

NEW CHADBOURNE HALL



Fig. 1. New Chadbourne Hall in July 1959, just after opening. [series 26/1, Chadbourne Hall, jf-75]

Built in 1958 to replace the old Chadbourne Hall at the same site, Chadbourne was the University's first high rise building. It was originally women's housing but became coed in 1995.

The construction of the new Chadbourne Hall was significant for a number of reasons. It was the first planned and last built of the 1950s housing boom. It was the last undergraduate housing unit constructed on the campus north of University Avenue. And most significantly, new Chad was the University's first high-rise building. After Chad nearly every new building project was pre-supposed to be a high-rise.¹

Plans began in 1952 to replace the ageing, and low capacity Chadbourne Hall. In the fall of 1952 Residence Halls announced the closure of old Chad, and the imminent construction of a replacement. Within a month the announcement was rescinded, due to an increase in enrollment. Difficulties with funding delayed progress until 1955.²

In February 1955, the regents voted to use the site of old Chadbourne Hall for the new dorm. In September 1955, funding problems were resolved when the regents applied for funding through the federal government's HHFA, in the amount of \$2.4 million for a dorm that would house 600 women. Three months later, the regents approved the preliminary plans for the new dorm as prepared by Stanley Nedrum of the state architect's office. The regents requested that a larger dorm be considered, since 600 now seemed too small. At the same meeting, the news arrived that the HHFA loan for \$2.4 million had been approved. The project seemed at last to be on the way. This impression was shaken when two months later in February 1956, the regents rescinded their approval of the plans in favor of a new plan by Nedrum, which changed the original pair of six story towers and a connecting dining facility to a single eleven story tower with a dining facility connecting to Barnard Hall. This new plan was approved unanimously. Old Chad was razed in February 1957. In April 1957 the



Fig 2. Spring 1958, the Chadbourne tower, up to level four, from the corner of University and Park. [series 26/1, Chadbourne Hall, ns-1664]

regents approved the final plans and specifications for the new dorm. The plans were for a one story dining hall and an eleven story tower housing 678 students in double rooms. The following month the regents obtained from the HHFA an increase in funds to \$2.9 million.³

In July 1957 the regents awarded construction contracts for the project. The general contractor was J. H. Findorff for \$1.55 million. Total contracts amounted to \$3.16 million. Construction began immediately. By spring of 1958, the tower was well under way (see Fig. 2). Target date for completion was September 1959. The regents accepted the completed building July 10, 1959. Students began moving in September 17, 1959. A formal dedication was held in December 1959.⁴

The finished building was an eleven story 'Y' shaped structure of reinforced steel and concrete, faced with brick. The central core of the Y contains utilities and the first elevators in a University dormitory, and the three wings contained 31 double rooms per floor. The unusual shape of the building meant that every room in the dorm had a wall of windows. The dorms was divided into houses, as was customary with dorms, each floor of the building making up a house of approximately 62 students. A touch of continuity with the old Chadbourne Hall (in addition to the name) was provided by the sandstone entry-ways salvaged from the old building's walls from old Chad. The new building immediately earned the nickname of "the Chadbourne Hilton" (see Fig. 1).⁵ Its location and amenities made Chad popular from the beginning. The dorm remains at capacity, although to maintain that popularity, it became co-ed by floor for the 1995 school year.

1) Teicher and Jenkins, *A History of Housing at the University of Wisconsin*, pp. 61-64.

2) *Regent's Minutes*, October 24, 1953, November 14, 1953; *Daily Cardinal*, September 1952, Registration issue, *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, October 1952 p. 11, 14. The Alumni Magazine announces the demise, p. 14, and the reprieve, p. 14 of old Chad in the same issue. *Daily Cardinal*, February 15, 1955, December 13, 1955, September 1956 Registration Issue, May 16, 1957, August 20, 1957, ;

3) *Regent's Minutes*, August 7, 1954, February 12, 1955, June 16, 1955, September 10, 1955, December 10, 1955, February 11, 1956, November 10, 1956, December 8, 1956, April 6, 1957, May 11, 1957;

4) *Regent's Minutes*, July 13, 1957; *Daily Cardinal*, July 16, 1957; Dedication pamphlet, series 24/9/2 box 12, Chadbourne Hall folder.

5) *Daily Cardinal*, February 27, 1957, July 10, 1959, September 16, 1959; *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, November 1959, p. 9; The houses are named for notable Wisconsin women: Zona Gale Breese, Ruth Campbell, Abby Marlatt, Christina Murray, Lois Rosenberry, Gretchen Schoenleber, Almere Scott, Ruth Wallerstein, and Julia Wilkinson.