A TENTH HOUSE FOR HARVARD COLLEGE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

16 January 1963

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THE ABSTRACT

Harvard's tenth undergraduate House must provide not just a dormitory but a residential complex which will be today's physical interpretation of Harvard's House system in a once semi-urban and now growing urban area. Of particular importance to this study is an understanding of the full scope of the building tradition at Harvard, for it is out of this tradition that the tenth House--and any other future residences at Harvard--must be developed. An investigation into the House system, the organization of this information, and the writing of the program have constituted a significant portion of this thesis, based on the conviction that a subtle but very important relationship exists between the physical organization of the House and the intellectual and social interchange among students. In the absence of more positive public plans by Harvard a hypothetical site (the block north of the Leverett towers) has been selected for the tenth House.
Cambridge, Massachusetts
16 January 1963

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Dear Dean Belluschi:

I hereby submit this thesis entitled "A Tenth House for Harvard College" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Architecture.

Sincerely yours,

Sjoerd W. Zwart
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to thank the following for their help and counsel during this study: Professors Lawrence B. Anderson, Herbert L. Beckwith, William H. Brown and Robert B. Newman of the Department of Architecture at M.I.T.; Mr. Harold L. Goyette of the Harvard Planning Office; and fellow students Richard H. McCrae and Leonard B. Stolba.

I am particularly indebted to Professor Albert Bush-Brown for his perceptive comments and writings on college and university housing and to Professor Hugh S. Morrison, chairman of the Department of Art at Dartmouth College, whose teaching and writing on architecture have provided a model in ordering architectural problems according to their historical implications, an approach which has been invaluable in this study.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction 8

II. Harvard student housing
   A. Intent 12
   B. Types of student residences
      1. Pattern of development 13
      2. Buildings as colleges 15
      3. Buildings as dormitories 16
      4. The House system 22
      5. The Graduate Center 23
      6. The new Houses 25
   C. Conclusion

III. Development of the program
   A. General 31
   B. The Harvard House system 31
   C. General requirements for a new House
      1. Competition with older Houses 33
      2. Organization of the House 35

IV. The Program 42
V. Site considerations

A. General 46
B. Specific sites 46
C. Final thesis site selection 48

Bibliography 54

The Design
"At a minimal level, a good educational building is an economical construction which provides accommodations for students and their activities. But since these activities themselves are never permanently established and vary according to educational and social theory, even this minimal function of a building involves specific interpretations of a whole range of educational, religious, social and political beliefs. The very form the building assumes is a consequence not only of engineering and stylistic preference but of social ideas which in their broadest sense are the foundations of architectural design."

I. Introduction

A growing challenge in our generation as the number of college-age students increases, college and university building provides some of the most significant design problems of our era. The frustrations often encountered in other building on this scale are alleviated in college and university building by two factors: the nature of the land ownership and the nature of the client. Fortunately, most college building takes place in an environment in which the control of land makes it possible for an architect to plan in light of inter-building and inter-block relationships with some hope that these plans may be realized. Further, our colleges and universities provide one of the best sources of the enlightened client, without whom even the best of architects is doomed to mediocrity.

The area of student housing in particular warrants attention by those concerned with university and college building. Eloquent argument for such attention is given in the opening pages of College Students Live Here,
a study of college housing by the Educational Facilities Laboratory of the Ford Foundation.

The most pressing problem of college housing is that there isn't enough. At the moment housing is available for roughly one-fourth of a college population of just under four million. By 1970, that population will have mushroomed to more than six million. And as much as 40 per cent of it will have to be housed on campus.

During the current decade, colleges and universities will have to add to their existing residential facilities about one and a half million new units---enough to house the combined populations of Boston and Cleveland. The bill for this added housing will run to at least $3 billion according to the most conservative estimate of cost and quantity. Present trends in construction costs and institutional policy make $4.5 billion a more realistic figure. A $6 billion price tag is entirely possible.

