

# EXTENSION BUILDING



Fig 1. Extension building, from Lake Street, 1962. [series 9/2, Extension, jf-76]

The University Extension Building was erected in 1961 to provide consolidation of extension services. Until that time extension had been housed in the home ec-extension building on Linden Drive and many rental locations around campus.

**T**he University Extension was housed in the old home-economics extension building on Linden Drive beginning in 1914. They were quickly and chronically out of space. They moved into abandoned buildings all over campus and rented auxiliary quarters in the campus area. In 1958 they were occupying all or part of 14 buildings. The time had clearly come for a new building for the Extension.<sup>1</sup>

Planning began on May 1, 1958, with the appointment of an Extension Building committee. With rough estimates of space requirements and input from the physical plant office, this group tentatively planned for a \$1.3 million building at the corner of Johnson and Brooks. The University planners began to discuss the construction of a new administration building in the same area and connecting it to the proposed extension building. By the end of the summer they decided that a better site for both buildings was the block bounded by State, Lake University and Murray Streets. Principal among the reasons for the change were the simpler connection to utilities, a more centralized location, the rehabilitation of an increasingly blighted area of campus, the proximity to existing extension facilities, and the desire to reserve the Johnson Street site for classroom buildings. Also in the summer

of 1958 the state architects office appointed as architects for the project the firm of Brust and Brust of Milwaukee. The committee had planned from the beginning that the building would be expandable. In January 1959 the regents formally changed their choice of location to the north Lake Street site.<sup>2</sup>

By February 1959 Paul Brust had made preliminary drawings acceptable to the building committee, these plans utilized the Lake Street site. Throughout 1959 the committee under chairman Paul Grogan, questioned, refined and corrected the plans. Considerable effort was spent on deciding exactly what functions should be housed in the new building. It was clear that the available funds would not put up a building that could house all functions of the Extension. Some of the largest, and heaviest (which could not easily be housed on upper floors) were BAVI (Bureau of Audio Visual Instruction), and the multigraph (copying) department, were selected to be eliminated from the new building. In January 1960, the regents approved the preliminary plans for the Extension building. A change of management in the state architects office, and disagreement over space allocation slowed progress during 1960. The land at the Lake Street site was purchased and demolished.<sup>3</sup>

In January 1961 bids were opened for construction of the Extension building. At their February 10, 1961 meeting the regents awarded contracts for the project. The general contract went to Precour Construction of Oshkosh for \$823,900. Total costs were \$1.85 million, chargeable to the state appropriation of 1959.<sup>4</sup>

Groundbreaking was held on February 10, 1961. The project encountered no particular problems and was accepted by the University on July 16, 1962. In August 1962 the extension music department became the first of thirty departments to move to the new building from their old quarters at 548 State Street. They were followed quickly by the myriad of outlying departments from all over the campus and city. After them the offices under Camp Randall stadium were moved. By the dedication in October 1962, all the Extension offices, except photomedia, BAVI, and duplication services were housed under one roof for the first time in the history of the oldest University Extension department in the country.<sup>5</sup>

The new building was an eight story tower of steel and concrete. Plans for potential expansion involved adding a second tower to the south of the first one, but there are at present (1994) no plans to do so. Although the first tower is filled to capacity, the pressure on extension has been relieved by again renting small retail space outside the building, and by moving some functions to offices in other Extension facilities (the Wisconsin Center and Lowell Hall).

1) Curti and Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin*, vol. 1, pp. 711-714, 721-728.

2) Summary Statement of Extension Building Committee Findings, September 8, 1958, Grogan to Brust and Brust, September 30, 1958, Grogan to Wendt November 25, 1958, Paul Brust to Gallistel, February 19, 1959, series 24/9/2 box 11. Paul Brust to Stanley Nerdrum, October 22, 1959, series 24/9/2 box 12.

3) Paul Brust to Gallistel, February 19, 1959, series 24/9/2 box 11; Regent's Minutes, January 17, 1959, January 9, 1960.

4) *Regent's Minutes*, January 6, 1961, February 10, 1961.

5) *Daily Cardinal*, August 3, 1962. *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, January 1962, November, 1967 p. 10; *Wisconsin State Journal*, June 16, 1961;