

BARNARD HALL



Fig. 1.
Barnard
Hall from
Chadbourne
Hall shortly
after
completion,
c. 1915.
[series 26/1
Barnard
Hall, x25-
1894]

Barnard Hall was erected in 1912 as an undergraduate women's dormitory. It has served that purpose ever since. It was the last University building faced entirely with Madison sandstone.

In 1906 President Charles Van Hise told the regents: "the parents of the state are desirous of sending their daughters to quarters under some university supervision ... This is not possible at the present time for more than a part of the young women, nor does it seem likely that it will become possible until additional women's dormitories are provided."¹ Van Hise was determined to raise the level of opportunity for women students as much as possible. He began by providing the Athletic and social center at Lathrop Hall in 1909. Soon after the completion of Lathrop Hall in 1910 agitation began for the construction of new dormitory space.

The first and most enduring issue regarding the new dorm was where to locate it. There were two distinct views. The first was promoted by the consulting architects Laird and Cret, who proposed in the general plan of 1908 that the women's dorm group should be located on the Lake Mendota shore at the approximate site of Elizabeth Waters Hall. President Van Hise supported this location, even though it was intended for a large group of dorms and only one would be built at this time. Another faction (led by Florence Buckstaff of the Committee of Women's Affairs) contended that the site was too remote, and argued for a site on Park Street, to utilize the property at Park and Langdon occupied at that time by the President's House, and currently by the Union theatre. These opinions were so far from agreement that they had plans drawn by various architects showing the utilization of the disputed sites.² The disagreement smoldered on through early 1911. Then in June 1911 Laird and Cret were re-consulted, with the understanding that their original proposal was unacceptable. On July 11, 1911 it was definitely decided to locate the dorm on University Avenue between Chadbourne and Lathrop Halls.³ This decision was partly a compromise, but the idea of a connecting kitchen building for Barnard and Chadbourne made the site appealing.

By October the plans were completed. The contract for the excavation and foundation was let on November 6, 1911 (for \$3469) to the Muskegon Engineering and Construction Co. who began work immediately in November 1911 and finished that winter. The contract for the superstructure was signed March 18, 1912 with the Wisconsin Construction Company of Chippewa Falls for \$109,073. This contract stipulates that the entire building excepting the kitchen building be completed by February 1, 1913. According to the monthly reports of supervising architect Peabody, work was slightly delayed in the summer of 1912 because of a shortage of masons and high quality stone (Barnard was the last University building faced entirely with Madison stone). The kitchen building, a connecting link between Barnard and Chadbourne, was intended to consolidate the dining facilities for the women's dorms. It ran into some difficulties in the fall and winter of 1912 which not only delayed progress on the project but cost Mr. Peabody his position as supervisor of buildings, and earned him the censure of the regents.⁵ The building [Barnard and the kitchen] was not finished until June 1913.⁶ The grand opening was held at the gymnasium at Lathrop Hall on October 11, 1913, and featured regents Florence Buckstaff and Elizabeth Waters, ending with a reception on the Barnard terrace and a tour of Barnard and Chadbourne Halls.⁷

The building consists of a 150 ft. X 85 ft. central wing running north-south, with two 42 ft. wings extending to the east on both ends enclosing a courtyard on the east side. The two level kitchen building connects Barnard to Chadbourne Hall from the east end of the north wing. The dorm is four stories high above a raised basement, built of Madison sandstone with concrete floors, tile partition walls and a tile roof. There was initially accommodation for 136 students, with rooms in the attic reserved for 22 servants (later turned into student rooms). The basement and ground floor dining rooms have a total capacity of 240. The total cost of the dorm was \$123,500. The somewhat informal application of the campus' Italian Renaissance style makes Barnard Hall one of the most attractive of the buildings on the campus from the Van Hise period, although the site and landscaping, as well as the location of new Chadbourne Hall, keep its good looks hidden from most angles.⁸

The news that the university had built a new women's dormitory brought new students from all over the state (state residents, and Madison city residents were given first priority) and the facilities were soon filled again. It would be another thirty years before the construction of Elizabeth Waters Hall would add to women's dormitory space.

Barnard Hall is named for Henry Barnard, noted educator and University president (1858-1861).⁹ Barnard Hall became for a time in the late 1950s a graduate women's dorm, set up to emulate the Knapp graduate center for male grad students.¹⁰ It has now reverted to an undergraduate women's dorm. With the demolition of old Chadbourne Hall, Barnard has become the oldest continuously used dormitory on the university campus.

1) *A History of University Housing*, Teicher and Jenkins, p. 20.

2) Among these were Jarvis Hunt of Chicago, the consulting architect on Birge Hall, and Chicago's Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge. There were later recrimination and lawsuits over the fees for both these firms. The designs are surprisingly similar to the ones finally used, indicating that the regents knew pretty clearly what they wanted, if not where they wanted it.

3) *Regent's Minutes*, July 11, 1911.

4) *Regent's Report*, 1913-1914 p. 340.

5) Mr. Peabody omitted a grade line from the drawings for the kitchen excavation and when the mistake was discovered, authorized the contractor to finish the excavation without getting an official order, from Peabody's memoir, *Short Resume of University Buildings* p. 20. University Archives Peabody biographical folder.

6) *Regent's Report*, 1913-1914 p. 340.

7) *The Daily Cardinal*, October 11, 1913.

8) *Regent's Report*, 1913-1914, p. 340.

9) It is ironic that the building honoring Dr. Barnard should be a dormitory since he was expressly opposed to them. See Thwaites p. 73 fn1.

10) *Daily Cardinal*, April 17, 1959, p. 3.