Cobb's North Gymnasium burned in 1969 and was subsequently remodeled into a classroom facility. With its rectangular massing, the building resembles a number of Cobb's University of Chicago buildings. Cobb used red granite masonry, corner turrets, and a prominent gabled entrance sheltering an arch with large voussoirs to enhance the simple building.

In 1890 Cobb competed for and received by far his largest commission until then, and one of the most important of his long career. This commission lasted until 1901 and resulted in eighteen actual buildings, all of which stand more than a century later. More importantly, the commission produced a plan for the central quadrangles that, broadly speaking, was followed by all of Cobb's successors. In Neil Harris's words: "The University of Chicago would never lose a sense of presence that gave it, even as a comparative newcomer, a special personality among the country's universities."