Additions Planned for Science Center

$22 million, 20-month building expansion to begin in summer of 2002

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Construction of a $22 million, 30,000 square foot addition to the Science Center will begin this summer after three years of planning. The latest of the addition's new stories above the current administrative wing along Oxford Street—will contain increased space for the history of science department. The first floor will be a new museum to house the scientific instrument collection with the second and third floors containing new seminar rooms and office space. The project is expected to last 30 months, reaching completion in fall 2003.

“The main thrust of this project is not for classrooms space in the renovation itself, but for the history of science department will be gaining an additional seminar room for seminars,” said Jeffrey L. Cushman '86, capital projects manager for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) department of physical resources. The project will also add two stories to the rear end of the building and 1,800 square feet of additional space on the earth floor roof behind the central staircase.

A need for adequate space to house the scientific instrument collection—most of which is being temporarily stored in the basement of the Science Center—along with Harvard University Arts and Sciences Computer Services' (HASC) need to expand were the two main factors that originally prompted the FAS physical resources department to investigate the possibility of an addition.

“We have grown and just expanded into current,” said Franklin M. Sun, director of HASC Computer Services. HASC will benefit from the expansion in several ways. The earth floor area in the basement will be reconfigured. The department will also gain two new, smaller computer classrooms on the second floor in replacement for the one currently located on the first floor.

The technology showcase, a room where high-end equipment is kept for student use, will also be increasing in size, from 50 to 100 square feet. “We had hoped to gain some more computers since the current ones are under such great demand, but it looks like the number of available computers is going to stay about the same,” Sun said.

The statistics department will occupy the 1,800 square foot addition on the sixth floor roof. The department will gain new office space for faculty offices and teaching fellow, a larger designated dressing room and more office and computing space.

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Renovations Planned for Science Center

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—Betsy B. Copswell, department administrator.

Faculty members and teaching fellows, a better designed classroom and more office and computing space for post-graduate fellows.

“We will be gaining more space, but the greater benefit is better space utilization, which will allow for better faculty and student interaction,” said Betsy B. Copswell, department administrator. The mathematics department will also be gaining office space, as will the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.

“The Science Center is such an important building that we wanted to make the most of the disruption, and as we were examining the existing needs, others surfaced,” said Celia Kent, director of planning.

The project coordinators are confident that Science Center activities will not be disrupted throughout the project and say that the biggest issue will be relocating the computer stations while the downstairs labs are being renovated.

“The project has been specifically designed in phases in order to minimize the effects of the construction,” Kent said.

The Science Center was originally designed by José Luis Corte, a former dean of the Graduate School of Design, and was completed in 1979. The building is shaped like a Polaroid camera due to the fact that Polaroid founder Edwin Land, Class of 1930, donated most of the money for the building.

The new renovation, designed by Andrea Leers of the Leers Weinzapfel Association, will be composed mostly of glass and will incorporate the design of the existing building, while remaining visually distinct.

“The Science Center is a landmark building, and the addition will be compatible with the essence of the building, while not trying to fake that something has changed,” Cushman said.

“This project is one of several that we must undertake to give breathing room to departments, and to allow us to increase the size of the faculty,” Dean of the Faculty Jeremy R. Knowles wrote in an e-mail.