



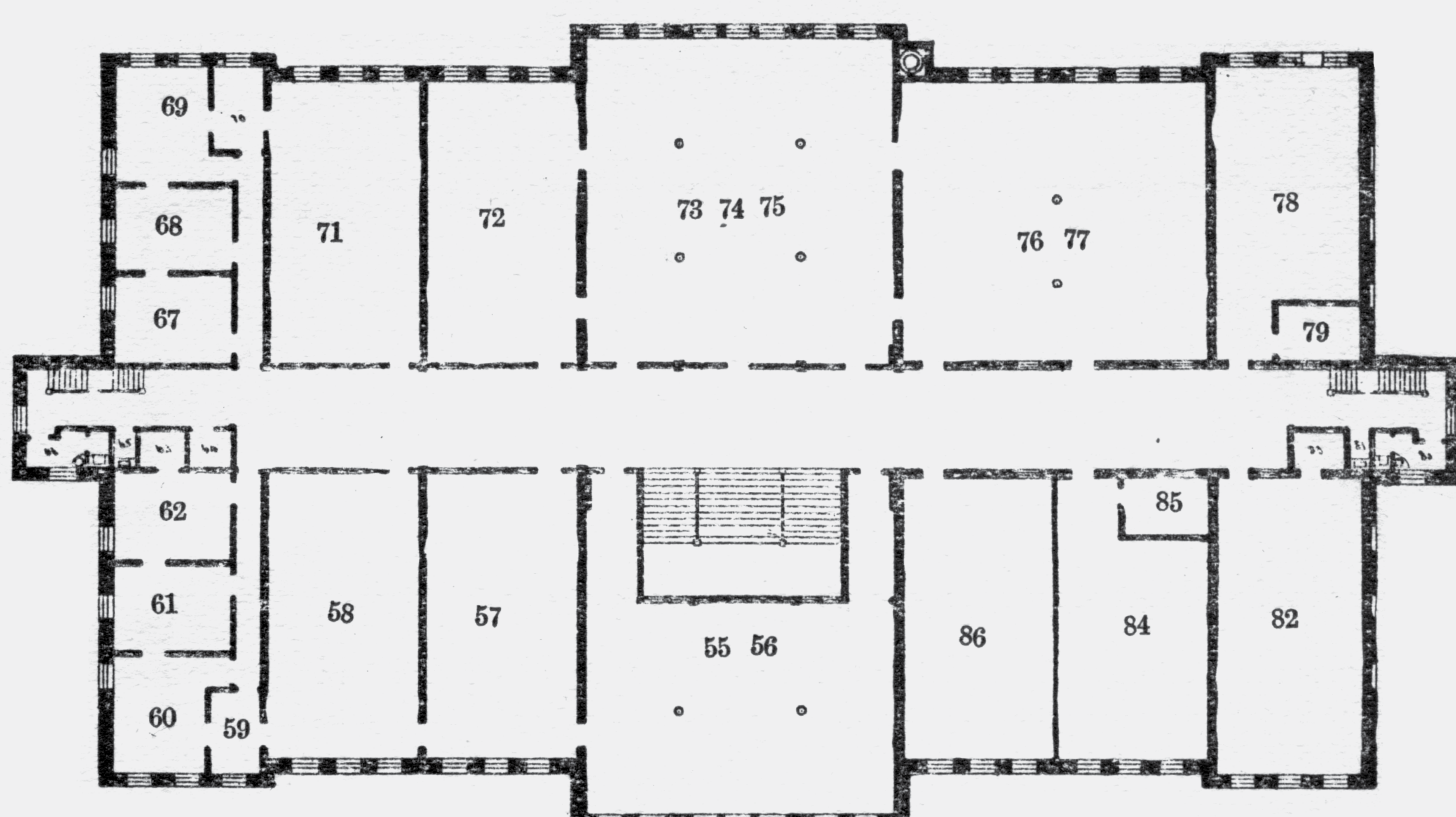
1887

Jonas Clark Hall

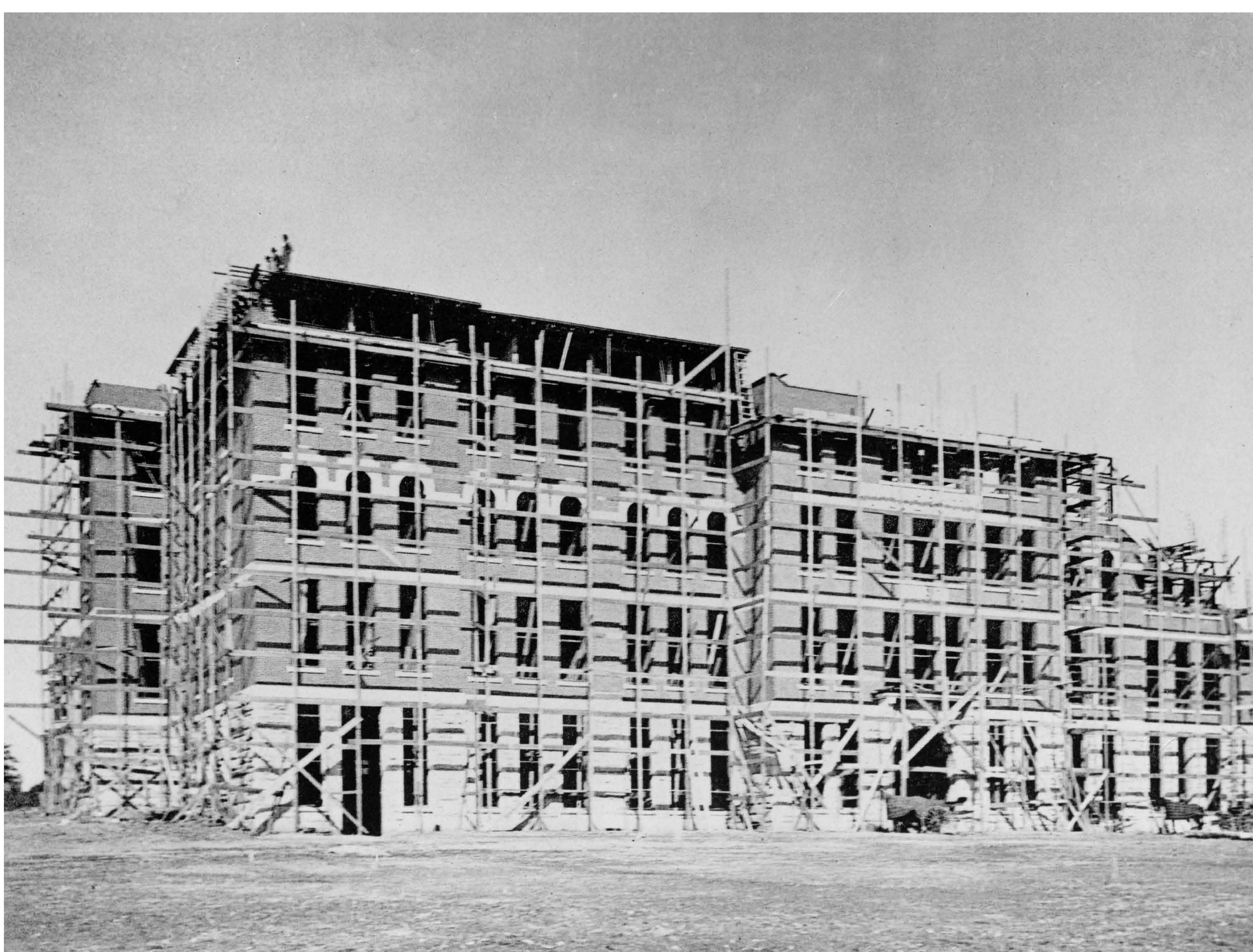
At the laying of the cornerstone of his university's first building, Jonas Clark described his vision for the school: "Broad in its scope, liberal in its methods, and comprehensive in its teaching..." Just as the university's first building made a large visual impact in its Worcester neighborhood—which, at the time, had no dense urban development (see photograph above)—Clark imagined that his university would make a large impact on the Worcester community. Clark was notoriously suspicious of the trappings of pretension that so frequently surrounded institutions of higher education. Thus, while he wanted Clark University to stand on a par with research institutions such as Johns Hopkins, he wanted it to do so without the social prejudices that typically excluded certain groups of students.