Students are already descending on our colleges in such swarms that, as one harried housing director put it, 'We seem always to be taking two steps forward and three steps back' in meeting the demand for living space. The temptation is to simply throw up a roof over the students' heads and worry later about what is to go under the roof. Yet shelter alone is a dubious investment for educational institutions to spend $6 billion on. (p. 6)

An undergraduate House for Harvard College as a thesis topic provides all the challenges of a university residential complex as well as some unique and trying problems of its own. Viewed
within the Harvard-Cambridge community it presents the challenge of working within the Harvard tradition in a period of transition. It must provide not just a dormitory but a residential complex which will be today's physical interpretation of Harvard's House system in a once semi-urban and now growing urban area. Harvard, as an enlightened client, finds a spokesman in President Nathan M. Pusey:

We cannot go on forever getting bigger and bigger. Granted; but what I should like to say ... is that we are already bigger. The increased number of students who will not fit into existing living facilities, and by whose presence, because of this fact, the 'Collegiate Way of Living' is threatened with breakdown, are here now. They are here while the number of other students who want to come to Harvard--and many of whom should--continues to mount steadily year by year. In these circumstances should we not recognize that not only Harvard but all urban America is now faced with a necessity to adjust to a more densely populated kind of living than we have yet learned to envisage? And is it too much to expect that Harvard, which has so often led, and has done this under private initiative, can again find a way? Is it not the task of this generation to find a solution in terms viable for the last half of the twentieth century and suited to the new conditions of our lives; and at the same time to maintain the essentials of the 'Collegiate Way of Living'? Fortunately, it seems to me, the solution hit upon the last time the College was threatened by the very size of its student
body, when the Houses were constructed to make possible the achievement of small communities of a size suited to the human element within a larger community--this device, susceptible of extension throughout the whole University, now again points a way. We can cope with the problem created by the increased number of students if we will build more small communities within the large community. We should not worry because in the twentieth century the small community can no longer be coextensive with the whole. For experience has shown that a small community set in the larger environment acquires by that very fact a richness, and an importance, which it could not otherwise have. Harvard can continue to be Harvard for a long time to come.

(Harvard University Planning Office, An Inventory for Planning, 1960, p. 4-2.)
II. Harvard student housing

A. Intent

The area of investigation of student housing in this study is confined to that at Harvard University; for more general background the newly published (1961) College Students Live Here by the Educational Facilities Laboratories of the Ford Foundation does an excellent job of covering recent developments in college and university housing. Although student residences at Harvard are by no means typical of American college and university housing, Harvard's dormitories and later its House system present case studies in most of the types of residential facilities found on other American campuses; in addition, the Harvard residences present an historic record encompassing more than three hundred years of American college building. Of particular importance to this study is an understanding of the full scope of the building tradition at Harvard, for it is out of this tradition that the tenth House—and any other future residences at Harvard—must be developed.
B. Types of student residences

1. Pattern of development

It is not surprising that Harvard University, the first college to be established in the American colonies, should have been patterned after the collegiate tradition of the mother country. It is more important to realize that the English colleges do not form the only pattern available to institutions of higher learning.

A gross simplification would suggest that there are two major patterns of college or university development. The English collegiate tradition gives the college the responsibility for housing all its students and faculty, a system which depends greatly upon student-teacher (or tutor) interchange not merely confined to the classroom but growing out of the interrelationship of academic and residential physical facilities and the resultant opportunity for easy and often informal intellectual exchange.

The second system, developed from the German university tradition, provides the basic academic facilities, such as classrooms and
libraries, operates on a much more formal educational basis, and leaves the students and often the faculty to their own devices in obtaining board and lodging.

Neither of these systems has been adopted in its purest form in this country, but both have had significant impact on the development of American educational institutions. Although the early American colleges generally followed the English tradition, they have often, usually under financial pressure, made use of aspects of the German system. Harvard, for example, has always had a number of non-resident students and today the English system is found in a much purer form in Harvard's undergraduate college than in its graduate schools, where the German pattern is more common. There have also been a number of institutions in this country patterned directly from the German university model, the clearest examples of which are the technical institutions such as M.I.T., Stevens Institute, and Case Institute. Even these institutions, however, early gave up some of the austerity of the German organization for some
of the obvious advantages of the English residential system.

Harvard's undergraduate college, which has always operated roughly within the English tradition, gave way to pressures of expansion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when large numbers of undergraduates were housed in the privately owned buildings known as the "Gold Coast." As a method of coping with Harvard's increased enrollment the development of the House system after World War I marked a departure from this trend toward the German system and an attempt to regain some of the unity of college life the English system encourages.

