

Newspaper clippings and photos relating to the replacement of the Albany Country Club by the State University of New York at Albany uptown campus 1960-1963.

The ultimatum - Nelson Rockefeller, the New York governor at the time, decided that the new University campus, and a large part of the adjacent State Office campus, would be built on the lands of the Albany Country Club. Opposition from the 500-strong club membership, including the usually influential mayor of Albany, Erastus Corning 3rd, was brushed aside.

Clips from the Altamont Enterprise, 8 August 1960, p.1

King Favors Sale Of Country Club Tract

At a meeting of the Guilderland Town Board Tuesday night, Supervisor John E. King reiterated his views that "Guilderland could conceivably receive great benefits from sale of the Albany Country Club to the State of New York."

The supervisor said he has "mixed feelings" about the possible transaction because it would mean an immediate loss of \$6,000 in tax income to the town.

Country Club Maps 'War'
More than 300 members of the Albany Country Club at a meeting Tuesday night pledged "total war" against the state's attempt to take over the club property, and a spokesman said the real issue is state extravagance and bad planning.

John E. Holt-Harris, speaking for the board of governors, told the members of the second oldest country club in the nation, that the state's take-over would be drastically expensive to the city of Albany, costly to the citizens of the state, and is the product of questionable planning.

The state wants the 298-tract of land for an expanded state office building campus and for an expanded State University site.

The membership backed the directors by roaring unanimous approval of a resolution to "take all steps necessary and appropriate to prevent the loss of the club's property and to insure the continued existence of the club."

Clip from the Times-Union, 20 September 1960

College Goes to Country Club Site Or It Leaves Albany, Rocky Warns

Location Decision Called 'Absolute'

By JOHN DOUGLAS
Times-Union Staff Writer

Either the state university college at Albany will expand to the Albany Country Club site, or the college—including existing facilities—will be moved out of the city. There is no alternative in Albany.

It is imperative that Albany, as quickly as possible, develop a master plan—and this plan must include middle income housing. Full state cooperation will be afforded the city if it develops the plan.

The state decided to build its new offices at the campus site off Washington Ave., because "the city fathers in their wisdom decided" they didn't want state expansion downtown. This arrangement was agreed upon 12 years ago.

DECISION ABSOLUTE

These were the news conference remarks of Governor Rockefeller yesterday afternoon following a conference with Mayor Corning, held at the mayor's request.

Rockefeller made it clear that the decision insofar as the Country Club was concerned was absolute and that the city in effect was faced with an ultimatum.



text in this clipping:

Either the state university college at Albany will expand to the Albany Country Club site, or the college - including existing facilities - will be moved out of the city. There is no alternative in Albany.....The state decided to build its new offices at the campus site off Washington Ave., because "the city fathers in their wisdom decided" they didn't want state expansion downtown. This arrangement was agreed upon 12 years ago. These were the news conference remarks of Governor Rockefeller yesterday afternoon following a conference with Mayor Corning, held at the mayor's request. Rockefeller made it clear that the decision insofar as the Country Club was concerned was absolute and that the city in effect was faced with an ultimatum.

The taking - the State used eminent domain to take the Country Club property, and offered compensation of "no more than \$2,119,000" for the property

Clip from the Knickerbocker News, 3 January 1961, p.1

Flurries
Cold with few flurries
TODAY'S TEMPERATURES
(To 3 P.M.)
High 27 Low 11
(Weather Map on 2-B)

THE KNICKERBOCKER NEWS

Vol. 24—No. 155 Albany, N. Y., Tuesday, January 3, 1961 *** Price Seven Cents

★ ★ ★
RED STREAK

\$2,119,000 Ceiling Set for College, Campus Property

State Seizes Albany Country Club

The state acquired the Albany Country Club property today and indicated it would pay no more than \$2,119,000 for the 300-acre site. The property will be used to relocate and expand the State College of Education and to extend the Campus Site office-building development.

The state took title to the property by filing maps with the Albany County clerk and the secretary of state. The acquisition of the 70-year-old club was announced by Governor Rockefeller's office.

The Governor declared that the long-delayed expansion of the college will "dramatically help meet our higher education needs and will aid in the economic and cultural development of Albany."

'Integrated Development'

The state's acquisition of the club also will assure the "future integrated development" of the Campus Site, the Governor said. He noted that the existing state-owned land is "virtually committed" to specific projects and that more land is needed to complete the site.

The relocated College of Education will occupy about 220 of the club's 300 acres. The state hopes to break ground there in the spring of 1962, with classes starting at the new site in the fall of 1963. The expansion would involve more than \$20 million.

Might Challenge Figure

Edward D. Meacham, president of the club, said the state's action came "a little sooner than I expected." He raised the possibility that the club might challenge, in the Court of Claims, the maximum value of \$2,119,000 placed on the property by the state. Mr. Meacham also indicated the club would start looking for a new site.

To reach the total of \$2,119,000, the Governor and the legislative leaders allocated \$786,000 from the Governmental Emergency Fund, which will be reimbursed later. The balance consisted of funds previously appropriated by the Legislature.

The Governor's announcement climaxed a year-long battle by the club to retain its property. It also diminished hopes downtown merchants may have had that the state might slow the development of the Campus Site in favor of buildings closer to the center of the city.

The country club site will enable the 2,400-student college to expand to an eventual enrollment of 7,000. The first phase of the expansion will enlarge the college to about 4,000.