The first campus structure was originally called the "Main Building" (today called Jonas Clark Hall). It is, in the words of **Chloe Garcia '13**, a building with a largely "utilitarian appearance" that "symbolizes the serious learning and dedication to the sciences, without ostentation" that characterized Clark's educational philosophy. The building's red brick reflects the brick vernacular architecture dominant in Worcester's factories. Its ornament is restrained, confined primarily to a row of Romanesque round arches at the third story and neo-classical moldings at the cornice. The outstanding visual feature of the building is in the central bay, where three granite blocks announce in bold, sans-serif type: "CLARK UNIVERSITY 1887."

Clockwise from top: view of Jonas Clark Hall from South High School, c.1915; under construction with scaffolding, 1888; floor plan, 1889.



THIRD FLOOR.





1887–1924

Jonas Clark Hall

Jonas Clark Hall originally featured a tall clock tower which rose a full story above the building's central bay, as seen in the photograph above. It was supported by a large round arch framed by two pilasters, and had a clock face on each side. In 1924, during a violent summer storm, the tower and a portion of the window beneath it collapsed. When it was rebuilt, the height of the tower was reduced by more than a half, and the supporting arch was eliminated. The tower now has a single clock face, which overlooks the building's main entrance, as illustrated in the photograph below.

Worcester's preeminent architect in the late nineteenth century was Stephen C. Earle, who designed, among many local buildings, the Worcester Art Museum, several structures at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and a commercial building owned by Jonas Clark downtown.

While Earle is known to have played some role in the design of Jonas Clark Hall, the precise nature of his involvement has never been definitively determined. Jonas Clark himself told his original Board of Trustees that he had developed the designs for his school's first building. In an early institutional history, Earle disavowed any responsibility for the building's aesthetics and stated that he had merely translated Clark's vision into a drawing. Whatever the historical truth, the building shares many features with university buildings constructed across the country in the 1860s and 1870s, and there is no evidence that it was ever intended for any other purpose.

Clockwise from top: postcard of Jonas Clark Hall with original clock tower, c.1890; view with lower tower, c.1940; under construction with Clark University name already present, c.1889.





