

 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

東亞圖書館
East Asian Library
and the *Gest Collection*

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"End Matter", The Gest Library Journal 3, no. 1-2 (1989): 56-65, accessed January 14, 2017, <https://library.princeton.edu/eastasian/EALJ/end.EALJ.v03.n01.p056.pdf>

A New Gest Library

PHYSICAL SPACE PROBLEMS — BY THE JOURNAL STAFF

Talk of a new building to increase space for the Gest Library is much in the air. The Library's Curator has recently sent what has become in recent years her annual spring notice to faculty users, telling what emergency measures will be implemented over the summer to deal with the continuing crisis. For a third year there is no space for shelving newly acquired books, the ten to twelve thousand volumes purchased each year. That means shifting some less frequently used items temporarily to storage from which they can be recalled as needed, but placing them beyond the access of stack browsers. It also means adding more temporary shelving in hallways and reading room spaces. The Gest, long known for its gracious, quiet spaces for study, has become crowded and inconvenient. That taxes the patience of our greatest resource, our splendid and devoted staff, and it interferes seriously with the users.

This problem was accurately foreseen and reported to Princeton University's administration at least five years ago, but it takes that long for an institution to find ways of solving such a problem and to assign it effective priority among competing demands. It is reported that President Harold Shapiro, familiarizing himself with current conditions since his arrival in January, 1988, has walked through the Gest to see the problem at first hand, and agrees with the urgent need for action. The University Librarian, Dr. Donald Koepp, responding to our inquiries in a memorandum dated April 26, notes that he cannot think "in concrete terms, no pun intended, about future East Asian Library space since I do not know where it will be." But he goes on to make the assumption that it will be close to the East Asian Studies Department.

Mr. Koepp further assumes that primary consideration must be given to providing space for continued growth of the collection, needing something like 800 square feet of space a year. Secondarily, enlarged facilities for users must be provided, and the temperature- and humidity-controlled space that houses the rare book collections must be provided, probably enlarged. In

conclusion, Mr. Koepp says: "Needless to say, these are only my own ideas, and I can tell you from considerable experience that the actual planning of such a facility is a long and complicated — if also exciting and rewarding — process in which different points of view get meshed and merged and reformulated within the always pressing constraints of funds available and limitations inherent in the site."

Those constraints of funds and site limitations are very real; solving them will be the challenge that all of us interested in the Gest Library must share. In this first of a series of articles we shall explore the site problem; future articles will look at the uses to which the new space may be put, and the truly exciting place that a new Gest facility will assume in the life of the University and the East Asian fields. The Friends of the Gest Library have a large interest in this planning and may contribute to all aspects of its realization. We can be one of the voices helping to reformulate the different points of view. We urge you to become involved, to send us your views, and to help us to think realistically about the ideals that we shall be articulating.

How and where can new space be built? The assumption of all the persons we have consulted is that it must take the form of an addition to Palmer Hall, in which the Gest Library now occupies the east end of the third and fourth floors. (See Illustrations 1 and 2.) This fine old building was constructed for the Physics Department before World War I. The larger physics courses and their elementary laboratories are still housed in the west end of the building, although the Department offices moved in 1969 across Washington Road to the new Jadwin-Fine complex built at that time for Physics and Mathematics. Palmer Hall extends roughly 180 feet more or less east-to-west, with its main entrance at the center facing north. Wings at the east and west turn to the south, forming an inverted "U" shape open to the south. A narrow lane runs along that open south side, beyond which the ground falls off sharply some ten feet, down to the Isabella McCosh Infirmary. The narrow lane continues on along the south side of adjoining Jones Hall, built in 1928 as Fine Hall to house the Mathematics Department. It now houses East Asian Studies and Near Eastern Studies. The lane descends the slope behind Jones, to the level of the rear of the infirmary, and serves as a fire-lane into that part of the campus.

