

Speculation Rampant On Possible Elgin Uses

Aging Buildings May Hold Clues

By Dick Ramage

It's ours for \$725,000 and a bargain at that — but what happens next?

That's the problem now with the utilization of the Elgin plant. Speculation of the use that will be made of the structure, six times larger than any of the present University classroom buildings, began before the final agreement was made with Elgin officials.

The plant has 310,000 square feet of usable space.

Purchase of the building will be financed by funds from the 10-year state institutional building levy, University officials said, and will probably eliminate the need for the near-future construction of a science building and general classroom building.

The University space utilization committee is now studying the problem of how to use the structure, Business Manager Carl Donaldson said. First results of the study are not expected to be released until early fall.

Possibilities

University observers point out several possible uses of the newly-acquired structure, however. The clue to final use of the building may lie in the age of several presently used buildings on the city campus.

All the present partitions in the Elgin building are removable, allowing for ease in renovation and for flexibility in future planning, Donaldson said.

Grant Memorial Hall, now used by the Department of Women's Physical Education was built in 1887. Students enrolled in the department's courses walk from the Hall, located at 12th and S Streets, to the girl's physical education field, off 14th and W. The field is just west of the Elgin building, 17th and Northside.

Adjacent to Grant Memorial is the Department of Geography and the University Police. It was built in 1906.

71 Year-Old Tot

Nebraska Hall, also constructed in 1887, holds the Division of Conservation and Survey, in addition to other federal offices working with the University.

The Department of Architecture, located in Architectural Hall, is vintage 1894, and the adjacent "temporary" building is some 12 years old. Also located in the Hall is the Audio-visual Aids Department and the Extension Service.

Donaldson has commented



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that the Extension Service does not have direct contact with University students and could be placed further off campus without impairing its services.

The School of Music building was acquired in 1896, but a recent addition added more practice rooms to the facilities.

Entire College

Some observers, keeping in mind the fact that the Elgin building can support 300 pounds per square foot on the first two floors and 75 pounds on the top two, are casting an eye of the entire college of Engineering and Architecture.

Chancellor Clifford Mardin has said the floors of the building are more than adequate to carry any type of laboratory equipment, and engineers have that.

Many of the engineering structures are aging. Ricards Laboratory, housing the Department of Mechanical Engineering, was built in 1908 and the old part of the Bancroft building was constructed in 1915.

Stout Hall, home of Civil Engineering, was built in 1897, but has a 1953 addition.

The department does have several new buildings in addition to the additions. Avery Lab, used by Chemistry and Chemistry Engineering was built in 1918, but as a 1947 addition.

Another crowded building is Bessey Hall, built in 1916. The structure houses botany, biology, zoology and bacteriology.

Chancellor Hardin may

have given a hint of partial future use of the Elgin building when he told a meeting of the central Labor Union that he believed physics and

biology could specifically benefit from the available additional space.

"When you decide what to put in the Elgin building, you

still have the problem of what department or school to put into the quarters vacated by the moved departments," Donaldson said.



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