Brown Hall

Specifications for an addition to this building are in RG 6/e-7/40/8.

Blueprints # 823-832 are located in 054-900-Box 1.
Institution: The Ohio State University
Name of Bldg: Brown Hall
Year erected: 1903
Contractor: W. McBratney and Sons
Architect: J. H. Bradford, Wm. G. Preble
Cost: $174,912

Construction:
- Fireproof?: Northwest wing only, peel shingled cast
- Walls: Brick
- Floors: Main part all wood, Northwest wing, concrete with tarps and linoleum wearing floor
- Roof: Main part tile, wood shingled, with tile NW wing, stucco, shingles, Holcim, composition roofing
- Basement: Wood concrete ceiling, plastered all over

Use:
- Laboratory, drafting rooms, classrooms, offices for departments, Arts, Engineering, Architecture, Law, Journalism, and University of Cincinnati

Comments

Remodeling, Repairs and Fixed Equipment
BROWN HALL
1903
4/23/08 A letter from Mr. C. W. Fouls was read to the Board by President Thompson, concerning Memorial Tablets and stating that some of the Alumni and friends of the late Christopher Newton Brown had ordered a memorial Tablet, to be placed in Brown Hall by commencement of the current year.

Mr. Derthick and Mr. Corson were appointed a committee to draft a suitable resolution expressing the appreciation of the Board of Trustees.

Mr. Corson, presented the following report from the Committee on Memorial Tablets, which was approved by the Board:

"Committee on Memorial Tablet, Ohio State University Alumni Association; C. W. Fouls, Chairman:

Your communication, stating your intention to place a Memorial Tablet to Christopher Newton Brown, in Brown Hall, Ohio State University, was received by our Board of Trustees at its meeting April 23, 1908.

The Board greatly appreciates the appropriate action taken by your committee, and heartily commends your suggestion that similar tablets be placed in other Memorial Buildings.

The Board will be glad to cooperate with your committee or other committees interested in this movement."

The Tablet is on the east wall of the Loggia of Brown Hall.

The Board on April 23, 1908 accepted the proposal of the Putnam Sign Co. to place Nineteen Copper signs on the prominent Buildings of the University for the sum of $200.00.

"Dean Price was authorized to dispose of the old (frame) horse barn, the silo in connection with the Cattle Barn, the small building to the west of the Horse Barn and the small shed to the south of the Horse Barn."

This would leave only the Cattle and Dairy Barns.

The Secretary directed to secure propositions on wrecking the "old north Dormitory", the proposals to provide for the removal of all materials and debris from the grounds at once. Propositions to be ready for the next meeting of the Board.

"The North Dormitory was in a bad state of repair, had no modern conveniences, was a poor piece of Architecture and occupied a very valuable site for a school building."
Brown Hall’s entrance is rarely recognized for its simple, classical beauty. Named in honor of Christopher N. Brown, the structure was built in 1903. Brown was dean of the College of Engineering. Today Brown Hall houses the School of Architecture. To enhance detail, the photograph has been posterized.
$30,000 Damage Estimated In Brown Hall Fire Saturday

By Jean Heller

University officials have tentatively set the damage done to Brown Hall in Saturday's early morning fire at about $30,000.

The final estimate should be available tonight, but the $30,000 figure is "pretty close," according to Frederick W. Stecker, executive director of University Relations.

The fire, discovered Saturday at 3:03 a.m. by a night watchman, gutted a basement photography laboratory and damaged a first floor architecture design classroom.

The watchman, Arthur L. Barnett, turned in the alarm to the

'Cured-out' Schedule

Classes scheduled in Brown Hall's two damaged rooms will be moved but will continue uninterrupted.

Photography classes scheduled for Room 7 will be held in Room 2.

Students who meet in Room 117, the other damaged classroom, should report to that room at class time to be reassigned to other rooms.

These are the only changes being made.

Columbus Fire Department at 3:08 a.m.

The report of the Columbus Fire Department set damage to the building at $400, but a report released from Mr. Stecker's office at noon Saturday put the cost of repairing the building at $18,000.

Walter L. Hartman, assistant director of the Physical Plant, is still working on a final estimate.

He said the damage may be somewhat below $18,000, but that until contractor's reports and material estimates are available, no final figure can be set.

The Department of Photography estimated that $12,000 damage was done to its equipment, but this too is not a final figure. At this time, according to Mr. Hartman, it is known that several microscopes, a reproduction apparatus and the contents of several filing cabinets were destroyed.

A valuable pictorial history of Ohio State, kept in the room next to the photography laboratory, was not damaged.

