

SERVICE MEMORIAL



Fig. 1. The preconstruction architects drawing of Service Memorial. The view is from Linden Drive looking south, Charter Street is at the left. [series 9/4, Service Memorial, jf-49]

The Service Memorial Institute was built as the first dedicated home of the University medical school in 1926. The name is the result of the financing of construction with money from the state soldier's memorial fund. Major additions were made to the original building in 1956 and 1958. Since the 1972 construction of the new hospital and clinics the medical school now occupies the entire complex that was originally the hospital and associated buildings.

The "attic medical school" had been very patient for a long time. Since its founding in 1907 it had been housed in the attics of science hall, and the old chemistry building at 600 N. Park Street. Even in 1915 when the legislature appropriated money to build a physics or a medical building, there was little complaint when the regents decided on physics as the most deserving department to occupy the new Sterling Hall. The medical school, under dean Charles Bardeen, gratefully expanded into the large space in science hall vacated by physics.

This situation began to change in the early 1920s. By 1920 Dean Bardeen and his staff had two buildings (Bradley Memorial and the Student Infirmary) to begin clinical work in what had previously been a strictly two year non-clinical medical school. Even more important was the 1919 legislation which removed the two-year restriction from the department and allowed not only the establishment of a four-year degree program, but the construction of the Wisconsin General Hospital. The hospital was built with funds from the soldier's recognition fund in 1926. The success of the hospital showed up more strongly the inadequacies of the medical school's educational facilities. The rising enrollment in the medical school following WW I, and the lack of doctors in the state made the job of convincing the legislature to provide funding for the medical school relatively easy.¹

In a memo to the chairman of the regent's Constructional Development Committee which was preparing estimates and plans to present to the legislature regarding university constructional needs for 1925 Bardeen explains that "... anatomy, physiology, physiological chemistry, pathology and bacteriology, and pharmacology of the medical school are now housed in Science Hall ... What



Fig. 2. This 1930 photo shows the shape and orientation of the original Service Memorial Building to the east [right] of the hospital. [series 8/4, jf-50]



Fig. 3. c. 1960. The modern configuration of the hospital and the completed Service Memorial Building. [series 8/4, jf-51]

appears to be an ideal location for a medical school laboratory building is the side of Charter Street opposite the buildings where chemistry and physics are housed. Such a laboratory should be connected by a wing with the north wing of the new hospital. It should provide additional facilities for clinical research and teaching. At present there are no facilities for clinical lectures and no good facilities for hospital pathological work." Bardeen's estimate for the cost of the proposed project was about \$1.2 million. This plan called for a large quadrangle to fill most of the space from the hospital to Linden Drive, and from the Bradley Memorial to Charter Street. It would be enough building to house all the functions of the medical school including future expansion space. Bardeen recognized that a building of this size would have to be funded at least partly by private funds.²

Then came a political upheaval that could have ruined the plans of a lesser man than Bardeen. Begun by a series of articles by Robert M. La Follette in January 1925 a general movement arose to compel the university to refuse funds offered by corporations. Six months of very inflammatory rhetoric followed: "Our universities, colleges ... are cringing and fawning for the favors of predatory wealth." [La Follette]; "We are not a morals squad. Let's be consistent and keep our halo on straight if we are going to wear one." [regent Michael Olbricht]. In August of 1925 the regents passed a resolution against the acceptance of "gifts, donations ... from any incorporated educational endowments or organizations of like character." This decision cost the university a pending grant of \$740,000 for the medical school from the Rockefeller Foundation. The private funding Bardeen had counted on for the medical school was lost.³ Bardeen immediately began new plans. The legislature of 1925 had passed a bill authorizing the construction of Service Memorial Institutes in connection with the university medical school "for the advancement and utilization of knowledge of medicine ... to be known as service memorial institutes." The money would be raised from the surplus of the soldier's rehabilitation fund, but this amount was insufficient.⁴

