

SUSAN B. DAVIS HOUSE



Fig. 1. Davis House 1993. The building is 33 by 91 feet of concrete block, three floors and a basement. [Author Photo, AP-38]

The quick success of the first two cooperative dormitories, Bayliss and Schreiner, was followed by a period of five years when all attention and funding for housing was absorbed by "regular dorms", the Elm Drive dorms, the Holt dorms, and new Chadbourne Hall.¹

Then in October 1960 the regents authorized the planning of a new women's cooperative. It was to be built west of Bayliss, to cost \$212,000 of residence halls revolving account with borrowing by the Wisconsin University Building Corporation. The new dorm was to be identical to Bayliss house and to hold 50 women on a cooperative basis. In November 1960, the University department of planning and construction discussed the project with the state architect Karel Yasko, and agreed that the cost projections were accurate. The project was speeded by the fact that the University already owned the land on the site.²

Preliminary plans were approved January 18, 1961. In February, architects Weiler and Strang were hired to oversee the project. Their final plans were approved by the regents on February 10-11, 1961. In March, 1961 the regents voted to name the dorm after Susan Burdick Davis, after the woman who had been come to the University in 1925 as a lecturer and until her retirement in 1941 was dean of freshman women.

Contracts for construction were let in April 1961, with Vogel Brothers of Madison getting the general contract for \$107,805. Construction began immediately, and proceeded through 1961 and the spring of 1962. The finished dorm was dedicated May 13, 1962. The twenty six double rooms were 12 by 14 feet. All 52 women in residence were state residents, and were selected based on financial need and academic status. Davis House was a successful coop house for fifteen years until it could not be kept full, and was changed to graduate housing in 1989.³

1) The 1956 Board of visitors report says "The board can only sing the praises of ... Bayliss and Schreiner ... 'Please give us more'". *Regent's Minutes*, May 12, 1956;

2) *Regent's Minutes*, October 7-8, 1960; February 10-11, 1961;

3) *Regent's Minutes*, January 6, 1961, March 10, 1961, April 7, 1961; *Daily Cardinal*, April 19, 1962; For Miss Davis, see archives biographical file.