

Robb College

Highlights from Conception to Completion: 1957-64

*By Cherry Robertson
Secretary of the College 1960-1967*

The University's declared policy of establishing a fully residential collegiate system was now under way, and the dairy farm, on what was to become known as "The College Area" had been acquired. This meant that one occurrence which had become a daily gamble would now cease. The dairy farmer was accustomed to walk his herd of cows at that well-known maddeningly slow pace, across the road at the late afternoon peak hour. This not only held up traffic, but placed at risk cars manoeuvring past with tyres slithering through the numerous fresh pats placed with such practised expertise by the unconcerned and totally uninhibited animals.

It was still an age when minutes were not so feverishly important, and tempers not so easily inflamed at the slightest delay. Even so, the above scene, although picturesque, gave some credence to the term 'our bucolic university' which was often still muttered by those detractors, who even yet believed that this first country university could not possibly thrive.

With completion of the initial three blocks of the First Men's College (Wright) and one block of the First Women's College (Mary White), members of staff who had had the benefit of College experience in large universities overseas, and also in Australian cities, were drawn into planning committees and this side of development became top priority.

In October 1958, the plans for what was called the Third College (actually the Second Men's college) were on display and caused quite a bit of excitement. The site was to be south west of Wright, also on the wide expanse of the former dairy farm, and the design was the work of Government Architect, Peter Hall, (later to take over the completion of the Opera House, amid a storm of controversy). The college was to be built along Scandinavian lines, consisting of three residential Courts and a Dining Hall-Common Room Court, each with its own inner courtyard. The four Courts were to be located around a large central quadrangle and seemed to provide for plenty of sun and protection from wind.

The Second Men's College had been named Robb College in honour of William Robb, Registrar of the University College from 1948-1953 and first Registrar of the new University. He had suffered a serious heart attack in 1957, but after the disastrous Belshaw fire in 1958, despite warnings from his doctors, remained an indomitable spirit in the forefront of 'Operation Rescue'. He had survived the strain of his great effort at that time, but died on 14th May. The loss of his experience and wise counsel was felt very keenly.

Ben Meredith, Warden of Students, was appointed Master of Robb and having been a former member of Trinity College, Melbourne University, was anxious to establish the College along traditional lines of formality and was supported in this by the first officers of the Senior Common room, most of whom had had experience of such traditions at Oxford or Cambridge.



The first court was in course of construction and would house 82 men students. It was expected that the building would be ready for occupation by the end of Lent Term. Delays were frequent and as the pressure on accommodation

was still critical, the responsibility of following up such delays and making every endeavour to have this extra accommodation available was a never ending source of stress and worry for the Master. University authorities were acutely aware of the spartan accommodation in some of the town houses and anxious to close down the most unsuitable by transferring those 82 men to the new building.

Manufacturers were fully aware of the residential development at New England and a profusion of brochures of new designs in institutional furniture and furnishings arrived daily. Our knowledge and experience of the damage which could so easily occur in studies and common rooms, where the exuberance of the occupants knew no bounds, made the selection of strong foolproof chairs etc. a very important matter.

Kidnapping was a popular event and raised quite a large sum of money for WUS Week. This year Ben Meredith was kidnapped and held in one of the town houses. Students involved in this activity then visited every building on campus to raise the required ransom for his release. Most students both male and female still knew him very well as Warden of Students at this stage, and many other members of staff, including groundsmen, waitresses, cleaners, Union and other staff had experienced his courtesy and helpful kindness, so that the money was soon raised. I well remember seeing his rather dangerous return to the campus. Hugh Sandford Beggs, a very large student from Victoria (brother of Tamie Fraser, who is wife of our former Prime Minister) and fellow Animal Husband, as Rural Scientists were now called, had commandeered a strong cyclone type



St Cuthbert's, at the corner of Dangar and Mossman Streets, was one of the old Armidale houses used as student residences prior to the building of the colleges. When Robb opened for students in June 1960, St Cuthbert's was closed down. It was demolished shortly afterwards.

Photo: Courtesy of Bruce Edgell of Armidale.

The collapse of a seemingly strong piece of furniture in a common room could result from sudden simultaneous occupancy by three young men weighing in the vicinity of fourteen stone each. A study chair could become a ruin, the culprit nevertheless looking so innocent as he called at the office carrying the surviving pieces of metal and explaining "I only leaned back to yawn and stretch".

cage, normally used to transport special experimental animals from farm to campus and this now confined the kidnap-pee on his return from town. As the utility vehicle dragging the cage sped along Elm Avenue and up the hill, amid shouts of approval from student spectators, Ben Meredith hung on grimly and precariously with his only hand, hair flying in the wind.