Most of the material destroyed in the architecture classroom belonged to students, Mr. Hartman said.

He said it will be three to four weeks before the photography laboratory can be used, but the design room will be repaired before the end of the week.

Power Out

"Most of the damage done there was to the ceiling, the lights and windows," he said. "The heat also blistered the paint on the hall doors."

The fire knocked out the power supply to the building, but it was restored by late Saturday afternoon, Mr. Hartman said.

The fire started in the northwest corner of the basement. The cause is still undetermined.

Brown Hall is 61 years old.

Francis W. Davis, chairman of the department of photography, said no final estimate of damages to the contents had been reached.

Mr. Davis said that a valuable photo history of Ohio State which was stored in a room adjoining the photo laboratory has been saved.

He said the photographs were in a fire proof vault.

"That fire proof vault probably saved the pictures," he said.

Complete History Involved

The photographs contain a complete history of Ohio State from the time it was founded, according to Mr. Davis.

"There has never been any dollar value set on the pictures," he said, "but they couldn't be replaced for any amount."

Mr. Davis said although the final damage estimate of the contents was incomplete, that it would be close to the $12,000 originally estimated.

Fire Damage Estimate Set

Damage has been set at $18,000 to the building and $12,000 to the contents as a result of Saturday's early morning fire at Brown Hall.

Frederick W. Stecker, executive director of University Relations, confirmed the earlier estimates, but said the investigation as to the cause of the fire is still in process.

The fire, discovered Saturday at 3:03 a.m. by a night watchman, destroyed a basement photography laboratory and damaged a first floor classroom.
Time scars University landmark

By David T. Hall

It was once regarded as the foremost example of architectural genius. Later, it was an element of a celebrated society murder. Then, it was the center of student activity on "Smock Day," a traditional initiation ceremony of young architecture students during the 1920’s.

Today this piece of architecture, a large five-foot diameter terra cotta capital (top of a column), designed by Stanford White, lies covered by ivy, outside Brown Hall, forgotten in its ruinous decay.

"In ITS glory, the capital surmounted a column that was Stanford White’s derivation of those of the Pantheon in Rome," said Thomas Hauck, a graduate student from Toledo. Much of America’s contribution to architecture is exemplified in the capital’s design, he said.

Hauck is trying to save the capital by listing it in the National Register of Historic Places. His interest in the capital began for his studies, but later he felt its restoration was important "because of the danger of it deteriorating."

"It is doubtful that the capital will last much longer in its present state," said Hauck. The seriousness of the capital’s decay is because the "root scars of the ivy may have undermined much of the colored glaze."

This terra cotta capital is in danger of deteriorating. It was brought to the University in the 1920’s and served as the focal point for the hazing of young architecture students.

Hauck said a historical attraction of the capital is that White, the architect, "was shot to death by a jealous husband near the church where the capital stood."

In addition, the University’s School of Architecture held a traditional event each spring called "Smock Day." The capital became the focal point of activity for the hazing of underclassmen.

The underclassmen had to bend down and kiss an arbutus leaf and receive a vigorous paddling with "T" squares from the upperclassmen, he said.

The "Smock Day" tradition is no longer observed by the school and few of the students, or faculty, "know the origin or history of the capital," Hauck said.

GILBERT Coddington, professor of architecture, was a student at Ohio State during the 1920’s, and remembers the ceremonies well.

"All the architecture students wore smocks in those days, each class sporting a different color," he said.

"Freshmen wore red smocks and when it came their turn they would bend over and kiss the leaf like a Blarney stone," Coddington said, with a smile.

The past tradition of "Smock Day" did not "end all at once, but gradually faded out during the depression," he said.

DURING THE Depression, money and construction was limited and architects were looking for material substitutes that were economically practical. The transformation in building construction was first associated with cost and permanence and the "brittle terra cotta material, which was used in the capital, was phased out," he said.

The capital was brought to Columbus after the raising of Madison Square Presbyterian Church in New York City in 1920. The capital was saved by architect Eric Gulger.

GULGER WAS unable to keep the capital in his apartment in New York City and was persuaded to give it to Ohio State by Howard Dwight Smith, then a professor of architecture at the University, Hauck said.

The capital is too important a development of architectural education to be overlooked, Hauck said.

Hauck is optimistic about restoring the capital. "We are looking for matching funds from the Department of the Interior and the University," he said.
Fire hits Brown Hall vault

5-4-76

A fire in Brown Hall Monday afternoon caused $100 damage when a fan in a University Photo Archives film vault caught fire.

