Making it Modern

Wheaton College and the International Style
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Essays
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Curatorial Team
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 Appropriately enough, the idea for this project began with a conversation in the College Archives. It was there, at the first meeting of the Preservation and Stewardship Team (PaST) in spring 2008, that a small group of us began to brainstorm projects that might highlight and preserve Wheaton's unique history. Given the curricular dimension of our charge, I suggested teaching a seminar devoted to Wheaton's 1938 competition for an art center—a little-known, but critically important contest that attracted some of the twentieth century's greatest Modernists. This idea was improved upon by Leah Niederstadt, Curator of the Permanent Collection, who suggested linking this fall seminar with her spring Exhibition Design class. The result of that morning's conversation is the rich collection of essays before you, and the wonderful exhibition of the same name that Leah's students have designed and mounted in the Beard and Weil Galleries this spring.

The title chosen for this project has an intentionally dual meaning. The visionaries behind Wheaton's built environment—Eliza Baylies Wheaton, Samuel Valentine Cole, Ralph Adams Cram, Esther Seaver, Howard Meneely, Howard Rich, and many others—were all, in one way or another, interested in making Wheaton modern. This spirit of the "new" may be as easily seen in the ambitious 1849 design of New Seminary Hall (later named Mary Lyon) as it is in the crisp, Modernist clarity of Meneely Hall. In another sense, the College's leaders were also invested in "making it" as an institution—demonstrating, through its buildings, that the school had truly arrived. This attitude informs projects as widely separated in time as Wheaton's 1844 gymnasium—the first of its kind in the country and the projected $50 million Center for Scientific Inquiry and Innovation, a project under construction as of this writing.

In their exploration of both modernism and Modernism, these essays aim to do three things: to set the stage for Wheaton's "conversion," by considering the institution's early history of innovative design; to examine the arrival of the International Style on the campus, from theory to practice; and finally, to consider the contemporary dismantling and reshaping of Wheaton's Modernist legacy. Although it covers a rather wide territory, this catalogue is not intended as a complete architectural history of the school. Rather, it is an attempt to understand Wheaton's built environment through the lens of progressive design—a narrative that not only tells us a great deal about the institution's evolving character, but one that also serves as a valuable case study of the changes that happened in twentieth-century campus design more generally.

Like the Wheaton campus itself, this project represents the work and support of many hands. I would like to thank, first and foremost, the students who made this catalogue and exhibition possible. They include the authors of the following, thoughtfully researched essays: Ross Culliton, who worked tirelessly to produce this smart, Modernist-inspired catalogue under Barbara Dill's direction; and the students in Leah Niederstadt's Exhibition Design class, who mounted such an extraordinary show: Andrea Bravo, Eric Brownstein, Ross Culliton, Mollie Denhard, Maria Escudero, George Kunhardt, Jessie Landau, Kendra Lawrence, Nancy Milka, Evan Morse, Meghan Quigley, Shannon Ryan, Mell Scalzi, and Jennifer Valentino. I am also extraordinarily grateful to my colleagues, Zeph Stickney, and Leah Niederstadt, for their incredible energy as writers, editors, and teachers. Indeed, this project would never have gotten off the ground without Zeph—whose profound knowledge of the College's history, and heroic stewardship of its primary documents, deserve our deepest respect and gratitude.

And all of the readers of this catalogue, would also like to thank those whose generous financial contributions made its production possible. Above all, I would like to acknowledge the all-too-often unsung support of the Wheaton College Friends of Art and Art History department. The group's frequent and generous contributions to the Art and Art History Department have not only enriched the lives of our majors, but also those of the entire Wheaton community. I am deeply grateful, as well, to Kathleen Foley Denniston (W1973), whose financial support for our students and their work has made a lasting impact on the Art History program. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to Wheaton's former Provost, Molly Easo Smith—who not only pledged administrative support for this project, but whose creation of the PaST Committee itself brought this era of the College's past into the present.

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Spring 2009
In its early years, Wheaton Female Seminary consisted of only a few modestly scaled buildings surrounded by the farms, forests, and marshlands of a small, rural community. Despite the Seminary’s humble origins, its founders had far-reaching plans for the school—envisioning it as a progressive institution that would reflect all of the recent advancements in women’s education. Indeed, by the end of the century, President Samuel Valentine Cole would reflect all of the recent advancements in women’s education. Indeed, Wheaton founders created an environment that physically reflected their educational principles. In doing so, they established a building philosophy that the school would continue to expand upon in the decades to come.

Founded in 1834, Wheaton Seminary was built to honor the memory of Judge Laban Wheaton’s beloved daughter, Eliza Wheaton Strong. The school’s true guiding light, however, was the judge’s daughter-in-law Eliza Baylies Chapin Wheaton, who persuaded him to establish this living memorial to his daughter. The school’s appearance—as built by its bucolic setting (in its early days, the Seminary was bordered by an apple orchard, a swamp, and a pig sty), and also by its New England village context. In their position along Norton’s Main Street, the boarding house and Seminary Hall not only signaled their importance as civic structures, but they also embodied the region’s commitment to women’s education.

Over the next decade, the scale and character of the Seminary’s architecture would reflect greater ambition—beginning, in 1844 with the construction of a gymnasium (Fig. 1.2). By creating an indoor facility devoted solely to physical education, the school’s founders not only demonstrated their faith in the health benefits of exercise, but also their belief in women’s physical capabilities. This decision, moreover, placed the school at the very forefront of collegiate planning—for Wheaton’s gymnasium appears to have been the first freestanding building of its type to appear on an American campus. The new building was equally noteworthy for its design. Built in a stately, Greek Revival style, this temple-like structure featured a wide porch with fluted, Doric columns beneath a Classical pediment. Not only did the new gymnasium reflect the style of contemporary male colleges, but it also marked the school’s transition from domestic to institutional scale.

Built in 1849, New Seminary Hall (later named Mary Lyon Hall) far more radically altered the campus’s appearance (Fig. 1.3). This considerably larger version of the first Seminary Hall cost over $5,000 to complete; added to these costs was the relocation of the “Old Sem,” as its predecessor was hitherto known, to Howard Street. The bracketed, Greek Revival style of the new academic building—combined with the Classical austerity of its immediate neighbor—the 1844 gymnasium—contrasted starkly with the campus’s earlier buildings; indeed, even its wooden clapboarding was “flat-laid,” rather than overlapped, in order to simulate the appearance of masonry. Its two-story, Giant Order pilasters lent the building a sense of unity and solidarity, whereas its arched and flower-drop carvings demonstrate the impressive skills of its probable carpenter-designer, James D. Hathaway. This combination of imposing scale and sophisticated decorative detailing put an impressive new face on the Seminary—one that was at once forceful and elegant. The design demonstrated a certain frugality, as well, for records indicate that the building’s plans were borrowed from another seminary in Hinsdale, Massachusetts.

The architectural refinement of the Seminary’s new centerpiece visually embodied the Wheatons’ goals for the institution. By approving a Greek Revival style for the new building, for example, they suggested that the Seminary’s intellectual pedigree lay firmly rooted in Classical civilization—whereas the stately symmetry of the building symbolized the stability and gravity that they hoped the school would convey to its local and regional community. Indeed, following the 1837 departure of Mary Lyon—the Seminary’s most valuable and well-known early advisor—the family no doubt wished to demonstrate, in architectural terms, that the institution remained a thriving one. Considered in its local context, the new building’s design also recalled the chapel at the Pittsfield Young Ladies’ Institute, constructed in 1847—a gesture that once again illustrates the Seminary’s awareness of architectural trends at its peer institutions.

The later additions to New Seminary Hall, undertaken in 1878 by the renowned architect Gridley J. F. Bryant, garnered further prestige for the school (Fig. 1.4). Bryant’s previous designs in Boston,
Providence, New Haven, Philadelphia, and New Orleans had won him national acclaim and substantial wealth. At the time of his commission for Wheaton, Bryant was arguably best known for his design of Boston's new City Hall, completed in 1872.* In selecting such a high-profile architect for this project, Mrs. Wheaton further cultivated the school's reputation as a serious-minded academic institution.

At a cost of more than $25,000 (or five times the cost of the original building), Bryant's three additions to the east, south, and west sides of New Seminary Hall proved to be a costly yet advantageous investment. The pilasters and cornice details of these wings amplified the building's stately elegance, whereas the grand new staircase and elaborate, Renaissance-inspired cupola of Bryant's design increased the building's splendor and height. More importantly, these additions nearly doubled the size of the school's academic space—providing the Seminary with a library, a science laboratory, and recitation rooms. The 1844 gymnasium, whose removal had in fact initiated this expansion (Mrs. Wheaton had pledged to expand New Seminary Hall provided she could donate the former gymnasium to the nearby Trinitarian Congregational Church, where it still stands), was replaced by a new athletic facility within Bryant's west wing.” The impressive enlargement of New Seminary Hall not only enhanced Wheaton's image as an important local institution, then, but it also placed its curriculum and facilities on a par with men's institutions.

The additions to New Seminary Hall prefigured the more comprehensive plans that Mrs. Wheaton and the Rev. Dr. Samuel Valentine Cole would eventually formulate for the school (Fig.1.5). Appointed as President of the Seminary in 1897, Cole had agreed to take the position on the condition that Wheaton would become a four-year college. By the 1890s, the notion of college education for women had become increasingly mainstream—a situation due, in no small part, to Harvard's official recognition of Radcliffe as its sister college in 1894.* As college attendance became an increasingly accepted goal for women, seminaries and junior colleges were obliged to adjust to the times by establishing college preparatory programs. Wheaton, too, was compelled to adapt its curriculum in order to survive.†

Architecture played an especially important role in Wheaton's transition from a seminary to a college, since larger facilities were needed to support its expanded collegiate curriculum. Collaborating with the young Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram (Fig.1.6), Cole proposed a new campus plan. As Cole later recalled:

I remember taking Mr. Cram ... over the Seminary grounds and as we came down the path through the apple orchard yonder, I asked him if it were not possible to group our future buildings around an open court, making a sort of quadrangle. He said, "Entirely possible," and upon reaching my office he drew a pencil sketch outlining such a plan.**

The plan that Cole and Cram devised was not only aimed at enlarging the school's cramped facilities, but it was also meant to embody Wheaton's new educational goals. Cole hoped, in short, to create an entirely new architectural identity for the school—transforming it from a cluster of modest-sized seminary buildings, huddled around the nucleus of New Seminary Hall, into an impressive and carefully laid-out collegiate campus. For Cram, too, the commission represented an important milestone. Following this first campus design, the Boston architect built a long, distinguished career as a collegiate designer and planner—a series of commissions that eventually included the United States Military Academy, Princeton, Wellesley, Williams, and Rice, among many others.‡

The first Wheaton campus plan consists of only a few vague outlines, sketched in pencil (Fig.1.7); it is a simple image, yet one that clearly demonstrates an ambitious vision for the school's future. Cram's sketch depicts several buildings around a central, rectangular space, in an arrangement that emphasizes symmetry and a pronounced, north-south axis—two elements that would play a significant role in the eventual construction of the campus. The miniature facades that Cram delineated around the edges of the plan attest to his experimentation with a variety of different historical styles. Although he became far better known for his Gothic Revival designs—Cram would later design New York City's Cathedral of St. John the Divine—he settled on a Georgian Revival style in this case. Loosely based on the eighteenth-century architecture of the American colonies, yet elastic enough to include the English Renaissance and Classical Rome, this aesthetic was characterized by the use of red brick, white columns, and the Classical orders.

Cram's careful attention to spatial arrangement would contribute as much to the campus's visual harmony as had his design's stylistic unity. By locating buildings around a central quadrangle, Cram planned an inward-facing campus—an arrangement that not only preserved the institution's sense of intimacy, despite its growth in size, but that also conveyed an insulated (and almost cloistered) atmosphere felt to be appropriate for a women's institution. Regardless of the students' gender, of course, such an environment naturally encouraged reflection and a strengthened sense of community. Bonds at Wheaton had always been strong, yet under Cram's plan the Seminary would evolve from...
a family-oriented model in which students lived in small, clapboard houses under the benevolent eye of Mrs. Wheaton, to something that looked and acted more like an idealized society.

Although Cram's plan was clearly innovative in its use of space, it also reflected the architectural trends of its period. Cram's organization of buildings around a central court, for example, paid direct tribute to the so-called "Court of Honor" at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (Fig. 1.8). Indeed, both he and Cole used this same label to describe Wheaton's rectangular plan. Composed of a central basin surrounded by neo-Classical buildings, Chicago's Court of Honor—familiarly known as the "White City"—demonstrated the power of stylistic and planning uniformity. Contemporary fairgoers recognized this space as one of the exhibition's greatest triumphs. Montgomery Schuyler, a well-known architectural critic of the period, noted that Chicago's Court of Honor had achieved "a success of unity, a triumph of ensemble ... [in which the] whole is better than any of its parts." Arranging Wheaton's campus around a similarly conceived court, Cram created an enclosed and unified haven for the Seminary's students—a "White City" in Georgian red brick.

Wheaton's Court of Honor reveals, too, the influence of the City Beautiful Movement—a city-planning trend that was itself a legacy of the 1893 fair. During the heavily industrialized period of the late nineteenth century, the country's natural environment had become romanticized as a source of purity, inspiration, and emotional relaxation. Consequently, in cities where the natural environment had been virtually annihilated, such as Chicago, landscape architects attempted to reinsert elements of this lost world through the creation of parks. This contemporary practice was integrated into Wheaton's design through the inclusion of a central green space—an element that was as important to Cram's design as the buildings that surrounded it. Ironically, of course, given the origins of the City Beautiful movement, Cram had in effect created a synthetic "natural" environment within what was still a largely unspoiled setting. Indeed, its most famous feature, the "Dimple," reflects this space's formerly bucolic setting. Created when a stable and barn were removed from this site in 1905, this depression was later graded during the construction of Emerson Dining Hall in 1908, when the feature was slated to become a reflecting pool.

