

The Summit at First Hill

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Project Information

EVALUATION SITE: The Summit at First Hill

COMMUNITY TYPE: Independent and Assisted Living

REGION: Pacific Northwest

ARCHITECT: Mithun

OWNER: Kline Galland Center

COMMUNITY TYPE: Independent Living and Assisted Living Facility

102 Independent Living Apartments

10 Assisted Living Apartments

13 Assisted Living Apartments for those with dementia

DATA POINTS:

Resident Room: 815 gsf (independent living)
460 gsf (assisted living)

Total Area: 779.2 gsf/assisted living apartment

Total Area: 7,792 gsf (assisted living)

Total Area: 636 gsf/assisted living for dementia

Total Area: 8,268 gsf (assisted living for dementia)

Total Area: 997.4 gsf/independent living apartment

Total Area: 101,738 gsf (independent living)

Overall Total Area: 117,798 gsf

Total Project Cost: \$25.26 million

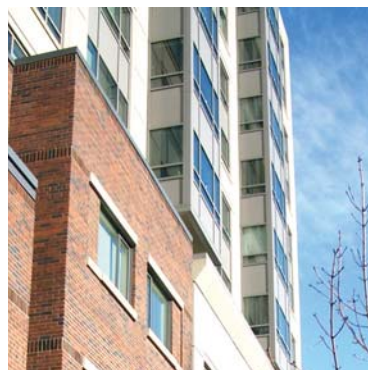
Investment/apartment: \$202,080

Occupancy: 92% as of December 2008

FIRST OCCUPANCY: April 2001

DATE OF EVALUATION: December 1, 2008

EVALUATION TEAM: Wolf Saar AIA; Stephen C. Wattenbarger AIA; Joyce Polhamus AIA;
Jerry Meyer; Charlene Boyd; Brittany Wood



Introduction

The Kline Galland Center is part of the larger organization Caroline Kline Galland Home which originated in 1905 from Mrs. Galland's bequeath and vision to serve older adults. In her last will and testament Caroline wrote, "It is my desire that the Caroline Kline Galland Home for the Aged be so constructed and managed that it may bring to the lives of the aged men and women who shall be domiciled therein the greatest degree of contentment and happiness in their declining years." From its humble beginnings, originally serving just seven residents, the Kline Galland Center has grown today to provide resident-centered care to more than 400 older adults.

At the time of the evaluation, The Summit at First Hill was eight years old. Although the building was originally designed to attract younger, seventy year old residents, the population has become much older, not as active as anticipated and, on average, in their upper 80's in age with multiple physical and emotional challenges. Residents stay for a long time because they find it difficult to move from their assisted-living apartments to the remote skilled-nursing campus operated by Galland Home that is eight miles away. Anticipating this, The Summit at First Hill has a full-time social worker and a full-time nurse on staff to assist residents in addressing their needs as they age. A certified home health care service, along with a licensed clinic, has also been added within the building.



When asked during interviews with the evaluation team what they would have done differently had they anticipated the average age of residents, staff reported that they would have:

- Added another elevator in order to ease vertical staff and resident circulation;
- Planned for space to store ambulation assistive walkers during meal time near the dining room, as 60 percent of the building's population use these assistive devices;
- Included in-house home-care services and a licensed clinic from the inception of the facility.

In addition, the staff shared the following existing and anticipated needs and trends which they feel would significantly impact the built environment:

- Addition of technology: wireless capability for both residents and operational purposes and the increased use of electronic medical records;
- There needs to be more support space for the kitchen, staff preparation, storage areas and for staff circulation;
- Residents want to maintain their independence or "age-in-place" without moving into a higher level of care setting;
- With an aging population and a higher than anticipated resident age, an enhanced wellness program and physical therapy offerings will probably be necessary.

Kline Galland Center, an organization established to address the needs of Jewish elderly, decided to expand their services to seniors in an active downtown setting. While not adjacent to their existing urban skilled nursing campus, the organization acts as a virtual continuum of care. For their new high rise, they wanted to:

- Attract sophisticated, well-traveled, educated upper-income seniors;
- Integrate seniors into an urban neighborhood where services such as stores, theaters, public transportation and medical offices are located;
- Respect and celebrate the symbolic and ritualistic needs of the full spectrum of the Jewish population;
- Express the community's love of learning;
- Fit into the existing urban residential neighborhood;
- Encourage community and intergenerational activities;

Designers' and Operators' Stated Objectives and Responses

Objective: Fit into the residential neighborhood.