Eight pieces of fire equipment and 30 firefighters were detained about one-half hour before they could get to the blaze because the keys to the vault could not be found until campus security and the University archivist located them.

ONCE THE KEYS were located, the vault was unlocked and kicked open while firefighters stood by prepared with gas masks.

Carl Spaeth, Columbus Division of Fire battalion chief said the insulation on the wire leading to the fan had burned and produced a smell which resembles the odor released by nitrate oxides.

Fire officials feared if the vault containing the nitrate base films had caught fire, a toxic and deadly gas could have been released.

SPAETH SAID the reason why the insulation on the wiring had burned was because the shaft of the fan had become stuck causing the wiring to overheat.

He added a major fire could have been started if an oversized fuse was used.

Spaeth said the reason why so many men and equipment were sent was because the University is considered a "B" assignment. "Any 'B' call will automatically disperse a large number of men and equipment to the scene," Spaeth said.

The criteria for a "B" assignment call is any place of public gathering or assembly, according to Spaeth.
Architectural fragment decorates Brown Hall

By Rhonda Macy
The Lantern
11-21-80

Rushing to class, it is easy to miss the foot structure on the south lawn of Brown Hall.
The fragment of architecture, called a capital, is the remainder of one of six columns that once supported the Madison Square Presbyterian Church in New York.

With a few exceptions, the terra cotta capital has been relatively ignored in its two-year stay on campus.

"It was once an important part of Smock Day," the School of Architecture's annual spring hazing of underclassmen. Freshmen architecture students, wearing their red smocks, were required to kneel and kiss a leaf on the capital while someone (probably an upperclassman) whacked them with a paddle.

In 1975, Thomas Hauck, a graduate student in architecture, became interested in the capital and tried to get it nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

But it never made it. "The criteria for something being nominated means it has some architectural or historical value," said Paul Young, professor of architecture. "Obviously, the committee thought it didn't."

Hauck tried to get it nominated because "he felt more attention would be given to it," Young said. "But being on the National Register brings no (such) guarantee."

In Hauck's research of the capital, he found that it was designed after the columns of the Pantheon in Rome. It decorated the New York Church, which was built in the late 1860s, and was designed by architect Stanford White.

"At that moment in history, Stanford White was probably the most notable architect in the U.S.," said Gilbert Coddington, professor of architecture.

When the church was razed in 1929, another architect managed to salvage the capital. He was persuaded to give it to OSU by a professor of architecture.

"It came here in pieces," Coddington said. "I've thought it was quite a chore to get it here from New York. And then they were lucky enough to have someone to put it back together."

No one seems to have any plans to restore the decaying structure.

"It looks like a piece of junk," Coddington said. "It's too bad more attention hasn't been paid to it."

However, at least one person in Brown hall has a suggestion — plant flowers on it.

This historical column once decorated a New York church designed by architect Stanford White. It now stands on the southwest lawn of Brown Hall.
Graduate students help fight Brown Hall fire

By Patrick McSweeney
Lantern Staff writer 3-15-82

Three architecture students tried battling a fire that gutted a ground floor room in Brown Hall Saturday night, but were forced back by smoke.

David G. LaComb, a graduate student from Utica, N.Y. and Brad Erdy, a graduate student from Columbus, were in the west side of the building working on projects when the fire broke out.

Scott Weaver, a senior from Columbus, said he noticed smoke when he entered the building about 7:40 p.m. and alerted LaComb and Erdy.

After tripping alarms and calling the OSU Division of Fire Safety, the three students tried to put out the fire with an extinguisher.

After OSU firefighters arrived at the scene, Erdy directed them to a rear entrance of Brown Hall where the blaze was contained in a small ground-level storage room.

Columbus and OSU firefighters brought the blaze under control in about five minutes, Columbus Battalion Chief Michael Fiorimi said.

He said 25 Columbus firefighters answered the call but only three fought the fire.

No damage was reported to the Arts and Sciences Career Counseling and Placement offices located in that area of Brown Hall.

The fire filled the building with smoke, but officials said it will be open today.

The cause of the fire is undetermined, OSU firefighters said. Fiorimi estimated the damage at between $500 to $1,000.
Old halls reviewed; restoration an issue

By Neerja Sharma
Lantern staff writer

The appearance of the OSU main campus may soon change with the proposed demolition of Lord and Brown halls, and the Neil and 17th building.

Richard Eschliman, assistant vice president of the University Architect's office, said there has been discussion concerning the demolition of Lord Hall, but the building's demolition has not been placed on any agenda.