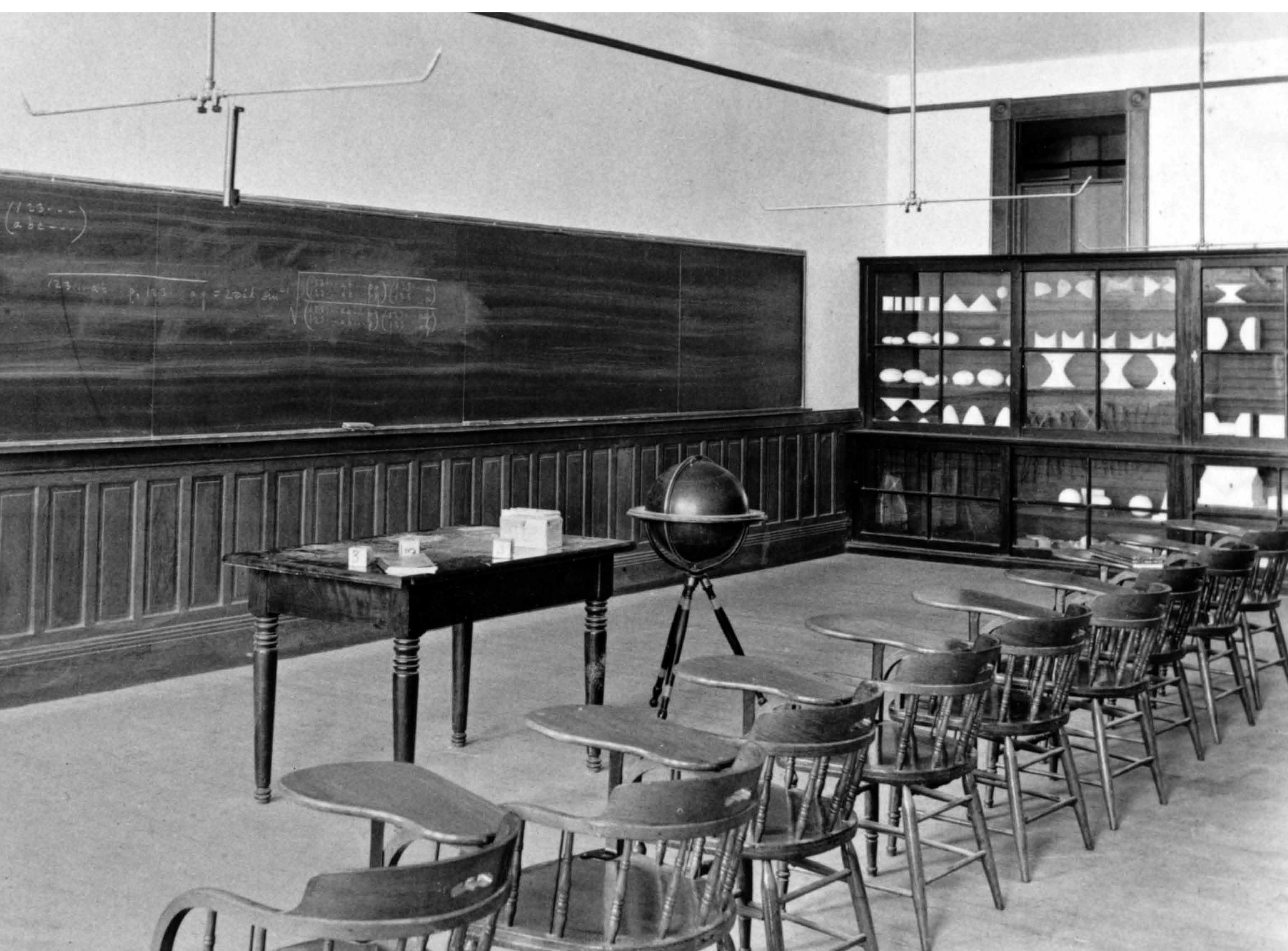
1887–2012

Jonas Clark Hall

Because of its central location on the city block and its boldly articulated name, Jonas Clark Hall has always been the beating heart of Clark's campus. Over the past 125 years, the building has housed literally every function of the university. It originally contained spaces for scientific laboratories, classrooms, the library, and the president's office. Because of its large windows, the building's interior spaces were deemed extraordinarily functional and well-lit. That functionality has enabled a wide variety of campus activities over the ensuing decades: Jonas Clark Hall has housed the gym (whose location in the column-filled basement level was decidedly impractical for basketball), the major campus lecture hall, the campus bookstore, a snack bar, and classrooms (see the photographs below).

Jonas Clark Hall faces the major green space of the campus, which in the twenty-first century is known as "Red Square." Red Square, like Jonas Clark Hall, has had several different uses over the course of Clark's history. While it originally was an open green lawn, by about 1940 part of it had been taken over for campus parking (as is evident in the photograph in the previous panel). The green space was restored in the mid-1980s with the construction of the very modern Sackler Science Center to the left side of Jonas Clark Hall. The photograph above, taken from the atrium in the Sackler Science Center, captures the enduring presence of Jonas Clark Hall over the course of the university's history.

Clockwise from top: Jonas Clark Hall as seen through the windows of Sackler atrium, photo Peggy Bain; students in the JC basement gym, 1915; JC mathematics classroom, 1893.





