtless saw that to mention
£100,000, or even £50,000, for buildings would have frightened his Legislative Council colleagues. The result was the fifteen years sojourn in Irwin Street in temporary buildings. Notwithstanding all the ridicule and contumely heaped on "tin-pot alley" the necessity to spend these fifteen years there is now realised to have been very fortunate. There are several good reasons for believing this. In the first place, the contemporary conception as to the buildings and the area of land required appear to us now to have been rather small, even petty. The Royal Commission say "A building of the size of the Technical School in St. George's Terrace or the Continuation School in Thomas Street, ought to be sufficient for the earlier stages." If the Government of 1913-4 had spent say £50,000 to erect a building on 80 acres in West Subiaco the University would have had a much less propitious beginning than it ultimately had.

The fifteen years sojourn in tin-pot alley allowed the undreamed of potentialities of the Hackett Bequest to mature and we were able to erect £220,000 worth of the most beautiful University buildings in Australia on 170 acres of land suitable from every standpoint and in a position of unsurpassed beauty and convenience.

Meanwhile the Senate of 1912 had to find accommodation of some sort in which to begin its work. It lost no time, for at its first meeting it was decided, on the motion of Mrs. Moss, to appoint a Committee consisting of the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Battye and Mrs. Moss to make arrangements for the future temporary accommodation of the Senate. The report of this Committee was adopted at the third meeting of the Senate (May 20th, 1912) held at the University Office. The office and Senate Room were in Cathedral Chambers.

At the meeting in September 1912 Messrs. Wilson and Somerville were appointed a Sub-Committee to interview the
Government with the view of obtaining the old Legislative Council buildings in Hay Street. These have been for many years occupied by the Agricultural Department. In 1912 they had just been vacated by the Legislative Council who had moved to new quarters in Harvest Terrace. The Sub-Committee were also instructed that if it was not found possible to secure the Legislative Council buildings the Government be asked to provide the money necessary to erect temporary accommodation on a site to be selected. Various alternative proposals were discussed including the rental of a floor of the newly erected Forest House in St. George's Terrace but the Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Andrews, preferred temporary buildings which he estimated could be built for about £3,000. The effort to secure the old Legislative Council buildings was not successful. The Government had other plans for that building.

In the meantime the Administrative Committee had reported in favour of the temporary buildings being erected on Reserve 5957 on the corner of William Street and Bazaar Terrace. It was decided to take a ballot to decide the order of preference of three proposed sites. The voting was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>1st pref.</th>
<th>2nd pref.</th>
<th>3rd pref.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bazaar Terrace</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observatory</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irwin Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not shown how these preferences worked out but the next resolution was -

"That the Premier be asked to provide a site for temporary buildings and that if they are available the following sites - Bazaar Terrace, Observatory and Irwin Street be recommended but without any indication of preference."

At the October 1912 meeting the Chancellor reported having interviewed the Premier who had promised to reply
through Mr. Walker, the Minister for Education and Senator. Mr. Walker said the Government proposed -

(1) To place the services of the Chief Architect at the disposal of the Senate for the preparation of the necessary plans.

(2) To grant the Observatory site provided that a favourable reply was received from the Commonwealth Government as to the termination of its tenure.

(3) To find the money for the erection of temporary buildings on condition that the University paid interest on the amount involved.

(4) To allow buildings to be erected in Bazaar Terrace in the event of failure to secure the Observatory land.

On the motion of Messrs. Grasby and Smith it was decided - "That the Government be thanked for the offer to provide buildings and that the Administrative Committee be empowered to make the necessary arrangements."

It is notable that this resolution makes no mention of the third condition, namely the University to pay interest on the amount "involved" in providing temporary buildings. This is bound to have been strongly criticised and Mr. Walker presumably withdrew it for it is not subsequently mentioned.

The next stage was the elimination of the Observatory land. It was not found possible to make terms with the Commonwealth authorities, so a resolution was carried that the buildings be erected in Bazaar Terrace. This in turn presented difficulties for it was found that a Mrs. Evans had paid half the necessary deposit for a lease. So finally, on 9th January, 1913, the Senate agreed to Irwin Street.

