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IN SEARCH OF SPACE

It is perhaps in the nature of libraries sooner or later to run out of space. An imaginative combination of judicious management, developments in technology and reallocation of space can delay the evil day, but not for ever. The library of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies will find itself in this unenviable position within the next five years. As our national law library and the best documentation centre available for a number of countries (particularly some of the Commonwealth nations), there are limits on the extent to which material can be reduced to an electronically readable format. The situation is exacerbated by the need to prevent, at all costs, a significant interruption of service to its many and varied readers and users of its information services.

There is a real and present danger that the serious shortage of space experienced by almost every function within the IALS could start to undermine work and inhibit initiative. Consequently, the Institute has set up a Development Committee, under the chairmanship of Lord Nolan, who is also chairman of the Institute's Board. Another committee has been established by the Board, under the chairmanship of Professor Roy Goode, to review and report on the Institute's present and future role.

The Development Committee has already considered and rejected as impractical the possibility of significantly increasing library space within the existing building. It is therefore left with two alternative strategies. The first involves the construction of a new and additional building, hopefully connected to Charles Clore House, while the second requires the acquisition of additional space in reasonable proximity to the Institute. Both strategies are in a very early stage of consideration and inevitably discussions will have to be held with the relevant officers of the University of London and other interested parties. What is clear is that the Institute and the Society will have to raise a substantial sum of money. The Executive Committee of the Society for Advanced Legal Studies has recognised that the prospect of additional and dedicated new space becoming available would be of considerable benefit to the Society. The inclusion of an auditorium within our tentative plans – which could be used for the purposes of the Institute, Society, University and the profession – has already received support from the Institute's Development Committee and members of the Society.

It is imperative that the Institute takes steps to address the problem of lack of space with alacrity. The deliberation, determination and execution of plans inevitably takes time, as will the identification and securing of funds. Consequently, this is a matter that readers of *Amicus Curiae* may expect to hear a great deal about over the next few years. Given the importance of the matter, I make no apology for this!

Professor Barry Rider