2. Buildings as colleges

The concept of a college as a single building housing all, or the majority of, the activities of undergraduates was a common one during the American colonial period. Representative buildings of this type can be found on the majority of our older campuses, Nassau Hall at Princeton, University Hall at Brown, and Dartmouth Hall being notable examples. The fact
that such a building is not always the oldest building on its particular campus does not diminish its significance; the all-inclusive college hall was regarded as the optimum arrangement even before a young institution was able to afford one.

The "Old College" (see pg. 17) at Harvard is one of the earliest examples of this concept. Built between 1638 and 1642, this structure contained a large hall for lectures, a kitchen, dormitory chambers for sleeping, smaller studies, and a library of 2,000 volumes. The college's sixty students lived three to four to a chamber; each student had his own small private study. Torn down in the 1670's, the "Old College" was replaced by Harvard Hall (see pgs. 18 & 19), a more sophisticated and larger (its scale indicated by its library of 5,000 volumes) version of its predecessor.

In turn, in 1765-66 Harvard Hall was replaced by its present day successor, "New Harvard Hall."

3. Buildings as dormitories

As Harvard expanded during the late 17th and
The Old College

Plan of first floor
Old Harvard Hall

Conjectural floor plans
Burgis print of Harvard College in 1726.
Left - Harvard Hall, Middle - Stoughton Hall,
Right - Massachusetts Hall.
early 18th centuries, a new trend of building developed. The common functions of the students continued to be housed in the older "colleges," but the newer "colleges," as all major buildings continued to be called, began to serve exclusively as residential structures. Stoughton Hall (1698-99) was such a building, with four chambers and small private studies on each floor organized on either side of two entries. Massachusetts Hall (1718-20) (see pg. 21), the oldest Harvard building now standing, was also built as a dormitory structure, and with Stoughton and Harvard Halls (colleges) (see pg. 19) it formed the third side of the court which must have been the heart of college activity for some time. This area now forms the west entry to Harvard Yard. In time the names changed from college to hall and the trend toward building specialization continued. Holworthy Hall (1812), which eliminated the study cubicles, was the last structure to retain the designation "college." As Harvard expanded, the number of buildings for specialized use increased and the campus rapidly began to grow.
Massachusetts Hall
outward in all directions, until by the early years of the 20th century the student population had outpaced the building program and the gold coast houses provided a large portion of the undergraduate housing. Realizing that the college itself must resume its responsibility of providing residences for its students, Harvard made its first step toward the solution of the growth problem with the construction of freshman dormitories along the riverfront south of the Yard and with the "cloistering of the Yard" conceived by President Lowell. The new buildings such as Lionel and Wigglesworth Halls, which were constructed around the perimeter of the Yard, and Smith, Standish and Gore Halls, representative of the new freshman dormitories, provided at least a temporary solution to Harvard's pressing student housing problem.

4. The House system

An even more remarkable solution to Harvard's problems of expansion was the development of the "House" concept. A very simple and reasonable idea in retrospect, it indicated that the existing college had grown too large and too
impersonal to retain the kind of scholarly exchange which had been possible in Harvard's earlier days. It also suggested that the logical residential grouping of students and teachers should be closer to 200 than to 2,000. The foresight of President Lowell and the generosity of Edward S. Harkness made the House concept a physical reality. (A more detailed description of the House system follows in the development of the program for Harvard's newest House.) The period between World Wars I and II saw the establishment of seven undergraduate Houses through modification of existing structures, in particular the newly built freshman dormitories along the river, and through construction of two completely new Houses.