The Public Works Department got energetically to work and in about 2 months' time had erected a jarrah building. This, together with the old buildings formerly used as the Unemployment Bureau, served to begin. The new building
was T-shaped with the cross member facing St. George's Terrace and the leg running back to about half way to Hay Street. The old building fronted Hay Street. Both of these were afterwards shifted to Crawley in 1931-2 and are at the time of writing occupied by Botany, Psychology, Education and Law.

Teaching began in March 1913. Professor Murdoch relates how on the day the staff were to begin they found the workmen had gone, the door was locked and no-one had a key. However, Professor Wilsmore found a window unlocked and through this he climbed and so opened the University for business. The papers next day announced that the University had begun its career but did not mention Wilsmore's burglary.

The office and administrative staff were in rooms in Cathedral Avenue rented from the Church of England. These had been secured in January 1912. They consisted of the whole of the ground floor of Cathedral Chambers, the rent was £4 per week, and they were occupied until 24th July, 1916. In June 1916 the Senate enclosed the verandah facing St. George's Terrace at a cost of £110 to provide office accommodation.

The two buildings in which teaching had begun soon proved insufficient and representations were made to the Premier for money to erect further buildings.

The Premier wrote on 12th June, 1913 the Government (Scaddan) would be prepared to provide the additional amount required for temporary buildings free of interest subject to the University being prepared to transfer for the purpose of Workers' Homes certain of the Endowment Lands. This letter is of interest for it is the first mention of the desire of the Scaddan Government to obtain some of the Endowment Lands for Workers' Homes. It was promptly challenged by Sir Walter James and Dr. Saw who moved at the next meeting -
"That the suggestion of the Hon. the Premier is one which in principle the Senate cannot entertain and that two members be appointed to convey the decision to the Premier."

Thus was the battle of the sites fairly joined but its history belongs to another chapter.

In the meantime the enrolment of students was growing and pressure on the building space at Irwin Street was increasing. The removal of Engineering to Crawley in 1914 had eased it slightly but progress towards increased accommodation was blocked by the difference of opinion between Scaddan and James as to the use of endowment lands for Workers' Homes. Scaddan went out of office and Wilson became Premier in July 1916.

During the early years of the University the paucity of students on the Science side was deplored. However, the taking up of Science by the State Modern School and the building there of Science laboratories practically forced a similar course of action on the part of competing private secondary schools and a great increase in the number of University students on the Science side resulted.

It was impossible to find space for these in the existing buildings, so on April 20th, 1917 (Wilson, Premier) a deputation waited on the Minister for Education to put to him the critical stage that had been reached. The Minister, after inspection, informed the deputation that he was satisfied that unless increased accommodation was obtained the University would have to refuse to enrol all the students who were coming forward. As this would be very regrettable a search was instituted by Mr. Hunt, the Under Secretary for Works, and Mr. Hardwick, the Chief Architect, for Government owned wooden buildings which might be shifted to Irwin Street. The buildings obtained and the estimated cost of pulling down and re-erecting were as follows: Oddfellow Hall from Oxford Street, Landerville $654, the
Workers' Hall from Coolgardie £667, two buildings from the Barracks formerly used by the State Brick Works and the State Sawmills £181, and for other buildings and contingencies £2,000 - a total of £3,502. They were erected in a row on the western boundary of the Irwin Street block with the exception of the Coolgardie Trades Hall which faced Irwin Street. They were a nondescript collection which for various reasons had either been erected by the Government to serve some passing need or had reverted to Government ownership because of non-fulfilment of loan conditions. The only one with any design or associations was the Coolgardie Workers' Hall. This had been erected in 1902-3 from a grant by the Government of £350 plus a loan of £250 from the State Savings Bank. Just about this time Coolgardie began to wane and most of the population shifted to Kalgoorlie. The management committee got into financial difficulties and in 1905 the building became the property of the Government in default of payment of interest on the loan. In 1906 the Hall was sold to the Australian Natives' Association for £250, which amount was lent to the Society by the Government Savings Bank to purchase same and a grant of £100 was made to pay off debts and interest etc. But the decline of Coolgardie continued and the A.N.A. were forced in 1912 to inform the Government, after trying to persuade the Federal Government to buy it, that they were unable to keep up payments and were willing to transfer the Hall back to the Government. So the Hall which had cost the Government £950 and the various societies an unknown amount in addition became ownerless. One can imagine it standing derelict and forlorn in one of the dust swept, sun baked and empty streets of Coolgardie until 1917. Then Under-Secretary Mounts Fiat went forth - "Find me buildings which can be taken down and added to the West Australian University." In April 1917 a Coolgardie agent reported
"that there was a building in Coolgardie. The windows are broken and the backdoors are torn off their hinges. "It is wood and iron without lining and £70 would be a good price. The Burbanks Hotel, which had cost over £2,000, sold for £75 and the Bank of Australasia for £60." If you could buy a Coolgardie Bank for £60 why pay more than £70 for a Trades Hall? Architect Hardwick had a Public Works official in Coolgardie and he reported it suitable for removal, for it was strongly built. So it took its long journey of approximately 360 miles by road and rail and came to life again as the Vice-Chancellor's Office and administrative centre of the University in Irwin Street (August 1917).

