

# The New York Times

## Real Estate

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### A Medical Center Works on Its Health

**A goal of \$1.13 billion plan: Make Columbia-Presbyterian not look like a hospital.**

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

**W**HEN the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center opened in 1928, its towering promontories inspired comparison to Mount Shasta. Sixty years later, however, the mountain was turning into a molehill. "Columbia, frankly, had gone through a 15-year period of trivial investment — and it showed," said Dr. Herbert Pardes, dean of the faculty of medicine and vice president of the university for health sciences.

An architect familiar with some of the more antiquated areas of the old Presbyterian Hospital building was even more blunt. "It was frightening," he said. "To think that this was where people came to get well."

Since the late 1980's, however, \$1.13 billion has been invested to construct or renovate 4.27 million square feet of space at the Washington Heights complex.

"What you see is an expression of the institution... taking the initiative to keep itself strong and to serve the community," Dr. Pardes said.

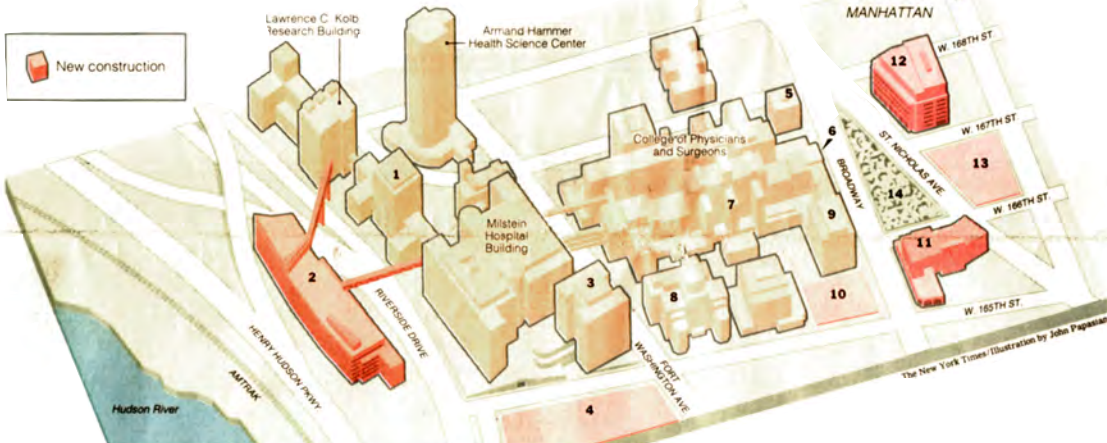
With the opening of the Milstein Hospital Building in 1989, many floors of the old Presbyterian Hospital tower emptied out.

In June, the Anne Youle Stein Center of New York Orthopaedic Hospital opened on the 11th floor. Paneled in expanses of blondish anigre wood, with mini-rotundas where corridors cross, the center might be mistaken for a law office — at least until one came to the microsurgery and arthroscopy labs.

Integrated Design Group is the architect of the Stein Center and of renovations to the 14th floor of Presbyterian Hospital and the 13th floor of the Atchley Pavilion. "We're trying to remove all the things, like stainless-steel corner moldings, that scare you as a patient," said Barry Erenberg of Integrated. "It's an interesting project — concealing a hospital within a hospital."

#### Changes at the Medical Center

Starting in the late 1980's, \$1.13 billion has been invested at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center to construct or renovate 4.27 million square feet of space. Shown here are some of the major projects undertaken since 1995, with completion dates given in parentheses.