June 1960, and now the building was ready. Under the expert supervision of Madge Brown, Household Administrator, the cheerful housemaids in their crisp new blue uniforms - thrilled to be assigned to the new college - had brought South Court to a state of perfection and departed for home. I was soon to know some details of their family and marital problems and, in the case of migrants, their language difficulties.

As I wandered along the silent corridors, the solid building seemed filled with an air of expectancy, ready to withstand the coming impact of 82 young men, who would soon swarm in with their books, luggage, guitars, bongo drums, life sized posters of motor bikes and luscious girls, (the latter often quite outrageous) and assorted sporting equipment.

The immediate impression after occupation was one of respect by the men for the new surroundings. They dressed better, were quieter, kept their rooms tidy and swore less in the corridors. They seemed to take on a new dignity. A few rascals had been included, as democracy demanded a comprehensive intake. One of our first discoveries was the inadequacy or outright failure of the hot water system, which also supplied heat to the building. This meant the influx of 84 two bar radiators, shades of my days in Hut C! Despite the efforts of the engineering technician, who was almost a permanent member of the college and nearly under our feet, as he bobbed from room to room "bleeding" the hot pipe fixture placed near the floor, and frantically turning the knobs from "plus" to "minus" and from "minus" to "plus" in his efforts to rectify the position. It was quite some time before the heating system became manageable and ceased to send out the guttural rumbles and gurgles that heralded something not quite right.

During this period winter descended into its coldest period and students were inclined to depart for lectures leaving their radiators on, thus providing for a warm cosy room on their return, perhaps many hours later, as they naturally remained "up top" for lunch in Bevery. Although the housemaids were always alert to the danger, this duty ceased on their departure for home at 4.00 p.m.

The late B.C.J. Meredith OBE, BA, Dip.Ed., first Warden of Students 1956-60 and first Master of Robb College 1960-66. Photo: Courtesy of Mrs Cherry Robertson of Armidale.

On the second night of occupation some late comers returned in the small hours to find the upstairs corridors full of smoke and a strong smell of burning wafting through the building. They began an urgent search and soon found the trouble spot. The miscreant, having retired to bed fairly well under the influence, had gone to sleep with his radiator on. Later, and probably after some tossing and turning, he had flung off his blankets and also pushed his pillow aside. The kapok pillow hanging over the side of the bed, while not in contact with the radiator, had begun to smoulder slowly. However, the blankets, which had actually been thrown over the radiator, were also smouldering and had already set alight to the mat. The culprit was in a heavy sleep and would certainly have been asphyxiated before too long. The rescuers themselves could also have been in danger from the heavy, pungent smoke. The heat created had not been sufficient to set off the modern fire alarm system. This episode was taken very seriously by the boys themselves and a voluntary squad was formed to make frequent checks of the building while the radiators were still in use.

During the early days of occupation of South Court it was the practice to hose out the ablutions blocks with hot water, especially in Winter, and in some cases this set off the sophisticated fire sprinklers, which in turn set off the alarm,



which was connected to the university Fire Brigade, installed after the disastrous Belshaw Fire, in the upper reaches of the campus. Fairly frequently the Fire Officer, Keith McRae, and his men would arrive in their bright red fire truck in a tremendous rush to find us all searching for the non-existent fire - until we became aware of the hot water hose events. Soon the occurrences became so frequent that it became almost a matter of crying "Wolf!" Even so the Fire Officer, Keith McRae, was required to come down to reset the system after each false alarm and make a thorough search of the building.

One morning I heard an anguished shout not far from my office and dashed out to find that Keith McRae had crashed through the beautifully clean plate glass wall in one of the foyers. He was bleeding badly from a gash in the arm. I sped back for the first aid box and soon had the bleeding stopped and Keith was taken into town to see about stitches. The plate glass was replaced and a suggestion made that timber beams should be placed across these sections of glass walls and doors. However, before this could be done, and very shortly afterwards, yet again one morning I heard similar cries, followed by yells of "Oh no, oh no, not again!" accompanied by the crash of breaking glass. I rushed out to see Keith coming up the corridor, hands held over his face, as a copious flow of blood rained down. This time the glass door was open but created an optical illusion of being beside itself, and the injury was much more serious. Our cleaner Old Charlie and I, clutching the first aid box, rushed the victim into one of the wash rooms where we sat him on a stool in front of a handbasin. Apart from a gash in his forehead, it seemed that the centre of his nose had been scooped out and the blood poured down in rhythmic, pulsating gushes. I grabbed packets of rolled up bandages and pressed them directly on to the wounds, while Charlie hurried off to ring Bill O'Hara, then the official Ambulance officer on the campus. Unfortunately we were placed in front of the long mirror which ran above the row of handbasins, and I could see my chalk white, shocked face staring back at me. There was no hope of hiding my concern from poor Keith, but, more seriously, for the first time in my life, I felt very dizzy and was afraid I might keel over in the midst of my ministrat-

ions. But Bill O'Hara was soon driving Keith to the hospital.