Although the scale of Cram's proposed construction was almost alarmingly vast, it was begun on a moderate scale with the building of a dormitory named Chapin Hall in 1900 (Fig. 1.9). Relatively modest in size, yet certainly grander than the school's boarding house, Chapin Hall afforded housing for an additional seventy-five students—an increase that signaled the school's broader plans for expanding its student body (the enrollment increased rapidly during this period, from eighty-five students in 1899 to two hundred students by June of 1910). Not only did Cram's design serve to expand the size of the school, but it also increased its prestige. Chapin Hall projected a sense of dignity appropriate to the school's new sense of academic rigor; as one contemporary critic claimed, the dormitory's austere lines proclaimed its "scholastic character." By utilizing costly materials for its construction, moreover—the building was constructed in Flemish-bond brick, and trimmed in white Vermont marble (a flourish never seen again on a Wheaton building)—the school also proclaimed its investment in women's education.

If Chapin represented a small step towards the completion of an extensive architectural plan, then Wheaton's later dormitories demonstrated the grandeur of the school's eventual expansion. As Wheaton continued to grow in size after the turn of the century, dormitories were gradually added to accommodate the increasing number of incoming students; by 1922, the student body had grown to an impressive total of 309. Later dormitories such as Larcom, Cragin, Stanton, and Everett incrementally increased in both size and architectural sophistication. Their stone quoins, elaborate cornices, and (in Everett's case) even a crowning cupola attest to the school's evermore ambitious style—and yet, no single building stood apart from the unified expression of the whole. As Wheaton continued to expand, it once again needed a new gymnasium (Fig. 1.10). At the turn of the century, the school's athletic facilities were still contained within the west wing of New
Seminary Hall; not only had this space become inadequate to the student's needs, but it also represented potentially valuable academic real estate. By placing the new, 1903 gymnasium at the far southeast corner of Cram's proposed "Court of Honor," the Seminary was able to fill in a significant border to the campus plan. As the lone anchor to this part of the plan, however, the new structure must have seemed strangely isolated (Fig. 1.11); its neighbor, the Power Plant (later known as the Doll's House) would not be built until the following year. Not only did the new gymnasium indicate the school's long-term commitment to Cram's plan, but it also provides striking evidence of Cole's control over Wheaton's building process. Rather than commissioning the building from Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson, Cole instead hired a firm far better known for this kind of work—Rotch and Tilden of Boston. Notably, George Tilden had recently designed a gymnasium for Dudley Sargent, the Director of Harvard's physical education program and a nationally known figure in his field. Indeed, it was Sargent himself who directed Rotch and Tilden's designs for Wheaton—a distinction that Cole widely advertised.\(^5\)

Cram bitterly complained of Cole's decision to employ an "outsider" firm for this project (an attitude that was exacerbated, no doubt, by the fact that Rotch and Tilden had once employed him as an unpaid apprentice).\(^6\) Cole was not cowed by Cram's angered response. Rather, he wrote to the architect, asserting that: "I assumed that a firm of your standing would prefer to leave us to go and come as our own interests seemed to demand ... I see, however, from your letter that your understanding of the case and mine are not quite alike."\(^7\) Despite Cram's fit of pique, Cole maintained his right to manage all the campus's future building projects.

The conflict over the placement of Emerson Hall in 1907 clearly illustrates Cole's dominant role in campus development, even at the expense of the Trustees' wishes. Little conflict over campus construction had occurred until this new dining hall became a topic of serious debate at a Trustees' meeting that same year.\(^8\) Hoping to strengthen the western side of Cram's Court of Honor (if not with a building by Cram's firm—for Emerson, like its direct contemporary, Larcom Hall, was the design of the Boston firm Ripley and Russell), Cole favored positioning Emerson well in from Howard Street. The majority of the Board Members, however, strongly opposed this arrangement. The Trustees believed that Cole's proposal would waste valuable space; as Board Auditor William Fox stated, "I think ... that the fundamental objection, in my mind, to your plan is that it practically narrows our campus through its whole length by fifty or sixty feet."\(^9\)

The Trustees' protest was seconded by many members of the Wheaton community, who felt that the shift away from Howard Street would unmoor the school from its traditional center (in this, of course, they were perfectly right). The faculty, too, challenged Cole's decision, advising him in a joint letter that if he persevered in his course of action, it would prove "a serious disappointment to the Trustees and friends of the Seminary."\(^10\) Such overwhelming opposition illustrates the pressure that Cole faced as he attempted to realize Cram's vision. Through persuasive appeals, Cole eventually won over the support of the Trustees. To stem any future opposition to the campus plan, he then convinced the Trustees to name Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson as the Supervising Architects for the school in 1907.\(^11\)

Emerson's siting marked a significant step toward the realization of Cram's comprehensive campus plan, firmly establishing the western side of his Court of Honor (Fig. 1.12). The new dining hall also altered the previous orientation of the campus, whose earlier buildings had almost exclusively lined Main and Howard Streets. By deciding to place Emerson further from these roads in accordance with Cram's plan, Cole thereby fundamentally shifted the campus axis—not only creating the enclosed, inward-facing community he and Cram had originally envisioned, but also forging a clear distinction between the school and the town of Norton.

The building of Wheaton's Chapel in 1917 marked another important step in completing Cram's scheme (Fig. 1.13). Indeed, Cole deemed this building so significant that he initially considered placing it at the south end of the campus's main axis.\(^12\) As the spiritual heart of the campus, and also a sign of the school's increasing autonomy (previously, students had worshipped at Norton's Trinitarian Congregationalist Church), the Chapel certainly deserved a dominant position in the plan. Designed to hold 900 comfortably, its seating capacity alone made it the most spacious building on campus to date; at the time, the total college population itself fell well below this figure. Cole eventually decided to place the Chapel
along the eastern side of the quadrangle, rather than at its end—reserving this site, instead, for the future Library—yet its dramatic verticality still heralded its importance on the expanding campus.

The Chapel's impressive design managed to convey both the institution's new stature as a four-year institution—the Seminary had become a college in 1912—as well as its New England roots. With its Renaissance-derived "Scamozzi" Ionic columns, stately clock tower, and towering, 165-foot steeple—derived from the seventeenth-century designs of Sir Christopher Wren—Cram's Chapel demonstrates an architectural bravado never before seen on the campus (rather fittingly, the steeple terminates in a weathervane shaped like a peacock). Counterbalancing these elements are the building's austere silhouette and clear-paned windows, both of which evoke the simplicity of a traditional New England meeting house. In the end, Cram was so pleased with the design that he repeated it, in reduced scale, for the chapel at Choate School in Wallingford, Connecticut, seven years later.

The placement of Wheaton's Chapel aligned it with the relatively new Science Hall (later named Knapton Hall). Constructed in 1911 on the site of the Wheatons' former apple orchard, Science Hall (Fig. 1.14) was the only academic building constructed by the College since New Seminary Hall—a distinction it held until 1959. By devoting this building solely to the sciences, Wheaton architecturally reinforced its commitment to serious scholarship, and in particular, to a curriculum traditionally associated with men's institutions. Though Spartan in its lines, Science Hall achieved a certain architectural complexity through its use of decorative cornice trim, elaborate escutcheons, and a cupola that echoed the one atop New Seminary Hall. Thus, this new science facility illustrated Wheaton's dual attempt to project a new collegiate identity, while also acknowledging its earlier history.

More so than any other building from this period, the College's Library symbolically represented its academic aims—and in a more practical sense, it also provided a permanent site for the school's collection of books (Fig.1.15). Throughout Wheaton's history, its library had been extremely mobile. As construction on the campus had progressed, the school's books had been transferred from the old gymnasium, to New Seminary Hall, and eventually to the basement of the Chapel. With the completion of Cram's library in 1923, the College's books were finally given a permanent home—an act that proclaimed the central importance of scholarship at Wheaton, and signaled, in visual terms, the school's new collegiate identity.

The Library was positioned at the prestigious southern end of the campus's primary axis, a location that effectively established a new center for the College—and that demonstrated, as well, Cram's admiration for Thomas Jefferson's campus plan at the University of Virginia (whose historic library, the Rotunda, had undergone a widely-publicized restoration in the years when Cram conceived his plans for Wheaton). Jefferson's unorthodox decision to place a library at the center of his campus plan, rather than a church, was as radical as his library's stylistic source—a "pagan" Roman model, the Pantheon. Cram, too, terminated his central axis with the Library, and expressed its character in a grand, Roman style that set it distinctly apart from its neighbors. Its imposing façade of freestanding stone columns is topped with a Roman "attic" story, a horizontal alternative to the triangular Greek pediment that is typically reserved for inscriptions (in this case, the College motto: "That They May Have Life, and Have It Abundantly"). The columns' Composite order capitals, a combination of the Ionic and Corinthian orders, are yet another Roman motif. The most elaborate of all the Classical orders, the Composite occurs nowhere else on campus—a distinction that echoes Jefferson's similar reservation of this order for his library at the University of Virginia.

Cram's Library also referenced a recent, and more local model: Horace Trumbauer's Widener Library at Harvard, constructed in 1915. Although built on a much smaller scale than Widener, Wheaton's library employs the same screen of columns, Roman attic story, and dramatic flight of steps. In this rather pointed allusion to the Ivy League, the College emphasized its students' ascension to new intellectual heights—an intention clearly demonstrated, as well, by the façade's secondary function. Designed to serve as the backdrop for the Senior Class's annual Classical plays, the Library featured "stage" doors at each end of its inset porch, and a second-floor balcony for Greek choruses.

The following decade saw the final realization of Cole's ambitious campus plan—a dream that had begun so many years before, on that historic day in an apple orchard. Cole died before he could witness the completion of Cram's plan, yet the later buildings of the campus were acknowledged as an honor to his memory. As Acting President George Smart declared, Everett Hall—which was completed in 1926, the year after Cole's death—added "a final touch of glory to the administration of Dr. Cole." Wheaton's Chapel was tied even more closely to Cole's memory when, in July 1926, the structure was dedicated as Cole Memorial Chapel. Cole's eventual successor, President John Edgar Park (Fig.2.2), continued Cole's vision by constructing the dormitories that completed the final corner of the 1897 campus plan (Fig.1.16). Kilham Hall, built in 1932, maintained the campus's stylistic unity through its symmetrical design and Georgian style; the same approach was applied to the design of its matching dormitory, "New" Metcalf—a structure that replaced one of the College's earliest buildings. The demolition of "Old" Metcalf, the Seminary's original boarding house, marked the end of an era. The memory...
of the earlier campus, however, was not so easily erased—nor was
the plan of Old Metcalf itself, whose footprint may still be read in
the "H"-shaped configuration of Kilham and its neighbors, Hebe
and New Metcalf (the columns of Old Metcalf, moreover, were
recycled for the 1935 Greek Temple built on Peacock Pond).16 If
these joined dormitories recalled the configuration of the College's
oldest dormitory, however, then their presence on campus was
soon screened by another reminder of Cram's master plan. The
new administration building—later named Park Hall—filled in
the northwestern corner of the Court of Honor in 1934, exactly a
century after the Seminary's founding (Fig. 1.17).

In the coming decades, Wheaton would continue to face
academic challenges and architectural controversies. Throughout its
first hundred years, the institution had proven its ability to sustain
its original ideals through its built environment, while seeking ever-
 loftier goals as an institution. Wheaton's founders and administrators
had provided the College with a stable and cohesive identity that had
enabled it to endure; indeed, their efforts to adapt to changes—both
institutional and physical—ensured that the school would meet
future obstacles with foresight and wisdom. The public face of the
institution would change rather radically beginning in the 1930s, but
the College's values and commitment to women's education would
remain as stable and enduring as Cram's Court of Honor.
Esther Isabel Seaver (1903-1965), Wheaton's new Instructor in Art, swept onto campus in 1930 with energy, unconventional ideas, and an almost evangelical devotion to Modernism (Fig. 2.1). A 1924 cum laude graduate of Beloit College in Wisconsin with a doctoral degree from Radcliffe nearly complete, Seaver specialized in the study of Scandinavian art and read fluently in five different languages. Described by one of her contemporaries as a woman with "dark hair, blue eyes and a generous smile" who favored "softly tailored clothes that are not too tweedy," Seaver enjoyed detective stories, abstract art, Modern furniture and jewelry, and playing the piano. Above all, she showed "an insatiable interest in anything new and unusual." 

Wheaton's President John Edgar Park (Fig. 2.2) had hired Seaver—the College's first professionally trained art historian—to replace the head of the Art Department, Amy Otis, who was then on a leave-of-absence. Despite Otis' popularity with the students and her devotion to the College, Park had decided that it was time for Otis to retire. In fall 1930 he had offered her the leave-of-absence to "think things over," and before she returned, he wrote to ask her decision. "You have been so much beloved by the students," he wrote, "that you will be a great loss whenever you leave us. On the other hand, I am convinced that it is better to leave two years too early than one day too late." When she did not immediately respond, Park took a tougher stance—telling her that the department's leadership "must be taken up by younger hands." Otis finally agreed to retire at the end of the 1931-32 academic year.

