

THE KRAUS NATURAL SCIENCE BUILDING

The Edward Henry Kraus Natural Science Building, nestled in the heart of central campus, has been the home of scientific learning and research since its construction in 1915.

The university's emphasis on scientific curriculum led, eventually, to a serious lack of space for classrooms and laboratories. In 1913 the legislature appropriated \$375,000 for a Natural Science Building to be designed by the renowned Detroit architect Albert Kahn, whose other campus masterpieces include Burton Memorial Tower, Hill Auditorium, and Hatcher Graduate Library, among others.

The Natural Science Building housed the Departments of Botany, Geology, Mineralogy, Psychology, and Zoology; the School of Natural Resources; and the Natural Resources Library. It contained numerous laboratories, all equipped with specially adapted furniture: acid-proof tables, specially designed sinks, and other features. Many of the classrooms were equipped for picture projection. The Museums of Mineralogy and Geology were connected on the northeast corner of the second floor. Zoology had both an aquarium room and an animal house (erected in 1930 in the central court).

The Natural Science Building, carefully designed with its essential purpose as a lab building, was a pioneer in university construction. Kahn utilized a newly developed system of regularly placed steel and concrete piers to support the building, which made all the rooms exactly the width of the spaces between the piers or multiples of that space. The space between the piers was utilized entirely for windows, thus affording a maximum amount of light.

*–From the University of Michigan Millennium Project,
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