One other difficulty which caused serious annoyance, not only to the cleaning staff, but to late risers and also to the residents along Handel Street, was the inadequate pressure in the town water pipes. The demand had not been provided for and by 10 a.m., each weekday morning particularly, the water available had diminished to a mere trickle or was non-existent. The frequent automatic flushing of the urinals in the building itself seemed such a waste, in the face of the heavy peak hour requirements for hot showers and laundry in the whole neighbourhood. The absence of water, both hot and cold was a constant source of angry debate as to priorities among those affected. Everyone concerned kept up a constant barrage of urgent demands for the local Council to increase the gauge and pressure of the pipeline.

During 1961, North Court, more or less a replica of South Court, was under construction, and although complaints about the noise of building activity were fairly constant, everyone was looking forward to its completion by the beginning of 1962. The rich orange clay, either as dust or mud, was always with us.

One morning a bricklayer from the building came rushing into my office to announce that there had been an accident to one of the men, who had heard warning shouts from above and looked up just in time to collect a brick on his forehead as it fell from the first floor. I grabbed the first aid box and dashed over there. The victim's mates were supporting him and he appeared to have a great gash in his forehead. There was blood everywhere, all over his face and hands, down his front, on his bare legs and shorts, on his boots - in fact he looked as if he had been standing under a shower of blood. It was a dreadful sight, but with a tap close by and a first aid box which supplied everything I needed, I was able to stop the flow.

The men stood around with white faces. I had sent one off to ring the ambulance and got others to help me. We persuaded the patient to lie down on a pile of timber and soon had him quiet and peaceful with large pads firmly bandaged in place. It was tremendous to see the relief on all the faces when the blood stopped as well as the relief



The striking Scandinavian-style architecture of Robb College was the brainchild of Peter Hall, the man later called in to complete the Sydney Opera House after the controversial resignation of Danish architect Joern Utzon. It is shown at its best in this picture of the walkway adjacent to the Dining Hall. Photo: Courtesy of UNE Information Office.

of the patient himself. The ambulance soon arrived and took him to hospital.

Although excavations for North Court had begun on April 27, 1961, the building was not occupied until February 27, 1962. The picture was very different to the perfectly conducted occupation of South Court. The new building was almost a replica of South Court, except that the carpet was an interesting blue-grey, and much of it was still being laid as the boys made their way along the corridors. The study-bedrooms were only equipped with built-in wardrobes and mattresses, the latter being laid directly on the floor. There were no bedframes, bookshelves, chairs, curtains, bedspreads, mats or cushions. Inexplicably the ordering had been delayed. When they eventually arrived the rooms would be just as attractive as South Court. 1962 was still an age where privacy was valued and the lack of curtains with lights on at night was an embarrassment to some people. Lying on the mattress on the floor did not seem to be a worry, but the absence of a chair, desk or shelves was really inconvenient, although difficulties were accepted cheerfully.

One night an enterprising lad discovered that by turning the top drawer in his wardrobe unit upside down and leaving it in the runners, he had a reasonably satisfactory desk. The news spread like wildfire and soon these temporary desks were accepted as the norm in the 79 rooms, although each student had to stand in front of it to use it.

Early in April Armidale was hit by a very cold change in the weather. By lunch time I was so freezing that to eat my lunch I sought comfort in the warm drying room, close to my office, among the rows of shirts, underpants, pyjamas and socks.

On April 12, work had begun on the excavations for West Court and the Dining Hall block, which would complete the college. It was an exciting prospect, but because of the position of West Court, tucked into the side of a steep little hill, much excavation was necessary with the attendant dust and noise from the bulldozers. Also the construction of the intricate timber formwork on which the vaulted concrete ceiling would be poured was a tremendous undertaking which occupied all of six months.

This vaulted concrete was to be a special feature of the Dining Hall building, as the ceiling would take on the timber character of the wooden formwork and need no maintenance.

The ready response of students to the call for volunteer blood donors, assistance with wood chopping and other duties at the Aged People's Home, the Handicapped Children's Centre and Freedom from Hunger Campaign was rather surprising. I remember one lad, a first year, who was busy at his desk preparing for his first term test that afternoon. He rose unhesitatingly when I called on him with the hospital's request to go in immediately. He belonged to a rare blood group and this would be his first experience as a donor. Any feeling of weakness or the effect on his concentration for the test did not seem to occur to him.

"Its the only thing to do. If I lock it I'll wreck my college image".

This was the first time I had come face to face with the college image syndrome. The theft of the radiogram was more serious than petty thieving of small amounts of money left on desks, or the "borrowing" of a shirt from the laundry when caught short. Really serious was the actual theft of lecture notes, or even of draft essay assignments. These could be plagiarized in an effort to save time, or if the culprit had failed to attend the relevant lectures on the topic.