- 1. Old Psychiatric Institute building: Renovation for the Joseph L. Mailman School of Public Health (2002)
- 2. New York State Psychiatric Institute: New 6-story, 330,000-square-foot building (1998)
- 3. Dana W. Atchley Pavilion: Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center, 7th floor (2000), 8th and 9th floors (1998), 10th and 11th floors (1996), dermatology and surgical centers, 12th and 13th floors (1999)
- 4. Possible future hotel site
- 5. Washington Heights District Health Center: Renovation by New York City Health Department for tuberculosis clinic, 2d and 3d floors (1999)
- 6. Energy Court entrance: Renovated pediatric and psychiatric emergency rooms (1999)
- 7. Old Presbyterian Hospital building: New centralized testing laboratories, 3d floor (1998); Anne Youle Stein Center: New York Orthopaedic Hospital, 11th floor (1998); Department of Surgery, 14th floor (1999); Department of Dermatology, 15th floor (1999)
- 8. Edward S. Harkness Eye Institute: Flanzer Eye Center, 1st floor, and restored lobby (1998)
- 9. Babies and Children's Hospital: Pediatric intensive care unit, 9th floor (1998)
- 10. Babies and Children's Hospital: New 11-story, 780,000-square-foot building (2001)
- 11. Audubon Biomedical Science and Technology Park/Mary Woodard Lasker Biomedical Research Building: New 6-story, 105,000-square-foot building (1995)
- 12. Audubon Park/Russ Berrie Medical Science Pavilion: New 7-story, 175,000-square-foot building (1997); Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center, 2d floor (1998); Associates in Internal Medicine clinic, 1st floor (1998)
- 13. Audubon Park/third site: New 7-story, 220,000-square-foot building (2004)
- 14. Mitchell Square: Rehabilitation by New York City Parks Department (1998)

## Columbia-Presbyterian Works on Its Health

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acknowledged the danger posed by managed-care programs to large, single, free-standing academic medical centers. "That is why we moved a long time ago to create a health-care system that has another 28 hospitals," he said.

Now part of that system, Presbyterian is itself the sum of once-independent units like the Babies and Orthopaedic hospitals. Presbyterian joined with Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1921 to build the medical center. The Psychiatric Institute, run by the New York State Office of Mental Health, is affiliated with the college.

The institute has produced what is surely the most striking recent addition to the center, a \$79 million, six-story structure that is actually two buildings in one, divided by a soaring, prismatic atrium.

The south part is devoted to in-patient care, with 22 beds for upper Manhattan residents and 36 beds for research programs, and out-patient centers like an anxiety disorders clinic, a depression evaluation service and a children's day program. The north part is largely for laboratories.

The structure was designed to rise not much higher than the nearby cliffside so that it did not block views from the upland neighborhood. As a consequence, it is most familiar to highway motorists; not the usual case for a building in Manhattan.

"The facade facing the highway picks up on the speed of cars and the flow of the Hudson River," said Peter Fran, of the architectural firm NBBJ in Seattle. While at the Ellerbe Becket firm in the early 1990's, Mr. Fran designed the institute, with

Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern said he had opposed construction west of Riverside Drive since his earliest days in city government. But he was also responsible for naming the spot Dead Dog Park during his previous term as Parks Commissioner after he came across a dog that he said had been "executed Santeria-style."

Community opposition to the project was placated somewhat by the promise of a pedestrian bridge to Fort Washington Park along the river. Mr. Farrell, who heads the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, said last week that construction of the long-awaited bridge might begin in 2000.

On the east side of the medical center another "park" — this one of buildings — is taking form. It is called the Audubon Biomedical Science and Technology Park.

The first structure in the park was the \$17 million Mary Woodard Lasker Biomedical Research Building of 1995, a speculative, multi-tenant, commercial laboratory at Broadway and 168th Street. Its 500-square-foot modules, meant to serve as "incubator" space for new companies, have lab benches and ventilating hoods. The average annual rent is \$26 a square foot.

There are now 16 tenants, said William A. Poff, a deputy vice president of Columbia University, including V.I. Technologies, which specializes in blood cleansing.

From the public point of view, the building is best known for incorporating portions of the old Audubon Theater and Ballroom, where Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965.

Columbia once intended to raze the building. Under pressure from preservationists, however, the university agreed to retain the terra-cotta facade, which now functions as a decorative screen for the new building, and

to the core of original buildings where much renovation is taking place. (The core buildings replaced a ball park where the team that became the New York Yankees played from 1903 to 1912. A plaque in the courtyard marks the location of home plate.)

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Pearwood walls and granite tiles greet visitors to the new medical oncology floor of the Herbert Irving cancer center, designed by Gwathmey Siegel & Associates. Flat-screen television monitors are mounted on the treatment cabinets in the day hospital, so patients can watch TV, with headphones, as they are getting infusions.

"We are always trying to make the facilities more comfortable and inviting," said Deborah J. Irving, director of the office of

terian's Columbia-Presbyterian campus (and no relation to Herbert Irving).

When the smallest patients awake after surgery, they literally see stars — embossed in the ceiling tiles overhead. The visual theme of the new pediatric intensive care unit, on the ninth floor of Babies and Children's Hospital, is space travel.