Design Intent: To fit into the existing residential neighborhood, the three-story brick base is modulated to reflect the scale of a series of row houses. Some of the functions are expressed subtly on the exterior of the building; on the east corner is the synagogue, which is articulated as a hexagonal two-story element and topped with a metal-pitched roof.

The café is set back from a covered outdoor terrace that overlooks the activity of the street and the neighborhood park.

The base, which spans the entire block and supports a thinner tower, incorporates all the common areas and the higher care floors. The tower is set back from the base of the building to minimize its apparent mass from pedestrians.

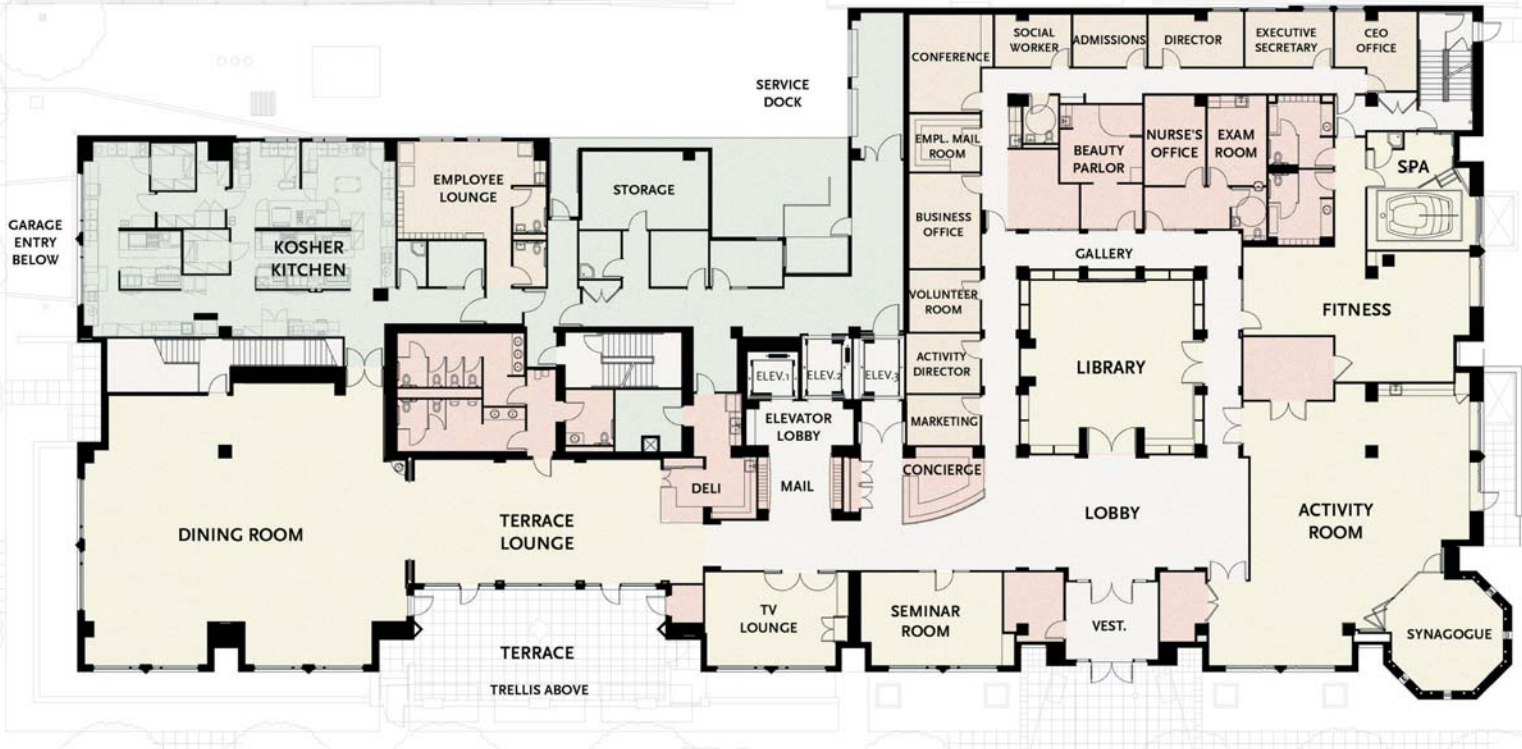
Objective: Express the community's love of learning.

Design Intent: The library is designed to serve as the heart and soul of the community. Located directly past the lobby, it is the first room seen from the main entry. This centrally located, sky-lit location encourages residents and their families to gather, read and play games.