This constricted area, presumably, must be redesigned to allow for a new building at the back of Palmer Hall, attached to it in some way. A fire-lane

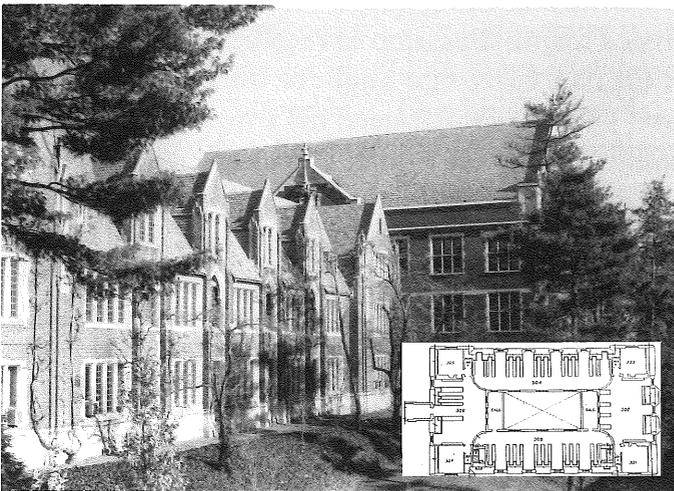


1. This is a view of the south side of Palmer Hall, with its two wings — east on the left and west on the right. Jones Hall (barely visible through tree branches immediately to the left of Palmer's east wing) abuts Palmer longitudinally at the east wing. It is easy to see the "U" shape courtyard in the rear of Palmer, with the shed-like structure, trucks, and loading docks at its lower level, on the narrow fire-lane. Washington Rd. runs diagonally across the picture at the lower right. McCosh Infirmary is not shown in the photograph. It is below the slope on which Jones Hall and the far end of the fire-lane are located.

to the rear of the infirmary must continue to be provided. This is a site to tax the ingenuity of a good architect. Palmer, Jones, and the Infirmary all are superior buildings; their architectural integrity must be respected and the space should be enhanced by whatever is done.

A conversation with Mr. John D. Hlafter, M.F.A., Director of the Physical Planning Department, provided informed opinion about how some of the problems might be handled. Mr. Hlafter and the Department are responsible for all the University's building projects, from refurbishing existing buildings, planning space use, improving sites, and the actual construction of all new buildings. He has borne these responsibilities for more than twenty years and clearly is the first person from whom to seek advice as we look forward to the new Gest Library. He has not, however, been asked by the University to commence any formal planning for this project, so he offered only his speculative thoughts about some of the possibilities; he would not want what follows to be taken as his considered planning or as the University's official views.

Mr. Hlafter reported that the administration would like to see all of the central campus area, to which Palmer belongs, used wholly for academic purposes. This directly affects planning for Palmer Hall because many years ago a one-story shed-like building was placed adjacent to its long central part inside the open "U", atop a loading dock. (See Illustration 1.) That now provides space for building maintenance offices serving the campus, and those could be relocated. If the shed-like structure and loading



2. Here is a closer view of the rear of Jones Hall, at the fire-lane. The view looks toward the east wing of Palmer (the darker building), which Jones joins by means of an internal passageway. McCosh Infirmary (not pictured) would be down the slope farther right. Currently the Gest Library is housed in the third floor of Jones (where the gabled windows run; compare with the Jones floor plan, shown in inset) and in part of Palmer's third- and fourth-floor east wing, through the passageway.

dock were removed and a fourth side were added to close the "U" on the south, it could turn Palmer's open "U" space into an enclosed, or partially enclosed garden courtyard. The new building of course would extend over the fire-lane, but that probably could be relocated on the level of McCosh Infirmary, to be entered from the Infirmary driveway.

Palmer Hall sits just at the point where the banks lining Washington Road are the highest. Mr. Hlafter speculated that a pedestrian bridge could be added, crossing over Washington Road. It has long been felt that such a safe pedestrian crossing is needed; it would link Prospect Street, the Computer Center and the Engineering Quadrangle to the central campus. Such a walkway might pass through the new Palmer courtyard; perhaps the main entrance in the center of Palmer (see Illustration 4a) could be converted into another of Princeton's distinctive open archways.

Mr. Hlafter also noted that the Borough zoning regulations permit this part of the campus to have buildings up to sixty feet tall. With the possibility of placing one or two stories of the new building below the ground level of Palmer, but above the ground level to the south so that windows could be provided on that side, a building of seven or eight stories could be constructed. Were its ground floor dimensions to match those of the main east-west portion of Palmer, it could provide almost 4,500 square feet on one floor. Thus we are speaking of a building that might reach as much as 36,000 square feet of floorspace. We are looking at a multi-million dollar building.

