

IN ADDITION

Picture a high school campus surrounded by nothing but fields, with shimmering fountains in front of the imposing entrance, a large recreational development at one end of the building, and ivy vines creeping over a large portion of the fine red brick walls.

This is how the architectural firm of Law, Law and Potter envisioned West High School when it was being designed in the mid-1920's.

In an article appearing in The West High Times, architect E. J. Law determined that "the architecture of the building may be thought of as combining utility and beauty."

Adopting the Georgian or Colonial style of design offered the best medium to blend with the architecture of the surrounding homes. "There should be a certain harmony between the high school and the homes on account of the close human relationships which exist between them," stated Law.

The firm visualized a framing of beautiful trees throughout the campus. The main entrance would be outlined with ivy vines that would enhance the artistic appeal. And possibly the most unusual idea - a rock garden - would be located on the foreground of the Ash Street entrance. The garden was designed by University of Wisconsin Professor Franz Aust who lived in the area.

A large recreational complex was also envisioned during the construction of the building; to the west of the building a football field with a natural stadium along the sides, baseball diamonds, tennis courts and other facilities were to be developed.

The building itself was a precedent in design and construction in Madison. Much of the equipment the building contained represented the most modern technological developments of the 1930's.

The cafeteria, later to be the biology complex, was enhanced by a vaulted ceiling and modern lighting techniques. The corridors contained interesting features of design. Hallways were spacious and their length broken up at intervals with arches. Because of "the great deal of commotion between classes," an asphalt tile floor was used to reduce sound vibrations as well as add to the beauty of the elongated corridors.

The music department was originally confined to the fourth floor; thus the rooms were isolated from the remainder of the school. Two large rooms were allotted for the musicians - one for orchestra and band, the other for choruses and glee club.

While the building was modern in the 30's and seemed to have too much space for the student enrollment - which eventually reached, then exceeded the 1500 building capacity, America was undergoing change in the 1960's. And so was Madison West.

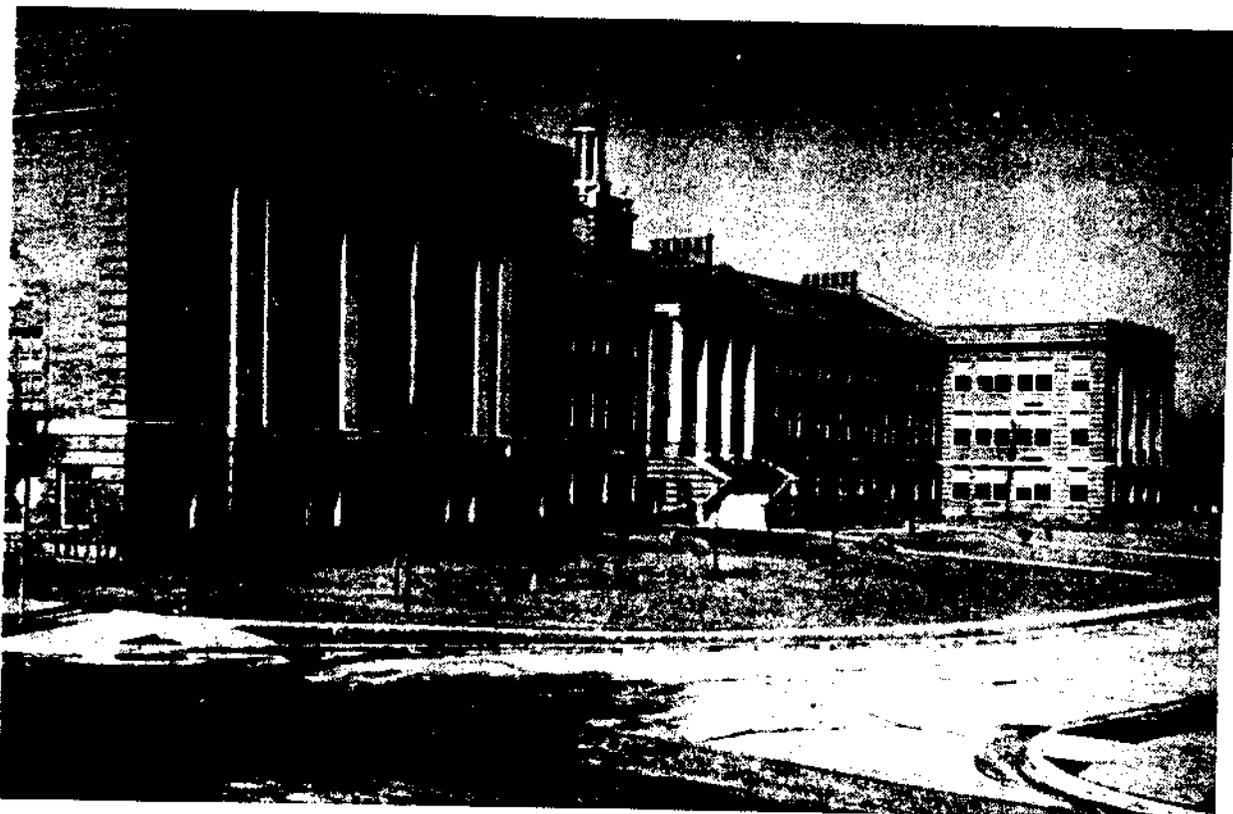
In the early 60's, architects Potter, Lawson, Findlay and Powlowsky proposed the first major addition to West: the VanHise gym, a swimming pool, music rooms and a 31-room wing. The

estimated cost was 1.5 million dollars including the swimming pool which was termed a bargain at \$50,000. When the school board allotted \$200,000, on top of the original proposal, for some general remodeling and the addition of four badly needed science rooms. West High could accommodate 900 more students.