Although Seaver was hired at the height of the Great Depression, when employment in every sector was uncertain, she demanded better accommodations and equipment from the start. In her acceptance letter, for example, she asked for a dormitory suite, rather than a single room. Park immediately granted the request. Immediately after she began to teach, she demanded repairs to the Science Hall lecture room she used for art class and argued for better slide viewing equipment; soon, she was arranging exhibitions and lectures without obtaining Presidential approval, requesting cash advances for expenditures in Europe, and even ruining College towels in painting her rooms. The students themselves remarked on Seaver's disregard for college rules. The 1939-40 President of the College Government Association reported to Park that the group resented Seaver's "continual references in her lectures to this College being so full of picayune little rules."

In spite of these problems, and the time and effort they cost him, Park named Seaver Head of the Art Department in 1931 and promoted her from Instructor to Associate Professor in 1934. Having skipped the intermediate step of Assistant Professor, Seaver continued to ask for promotion to full Professor as well as for larger living quarters—even though she also owned an apartment in Cambridge, and lived on campus for only part of the week (an arrangement previously unheard of amongst Wheaton's faculty). Dissatisfied with Wheaton's living arrangements for single female faculty, and frustrated in her quest for immediate promotion, she submitted her resignation in 1935. Following Park's reply that "only a charlatan would promise increases in salary in the world today, as the future is so uncertain," Seaver reluctantly signed her contract.

Once she was placed in charge of the Art Department, Seaver enthusiastically reorganized it, infusing its curriculum with a distinctly Modernist approach. In her first semester at Wheaton, for example, she introduced a course called "The History and Principles of Sculpture"—an "experiment ... [that] combin[ed] modeling with the history of sculpture" that she believed to be unique in U.S. collegiate curricula. Drawing on her Harvard connections, she borrowed slides from the Fogg Art Museum to teach her courses and sought out celebrity academic lecturers—including Jonathan Cross of New York University, who spoke to her classes on Modernism in American architecture. Within a year of becoming Department Head Seaver had designed an art major, expanded the department's popular interior design course into a year-long program, added a course on Asian art, and arranged for lectures on subjects ranging from oriental rugs to modern advertising. Every year following her appointment, she introduced new experimental or permanent courses—until, by 1935, a record seventeen courses appeared in the catalogue's Art Department offerings. Between 1932 and 1936, the number of majors in the department also grew from five to thirteen.
In just a few years, then, Seaver managed to build an art department that rivaled those in larger institutions—yet there were still many difficulties to be overcome in creating this expanded program. A chronic lack of lantern slides, screens, projectors, and studio art supplies plagued both faculty and students. Each member of the department traveled to Boston or Cambridge on a weekly basis to borrow slides and books from the Boston Public Library, Widener Library, and the Fogg Museum at Harvard, in addition to loaning their own books for student use.10 Seaver sought to overcome some of these challenges by applying for, and receiving, the first foundation grants ever given to the College. By 1937 the Carnegie Corporation had donated more than $30,000 for the purchase of educational materials, including books and slides, textiles, prints, and furniture.

Structural barriers to the integrated study of the arts remained, since art facilities at the College were at the time divided between five buildings: the Library, Mary Lyon Hall, Science Hall, the Chapel, and "The Studio," a small wood-frame building between the Gymnasium and the Doll's House. Each location seemed to present its own range of problems. The large windows in many of the lecture rooms made it difficult to see slides, whereas the noise and confusion of students passing to and from classes in Mary Lyon Hall made it difficult for students to view exhibited art work in the gallery. For its part, "The Studio" had no heat or running water, making it inconvenient and unusable for several months of the year.11

Despite the drawbacks of the Art Department's facilities—or indeed, perhaps because of them—Seaver displayed a particularly progressive approach to teaching art and art history. She sought to better integrate the study of art with the discipline of history, for example—a method that we take for granted today—and encouraged her students to experiment with new techniques and materials. She introduced these ideas to the College community through speakers, exhibits, and purchases for the library and art collection. Vitality in the art program, she believed, required "that account be taken of the contemporary scene, and the best way of doing this is by frequent exhibitions of contemporary art." She believed the programs were as important for potential patrons of the arts as for budding artists, and also hoped to invest the town of Norton with a bit of badly needed culture.12

Two art conferences that Seaver organized at the College between 1936-37—events that combined distinguished lectures, demonstrations, and exhibits—brought considerable acclaim to the Art Department and the College. The first, a three-day conference held in February 1936, was entitled "Patron and Artist in the Pre-Renaissance and Modern Worlds"; featuring lectures and demonstrations by artists in calligraphy, silver, stone, fresco, and stained glass, its accompanying exhibit featured artists who are now considered among the most renowned in their fields.13 Not only did the event introduce students to important practicing scholars and artists, but it also created important and favorable publicity for the College. The triumph of this conference drew the attention of The American Magazine of Art, which noted that "What the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood tried, and failed, to do in early Victorian England seems in some likelihood of being accomplished ... at Wheaton College," where conference attendees were determined that Modernists would not repeat the mistakes of the Pre-Raphaelites, who "failed to create the artistic revolution at which they aimed."14

Even more notable was the conference Seaver organized in April 1937, "New Horizons in Architecture," which brought to Wheaton some of the most influential International Style architects in the United States. Dean Joseph Hudnut of Harvard's Graduate School of Design presided over the sessions. Speaking on "The Significance of Modern Architecture," Walter Gropius, former Director of the Bauhaus in Germany, and then a professor of architecture at Harvard, emphasized the importance of functionalism—stating that "Modern architecture is not a whim of fashion, but rather the product of the social conditions of the age" which must go its "own way, instead of copying the past." Introduced as "one of the gifts of the German Chancellor to America," Dr. Walter Curt Behrendt, Lecturer in Regional Planning at Dartmouth College and author of the 1937 book Modern Building, gave a talk on "Contemporary Design"—declaring that architectural tradition is alive only "when it is a driving force aiding us to solve present day problems."15

As the Art Department grew dramatically in its curriculum, class enrollment, and popularity, Seaver's influence extended to the rest of the College's curriculum. A dedicated Humanist, she was instrumental in establishing the "E.C.A." (Elements of Composition in the Arts) course at the College. This remarkable curriculum project, instituted in the fall semester of 1937, enrolled ten freshmen in connected courses in art, English, and music—an effort intended to underline the interdependence of poetry, painting, drama, dance, and other forms of creative expression.16

Despite faculty politics and inadequate facilities, Seaver was able to use the growth of the Art Department and the E.C.A. program to demonstrate the need for a building that would integrate all of the College's creative departments. Seaver's successes, and the inadequacy of the College's facilities for the arts, were lost on neither Park nor the Trustees.17 For several years, in fact, the College had been receiving unsolicited designs for arts and alumniue buildings from the office of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson. Seaver had voiced objections to every version, from the designs themselves to the building's proposed site between the Power House and The Studio—"a sham, eighteenth-century" architecture. When he suggested that a group of buildings including art, student-alumnae, and music "be designed and erected at the same time," Seaver asked him to inform Park that the idea was his. What no doubt caught Seaver's attention, and later Park's as well, was Barr's assertion that: So far as I know, no college either for men or for women has announced its intention to put up a really Modern building, although another New England women's college is seriously considering this step. I mention this because it is still possible that Wheaton might take the courageous step of initiating what would be the first, I feel sure, of a long series of Modern academic buildings.18

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The estimated cost for the arts complex was $1,000,000—nearly
equivalent to the College’s entire $1,094,250 endowment. As Park
noted, “Whetown is an example of New England thrift in its most
spectacular form,” yet its conservative management actually served
to turn away major donors. Nevertheless, the Trustees voted to
adopt both the architectural project and the competition.77

At the “New Horizons in Architecture” conference the
following month, Seaver obtained the participants’ approval for
the concept of an arts center and competition. In May 1937, she
in turn introduced the idea to the alumnae—suggesting that the
lack of adequate facilities provided a positive opportunity for
an “architectural solution” to the problem of expressing a “new
philosophy of art education, which seeks unity rather than diversity
of purpose.” Quoting liberally from the letters she had received
from Barr, Younitz, and Whiting, she suggested that because no other
institute in the country had attempted to combine all of the arts
in one complex, both architects and donors would be drawn to the
Wheaton project.78

Diligent in her attempts to move the project forward,
Seaver met repeatedly with Barr and John McAndrew, a Curator
of Architecture at MoMA, about methods for fundraising and
conducting the competition. She enlisted the aid of Ellen Ballou,
teacher of Spoken English and Dramatics, to ask for support from the
Rockefeller Foundation—which asked, in turn, for a detailed survey
of Wheaton’s history, faculty, alumnae, financial standing, and the
departments to be included in the project. Seaver pushed Park for a
financial commitment to the project, knowing that he would be on
sabbatical in Europe during the fall 1937 semester. Not only did he
secure an appropriation for the competition from the Trustees, but
he also authorized Seaver to draw on the fund—effectively leaving her
in charge of the competition.79

During Park’s absence, a committee of faculty in the arts, led
by Seaver and Ballou, prepared the proposal to the Rockefeller
Foundation. The philosophy outlined in the report emphasized
the cultivation of knowledgeable critics and patrons of the arts,
through the study of art history and studio techniques; and the
integration of the arts into all aspects of college life.80 Even in this
otherwise professional proposal, Seaver could not resist a jab at
traditionalists—noting that it was:

... a strange paradox that liberal arts colleges, admittedly
oriented primarily to the preparation of students for the art of
living, always display such apprehension about anything which
is still alive.... [C]ollege administrators and professors should
[be able to] measure true worth in the new as well as the old;
and thus they should help to formulate the cultural and artistic
ideals of our own time rather than to escape to those of the
past.

Seaver suggested that the proposed art center, designed in a
“contemporary idiom,” would give “architectural expression to the
ideology of our own time, just as the great traditional forms in
architecture did to those of the periods that produced them.”81

Upon his return to campus, Park graciously accepted the fast
accomplishment of the Rockefeller proposal; yet by the March 1938 Trustees
meeting, the Rockefeller Foundation had declined Wheaton’s
proposal and no other donors had come forward. Park outlined the
history of the arts project for the Trustees, and noted that they were
faced with a dilemma: invest more money in the arts center scheme,
pay Cram and Ferguson for the work they had done, hire an agency
to conduct a capital campaign, or simply build the “two modest
buildings” as originally planned (separate art and alumnae
buildings). The Trustees voted to expend additional funds on the
competition and its attendant publicity.82

While the Art Center Competition eventually cost more
than originally planned, and even instigated a lawsuit by Cram
and Ferguson, it also generated extensive press for the College.83
Among the magazines that printed stories about the event were

circulated to more than eleven million newspaper readers in thirty-
eight cities; indeed, between February and July of 1938, more
than seventy stories nationwide featured Wheaton’s trailblazing
Modernist competition.84 Seaver never let the administration forget
the tremendous success of this venture, whose dazzling Modernist
entries—along with the changes they wrought in the campus’s
appearance—are treated in full in the subsequent essay.

With no hope of raising the funds necessary for the art center,
Park finessed the existing funds into a scheme to construct the
Student Alumnae Building. Following the November 1938 Trustees
Meeting, when Park announced that Herbert Plimpton had agreed to
assign a gift of $50,000 toward the construction of the main hall
of the proposed building, the winning Art Center Competition
architects—Caleb Hornebostel and Richard M. Bennett (Fig.2.3)—
were appointed to design the structure.85 While the architects were
“interested in the Modern forms of architecture,” Park noted with
palpable relief that they were “not extreme in their views” and “eager
to take the best both of the old and of the new.”86 Over the years
that followed, Hornebostel and Bennett would continue to revise
their plans for their winning art center entry—hoping that it might
still be built. The advent of World War II, however, prevented both
donations as well as construction.

Following Park’s retirement in the summer of 1944, forty-five-
year-old A. Howard Meneely (Fig.2.4) succeeded to the presidency
of the College. Although his intentions were undoubtedly good, he
lacked the warmth, charm, and wit of Park—qualities that might
have helped him to avoid the frequent (and sometimes serious)
misunderstandings that developed in his interactions with his
new colleagues. Seaver’s relationship with the new President began
cordially. She arranged a welcoming tea for Meneely and his wife, and
he appointed Seaver to the new Committee on Committees, part of
his plan to delegate more authority to the faculty. In an early meeting
Trustees' Grounds and Buildings Committee noted their preference the College's first construction priorities. The following fall Seaver with the Trustees, Meneely remarked upon the "very healthy feeling for returning to the Georgian style on campus. Meneely began as she had once envisioned it—for at its September 1945 meeting, the encountered a far greater obstacle to realizing the art center project, faculty housing, a new classroom building, and an infirmary as agreed that the arts project remained important, he established on Hornbostel and Bennett's design in April 1945.* While Meneely community did not forget the art center, giving an illustrated lecture winning design from the 1938 Art Center Competition. Seaver made certain that both Meneely and the College before the November Board meeting that "she would probably resign if we 'went Georgian.'"* On January 1, 1946, she made good of the traditional campus as nothing less than a betrayal, both saw Meneely's preference for the "prevailing architectural style" important contributions to American education."* Clearly, she public, Seaver had sent Meneely excerpts from correspondence and competition publicity to demonstrate that "Wheaton's architectural decision is a mandatory all-student meeting for January 14, and invited discussion. Faculty members wrote to the "violation of a professional code of ethics" by rejecting the national competition, and for abandoning its "progressive leadership" by substituting the Georgian architectural style for Modern.44 Sharp divisions were drawn among the students, faculty and alumnae over the issue. Letters from alumnae deriding the actions of the students were countered by those who were dismayed at the Trustees' decision to abandon the art center in the first place. Meneely doggedly answered each one, explaining that, because there was insufficient funding, the art center had not been under discussion. Faculty members wrote to the Wheaton News supporting Modernism, while others wrote to Meneely lending moral support to his presidency. Student reaction seemed at first to be completely against the administration. The College Government Association called a mandatory all-student meeting for January 14, and invited Hunter to address the throng that filled Plimpton Hall. There, she reiterated the points in her letter, and identified Modernism as "a basic ideal" of the College. Meneely read a statement in which he voiced his concern over the "hysteria" on campus, a situation fueled by tactics that had "been used with devastating effect from time to time all over the world in the last twenty years with such tragic consequences to mankind." Explaining that he was "not under any obligation to discuss matters ... within the jurisdiction of the Board
of Trustees," Meneely nevertheless outlined how the recent decisions had been made. His final remarks were undoubtedly aimed directly at Seaver:

There was nothing sly or underhand in any of the decisions reached, and I repudiate utterly any insinuations to the contrary. At every step the Board of Trustees was acting within its authority and in accordance with its statutory responsibility. The members of the Board of Trustees of Wheaton College are men and women of high character, of honor, and of integrity, and I do not need to defend the honor or the good faith of the Board.... They do not need to be instructed in the matter of ethics or morals by any alumna or by any undergraduate of Wheaton College. 45

After Meneely left Plimpton Hall, Mary Tousey (W1946) presented a resolution requesting that the Board reconsider its new architectural policy. Although the resolution was loudly endorsed, it was referred to the newly created Student-Faculty Coordinating Committee for revision before returning it to the student body at the beginning of the next semester. 46 Although the Wheaton News published the remarks made by Hunter and Tousey, Meneely refused to give them his own, raising the ire of alumnae. Seaver, meanwhile, encouraged her colleagues at MoMA and Architectural Forum to respond to the College's actions. Alfred Barr, Walter Gropius, and even one of Meneely's old friends from Dartmouth, the architectural critic Hugh Morrison, wrote letters protesting the abandonment of Modernism at the College and its refusal to honor the winning design for the art center. 47

At the time, Seaver was also in close contact with Caleb Hornbostel's wife, Ruth—who told her that Architectural Forum planned to print a scathing review of the situation in its February 1946 issue, and that she would initiate a letter-writing campaign against the College unless the controversy were not satisfactorily settled. In a letter she wrote to Seaver in January of 1946, three weeks after Seaver had submitted her resignation, she shed further light on the controversy:

I don't like the smell of things, Esther. I can only hope for the best... Dick [Bennett] told me he thought that it was Caleb [Hornbostel's] fault that it turned out this way. That he should never have said "no," right out about doing colonial architecture. 48

Given this revelation, it appears that Hornbostel had thrown down the gauntlet, as well, in facing the threat of Georgian Revival's reappearance on campus. For him as for Seaver, the question of style had become a matter of principle—one they both felt was worth the risk of losing their jobs.

Throughout the storm over the College's preferred architectural style, it was Meneely alone who recalled that there was in fact no funding for an art center, that the competition had not encouraged any significant donations, and that the building had not even formed part of the original discussion amongst the Trustees. The question of which style to use in its construction was therefore, to his mind, a moot one. In an attempt to diffuse the situation, Meneely met with the faculty on February 11 and with students on February 20. In both meetings, he apologized for the misconceptions that had fueled the uproar: first, the notion that he had insisted on building this (purely theoretical) art center in a traditional style, and second, that he was pushing for Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn to design it. The Wheaton News published a letter signed by 232 students thanking Meneely for his patience. 49

The issue of Seaver's resignation, however, remained a problem. Meneely had in fact never accepted her January 1 resignation, and the Trustee Administration Committee now suggested to Seaver that she reconsider her decision. Although he was convinced that Seaver wanted to stay, Meneely feared that "we shall have trouble with her whether she leaves or whether she stays," because she insisted on a definite commitment to a Modernist art center. He was also concerned about the influence that Seaver exerted over a "disaffected minority" of students, keeping them "considerably stirred up in her own interest and with a view to force the Board to reach decisions concerning the art center and its architects." These "agitators" included the Wheaton News' Editor-in-Chief, Katherine Fox (W1946), and its Managing Editor, Eleanor Johnson (W1946)—who released, without Seaver's permission, the story of her resignation to the Boston Herald and national wire services. Despite the editors' apology in the Wheaton News for releasing this information, they had forced Meneely's hand. 50 On February 20, Meneely accepted her resignation, noting that "the recent publicity" had left him "no satisfactory alternative." 51

Before Seaver left the College at the end of the academic year, she saw her final crusade for Modernism triumph in the May 11 Wheaton News. Under the page-one headline "MODERN ART CENTER ENDORSED: Trustees Issue Statement Approval Erection Of Modern Art Center," it published the Trustees' statement that the "status of the project for a Modern Art enter at Wheaton College has not been altered," nor even discussed, due to lack of funds. More importantly, the Board affirmed that: "if funds were now at hand or should become available, the present Trustees would expect to proceed with plans for an art center of Modern design drawn by the winners of the competition in 1938. 52 It is a great irony, of course, given the heated controversy of 1945-46, that Meneely would eventually oversee the creation of an entirely new, International Style campus at the college—a constellation of structures that Carrie Peabody examines in her subsequent essay. Seaver embodied the individual determination that can lead to innovation, creativity, and inspiration—but one that could also stray into willfulness, misunderstanding, misconceptions, and melodrama, causing confusion and inflicting pain on a community. She was a brilliant and iconoclastic woman who almost single-handedly brought Modernism to Wheaton College, but who, like many evangelists, believed that her ideas were unassailable. When she tried to impose these ideas upon the President and Board of Trustees, she learned that the power she had gained was not infinite. In spite of herself, however, her influence upon education at Wheaton—and upon the future of collegiate architecture itself—was undoubtedly a profound one.
Although it may not have led to the building of the example Seaver first envisaged, the 1938 Arts Center Competition profoundly changed Wheaton's architectural self-image—not only due to the extraordinary attention this competition received, but also, and far more importantly, because its designs inspired a lasting taste for Modernism on the campus. Indeed, this watershed moment in the College's history would result in the construction of its first truly Modern structure: Horbostel and Bensett's Student Alumnæ Building of 1940. With this design, and with the architects' 1941 additions to Science Hall and the Library, Wheaton not only fulfilled the spirit of Seaver's vision, but it also became one of the country's pioneers in collegiate Modernism.

The seeds of the Modernist movement were first sown in the United States, beginning with the work of the Chicago architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's early "Prairie Style" designs, which were first published in Berlin in 1910-11, made a deep impression on the later founders of German Modernism—including Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. As successive Directors of the world-renowned Bauhaus School of Art and Design in Germany, Gropius and Mies van der Rohe would teach their students to admire Wright's use of flat roofs, long bands of windows, and his celebration of materials' natural properties—an approach they blended with their own passion for industrial forms and prefabricated building parts. All of these features would later distinguish the so-called "International Style," the aesthetic with which Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and their European contemporaries became so closely associated.

Gropius had founded the Bauhaus in 1919, during the Weimar period in Germany—an artistically progressive, yet politically unstable time. With the subsequent rise of the Third Reich in the 1920s, the progressive ideas of the Bauhaus did not set themselves as refugees, but rather as "exponents and ambassadors of a cultural movement: Modernism?" In 1937 alone, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, and Marcel Breuer all emigrated to the United States. Most of those who arrived here found excellent professional opportunities—especially Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, who developed successful new careers in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Chicago, respectively.

In the United States, these architects were known not simply as Modernists, or as members of the Bauhaus, but as "International Style" architects. The term had been coined in 1932 by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson, co-curators of an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) called "Modern Architecture: International Exhibition," and authors of its influential accompanying catalogue, *The International Style.* Hitchcock and Johnson's exhibition featured some of the most renowned Modernist architects from Europe—including Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, LeCorbusier, and I.J.P. Oud. Not only did Hitchcock and Johnson distinguish a unified movement in the work of these architects, but also an easily identifiable aesthetic.

The three guiding principles of the International Style, as Hitchcock and Johnson defined them, included: an emphasis on volume rather than mass; a preference for balance and regularity, rather than strict symmetry; and the rejection of all applied ornament. The "international" label that they invented described both the architects' various points of origin, as well as the character of the aesthetic itself. Because the International Style rejected all historical reference and also, to some extent, site specificity, its forms looked no different in Barcelona than they did in Berlin. Its adherents claimed to follow no visual rules, yet they shared a common vocabulary of forms: clean lines, flat roofs, industrial-scaled windows, exposed materials, asymmetry, open plans, and an emphasis on combined indoor/outdoor space.

Building on the success of its 1932 exhibition, MoMA later mounted a 1938 show that focused exclusively on the designs of the Bauhaus. Not only did this exhibition help to familiarize American audiences with the Bauhaus and its designers, but it also furthered dialogue in the United States concerning Modernism in a more general sense. This dialogue provided an important turning point in the careers of German émigré architects, and in a more local sense, it also had a lasting effect on Wheaton's architecture—for in the same year that MoMA mounted its Bauhaus exhibition, the museum also showcased the prize-winning designs from the College's 1938 Art Center Competition.

Seaver had fully explored the idea of a competition prior to suggesting this plan to President Edgar Park. On March 20, 1937, she wrote a letter to Park in which she suggested a change in the "architectural policy" of the college—on that would have far-reaching effects. Attached to her letter was a five-page proposal, "A Report on the Proposed Art Center For Wheaton College," that Seaver had composed along with MoMA's director, Alfred H. Barr, Jr., and others sympathetic to the project. The report suggested options for selecting an architect; it argued the advantages of building the art center in a Modern style; and it outlined the financial advantages of building a single structure, rather than separate buildings. Estimated costs for the project were vaguely pinned at "something in the neighborhood of $1,000,000." At the Board of Trustees meeting held two days later, the proposal was enthusiastically approved—despite the fact that the College had no money set aside for the proposed building, nor any experience raising such a large sum.

Several years before, Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson—who remained the College Architects—had submitted their own design for an art center. Indeed, it had been Seaver's strong objection to the firm's traditional, Georgian Revival design that had eventually inspired her plan for a Modernist competition. In a letter to the firm dated November 14, 1936, Park wrote that the Art Department (referring, in fact, to Seaver) was not satisfied with the 1932 plan that Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson had presented. Two days later, Seaver wrote to Park reiterating this point—explaining that the firm had yet to submit a plan that was "satisfactory to the department in part or as a whole."

Specifically, Seaver had been put off by the fact that this design focused almost exclusively on the building's façade, rather than on its functional requirements. The College needed an art center, she insisted in her 1936 letter to Park, that "gives primary thought and concern to function, and lets Beauty look after herself." If the College's architects were unwilling to produce such a design, she added, there were "many gifted modern architects" who would gladly take up the project. Clearly, the handwriting was on the wall for Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson. Cram would make his final contribution to the campus a year later. A modest footnote to his long relationship with Wheaton (and one that, in Seaver's eyes, would have epitomized the arbitrariness of his Revivalist styles), that last design at the College was for a Chinese/Greek/Colonial bird feeder placed alongside the Library's steps.

The 1938 competition program describes the features of the proposed building in two parts: "General Requirements for all Departments and Public," and "Requirements for Separate Departments." The principal elements of the program included a 500-seat theater, a 150-seat auditorium, and a library. In addition, Drama required rehearsal rooms, a 1500-square-foot workshop, costume design rooms, and dressing rooms—whereas the Art Department needed extensive classroom space, storage facilities, and multiple galleries with approximately 400 square feet of hanging space. For its part, the Music Department advocated for expanded teaching space, as well soundproofing teaching studios and practice rooms.

The competition for Wheaton's art center was co-sponsored by MoMA and Architectural Forum, an impressive partnership that lent the project considerable cachet. Announced in February, 1938, it was open to all architects in the United States. In addition, four
firms were specifically invited to compete: Gropius and Breuer, Lyndon and Smith, and the offices of William Lescaze and Richard J. Neutra. The proposed site for the art center, as illustrated in the program, was located alongside Peacock Pond (Fig.3.1). Created in 1929, this artificial water feature separated the proposed building from Cram's Court of Honor quadrangle and primary north-south axis. Because the rest of the College had been designed in such a traditional fashion, however, the program states that "some harmony in color and scale" would be welcomed in the competition program, was located alongside Peacock Pond (Fig.3.1). Created in 1929, this artificial water feature separated the proposed building from Cram's Court of Honor quadrangle and primary north-south axis. Because the rest of the College had been designed in such a traditional fashion, however, the program states that "some harmony in color and scale" would be welcomed in the competition program. Careful not to restrict the architect's imaginations too stringently, the program also asserted that the design of the existing campus was not to be considered a "stylistic limitation."^7

Competition entries were to be anonymous, and each had to include at least four drawings: a plan, an elevation, and at least two sections—one of which had to be taken through the auditorium. The volume for the proposed building was pre-set at 750,000 cubic feet, yet this figure could be achieved in any manner the architect wished. Other important criteria included the design's consideration of its site (enlarging Peacock Pond was not an option, for example, but building a bridge across it was considered acceptable);^8 its accessibility from the main College campus and nearby roads; and its suitability to a rural, New England setting. The relation of the building's principal parts to one another, especially in regards to the proposed library, was another important concern—as was the issue of easy circulation within the structure. Naturally, the Jury also expected that entries would accommodate the specific needs of individual departments. First Prize included a contract with the College, to be signed within 120 days of the award, along with a thousand dollars for the winner's services—an amount to be considered a cash prize if the building were not constructed. The competition Jury included the architects Edward Durrell Stone, John Root, and John McAndrew, who was also a Curator of Architecture at MoMA; the Chief Architect for the Tennessee Valley Authority, Roland Wank; Stanley McCandless, who was both an architect and a professor of Drama at Yale; Walter Curt Behrendt, a critic and city planning expert; and Seaver, who served as the representative for the College. The list of architects who submitted entries was equally distinguished. In addition to the four invited firms, the architects Fred and George Keck, Gordon Bunshaft, Louis Kahn, Oscar Stonorov, Eero Saarinen, and Rudolf Mock all submitted entries.32

Although the competition program did not explicitly state that Modernist designs were required, its reluctance to dictate any style in some ways assured that these kinds of proposals would be more welcomed. Indeed, nearly all of the 253 entries submitted were executed in the International Style. As if following Hitchcock and Johnson's principles to the letter, the entries emphasized regularity rather than axial symmetry or spatial hierarchy; they included transparent volumes, rather than solid massing; and they all rejected applied decoration in favor of horizontal planes and flat, cantilevered roofs.