5. The Graduate Center

The first major residential complex built after World War II, Harvard's Graduate Center attempted to provide a physical environment for education on the graduate level. The concept appeared as good as the House system but the final product, built for a token number of graduate students, suffered from having been constructed
during a period of false economy when Harvard's private capital appeared to be facing a losing battle with inflation and before the possibilities of a large capital funds drive had been fully realized. Examined in the light of its per-student budget (about one-third that of the most recent undergraduate House additions) the Graduate Center is a tremendous accomplishment. As a student residential complex, however, it is probably Harvard's biggest failure. The residential units are too small; thin walls and organization of the units along corridors make the student quarters almost unserviceable. Since the original construction of the Center the University has gone to considerable expense in renovating the interiors to make the units more habitable. One would hope that the failure of the common room system in the graduate house would serve as an example to designers who would use these rooms as a means of providing students with common living area at the expense of the only space which is in fact used for that purpose. The number of "common rooms" that stand idle throughout the country's
colleges and universities should give ample support to the theory that students will congregate in the most convenient space that is actually lived in by one of their number and not in special isolated rooms too often provided for this purpose in newer buildings.

The larger common facilities in the dining hall complex of the Graduate Center are much more successful, their effectiveness depending upon their proximity to the dining hall and their use on a higher order of social organization.

6. The new Houses

Harvard called upon the architects of their earlier Houses, Sheply, Bullfinch, Richardson and Abbott, to design the new Quincy House and the Leverett House addition. Judging by student demand these new additions have been quite successful.

Quincy House (see pg. 26) provides a contemporary environment and still retains much of the scale, the feeling, the warmth of the older Harvard buildings. More significant than the red brick and white limestone in solving the
Quincy House
difficult problem of continuity are the spaces between buildings and the scale and proportions of the elements. Quincy House is also a guide to future designers of Harvard Houses in the demonstrated effectiveness of its suite system. The important aspect here is not the skip-stop elevator system but the organization of the suites (see pg. 28), which provides four men with a common living room (which can also serve as a study area) and bath, and individual study-bedrooms. The arguments for the effectiveness of this system are the Quincy students' own praise of it and their demonstrated predilection for their rooms as a place of study. The Leverett House addition (the Leverett towers) provides an almost equally popular student residence, but fails to produce a House truly unified with its older common facilities and residence halls across DeWolfe Street. The spectacular views from the rooms and the small river front site undoubtedly justify the high buildings, but the organization of suites around the elevator core (see pg. 29) seems to fall short of the standards set by Quincy House.
Quincy House
Typical four man suite

Bedroom floor

Corridor

Living room floor
Leverett House addition
Typical floor plan
C. Conclusion

Harvard, like other universities, has changed the nature and intent of its residential building program to some degree with each new building. The most remarkable change over Harvard's three centuries has been the transition of the college from a small group of scholars numbering in the hundreds to a group numbering in the thousands; this change is reflected in the development of student housing from the first 'colleges' to the single dormitories to the current breaking up of the large undergraduate body into the more meaningful units of the Houses. Harvard's solution to housing its increased numbers, if not without its errors, is still truly a lesson in continuity.
III. Development of the program

A. General

Although a new undergraduate House has high priority in Harvard's current building program, there is no written program available at this time. Consequently the gathering of information, the organization, and the writing of the program have constituted a significant portion of this thesis. The sources include a program for "A Harvard Dormitory," a Harvard Graduate School of Design problem in 1956; statements--first and second hand--by students, tutors, housemasters and deans; and an investigation into the operation and physical nature of the existing Houses with particular attention to the newest additions, Quincy House and the Leverett towers.

B. The Harvard House system

The characteristics of the Harvard House system which require unique specifications in the program are comprehensively stated in the following quotations:

As a small unit in the larger College complex, each House is staffed with a resident House Master, a resident Senior
Tutor, a small staff of resident Tutors and junior Faculty, and a larger group of associated, non-resident Faculty of all ages. Ideally, senior Faculty members maintain studies in the Houses and dine frequently with students and their younger Faculty associates. Common rooms and dining halls, designed as centers for House life, are the scene of a wide variety of events.

A glance at the notice column of the Crimson for a given day reflects the lively, vigorous House life: "Economics concentrators--National Honor Society in Economics Meeting--Eliot House Junior Common Room; French speakers--La Table Francais--Adams House Dining Hall--M. Bruno de Leusse, French Foreign Ministry, guest; Adams House Madrigal Singers will meet in Adams' Lower Common Room; Actors, actresses--casting for parts in Lowell House production of 'Darkness at Noon,' Junior Common Room. . ." These are but a few of the activities in the Houses which contribute so much to Harvard's unique educational experience.

