

Columbia Seeks Room to Grow

Fall 2003

As President Lee Bollinger said in his inaugural address, the University is “engaged, international, diverse, steeped in tradition, a college town, part of the City and the neighborhood, and desperately in need of space.”

Columbia has 194 square feet per student, less than any other Ivy League university, according to a 1998 survey by the Provost’s office. Princeton has about 561 square feet per student; Penn, 440; and Harvard, 368. “If college and university rankings were based on creativity per square foot, Columbia would far surpass everyone else,” Bollinger added.

To address the University’s space shortage, the President has hired two prominent architectural and planning firms—the Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. Renzo Piano won the 1998 Pritzker Architecture Prize, considered the world’s most prestigious award in the field. His firm designed and rebuilt Berlin’s Potsdamer Platz and is currently designing the new headquarters for *The New York Times*. Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, which has completed campus-planning studies for Harvard, Yale, and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, is designing New York City’s new passenger rail station.

The two firms are working to determine where more space is required, maximize existing space, and develop a strategic plan for the University’s long-term growth—a plan that, if realized, would be Columbia’s first major expansion in 75 years and one of the largest development projects in the City.

University officials have been meeting with community representatives and federal, state, and local officials as a part of this University campus plan. The first phase of this project includes a mix of academic, research, residential, and retail space as well as a new home for the School of the Arts on 125th Street. According to a July 30 *New York Times* article, Columbia already owns about 40 percent of a 17-acre parcel in Manhattanville, an area bounded by Broadway, 125th Street, 12th Avenue, and 133rd Street, and is in the process of buying 32 percent more.

This fall, Columbia opened a K-8 school and residence on 110th Street and Broadway, and Lenfest Hall, a 16-story apartment building for law students at Amsterdam Avenue and 122nd Street. Adjacent to Lenfest and fronting on Amsterdam Avenue, a new School of Social Work is under construction and is scheduled to open in the fall of 2004. Columbia is also constructing a residential building at 103rd Street and Broadway, scheduled for completion in early 2005.



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