

CP-2 was followed in 1943 by CP-3, a heavy-water reactor designed by Eugene Wigner and built by Walter Zinn.

In 1944, the modest collection of cinderblock and corrugated iron buildings at Argonne became the Argonne Laboratory, directed by Fermi. Its function now became basic research on nuclear fission, rather than weapons development, with consequent shortages of both funding and personnel until after 1945.

In January 1947, the Atomic Energy Commission purchased a new site near LaMont, Illinois, southwest of Chicago for the Argonne National Laboratory. At the new laboratory the wartime reactors became peacetime centers of research into neutron diffraction, the effects of radiation, and applied mathematics. The pile of graphite and uranium known as CP-1 thus spawned a full-scale nuclear research laboratory. Its work no longer was used to study plutonium production, but the broader ramifications of nuclear fission—biological and medical research, basic physics, reactor analysis, and nuclear power.

In the end, the various offspring of CP-1, the first reactor, continued its original mission: to push back and explore the frontiers of science in the never-ending quest for knowledge of the universe in which we live.

---