Important also are the sports played in the Harvard spirit of "athletics for all." Some 2,000 men play more than 1,000 games annually in House and Freshman leagues.

("The Meaning of the Houses," part of the fund-raising brochure A Program for Harvard College, 1957.)

The House system is composed of general communities of teachers and students engaged in a common educational venture as distinguished from the necessarily specialized communities of the academic departments. The House system has established and maintained a point of view within the university from which the students' education can be considered as a whole, since it is the
student as a human being rather than courses as courses, which primarily concerns the House community. The House system has become essential to the kind of education of individuals as individuals to which Harvard is committed, and the full realization of the education potential of the Houses is a present and urgent need if the ends of that education are to be achieved. It is an historically illustrated fact that the Houses are capable of establishing an intellectual, social and moral climate in which students may participate in their own education and in which formal instruction in courses may bear fruit where it should in the conversation and activities and the lives of those to whom instruction is given.


C. General requirements for a new House

There are a number of general requirements which will not appear in the written program but which will have a significant influence on the physical form of Harvard's tenth House.

1. Competition with older Houses

The college feels that it is very important to keep all the undergraduate Houses as nearly equal in popularity as possible. This does not mean that they must be identical; there are
in fact strong arguments for significant differences between the houses. For obvious reasons an "elite" House would be undesirable; a House for the "leftovers" would present even greater problems. The college does have a certain amount of control in assigning rooms in the spring of the students' freshman year, but the students also have an opportunity, without guarantee of being assigned to their first choices, to state their preferences. This consideration presents a number of problems to the designers of any "next" House. The older Houses have fireplaces in most of the student living rooms; many of them have their own squash courts, and one House has its own swimming pool. These factors combined with the more generous space allotment per student in the 1920's makes the problem of "matching" the earlier Houses quite clear. Only about half of the Houses have river frontage, but the Houses further from the river gain by being closer to the Harvard academic center. It becomes obvious that a site as far away as the Western Avenue bridge would present an inequality
which would be hard to overcome. Part of the
design challenge of this new House is in pro-
viding a physical environment which can
successfully compete with the established
Houses.

2. Organization of the House

There is a subtle but important relationship
between the physical organization of the House
and the intellectual and social interchange
among students. In the case of roommates
sharing a room or suite the general effect of
the physical organization on the students is
fairly clear. The final physical form of the
House, however, is vitally effected by the
number of students per suite or room, the
number of students per House, and the possibility
of other groupings. The extremes of the House
organization are easily understood with the
individual student at one pole and the total
House at the other. Student population pressures
and kitchen economics suggest 400 as an optimum
House size; the House masters generally agree
on 300 as a more desirable figure. The Harvard
administration has recommended a compromise of
The intermediate groupings, students per unit or suite, students per "entry" or "cluster," or any other such grouping, are subject to much more controversy. It appears that the organization of the four man suite in Quincy House is an extremely satisfactory solution. The provision of a minimal but adequate private study-bedroom for each student seems to be eminently workable. The grouping of such rooms, a bath, and a common living room about a common circulation area seems equally desirable. The question of the number of students per suite is more debatable. The Dean's Office at Harvard states that suites of even numbers of students generally prove more satisfactory than odd numbers, but admits that a large number of three man suites are operating without complications. There seems to be general agreement among both deans and students that large suites of seven or eight men are not especially satisfactory as group control and responsibility tend to break down in these numbers. This problem, occurring to a lesser degree in groups
of four, five, and six, generally grows in proportion to the number of students sharing a suite. Furthermore, as experience in the Harvard Graduate Center bears out, when the number of students in a grouping increases from eight the distance from the individual units to the common living room detracts from the use of that room for its intended purpose. Again, the use—or lack of use—the common room receives is in direct proportion to the number of students it serves. The four man suites have the advantage of providing optimum baths and common living rooms, which are more difficult to justify in suites for two and three. The conclusive argument for the four man suite comes from its success in Quincy House.