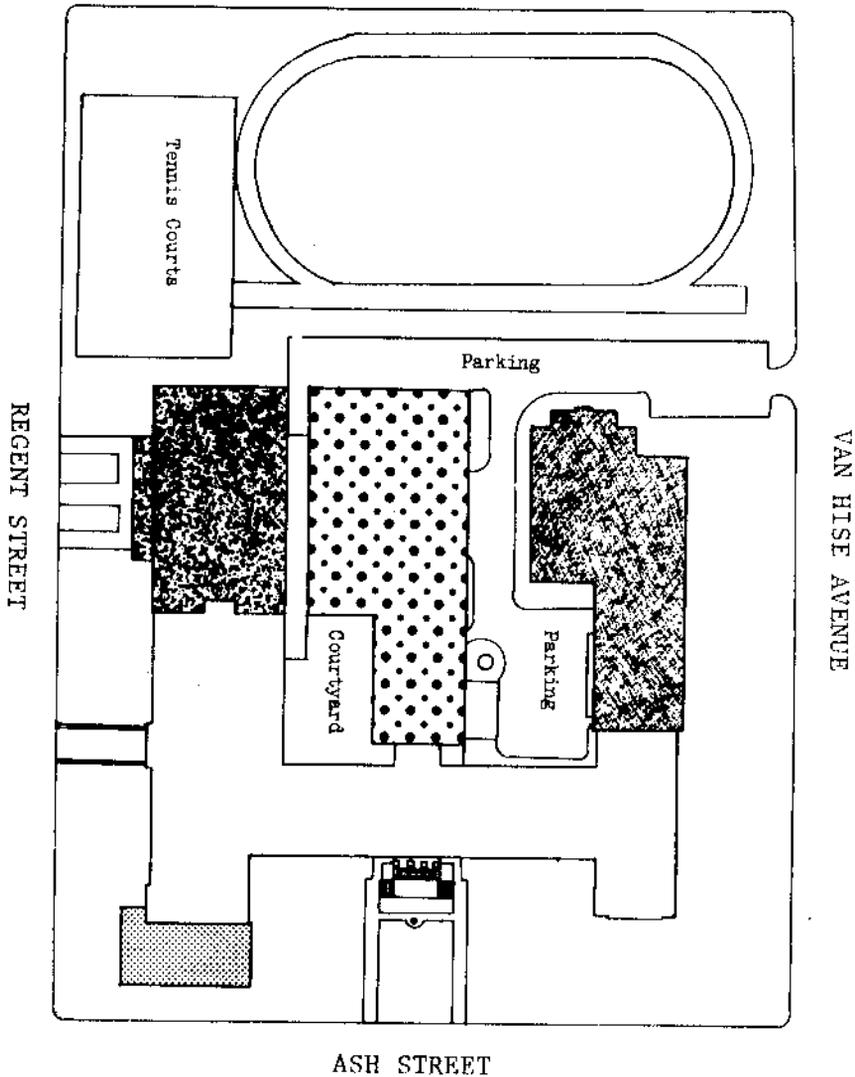
In 1965, plans were unveiled and approved for changing the library into an "Instructional Materials Center." This innovation involved the addition of 8,000 books, more audio-visual equipment, private study carrels, an enlarged 3-room study area and a professional library for members of the staff.

The most costly addition, however, was proposed in 1968. A 2,400-seat gymnasium, the newly developed I.M.C., shops for vocational education, and a large modern cafeteria were all to be housed in this costly 2.6 million dollar addition. The school board agreed to this latest venture largely because of the expected jump in enrollment at West with the planned closing of Central High School. And so it was. The enrollment continued to climb, peaking at just under 2,700 students in 1972 and settling to a comfortable present enrollment of 2,222 in 1981.

The final addition in 1968 was intended to increase the useful years of West by 24. This is a conservative estimate, and we can safely assume West to remain largely unchanged and still going strong well into the next century.



HIGHLAND AVENUE



RECENT STREET

VAN HISE AVENUE

ASH STREET



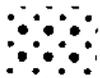
The original building, completed in 1930.



The first addition, a swimming pool and four large rooms for music and theater related courses, was finished in 1960.



Built at the same time as the swimming pool addition, this section houses the Van Hise gym and thirty-one class rooms.



The latest addition, completed in 1968, contains the I.M.C. and vocational education classes.



Also completed in 1968 was this huge 2,400 seat gymnasium and spacious locker rooms.