The cost of these temporary buildings was the only capital outlay incurred by the Government to get the University started. Subsequently the money to erect the Geology and Biology building, the two-storeyed hall added to the old Crawley Homestead for the Engineering Department and shifting the temporary buildings from Irwin Street to Crawley was also provided by the Government. But the earlier proposals to charge rent for the temporary buildings, the actual charge of rent for a time for the old Unemployment Bureau and the failure to provide any capital grant for equipment all indicate that the Government of the day, headed by J. Scaddan, had a very restricted idea as to the requirements of a University.

Teaching began in 1913 and the annual grant began in March 1912 so that when teaching began there was an unexpended balance of £11,000. The whole of this was spent on equipment, and obviously to furnish seven teaching departments with what they required it was inadequate. What may be said to be part of the Arts equipment, which was acquired later in 1925, was a monstrous collection of plaster casts said to represent the elements of design and architectural detail. Some were white but the majority
looked as if they had been stored in a coal cellar. Professor Wilsmore promised to find a solvent for the grime but never thought it worth while. They adorned the walls of the Arts Lecture room in Irwin Street in which the Senate held its meetings for some time. They were offered as a permanent loan by the Victorian and Albert Museum of London. A sceptic might suggest that the Victorian and Albert Museum wanted to get rid of some cumbersome rubbish. They cost a substantial sum to pack and transport from London to Irwin Street and from Irwin Street to Crawley. During the 19 years the University has possessed them they have been of as much use as the gross of green spectacles for which Moses Primrose exchanged the Vicar of Wakefield’s family colt.

The total expenditure by the Government on temporary buildings in Irwin Street was £12,300 made up of £8,800 for the new building in which teaching began in 1913 and £3,500 for the old buildings removed from other places and re-erected in Irwin Street in 1917. This compares unfavourably with Queensland. The University there had begun two years before that of Western Australia and had been granted £36,000 for equipment and been allowed the use of Government House in Brisbane pending the erection of a permanent home.

So the University settled in for the remainder of its sojourn in Irwin Street. To me it was quite appropriate that the first Trades Hall to be erected in Western Australia, where the Trade Union meetings of the gold miners of Coolgardie in its hectic days were held, should subsequently house the Senate and administrative staff of the University. Whatever the Senate may become in the future it certainly had in its first home a democratic environment. For generations well wishers of the higher education have regretted the indifference, even hostility, of each to the other which has characterised the attitude of Australian
wage earners to the University and of the Universities to wage earners. May it be taken as an augury of better things that the building in which Professor Whitfeld sat and dreamed while Fletcher and Parker and their typistes bustled about should be the same building in which the miners had plotted how to get another bob a shift rise or discussed the social reforms of which many of them were students.

In the latter part of 1930 when all the Arts faculty had been transferred to Crawley the Public Works Department began to press for the surrender of some of the temporary buildings in Irwin Street. The University in turn pressed for the erection at Crawley of the permanent Physics and Chemistry buildings. Finally the Government were informed that the Administrative building was vacant. Thus did the old Coolgardie Trades Hall pass from the University's possession. Had we objected to the Premier's request it would in all probability have been transferred with the others to Crawley, in which event the University would have had one building with historical associations for in it had been held in Coolgardie the first W.A. Congress of the Labour Party. At this Congress in 1899 there had been drawn up the Platform and Constitution of that Party. This document was destined to have far reaching effect on the history of Western Australia.