1902–1910

The Gothic Revival University

The first building constructed by Clark in the twentieth century was the university's library. Completed in 1902 by the Worcester firm of Frost, Briggs, and Chamberlain, it was located at the corner of Main and Downing Streets (this building is now Jefferson Academic Center). The outstanding feature of the library was the grand reading room on the second floor (see photograph above). Modeled after the library at Trinity College, Cambridge, the room boasted a vista down the entire length of the building, culminating in a bay window overlooking Main Street. The building is an example of the Gothic revival style: it includes Gothic elements such as steeply pointed arches and lancet windows. In 1945, the bay window at the far end was filled with stained glass windows; these enhanced the Gothic character of the building.

By 1909, it was clear that the Library had reached its functional capacity, and the trustees voted to build a Library Addition, situated perpendicular to the original structure along Main Street (this is now the Geography Building). The addition included an undergraduate reading room; located on the first floor, this new space was open and light-filled, like its graduate counterpart, but with more space dedicated to group study (see photograph below). The University Librarian who oversaw the designs of Clark's library facilities was Louis N. Wilson, depicted in his study in the photograph below. President Hall, clearly proud of these cutting-edge facilities, declared in 1904, "We live in what might be called a library age."

Clockwise from top: main reading room of Library, c.1912, photo Charles L. Blair (current Jefferson Academic Center, second floor); exterior of Library and Addition, c.1940; undergraduate reading room of Library Addition, c.1914 (current Geography Building, first floor); Librarian Louis N. Wilson at his desk, c.1914.





1902–1910

The Gothic Revival University

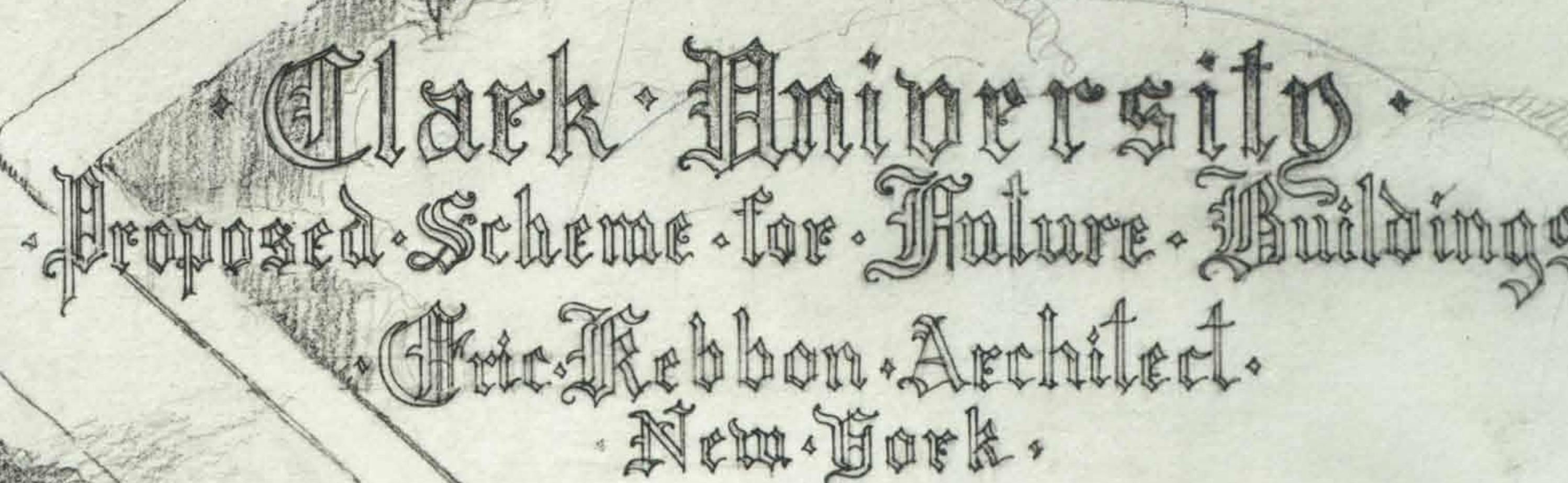
When the Library and Library Addition were built, Clark was following a national trend of Gothic revival architecture on college campuses. American universities had been building Gothic revival structures since the mid-nineteenth century because the style evoked age and venerability. When the Library and Addition were built, the administration and Board of Trustees were clearly making a statement about the deeply serious aspirations of the school. While Clark may have been young, it aimed to inspire great research and learning that would transcend the ages.