On Ball nights when black tie was required, some crafty opportunists would not hesitate to "borrow" the necessary items, shirt, suit or whatever and leave the lawful owner in a state of utter frustration and despair, especially if he had a really special "bird" lined up for the



*The magnificent Robb College Dining Hall looks resplendent shortly after its opening.
Photo: Courtesy of UNE Information Office.*

Some boys would never leave the college to go "up top" unless they had locked their door and taken every precaution to protect their belongings. Others would casually walk off and leave door and drawers completely open and at risk, without a backward glance. One morning I arrived to find Paul waiting outside my door with the appalling news that his radiogram, for which he had worked hard to save the money, was missing. Queries on all sides brought no response. "Did you leave your door open?" I asked. "Of course," he snorted.

occasion. It would be almost impossible to track down the missing clothing, for once dressed most fellows looked very much alike, as if in a regulation uniform.

When news of Paul's radiogram and petty or more serious theft came before the Master, he ruled that, as unauthorised persons could easily wander round the corridors and in and out of rooms in the guise of students from other areas of the campus, everyone should take the precaution to lock their rooms when leaving the college for any length of time. This directive covered all ranks

and was a decision displaying the wisdom of Solomon. Not only did it provide a way out but must have been a great relief to those whose college image was so important.

It was good to have Ben carrying out his morning inspections of the two buildings. Once again that cheerful whistle warned of his approach, silent on the thick corridor carpets. These inspections gave an opportunity for him not only to keep his eye on the progress of those in bed for a day or so with heavy colds or influenza, but also on the few who, in a bid to escape from failure to keep up with the requirements of their courses, took refuge in bed and seemed to sleep the clock round.

Sometimes a casual call and a chat would make all the difference, for many, caught in the whirlwind of worry verging on despair, would avoid a call on the Master and elect to mourn in privacy, refusing to bring their problems into the open, much in the same way as a wounded animal would seek shelter in a cave. Sometimes, of course, the sleeping occupant could be recovering from a hang-over. Those who were inclined to leave their rooms looking as if a hurricane had passed through were left a note to call.

New engagements once again came as a surprise and some broken hearts were in evidence as romance came to an end or infidelities were exposed, making for both happiness and sadness, as the year drew to a close. Goodbyes were once again, in the case of those not returning, quite sorrowful occasions and then as last I was in the grip of end of year routine. Examiners meetings were over and the best and the worst was now made public, and the phone rang and rang as long distance callers made anxious enquiries. No prohibition order could put a stop to that.

West Court and the Dining Hall court still had a long way to go, despite daily follow up action in every direction by the Master, which included checking on delivery of building supplies, plus the beginning date of every aspect of progress on a comprehensive chart. This was placed in a prominent position on the wall of his room. As frequent delays seemed to hold the unwelcome promise of longer and longer postponement of completion, tension had already begun to mount. Accommodation problems for

1963 did not bear thinking about, for the university was counting on the occupation of West Court by the beginning of the new term, and work had now ceased as the building industry closed down for its summer break.

In 1963, building operations had recommenced and added to the sense of urgency filling our area. Heavy motorised and electric machinery whined and groaned, while closer at hand the Music School filled the buildings with glorious sound. Quite often members of the school - the girls as bright and exotic as peacocks strolling in an Asian garden - looked in for a chat. On its last weekend the choir performed in St. Peter's Cathedral to the delighted appreciation of the congregation.

Summer schools were over, and post and special exams, and although West Court had been a photo finish, being occupied on 28 February, it was not so exciting or so fraught with difficulty as to furnishings etc., as North Court had been. The building was attractive and the forty-six rooms were furnished in similar colours to North Court. The basalt treatment was quite extensive but had only prolonged time spent on construction.

Now attention was centred on the completion of the powerful impressive Dining Hall Court. I had a very personal interest in this building from the ground up, as Adrian Allen - a young Englishman, who had lived an exciting and adventurous life in South East Asia, had come to the University in 1960. He had enrolled as a student in Science without scholarship and very little private means, but with the firm intention of paying his way through by labouring during the vacations.

However, true to form, Adrian was now working on the removal of soil left by and in the excavations of the large round holes over 6 feet deep, which had been prepared to take the huge concrete pylons. These would form the foundation of the building. It was hot and heavy work trundling the heavy wheelbarrow of clay hundreds of times a day, and in this Adrian worked alongside my son Richard, who trundled his own wheelbarrow, bent on helping us in financing his education.

Excavations at that time also included crawlway passages under the building to cope with service pipes, electric-

ity connections etc. This was another area of delay when it was decided to change the crawlways to walkways, calling for much more excavation. I have often wondered if plans are available showing these walkaways, and if, over the intervening years (as I write in 1985) any emergency has ever cropped up where they would be needed.