Recognizing the differences among students and in particular the desire of a small minority to live in semi-seclusion it does seem that some provision should be made for a limited number of suites of different sizes—doubles, possibly triples and certainly singles—but that the number of these suites in a House should probably be in the order of 25 per cent.
The subdivision or grouping by entry or cluster has probably provoked the most heated arguments about college housing. In their simplest form the arguments pitted the corridor system against the entry system; today the situation, or at least the argument, has been complicated by the possibility of a grouping by floors about the vertical circulation of an elevator building. Quincy House is weak in this regard; the building tends to break up into groups of four but bypasses any intermediate grouping between that of four students and the House as a whole. There is good argument that this arrangement is not as satisfactory as the groupings about entries in the older Houses. (See pg. 39.) The entry system, economically unrealistic today unless the second egress can be provided through another entry, does have the advantage of providing an intermediate grouping in the House composition. The entry or cluster creates a small readily identifiable living group, encourages mutual responsibility for property, and provides common traffic patterns which allow and perhaps foster frequent
Older Houses
Typical entry plan
and close interchange among members of this
group. This system also has the obvious advan-
tage over the corridor system of making easier
provision for a dead-end suite system as well
as a dead-end unit organization, both of which
provide privacy while allowing limited common
exchange within the suite and a broader exchange
within the entry. On first consideration a
common space for the use of the entire entry
grouping may seem desirable; the fact of the
matter is that spaces provided for this purpose
remain unused--witness the Graduate Center.
The organization of the older Houses which pro-
vide for groupings of from sixteen to thirty-
two students about a common entry and stair
system appears a very workable system; the
tenth House design will be developed to form
groupings of from twenty to thirty students.
The common facilities of the House as a whole
and their physical requirements are presented
in the program which follows, but it would seem
appropriate to justify the inclusion of House
common rooms. Preliminary judgment suggests
that such facilities might suffer from the same
non-use that entry or cluster common rooms receive; there are two distinct characteristics, however, of the House common rooms that make them viable elements within the House design. The first is their proximity to the dining hall and the resultant use for informal gatherings of all sizes which naturally tend to occur before and after dining. The second and more substantial characteristic is the nature of the House organization and government which allows more formal and organized use of these common facilities. As with the four man suite and the entry grouping, the conclusive argument comes from demonstrated active use of these facilities in all the existing Houses.
IV. The Program

A. Residential facilities

1. Student rooms (350 @ 250 ft²)  
   87,500 ft²

2. Tutors' suites
   a. Bachelor tutors (9 @ 600 ft²)  
      5,400
   b. Married tutors (5 @ 900 ft²)  
      4,500

3. Senior Tutor's suite  
   1,400

4. House Master's residence  
   5,000

5. Superintendent's suite  
   1,200

6. Guest suites (1 @ 900 ft² & 1 @ 1400 ft²)  
   2,300

Total: 107,300 ft²

B. Common facilities

1. Library (10,000-15,000 volumes  
   for general reading, browsing,  
   limited research, reference work  
   and study)  
   3,000 ft²

2. Seminar or tutorial rooms (2 @  
   200 ft²)  
   400

3. Music practice & listening rooms  
   (might also be used in conjunction  
   with language labs. or double as  
   typing rooms related to library)  
   (8 @ 60 ft² & 1 f/ grand piano  
   @ 150 ft²)  
   630

4. Junior common room  
   (for music programs, house  
   parties, small dances, etc.)  
   1,200

5. Senior common room  
   (for more intimate meetings,  
   faculty teas, sherry, etc.)  
   600
6. T.V. (Hi-fi) room 200 ft²

7. Game room(s)
   (pool, billiards, table tennis) 1,500

8. Dining facilities
   a. Dining room (suitable for small dramatic productions, recitals, house meetings ((need not seat entire house f/ dining in one sitting)) )
      (10-14 ft²/diner) 4,000
   b. Private dining rooms (3 @ 250 ft²) 750
   c. Grill (also vending machines) 200
   d. Kitchen facilities (30-40% of dining) 2,200
      (1) food storage (20-25% of dining)
      (2) preparation
      (3) serving (20% of dining)
      (4) dishwashing (20% of prep.)
      (5) garbage disposal
   e. Service facilities 800
      (1) kitchen office
      (2) locker room
      (3) rest room
      (4) small dining room

