

University of Queensland, Great Court Complex

12 Upland Road, St Lucia

While proposals for a Queensland university began in the 1870s, it was not until 1893 after 2 Royal Commissions that a group of private individuals called the Queensland University Extension Movement organised public courses for adult education. In 1894, 245 students were enrolled in extension classes, emphasising the practical aspects of university education and its importance for Queensland commerce.

Navigational hint: see the university grounds as the CityCat approaches the UQ St Lucia ferry terminal.

In 1906 after growing political momentum, 60 acres in Victoria Park were gazetted for university purposes. On December 10, 1909, an Act of the Queensland State Parliament established the University of Queensland to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Queensland's separation from the colony of New South Wales. Old Government House in George Street was set aside for the university and, in 1910, the first teaching faculties were created for engineering, classics, mathematics and chemistry.

The selection of a permanent university location was controversial. Shortlisted sites such as Old Government House were deemed too small and building on Victoria Park's sloping grounds too costly. In 1926, Dr James O'Neil Mayne and Mary Emilia Mayne made £50,000 available for Brisbane City Council to resume land at St Lucia for the purposes of establishing the university.

In 1937, Queensland Premier, William Forgan Smith laid the foundation stone and, in 1938 construction started with the main building, now known as the Forgan Smith Building, followed by lower floors of the library and chemistry buildings. In clockwise stages, building proceeded after the Second World War to form what is now known as the Great Court.

Designed by Hennessy, Hennessy & Co, the Great Court Complex is semicircular in plan and features a continuous colonnade linking 5 buildings clad in attractive Helidon sandstone that varies in colour ranging from rich purples to creams and tans.