Relative to the other buildings on campus, then—especially those designed by Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson—the competition entries represented an about-face in terms of style. Cram and Ferguson's buildings are balanced and symmetrical, with a strong emphasis on their primary elevations. Carefully fitted around the College's Court of Honor, these buildings were collectively intended—like the buildings of the 1893 Chicago fair—to create a unified, monumental composition. By contrast, the entries for the Art Center competition strictly avoided symmetry, contextual harmony, or Classical gravitas. Indeed, in many cases, it is difficult even to locate their entrances.

The competition entries contrasted with the College's existing buildings most strikingly in their volumes and in their rejection of applied ornament. Hitchcock and Johnson describe the International Style as an architecture of the "open box"—an approach that rejected earlier styles characterized by their use of "dense brick" and traditional wood trim. Compared with the solidity and compactness of Cram's work, then, the art center designs feel far lighter due to their extravagant use of glass and lightweight construction techniques. And whereas the College's existing buildings featured elaborate Classical framing—cornices, pediments, and columns—the competition designs relied only upon minimalist, unornamented lines for their decoration. The proposed roofs were flat, with no eaves; windows were often designed in uninterrupted bands; and simple, cantilevered awnings were used to signal the building's entrances, if the entrances were marked at all.

If Seaver had been frustrated by the emphasis Cram's firm placed on facade, rather than plan, then the competition entries neatly reversed this problem. Indeed, with few exceptions, the elevations of the proposed designs resemble one another with an almost disappointing uniformity. In Eero Saarinen's design, we see these shared qualities distilled to their purest form (Fig.3.2). The severe horizontality and sweeping lines of his elevations typify a great number of the entries, as do their long banks of windows; the overall effect of this design, and of those proposed by Saarinen's peers, is almost intentionally underwhelming. Looking at the entries in plan, on the other hand, reveals that they are all strikingly different from one another (Fig.3.3). Indeed, given the International

![Fig.3.1 Proposed site for the 1938 Art Center Competition; Cole Chapel and Science Hall are seen at right.](image)

![Fig.3.2 Eero Saarinen, elevation (1938 Art Center Competition).](image)
Five entries merit closer inspection for their unique features and particularly imaginative plans. These include Caleb Hornbostel and Richard Bennett's (First Prize); Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer's (Second Prize); Alexis Dukelski's (Fourth Place); Richard Neutra's (first Honorable Mention); and finally, George and Fred Keck's entry, which did not place in the competition. In these examples we not only encounter the highlights of the competition as a whole, but also elements that the College itself valued in the proposals.

The First Place design, submitted by New York City architects Hornbostel and Bennett (Fig.3.3)—who collaborated for the first time on this project—is an attractive, elongated "L" shape with a curved wing for the theatre at the south end (Fig.3.4). Their entry included all of the features dictated by the Jury, who admired it for its practicality and ease of circulation. Another point of praise was its imaginative use of the site, which made a feature of the point between the ponds two lobes. Echoing this spatial sensitivity, their curved theatre provides a pleasant contrast to the rectangular wings—a feature that would have registered in both plan and elevation. Like so many of the designs, it features long horizontal lines, a flat roof, large and simply framed windows, and an utter lack of applied ornament. The architects' proposed terrace—another feature found in many of the entries—is notable for its combination of indoor/outdoor exhibition space, whereas their Modernist awnings were also distinctive, featuring large, open holes resembling Swiss cheese (one wonders how effective such an awning might have been during a rainstorm).

The Jury called Hornbostel and Bennett's design "well studied and practical." The architects' placement of the library was seen as especially fitting, for it was closer to the rest of the College and easily accessible to the Music and Art Departments. Individual features of the Music and Art Department were dealt with successfully, as well, and the shape of the auditorium was praised for its clear sightlines and acoustics. The Jury noted that the space within the proposed structure had been handled "economically" overall, and they positively noted that the total volume was smaller than in some of the other, less financially feasible, entries. The design showed a real grasp of the "essential problem" and appeared "easy and pleasant" to use.

Not as functional, but far more visually striking, was the Second Place entry. Gropius and Breuer's design is a sophisticated and elegant H-shape (Fig.3.5). The design feels light due to its expansive use of glass, and also because it features a great deal of negative space; compared to the other designs, the Gropius and Breuer plan is far more spread out—the Art and Drama wings are in fact completely separated from one another, with the theater at the center of the plan. This arrangement had its down side, however, for the Jury criticized the lack of easy circulation between the Art and Drama Departments.

The elegance of Gropius and Breuer's plan is matched by the minimalism of their proposed elevations. Indeed, according to Seaver, the Jury immediately identified their entry because it so clearly epitomized the austerity of Bauhaus design. The building was to be constructed out of three primary materials: glass, stone, and poured concrete. The design's extravagant use of glass paneling, in particular, showcased the beauty of the materials the architects planned to use throughout the design. Praising the "authoritative clarity" and "brilliant aesthetic discipline" of these elements, the Jury nevertheless concluded that such extensive use of glass would make these spaces difficult to heat and expensive to clean.

One of the more distinctive features of Gropius and Breuer's design was their use of covered walkways, supported by columns placed in a "V" shape and bounded by rubble walls. Placed separately from the building, these walls were intended to include existing, mature trees—thereby creating a sheltered terrace near the Drama...
The entry submitted by Keck and Keck did not even garner an Honorable Mention, yet it is surely one of the most imaginative designs submitted (Fig. 3.8). The west side of the structure is taken up entirely with the theater and workshops, whereas its eastern side features a large and completely open courtyard enclosed by the Art and Music Departments. Such an emphasis on negative space echoes Gropius and Breuer's design, yet in this case the courtyard would have been concealed from the outside. The side of the courtyard housing the gallery is slightly angled, giving the plan a dynamic, almost moving shape—an effect further accentuated by the placement of the art center's main floor. Lifted off the ground and dramatically cantilevered, this section of the building recalls the "floating" effect of Le Corbusier's iconic Villa Savoye of 1928.

The entry by Richard Neutra was only given an Honorable Mention, but of all the designs it is perhaps the most imaginative (Fig. 3.7); as Thomas McCormick has described it, the design has a "sense of perfection, crispness and restrained elegance" typical of this Viennese architect's work. Similar to Gropius and Breuer's design, Neutra's entry is quite spread out—yet it does not employ negative space in the same way. When looking at the plan, one gets the impression of two distinct wings that nevertheless allow the building to remain unified as a whole. Although Neutra does not showcase his materials as prominently as Gropius and Breuer do, he uses them in unique ways—seen particularly in the prominent, vertical steel ribs that he included on the exterior of his theater elevation. Although appliqued ornament of any kind violated International Style principles, Neutra doubtless justified this element as an indication of the building's hidden, internal structural system.

Neutra's ribs were not the only distinctive feature of his design. To cite another example, he intended to place an outdoor theatre across from the interior one—thereby creating an innovative juxtaposition of positive/negative, sheltered/open spaces. His inclusion of a protected inner court recalls both Dukelski's and Gropius' designs, yet Neutra's terrace is covered by an attractive, curved colonnade. Even Neutra's use of the site was unique. Placed far south on the site, his proposed building would have been sited further from the rest of the campus than all of the other submitted designs; its isolation would undoubtedly have added to the structure's unique character, while also allowing for future expansion.

Despite the public interest and praise that the 1938 competition garnered, financial obstacles prevented Hornbostel and Bennett's winning design from being constructed. When the competition had been set in motion, of course, not a cent had been set aside for this purpose by the College. Since that time, not only had the competition cost Wheaton the substantial sum of $4,722, but Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson had also sued the college for an additional $6,711 in restitution for the plans the firm had submitted prior to the competition. To Seaver's disappointment, no funding from outside sources materialized for the new project, either—a scenario that had clearly figured in her plans for realizing the project. With the advent of the Second World War the following fall, building an art center was no longer a top priority at the College.

The prospect of commissioning a major new building for Wheaton's campus, however, was not entirely lost. Since the late 1920s, a plan had been circulating to construct a Student Alumnae Building. The campaign for the building had begun in February 1928, and by June, the Wheaton News claimed that the "Campaign for Student Alumnae Building Wins Staunch Support of Undergraduates." In the May 1929 issue of the Wheaton Alumnae Quarterly, Helen Meyers Tate—the Executive Chairman of the...
The design was, in fact, one of the very proposals that Seaver had rejected prior to the 1938 competition—for originally, it must be remembered, the firm had designed a combination art center and alumnae building. Tate explains that the building would seamlessly blend with the rest of the campus (a point that Seaver had of course seen as a deficit), and would provide such sorely needed facilities as a ballroom, a theater, a large lecture hall, and informal parlors.

Like the firm’s proposed design for an art center, this one, too, would be sacriﬁced on the altar of Modernism. In the fall of 1938, the theater, a large lecture hall, and informal parlors.

As exciting as the 1938 competition had been, then, it seems that Seaver still faced challenges to the acceptance of Modernism on campus—a struggle that would only intensify in the 1940s.

In January 1941, Architectural Forum featured a cover story on the newly completed SAB. The article celebrates all of the building’s Modernist features, yet it also highlights the building’s use of red brick and white trim—elements that were praised for linking the building, as Tate had done in 1929, but Hornbostel and Bennett’s rendering make it clear that the building would be Modernist in conception (Fig.3.10).

Hornbostel and Bennett’s design for the Student Alumnae Building (or simply “SAB,” as the building became known after its completion in 1940) is a model of International Style architecture. The magazine placed particular emphasis on the building’s dramatic entrance and its windows. Its illustration of SAB’s southeast façade shows the building’s circular driveway for arriving cars—one of the ﬁrst nods to the automobile on Wheaton’s campus—as well as the building’s, cantilevered awning that identiﬁed the building in Modernist lettering. Prominently featured in the article, too, are the vertical rows of windows that appear on both sides of Plimpton Hall, and the outer wall of Modernist glass blocks that lines SAB’s interior stairwell.

In addition to illustrating the building’s façade, Architectural Forum also paid close attention to its interiors, created by the Modernist designer Ann Hatﬁeld. Chosen for the project in 1939 for the Student Alumnae Building Fund—presented her fellow alumnae with their ﬁrst look at the building’s design, described as “another beautiful creation by Ralph Adams Cram” (Fig.3.9). The design style—preparing the ground, as it were, for the architects’ proposal (a maneuver that Bennett appears to have been unaware of). Ruth Hornbostel writes:

“[Caleb Hornbostel] said that they didn’t want contemporary architecture when the Student Alumnae Building was to be built. [Bennett] said that he didn’t commit himself, but said he would present a sketch to see if they liked it, etc. etc. [T]hen I reminded him of all the ground work you had done at that time. He said, ‘Oh no, they were all against Modern when I went up there.’”

As exciting as the 1938 competition had been, then, it seems that Seaver still faced challenges to the acceptance of Modernism on campus—a struggle that would only intensify in the 1940s.

In a 1938 Wheaton Alumnae Quarterly article devoted to the Student Alumnae Building, alumna Kathleen Emerson Swann notes Herbert Plimpton’s generous gift to the College of $50,000 dollars, in memory of his mother; it was this donation, she explains, that had allowed Wheaton to ﬁnally go forward with its plans for the building. The potential site, which had originally been planned for somewhere “beyond the Chapel” (its back facing the Congregational Church), was in Swann’s article pinned to a location across from Everett Hall. She makes no explicit reference to the proposed style of the building, as Tate had done in 1929, but Hornbostel and Bennett’s rendering make it clear that the building would be Modernist in conception (Fig.3.10).

Hornbostel and Bennett’s design for the Student Alumnae Building (or simply “SAB,” as the building became known after its completion in 1940) is a model of International Style architecture (Fig.3.11). Its austere geometry, pipe-railing balconies, vertical ribbon windows, as well as its utter rejection of symmetry and applied ornament all set it distinctly apart from the rest of the campus. Indeed, the distinctive chevron-shaped plan of SAB—an element that was almost certainly derived from the team’s art center entry—is placed at a 45-degree angle to the campus’s prevailing north-south axis. Quite literally “turning a corner” with this building, then, the College had at last commissioned a design whose style clearly broke from the look of the traditional campus—and whose stated program ultimately trumped concerns regarding its appearance.
a competition set up by MoMA; Hatfield collaborated with Hornbostel and Bennett to ensure that the furniture and interiors of SAB would complement the architects' emphasis on function. In an article in *Interiors* magazine, notably entitled "Century-Old Wheaton Sponsors Modern," Hatfield is credited with "furnishing [SAB], not as a monument, but in the scale of a living building for active young girls." For SAB's parlors and Game Room, Hatfield used bright colors, long, uninterrupted lines, and an overall minimalist approach to decoration—including Venetian blinds rather than curtains, and light, birchwood furniture designed by the Finnish Modernist Alvar Aalto. 

Admiration for SAB came, first and foremost, from within the Wheaton community. Concerning her first impressions of SAB, Mary Rhodes (W1942) wrote that she was so proud of the building that she decided to bring her date to see it, knowing it would impress him—whereas Julia Fernandez-Herrera, also from the class of 1942, felt that it conveyed the "real civilization of this epoch, with its light, birchwood furniture designed by the Finnish Modernist Alvar Aalto."

