

SERVICE BUILDING



Fig. 1. The Service Building after additions c. 1926. [series 9/5, Heating Plant and Service Building, x25-2923]

Built in 1910 for shops and the storage of bulk material, the service building was added to in 1921. It now contains shops and offices of the University physical plant.

The need for storage space for the university physical plant became clear to supervising architect Arthur Peabody, when in 1907 during the construction of the Stock Pavilion, the central heating plant, and Lathrop Hall, work was slowed and sometimes halted because of a shortage of concrete. These problems were caused by strikes in manufacture, transportation, but partly because of lack of storage. He proposed to the regents that the university build at some central location, a facility which would supply storage for goods which could be bulk purchased at good rates and stored until needed.¹ As time passed and the plan matured, Peabody decided that the building should also provide a space in which the various trade shops (metalworking, carpenters, plumbers, etc.) could be removed from their various and scattered locations across campus and housed under one roof. In April of 1910 the regents agreed to build a shop building "to be located near the central heating plant, at an estimated cost of \$20,000."²

The regents opened bids for the shop building on May 20, 1910 and selected T. C. McCarthy. McCarthy's contract is dated May 20, 1910, for \$23,323, and agrees to have the "shop and store-house building completed on or before October 1, 1910."

Fig. 2. The original service building, before addition, four stories of concrete with a flat composition roof c. 1910, the central heating plant looms next door. [series 9/5, Heating Plant and Service Building, x25-2924]



Mr. Peabody's monthly reports show the building rising smoothly, throughout the summer and fall of 1910. By November some bulk material was being stored in the building. In December, steam was turned on, and the job of moving the carpenter's and electrician's shops was underway. In February of 1911, Peabody reports that "all physical departments have finally been installed in the Shop Building. The first floor has been filled with cement to the amount of about 20 [rail] cars." The large doors at ground level were sized so that a team of draft horses could drive directly into the building. It is now trucks which use these entrances. Peabody in his memoir deprecates the appearance of this building as being ungainly and strictly functional.³ (See Fig. 2.). The original building was 63 by 75 feet, four stories high with a flat roof.

By 1920, after a prolonged expansion of the university, the shop building was too small and it was decided to enlarge the building. The regents first request plans for the expansion in March 1919. Plans were approved in the summer of 1921. Peabody's plans for this expansion call for a second four story section to the east of the old building. They also include a two-story extension on the front of the building for an electrical substation. The construction contracts were let to J. H. Findorff for \$66,000 in the fall of 1921. As Peabody remembers it he massages the plans of the expanded building to include a tile gable roof, skylights (since removed) and a number of small details which combined to make a far more attractive building by reflecting the architecture of the Central Heating Plant next door. (See Fig. 1.)⁴ This addition slightly more than doubled the size of the original building.

This construction brought the building to its current [1993] configuration. The growth of the campus has made this sturdy and centrally located building a valuable commodity which is again too small for the shops. Many of the physical plant shops have been moved to other locations, and much of the service building is taken up by physical plant offices.

1) Statement, Arthur Peabody, series 24/8/10 box 5, undated but apparently 1909.

2) Regents Minutes, April 20, 1910.

3) Memoire, Arthur Peabody, Archives Peabody biographical file. Architects reports in the Executive Committee Papers, June-December 1910.

4) Regent's Minutes, March 6, 1919, June 24, 1919, June 21, 1921; Executive Committee Minutes, September 30, 1921,