

The New Hunter: High Rise and Handsome



Renderings courtesy of Ulrich Franzen & Associates

Tower and "pancake" of new main building at southwest corner of 68th Street (foreground) and Lexington, with skywalks leading to second new tower (left) and existing college structure (right, not shown).

Armed with sleek sketches of "the new Hunter in the sky" and busy photos of our present "sardine can that doesn't work," President Jacqueline Wexler gave three slide presentations to faculty, students and alumni during April, showing the final plans to double the college campus by 1977 and make it "human" again.

Site clearance will begin in late spring 1974 on the \$60,000,000 project, which includes two new 18-story towers flanking Lexington Avenue and their adjoining 7-story "pancakes" on 68th Street. The present main college building on Park Avenue between 68th and 69th streets will be retired at the rate of half a floor a year for remodeling into laboratories, offices and some classrooms.

The future campus will be chock full of amenities that Hunter people only dream of today—a library tripled in size, new athletic facilities with a 1,000-seat basketball gym, large student lounges and eating areas, 560 faculty offices, a modern subway station, street-level plazas, arcades, stores and an art gallery, and skywalks between

buildings. The new campus is designed so people of the community can take advantage of many of these features.

In fact, the college, the architect—Ulrich Franzen & Associates, and Community Planning Board #8 have worked together for years to make the buildings an asset to the neighborhood. The low residential scale of buildings on 68th Street will be preserved by placing the two towers on Lexington Avenue; overhanging pedestrian arcades will protect students, faculty, area residents and passersby from inclement weather; shops and an art gallery will add to the pleasant neighborhood shopping area; a quiet park for Hunterites and the general public (much like Paley Park on East 52nd Street) will be on 68th Street across from Imperial House; and an active plaza, what Mr. Franzen calls a "people space, an extension of street life," will be on the southwest corner of 68th Street and Lexington Avenue.

The active plaza, with a sunken garden near the 68th Street subway stop, will be the gateway to the new Hunter. This elaborate entrance, plus the other entrances,

passageways and escalators leading to college buildings, will be funded by the State Dormitory Authority, as will the two new buildings. In addition, Mrs. Wexler is trying to raise \$500,000 in private funds to give New York its first "Montreal-style" subway stop, with beautiful track platforms and walls. "This might be the most exciting piece of philanthropy that anybody could do," she said. "It will be a statement of what the urban environment of the future ought to be like."

Space, comfort, consolidation and community compatibility—those are the watchwords of the new Hunter. Drawings of the future facilities made a breathtaking contrast to Mrs. Wexler's slides of crowding in the present main structure, built in 1940 to accommodate 2,300 coeds and used today by 12,000 FTED (full-time equivalent day) students of both sexes. "Today, students are forced to do most of their studying, eating, visiting and socializing on the steps and in the hallways," said Mrs. Wexler, "and although the present student body won't be here to enjoy the new buildings, those facilities are going to solve the problem of where to put people when they're not attending class." The new library alone will provide study space for 2,200 students. There will be 1,800 seats in the new eating facilities, which will include two large dining rooms (one each for students and faculty) and four snack bars. Eleven new student lounges will accommodate hundreds of people.

After years of dispersal, the faculty will be brought together in on-campus offices. Mrs. Wexler said this should bring cheers not only from professors but from their students, who currently have to track them down for consultation in offices all over town. This is part of the reunifica-

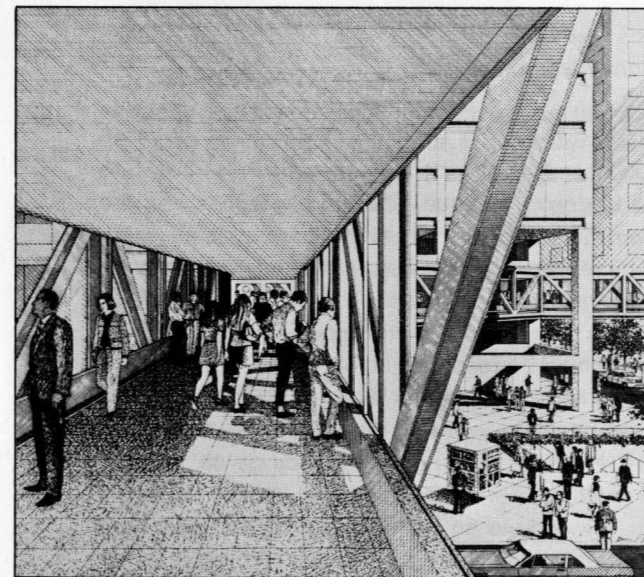
tion of Hunter that John Tesoriero, dean of administration, sees as the prime benefit of the new buildings. "Let's face it, fragmentation is our worst problem," says the dean. "We're conducting classes at 18 different sites, including synagogues, abandoned high schools and old office buildings. The new structures will consolidate us, rejuvenate us and save a lot of rental money." Eventually Hunter will be at four locations only: the 68th Street complex, the School of Nursing at Bellevue Hospital, the School of Social Work at 79th Street, and the Institute of Health Sciences at 106th Street.

