METEOROLOGY

Fig. 1. Meteorology and Space Science building 1972. Fifteen stories of cement block and face brick. Schreiner house at left, Camp Randall and Engineering Research in the far background. In later years the roof of meteorology would become the site of several large satellite dishes, making the building identifiable from miles away. [Series 9/5, Meteorology, jf-87]

Meteorology was the first stage of an envision earth science complex. Erected in 1966 it houses meteorology, space science and engineering, the state climatologist and several related projects.

Meteorology had put in their time. In the honored tradition, they were first (1946) housed in a couple of small rooms in Science Hall, quickly outgrew them, and were given rented quarters ever farther away from the center of campus. But by 1964, the other half of the tradition was due to be honored; since they had produced significant scientific results, and lots of graduate students they would be considered for a building of their own.[1]

A December 7, 1964 request to the state for funding for an Earth Science Complex, reflects these considerations. Stage I of the complex would provide space for graduate research and science facilities for the department of Meteorology and the Space Science and Engineering Center (SSEC), a graduate school affiliate. The request describes the existing facilities: "The present space in Science Hall, patently crowded and inadequate, must now serve an academic staff of 12, 7 post-doctoral researchers, a secretary and a technical staff of twelve, and 55 graduate students." Rented research

space on Regent Street and University Avenue was equally inadequate. Another concern is reflected in that post-Sputnik panic period: " It is paramount that this country recruit, motivate and train sufficient personnel capable of taking a leading role in such research in time to ensure that our long term national interests are not jeopardized by unilateral action." The application asked for $4.4 million.[2]

The regents in December 1964 approved as the site for the "Earth and Space Science Complex" as the south side of the 1200 block of West Dayton Street, between North Charter and North Orchard Streets. This had formerly been discarded as the site for computer science on the ground that it was too small for that instructional program. It would be large enough for a basically research oriented program. Funding was to come from the state and from federal funds (NSF and NASA). 1965 was occupied with initial planning stages in conjunction with architects Grassold, Johnson, Wagner, and Isley of Milwaukee. In February 1966 the regents authorized the preparations of preliminary plans for a 15 story for Meteorology and Earth Sciences.[3]

Reflecting the high degree of advance planning in this project the preliminary plans were approved by the regents only two months later in April 1966. Funding was to be by the state, NSF and NASA. In June 1966 the University purchased the land at the proposed site. By August 1966, after examination of soil conditions at the site, and escalating construction costs in the Madison area, the budget was increased to $4.7 million. The final plans for the building were approved by the regents in September 1966. Scheduled completion was July 1968.[4]

Construction contracts were let November 17, 1966. The general contract went to the Anthony Grignano Company of Madison, for $1.85 million. Total contract costs were $4.2 million. These bids were so favorable that some previously deleted trim items were restored to the design, and some funds were returned to the state. Funding breakdown was: state funds $1.6 million; NSF grants $1.2 million; NASA grants $1.7 million.[5]

Construction began with the demolition of seven houses at the site in December 1966. In January 1967 the contractors began to have problems sinking the pilings for the foundation. After some investigation (and extra cost) the problems were settled, although the pilings at the northwest corner do not extend all the way to bedrock. Except for some labor strikes and shortages, construction went on without serious difficulty. In November 1968 the regents voted to name the new building "Meteorology and Space Science". The building was first occupied in the fall of 1969. A formal dedication was held on October 20, 1969; featured were speeches by governor Knowles, and a symposium on the "Future of the Weather." The departments of meteorology, the SSEC, space medicine, and the center for climatic research, were under one roof for the first time.[6]

The building is 92 by 121 feet, and fifteen stories (238 feet) high; it is faced with brick and precast concrete panels. Unusual in University high-rise buildings, it has openable windows, and the mechanical equipment is on the seventh floor, instead of the usual roof penthouse. This is because the roof was needed for meteorological experimentation space. The building contains no classroom space, but is entirely filled with faculty and staff offices and laboratories.

1) University directories; Gisela Kutzbach, *125 Years of Meteorology at the University of Wisconsin*, Archives departmental file series 7/24. *Milwaukee Journal*, October 14, 1959; *Wisconsin State Journal*, October 15, 1959.
2) Agency Request for State Building Commission Action, December 7, 1964, series 24/9/3 box 8.
3) *Regent's Minutes*, December 11, 1964, February, 4, 1966; Estimated Budget, September 15, 1965, series 24/9/3 box 5. *Daily Cardinal*, May 12, 1965.
4) *Regent's Minutes*, April 1, 1966, September 9, 1966, November 4, 1966; The building committee comprised, Reid Bryson, Robert Alberty, R. A. Ragotzkie, Verner Suomi, Eberhald Wahl, A. H. Robinson, Robert Gates, Robert Bock, Donald Sites and alternates.
5) *Regent's Minutes*, December 9, 1966; Redfern to Holmes, December 8, 1966.
6) Edsall to Riley, January 20, 1967, Sorensen to Holmes, February 8, 1967, Anhalt to Grassold et al. January 30, 1967, Edsall to Risser, February 23, 1967, Sorensen to Smith, May 12, 1967, series 24/9/3 box 8; *Badger Herald*, October 17, 1969; *Daily Cardinal*, October 18, 1969.