We cannot fault the University for having allowed Gest's space problems to reach crisis proportions before launching a new building project of this magnitude; it clearly involves a major allocation of resources. We do not of course anticipate that all of the new space that might be built here would be devoted to the Gest Library. There is similar need for a new Near Eastern Studies Library, which should be adjacent to that Department's offices on the ground floor of Jones Hall. The ground floor of the present east wing of Palmer plus adjacent space in whatever new building will evolve here undoubtedly should be given over to that library. And, the University probably has other space needs in mind, perhaps to occupy a significant portion of the new building. Nonetheless, there seems to be a possibility that the Gest Library and associated East Asian Department and East Asian Program requirements for space can be generously met, if the new-south-side-of-Palmer idea can be realized.

HYPOTHETICAL DESIGN OF THE GEST EXPANSION

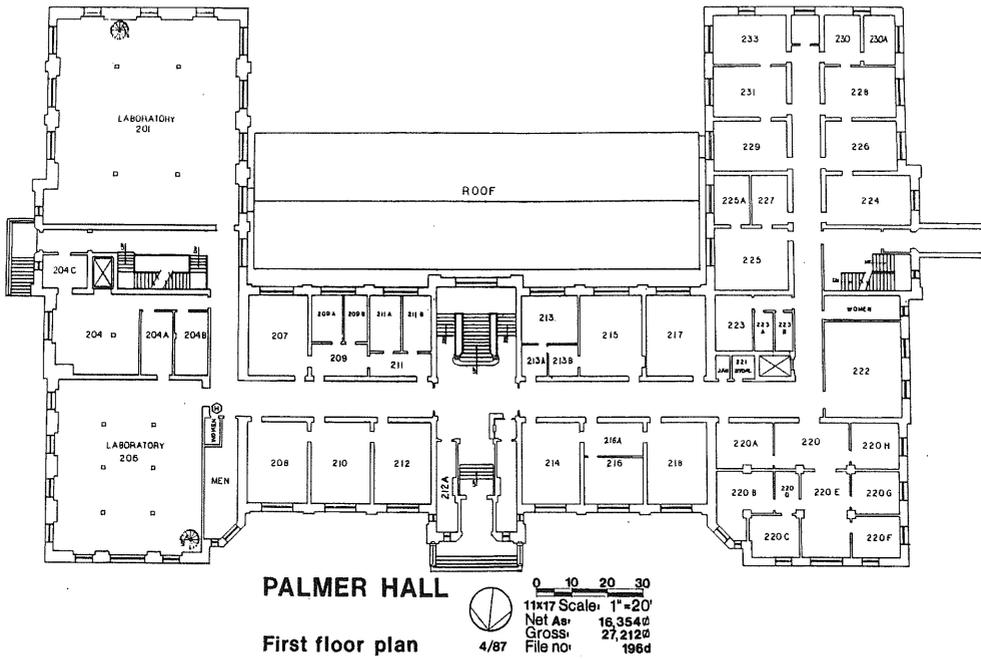
— By Cary Y. Liu

The following set of architectural diagrams (Illustrations 3a-c) are intended as a hypothetical exploration into the possibility of expanding Gest Library into the Palmer Hall courtyard, as proposed in the above section. These diagrammatic plans are not intended as a detailed proposal for the exact layout, instead, they are designed as preliminary investigations into square footage and organization of entrance, circulation, and other design considerations. It is hoped these diagrams will be helpful in raising some issues that should be further explored as planning for a Gest Library extension progresses.