In light of SAB's opening, Park wrote a one-page document about the building for Seaver, who anticipated inquiries about it at the upcoming meeting of the College Art Association. The Student Alumnae Building is, we feel, a superb example of functional design combined with beauty, harmony with stimulation. In light of SAB's great success, Hornbostel and Bennett were asked to design additions to the Library and Science Hall in 1941. The Library's new Jackson Wing added browsing and periodical rooms to Cram's original design; in the words of College Librarian Marion Merrill, this much-needed space was to be for "use, rather than exhibition." Prominently featured in a 1943 *Architectural Forum* article, the completed wing was photographed to illustrate its connection to the existing Library. As the magazine explained, the new structure was unmistakably Modern in its austerity and expansive fenestration, yet the architects' use of brick had ensured that it did not clash "too violently" with the campus's more traditional forms. Ann Hatfield once again designed the interiors, in a similar fashion to those in SAB; *Architectural Forum* praised the Jackson Wing's "high degree of practical imagination, as evidenced by the adaptability of the furniture to the room." 

In the same year that they completed the Jackson Wing, Hornbostel and Bennett also created a four-story addition to the rear of Science Hall (later named Knapton Hall). Despite the architects' stated intentions to blend their work with Cram's original building, *Architectural Forum* claimed—quite rightly—that the addition in this case represented a "drastic departure" from the original structure. Indeed, its four stories of large, ribbon windows (Fig. 3.12) provided a striking contrast with the brick walls and Classical trimmings of Cram's design on the opposite side. Rather than condemning this juxtaposition of old and new, however, the magazine claimed that the addition demonstrated the "continuing vitality" of Wheaton's architectural evolution—a design that far better represented the College than the "elaborate ... medieval and Georgian fakery" of its more traditional buildings.

As *Architectural Forum* suggests in this article, by the 1940s Wheaton's very identity had become inextricably linked with Modernism—a remarkable shift that may be credited almost entirely to four people: Seaver, Hornbostel, Bennett, and Hatfield. It was Seaver, of course, who had first inspired her students and colleagues with her own passion for International Style aesthetics—making SAB, in particular, one of the most celebrated and well-loved places on campus. Hornbostel and Bennett's designs had brought this style to the campus in a striking but harmonious way, whereas Hatfield ensured that the Modernist "experience" also became a part of the students' day-to-day lives. Over the coming decades, the campus would undergo a Modernist transformation more radical than anything these men and women could have imagined.
Dramatic growth in post-war college enrollments led to equally impressive physical changes at Wheaton—not only in the appearance of its buildings, but also in the way its students experienced the campus. The particularly dynamic decade of 1954-1964 witnessed the construction of four new dormitories, including the College's largest to date, as well as an infirmary, a new dining hall, and two major new academic buildings. Like Hornbostel and Bennett's much-acclaimed Student Alumniæ Building, nearly all of these new structures adhered to the principles of the International Style. Indeed, by the late 1950s, the sheer scale of the College's expansion rendered these new, Modernist buildings the norm on campus rather than the exception.

This second architectural epoch in Wheaton's history largely reflected, once again, the collaborative vision of a president and his primary architect: A. Howard Meneely (Fig. 2.4), who served as Wheaton's President from 1944 until 1961; and Howard L. Rich, of the Boston firm Rich and Tucker Associates. Together, the two Howards effectively created a second Wheaton campus—one that was worlds apart from the traditional environment created by Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson on what would soon be known as "upper campus." For all its novelty, however, this new Modernist campus was as strictly uniform in style as Cram's Court of Honor.

It is no mere coincidence that the International Style gained such popularity on American campuses in the post-war era. The movement's focus on practicality, economy, and versatility was a perfect fit for any college or university struggling to address increased enrollment in this era; as of 1944, a Presidential Commission pegged the United States' college population at a new high of more than two million—nearly double the figure of a generation before. Not far only were the American campuses growing in size, but they were also becoming more diverse. As a result, schools had to adapt to a wider range of student needs and interests—developing specialized curricula and a greater range of academic departments. Taken together, all of these changes led to startling new built environments on American college campuses.

Following the Second World War, Wheaton's Trustees appointed Rich and Tucker Associates as its new Campus Architects. The College's attention to campus planning was not without precedent, of course, but in this period it had become a far more modernized profession—and one with a distinct preference for Modernist design. Although he was comfortable working in a variety of architectural styles, Rich was clearly most adept at designing within an International Style rubric. Indeed, given the scale of the projects he built for Wheaton, he was even able to apply some of the style's city-planning principles to the campus plan (if at much-reduced scale.)

Rich and Tucker's first Wheaton commission was for a faculty apartment complex on Howard Street. Completed in 1949, Shepard Court apartments consist of three separate townhouses facing an open courtyard. The buildings' elevations harmonize with the nineteenth-century houses located on Howard Street and the surrounding neighborhood—featuring such traditional elements as colonial/Dutch-gambrel roofs, dormer windows, shingled exteriors, brick chimneys, and Chippendale porches. In subsequent projects at Wheaton, Rich would completely abandon the traditional detailing of these designs; indeed, Shepard Court constitutes the last example of historical-revival architecture built on the twentieth-century Wheaton campus. The rational layout, perfect symmetry, and siting of these structures already betray Rich's underlying preference for the International Style.

Not far from Shepard Court, the College built a new infirmary in 1954—a building Meneely had been advocating since his inauguration ten years before (Fig. 4.1). Rich's design was a model of efficiency, as well as an indicator of the style that would later become his signature on campus. Replacing the quaint, if increasingly unserviceable, King Cottage—a mid-nineteenth-century farmhouse that had previously served as the College's infirmary—the new, up-to-date facility included two examination rooms, a treatment room, a small lab, an X-ray room, nurses' suites, four double patient rooms, an isolation ward, a solarium, a utility room, and a full kitchen. As Modernist in style as it was in function, Rich and Tucker's one-story Infirmary featured a flat roof, long, horizontal lines, and simple, unornamented materials: polished steel, plate glass, glass bricks, and flush-mortared masonry. Surviving letters indicate Meneely's particular admiration for the firm's handling of materials. In 1954, he wrote to the project's construction manager that: "it has been a source of comfort to me to have Mr. Rich ... in charge of the work, because it gave me confidence that the workmanship would be good and honest from start to finish." In 2002, the Infirmary was demolished to make way for a new dormitory, Beard Hall, yet for generations of Wheaton students the building stood as a prime example of progressive, post-war design.

Around the time that the Infirmary was completed, Wheaton faced a serious internal struggle over the question of campus growth. Although the College had previously determined that Wheaton's enrollment should not surpass 500 students, the growing population of prospective students presented new opportunities for the school to expand. In March of 1955, the Board of Trustees asked Dean of the College Elizabeth Stoffregen May—who was then serving as Acting President during Meneely's leave-of-absence—to prepare a report regarding student enrollment. Citing shrinking graduation rates as an indication of student dissatisfaction with the school's size, the report provided the Trustees with the justification to increase the school's enrollment—and to do so against the wishes of the temporarily-absent Meneely.

Like many college and university leaders in this period, Dean May and the Trustees understood that Wheaton's financial success depended on increasing its student population. To do this, however, Wheaton would need to significantly expand its facilities; "planning for space," May wrote in her report to the Trustees, "should be tied to our concept of the future of our program." In October of 1955, the Board of Trustees approved the construction of three dormitories to house eighty students each, as well as a new dining hall. The proposed expansion would allow the Wheaton population to grow to 800 students—a significantly larger number than the 600-student cap that Meneely himself had envisioned.

The new dormitories, Young Hall (1957), McIntire Hall (1959), and Clark Hall (1960), formed part of an expansion plan intended to celebrate the school's 125th anniversary (Fig. 4.2). For many involved with this project, construction could not start soon enough. In a letter sent to Meneely in September of 1957, the Board urged him to quickly review and accept Rich's latest architectural plans for Young Hall, so that construction could begin as soon as possible. The letter reflects Wheaton's tremendous need for the new space, and also...
Not only do they all feature abundant plate-glass windows.

dormitories, for example, were designed to capture maximum
cater to students' movements. The three buildings are placed parallel
to one another, with McIntire set well back from the other two; this
formation creates natural walkways from one building to the next—
contained within Haviland Court, the large, open courtyard bounded
by Young and Clark—while also allowing for a variety of spatial
experiences as students navigate around and through the buildings.
Although conceived at a much smaller scale, Rich's organization
directly reflects the forms of Le Corbusier's utopian Ville radieuse,
or "Radiant City" of 1935—a scheme composed of parallel, 60-story
tower-blocks whose glass exteriors and open courtyards provided
these otherwise intimidating, industrial-looking towers with a
connection to nature. 31

Not only did Young, McIntire, and Clark Halls depart from
the traditional look of Wheaton's older buildings, but they were also
physically far-removed from the original campus. In their distance
from Cram's Court of Honor, these structures formed the nucleus
of an entirely new, eastern campus—even if their alignment still
strictly adhered to Cram's primary, north-south axis. First conceived
as the site for the proposed 1938 art center, this area of the College
had remained not much more than a mixture of fields and a few
nineteenth-century faculty houses. Much like the 1903 gymnasium,
which had once anchored the lonely southeast corner of Cram's
campus plan, these buildings must have seemed noticeably isolated
in the late 1930s.

Compounding the dormitories' startling newness was their use
of unconventional materials. Rather than using the red brick of the
traditional campus, Rich faced these buildings in a buff-colored brick
and capped their ends with Lenroc Stone—a grey-green fieldstone
native to upstate New York (Fig.4.3). The name of this material,
in fact, derives from its use at Cornell University; also spelled
"Llenroc," the stone's name is simply "Cornell" spelled backwards.32
Lenroc Stone was prized by Modernists for its color, which echoed
the neutral tones of cement and weathered steel, and also for its raw,
irregular forms. At Wheaton, for example, these stones are cut to
varying sizes with their faces left undressed; the irregular adze marks
on their surfaces provide a "primitive" foil to the industrial precision
of the materials they accompany, whereas their composition recalls
the look of traditional, New England stone walls—an echo of Gropius
and Breuer's 1938 Art Center design.

Other characteristics of Young, McIntire, and Clark Halls
demonstrate their loyalty to the International Style more subtly.
One such detail is the use of exposed, steel I-beams for the covered
walkways between the three dormitories. Characteristic of Modernist
structural systems dating back to the 1920s, these exposed supports
were believed to convey structural "honesty"—and yet, much like
the Classically-inspired columns that they replaced, these steel
beams were as valued for their associative properties as they were
for their structural ones. Evoking the steel support beams (or pilotis)
that Le Corbusier used for his Villa Savoye in the 1920s, as well as
the polished, steel I-beams of Mies van der Rohe's 1929 German
Pavilion in Barcelona, these elements provided Rich's designs with a
recognizably Modernist pedigree.

With the construction of so much new living space, the College
needed a new dining facility, as well—prompting the construction
of Chase Dining Hall in 1959 (Fig.4.4). Aptly known as "Chase
Round," this circular dining hall stood out on the Wheaton campus
due to its unique shape—an element that made this building an
instant sensation.33 When it first opened in 1959, Chase was hailed
in College promotional literature as "an outstanding example of
contemporary campus architecture," whereas one student claimed,
"even the food tastes better here!"34

The dining hall's unique shape epitomized the sculptural, non-
contextual approach adopted by so many purveyors of so-called
"heroic" Modernism in this era—yet Rich had also chosen this form
to signal the building's varied functions. Not only was the circular design intended to mimic students' foot traffic as they moved around the dining hall, but its panoramic views of Peacock Pond also made it an appropriately dramatic setting for hosting dances. In its unusual plan and flexible program, then, Chase exemplifies the multi-use, "geometrically bounded space" that Hitchcock and Johnson had celebrated in their 1932 International Style show.

The construction of Young, McIntire, Clark, and Chase between 1957-1959 constituted the most rapid architectural expansion in the College's history. Despite the economic efficiency of the buildings' construction—a factor that would later serve as a point against them—the College could only afford construction on this scale with the aid of government-funded Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) loans. The new eastern campus was, therefore, not just a reflection of mid-century style, but also a testament to the expansion of government aid in this era. In a more local sense, the financing for these buildings also demonstrates how far Wheaton had come from its origins as a family-supported institution. Appropriately enough, only domestic objects such as chairs, beds, tables, sofas, and silverware were bought with alumnae donations.

In the year that Chase Dining Hall was completed, Meneely turned his attention to the creation of a new academic building—the first to be constructed since 1911's Science Hall (later named Knapp Hall). Aware that the success of Wheaton's recent classrooms into an important part of the design, as well, providing an active element that enlivens the building's exterior. Placed off-center and originally covered with only a thin metal canopy, the building's unassuming entrance stole as little attention as possible from the otherwise uninterrupted façade. The transparency and reflective qualities of this grey-green glass "skin" as Le Corbusier would have called it, epitomize the French architect's declaration that, at its very best, "architecture is the skillful, correct, and magnificent play of volumes assembled in light."

The uniformity of the Humanities Building's primary façade is counterbalanced by its side and rear elevations. The eastern and western ends of the building, composed of rectangular, stone veneer panels, serve as anchors to the lightness of its entry side (before its 2002 alteration, in fact, the westernmost end featured no windows at all). In contrast, the rear façade of the building is an imaginative checkerboard pattern of brick panels and glass (Fig.4.6)—an apparent nod to the predominating materials of the two campuses between which this building is positioned. The semi-enclosed pattern of this rear façade demonstrates, as well, the very nature of the spaces that it screens. For if the building's transparent, primary façade showcases its classroom space, then this more solid wall conveys the hermetic spaces of faculty offices. With its strong geometry, innovative use of materials, and visual declaration of its various functions, this 1959 design was perhaps the purest example of the International Style to be built on Wheaton's campus.

