



# 1959

## Modernism

For generations of Clarkies, the most important building on campus is one that no longer stands: the student union and dining hall known as Jefferson Hall. Jefferson Hall was built during a 1958-59 campaign along with three other campus structures: Jeppson Laboratory and Wright and Bullock dormitories. For these buildings, the university employed the architect who had helped them build their earlier Gothic revival structures, G. Adolph Johnson. Johnson, in turn, collaborated with the Boston-based firm Cram and Ferguson, who had been one of the most successful architects of college campuses in the country during the first half of the twentieth century.

Jefferson Hall was a single-story structure that occupied a site along Main Street that abutted Johnson's earlier Alumni Gymnasium. Its broad windows, flat roof, and lack of ornament qualify it as an example of modernist

architecture, albeit a very modest example. Designed to accommodate the quickly growing population of residential undergraduate students, it was the university's first attempt at a student center. It contained the largest dining facility on campus, a snack bar, and a student lounge. It was immediately popular, and was quickly stressed well beyond its functional capacity. The administration was forced to implement a variety of rules to ease congestion, which seem unnecessarily restrictive to today's casual campus atmosphere: students were not allowed to play cards in the snack bar, and they were expected to dine in 50-minute shifts.

*Clockwise from top: architect's rendering of Jefferson Hall, 1956; student lounge in Jefferson Hall, c.1959, photo Cram and Ferguson; students in dining room of Jefferson Hall, c.1959.*







# 1991

## Postmodernism

By the mid-1980s, the university had decided to raze Jefferson Hall and build a new campus center. Payette Associates of Boston had just completed the Sackler Science Center, which joined the old Chemistry Building and Jeppson Laboratories into a gleaming, new building. They received the commission to build the new center and planned to make it connect directly to Sackler, thus creating a coherent line of buildings that, according to **Jared Packard-Winkler '12**, “bisected the sprawling quad-range in front of Jonas Clark Hall. It broke the expansive space into the intimate, welcoming green on which students lounge and play today.” In addition, the new campus center opened directly into Alumni Gymnasium; the gym’s open space was successfully converted into the major dining hall for the entire school. The two elevation drawings shown below illustrate how this

structure, today known as the Higgins University Center, seamlessly connects several pre-existing structures on campus.

The Higgins UC was intended to be more than just a dining hall: it was designed to provide community space for undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators. Among the interesting features of the original design was a large, student “living room” in the cathedral space that is today known as Tilton Hall. Higgins UC is best understood as an example of post-modern architecture: it playfully quotes the steep gables, bay windows, and pointed arches of the surrounding Gothic revival structures, but is emphatically modern with its plate-glass windows and austere expanses of red brick.

*Clockwise from top: campus facade of Higgins UC, Alex Gazonas, 1990; architect's rendering of “living room” (now Tilton Hall), c.1990, Payette Associates; elevation drawings, c.1990, Payette Associates.*







# 1988

## Postmodernism

After the building campaigns of the 1960s, Clark did not build any new residential structures until Maywood Hall in 1988. Designed by Boston-based Earl R. Flansburgh & Associates, Maywood Hall did several important things for the campus and the neighborhood. On the campus, it provided a new, suite-style option in dormitory living. Aesthetically, it used the language of postmodernism to cleverly speak to many different features in the campus architecture. Rather than the pointed gables of the Gothic revival, its bays are capped with the negative outline of pointed gables. And rather than a grassy courtyard, it has a brick patio with a spiraling design. As Jim Collins, the University's Executive Vice-President, wrote at the time to the architect, "It seems to have the unusual ability to convey an impression of both being new and having been in its location forever."

In the neighborhood, Maywood Hall also had a significant impact. As **Harrison Bass '13** explains, a major housing shortage on the campus had forced students to look for apartments in the blocks adjacent to campus: "Clark was unintentionally becoming a force for economic displacement in the neighborhood... By providing housing for over 220 Clark students in Maywood Hall, the administration was able to remove much of the stress on the surrounding housing market." The construction of Maywood Hall was ultimately one part of a larger program called the University Park Partnership, in which the university has attempted to work creatively with the neighborhood on issues of preservation and sustainability.

Clockwise from top: entrance of Maywood Hall, photo Rick Segal '12; Maywood and Carlson halls, photo Rick Segal '12; detail of Maywood Hall window, c.1990, photo Gabriel A. Cooney.







