

## THE UNIVERSITY'S ESTATE MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING SERVICE: ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

*D. J. Todd-Jones*

The social and environmental changes, which were the consequence of two world wars, in turn created and then reshaped the teaching and subsequently the practical application of Estate Management at Cambridge.

In 1917 Mr W. C. Dampier Whetham (later Sir William Dampier FRS), a Fellow of Trinity College, wrote to the Council of the Senate advocating the establishment of a School of Rural Economy, to combine the teaching of estate management with the practical management of University and College estates.

He introduced his proposals by saying:

"After the war it will be necessary to place on a permanent footing the efforts now being made to increase to the utmost the resources of the agricultural land of England. In this movement, education must play a great part. Not only must scientific training be given to farmers and land agents, but it is to be hoped that English landowners, more than in the immediate past, will set an example of scientific management by farming large areas of their own land on economic lines, and regard their career as a definite profession needing a professional education not in agriculture and forestry only, but in all the other departments of rural economy.

"In the education of landowners, land agents and large farmers, the University of Cambridge has a great responsibility, and, by a natural development of work already well begun, a unique opportunity for usefulness and success. The Cambridge School of Agriculture has earned a world-wide reputation for the brilliant research work there carried on and for the excellence of the teaching it offers. But a knowledge of agriculture alone does not fully equip a landowner, a land agent or even a large farmer for the duties of his position.

"....It is practical instruction in the problems of land that the University has as yet failed adequately to provide ... those to be trained fully in rural economy need an insight into the multifarious work of a land agent's office."

After lengthy negotiations which involved Heads and Bursars of Colleges, members of the Board of Agricultural Studies and representatives of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (which guaranteed for five years the stipend of a Reader in Estate Management) the Estate Management Branch of the School of Agriculture began work in 1923. From then on the officers of the Branch not only taught for the examinations in Estate Management, but were also engaged in the management of University and College property. For both kinds of work they were paid partly from the teaching funds of the School of Agriculture and partly from fees paid by the University and Colleges for professional work. The Branch was controlled by the Faculty Board of Agriculture through its Estate Management Committee.

A Report to the University in 1938<sup>1</sup> reviewed the changes in the work of the Branch over the first fifteen years of its life. In particular, the growth in the activities of the Building Section of the Branch (under the direction of Noël Dean), involving "valuations and reports on the purchase and sale of property, the construction, repair and maintenance of agricultural and other buildings, the planning and sale of building estates and repairs to College (and University) fabrics" had been such that it was suggested that the Branch should no longer be controlled by the Faculty Board of Agriculture. The Report recommended that a special Syndicate should be appointed to consider the establishment of a Department for the purpose of teaching and practical work in Estate Management, urban as well as rural and that, in the meantime, control of the Estate Management Branch should be transferred from the Faculty of Agriculture to a special Committee. This was accepted by the University.

The outbreak of the 1939-45 war meant that effective decisions on the establishment of a Department were deferred by several years, and although an interim Report was presented in June 1940 it was

<sup>1</sup> Reporter 1937-38, pp. 935-937

not until May 1945 that the Syndicate presented a Report<sup>2</sup> which echoed Dampier's words written during the earlier world war:

"It appears likely that, after the war, the Nation will become more conscious of the importance of the proper management of land, and the post-war problems of the restoration and rebuilding of damaged property, the need for planning, the demand for housing and the organisation of agriculture and forestry will enlarge still further the need, in both public and private employment, for men with the high standard of training which the University can provide."

It is interesting to see Dampier's name once more among the eight members of the Syndicate which produced this Report.

The Syndicate considered that the post-war period would create an exceptional demand for the professional services of the Estate Management Branch in connection with the release and restoration of requisitioned property, the making up of arrears of maintenance, repairs and improvements on property of all descriptions, and the adaptation of the equipment and methods of management of agricultural estates to the requirements of post-war developments in farming policy and practice. The demand for these services was already becoming urgent in connection with the release and restoration of University and College buildings, and in connection with University and College Estates.

The Syndicate recommended that a Department of Estate Management should be constituted, independent of any Faculty but directly responsible to the General Board, and controlled by a Board of Estate Management. The new Department should continue to be responsible for the control and development of both teaching and professional work in view of the practical advantages of such an arrangement.

The Report was accepted in May 1946 and the Department of Estate Management came into being the same year with Noël Dean as the first Director. The Department now provided teaching for degrees in Rural and Urban Estate Management, rather than the previous limited teaching in Rural Estate Management as part of the degree in Agriculture. It also continued to carry out extensive building and management work for the University and certain Colleges. Initially those engaged in teaching were required also to

<sup>2</sup> Reporter 1945-46, pp. 606-610

carry out professional work for the Department, and some holding professional appointments assisted with teaching, but during the 1950s the two sides of the Department grew apart and there were in effect two Departments, each under Noël Dean, well before his retirement in 1961.

