

A&M Architect C. W. Adams Key Figure in Construction

In 1946, when the Board of Directors of the college asked Carleton W. Adams, A&M System architect, to make a preliminary report of study on the proposed Student Center, he was faced with the problem of making a survey of what the needs of the A&M Student Center would actually be, what its size would be, and exactly what facilities should be included in its construction.

With the assignment of this architectural problem to his office, he first assembled certain data available locally. Then he made a visit to seven colleges with outstanding union buildings, mostly in the Midwest. This trip proved of great interest and considerable value in building an understanding of the general problem and in seeing what others had done and were planning to do with their unions.

Word Travels

Word that A&M proposed to have a Student Center without unnecessary delay was received with considerable interest at the colleges visited. The personnel in each union were gracious in giving their time to discuss the project and in going over their buildings and explaining their operations.

Adams was confronted with the problem of building a center to serve the needs of the college. One particular problem on this campus that is unlike those at other colleges is that A&M is not co-educational. Most of the students live on the campus and have normal eating facilities.

In some of the larger universities the union problem is sort of a day room problem, with a big crowd at noon and in the early evening, while here our proposed center was to be for social and extra-curricular activities.

Due to the fact that we had limited facilities for recreation on the campus, the recreational portion would have to be accented. There was also the problem of the site for the building. The location that was chosen is the best that was available since it is between the two dormitory areas, close to the athletic facilities, faces the main drill field, and provides as much parking space as possible. Many student activities and meeting rooms would be needed to house the various organizations on the campus.

Based upon his trip to other student unions, Adams observed that the Center should be provided for three groups.

For Students

First of all it should be primarily for A&M students. It should offer them something of immediate pleasure and future profit by becoming the center of the social life of the college. By providing facilities for fellowship, study, recreation, entertainment, eating, drinking, and lounging, the Center would cover a wide range of activities, accenting those that were social, spiritual, and healthful.

It would help weld a strong school spirit, cement friendships, promote mutual interests, common pursuits, and understanding. This environment would stimulate vivid personalities and develop qualities of leadership and supplement the work of the classroom. It was to provide unlimited means for discriminating use of time.

Faculty and Staff

Second, the Center was to be for the faculty. Although fund limitations prohibited having a faculty lounge and dining room, the Center offers the faculty facilities not available elsewhere on the campus. It affords an atmosphere where faculty and students may meet on common ground.

Thirdly there are the former students. The Center becomes their college home, the place to renew old friendships, the point of contact in college life. Beyond this there are the friends of the college—the fathers, mothers, and sweethearts. And finally the proposed Center was to be a memorial, serving especially as a monument to those of A&M who gave their all in their service to their country, and also as a memorial to all those who served in the armed forces in times of war.

The main advantages of our Memorial Student Center are the free and open plan of the building, the orientation of the building on the site, the provisions for expansion, and the generally inviting and interesting "look" of both the interior and the exterior.

Advantages Shown

When the proposed plans were sent out to the director of the University of Wisconsin Union for criticism and suggestions, the director pointed out these advantages: "The relationship of the facilities to each other and to the most appropriate location in the present scheme with an eye on operating efficiency and economy, and on convenience of use by the public and servicing and supervision by the staff."

He praised the service auxiliaries and the special features that have proven desirable in general union experience since they allow for future additions.

