



An architect's view of the street level of one of the proposed new buildings.

Some Thoughts on the Building Plans

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At a subway/commuter-college such as Hunter, where everyone is exposed to the crush of overburdened transportation and street systems, an efficient and attractive way of arriving at the campus and circulating within it is a great need. Therefore, special attention has been given to the importance of places to lounge and study during class breaks with emphasis on many scattered and intimate settings. The broad concept involves arranging the spaces serving the entire academic life of students in a medium rise zone, up to seven stories in height. The concept avoids reliance on inefficient elevators and permits the use of escalators. A very substantial improvement in being able to move about the college should be the result. However, the new plans do not envisage mechanical devices such as escalators to solve all our problems. Pleasant walking spaces will be provided by means of skywalks at the third story level crossing 68th Street and Lexington Avenue. This main walkway at the third story level was designed to become not only the prime means of walking through the academic life component of existing and new structures, but to become the college community's main street, well above rush hour traffic at street level.

An overwhelming majority of Hunter students arrive by subway. For that reason major improvements are planned beginning with the subway station itself. It is hoped that the entire station can become a new prototype for the City in attractiveness and efficiency. Specifically, a mezzanine expansion is contemplated with direct access to the college and a new gymnasium through a sunken garden

court. It is the subway station where the interests of Hunter College and those of the adjoining community intersect. The improvements we might achieve at this important subway station will represent benefits not only to the college community, but to the thousands in the neighborhood who are also using this transportation hub.

In developing the overall disposition of major building elements, we consulted not only with the college, but also the community as represented in Community Planning Board #8. One of the first considerations was the means by which the building masses of the new Hunter College could relate themselves in a meaningful way to the existing urban setting. The newly planned 17 and 18 story high rise elements are located on Lexington Avenue, while the low rise building masses have been situated to complement the smaller scale of the mid-block. It is a characteristic and a valid one of the Manhattan street grid that avenues have been developed with larger structures, retaining a smaller and residential scale on the crosstown streets. This pattern is reflected in our arrangement.

The intersection of 68th Street and Lexington Avenue, accommodating a major subway stop, crosstown and downtown bus traffic, situated among several major institutions, and part of one of the most densely populated areas of the City, represents a special responsibility toward providing pedestrian amenities. At the corner of 68th and Lexington, around the focal point of people circulation, an

active space, much like a piazza, will be provided at street level. This space will not only serve as the new main entrance of the College, but will hopefully become a focal point for the coming and going of neighborhood residents.

Away from the busy intersection along 68th Street and facing Imperial House, a quiet sitting park is proposed for students and residents alike. In addition, the plans provide, wherever possible, covered arcades for pedestrians moving along Lexington Avenue and 68th Street. The arcades are for the purpose of sheltering people from inclement weather, especially when waiting at bus stops.

Finally, it should be noted that the building on the west side of Lexington Avenue is envisaged as the center of the college's life, and therefore the new spaces for physical education, classrooms, lecture halls, lounges, and eating spaces are concentrated here. The structure to the east of Lexington Avenue will primarily contain the new Library. The final development of these broad plans envisages the development of not only the two new buildings to either side of Lexington Avenue, but the renovation of the existing building as an integral part of the new setting for Hunter College.

Although many complex problems of cost and efficient use will still have to be solved, our most overriding concern in the design for Hunter College is for a human scale for students and faculty as well as the adjoining neighborhood, resulting not in a larger institution but a community.