His impending retirement led to a Report by the Council in January 1961<sup>3</sup> based on a Memorandum prepared by the Board of Estate Management, which reversed the view taken in 1945 and recommended the complete separation of the professional and building function from the teaching and research function for four major reasons:

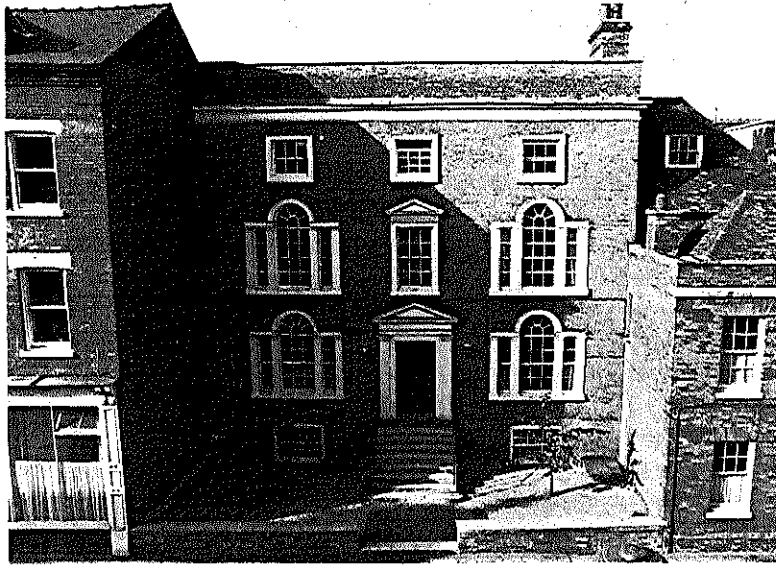
- (a) The large increase in the volume of professional (advisory) work.
- (b) The need to revise teaching courses and to develop teaching and research in the field of land management.
- (c) The virtual impossibility of finding a suitable person competent and willing to organise and develop teaching and research and also to control the large volume of professional (advisory) work.
- (d) The unsatisfactory arrangements whereby the General Board were responsible not only for teaching, but also for the professional work which was correctly the concern of the Financial Board.

The Financial Board recommended that the separation could best be implemented by the establishment of an Estate Management Advisory Service under their direct supervision and control to assist the Board "in the exercise of their duties and responsibilities as defined in Statutes and in the general regulations for University Buildings and to give similar assistance to Colleges when requested".

On the teaching side the Department of Land Economy was established, directly responsible to the General Board, and the new Land Economy Tripos was established in 1962.

The separation of the two sides of the Department of Estate Management was complete. The Department of Land Economy moved first to Fitzwilliam Street and later to Silver Street and Laundress Lane. The new Estate Management and Advisory Service, now under John Mills as Director, remained in 74 Trumpington Street and the adjoining houses opposite Pembroke College. No. 74 'Kenmare' was designed by James Essex in the eighteenth

<sup>3</sup> Reporter 1960-61, pp. 884-889



Kenmare.  
74 Trumpington Street and adjoining properties.

century; no. 75 was a popular café – first the Pem and then Tullivers – in the 30's and 40's; and no. 76 was a lodging house.

After a decade of continuous and rapid growth, a further Report to the University in May 1973<sup>4</sup> led to a change in title to the present form of Estate Management and Building Service. The principle of charging for services to University Departments was discontinued although fees were still charged for work carried out for Colleges.

The principal duties of the Director were also more specifically defined whereby he would “assist the Financial Board in the exercise of their responsibilities for the care and management of all lands, houses, buildings and other real property belonging to the University”.

John Mills moved to Jesus College as Estates Bursar in 1975 to be succeeded as Director of Estate Management by Vernon McElroy. The present Director, David Todd-Jones, took over the post in 1987.

The University owns some 120 operational buildings in and around Cambridge with a net usable floor area of 250,000 m<sup>2</sup>. In 1988–89 the maintenance and running costs on these buildings were around £8,000,000. There is also a rapidly increasing programme of capital works on which £5,000,000 was spent in 1988/89. The University's investment properties are currently valued at £74,000,000 and bring in annual rents of over £4,600,000.

The Service has a range of professional disciplines – architects, building surveyors, estate surveyors, quantity surveyors, mechanical and electrical engineers – together with support staff at Kenmare, building trades at Herbert Street, Chesterton, a Services Maintenance Unit on the Old Addenbrooke's Site and gardeners and boilermen on a number of major sites.

What of the future? Lord Adrian, the Vice-Chancellor from 1985 to 1987, in his valedictory address on 1 October, 1987 stated that “we must plan to reduce permanently the proportion of our annual operating costs which comes from public funds, because these funds now come to us with conditions and constraints which limit our freedom of action... But full independence will not be ours until we have control over the major heads of our income and expenditure because we generate our own income and therefore can choose how to spend it... Without the ability to manage a major part of our income and the major part of our expenditure, we are in a poor position to shape our own future”.

<sup>4</sup> Reporter 1972–73, pp. 918–920

The establishment of the Development Unit and the Report on University Development to 2000, together with the report on Site Strategy to which the Service was a major contributor, are essential prerequisites to the implementation of Lord Adrian's strategy, by ensuring that physical planning is adequately geared to support academic development and thus maintain the position of Cambridge as one of the world's leading Universities.

In common with every other University department, the Estate Management and Building Service has had to respond over the past ten years to a reduction in funding from Government sources. The number of major projects funded by external organisations, however, dramatically increased to the extent that the current major building programme is of the order of £120,000,000 including projects at feasibility, design and construction stage and is by far the largest programme ever handled by the Service.

The future is clearly one of continuing change with demands the ability to adapt accordingly. The story of the Estate Management and Building Service shows how it has responded to the changing needs of the University. It can justifiably face the future with confidence.

*Mr D. J. Todd-Jones MA, ARICS is Director of Estate Management.*

## THE COUNCIL

The Council of the Cambridge Society meets once a year before the A.G.M. to discuss any matter relating to the welfare of the Society and to make recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Any member of the Society may, before the end of February, nominate in writing to the Secretary one or more candidates for election to the Council with effect from the close of the following A.G.M. If a member wishes to nominate him or herself, a proposer should be sought from amongst the membership.

Each year a quarter of the members of the Council retire in rotation and may offer themselves for re-election.