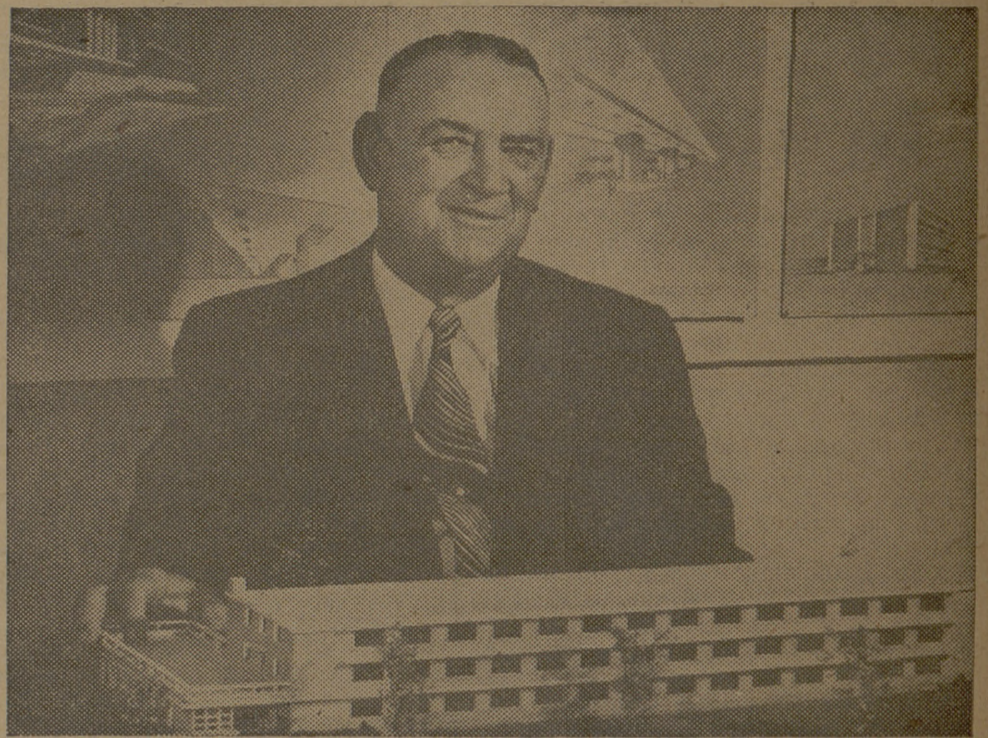
Plans have been made to build an additional eight bowling alleys, a theater with 1,000 or 1,200 capacity, an additional 66 guest rooms, and a swimming pool and locker rooms.

In the architectural and design sense, Adams believed there should be "harmony" indicative of a unified people, and "solidarity" indicative of strength of character and rugged masculinity. He believed that the Center's great front doors should constitute a real "invitation" to students and a "welcome" to visitors.

Invitation Look

Adams pointed out that a majority of the student union buildings have no such inviting look. Instead, with the usual narrow entrance, they seem to keep the students out rather than make them feel that they should go inside.

Careful allotment of space and sound planning was required for economical operations and easy



Carleton W. Adams

The man behind the planning of A&M's new Memorial Student Center is Adams, A&M System architect. As a result of his efforts, the building has become widely proclaimed a structure of unusual beauty, architectural merit, and practical arrangement. He is currently working on a \$9 million building program for the System. Before him is a model of the new \$300,000 men's dormitory for Arlington State College.

control. Flexibility of arrangement was essential since available funds would not permit the inclusion of everything desired.

On October 24, 1946 the building committee of the Memorial Student Center was appointed by President Gibb Gilchrist. This committee was authorized to decide on the facilities needed in the building, the operation and control of the building program, and the financing of the complete program.

Committee members were E. E. McQuillen, chairman, H. D. Dillingham, J. J. Woolket, E. N. Holmgreen, W. R. Carmichael, S. L. Loveless, J. W. Rollins and E. L. Angell. Adams sat in with the committee on their meetings. Student members were Pat Spillman, Elmo Livingston, Robert Leatherwood, Sam Williams, and Powell Sheumock.

A report by the committee decided on an extended type building with careful attention to porches and terraces to make it as homelike in appearance as possible, and made recommendations concerning their decisions. It was agreed that the building program would get underway by May, 1948. However the ground-breaking ceremonies were not held until Sept. 20, 1948.

In working with the committee, Adams first submitted a drawing showing all the facilities the com-

mittee asked for, and then the committee decided upon which parts to omit, because of fund limitations. The completed building cost \$2 million to construct and is planned so that the proposed additions will blend with the architectural scheme.

Guest Room Work Is Mrs. Holland's

Mrs. Mozelle Holland, acting manager of the guest rooms, has worked with the Memorial Student Center for two years. Prior to her present position, she was general cashier for the business departments.

Her office is just beyond the main lounge in what is called the Front Office. To help her with her job of managing the 66 guest rooms and the 32 rooms in the Aggie Inn, and taking care of reservations, housekeeping, and all matters pertaining to their operation, she will have a staff composed of clerks, maids, bellhops, and office workers.

There are two types of guest rooms, Mrs. Holland said. One is the standard room and the other is a deluxe room with a living room and bedroom combination. All rooms are air-conditioned, have private baths, room service, and telephone.

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