

# SOILS ANNEX



Fig. 1. Looking north: soils annex in center, King Hall and greenhouses at right, dairy annex roof at left. c. 1920. The half-timber decorative scheme harmonizes with Smith Hall and the Smith Hall annex, more than with King Hall, the building it was added to. [series 9/3, Soils, x25-2520]

*Designed by architects Laird and Cret, the soils building was added to King Hall in 1915, to provide laboratory space.*

King Hall was built in 1894 as the horticulture building, and also housed the soils department under Professor F. H. King. The soils department gradually usurped the space of horticulture and in 1910 a separate horticulture building was erected, leaving King Hall to soils. The eventual addition of a wing to the west of the building was approved by the regents in December of 1908. In 1910 agriculture dean Russell says: "It seems imperative that this wing should now be constructed ... Even with the complete removal of the horticulture department from this building, sufficient laboratories cannot be secured."<sup>1</sup> The cost was estimate at about \$60,000. The legislatures of 1915-1917 finally appropriated money for the soils addition. In 1915 the regents selected contractors for the project, N. Quinn received the contract for excavations and foundations for \$2410, and T. C. McCarthy in his last major construction project for the university won the superstructure contract for \$49,249.<sup>2</sup>

The size, layout, and price of the Laird and Cret designed annex was apparently agreeable to all concerned. It was designed to create a court between King and Smith Halls. The architects, following the habits of most architects, in discounting the efforts of their immediate predecessors to nothing, had no good to say of the old building. It is clear from looking at the 'modern' steel and concrete annex that they didn't worry too much about how well it matched; seldom has less sympathy been applied in grafting one building onto another. Regardless of aesthetics, the annex was a success, the soils department had enough room at least temporarily, and is still housed in King Hall its west wing, and the adjacent annex to Smith Hall.

1) *Regent's Report*, 1909-1910 p. 174, p. 41, 1906-1908, p. 35.

2) *Regent's Minutes*, Aug 19, 1915, January 20, 1915, December 2, 1914