As for pedestrian traffic circulation within the new Hunter complex, Mrs. Wexler had only words of praise for the architect, Ulrich Franzen. "He faced squarely a lot of the problems that were ignored in the present structure, where the concentration of classrooms on upper floors puts a heavy burden on elevators." In the new complex, classrooms will be on the lower floors, easily accessible by escalator. The architect solved the problem of traffic between buildings with the "campus walks" or bridges, which will cut point-to-point walking time, protect students and faculty in bad weather, and keep them from crowding local streets needlessly. There will be one bridge across 68th Street at third-floor level, connecting the present building with the new "Building B" or classroom building, and two bridges over Lexington Avenue, at the third and seventh floors, linking Building B with Building C, where the library and administration offices will be located. Mrs. Wexler said the main pivotal floor in all structures will be the third floor which will be the access point to elevators and the 9-story library as well as the skywalks.

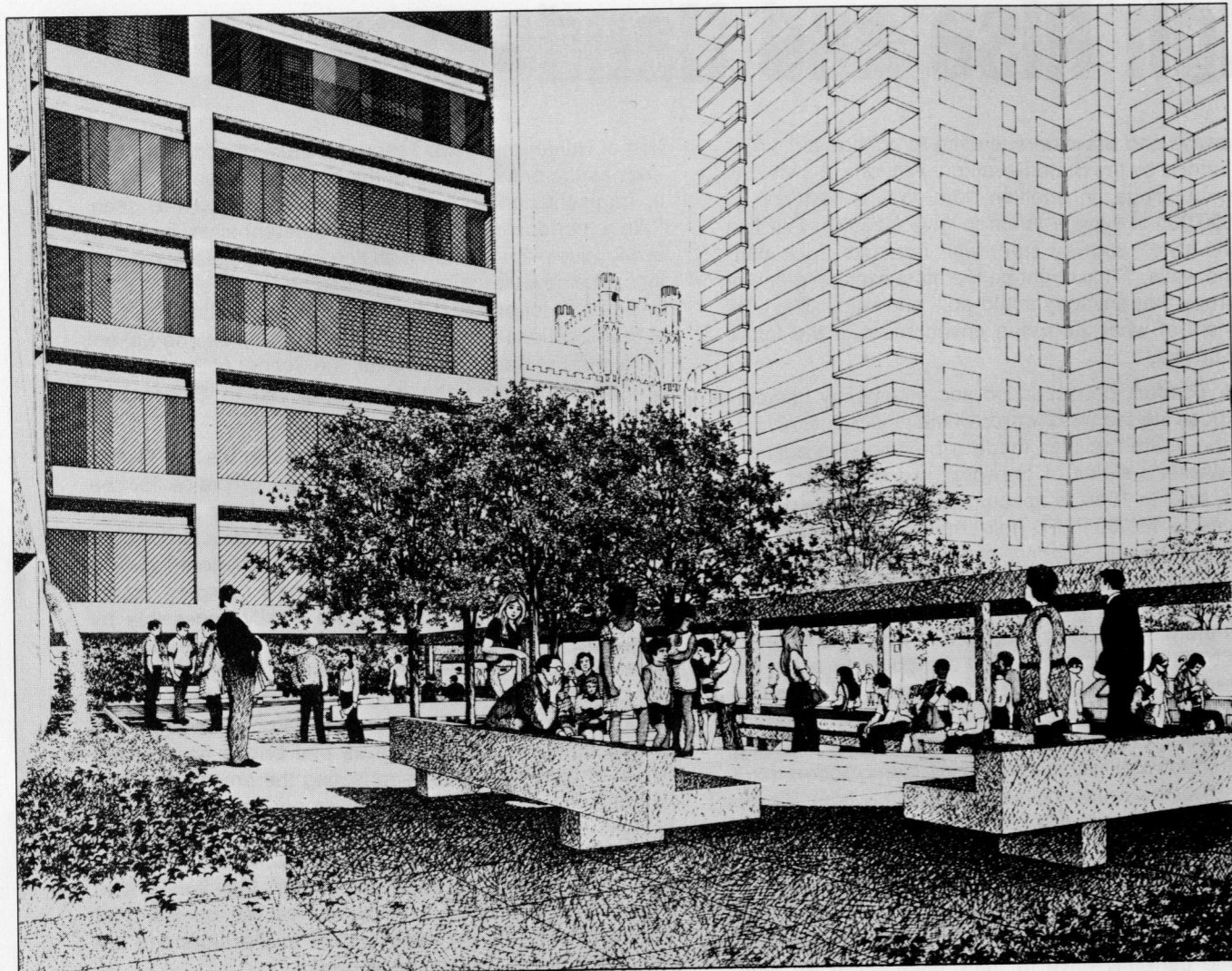
"The twin towers will act as a portal," says architect Ed Rosen, who worked on the project with Mr. Franzen. "You enter an area that definitely says Hunter College. The general public will know where they are, and will enjoy using the active and quiet plazas, the subway entrances, shopping in the stores, attending the athletic and cultural events. Yet, they won't have to get involved in congestion at class breaks because the skywalks will siphon off the traffic."