As well as gifts of books and publications to the College at this time by the Fellows, the following Embassies also contributed: Italy, South Africa, Japan, France, China, Brazil, the Royal Greek Embassy, Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Swedish Legation, Canadian High Commissioner and High Commissioner for Malaya. Donations to the Robb Art Collection made possible the purchase of two Gould Prints, oil paintings by Zuster, Wells, Moriarty, Coburn and Grieve. Art gifts were made by the Vice-Chancellor, Miss Bagnall, Graduates of 1961, the German Embassy, Foreign Service of the United States of America, Fourth Residential Music School, Royal Greek Embassy, Royal Netherlands Embassy and the British Council. This evidence of interest and goodwill certainly went a long way to make up for any feeling of isolation from the centre of events that we at this young university might have. Also the portrait of the late William Robb painted by Joshua Smith and donated by Mr. Geoffrey Forster, had arrived and would be hung in the foyer of the Dining Hall Court when it was completed.

The Dining Hall Court had been coming along apace, but bitter weather made conditions very hard for the workmen. The wind blew over the frosty ground and whistled through the various sections. By the very nature of its design it was impossible to get the building to lock-up stage, as in the construction of a house. Empty oil drums were cut out as braziers and placed in strategic positions so that cheerful charcoal fires glowed helping to ease the freezing blasts.

Without the colourful curtains and carpet squares that would eventually soften the rugged effect of the high basalt columns, the building looked grim and dark indeed. Staircases, as in most buildings, were not to be constructed until a later stage, and so access to the upper regions was by long ladder and the men developed the surefooted agility of monkeys as they moved up and down with supplies. The huge mobile hoist, as we know it today, was certainly not in evidence on that job.

One night the boys in South Court were jolted awake by the sound of screams coming from the building. As they emerged from sleep, located the direction of the screams and dashed off in the darkness to investigate, the minutes passed and by the time they had climbed the ladder the screams had ceased. There was only the sound of heavy sobbing to guide them.



South Court in June 1960, shortly after the first students moved in. The picture is taken from the north-east, where the Dining Hall is now. Landscaping was obviously still a thing of the future! Photo: Courtesy of Bruce Edgell of Armidale.

Eventually one of our rather physically immature sixteen year olds (we will call him Michael) was discovered in his pyjamas, freezing cold and in a state of shock, clinging to the nearest support on the upper floor. He had evidently been sleep walking, wandered into the building, climbed the ladder and woke to find himself balancing on the edge of what appeared to him in the darkness to be an abyss.

As with quite a few boys of his age, Michael's voice had not yet broken and it seemed that he was obsessed by what seemed a gross deficiency, and the delay as he waited for the magic change occupied all his thoughts. This explanation of the event emerged during what remained of the night, for his friends took turns to sit beside his bed until morning and the only words they heard as he lapsed into uneasy sleep were: 'Is my voice getting deeper?' 'When will my voice get deeper?' During the day Michael appeared to have recovered. He did not mention his voice, attended lectures and mixed with his friends as usual.

