Riverwalk Place: Small Town in the Big City

Weill Cornell Medical College faculty, postdoctoral trainees and their families will soon be moving into 88 outstanding apartments in Riverwalk Place, the third of nine new buildings to be constructed on 19.3 acres in Southtown in the center section of Roosevelt Island. According to Barry Duignan, Senior Director of Facilities Management, “The units were developed to assist the Medical College in the recruitment of new faculty and postdoctoral fellows as part of Phase 2 of the Strategic Plan.” The condominium building is adjacent to 465 Main Street, another Medical College residence for faculty and postdoctoral fellows that opened in November 2003. Riverwalk shares its neighbor’s waterfront location and impressive range of amenities.

Greenberg Molecular Cardiology Lab Reopens to Rave Reviews

After 10 months of working in multiple locations on campus and off-site, researchers and scientists returned to their newly renovated Molecular Cardiology Laboratory on A-3 in the Harkness Building. The 9,000-square-foot project began in January 2005 and was completed in December, “on time and under budget,” notes Frank Kubicek, Project Manager of Weill Cornell’s Division of Facilities Development.

The complete renovation of the entire floor required construction of two wet laboratories with support research spaces, including microscopy, optical mapping and patch clamp rooms; a computational cardiology lab; a new cold room; two separate tissue culture rooms; separate offices for the primary researchers and administrators; and meeting and conference/staff rooms. The design was by Perkins Eastman Architects PC.

Due to the nature of equipment and delicate instrumentation used by researchers, the technically complex project also called for construction of special flooring to mitigate vibrations. “Approximately 20 percent of the lab floor was placed on special springs—called a gym floor—to absorb and dampen vibrations that are inherent in an older building and that come from surrounding elevators,” says Mr. Kubicek. “The gym floor provides stability for the special microscopes and patch clamp room equipment.”

The A-3 renovation was made possible by a generous grant from Maurice and Corinne Greenberg, for whom the lab was named at a dedication ceremony held on January 9, 2006. Separate plaque dedications were held to recognize the support of Jean M. & David W. Wallace and Lawrence A. Inra, M.D., and The Kenny A. Gordon Foundation.
Sprucing Up the Hardwood in Olin Gym

A renovation of the exercise room and basketball court in the Olin Gym began in early February. The first phase calls for painting and the installation of new floors and mirrors in the Weight Room, as well as replacing the majority of the cardiovascular and weight-resistance training equipment. This renovation is expected to take eight to 10 weeks.

Riverwalk Place

““It’s a stunning residence,” notes Richard Sens-Castet, Director of Facility Systems Management and Real Estate. “It’s in a collegiate setting; our neighbors in Building One are from Memorial Sloan-Kettering. It offers the benefits of living in Manhattan, but in a quieter setting.”

The new residence is within 15 to 20 minutes from the Weill Cornell campus by tram and a quick walk, and it is also immediately adjacent to the Roosevelt Island “F” line subway station. In addition, Riverwalk Place overlooks a Commons—or “town square”—with a landscaped park and nearby soccer and softball fields.

The apartments, located on floors 5, 6, 7 and 8, are primarily one-bedrooms and studios, with one two-bedroom apartment on each floor. Retail shops are planned for the ground floor with storefronts facing the Commons, including a coffee house, a dry cleaner and deli.

Developed by the Hudson Companies and the Related Companies, the first two buildings were completed in 2003. “Buildings One, Two and Three—which is Riverwalk Place—form a cluster that face either Main Street, the Commons or the existing Roosevelt Island development to the north,” says Alfreda Radzicki, AIA, partner at Gruzen Samton LLP, the architects who created the master plan for the nine buildings, as well as designed the exteriors of the first four.

According to Ms. Radzicki, “In order to have the building façade read in an interesting architectural manner, we recommended that living rooms be placed in corners, and we created a series of setbacks in the building footprint that increased the number of corners.”

The three buildings share an entry courtyard on Main Street, with a canopy at each building entrance. Building Four—Riverwalk Landing—will be similar in character to the first three. “However, we don’t want to repeat ourselves,” says Ms. Radzicki. “We want to make each building read like it’s part of a family, but not be identical.”

PROJECTS IN BRIEF

- The Office of Academic Computing in the D Building basement is nearing the end of the first of two phases of construction. OAC facilities are expanding into former library space.
- The Uris Auditorium is looking good with a recent refurbishment that includes new seating, carpeting and additional audio-visual equipment.
- Staff on the sixth floor of the A, B, C, and D Buildings are in the process of moving from their labs into swing space for hematology-oncology, pathology, and CT surgery in preparation for construction beginning this spring.
- Neurology labs on the sixth floor of the E Building have relocated temporarily into the LBRC to prepare for construction of the new three-story addition on top of the E Building, which will be starting in the next few months.
- The relocation of core facilities from the first phase of the RARC renovation on A-7 has started, beginning with the relocation of the BSL-3 lab into swing space at Rockefeller University. While there may be an occasional disruption or unavailability of facilities during the renovation period, every effort will be made to keep the RARC facilities functioning at their normal level.
- The new physicians’ assistant training facility at 575 Lexington officially opened on January 10.