Objective: Provide comprehensive orientation.

Design Intent: Facing east, a series of elevator lobbies look out over the roof garden and views of mountains beyond, helping to orient residents to their floor and to the seasons.

First Floor Plan



Field Observations: Meeting the Objectives

Objective: Fit into the residential neighborhood.

Field Observations: The building's massing articulates the tower element, setting it back slightly from the main entry and from the principal street exposure, resulting in a more respectful association with the scale of neighboring uses and nearby historic structures. This massing is successful, with enduring materials and design, yet the arrangement of the façade elements sets the building somewhat apart from the neighborhood, making it less inviting. The appearance of the project is consistent with the urban residential towers seen in other Northwest U.S. cities such as Vancouver in British Columbia, where high-rise living is embraced. Although this contemporary design approach is successful, further articulation of the tower elements could have further integrated the building into its environs and provided a more interesting edifice.

While the use of richly hued, detailed brick patterns on the base element gives it a warm and approachable feel and connects it to other historic structures in the neighborhood, the lack of small-scale articulation and the use of uniform fenestration result in a façade that belies its residential use and feels more commercial. The streetscape attempts to present a "row house" look but fails at least in part due to a lack of more interesting details on a residential scale. The introduction of cement stucco elements to the base façade above the first level helps to suggest this "row house" approach and to reduce the apparent scale when viewed from a distance, but these details are almost surely missed by the street-level passersby.

The synagogue at the southeast corner of the building is interesting and intriguing because the expression of the synagogue as a two-story hexagonal element with a very visible metal roof breaks away from the otherwise uniform plane of the façade and reaches out to complete a connection with the larger neighborhood.

Fourth Floor Plan



Objective: Express the community's love of learning.

Field Observations: Lifelong learning is a strong tenet in Jewish culture, and the included library supports this tenet with its prominent location opposite the main building entry. The space is very inviting and acts as a destination. The library also is larger than those found in similarly sized communities and is well-used by the residents. A central skylight provides a welcome splash of natural light into an interior that is otherwise minimally illuminated. The size, scale and lighting of this room make it well-suited for small discussion groups and other meetings. The use of light woods in the interior of the library brings additional warmth to the space.

The library is not just a reading room and repository for printed matter. It is also used for group discussion and classes in Yiddish, which can be very lively. As a result, conflicts between individual and group uses and the lack of other classroom space for group activities can discourage use of the library by residents seeking a quiet experience. While the library is well-designed and serves as the center of activities, it is too small to accommodate the demand for both meeting space and library space, and its uses could be duplicated elsewhere, such as in the Chai Lounge, located on the top floor, and the first-floor television room. Programming that is not simply library-specific, but takes into account the entire building would provide and encourage more opportunity for learning.

Given the importance of this stated objective, it is unfortunate that the community does not have other spaces dedicated to learning and unfortunate that the importance of this core value seems to stop at the library door. On paper, the library looks like the heart of the community, but its placement and design block out the spaces behind and around it.

Objective: Provide comprehensive orientation.

Field Observations: It's not clear how comprehensive orientation is provided as a result of the architectural design for this project. The elevator bank is not located near the front door, so it is hard to find a landmark for orientation when taking the elevator from the first floor. With the tower being set back and being a smaller building footprint, residents and visitors enter the elevator in the center of the building and arrive opposite an exterior window on the upper floors. The presence of exterior windows and views at each residential floor elevator lobby is a notable and infrequently seen feature in mid- and high-rise projects, which usually relegate the elevators to the interior core. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce natural light into residential corridors, but, since all elevator lobbies are treated identically, it does little to help orient residents to individual floors.

Once residents or visitors arrive on an upper floor, only the window in the elevator lobby provides any orientation to the exterior. The apartments were prioritized to receive most of the available natural light, something which is indeed very nice inside the apartments. However, as this is not a condominium building where the unit itself is typically the design focus, this appears to be a missed opportunity for a senior-living community. The hallways outside the apartments are great places for residents to interact with their neighbors and feel like they are part of a larger community.

Orientation to individual floors is further diminished by uniform accessorizing and painting on each floor's elevator lobby and in the corridors. Since the floor plates of the residential floors are so small, there is not a need for further orienting devices within the floor itself.