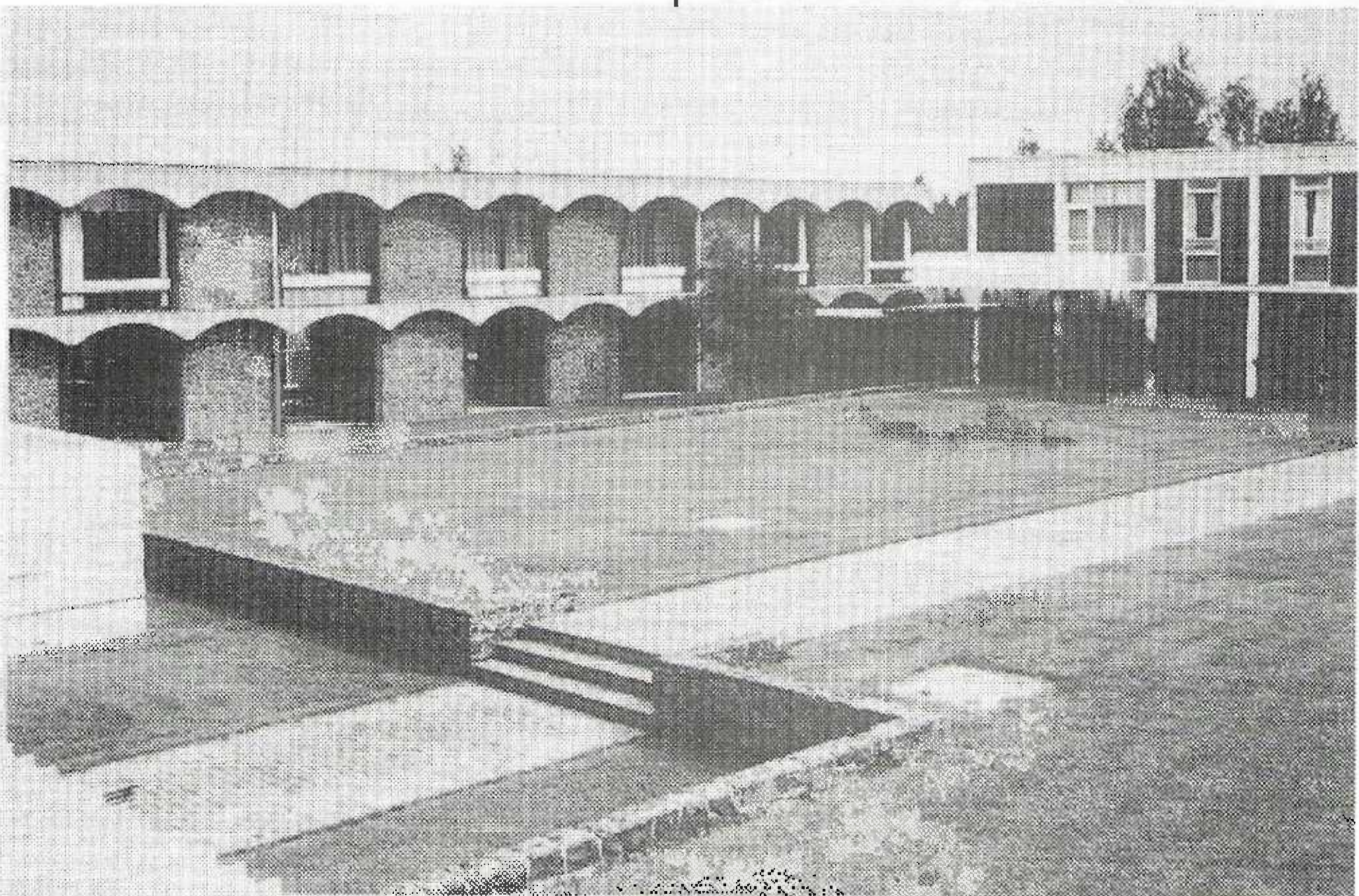
But that night the incident was repeated. The boys could not believe it when the same screams brought them leaping out of bed and, armed with torches this time, they went off to the rescue. Once again they took up vigil beside his bed, but this time the Resident Fellow was called in and gave the boy a sed-

ative. There was no student counsellor attached to the university at this time, so in the morning the Master took Michael into town, and his doctor, after some fatherly advice, suggested that he should go home for a few days until he was convinced that he was in no way unusual and that patience and acceptance were all that was necessary.

Unhappily the hall proved to be totally unsuited to drama - a bitter disappointment to Ben Meredith. As an enthusiastic Shakespearean and dramatic actor, he had arranged with the architect to provide two side doors on the southern wall, one to the left and one to the right of the dais, for the entrance of actors. High table dais had been given added height to serve as a stage. However the resonance, which added so effectively to choral and orchestral work, ruled out dramatic performances.

Acoustics consultants, brought in to advise, suggested that heavy curtains covering the long plate glass panels of the hall, could perhaps reduce the rising echoes, apparently caused by the wave effect of the ceiling arches. However, lack of finance ruled out this idea and our disappointment remained.

