

# Historical Center Design Unequaled; Art Professor Says 'Most Beautiful'

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Art Editor

In 1910, New York architect Cass Gilbert, famous designer of the Woolworth Building in New York City and the Minnesota Capitol Building, was selected to plan a new building for the University.

Probably the foremost architect in America at that time, he chose a modified Spanish Renaissance style as the best suited to the traditions and semi-arid climate of the Southwest.

The building, now known as Barker Historical Museum, was once named one of the twelve most beautiful buildings in the Southwest. The first Spanish Renaissance type building on the campus, it was from its unusual and original architectural design that the entire University was set. Gilbert also designed Sutton Hall. His elaborate plans for the University, even today, are being carried out in part.

Despite the fact that other more expensive buildings have shot up on all sides of the building, it remains unequalled in the eyes of many who appreciate art.

For example, Dr. Marian Davis, professor of art, says, "I think it's the most beautiful building on the campus."

The most obvious style-setting of the building is its dull Spanish red and buff tile roof. Its broad white wall surfaces, a deep cornice, and free use of color naturally fit into the surroundings of the campus.

The balconies, lanterns, and doors are painted a blue-green. Effective contrast is provided by such ornamentation. The many-colored terra cottas surround each of the large windows, showing raised designs in reds, blues, and greens.

Inside the building, there is intricate, hand-carved scroll work around doors in the main reading room. They are now painted in delicate colors.

The ceiling of the reading room is Renaissance style with highly decorated wooden beams. A Vermont marble stairway with a handrail of iron connects the first and second floors.

Just southwest of the giant Main Building, the Historical Center is more than headquarters for the Texas Collection, Texas Archives Collection, papers, letters, documents, and pictures from early days, Texas newspapers of the past and present, and the Frank Reaugh collection of paintings depicting life in the cattle kingdom.

It is a memorable link between the University's past and present. For it was in this cream-white limestone structure that a small, incomplete library grew to be the best in the South and the thirteenth largest college library in the nation.

At the time it was built, the campus consisted of fields of bluebonnets and six buildings—B. Hall, the Old Main (where the Tower is now), the old Engineering (now Speech), The Women's (now

Drama), and the old Chemistry Building (located in the vicinity of the Biology Building, it was destroyed by fire).

Constructed at a cost of \$280,000, financial assistance was given by the late Andrew Carnegie. It was called the Library Building.

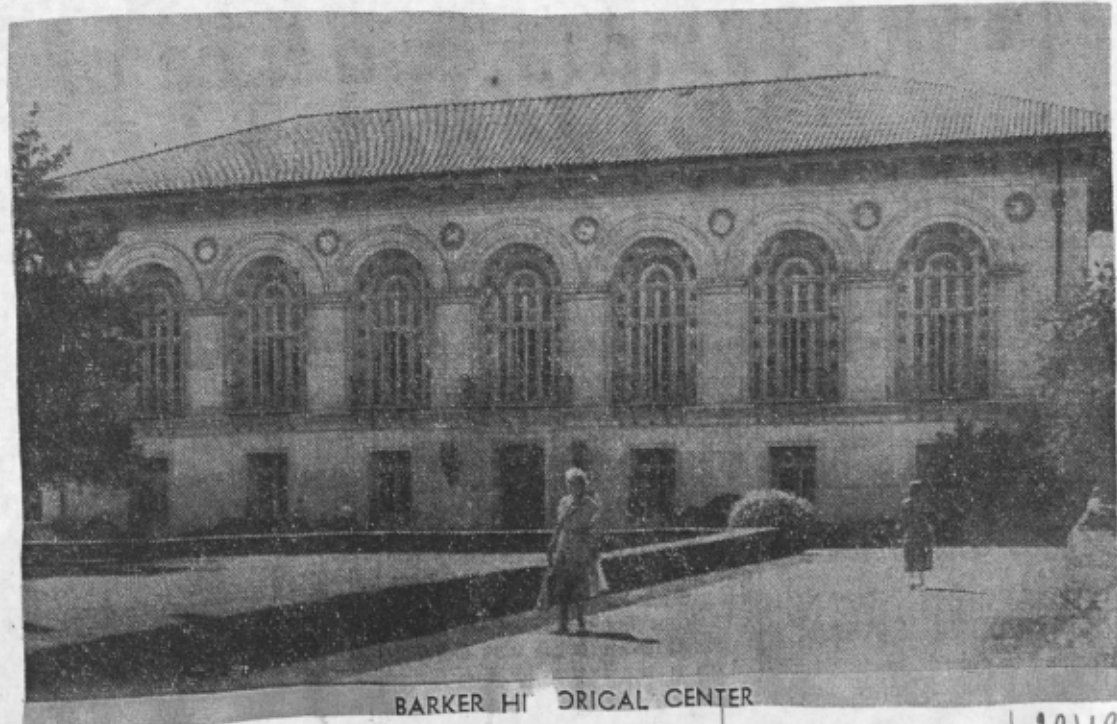
From 1911, when the building opened, until the new Main Building was completed in 1938, the building housed the administrative offices of the Registrar, the Auditor, the President, and the deans. Also located there was the 10,000-volume library collection. In 1938 it became known as the Old Library Building.

Before the College of Fine Arts was organized, the University Post Office was in the building. The College remained there from 1938 until the new Music Building was finished in 1942.

When vacated, the Department of Art occupied the upper floors of the building with janitors and nightwatchmen occupying the basement.

It became Barker Historical Center in April, 1950.

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BARKER HISTORICAL CENTER

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