The "memory boxes," designed to celebrate the lives of the residents who live in the associated apartments, are personal wall-mounted display cabinets situated in the hallway adjacent to each of the apartment entry doors. They are not successful as orientation and way-finding devices as they are over-sized and, as evidenced by their scant contents, a challenge for residents to fill. Furthermore, there is not a facility program or activity aimed at helping residents collect, plan and install their personal items within the cabinets. Although it was part of the original design, there never has been a memory-care program at The Summit at First Hill. This fact raises the question of why this memory box feature, normally associated with memory-care facilities, was a part of the original building design.



Field Observations: Themes and Hypothesis

Creating Community

The small footprint of the building is conducive to creating closely related activity and social spaces. However, the geometry of the site and service access points push residents' activity spaces into a narrow band along the primary street frontage. With the main dining room anchoring one end and the multipurpose space located on the opposite end, other resident activity spaces are located along the circulation spine joining the two larger spaces. Unfortunately, many of these spaces are not visible from the main circulation route. Other than the few residents sitting in the main lobby and café area, the evaluation team did not witness any activity or vitality in this area. All such activity was hidden behind doors and walls. This inhibits spontaneous participation by residents, fostering the feeling that residents should only come downstairs from their apartment when an event is scheduled. It is also often difficult for residents who require assistance to participate in these activities.

During mealtimes there is significant congestion at the café. Without a pre-dining gathering space for the facility there is no ability for appropriate assistive device storage such as walkers and wheelchairs and there is no opportunity for pre-meal resident socialization.



A multilevel building creates a challenge to easily bring people together socially. Strategically locating dedicated activity spaces on the different floors allows for more interaction, creating a sense of community on each floor. Unfortunately the tower floors have none of these common spaces which residents could utilize for socialization. Thus Summit residents do not have these places for chance interactions and casual conversations which could be enjoyed while discussing a view of the outside. The elevator lobby design provides spaces that are too small for significant resident interaction and they simply become circulation space.

The community spirit that exists seems to be created more by staff and residents than by the physical environment. Small groups of residents gather in the café everyday for late-morning coffee or lunch. The café is a large space, with large dining room tables scattered along the wall and only a few cozy or inviting features. The café lacks small tables where a single person would feel comfortable sitting alone. The residents that do use the café are “regulars,” generally a small group of the same friends who all sit at a large table, making spontaneous participation by others difficult. The space is less conducive to social interaction by the absence of smaller tables and modulated areas which create natural groupings and social interaction. However, the library is a place where people come together for planned readings and discussions, and it certainly promotes a sense of community, as does the roof terrace which provides a safe walking area for residents, a physical space to socialize and opportunities for community interaction.

The arrival of mail can be a social event in many communities. Often, residents will gather and chat while awaiting the daily mail arrival. The design at The Summit places the mailboxes in the elevator lobby allowing residents to quickly step off the elevator, collect their mail and go back to their apartment without ever encountering another resident or passing by an activity hub. Had the mailboxes been located at some distance from the elevators and near an activity hub, residents would have to make a special trip to retrieve their mail and, during the course of the travel, they would have the opportunity to see other residents, strike up conversations or join in activities.

In spite of the design which is limiting to relationships, the residents and staff have forged a very strong sense of community that is further strengthened by their shared Jewish community ties. A common religion and culture unite the residents with a bond that creates a “community.” The Summit at First Hill supports and respects kosher and other religious practices and observances.

Making a Home

The arrangement of the common spaces and the monochromatic interior design treatment does little to engender a sense of home. Additionally, the lack of amenity spaces that are common in a contemporary senior housing market, such as a spa/salon facility or a staffed fitness center, make it difficult for The Summit to offer residents a more active lifestyle. The sauna is rarely used and a spa area, including manicure/pedicure, hair, massage and aroma-therapy services would be preferred by the residents. The building’s fitness center has become visually and physically worn out. The existing exercise equipment in the fitness center is not as well-suited for frail residents as newer, safer equipment models that use hydraulic resistance would be. In addition, the use of the older equipment is not supervised by staff placing the residents, particularly those just starting out in an exercise program, at some amount of risk.

Resident apartments are full of light, thanks to abundant, large windows. A large percentage of the apartments are corner units and those that are not have bay windows, resulting in a sense of even more light. Views to the city, lake and mountains are spectacular, giving residents an ever-changing perspective and a sense of ownership of “their view.” The natural light and windows are strong marketing tools for the units. Apartment kitchens are well-planned and have a full complement of appliances. However, storage is limited, the toilets are not in view of the beds to assist in cuing, entryways are cramped and unit artificial lighting is poor. However, the residents observed and interviewed during the site evaluation appear to feel like that this is not an “institutional” environment and, indeed, is their home.