David Marsh, assistant vice president for the Office of Campus Planning and Space Utilization, plans to have Lord Hall demolished in four to five years. First, funding is needed in order to replace the structure.

According to Campus Planning, the average age of most buildings on the Ohio State campus is between 30-40 years. Lord Hall is 84 years old.

"Generally, if a building has some architectural character and is usable, we'd rather restore it than tear it down," Marsh said.

But renovating Lord Hall would not be cost effective according to the Office of Physical Facilities, the University Architect and Campus Planning. When renovating a building, it must be brought up to current code. Eschliman said Lord Hall is not architecturally unique like Orton Hall or Townshend Hall.

"Lord Hall is an old building. It has reached its prime and passed it," said James E. Stevens Jr., assistant vice president for Physical Facilities.

But Jeff Winstel, national regis-
Stuck in a rut

A view from Brown Hall of a construction worker corner of Sherman and 18th Avenue. Workers dig on Wednesday in what will be the basement of recently knocked down Brown Hall Annex to prepare the new Science and Engineering Library on site for the new building.
The complete report can be found in Accession 59/2010.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
DOCUMENTATION OF
BROWN HALL, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
(OH HABS No. _______)

COLUMBUS,
FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

October 2008
Brown Hall, The Ohio State University
Columbus
Franklin County
Ohio

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
Ohio State Historic Preservation Office
567 East Hudson Street
Columbus, Ohio 43211

October 2008
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Brown Hall, The Ohio State University

OH HABS No._____

Location: 190 West 17th Avenue, Columbus, Franklin County, Ohio. The building is located on the north side of West 17th Avenue, with Neil Avenue to the west and North College Road to the east.

Northwest Columbus, Ohio, USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle
NAD 27, Zone 17N, 4429621, 328111

Present Owner: The Ohio State University, 154 West 12th Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.

Present Use: The building is vacant.

Significance: John Milner Associates\(^1\) recommended that Brown Hall be considered a contributing building to a historic district eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C: under Criterion A as an example of The Ohio State University’s early twentieth-century development, and under Criterion C as an “outstanding” example of Neoclassical Revival architecture and the work of architect Joseph N. Bradford.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date(s) of construction: Construction began on the original structure on March 16, 1903, and the building was occupied by the fall of that same year.\(^2\)

2. Architect: The architect for the original structure and the 1921–1923 addition was Joseph N. Bradford (1850–1943). After designing Brown Hall, Bradford was appointed University Architect for Ohio State in 1911, and went on to design Sullivant Hall (1911), Campbell Hall (1916), and Starling-Loving Hall (1917), as well as other buildings on The Ohio State University campus.

3. Original and subsequent owners, occupants, uses: The Ohio State University is the original and present owner.

---

4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:** D. W. McGrath was awarded the construction contract for the original structure in March of 1903. There is no known information about the supplier or builder for the original building, although the cost was estimated at $75,000.

5. **Original plans and construction:** Surviving original construction drawings by Joseph N. Bradford are dated August 1, 1902. Construction began on the original structure on March 16, 1903, and the building was occupied by the fall of that same year. The original plans called for a three-story structure with brick exterior walls and brick and wood interior structure.

6. **Alterations and additions**

In 1912, $500 was spent to remodel the first floor into offices for the University Architect.

Joseph M. Bradford drafted construction drawings for a northwest wing addition to Brown Hall in August 1921. The board of trustees approved plans for the addition on September 14, 1921, and immediately solicited bids. The construction contract for the 1921–1923 addition was awarded on November 19, 1921. The general contractor was E. Elford; the electrical contractor was the Electric Power Equipment Company; and the contractor for heating, ventilation, and plumbing was the Huffman-Wolfe Company. There is no known information about the supplier or builder for the 1921–1923 addition.

Construction began on the addition to Brown Hall on January 10, 1922, and by March 2, 1923, all classrooms were occupied. The building was accepted from the general contractors at the March 6, 1923, meeting of the board of trustees. The addition is reported to have cost a total of $174,191.21.

