

# AGRICULTURAL BULLETIN

Fig. 1. Agricultural Bulletin building, c. 1930. [series 9/3 Smith Hall folder]



*Built in 1899 as the heating plant for the growing agriculture campus, this building became the home of the agricultural bulletin in 1937. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.*

**T**he construction of the agricultural heating plant is a typical example of the way the college of agriculture facilities were developed under Dean William Henry. Beginning in 1894 Henry began to talk about the need for a separate heating plant for the buildings on the agricultural campus: "It would certainly be advantageous to get the boiler and coal out of the Dairy building."<sup>1</sup>

We then hear little about it for a few years. Then in his report to president Adams in 1898, the project has gained central importance. Besides the improvement a central power plant would make to the dairy building, Henry adds the needs of the newly constructed horticulture-agricultural physics building [King Hall]. "There should be constructed a central heating plant located midway between the Dairy and Horticultural buildings. The boiler room can be sunk deep into the ground and a two story structure placed upon its walls." Henry optimistically estimates the cost of the project, complete with equipment at about \$12,000.<sup>2</sup>

The 1899 state legislature, almost always responsive to Dean Henry's wishes, in April appropriated \$35,000 for the "enlargement of the dairy building, with changes in heating apparatus..." Within five months plans, specifications and bids were sent to governor Scofield for approval, estimates totalled \$16,284.<sup>3</sup>

The power plant would supply heat to Smith Hall, King Hall and the proposed but unbuilt Agricultural College building and cooling apparatus for the dairying operations in Smith Hall, and the upper floors would contain shops to provide agricultural students instruction in steam engine operation, pipe cutting and other practical skills.

The design of the building was done by John T. W. Jennings the university's supervising architect, who had been hired by the university as a result of his work with dean Henry on King Hall. The contractor was another favorite of Henry's and of the university, T. C. McCarthy who had built Smith Hall, the law building and the red gym. McCarthy's contract signed October 9, 1899 calls for completion by January 1, 1899.<sup>4</sup>

Jennings designed the heating plant in the Richardson Romanesque style, the same general style he had used on King Hall. It is typified by semicircular arches, polychromatic brick work and a sense of great mass in spite of the relatively small size of the building (35 X 50 feet). This building is an almost completely intact example of the Richardson Romanesque style. There have been no external modifications at all and internal ones consist of machinery removal and the installation of temporary partitions of the internal space and dropped ceilings.<sup>5</sup>

The building served as the agricultural heating plant and machinery shop until 1937, when it became storage and mailing facilities for the Agricultural Bulletin, a large volume of publications generated by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.<sup>6</sup>

In 1987 when the new stores building was finished the Agricultural Bulletin moved to new quarters there. After a major interior remodelling in 1990, the building became home to the Wisconsin Nutrition and Pest Management Program, the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, and Agriculture Technology and Family Farm Institute.

1) Report of the Regents of the University of Wisconsin 1894-95 p. 15

2) Henry to C. K. Adams September 14, 1898, series 1/1/3 box 16

3) Secretary of the regents to governor Scofield September 3, 1899 series 1/10/3 box 1

4) Contract between the Regents of the University and T. C. McCarthy series 1/10/3/ box 1

5) National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form Wisconsin State Historical Society Historic Preservation Office March 14, 1985

6) Ibid.