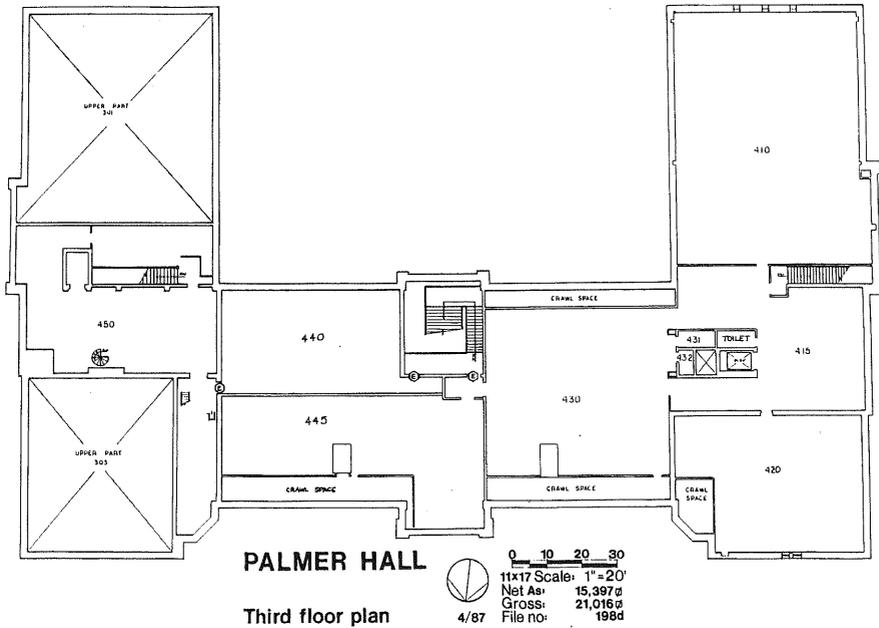
Plan Description

A library extension in Palmer courtyard should be designed as an independent structure with as few penetrations of the old structure as possible. Four stories can be placed in this location: basement and floors one to three. The basement floor would cover the entire courtyard area (approx. 9,960 sq. ft.), replacing the existing temporary structures, which would be relocated. Above this level, three floors (approx. 4,460 sq. ft. per floor) can be built to the south with a central light-court to their north (see Illustration 3a). This would produce a library extension with a total gross area of approximately 23,340 sq. ft. The light-court would not only serve the new library extension, but would also preserve most of the classroom windows at the rear of Palmer Hall (see Illustration 4a). The addition of windows along the south wall of the library extension would also act to provide natural light for each floor. In this layout, interconnections with the present Gest Library could be limited to three doorways on the first through third floors and can be built utilizing existing window openings along the west wall facing into Palmer courtyard. A fourth interconnection (not drawn in the diagrams) at the basement level could also be constructed at center of the north wall (at the Palmer central staircase) giving access to the Palmer basement. Parts of this area, perhaps, could be converted to library use or used for mechanical space.

NEW GEST LIBRARY



4a.



4b.

These are two of Princeton University's official floor plans for the existing Palmer Hall. Its first floor (4a) currently has no area given over to Gest Library use.

Entrance and Circulation

Two viable entry alternatives for the expanded library exist. The first would be to maintain the present second floor entrance at the connection between Palmer and Jones Halls (Illustration 3b), but this would result in overly circuitous and discontinuous routes between the various floors of the old and new library sections. The second alternative (Illustration 3a, left arrow) would create a new first-floor access directly into the new section. The primary advantage is that the new section, with continuous vertical circulation cores (staircases and passenger elevator), could then function to link all four floors of the library, with access on each floor to the old library. It would make sense in such a layout to relocate the existing library offices and the various card catalogs to the first floor of the new section, while converting the space they presently occupy to stack space (Illustration 3b).

Future Expansion

In the design of any library the question of future expansion must also be seriously considered. The logical location for a later addition would be to the south of the proposed courtyard extension; however, the southern edge of Palmer Hall and its courtyard is bordered by an emergency fire-lane. Inquiries should be made into the possibility of rerouting this fire-lane in the future. If not possible, plans for a connection by bridge over, or tunnel under, the present fire-lane must also be considered in the design of the courtyard extension.

FRIENDS OF THE GEST LIBRARY

The Friends of the Gest Library is a group of private individuals dedicated to the idea that an East Asian library resource like the Gest Oriental Library (the East Asian Research Library at Princeton University) must be known, supported and encouraged in order to enrich both the aesthetic knowledge of East Asia and the growth of scholarship and contemporary information concerning that part of the world. Many individuals have already been active for years in guiding the Gest Library, and contributing their time and resources *ad hoc*. In 1986 they formed the Friends of the Gest Library in order to broaden the Library's support and foster communication among other interested parties.

As a group, the Friends sponsor colloquia and exhibitions on East Asian books, calligraphy, art and their historical relationships. They secure gifts and bequests for the Library in order to add to its holdings items and collections of great worth. They disseminate information about the Library (and about other East Asian libraries) so that members and non-members alike can benefit from its resources.

JOINING THE FRIENDS

Membership is open to those subscribing annually twenty-five dollars or more. With that membership fee is included a yearly subscription to *The Gest Library Journal*. Members will be invited to attend special exhibitions, lectures, and discussions that occur under the aegis of the Friends. Checks are payable to the Trustees of Princeton University and should be mailed to:

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