I am indebted to Professor Ross for the series of sketch plans of the University buildings in the block facing St. George's Terrace, Irwin Street and Hay Street, Perth, generally spoken of officially as Irwin Street. The students trained there, not without affection, called it Tin Pot Alley. When it is remembered that the only new building erected for University purposes is the T-shaped building facing St. George's Terrace and that all the others were old wood and iron structures moved from other places
where they had served other purposes for many years, it will be realised how different were the facilities for University work to what are now enjoyed.

The sketch plans show in great detail how a room was added here, a verandah enclosed here etc. as the pressure on space increased.

The size of the rooms can be gauged by the scale which is approximately 32 ft. to the inch. The Library numbered 55-57 was 29 ft. x 48 ft. and from this two small cubby holes were partitioned off for the Librarian.

South Perth.
June 10th, 1944

Dear Somerville,

I am sure you had no evil intentions, but you have given me a painful jolt by forcing me to realise that I am in my dotage. My memory is almost a complete wreck. Your plan of that rabbit-warren brought this acutely home to me. There are five different rooms on it which I can remember having occupied at one time or another, as a private room, but which of the other little rooms was occupied by which of us, I can't recall.

You had better show the plan, if you have not already done so, to Ross and Wood, both of whom have good memories. You yourself will remember that Ross, starting with 1, rapidly expanded into 2, soon absorbed 4, and finally annexed 3 (the verandah) and glazed it. The little room at the end (with no number) Paterson held, defying Physics to oust him.

I can't think where Engineering hung out till 1914, but it was somewhere rear Hay Street - probably in 42, which later became the Library. Geology occupied the rooms cross-hatched with a blue pencil, but these didn't exist in 1913.
But you probably remember a great deal that I have forgotten.

Yours sincerely,

(Walter Murdoch)

I have made enclosed list instead of disfiguring plan with pencilings.
Index to Rooms.

April, 1913.

1. The Great Hall.
2. Library.
3. Lecture Room for Latin.
5. Lecture Room for Chemistry, Philosophy, Classics.
6. Staff Room & Office.
7. Lecture Room for French & German.
8. Lecture Room for Physics.
9. Lecture Room for Engineering.
10. Lecture Room for Biology & Geology.
University of Western Australia

Index to Rooms. May to November, 1913.

5. Mathematics.
6. Staff Room and Office.
7. Lecturers.
8. Professors Ross and Wilsmore.
9. Professor Woolnough.
10. Agriculture and Veterinary Science.
12. Professor Murdoch.
13. Professor Shann.
14. Lecture Room for Classics, French & German, & Philosophy.
15. Lecture Room for English, History & Economics.
17. Geology.
19. Professor Dakin.
20. Women's Common Room.
University of Western Australia

Index to Rooms.

5. Mathematics.
6. Office.
7. Lecturers.
8. Professors Ross and Wilsome.
9. Professor Paterson.
10. Agriculture and Veterinary Science.
12. Professor Murdoch.
13. Professor Shaw.
15. English, History and Economics, Philosophy.
16. French & German.
17. Biology & Geology Lecture Room.
18. Biology & Geology Laboratory.
20. Women's Common Room.

Engineering at Crawley.
University of Western Australia

Index to Rooms. Sessions 1915-16.

1. Physics Laboratory.
5. Mathematics & Physics, Senior Lectures.
6. Physics Preparation Room.
7. Telephone and Janitor.
8. Professor Ross and Mr. Tattersall.
9. Professor Paterson.
10. Agriculture.
12. Professor Murdoch.
13. Professor Sham.
15. English, History & Economics.
16. Philosophy, French & German.
17. Biology Lecture Room.
18. Biology Laboratory.
20. Women's Common Room.
40. Professor Wilsome.
41. Chemistry Preparation Room.
42. Chemistry Lecture Room.
43. Chemistry Laboratory.
44/49. Geology.
52/54. Lecturers.
55/57. Library.
38. Men's Common Room.
Index to Rooms.

