

PRIMATE HOLDING



Fig. 1. The Primate Holding Facility at Vilas Zoo, 1994. [Author Photo, AP-48]

The primate holding center, built in 1963, holds research animals for the University's primate research program. Its location in the Wingra Park zoo enables the public to observe the animals. The building belongs to the University, which leases the land from the city of Madison.

The \$1.29 million NIH grant of 1961 that allowed the University's Dr. Harry Harlow to build the Regional Primate Center was large enough to also build an off-site facility to house research animals. This was done in large part due to the space limitations of the Coyne Court site selected for the Primate Center.

Negotiations for a site for a monkey house at the Vilas zoo began in the winter of 1963, and in May 1963 the Regents of the University entered into a lease agreement with the city of Madison for the lease of land at the zoo for the construction of a primate holding facility, that would also serve as a monkey house for the zoo. This lease called for the University to entirely bear the cost of the construction, staffing, legal liability and upkeep of the building. The lease was at no cost to the University, and would run for twenty years from completion of the building, with three successive ten year extensions. The city reserved the right to review the plans for the building. Harlow notified the NIH in November 1962 that arrangements had been made for the site of the holding facility, and asked that permission to begin be granted, as well as a transfer of funds from the construction budget of the Primate Center, which had come in under budget, to the holding facility

budget.¹

In April 1963 the regents approved the preliminary plans for the building, as prepared by architects Herbst, Jacoby and Herbst, the same architects designing the Primate Center. The regents were informed that the entire cost of the building would be borne by the NIH grant. In June the board voted that the final plans be approved, with the estimate that construction would begin in August 1963 and be completed by February 1963. These date coincided roughly with the construction dates of the Regional Primate Center building. Construction contracts were let on September 6, 1963. The general contractor was the Jenness Construction Company of Madison, for \$146,253. Total contracts were for \$208,000, with funding coming from the NIH grant. Construction began immediately. The location is between the buffalo yard and the bear pens. The final inspection of the building by NIH officials was on October 4, 1965.²

The building is a two story circular structure, forty-eight feet in diameter and twenty one feet high, of reinforced concrete sheathed with limestone and concrete. Around the outside of the central building are monkey cages, that add seven feet to the radius of the structure. The cages are wire mesh on the outside for viewing by patrons of the zoo, and accessible from the inside second floor, for feeding and observation. The first floor contains cages, a staircase and food preparation facilities. The second floor contains some office space.

1) Lease, May 13, 1963, City of Madison and the Regents of the University, Harlow to Eyestone, November 2, 1962, files of Helen Le Roy, Harlow Primate Laboratory; *Daily Cardinal*, June 27, 1963;

2) *Regent's Minutes*, January 11, 1963, April 5, 1963, June 10, 1963, September 6, 1963; *Daily Cardinal*, April 10, 1963; Eyestone to Davenport, September 14, 1965, files of Helen Le Roy, Harlow Primate Laboratory.