

LAND TENURE CENTER



Fig. 1. The land tenure building, 1993. The old post office is just visible at the extreme right. [Author Photo, AP-11]

Between 1925 and 1927 the Badger Pharmacy, owned by Oscar Rennebohm, was moved from its original location at 1320 University Avenue across the street to a new commercial building erected by Rennebohm, from plans by architect J. Glaetti, on the corner of University Avenue and North Randall Street. The building had storefronts at 1357 University, where the Badger Pharmacy opened, and two smaller commercial spaces at 331 and 333 North Randall Street. Above the storefronts were two levels of six apartments each. Between 1929 and 1973 the building saw a series of small local businesses move through the small storefronts including Diemer Photo, Block Cleaners, and others. The apartments were more successful than the commercial space, nearly always full. The building is three stories above a full basement. It is 102 by 53 feet of masonry walls sheathed in face brick, with terra-cotta and marble trim. The old store windows have been covered over with stucco, as were many near campus after the turbulence of the 1960s.¹

In 1966 the building was leased by the University for use as "surge space" for Engineering and the medical school. This situation lasted until 1979 when Rennebohm sold his entire chain of Madison drug stores to the Walgreen Corporation, which placed the Randall Street building on the market. The Wisconsin Foundation, a nonprofit channel for contributions to the University, purchased the property and leased it back to the University. In July 1992, the University traded parking lot #41 at 1800 University Avenue for the old Rennebohm property and the vacant lot to the east of it on University Avenue.² The building is now used mainly for the land tenure center, and the University Archives. Its future is uncertain because of long range plans to build new art facilities on its block of University Avenue.

1) Madison city directories, State Historical Society library, Madison city building permits, University planning and construction flat files.

2) Request for state building commission action, July 1992, series 4/31/9-3 box 6, parking lot #41 folder.