1. Physics Laboratory.
2. University Office.
3. Mr. Cayzer.
4. Physics Lecture Room.
5. Messrs. Tattersall & Sanders, Senior Physics Lab.
6. Physics Preparation Room.
7. University Office.
8. Vice-Chancellor (Professor Whitfeld).
9. Professor Paterson.
10. Agriculture.
11. Professor Murdoch.
12. Professor Shanm.
15. Philosophy, French & German.
16. Biology Lecture Room.
17. Biology Laboratory.
19. Women's Common Room.
20. Professor Wilsmore.
22. Chemistry Lecture Room.
23. Chemistry Laboratory.
24. Geology.
25. 50-51.
26. Lecturers.
27. Library.
28. Men's Common Room.
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<td>4-5.</td>
<td>Physics Lecture Room.</td>
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<td>Optical Laboratory.</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Advanced Physics Laboratory.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Professor Ross.</td>
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<td>Professor Sharn.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Mathematics.</td>
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<td>16-17.</td>
<td>Biology Lecture Room.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Mr. Cayzer.</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Professor Dakin.</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Professor Wilemore.</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Chemistry Preparation Room.</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Chemistry Lecture Room.</td>
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<td>27.</td>
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<td>Vice-Chancellor.</td>
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<td>Senate Room.</td>
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<td>Professor Wood.</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Professor Murdoch.</td>
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<td>Classics, French &amp; German Lectures.</td>
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<td>Veterinary Science.</td>
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<td>Professor Paterson.</td>
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<td>Agriculture Laboratory.</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Agriculture Lecture Room.</td>
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<td>Men's Common Room.</td>
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<td>Workshop.</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Professor Tattersall.</td>
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<td>42-43.</td>
<td>Chemistry Laboratory.</td>
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<td>46.</td>
<td>Arts Lecturers.</td>
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<td>47-49.</td>
<td>Geology Lecture Room.</td>
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<td>Geology.</td>
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<td>51-52.</td>
<td>Geology.</td>
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<td>53-54.</td>
<td>Library.</td>
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3. Physics Store Room.
4-5. Physics Lecture Room.
7-9. Optical Laboratory.
10. Advanced Physics Laboratory.
12. Professor Ross.
13. Professor Shann.
14. Heat Laboratory.
15. Mathematics Lecture Room.
16-17. Electrical Laboratory.
18. Psychology Laboratory.
19. Senate and Board Room.

20. Women's Common Room.
21-22. Staff Common Room and Office.
23. Professor Walkmore.
24. Chemistry Preparation Room.
25. Chemistry Lecture Room.

27. University Office.
28. Clerk of Senate.
29. Telephone.
30. Vice-Chancellor.

31. Professor Wood.
32. Professor Murdoch.
33. Classics, French & German Lectures.

34-35. Professor Paterson.
36. Agriculture Laboratory.
37. Agriculture Lecture Room.

38. Men's Common Room.

39. Workshop.
40. Professor Tattersall.
41. Chemistry Dark Room.
42-43. Chemistry Laboratory.
44-45. Arts Lecturers & 52-54.
46. Chemistry Store.
47-49. French & German Lectures.
50-51. Chemistry Laboratory.
55-57. Library.
58-61. Chemistry Laboratory.

Biology & Geology had moved to Crawley.
Index to Rooms.

1-2. Physics Laboratory.
3. Physics Store Room.
4-5. Physics Lecture Room.
7-9. Optical Laboratory.
10. Advanced Physics Laboratory.
11. Physics Staff Research Room.
12. Professor Ross.
14. Heat Laboratory.
15. Psychology Lectures.
16-17. Electrical Laboratory.
18. Psychology Laboratory.
20. Women's Common Room.
21-22. Staff Office.
23. Professor Wilsome.
24. Chemistry Preparation Room.
25. Chemistry Lecture Room.
26. Adult Education Lecture Room.
31-32. Professor Paterson.
33. Agriculture Lecture Room.
34-37. Agriculture Laboratory.
38. Men's Common Room.
39. Workshop and Store.
40. Professor Tattersall.
41. Chemistry Dark Room.
42-43. Chemistry Laboratory.
44-45. Chemistry Stores.
46-51. Chemistry Laboratory.
55-57. Chemistry Laboratory.

Arts Classes had moved to Crawley.