# 2002

## Green Architecture

When Clark University acquired the Downing Street School from the City of Worcester in the 1990s, it represented a commitment to the architectural character of the neighborhood. Clark transformed the building into the Traina Center for the Arts, and while the renovation was not specifically “green,” the very fact of repurposing the building—rather than tearing it down—was an act of environmental stewardship. Construction and demolition materials are estimated to occupy 30% of U.S. landfills, and so the creative reuse of buildings can have a significant environmental impact simply by preventing the generation of waste. The renovation of the Downing Street School, undertaken by the Cambridge-based firm Ellenzweig, preserved the character of the original 1891 building but also introduced greater energy efficiency. The major addition was the construction of Razzo Hall and the Melville

Lobby, which is a modernist, glass-and-steel counterpoint to the Romanesque revival style of the main building.

Another feature in the Traina Center is the Schiltkamp Gallery. In fact, Jonas Clark’s art collection had its own gallery in the original 1902 Library (see photograph below; this space is now Jefferson 320). Over the course of its 125 years, the university has operated several art galleries. According to **Paul Puia ’14** “Clark’s visual arts program has reached its apex... [through] the thriving arts culture that the Traina Center and its remodeled facilities have enabled.” With this building, the university is now able to honor Clark’s original commitment to the visual arts.

*Clockwise from top: Traina Center with Razzo Hall addition, photo Edward Jacoby courtesy Ellenzweig; Jonas Clark’s art collection in old library, c.1904; Schiltkamp Gallery exhibition, 2011, photo Toby Sisson; Downing Street School, c.1900.*







# 2002

## Green Architecture

With the construction of the Cathy '83 and Marc '81 Lasry Center for Bioscience, Clark announced its commitment to both cutting-edge research in the sciences and to the environmental health of the planet. The building received a Gold LEED rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, based on a wide variety of factors including its innovative HVAC system (which was adopted in Blackstone Hall); its use of formaldehyde-free woods throughout the interior; the ample green lawn in front of the building; and its location along public transit lines within Worcester. The building houses classrooms, laboratories for teaching undergraduate science classes, laboratories for graduate and professional research, and numerous collegial spaces where scientists and students can gather informally to share ideas.

As **Bridgette Farrell '11** argues, on the exterior, through the alternating bands of zinc panels and windows, set against a solid wall of red brick, "Lasry expresses strength and monumentality." Upon stepping inside the front doors, however, the visitor is welcomed by a grand staircase and atrium that soars through three floors of the building. In the atrium, "usable space is lost and the building seems to celebrate aesthetics over functionality," Farrell notes. She goes on to say, "However, the atrium provides a feeling of community by opening up to each floor and expresses excitement" about the collaborative work undertaken in this notable building.

*Clockwise from top: Lasry Center, 2002, photo Robert Benson courtesy Tsoi/Kobus & Associates; architect's rendering of Lasry within the Clark campus, c.2000; faculty and students gathered in the Lasry atrium, c.2002.*







# 2007

## Green Architecture

In 2007, Clark University opened its newest dormitory, Blackstone Hall, designed by Cambridge-based Chan Krieger Sieniewicz. Blackstone embodies a new style of dormitory living: all suites in the building have their own kitchen, effectively allowing students to live in apartments. Indeed, the new dorm is powerful evidence of the way that undergraduate residential life has become increasingly independent over the past half century. The university's first major dormitory project—the Fuller and Dana Quadrangles from the 1960s—was organized around the vision of communal student living. The university's second major dormitory project—Maywood Hall in 1988—consisted entirely of suites and eliminated most dorm common spaces. Finally, in Blackstone, undergraduates have an almost entirely independent existence as they cook and socialize within their own “apartments.”

Blackstone’s second contribution to the campus can be found in its many “green” features. Its environmentally friendly characteristics include the construction process, which made use of recycled materials from older structures taken down on Beaver Street (the overall project achieved a 97% recycling rate); and its energy-efficient triple-paned windows. Blackstone Hall represents the university's twenty-first-century commitment to environmental stewardship, and received a Silver LEED rating from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Blackstone stands out on the Clark campus because of its yellow brick facade. While this distinguishes it from the dominant red brick that unites the rest of the campus, it does link the building to the Dolan Field House that lies one block beyond in the Granger Playing Fields.

*Clockwise from top: Blackstone Hall exterior, photo Christian Phillips Photography; site plan for Blackstone Hall; detail of Blackstone Hall, photo Rick Segal '12.*