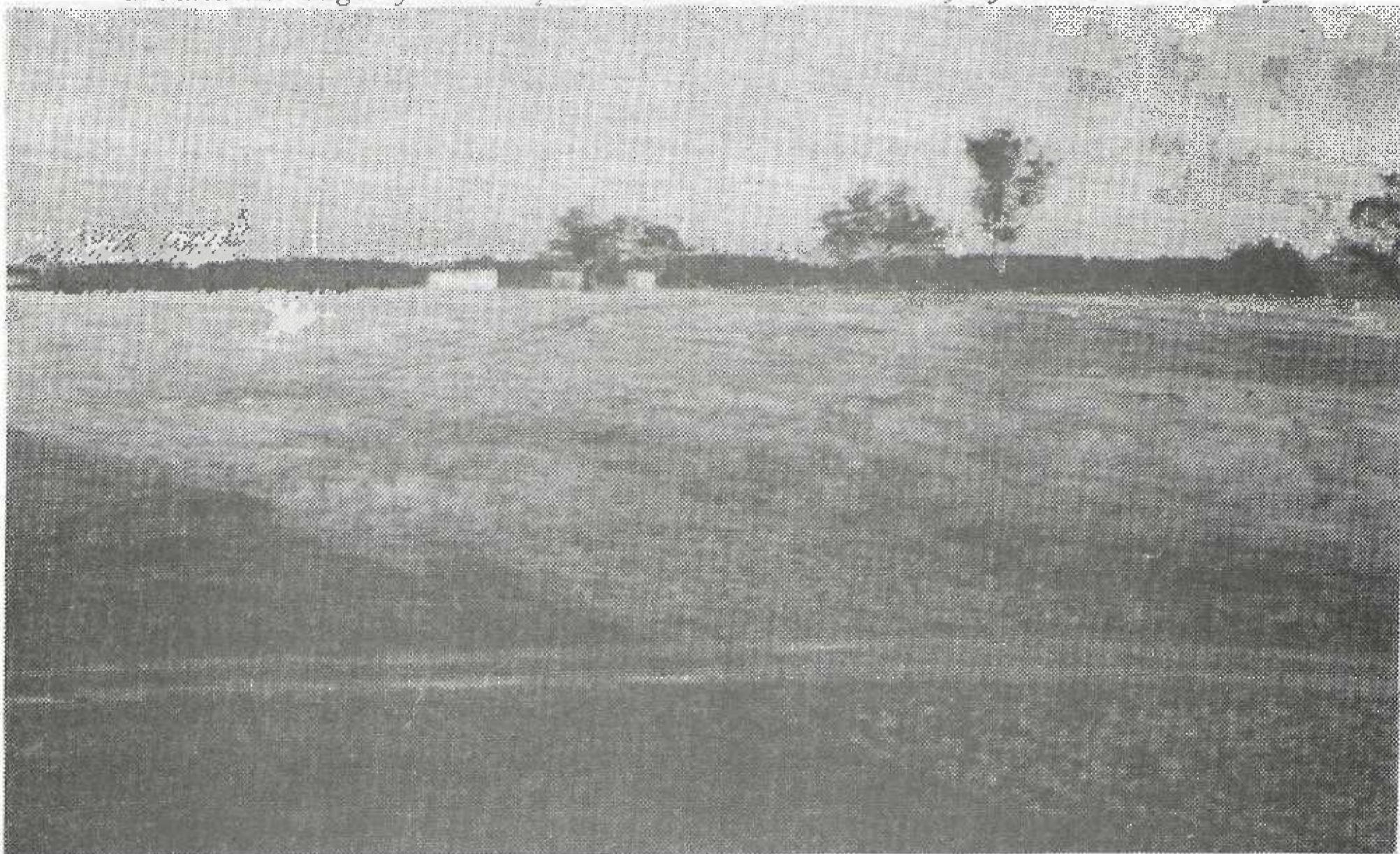
Orientation began on February 24, 1964. We welcomed 68 freshers and supper was served for the first time in the Junior Common Room.



Countless volleyball matches, garbage bin cricket games, water fights and ball 'recoveries' were still in the future when this picture of the central courtyard was taken about 1964.

Photo: Courtesy of UNE Information Office.

In the beginning... there was open space. This historic view was taken on the morning they began to build Robb College. The workmen's huts were the first signs of activity. The picture is taken looking west, from Epsilon Block of Wright College, with the trees being those around the edge of the Amphitheatre. Photo: Courtesy of Graham MacKay.



The Commencement dance, the first dance to held in the Dining Hall, took place on February 28.

That great event, the first formal meal in the Dining Hall was held on March 3. During the day the Master had given much thought to an appropriate Grace to be said before the meal. Finally, rather than use one of the well-known Latin forms of thanksgiving, the following rather unusual Grace was adopted for future use: 'For Fellowship and the opportunity of Learning let us be grateful.'

Hajo Milic had been elected Dining Hall Officer and had posted JCR members at each entrance door of the hall to check that all students had observed the strict dress rule for formal dinner - gown, coat and trousers, collar and tie. Henceforth this checking duty would be carried out daily.

It was a wonderful sight to see those 230 young men (which included non-resident affiliates from Armidale) moving into their places. The atmosphere was quite unique. Perhaps the occasion was taken for granted by the newcomers - just part of the new life - for they had not experienced the long years of waiting in all seasons and all weathers in the queue outside Bevery, inadequately protected from rain by the small shelter shed, which had taken so long to acquire.

And so the inaugural dinner proceeded. The tables were set with all the newly acquired silver, cutlery and dinner ware. High table was complete - Master, non-resident Fellows, Resident Fellows and Tutors. The waitresses had changed from their green uniforms and were dressed for this special occasion in simple black dresses, white frilled organdie aprons and a small circlet of white organdie on their heads. They were happy to accept a variety of compliments from the boys on their appearance. Cooks, kitchen men and maids, and scullery staff moved swiftly and expertly about their duties in this, their new domain, while Sybella our popular English supervisor kept an unobtrusive but watchful eye on the proceedings. Soon the associated noises of such a large gathering, somewhat amplified by rising echoes, provided a normal background.

It was impossible to tell from the Master's controlled expression how elated he was to be presiding on this occasion, or that his feelings were shared by all of us who knew what a struggle it had been to bring the college to completion. The first meeting - at which he had been present as Warden of Students - when a rough sketch on a few sheets of paper indicated the various ideas and hopes of the planning committee for the Second Men's College, seemed such a long time ago.