9. Laundry room (coin-operated washers-4 & dryers-4) 600

10. Faculty laundry 200
11. Trunk & storage rooms 3,000 ft$^2$

12. Activities rooms
   a. Dark room 200
   b. Art studio 200
   c. 3 small activities rms @ 300 ft$^2$ 900
   d. 2 large activities rms @ 1,000 ft$^2$ 2,000
      Total: 22,230 ft$^2$

C. Administrative facilities
   1. House Master's office 550 ft$^2$
      (secretary, conf. rm., storage rm.,
      2 lavs.)
   2. Senior Tutor's office 250
      (secretary, shares facilities w/ House Master)
   3. Tutors' offices (f/ non-resident tutors; 2/office 10 @ 120 ft$^2$) 1,200
   4. Superintendent's office (with control desk & clear view of entry-supply rm.) 300
   5. House committee office 200
      Total: 2,500 ft$^2$

D. Miscellaneous facilities
   1. Public phones
   2. Fire safety devices
   3. Mail distribution (boxes)
   4. Bulletin boards
   5. Trash disposal system
6. Communications system (private phones in rooms)

7. Janitors' closets

8. Display or exhibition area (part of lobby)

9. 25% allowance for mech. equip., circulation & 3,4,5,6,7,8 above

\[ 33,000 \text{ ft}^2 \]

Total area: 165,000 \text{ ft}^2

\[ 470 \text{ ft}^2/\text{student} \]
V. Site considerations

A. General

Although a specific site has not yet been selected for a tenth undergraduate House, Harvard's official position outlines a wide area south of Harvard Yard which encompasses suitable locations for the new House. (See pg. 47.) Harvard is and has for some time been buying or negotiating for additional properties in this area, and the final site selection will probably be determined in part by the outcome of these negotiations.

B. Specific sites

Two areas were suggested as possible House locations in An Inventory for Planning by the Harvard University Planning Office. The first of these is the M.T.A. yards. Not presently owned by Harvard, this site would certainly meet most of the requisites for a House location. On the other hand, the M.T.A. yard site raises some serious problems as to its suitability as a site for a thesis study. The area is so large that it could easily accommodate two Houses and still have a major portion of
Limits of possible House locations
land left over for other uses. In short, the M.T.A. yard site appears to generate basic design problems in determining the use of a large area of urban land, an investigation which would make a thesis subject in itself and allow little time for consideration of the architectural problems of an undergraduate House. The principal limitation of the second site, the Sterling Street area, is its distance from classrooms, libraries, and other centers of student activity. This factor viewed against the desire to keep all Houses equally attractive to undergraduates suggests that this might not make a satisfactory House location. Indeed, more recent Harvard plans suggest use of this area for married student housing.

C. Final thesis site selection

Since no site has been selected by Harvard it seems logical to choose one in terms of the current pattern of House growth. This growth has made use of the largest parcels of land which have become available to the east of the older Houses. Quincy House and the Leverett towers have followed this pattern. It would seem that
the next logical development might take place in the block bounded by Mt. Auburn and Grant streets and by DeWolfe and Athens streets. (See pg. 50.) The older Houses with the exception of Adams House have a consistent pattern of Houses opening out to the Charles River and a second row of Houses opening inward on enclosed or semi-enclosed courts. Quincy House and the Leverett towers also continue this pattern, the second row or depth ending with Quincy. (See pg. 51.) The recent growth pattern suggests that the area north of the new Leverett towers might suitably provide a House site which would complete the inner row of Houses and offer the possibility of terminating Mill Street in an open area comparable to its eastern terminus south of the Indoor Athletic Building. (See pg. 52.) Harvard presently owns part of this block, as does St. Paul's Catholic Church. A combination of purchases and exchanges by Harvard and the church might result in Harvard's acquiring the entire block—a semi-plausible speculation in light of past Harvard land acquisition in this area. While there is a very
Thesis site location

50
Existing Houses

51
good possibility that Harvard will never acquire this particular site in its entirety, there is still a strong possibility that a somewhat similar area will become available as a site for a new House. In the absence of more positive plans by Harvard, this site will be used as a hypothetical site for Harvard's tenth House.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


TYPICAL PLAN OF UPPER FLOORS - 1944

A TENTH HOUSE FOR HARVARD COLLEGE

PLANO PRAESENTIS

REZKAWT

JANUARY 1944