Meneely lived to see the completion of the Humanities Building in January of 1960, yet by the following spring, he lost his battle with cancer. In March of 1962, the Wheaton campus gathered in front of the building to dedicate the structure to this visionary President; Victor L. Butterfield, the President of Wesleyan University, declared in his dedication speech that: "In truth, according to Mr. Rich, the architect, each building constructed during his administration has some evidence of Howard Meneely's direct influence." Meneely's close cooperation with the College's architects ensured that his ideals and, to some extent, a part of his identity, would forever remain tied to the International Style on Wheaton's campus.

Two years after the dedication of Meneely Hall, the College prepared to expand once again—this time, with the construction of Wheaton's long-delayed fine arts center (Fig.4.7). Due to budget limitations and its preoccupation with enrollment growth, Wheaton
had postponed its commitment to build this structure for more than twenty-five years. Financial support for the new building had at last been asked of Jeannette Kittredge Watson (W1902), whose husband, Thomas J. Watson, had founded International Business Machines (IBM) in 1924. Watson Fine Arts Center, as the building was named, brought together for the first time the Theater, Music, Studio Art, and Art History programs—all of which had continued to occupy leftover spaces in the gymnasium, Science Hall, and the Chapel. Placing all of these departments under a single roof, the College believed, would be "conducive to an effective exchange of ideas." In addition to new offices and classrooms for the arts departments, Watson also housed a large auditorium, a theater, an art gallery, art history and music libraries, storage for the College's permanent art collection, a slide library, and music practice rooms.

Such an impressive range of facilities would have no doubt gratified Esther Seaver, who by this time had become a Trustee at her alma mater, Beloit College in Wisconsin.

As with Meneely Hall, the interior of Watson was designed to be as versatile and functional as possible. Not only were the lecture hall, classrooms, gallery, and theater intended to serve multiple purposes—the gallery was designed, for example, with sophisticated acoustics for small concerts—but the building's lobbies and hallways were also considered part of its varied program. By opening the large double-doors to the gallery, the wide lobby between the theater and the gallery could serve as a reception area for theater and art openings, as well as for expanded exhibition space. On the ground floor, in what came to be known as the "Blue Corridor," generations of art history students gathered to review the ever-changing "photo-study" gallery of required course images.

The siting of Watson Fine Arts Center made nearly as big an impact on the campus as its facilities did. Directly facing Meneely to the south, the arts building created an important new space—christened Hood Court—that became a crucial hub for two intersecting lines of student traffic. The first, a north-south axis that runs between Watson and Meneely, was reinforced by the direct alignment of the buildings' front doors. The second, a pathway that connects upper and lower campuses, was centered on the new Peacock Pond bridge; designed in 1957, Rich's cement bridge replaced an earlier, wooden version originally located further south on the pond. In its placement along Route 123, moreover, the new building managed simultaneously to increase the College's openness to the town of Norton—providing, in effect, a public "front door" to its theater and gallery spaces—while also screening the new campus from the town's primary road.

If Watson Fine Arts Center mirrored Meneely Hall in its placement, then its exterior presented an intentional contrast with the earlier building. Whereas Meneely's north facade features a uniform screen of glass within thin, steel frames, Watson's plate glass windows are slotted into a substantial, stone veneered grid of supports, and further enclosed, in its upper stories, by brick walls laid within these stone frames. By the 1960s, Modernists' extensive use of stone and reinforced concrete—an aesthetic epitomized by the style known as "Brutalism"—had significantly altered the previous generation's primary emphasis on glass. A late, hard-edged subset of the International Style, Brutalism favored the use of blocky, rough, materials and strong contrasts between light and shade. Watson's pierced concrete blocks, for example (used to screen the building's exterior mechanics as well as its theater tower), splinter light rather than reflect it—a Brutalist device particularly associated with the work of Le Corbusier, who called it a brise-soleil (literally, a "sun-breaker").

Far from slackening, the building pace at Wheaton continued to accelerate following the completion of Meneely Hall and Watson. In the final years of the previous decade, Young, McIntire, and Clark Halls had provided new living space for approximately 240 students—yet by the early 1960s, the College was once again running out of dormitory space; at this stage, Wheaton's student population had grown to well over a thousand. Built in 1964, Meadows Complex not only addressed this need, but it also constituted the largest dormitory ever built at Wheaton (Fig. 4.8).

Sited adjacent to the three new dormitories described above, Meadows Complex overlooks Peacock Pond from the location once reserved for the proposed 1938 art center. The sprawling structure consists of three distinct, four-story units (Meadows West, North, and East), each of which was intended to house ninety women—a figure that surpassed the combined capacity of Young, McIntire, and Clark by more than fifty percent, and that tripled the peak population of Old Metcalf. The three units are joined by a two-story common room, an arrangement that offered students in the Meadows Complex unprecedented communal space. By encouraging the residents of these separate wings to congregate in this common area, the architects were therefore able to offset the building's potentially intimidating scale and materials. The reinforced concrete balconies of Meadows North, for example, epitomize 1960s Brutalism—as do the brick walls of the Meadows Complex as a whole. Rather than using the buff-colored bricks of Young, McIntire, and Clark, Rich used red bricks here. Unlike the bricks of the traditional campus, however, these are "klinker" bricks—the rough, misshapen, and sometimes jagged type once created in kiln accidents. For Meadows, these bricks were intentionally produced.
The common room at the center of Meadows' three wings not only changed students' living patterns, but its design also stands out as one of the more distinguished Modernist designs of the new campus. Typical of the International Style social engineering, this communal space was also intended as a non-hierarchical, democratic gesture—quite literally, a "common" space where students of different years and backgrounds could congregate. Its unique, multi-angled roof, expansive plate glass windows, and exposed, poured-concrete support beams all proclaim its International Style roots—whereas its overall design reflects the style's preference for repeating geometric forms. Rich had used a similar approach in designing Young, McIntire, and Clark Halls—all of which repeat the same simple, rectangular shape—yet in Meadows' roof, he created a composition of far greater complexity. Its unusual pattern of repeating chevrons is not only unique to Wheaton's campus, but it also has no known equivalent anywhere else.

The Meadows Complex was a landmark design for Wheaton in more ways than one. First, it proved the College's ability to successfully address its quickly growing population; as The Christian Science Monitor stated in 1964, "this new complex of three dormitories is symbolic of the [College's] effort to keep up with the enrollment boom." Second, the dormitory's size and placement at last provided a center of gravity for the College's new, eastern campus—much the way Cram's Library had finally completed his Court of Honor. Third, it placed an even greater emphasis on communal residential life than Cram's outdated Science Hall of 1911. Designed by the New York firm of Voorhees Walker Smith and Haines—specialists in the field of academic science buildings—the structure owes its flexible, rationally-organized program to the principles of the International Style. As Wheaton's new President, William Prentice, claimed, the building emphasized the "shared use of faculty talent, equipment, and ideas." In its use of materials, the Science Center formed a kind of architectural truce between the traditional and Modern architecture on the Wheaton campus; its long, vertical windows echo those of SAB, whereas its use of red brick and limestone trim recalls the traditional campus. And yet, it belongs fully to neither group.

Tucked away behind the Library, the new building was not only placed far from the new, International Style campus, but it was also nearly invisible from Cram's Court of Honor—demonstrating a contextual insensitivity that Postmodern critics (fairly or not) pinned on Modernism. The Science Center's interior, moreover, reflected the visual banality that Modernism's critics deplored. By this period, the architectural minimalism that Seaver's generation had celebrated was regarded as cheap or lifeless; indeed, by the 1970s, Wheaton students had dubbed Meadows with the nickname "Ghettoes," citing the perceived inferiority of its materials. If Mies van der Rohe had believed "less is more," then Venturi—along with his cohorts so vigorously promoted in the 1970s and '80s. By the end of the twentieth century, ironically, the bold new forms of Rich and Tucker's new campus would appear as rooted within their own time as Cram's Library or Bryan's additions to New Seminary Hall.

Following this feverish period of expansion and building, the International Style at Wheaton eventually met the same fate as Cram and Fergusons Georgian Revival designs. Subsequent designers and Wheaton Presidents would move beyond the stark, traditional-versus-Modern divide to create new, hybrid forms on the campus—even fusing their designs with buildings from the preceding eras, creating exactly the kind of "complexity and contradiction" that Venturi and his cohorts so vigorously promoted in the 1970s and '80s. By the end of the twentieth century, ironically, the bold new forms of Rich and Tucker's new campus would appear as rooted within their own time as Cram's Library or Bryan's additions to New Seminary Hall.
Wheaton's building projects in the past quarter of a century mark a distinct chapter in the College's architectural history. This final essay focuses on three of this period's designs—works that not only represent significant additions to Wheaton's built environment in their own right, but that also demonstrate the eventual fate of International Style architecture at the College. The first of these case studies focuses on the 1986 creation of the Balfour-Hood Center, a project that incorporates the former Student Alumnae Building; the second examines the construction of the Mars Arts and Humanities Building in 2002, along with the related renovation of Watson Fine Arts Center; and the third looks ahead to the construction of the College's proposed Center for Scientific Inquiry and Innovation (CSII), projected for completion in fall 2011. Each of these projects illuminates new directions in Wheaton's architectural evolution, yet each also remains grounded in some way to the College's Modernist past.

Alumnae of the 1940s and 1950s considered Hornbostel and Bennett's 1940 Student Alumnae Building (SAB) an icon of progressive, International Style design on campus; indeed, until the mid-1950s, it also constituted the campus's only freestanding example in this style. The design of the Balfour-Hood Center (Fig. 5.1) in 1986—a project that fully absorbed SAB, while leaving its form essentially intact—therefore represents an unusual example of International Style preservation. The two structures co-exist in a fully functional, and even a complementary fashion. Although students of the present day might not detect the combined buildings' distinct architectural periods, those who knew SAB in its glory days and Bennett's original SAB building had done. Whereas the 1940 building traditions and Classical styles from which Modernism had made such a conscious break, but they also considered Modernism itself an historical style worthy of "revival." Whereas Modernists had stood for the simplification of form, the rejection of historical quotation, and the celebration of pure function, Postmodernists relished complexity, humor, ironic reference, and even form-without-function.

Because Balfour-Hood Center stretches between upper and lower campus, it creates a physical link between them; for this reason, the building was also intended to serve as a stylistic bridge between these two zones.1 Echoing the Georgian brick buildings of Wheaton's campus, while also reflecting the clean lines and horizontality of lower campus's Modernist structures, Balfour-Hood blends these traditions in a far more self-conscious fashion than Hornbostel and Bennett's original SAB building had done. Whereas the 1940 building had harmonized with the campus's traditional architecture in a way that still celebrated its own modernity, Balfour-Hood's references are made with the tongue-in-cheek approach of the Postmodernists.

In its fusion of a contemporary and Modernist building, Balfour-Hood is in fact the very model of 1980s Postmodernism—a movement that had originated as a critique of Modernism, Postmodern designers not only sought to revive the vernacular traditions and Classical styles from which Modernism had made such a conscious break, but they also considered Modernism itself an historical style worthy of "revival." Whereas Modernists had stood for the simplification of form, the rejection of historical quotation, and the celebration of pure function, Postmodernists relished complexity, humor, ironic reference, and even form-without-function.

The stark, industrial components and minimalist façade of SAB were therefore coupled, in the 1986 design, with a variety of elements that would have been considered anathema by any self-respecting Modernist of the 1940s. These include direct references to Classical columns and pediments in the building's upper campus entryway (Fig. 5.2); its internal, east-to-west "colonnade"; the flying, false wall at its eastern end; and its rhythmic pattern of perfectly square, plate glass windows that feature non-functional references to traditional casements. The greatest irony of all, however, is that such an approach to traditionalism, as well as the designers' internal preservation of SAB courtyard once stood, they preserved the building's exterior walls while enclosing this space with the longest façade ever constructed on campus. Stretching all the way from Cram's 1903 gymnasium (today, the Admissions Office) to the southern tip of Peacock Pond, Balfour-Hood's northern façade is nearly 250 feet long. Put another way, it would cover almost half the distance between Mary Lyon and the Wallace Library. However much the new building may have preserved SAB, then, its façade fundamentally altered two important elements of the earlier building's identity: its commanding presence on Chapel Field, and its unique, 45-degree-angle orientation to the traditional campus' north-south axis.

Within Balfour-Hood's new spaces—including the remodeled interiors of SAB—the designers created an expanded campus hub, including a café, game room, radio station, dance studios, and post office, as well as new offices for Student Life, the Student Government Association, Nike and Wheaton News. The flexibility of the large atrium space allowed it to serve a variety of new functions, and old ones, as well. With the loss of Plumperton Hall, SAB's former ballroom, for example, the atrium became the College's primary venue for dances.

Wheaton alumnae not only helped to fund Balfour-Hood's construction, but they also influenced the way that changes were made (or not) to SAB. The class of 1935, for example, wanted to recreate the New Yellow Parlor—a canary-colored lounge in which many of these women had spent memorable times during their College years. Originally located adjacent to Everett Hall, the Yellow Parlor had been relocated to SAB when the building was completed in 1946; thus, in its Balfour-Hood reincarnation, the room might well have been called the "New" New Yellow parlor. The class of 1935 worked closely with the architects to recreate the space in the new Balfour-Hood Center, ensuring that it lived up to their expectations and memory—a factor that explains the preservation of the original fireplace in this otherwise Modernist space. Specific expectations such as these created pressures, as well as opportunities, for the project's architects.