By the twentieth century, the popularity of Gothic revival on campuses gave rise to a new phrase: “collegiate Gothic.” Collegiate Gothic reached its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s with the construction of vast campuses full of Gothic towers, pointed arches, and enclosed

quadrangles at schools such as Duke, Yale, and Princeton. The style had an inescapable romanticism—buildings intended to evoke a precious past of great glory—and part of that attitude is compellingly captured in this watercolor from 1912. The young men in the foreground possess an elegant sense of entitlement, as they stand in the sun, protected from the world by the rambling buildings behind them. While the buildings are still too new to be ivy-covered, the tree in the foreground overlaps with the Library walls and gives us a sense of how venerable the school will look in its glorious future.

Detail (above) and full view (below) of a watercolor rendering of Library and Library Addition, Edward Full, 1912.

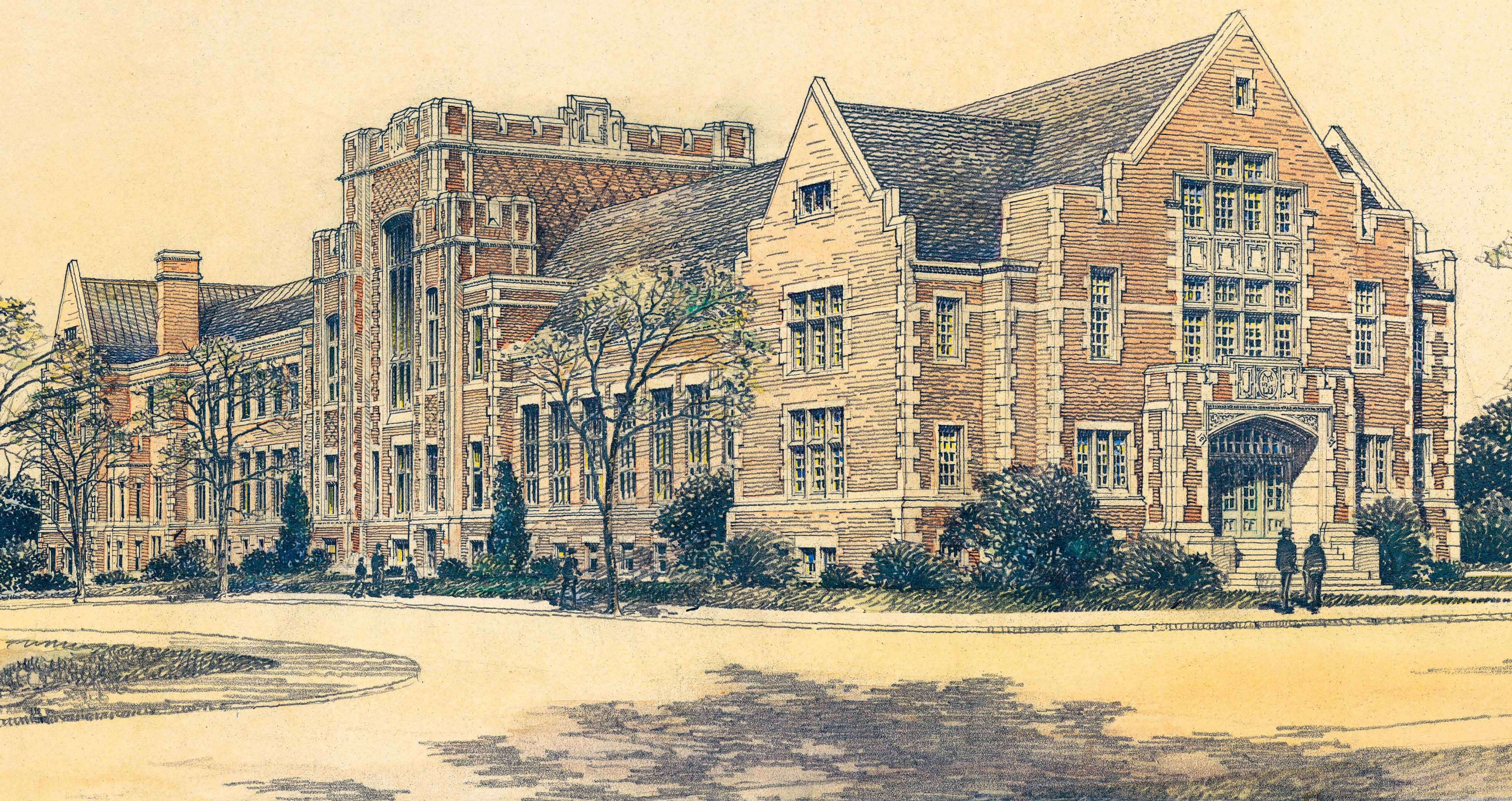




During the 1920s, Clark University's second president, Wallace W. Atwood, began to investigate how the school could expand its campus. Because the Library and Library Addition already formed one corner of the university's primary block, Atwood became interested in plans to completely enclose the block in a series of interconnected, collegiate Gothic buildings. Around 1926, he commenced correspondence with Eric Kebbon, an MIT-trained architect. Kebbon's first work for the university was to create this master plan—represented in the drawing above and the floor plan below. In the letter below, Atwood confesses that the plan is “a great inspiration to me.” The entire block—bounded by Main and Woodland Streets, and Downing and Maywood—would have been enclosed, and the interior of the campus divided into two Gothic quadrangles. Among the

