

SOCIAL SCIENCE



Fig. 1. Social Science c. 1980. The 1966 addition is at the left, and the auditorium section at the bottom. The street in the foreground is Observatory Drive. The sail boats are off the union terrace (hidden by the trees of Muir Woods). [Series 9/1, Social Science, jf-77]

The Social Science building was erected in 1962 to provide an enlarged home for Sociology, Anthropology, and Economics. Controversy arose over the siting of the building in the thick woods east of Elizabeth Waters Hall. An addition was built on the north side in 1965.

The social sciences, Anthropology, Sociology and Economics, were housed mainly in Sterling and South Halls in the first half of the twentieth century. Their need for more space was recognized in 1953 when the regents planned a joint building for law and Sociology (which then included Anthropology). This plan was discarded in 1955, when enough money became available for a separate law building. At that time it was decided that the Sociology department would have a wing built on the recently (1954) erected Commerce building, which had originally been known as Social Science-Unit 1. But the addition for Sociology never got past the planning stage. The plan was for a single six story tower section to be added to the west end of commerce, and rerouting of Charter Street to make more room. The more the planning commission looked at this idea the less they liked it. Finally in September



Fig. 2. October 27, 1961. Social Science under construction. Note the density of the wooded area to be developed to the north of the building. This is the Bascom woods that was so heavily defended by the Capital Times and others. [Series 9/1, Social Science, ns-2949]

1958, the University instructed the architects of the commerce addition to cease work. An entirely new plan was needed.¹

Building sites on the central campus were getting scarce and the planning committee made what seemed like the only available choice, the western end of Bascom Woods, the heavily wooded area of about 8 acres north of Observatory Drive between the Memorial Union and Elizabeth Waters Hall. The regents approved this site in February 1959, designating the rest of Bascom Woods as John Muir Park, an outdoor laboratory. This choice ignited a storm of protest against the University, led and orchestrated by the Capital Times. Editorials decried the plan to "despoil woods", "Regents set Precedent for Total Campus Beauty Destruction", and warmly supported a faculty group (led by professor Einar Haugen) who opposed the plan, until the faculty arrived at a compromise with the regents, at which time the group became "chiefly distinguished by their naivete". More fur flew in May 1959, when state legislation was introduced to prevent construction in the woods but was amended to allow the Social Science building.²

Architects Law, Law, Potter and Nystrom had preliminary plans drawn for the approval of the regents in June 1960. The budget was \$2.46 million in state funds. Final plans were approved January 6, 1961. Contracts were let on March 2, 1961, with Orville E. Madsen & Son getting the general construction contract for \$1.35 million, Total contracts were for \$ 2.6 million.³

The building was completed in time for classes in the fall of 1962. It houses Anthropology, Economics and Sociology. It is a seven level building of steel and reinforced concrete, faced with brick and precast panels. The 64 by 86 foot two story southern section contains two lecture halls, 250 and 500 seats, while the 265 by 90 foot main section has a basement, and four floors of offices and classrooms, and a library. These two sections enclose a pedestrian plaza to the south in which the carillon tower is framed.⁴

Three years later in March 1965, the regents approved the preliminary plans for the north

addition, which had been deleted to meet the original budget. The architects were Graven, Kennedy and Iverson. The 72 by 111 foot addition was eight levels high and went as far toward the lake as the north wing of Elizabeth Waters Hall. The wing was to be a research lab facility using computers, and was funded with grants and state matching funds. Contracts were let on August 20, 1965, with the general contract going to J. P. Cullen and Son of Janesville for \$1.6 million. Total contracts were for \$2.0 million. Completion was in the fall of 1966. The air-conditioned structure housed research labs, offices, and the new Poverty Institute under a grant from the federal Office of Economic Opportunity. To prevent confusion, the floors and rooms of the whole building, including the original sections were renumbered.⁵

A complete asbestos abatement project was carried out in 1994, with each department in turn moving into the old Commerce Building during the work. As of 1994 the John Muir Woods to the east of the Social Science Building remain intact.

1) University directories; Wendt to Culbertson, May 9, 1958, Executive committee of law school to Fred, December 10, 1957, Law-Sociology Building Committee minutes, October 28, 1957, Law, Law Potter and Nystrom to Wendt, March 21, 1958, Kirchhoff to Gallistel, March 17, 1958, Wendt Memorandum, March 26, 1958, series 24/9/2 box 10; Regent's Executive Committee minutes, July 26, 1957; Regent's Minutes, September 6, 1952; April 11, 1953; Gallistel to Law, Law, Potter and Nystrom, September 12, 1958, series 24/9/2/ box 11.

2) *Regent's Minutes*, February 7, 1959; *Capital Times*, December 18, 1958, January 10, 1959, February 3, 1959, February 4, 1959, February 5, 1959, February 9, 1959, February 17, 1959, February 12, 1959 (Frank Lloyd Wright takes another crack at the University), April 4, 1959, May 20, 1959, March 11, 1960, June 7, 1960, March 12, 1960, May 26, 1962; *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 4, 1959; *Daily Cardinal*, March 15, 1960;

3) *Regent's Minutes*, March 12, 1960, April 9, 1960, May 14, 1960, June 7, 1960, December 9, 1960, January 6, 1961, March 10, 1961;

4) *Daily Cardinal*, November 10, 1961, October 24, 1962.

5) *Regent's Minutes*, January 8, 1965, February 5, 1965, August 20, 1965; *Daily Cardinal*, March 7, 1964, March 24, 1966.