Fig. 5.1 Balfour-Hood Center as seen from Chapel Field; Kenneth MacLean and Robert Neiley (1986).

Fig. 5.2 Upper-campus entrance to Balfour-Hood Center; Kenneth Maclean and Robert Neiley

The stark, industrial components and minimalist façade of SAB were therefore coupled, in the 1986 design, with a variety of elements that would have been considered anathema by any self-respecting Modernist of the 1940s. These include direct references to Classical columns and pediments in the building's upper campus entryway (Fig.5.2); its internal, east-to-west "colonnade"; the flying, false wall at its eastern end; and its rhythmic pattern of perfectly square, plate glass windows that feature non-functional references to traditional casements. The greatest irony of all, however, is that such an approach to traditionalism, as well as the designers' internal preservation of SAB...
as an historical artifact. Indeed, the building's new, monumental façade eclipsed SAB in exactly the way that Postmodernism had itself sought to put a new face on Modernism—re-contextualizing the style, rather than wholly replacing it. Embracing diverse aesthetics, colliding styles, and period revivals, this new expression—as epitomized by this 1986 design—sought to assemble, in the words of the Postmodern critic Charles Jencks, "various parts, styles or subsystems in a new, creative synthesis."

On Balfour-Hood's Chapel Field façade, its architects included a far more esoteric historical reference—and one that is, therefore, all the more characteristic of Postmodern style. The long, horizontal band of squares along the top of this façade serve, first and foremost, to mimic the square motifs found throughout the design; beyond this, however, they also clearly recall the shape and pattern of metopes within a Classical Doric frieze. On the false wall at the eastern end of this façade, moreover, the solid squares of this frieze become cutouts—a motif that directly references Giulio Romano's similarly cut-out metopes at his Palazzo del Te in Mantua (1524-34). Although Venturi and other Postmodern designers viewed the Palazzo del Te as one of the great examples of Italian Mannerism, a rule-breaking style with which the similarly iconoclastic Postmodernists felt a deep affinity. The cleverness of this reference is lost on most visitors to the building, of course, and intentionally so. Indeed, the faux windows of the 1986 addition establish a number of carefully-constructed patterns, particularly in the long façade that faces Chapel Field. Divided into three sections horizontally, its windows decrease in size from bottom to top—from nine feet square, to six feet, to three feet, creating a pyramidal effect that is echoed by the many triangular motifs inside the building, including its atrium floor, skylights, and sconces. Most dramatic of all is the colossal, false window at the end of the building's eastern façade (Fig.5.3). This ten-foot-square cutout, centered on a wall that is physically separated from the addition's interior, adds an emphatic punctuation mark to the end of the building while also framing the angled back of Plipton Hall, SAB's former hall.

Ultimately, Balfour-Hood is as much of an historical set piece as the building that it eclipsed. Its ironic juxtaposition of Modern and Postmodern design, its playful references to past styles, and its attempt to define a third "campus" where none in fact existed—presenting a grand façade to nothing more than a playing field, and the backsides of its neighbors—make it, in short, a landmark of Postmodernism. For the generation of the late 1980s and beyond, it has become as central a part of the landscape as New Seminary Hall once was in the nineteenth century.

The next case study brings us back, once again, to the College's fine arts center—the 1938 proposals which had forever altered Wheaton's architectural course—and to its neighbor, the quintessentially International-Style Meneely Hall. As far back as the late 1950s, Watson Fine Arts Center and Meneely Hall were conceived as a complementary pairing—and to its neighbor, the College had initially considered adding onto or razing the Clark Recreation Center that Rich and Tucker had designed in 1969; a slightly different proposal called for a free-standing "Art Barn" alongside the Clark Center, a scheme that recalls the barn-like Studio that stood on the future site of SAB in the 1920s. A third idea suggested moving, and adding onto, the Old Public Library. Despite the availability of open land at the Clark Center site, critics of these schemes noted that they would remove the arts too far from the center of campus—to say nothing of the potential dangers that the barrier of Route 123 posed.
Watson would appear to have been the most obvious choice for the construction of new arts space, yet its site was problematic for several reasons. First, the building has no expandable footprint; built alongside Route 123, it is further hemmed in by Peacock Pond to the east, and by Mary Lyon to the west. Second, like all of the College buildings placed near Route 123, it falls within the Norton Historical District. Due to this designation, even alterations to an unabashedly Modernist structure like Watson would be restricted by the town's Historic District Commission.

Given the longstanding links between Watson and Meneely, as well as the prohibitive costs of creating a free-standing building, the decision was ultimately made to expand Meneely in the same way that Balfour-Hood had enlarged SAB's facilities. In 2000, the Boston firm Shepley Bulfinch drew up plans for an addition that would have run the length of Meneely's Chapel Field elevation. The slightly bowed façade that they initially proposed echoed the curved forms of Chase Round, while also providing a complement to the long, flat façade of Balfour-Hood across the field. To create a distinct separation between this new building and the 1959 design, the architects proposed a sky-lit atrium between the two structures.

This plan, too, was eventually abandoned—this time due to the objections of Meneely's faculty, whose views of Peacock Pond would have been seen only from its classrooms—whereas the art history faculty offices, which had originally looked out onto the pond, were to be placed along Hood Court. Citing the dim light and drawn shades they required for their classrooms, the art history faculty were able to reverse this arrangement. The architects' proposal of a glass-walled gallery space proved equally problematic, given the need to protect art works from sunlight. Art History Professor Ann Murray, who also served as the Gallery Director, eventually persuaded the architects to provide just two windows along with an enclosed, interior gallery (now known as the Well Gallery) for special exhibitions. What we see today in the Watson-Meneely-Mars complex is therefore the fourth or fifth iteration of the architects' designs—a solution that satisfied a wide number of concerns, but one that also partially obscures the College's International Style legacy. By wrapping the Mars addition around Meneely, rather than attaching it to the building's rear, the final design profoundly altered the geometric purity of Rich's original 1959 design. From the somewhat jaded perspective of the late twentieth century, many students, faculty, and staff regarded Meneely as nothing more than a pedestrian "glass box"; therefore, the arrangements of the new structure took precedence over any discussion of the earlier building's historical importance. If one looks past the geometric disruption of the new structure, however, it is possible to discern its historical sympathy with Meneely. In their design for the windows of Mars, for example, Shepley Bulfinch successfully referenced the original fenestration on Meneely in both color and organization.

Shepley Bulfinch continued to work closely with the Wheaton administration, faculty, students, and alumni throughout the design process; in fact, one of the project's architects, Cynthia Solarz, was herself an alums from the class of 1982. In particular, faculty suggestions substantially affected the final look of the projects—most dramatically, of course, in the altered footprint of the Mars addition, but also in the arrangement of classrooms, offices, and windows. Originally, for example, Watson's premium pond views would have been seen only from its classrooms—whereas the art history faculty offices, which had originally looked out onto the pond, were to be placed along Hood Court. Citing the dim light and drawn shades they required for their classrooms, the art history faculty were able to reverse this arrangement. The architects' proposal of a glass-walled gallery space proved equally problematic, given the need to protect art works from sunlight. Art History Professor Ann Murray, who also served as the Gallery Director, eventually persuaded the architects to provide just two windows along with an enclosed, interior gallery (now known as the Well Gallery) for special exhibitions.

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Certain other stylistic features of the Mars addition exemplify its intentional breaks with Meneely. One prominent feature is its use of "sails" on the southern side of the building—large strips of fabric slightly twisted and fastened onto the exterior of the building (Fig.5.5). This element was intended to block direct sunlight from studio classrooms, although it also serves an aesthetic function—providing a contemporary stamp on the building, and recalling Modernists' romance with the look of sleek ocean liners. Indeed, a number of details in the Mars addition, and in the Watson renovation, reflect a nautical theme. Not only does the new entrance to Watson feature mast-like steel poles and a prow-shaped plan (Fig.5.6), but Mars' roof also features a rounded mechanical tower like the chimney stack of an ocean liner.

In the end, the style of the Mars Arts and Humanities Building suggests a kind of 1960s Revival—romantically evoking crisp, mid-century Modernism as surely as Cram's Georgian-Revival buildings recalled Ye Olden Days of the American colonies. Such a spirit of Revivalism, of course, compromises the very integrity of the earlier buildings' aesthetic—cheapening it even as it celebrates it. And yet these designs also successfully accomplished the College's original intent: to provide expanded facilities, visual drama, and a new synergy between the arts and the humanities. For all of these reasons, the Jury of the 1938 competition might well have admired the new complex.

The most recent example of architectural hybridity on Wheaton's campus is the proposed Center for Scientific Inquiry and Innovation (CSI), projected for completion in the fall of 2011. CSI is the most ambitious building effort in Wheaton history—a $50 million project that will encompass 99,000 square feet of classrooms, lab, office, and common spaces, it will be the College's largest academic facility when completed. Not only will the building serve as the new home for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Astronomy, and Math/Computer Science, but it will also free the spaces these departments...
Crutcher, the building's design and even its materials—especially, its use of glass and grass—will create a "visual connection" for students, "encouraging collaboration and community." The underlying intention of the spaces is to increase the visibility of the sciences in their own right, as well as to strengthen the Connections dimension of Wheaton's curriculum. This sense of visibility will extend to the design's interior, as well, which is projected to include transparent laboratories visible to casual users of the building.

The design of CSII also reflects a communal spirit in its commitment to environmental sustainability. To this end, the College will be seeking LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the new construction. The five criteria for certification include; sustainable site development; water savings; energy efficiency; sustainable materials; and indoor environmental quality. Wheaton is not only hoping to achieve LEED certification for CSII, but also possibly for the first-floor renovation of the existing Science Center and for the entire 1968 building. The granting of LEED certificates is based on a points system, according to the five principles listed above, resulting in Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum ratings. Wheaton hopes to achieve a Silver designation for CSII.

In addition to its ethical commitment to sustainability, CSII will also exemplify the current vogue for Green aesthetics—particularly in its grassy roof. The Green Architecture Movement was founded on the principle of reducing waste, and leaving a smaller carbon-footprint on the planet. Along with considering the environment in the architectural planning, Green Architecture also often includes elements of the landscape itself. The CSII building is no exception. The building's Green roof will serve the practical functions of insulating the building, while also contributing to the design's overall visual appeal.

Considered together, the Balfour-Hood Center, the Mars Arts and Humanities Building, and CSII tell a rich story about Modernism's after-effects at Wheaton College. What had once captivated the College as a fresh aesthetic has come to be regarded, within the past generation, primarily as a reminder of its architectural past. Each of these case studies reflects a different, and more importantly, a contemporary response to Modernism. The Balfour-Hood Center preserves the College's International Style past, whereas the Mars addition to Meneely seeks to mimic and update it. As currently projected, CSII will revisit this style while providing a new way forward.

Like the previous case studies, CSII is intended to feature several stylistically varied facades—one that will harmonize the structure with its pre-existing campus environment. The wall facing the Library, for example, is projected to be built in red brick, referencing the Georgian architectural style that dominates the College's Court of Honor; by contrast, its glass eastern wall will reflect the lower campus's International Style aesthetics. The southern wall, facing the wetlands, is projected to incorporate unvarnished wood and other natural elements in a shape that follows the site's curved topography. In this final element, and in the grass-covered roof that will enclose its extended, one-story design, CSII will revisit this style while providing a new way forward.
A Progressive Vision: "Modernist" and "Eastern" Campuses

5. Helmreich, Wheaton College, p.56.
7. Stickle in her notes, the "building" moniker in her "Architectural History of the Wheaton College Campus" (11/24/87), p.3.
34. Buildings: Mary Lyon; Curtin Dahl, "Famed Architect Designed Mary Lyon Hall," College Campus" (11/24/87), p.3.
40. Buildings: Mary Lyon; Curtin Dahl, "Famed Architect Designed Mary Lyon Hall," College Campus" (11/24/87), p.3.
42. Buildings: Mary Lyon; Curtin Dahl, "Famed Architect Designed Mary Lyon Hall," College Campus" (11/24/87), p.3.
44. Buildings: Mary Lyon; Curtin Dahl, "Famed Architect Designed Mary Lyon Hall," College Campus" (11/24/87), p.3.
47. Buildings: Mary Lyon; Curtin Dahl, "Famed Architect Designed Mary Lyon Hall," College Campus" (11/24/87), p.3.

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1945: The Pike Memorial Bird Feeder, erected in 1937 to honor Clara M. Pike (W1866, A117), as well as for its 1932 Art Center proposal. See Zephorene L. Stickney, "Architectural Introductions to the School and its Influence; see Whitford, Bauhaus (London: Thames and Hudson), 1984.

1946: Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson's suit was based on the plans they had submitted for 1938, p.4; and 6; see also Kornwolf, ed., Modernism in America, Williamsburg, VA: Joseph and Margaret Muscarelle Museum of Art, 1985), p.31. According to College Archivist


Wheaton College's Architectural Growth (1834-2010)

Building or Structure's Existence
Indicated by the line represented.

Renovation or Expansion
Indicated by an increase of thickness to the line.

Change of Location
Indicated by a jog within the line.

Change of Purpose
Indicated by a change of color within the line.

Wheaton College
Indicated by the large black line.

The timeline represents the campus's architectural growth over time. Each line represents a specific building or structure. The color variety among the individual lines signifies the uniqueness of each building and structure on Wheaton College's campus.

Timeline design: Ross Culliton, Class of 2009
Wheaton College’s Architectural Growth (1834-2010)

The timeline represents the campus's architectural growth over time. Each line represents a specific building or structure. The color variety among the individual lines signifies the uniqueness of each building and structure on Wheaton College's campus.