

Research Building Update: Superstructure Grows Skyward

Two years after ground was broken on the Medical Research Building on East 69th Street in August 2009, the concrete superstructure is approximately halfway complete.

In January, the excavation and foundation work was finished and the concrete superstructure that forms the skeleton of the building reached the 8th floor.

Looking forward, the building's exterior brick work is scheduled to start by Oct. 1 and construction of the metal-and-glass "curtain wall" façade will begin on Nov. 15. According to Robert Musco, Project Director, Office of Capital Planning, after the concrete superstructure is completed and the building is weather tight, interior work will start in mid-January. This work will include the lobby, con-

ference center, laboratories and offices.

Although construction is moving swiftly and as planned, the 18-story, 480,000-square-foot structure "is not your typical building," Mr. Musco says.

At this point in construction, two of the most interesting aspects of the building are the floor height and columnar structure. Unlike traditional 10-foot slab-to-slab heights, the new Weill Cornell Medical Research Building will have 15-foot slab-to-slab heights; it will also be constructed us-

ing much thicker internal columns, which means that the columns can be spaced much farther apart to maximize floor space.

"Not having so many columns increases the flow and workability of the building," Mr. Musco says.

Occupancy for the \$637 million building is planned for spring 2014, with 16 floors dedicated to research. The new building will effectively double the research space at Weill Cornell Medical College. ♦

Curtain Wall Façade

A double-wall, metal-and-glass "curtain wall" will form the unique front façade of the new Medical Research Building. The inner section will serve as the building's exterior wall, while the outer wall will function like a "sunshade" blocking the sun, lowering electricity and air-conditioning needs and creating a more "environmentally conscious" building overall, says Robert Musco, Project Director, Office of Capital Planning. ♦



The superstructure of the new 18-story Medical Research Building is now approximately half complete.

Garden Café to Have Greater Access for Staff, Patients

The popular Garden Café in the basement level of 1300 York Avenue is undergoing temporary construction to provide greater ease of access for staff and patients.

In particular, new exits are being constructed to provide better egress; in the event of an emergency, diners in the Garden Café will have much quicker access to building exits through "rated corridors" designed to withstand fire and other natural disasters, says Sherman Wong, project man-

ager at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital.

"Because the cafeteria is a place of assembly, in an emergency travel distance becomes really critical, so we are shortening the travel distance to the exits," Mr. Wong says.

Construction started in late June and will be ongoing in sections to provide continued access to the café for staff and patients during dining hours. ♦

State-of-the-Art Chemotherapy Infusion Center Opens

The last block of raw shell space in the Weill Greenberg Center has been transformed into a state-of-the-art infusion center serving the Gastrointestinal Oncology Program at Weill Cornell Medical College.

The 8,600-square-foot space now holds nine exam rooms, 12 chemotherapy infusion bays, a three-station phlebotomy room and a fully equipped pharmacy.

The phlebotomy lab and “satellite” pharmacy, in particular, are significant conveniences for Weill Cornell physicians and patients; pre-infusion blood work and the preparation of chemotherapeutic agents can now be done on-site in “real time.”

Previously, patients requiring chemotherapy for GI cancers were seen at the Oxford Building on East 72nd Street; however, the unit was operating at more than a third over its capacity. Demand for hematology/oncology services at Weill Cornell has been skyrocketing, doubling roughly every seven to eight years.

“The unit had outgrown its existing space,” says Nicholas Chin, project manager with the Medical College’s Office of Capital Planning.

The unit’s design emphasizes patient comfort. Each of the 12,000-square-foot infusion bays, where patients may spend up to several hours receiving chemotherapy intravenously, is along an east-windowed wall. The rooms are private yet large enough for a patient to be accompanied during treatment. All rooms feature individual closets and DVD players with wireless earphones in customized cabinetry.

“It’s a much more relaxing environment,” says David Nanus, MD, Co-Division Chief of Hematology and Medical Oncology at the Medical College. “The whole floor is built in a model where patients check in, see a doctor, and then just walk down to get their therapy. It’s meant to give patients a calming experience during something that is obviously quite upsetting.”

The unit, which will accommodate patients for up to six oncologists, has been operational since summer. ♦



One of the rooms in the new Gastrointestinal Oncology Program’s state-of-the-art infusion center.

Neurosurgery Suites Round Out Weill Greenberg Center

The Weill Cornell Department of Neurosurgery has added a new home on the ninth floor of the Weill Greenberg Center, where an adult ambulatory unit has been constructed.

The 3,500-square-foot unit is located on the west side of the 9th floor and features nine exam rooms, primarily for office consultations by Weill Cornell neurosurgeons.

The department’s Spine Center, which includes the rehabilitative medicine, pain management and physical therapy units, will remain in the Starr Building.

Like other units in the Weill Greenberg Center, Neurosurgery had outgrown its previous space across York Avenue as a result of current and future planned growth of the department’s programs.

Adding an outpatient neurosurgery unit in the building will “round out” the Weill Greenberg Center as a comprehensive health care center, says Nicholas Chin, project manager with the Medical College’s Office of Capital Planning.

“It’s our flagship building and our prime ambulatory care facility, and having the presence of a neurosurgery unit there makes the building more well-rounded and really a true multidisciplinary ambulatory care center,” he says.

The layout is almost entirely office exam rooms with one multi-function space for physicians to meet.

Overall, the space will serve as a general neurological outpatient treatment unit and the home of the brain tumor program where neurosurgery patients will be seen pre- and post-operatively. ♦

Appel Institute: Temporary Lab for Dr. Steven Paul

Weill Cornell Medical College recruited distinguished Alzheimer’s researcher Steven Paul, MD, last year to lead the new Helen & Robert Appel Institute for Alzheimer’s Research. While the Appel Institute is being constructed inside Weill Cornell’s new Medical Research Building on 69th Street between 1st and York Avenues, the Office of Capital Planning quickly put together a “swing space” this spring for Dr. Paul and his colleagues on the 8th floor of the LC Building.

“Dr. Paul was brought on board with the intention of getting a floor in the new research building,” says Nicholas Chin, project manager with the Medical College’s Office of Capital Planning. “He needed space to start his research, so until the new space is ready we created a full, self-sustaining lab.”

The “swing space” was designed to accommodate Dr. Paul and three junior Medical College faculty members and included the construction of two offices, four touchdown stations, and a small conference room. Additionally, the interior of the space was completely refurbished, as were the research benches.

“Our lab’s immediate goal is to assemble and recruit a world-class cadre of neuroscientists focused on the problem of Alzheimer’s disease and neurodegenerative disorders more broadly,” Dr. Paul says. The larger focus will be on taking advances in the underlying biology of Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative disorders and translating those into new therapeutic and diagnostic approaches.