Building B, on the west side of Lexington Avenue, will be the main campus building. At ground level will be the active plaza, student lounges, art gallery, bookstore and bazaar. The second through seventh floors will contain the student dining hall and snack bars, two 300-seat lecture halls, two 100-seat lecture halls, and 37 classrooms varying from 50 to 22 seats. In the tower will be faculty offices and commons. Below ground will be the multi-leveled athletic spaces, with the spectator gym, another large dividable training gym, five handball courts, a room for combative sports and weight training, a dance studio, an all-purpose room, class and laboratory rooms, offices, and locker rooms for men and women.

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Student's-eye view of the third-floor skywalk spanning Lexington Avenue between the new library (not shown) and new classroom building (background).



It all spells "campus." Nestling beside the new library tower on the site of the city welfare building will be a grove of trees and a quiet plaza.

How the Future Shapes Up (Continued from page 9)

Building C, across Lexington Avenue, will be dominated by the 9-story library, which will include two floors below ground. It will have its own elevator and escalator system beyond its sole point of entry, on the third floor. It will have stack space for 600,000 volumes, an increase of one-third over current limits. Above will be student services, counseling and placement offices, with administration offices at the top of the tower.

The existing building at 695 Park Ave. will eventually be remodeled to accommodate classrooms on the first three floors, laboratories for the sciences, social sciences, humanities and arts, plus 174 faculty offices. However, this is likely to take place some time after completion of the new buildings. Since the remodeling will be a separate project, an additional \$30,000,000 estimated to cover the job will have to be found and approved, and new contracts let.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for late next spring at Site B. Bulldozers will move in about the same time to demolish the city Welfare Department building and P.S. 76 at Site C, across Lexington Avenue. The old city police and fire stations on the same site will eventually be demolished. They will be replaced by new quarters adjacent to Building C in a separate project financed by the city. The steel frames of the towers should be topped out by fall 1975. Building C should be ready by the end of 1976; Building B by mid-1977. Mr. Rosen and Mr. Franzen said this was the toughest architectural project they have ever worked on because it involves multi-purpose buildings on multiple sites for multiple clients. But, as Mrs. Wexler says, the architects "have done an incredibly good job, and now, after these years of planning and replanning, we're ready to see these drawings turn into reality." ■

Closing the Regeneration Gap

By Barbara Perrin



A child from the community gets the "good word" via earphones during his audiology evaluation at the Center.



Photos by Richard Greene

This youngster seems to be having a ball in her language therapy session as she transcribes words spoken by a student clinician.

Janet is a shy three-year-old who is small for her age. She doesn't understand English terribly well and is more at ease in her native tongue, Spanish.

One Tuesday afternoon during the winter she was one of five children from a local head start program who were tested for speech, language and hearing problems at Hunter College's Center for Communication Disorders at 105 East 106th Street. Each week

five more children will visit the center until all have been tested.

The primary mission of the center is to train Hunter students for careers in treating communication disorders. Comments Prof. Doris Leberfeld who directs the program, "It's just like an intern program in a hospital."

Janet came in to be tested for her speech and language abilities. Two students did the testing using games as devices. One test involved matching colors; a set of 12 colored plastic

sticks was used. A "Busy Box," a toy that has buttons to push, levers to pull and wheels to turn was employed for another test.

One of the student trainees asked Janet to push one of the buttons on the Busy Box, but Janet mistakenly tried to push a wheel instead. "Oh, no, you can't push that! That's a wheel!" the student exclaimed. "You have to *turn* a wheel. Let's see you turn it!" Janet caught on and turned the wheel.

But Janet had not said a word during the tests and the next step was for the students to coax her to talk. One of the students showed her a picture of a dog and said: "Do you know what this is, Janet? This animal says 'arf' 'arf'. What animal says 'arf' 'arf'?" Janet recognized the sound.

"Is it a dog?" the student asked. Janet nodded timidly. "Can you say 'dog'?" the student questioned. "Dog," Janet said in a muted voice. "Good girl!" the student exclaimed, giving Janet an impulsive hug.

The 140 graduate students studying at the center will receive M.A.'s in communication sciences and will be able to fill posts as therapists in special schools and hospitals and as speech improvement teachers in the city school system. The 80 undergraduates will earn B.A.'s in communication sciences and will go on to graduate work.

The center tests and treats children and adults from the community who have delayed language or language disorders resulting from stroke, people with cleft palates and cerebral palsy, and stutterers. The center also offers complete hearing tests, fitting of hearing aids and lip reading.

Most of the patients who currently use the center are referred by doctors, dentists and community agencies, but the center will also accept people who seek help on their own.

One year from now, Janet will take her second test. Should she need help, she and other children with speech and language problems have a place to go for expert continuing treatment. ■