The North Court courtyard has been the scene of many 'noteworthy' events since the sixties, when this picture was taken. The miracle is how it still manages to look much as it did then!
Photo: Courtesy of UNE Information Office.



And now at last Robb was complete, free to consolidate, to establish its own traditions, and to earn its place in the sun in our campus world.

There are many stories already told in detail of exciting visitors and events, of frustrations and difficulties of development on several fronts, of outstanding academic and sporting achievements, in my book 'Long Youth - Long Pleasure.' This article provides only a hint of life in the college from 1960 to 1964 - the years I will never forget.

In 1985, I will have my seventy-fifth anniversary, but now on this twenty-fifth anniversary of the college I raise my glass and drink a toast to Robb. 'Long may it flourish.'

"I don't understand" - Joco.

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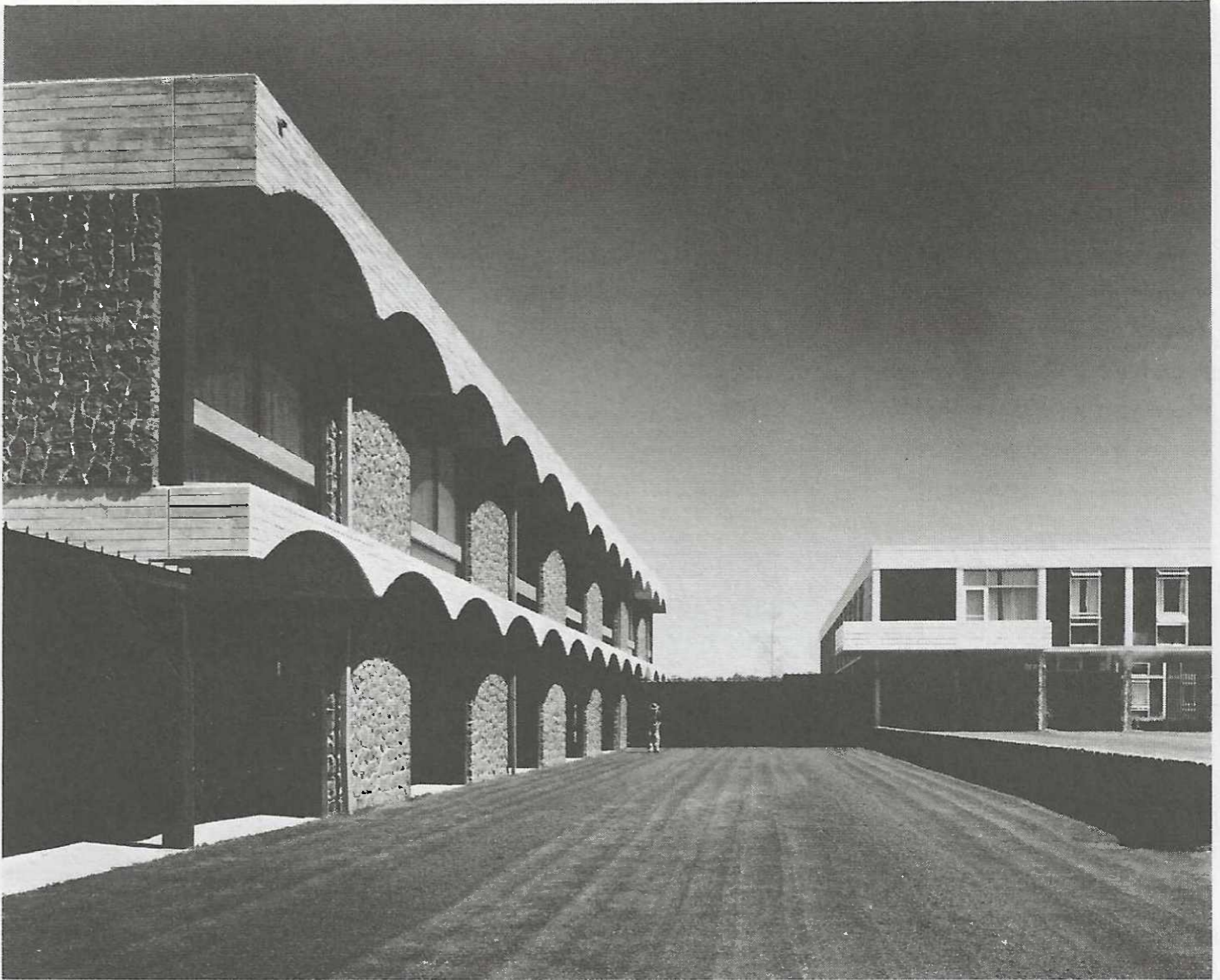
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Dining hall block and dining hall. *Max Dupain. Courtesy UNE.*