The university drastically scaled back the plan for the medical school. By February 1926 the medical school had decided to build only the southern half of the original quadrangle. Rather than force all of the medical school and state functions into the smaller building, they would leave certain functions (notably anatomy) in science hall. The height of the building was reduced. By April of 1926 it was clear that there was not enough money even for these reduced plans, and the decision was made to include in the new building only the medical departments whose space in science hall was most needed by the departments of geography and geology. The legislature insisted that the building's architecture be of a suitably monumental style, and not appear as an appendage to the hospital. By

May of 1926 the regents had approved the preliminary plans for the reduced project. The changes had reduced the estimated cost of the building to about \$600,000, the amount available from the Soldier's Rehabilitation Fund.

In the fall of 1926 the regents formally instructed the state architect's office of the requirements for the building. The plans were finished and put out for bids on November 29, 1926. The regents voted to award the general construction contract to J. P. Cullen & Sons for \$568,670. Equipment and utilities brought the total project cost to \$810,670. Construction began in January 1927 and proceeded without notable delays, and completion of the Service Memorial Building was announced on September 25, 1928.⁵

The building consists of five stories, a basement and a superstructure (a flat roof with some rooftop facilities), of fireproof steel and brick and Bedford limestone and connected with the Wisconsin General Hospital on floors one and three. [see Fig 2.]. The east wing contained memorial reading rooms, offices for the medical school, and the medical library, with the main book stacks in the basement, physiological chemistry, the State Laboratory of Hygiene, and research labs in clinical medicine. The central wing of the building housed administrative offices, physiological laboratories and a museum of pathology, bacteriology and advanced pathology. Most of the west wing of the building was occupied by laboratories, but also there were the department of rehabilitation, physical therapy, shops, storage, the connection to the hospital, and x-ray and radium treatment centers. The transfer of the medical departments to the new building doubled the space for geology in science hall, and freed up the third floor of south hall. Though not completely furnished, the first section of the Service Memorial Building opened in the fall of 1928 as the new home of the medical school.⁶

The new building remained suitable for less than twenty years. In the explosion of medical advances and of enrollment in the post WW II years an addition to Service Memorial was commissioned by the regents in November of 1953, designed by Brimeyer, Greillinger and Rose of Milwaukee, and built in 1955-6; dedication of the new six-story section as "Bardeen Memorial Laboratory" took place on May 17, 1957. Guests included 1956 Nobel Prize (in physics) winner John Bardeen (son of dean Charles Bardeen). The wing was intended as a teaching wing, mainly for anatomy which finally left science hall. Medical school dean John Z. Bowers estimated that the new facility would mean a 25% increase in the number of physicians graduating from the university. This first addition projected north from the original building almost all the way to Linden Drive.⁷

Almost immediately, in the spring of 1958, a second six-story addition to Service Memorial was begun. It was also designed by Greillinger and Rose, and built by J. P. Cullen, the contractor on the original service memorial building. The total cost of the second addition which was intended mainly as a research facility was about \$650,000. This addition completed the Charter Street, Linden Drive corner of the medical school and is named "Medical Sciences". This construction completed the quadrangle first envisioned by Bardeen and Peabody in the 1920s. [see Fig. 3] Since the construction of the new university hospital and clinics on the west edge of campus, the medical school has expanded into the entire old hospital complex at 1300 University Avenue, in much the same way they had first expanded into science hall 60 years before.⁸

1) Clark, Paul F., *The University of Wisconsin Medical School*.

2) Bardeen to John C. Schmidtman, October 21, 1924, series 12/1/12 box 2.

3) Curti and Carstensen, *The University of Wisconsin*, vol II, pp 223-232.

4) *Laws of Wisconsin*, 1925, chapter 545S.

5) *Regent's Minutes*, January 20, 1926, October 13, 1926, December 7, 1926; *Daily Cardinal*, January 12, 1927, October 2, 1926, November 17, 1926, September 25, 1928. *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, May, 1927 p. 234.

6) *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, December 1928.

7) *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, February, 1955, June 1957, December 1957.

8) *Minutes of the Executive Committee*, April 10, 1958.