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Aug. 5, 1915.

Mr. Ralph Adams Cram,
15 Beacon Street,
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mr. Cram:

We have once more engaged in making plans for the President's House, Rice Institute, this time on a successive scale of reduction in cost, the house now to be reduced to a frame house costing approximately \$35,000.00 for its general contract.

The position of President Lovett, as nearly as we can grasp it, is this: He is satisfied with the last house which we prepared for him in all respects, the general contract for which would have been approximately \$50,000.00, miscellaneous contracts and garage bringing it up to about \$60,000.00, and furnishing, fittings, etc., which must necessarily be included as part of the cost of the house in his request for money, making a total of approximately \$75,000.00.

He feels that he must have the house at once; that is to say, as quickly as it can possibly be built. He must have the space within the house which the last plans provided for, and it would be uncertain as to whether he could get the money to the amount of \$75,000.00 and certainly it would invite a criticism which would be very annoying should he attempt to do so at this time.

There is no question in our mind as to what should be done; that is, a masonry house, completely fireproof, would be the thing to do, but that would mean probably a total cost of in the neighborhood of \$85,000.00. If the house is not fireproof, we are of the opinion that probably it would be as well to build a frame house, with the view that in the future it might be used for some other purpose and the house as originally planned (except for increased or decreased dimensions which might be later worked out) be eventually built as the President's House.

The only real problem that we are anxious to have an expression of your opinion on at this time is the fact that if a frame house is built the only consistent and possible style for this Southern climate in frame lies in the Georgian types similar to those of North and South Carolina and Virginia, and it has been along such lines that we have blocked out plans and elevations, which meet with President Lovett's approval -- in fact he is enthusiastic concerning them.

We have, however, withheld recommendations, except as to the fact that such a home can be effectively built within the maximum limit of \$50,000.00, and furnished, etc., and can give him the size which he desires, and have the additional advantage

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of being built quickly, so far as he is concerned, making it possible for him to be in the house by February 1st.

Of course, the drawings, etc., after they have been more fully considered, will go to you for approval, but at this time we frankly ask your opinion as to whether the style along which we are moving is not the most proper, even in view of the fact that it lacks conformity with the buildings upon the Institute site, since, with its location ideal for a house of this character, being well back and away from all buildings, with a good cluster of oaks around it, it would have, even in frame, a certain color, refinement and dignity, within the limits of the means available. We would appreciate your advice at once on this point.

President Lovett is using the sketches we have made and we are not therefore able to send them at this time, but of course all points of detail in the matter are subject to your revision to any extent you care to revise them later.

Very truly yours,

GRAM AND FERGUSON,

By Wm. Mark Walker

The reduction of cost in the President's house is going to be helpful toward the approach of the problem of a permanent laboratory building. The fact that no considerable expenditure of any amount has been incurred this year means that both the Trustees and President Lovett will likely be ready to consider more quickly and with less delay the necessary laboratories for chemistry and biology, one of which must come up before the close of the present academic year.