To contemporary Clarkies, Kebbon's plan captures nothing of the university's unique character: it could be any Gothic campus anywhere in the U.S. **Casey Harrington '13** refers to Kebbon's plan as a "Gothic fortress," and indeed it does seem designed to keep the city of Worcester entirely out of the university. As she writes, Atwood "wanted the design of the university to symbolize academic sanctity and elitism, manifested in the cloistered Gothic architecture popularly used on the campuses of established universities."

Cordially yours



1937

The Gothic Revival University

While Eric Kebbon's plans for the university were dramatic, they were also well beyond its budget. By the mid-1930s Clark had found a Worcester architect who could carry out its Gothic revival plans on a more modest scale: G. Adolph Johnson. Atwood identified three priorities for the school in the mid-1930s: a stack tower that would accommodate the growing collection of the library; a large auditorium; and a gymnasium. Ultimately, the auditorium (Atwood Hall) and the stack tower were combined into a single building, thus creating a solid row of Gothic structures along Downing Street (see drawing above). Alumni Gymnasium was constructed across the campus green, at the corner of Maywood and Main Streets, on the site originally proposed by Kebbon (see photograph below).

These two buildings, in separate ways, demonstrate the beginning of Clark's deeper engagement with the neighborhood. From the beginning, Alumni Gymnasium was a space that was shared with the local community. As **Chantha Son '13** explains, the gym was "used by the local high schools of Worcester for basketball tournaments" and it was the site of the "Annual Scholarship Bridge Tournament in which money was raised to support a scholarship for a local Worcester student." For the building that became Atwood Hall, the university established the "Worcester Civic Drive": Atwood wrote in the Worcester newspapers of Clark's commitment to helping provide excellent educational experiences for Worcester residents, and appealed to the city for support in return.

Clockwise from top: G. Adolph Johnson's rendering of Atwood Hall and Library Stack Tower, c.1937; Johnson's proposed design for campus façade of Library Stack Tower, c.1937; campus façade of Alumni Gymnasium, c.1940.