The Governor's statement today referred to State University studies which indicated that expanding the college at its present site was "economically unfeasible." The club was described as "the most practical and feasible" place to expand the school.

The college's present buildings will be used to house the State University's administrative offices. Students will continue to live in the new dormitories in Western Ave., Partridge St. and Ontario St.

The Club indeed did take the State to the Court of Claims, and was awarded 170% of the State's opinion of the value of the property - the Club were paid a total of \$3,602,806 in compensation.

The plan - a campus designed on Nelson Rockefeller's request by Edward Durrell Stone



Nelson Rockefeller, on this viewing of the architect's model, 11 June 1962, persuading Mayor Corning that this is all a good thing. (University at Albany archives)

The consequences, for the old Country Club site

The site was aggressively cleared for building the structures designed by Edward Durrell Stone:
Knickerbocker News clip from 22 August 1962



This included the deliberate burning of the Clubhouse - Knickerbocker News clip from 14 February 1963



A LANDMARK GOES DOWN—These smoking ruins were all that remained yesterday of the old Albany Country Clubhouse off Western Avenue. The clubhouse, with only a section of the kitchen chimney standing, was razed to prepare the site of the new campus of the State College at Albany.

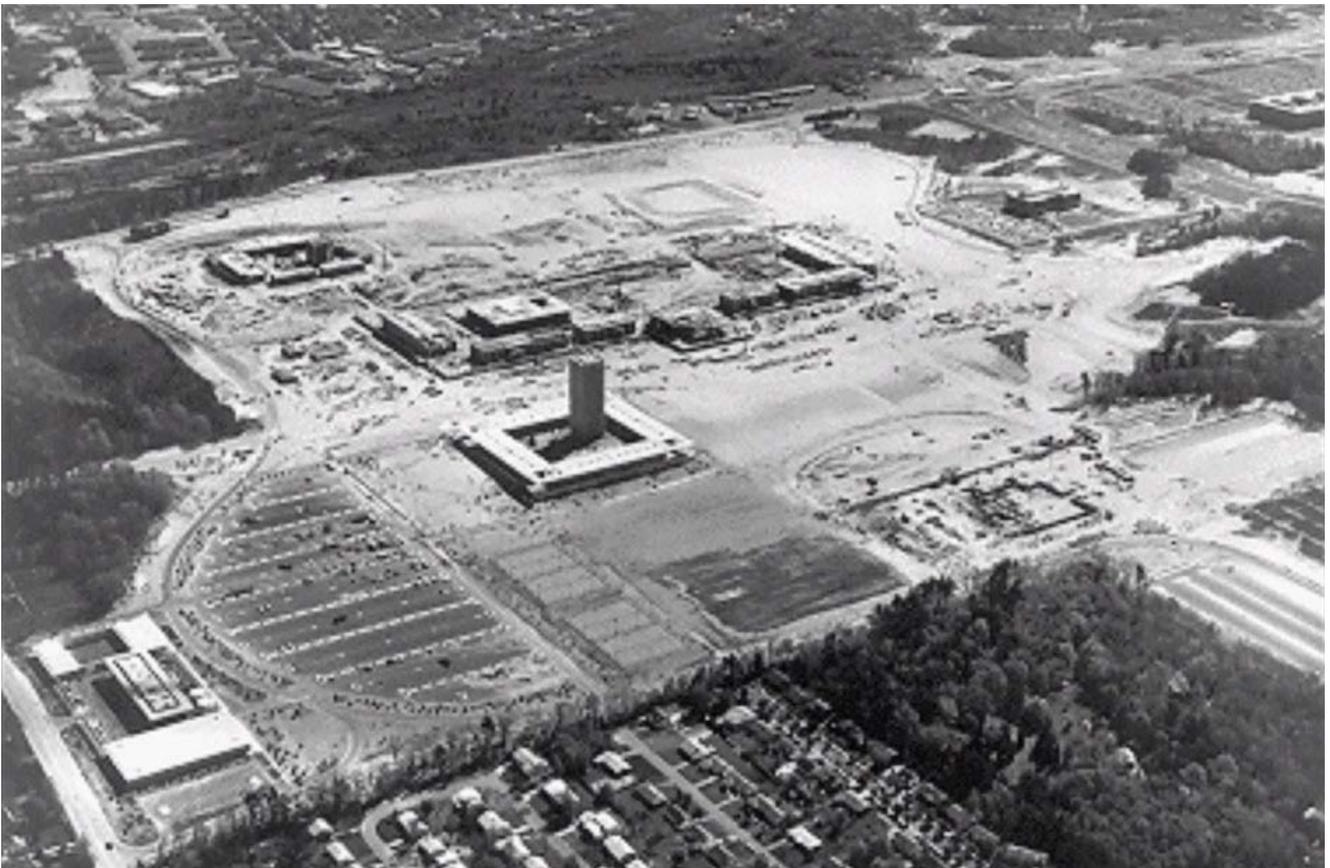
and perhaps not entirely accidental, but from failure to regulate the water level, the ~65-year old dam on the pond collapsed 21 March 1963 during the early spring thaw; the flood of mud and water that resulted poured over Western Avenue and into the valley of the Krum Kill, carrying a car with it.



View upstream towards the houses on Western Avenue after the flood 21 March 1963



View downstream towards Western Avenue of the flood-scoured drain pipe and channel of the Krum Kill east branch, 21 March 1963 (both flood pictures from the University at Albany archives)



Oblique aerial view from the southwest over the SUNY at Albany campus under construction 1964