

# OLD POST OFFICE



Fig. 1. 317 North Randall St. 1993. The 1966 addition is at the right. The side facing the camera was the entrance to the old post office. The second story of the front section is only 30 feet deep, and does not extend to the back of the building. [Author Photo, AP-16]

The plans for this building are labelled "Post Office for Mr. Oscar Rennebohm", dated September 27, 1929, and signed by architect Phillip M. Homer. The general contractor was the Vogel Brothers, who erected the building at a cost of \$13,000. The post office building was 114 by 28 feet, framed with 2 X 10 wood joists, the walls built of common brick covered with face brick.<sup>1</sup>

From 1931 until 1961 the building was used as the University substation of the Federal Post Office. In 1962 the building was rented by Mr. Rennebohm to the University, who used it as record storage for the University Hospital, then at its old location in the 1300 block of University Avenue. In 1966 a one-story addition without basement, was designed and constructed for the owner by J. J. Flad. This addition extended the building toward the south and east and was angled along the Johnson Street right of way. The addition more than doubled the gross area of the building.<sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 1979, the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation donated the building and an adjoining vacant lot (1345 University Avenue) to the Wisconsin Foundation, a non-profit organization for the channelling of private donations to the University. In November 1979 the Foundation notified chancellor Shain that the property was ready to be given to the University. The regents formally accepted the gift on December 14, 1979. The combined value of the land and building was \$242,000.<sup>3</sup>

The University converted the old post office to its new use of housing the safety department. In 1994 the forty employees of the safety department left the old post office and moved to temporary quarters on Lake Street. The building was taken over by graduate art students then housed in old houses scattered around the campus. The art students are probably also temporary tenants, since plans are afoot to build a new art building.

1) Plans in the files of the department of planning and construction.

2) Madison city directories; plans op. cit.

3) Agency Request for state building commission action, series 4/31/9-3 box 6, folder "Parking Lot #41"