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ARCHITECTS APPOINTED – THE FIRST STEP!

Regular readers of *Amicus Curiae* and those who take an interest in the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies will already be aware of the Institute's initiatives to address what is fast becoming an acute problem of space within Charles Clore House. The Institute has long recognised that given the pace of the library's inevitable expansion, available shelving will be exhausted within the next four to five years. Although the Librarian has taken a number of steps to increase space – including the installation during September of mobile stacks on the lower ground floor – it has been accepted that the only viable solution is additional accommodation. The demand for space for the academic and research activities of the Institute has also increased dramatically in recent years. Consequently, last year the Institute appointed a Development Committee under Lord Nolan to explore how best the Institute might find the additional space that it needs.

After considering a number of proposals, the Development Committee resolved that by far the best solution is to construct on the vacant site at Russell Square, next to Charles Clore House, a new building which would include additional space for the library and other activities and services of the Institute. The Review Committee, sitting under Professor Roy Goode QC, agreed that this was the best course of action and commended the work that had already been undertaken. The Institute is therefore pleased to announce that it has now appointed a consortium of Shephard Epstein Hunter, architects, Buro Happold, structural engineers, and Northcroft, project management, to produce designs for the new building. In addition to expanding the library significantly and providing more and better facilities for those engaged in research, the new building will include accommodation for the secretariat of the Society for Advanced Legal Studies and an auditorium.

While the design team will provide us with plans which will hopefully enable work to commence, there remains the issue of funding. When the Institute was first conceived, towards the end of the last century, its promoters considered it was appropriate for the profession to shoulder most of the costs involved in establishing a 'headquarters for the advanced study of law' and national law library. By the time Lord Atkin's Committee was invited to further these proposals, the view was taken that, given the national significance of such an institution, it was right and proper for at least a proportion of the costs to be borne by the public purse. Given the Institute's unique position at the centre of legal research in Britain, and for that matter the Commonwealth, we remain optimistic that financial support will be forthcoming from the public sector, although the Institute also recognises that, in fairness, those who are involved in the practice of law should be expected to bear at least a proportion of the costs involved in providing a service which is vital to the proper administration of justice. Although we appreciate it will not be an easy task to raise the millions that are needed, not only to construct a new building, but to refurbish Charles Clore House and provide the Institute with the means to pursue its role, we are all dedicated to the success of the venture.

Professor Barry Rider