

April 17, 1969

Science Building and Lecture Hall:

The new Science Building and the new Lecture Hall have been under construction for nearly six months. The mud holes and piles of shabby lumber are a poor visual representation of the progress that has actually been made.

With the exception of two or three days, a full construction crew worked through the winter. Temporary plastic tents with oil and steam heat covered those areas of the site, where work was continued.

Not unlike the iceberg, nine-tenths of the work that has been completed is below the surface. Hundreds of cubic yards of concrete have been poured, forming the footings and foundations that will support the Buildings.

Nearly all of the concrete walls for the Science Building are now in place. The two rather strange looking vertical slabs of concrete located in the center of the Science Building site, will extend from massive footings below the earth to the roof of the Science Building. These walls, known as "Shear Walls", are designed to resist a portion of the horizontal or "earthquake" forces that might occur. Providing for such forces is required by a National Building Code.

The first real show of progress will come in the very near future, when the pre-fabricated wood structure arrives from the west coast. Laminated wood columns will be set into place first. Then the huge beams, two and one-half feet deep and fifty feet long will be bolted into place. The building structure is "prefabricated", but only in the sense that the individual pieces of lumber are marked for a specific location, cut to size, and even drilled to receive the steel connections that will hold the building together.

Great care must be exercised in the erection, as the structural members supporting the building are all pre-finished and the wood itself will form the finish of the building. There will be no false ceilings to hide mistakes or plastered walls to cover scarred columns. The wood members will be individually wrapped at the factory with a heavy protective paper that will remain in place until final connections are made.

The erection of the wood superstructure will begin at the west end of the Science Building and proceed east. As this work is being done, the Lecture Hall concreting will be completed, and the erection of the Lecture Hall superstructure will follow.

Any person or persons who are interested in touring the construction area, please feel free to contact us at extension 374. Insurance regulations do require that anyone who enters the construction area be given a safety helmet and be accompanied by a member of our firm.

SEATS:

The design for the Lecture Hall seats is not entirely settled. We have proposed a continuous "park bench" seating scheme, with individually collapsible writing surfaces that will soon be submitted to the various committees, for comments. A full size "mock-up" of the seat is now being built, and will be available in the near future. With this "mock-up" seat, we will be able to adjust the contour to reach a consensus of comfortable configuration.

COMMONS REMODELING:

The first stage of the Commons remodeling is currently scheduled to begin construction within two months. This will involve an addition to the west of the "H" that is now used for receiving.

This addition, presented to and approved by a joint meeting of the Trustee Building and Grounds Committee, the Art and Architecture Committee, and the Student Art and Architecture Committee, will serve as a dining area, divisible by folding partitions into smaller meeting/dining areas, on the 2nd level, and as storage, receiving, and kitchen support facilities on the lower level.

It is currently planned to complete this addition, with no interruption in the present kitchen and dining areas. The renovation of the existing kitchen and serving area is to take place during the 1969-70, Non-Resident Term.

We welcome any questions regarding both the remodeling of Commons and the Science Building-Lecture Hall project. Drawings of all proposed construction at Bennington College are available for viewing at our office on the Science Building site.

In the future, Construction Notes will be distributed more frequently in an effort to keep the Community better informed of all construction activities.

Timothy D. Smith