Some information on the interior of the addition has survived. For instance, in an estimate of new hardware, the Tallmadge Hardware Company mentioned the photo studio, blue-print room, storage space, builder’s museum, dark room, offices, motion picture lab, drafting room, and restrooms. This document also reports that there would be thirty-eight new doors, a new cupboard in the entry to the darkroom, and that only the three restrooms in the addition would require locks. The Electric Power Equipment Company estimated that the change from ceiling outlets to floor outlets would require $663 in new outlets. An anonymous piece in the May 1947 *OSU Monthly* reported that the 1921–1923 addition to Brown Hall was built to house the architecture and photography departments that had been using space in the

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
Chemistry Building and in the Engineering Experiment Station. When the architecture department took over the building, there was no room for the civil engineering department.\(^5\)

In 1952, Rooms 103 and 114 of Brown Hall underwent renovations. Room 103 had the existing partitions, doors, shelving, and blackboards removed. Electrical outlets were also removed and capped. The swing of the doors in Room 103 was reversed. Both Room 103 and Room 114 had the floors replaced with tile, and the rooms were painted. Gypsum wallboard was installed, and trim around the windows and cleats were replaced. The new doors were glaze and broken window glass was replaced. All trim, finish, and exposed pipes were painted. Light-proof blinds were installed in Room 114, and venetian blinds were installed in Room 103. In addition, the stone concrete exterior steps, platform, and walk were rehabilitated. Remodeling cost $43,430.\(^6\)

In 1952, the library was remodeled at a cost of $3,380.

Beginning in 1968, the building underwent further remodeling to accommodate the College of Humanities and Placement Offices for the College of Arts and Sciences. Remodeling consisted of replacing existing carpet with flame-resistant carpeting and using concrete to level floors where needed so that 1/8" vinyl asbestos tile could be installed. The HVAC and some mechanical systems were also overhauled; this overhaul included adding new insulation, plumbing, and electrical equipment (including switches, fuses, telephone systems, lighting, and transformers). The remodeling specifications called for new hardware, and nine doors were replaced, as well as the toilet seats and the stall doors in the restrooms. New chalkboards were added to the classroom facilities.\(^7\) The cost of this remodeling project is reported as $315,447.68.\(^8\)

In 1975, an elevator was added to the rear of the Brown Hall addition by the Arjay Construction Company. In 1987, the tile roof on the original portion of Brown Hall was replaced with new tile, and in 1993, the roof on the 1921-1923 addition to Brown Hall was replaced with a rolled bituminous roof.\(^9,10\)

---

5. The Ohio State University Monthly 38 (1947).
7. Hollie W. Shupe, Specifications for Lord Hall Remodeling, Denny Hall Remodeling, and Brown Hall Remodeling (Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1968).
9. Ibid.
4. Brown Hall

Design Influences

Brown Hall was one of several buildings constructed at The Ohio State University main campus in the first five years of the twentieth century. The building was constructed on the site of the original Chemistry Building, which had been destroyed by a fire in 1889. Much of the built environment at Ohio State from this period reflects the Neoclassical principles of the City Beautiful movement, which began to reach a large audience as part of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The adoption of Neoclassical principles affected architecture and landscape design at Ohio State. In terms of buildings, the turn-of-the-century era saw the construction of Frank Packard’s Biological Hall (1898, since demolished), the Mines Building (1904, now Lord Hall), and Bradford’s Brown Hall, all buildings that mark a turn away from picturesque medieval-based architectural styles to more restrained Neoclassical and Italian Renaissance design sources.

Likewise, in campus planning, Ohio State’s original informal, park-like picturesque layout began to lose favor in the late 1890s, as more formal Neoclassical campus planning became more fashionable. In 1904, Frank Packard developed a more formal campus master plan, based on Neoclassical design principles of the City Beautiful movement. Later campus plans developed from 1905–1930 would continue to build on Packard’s Neoclassical design. At the same time, Neoclassical Revival and Renaissance Revival architectural design continued to be influential at Ohio State. Joseph Bradford’s Neoclassical and Italian Renaissance–inspired buildings from this era include Sullivant Hall (1913), Campbell Hall (1916), and Hagerty Hall (1922–1924).

Joseph Nelson Bradford, Architect

The designer of Brown Hall, Joseph Nelson Bradford (1850–1943) was born in California and came to Columbus in 1872. In 1878, Bradford graduated from the Ohio Mechanical and Agricultural College (later known as The Ohio State University) with a degree in mechanical engineering. Bradford began teaching in the college’s Department of Engineering in 1885; he founded the Fine Arts Department in 1886 and the Department of Photography in 1890. In 1899, Bradford established Ohio State’s architecture program, expanding it to a four-year program in 1900. Bradford then established an autonomous

Department of Architecture within the university’s College of Engineering in 1906. Bradford was appointed University Architect for The Ohio State University in 1911, and went on to design Sullivant Hall (1911), Campbell Hall (1916), and Starling-Loving Hall (1917), as well as other buildings on the main campus. Bradford continued to be active at The Ohio State University in the 1920s and 1930s, designing several building additions and promoting the university’s photography department and photographic archive. Bradford died in Columbus in 1943.

