

DANIELS CHEMISTRY BUILDING



Fig. 1. The new Chemistry complex c. 1968. The Mathews research building is at the left of the building, and the Daniels building is the base and tower section at the right. In the background is the old chemistry building. [series 9/1, Chemistry Building (new), jf-82]

Built in 1965 as the completion of chemistry's move from their old quarters, the Daniels Chemistry building provided lecture halls labs and office space for undergraduate chemistry education. It is named for Farrington Daniels, a long-time chairman of chemistry.

The basic idea for the new chemistry building had been around since 1957, when deans Daniels and Farrington planned for the department's exodus from the crowded and inadequate old chemistry building at Charter and University (now Chamberlin Hall). Because the whole project was estimated to cost more than six million dollars in the late fifties, the deans decided to press for building the complex in sections. They first built the research section (Unit I), now called the Mathews laboratories in 1960, principally funded by WARF. Planning for the expansion was pursued simultaneously. It was understood that the expansion would be a very large addition to Unit I, that could encompass the whole block bounded by University Avenue, Johnson, Mills and Charter Streets, except for the Methodist church in the northwest corner of the block. Funding for this classroom

building could not come from WARF, who only funded research facilities.¹

The building committee was headed by professors Holt, Larson and Ferry. In May 1963 the regents voted to allow the preparations of plans and specifications for Chemistry Building Units 2 and 3. It would take more than a year before the preliminary plans were approved. Much of this time was taken up by the tedious job of arranging funding from a number of different sources. The total estimated cost was \$7.3 million. Of this amount the state provided \$5.71 million, the NSF 1.2 million, and NASA \$442,000. Final plans were approved by the regents on March 5, 1965. Several months of revision, adjustments and bids followed. The architects for the building were Grellinger and Rose of Milwaukee.²

The regents let construction bids on August 20, 1965, with the general contract going to J. H. Findorff for \$2.719 million. Groundbreaking took place immediately. It was estimated that the building would be completed by February 1967. This timetable was not met. The building was first ready for classes in the fall of 1967. Some professors and researchers were not moved in until the spring of 1968. After ten years the chemistry department was again completely under one roof.³

The building was constructed of brick faced prefabricated concrete and steel. It is a subbasement, basement and three stories 278 by 147 feet, and a nine story tower rising to 111 feet. The general idea of the design is that very large traffic flow through elevators cannot be done, so large gathering places like lecture halls and large undergraduate labs should be on floors reachable by foot. Thus the base section of only three stories but covering a very large area. The lecture halls have capacities of 150, 300, and 400 students. The labs in the base section are 40 by 45 feet. The base area also contains stockrooms, the library, and the lobby (on the Mills Street side). In the tower section are offices and smaller labs, utilities and instrument rooms. The chemistry building was the first attempt by the University to build a high rise classroom building, and it was quite successful. There were long term difficulties with the ventilation system, a problem that appeared in every building ever occupied by chemistry. Some problems appeared with non-standard desks in some lecture halls. Most of these difficulties have been ironed out and the building is an excellent home for the department. At this time, 1994, there are plans to complete the entire structure, by adding section 5 to the south-east corner of the block, in the space where two old houses are now in use as tutoring facilities.

The history of the University had seen chemistry migrate from North Hall, to University Hall (Bascom), to the old Science Hall (burned 1884), the chemistry building at 600 N. Park, to the chemistry building at Charter Street and University Avenue, and now to a large and permanent home in the Mathews Research Building and the Daniels Chemistry Building.⁴

1) Aaron Ihde, *Chemistry as Viewed from Bascom's Hill*, p. 633-636;

2) *Regent's Minutes*, May 10, 1963, August 14, 1964; *Daily Cardinal*, January 23, 1964; *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, October 1964, p. 23. Final drawings, February 1965, series 24/9/3 box 5

3) *Regent's Minutes*, August 20, 1965; Aaron Ihde, *Chemistry as Viewed from Bascom's Hill*, p. 633-636; *Daily Cardinal*, March 11, 1965; *Badger Chemist*, winter 1966; Progress reports, August, September, October, November, 1965, January 1966, series 24/9/3 box 5.

4) *Regent's Minutes*, June 9, 1972.