Original Layout

Joseph N. Bradford’s original drawings for Brown Hall are dated August 1, 1902. The surviving drawings consist mainly of elevations and exterior and interior details. Bradford’s design was completed after Frank Packard’s 1898 Biological Hall but was before Packard’s design for the Mines Building (Lord Hall, which was in the Italian Renaissance Revival style and was approved in August 1904). Bradford’s original drawings identify Brown Hall as the Engineering Building. The board of trustees’ meeting minutes from April 23, 1908, indicate that the building was renamed in honor of Christopher Newton Brown, dean of the College of Engineering, and that a memorial plaque for Brown was requested.

The original architectural floor plans of Brown Hall do not survive; however, the overall layout of Brown Hall is documented in ca. 1920 planning diagrams of the Brown Hall layout. All three floors of the original building had a central hall and connecting corridors to rooms located in the east and west wings. The ground floor, first floor, and second floor were connected by two large staircases at the rear of the building and flanked a large open room. The locations of restrooms in the original building are not shown on these diagrams.

The ca. 1920 planning diagrams for Brown Hall’s west wing addition show the west wing, plus north and east wings that were never constructed. If all three of the additional wings had been built, Brown Hall would have a square layout with a central courtyard. The university may have envisioned adding the other wings as the College of Engineering grew, resulting in the courtyard plan. In the end, only the 1921-1923 west wing addition was built, and the courtyard plan never came to fruition.

Plans for the four-story 1921–1923 addition show that it was to have facilities for architectural instruction, film, and photography. The plan includes spaces for photography studios, a motion-picture room, offices, drafting studios, darkrooms, blue-print rooms, offices, and restrooms.

A 1939 map of The Ohio State University main campus listed Brown Hall as the Architecture Department building. Brown was also listed as the home of the departments of Civil Engineering, Engineering Drawing, Landscape Architecture, and Photography, as well as the site of the University Architect’s office.29

Brown Hall Annex

Beginning in 1951, additional architecture studios and classrooms were housed in Brown Hall Annex, located just northwest of Brown Hall. (This building is recorded in the Herrick Archive as Herrick Archives Number 017.) Brown Hall Annex began life as part of the old Power Plant in 1892 and later served as the laundry and a bus garage before housing overflow from the School of Architecture. This building was demolished in 1991.30

Notable Features and Events

The capital from Madison Square Presbyterian Church: A significant feature of the Brown Hall site is a 5’ x 5’ Corinthian glazed terra-cotta capital that has sat for many years on the west side of the Brown Hall site. The capital is an architectural fragment from the now-demolished Madison Square Presbyterian Church in New York City (1906). The domed church was considered to be an excellent example of the Neoclassical Revival style of architecture, and reflected ancient Roman design principles. Ohio State architecture professor Howard Dwight Smith stated that the capital “ought to prove as valuable for instructional purposes as if it were an antique from the Roman Forum itself or from the Acropolis at Rome” and that the capital represented a subtle fusion of ancient Roman and Greek influences.31

Madison Square Presbyterian was designed by the eminent architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White. The church is generally credited to Stanford White, one of the firm’s principal partners. The church was one of the last buildings designed by White before he was fatally shot in 1906 by the

29. The Ohio State University, “Map of Part of Grounds” (1939), Maps file, The Ohio State University Archives.
husband of Evelyn Nesbitt, an artists’ model with whom White had an affair. The church was demolished around 1918–1920 to make way for an office tower.

According to Smith’s account, the capital was one of six on the church’s main portico. Smith stated that a local architect, “Dutch” Gugler, witnessed demolition workers destroying five of the capitals as the church was being demolished. Gugler reported that he impersonated a foreman and ordered the workers to save the sixth capital. That night, Gugler hired teamsters to haul the capital to his architectural studio. During a subsequent weekend trip to New York City, Smith learned of the capital, obtained the item, and had it shipped to Columbus. Smith stated that the capital arrived at Ohio State on March 1, 1921, and was deposited at a temporary location on the southwest corner of Brown Hall, which is still the capital’s location. Smith also stated that he thought that several architectural professors who were interested in “classic art,” including Joseph N. Bradford, might appreciate “…the opportunity of having this piece, even though it might partake somewhat of contraband.”32

Fires: Brown Hall has survived three fires. An early morning fire in 1964 caused $30,000 of damage to the basement photography lab and the first-floor architecture lab.33 In 1976, the university film vault caught on fire after a malfunction with the fan wiring.34 A small ground-level storage room caught on fire in 1986 causing $500 to $1,000 in damages. It was reported that students walking into the building noticed the fire and then ran to tell students who were working in the basement.35

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement: Brown Hall is a Neoclassical Revival building with buff-colored brick wall cladding, limestone trim, and wood one-over-one windows. The building has three stories and consists of a hipped-roof center bay and two side wings, both with hipped roofs. The building also has a small original gabled northwest wing. A large four-story, flat-roof addition was built onto the northwest wing in 1921–1923. The building’s overall exterior decoration is fairly restrained, with most of the detail concentrated in the central wing of the façade, and at the cornice level. The exterior composition of the original portion of the building is highly symmetrical, with

32. Ibid.
applied ornament on the south, east, and west walls, while the north (rear) wall is very plain. Important decorative features include a central roof pediment and a central pedimented porch on the façade. The rest of the façade, as well as the east and west walls, have brick pilasters, stone entablatures, and stone cornices. The pilasters have limestone Ionic capitals. The northwest addition is compatible in materials and design with the original building. Brown Hall is a good example of early twentieth-century Neoclassical Revival design applied to a large collegiate building.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** The original portion of the building is a three-story structure with an unfinished attic. The original structure was roughly rectangular in plan, but it became L-shaped when the 1921–1923 four-story addition was constructed at the rear of the building. The gross size of the structure is 74,902 square feet, and the net assignable space is 42,574 square feet.

2. **Foundation:** For the original building, rough coursed limestone masonry with some brick masonry for the original building; for the 1921–1923 addition, poured concrete.

3. **Walls:** The exterior walls are composed of solid brick masonry. Most of the wall surfaces feature an exterior veneer of buff-colored pressed brick; the remainder of the walls are composed of a rougher, dark red brick. The red brick is hidden on most areas of the building, although it is exposed in the center portion of the building’s north wall, which is one of the less visible portions of the building.

4. **Structural system, framing:** The structure is supported by the brick masonry exterior walls. Although section drawings for the original building do not survive, the building is large enough that it likely contains brick masonry interior walls as well. The floors in the original portion of the building are supported by the brick perimeter and interior walls and a series of wood joists. The 1921–1923 addition was built with brick-clad, load-bearing, masonry exterior walls, masonry interior walls, and reinforced-concrete beams and floor slabs.

5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:** The south wall features a gabled porch supported by two stone Ionic fluted columns. The porch pediment features a stone lozenge with the date “1903” flanked on each side by foliate decoration. The porch cornice and the pediment’s raking cornice feature stone dentils, and the entablature of the porch has “Brown Hall” inscribed in Roman
lettering. The east wall has a small wood, gabled porch in the Craftsman style, with wood knee braces and rafters with exposed rafter tails.

6. Chimneys: The building does not have masonry chimneys, but it does feature two short metal ventilator stacks placed symmetrically on the roof of the east and west wings of the main building. The stacks sit on the north side of the roof structure, and are visible on Bradford’s original drawings for the building.

7. Openings
   a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance retains the original wood one-light double doors. The main entrance also has sidelights and a three-light transom. Other exterior doors are flat, steel single and double replacement doors dating to the post-1965 era.
   b. Windows: The building retains original wood, double-hung, one-over-one windows.

8. Roof
   a. Shape, covering: Bradford’s original plans called for a red clay, tile-clad, hipped roof, with small sections of gabled roof on the center front entablature and on a small northwest (rear) wing that was part of the original construction. The original portion of the building currently features areas of hipped and gabled roofs with timber-frame structure. The current roof covering is clay tile. The center wing is covered by one hipped roof, and the side wings each have a hipped roof. The pitch of the roof is moderate, not particularly steep but also not low and broad. The roof structure on the 1921–1923 northwest wing addition is flat.
   b. Cornice, eaves: The building features a limestone entablature, and a limestone cornice with dentils on the south, east, and west walls. The central pavilion on the south wall has a gabled stone and brick pediment with modillions, an oculus window, and a stone acroterion mounted at the peak of the pediment gable. The north wall trim is much plainer, and features only a thin wood and metal cornice.

C. General Description of Interior

1. Floor plan: The floor plan consists of a series of corridors leading to smaller spaces. These spaces include restrooms, offices, classrooms, and large studios.
2. **Stairway:** The building retains an original central staircase. The staircase has wood steps that have been clad in asbestos vinyl tile, although the wood risers are still visible. The central staircase has retained an original wood railing with turned wood balusters and round, fluted newel posts. The wood features of the staircase are coated in an older finish of dark reddish-brown.

3. **Flooring:** The floor structure is wood, but most of the wood flooring has been covered over with asbestos, vinyl tile, and other post-1950 flooring materials.

4. **Wall and ceiling finishes:**
   a. **Ground floor:** Walls are a mix of original lath and plaster, and later, gypsum wall board. Ceilings are a mix of plaster and post-1960 acoustical tile hung ceilings.
   
   b. **First floor:** Walls are a mix of original lath and plaster, and later, gypsum wall board. Ceilings are a mix of plaster and post-1960 acoustical tile hung ceilings.
   
   c. **Second floor:** Walls are a mix of original lath and plaster, and later, gypsum wall board. Ceilings are a mix of plaster and post-1960 acoustical tile hung ceilings.

5. **Doorways, doors, and windows:**
   a. **Doors:** Interior doors include many original two-panel one-light wood doors, with wood one-light transoms. The interior also features some later wood replacement doors.
   
   b. **Windows:** The one-over-one wood windows are visible in many of the rooms on the interior. Many of these windows have the original wood window sills, although most of these have been painted. The interior also features an opening with a round-arched wood fanlight.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** Some original trim survives in corridors, classroom spaces, and studios. The surviving original trim is composed mainly of wood door casings, baseboards, and window sills. Most of the remaining interior trim has been painted, except for the stair railings and balusters of the central staircase. The interior also has several archways on the first floor.
   
   a. **Fireplaces:** None
   
   b. **Cabinets and built-in features:** None observed
c. **Hardware:** Some of the remaining paneled doors appear to have original or early replacement brass doorknobs, hinges, and other hardware elements.

8. **Mechanical equipment**
   a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** Heating is provided via the Ohio State University central steam plant.
   
   b. **Lighting:** The lighting fixtures are generally post-1965 replacements, and include incandescent metal ceiling fixtures and fluorescent ceiling-mounted fixtures.
   
   c. **Plumbing:** No original plumbing was observed while in the building. Bathroom fixtures have been replaced within the last forty years.

D. **Site**

1. **General setting and orientation:** The building is located on a small grass lot in a densely developed portion of The Ohio State University campus north of the central oval. The façade of the building faces south and fronts West Seventeenth Avenue. The rear of the building faces West Eighteenth Avenue. The east and west walls face pedestrian walkways. The building is oriented according to the rectilinear street grid of the north portion of the Ohio State main campus.

2. **Historic landscape design:** The 1903 and 1938 photographs of the building show a small area of lawn surrounding the building and fairly minimal landscaping that included foundation planting of shrubs and a small number of trees. The building still sits on a small grass lot and has foundation plantings and some trees. A water reservoir for the university power plant once sat immediately north of Brown Hall, and the size of this reservoir was decreased to accommodate Brown Hall’s 1921–1923 northwest wing addition. The reservoir appears on 1939 campus maps but was later removed.

3. **Outbuildings:** No outbuildings are associated with Brown Hall
The Corinthian Capital

The Corinthian Capital has come to be synonymous with the School of Architecture at The Ohio State University. The following remarks describe the story behind the capital and how it came to rest in front of Brown Hall. The information comes from Hoover's History of The Ohio State University.

The capital is the sole survivor of the six capitals from the portico of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York City, better known as "Dr. Parkhurst's church." That edifice, recognized as one of the masterpieces of American architecture, was the work of the late Stanford White of the firm of McKim, Mead & White. It was razed to make way for a commercial structure, and fragments of it found resting places in the Hartford News Building, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the offices of admiring architects in various parts of the country. The location of the only remaining capital on the University campus is due to the professional enthusiasm of Eric Gugler, an architect and friend of Professor Howard Dwight Smith (C.E. '17) who was professor of architecture at Ohio State from 1918 to 1921 and from 1929 until his retirement in 1956. He also served as University architect from 1929-1956. When Gugler observed the destruction of five of the capitals by the wrecking crew, he employed a truck and laborers and had the remaining capital hauled to his home courtyard at midnight. His landlord had no more sentiment about it than the wreckers, and ordered it removed because it was disfiguring the yard. At this stage of the proceedings, Smith appeared and persuaded his friend to let him have the capital for The Ohio State University. Accordingly, the capital was brought to the campus in the spring of 1932 and placed in front of Brown Hall, where it may be found today. There is no doubt that the capital's perfection of design will long serve as an inspiration to students of architecture, and at the same time, perpetuate the eminence of a great American architect, Stanford White.
BROWN HALL
THIRD FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1"=32'

Storage Space
This Part Floored Over
N.J. 368