The residential tower floor configuration is very compact creating a very short walk from the elevator to all apartments on each floor. The residents expressed their opinion during interviews with the evaluation team that the environment expresses a feeling of “home.” They say it is warm, pleasant and welcoming, that the living room and library are well appointed and comfortably scaled, and that the café that opens to a garden terrace is comfortable and inviting.

Regional and Cultural Design

The exterior treatment of the base element below the residential tower shows a very balanced effort to relate to the historic brick structures that populate the neighborhood. However, the residential tower could be sited in any Northwest city. Regardless of the lack of regional iconography, the design is well done in a contemporary context and respectful of the surrounding built environment.

The inclusion of the synagogue is an important and successful gesture and an iconic element of the cultural roots and religious traditions of both the owner and the majority of residents. The cultural design within the building is strong. Even though only 20 percent of the residents are Orthodox Jews, the main dining room and café are kosher. Elevators do not have electric eyes and they stop on every floor on the Sabbath in order to allow orthodox members of the community to travel without engaging actively with the machine. The Sukkah trellis on the garden café is a brilliant solution to a religious ritual requirement. Used during the Jewish celebration of Sukkot, the Sukkah symbolizes shelter, commemorating the time God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness they inhabited after they were freed from slavery in Egypt.

Environmental Therapy

Staff has created a warm, supportive environment that is universally praised by residents, but the built environment provides little therapeutic value to the residents. The absence of active lifestyle elements such as a staffed and well programmed fitness center and the under-illuminated common spaces encourage residents to remain in their apartments unless there is a scheduled activity. The spa tub in the wellness center was a gift from a benefactor, but it is seldom utilized by residents. With a brighter, more energized wellness center, specifically targeted to the needs of the age group served at The Summit at First Hill, this area of the structure could benefit the residents more.



The roof terrace is an excellent example of an outdoor garden area integrated with a building. The courtyards on levels 2 and 3 also provide a walking path for residents. The tower floors look down onto the roof terrace and views beyond, which contribute to residents' emotional wellbeing by providing a safe and secure way to access an outdoor space and by linking them visually to the surrounding neighborhood and the distant views of the mountains. Public area lighting is inadequate throughout much of the building, and the yellow theme of the second floor is contradictory to the spectral standard of aging eyes. The typical paint color throughout the building is dark and dull. There are just a few accent colored walls, and these are even darker. Colors should be adjusted to the regional climate and be selected for their appropriateness for aging eyes. An abundance of wood doors and trim on the interior add warmth. However, the colors are not reflective of the climate and are somewhat dark.

Outdoor environment

Access to the outdoors is provided by a three-level roof garden and a series of interior terraces that provide both active and passive opportunities for residents to enjoy the outdoors in a secure and safe environment. The fact that this is an inner-city urban location makes this feature even more of a surprise and a source of delight. Much attention was given to the outstanding roof terrace, which the residents use in all types of weather. It has level walking surfaces that make it more desirable than walking outside on the sidewalk.

Quality of Workplace and Physical Plant

The management and staff clearly contribute significantly to the success of this community. The residents love the staff and all that they do for them. The staff consistently goes above and beyond their assigned duties to take care of the residents. Highly accomplished and educated nurses and social workers lead the caregivers, and they are provided the tools and resources needed to be proactive about resident care. Low turnover and experienced staffing is a huge advantage to the care of both the residents and the environment.

As the current front entry doors swing open, they allow cold and warm blasts, and also leaves and debris, to enter the building. This inhibits the use of this space to its fullest capacity by the residents and provides additional burden to the housekeeping staff. The assisted-living offices currently do not provide enough space for staff assignments, scheduling, care plans and medication management.

A lot of support functions are packed into limited space on the ground floor. This has led to various compromises including:

- A compact kosher kitchen in which meat and dairy are separated and which is challenged in terms of having limited space for key functions (such as managing dirty dishes), circulation and storage;
- The dual use of the passenger elevator for service functions is exacerbated by the fact that one of the elevators has doors back and front in order to provide a circulation route between back-of-house support areas and the public spaces on the ground floor. Although a creative response to many functions programmed into a limited space, this feature has proved to be less than ideal in the day-to-day functioning of the facility;
- Another victim of limited space is dedicated space for employees. Staff restrooms are located directly off a small staff lounge adjacent to the kitchen. This has posed privacy and odor issues due to the proximity of these disparate functions next to each other. The result has been the construction of screen walls that successfully create a visual separation but do not solve the odor problem and consume already-limited space.



General Project Information

Project Address:

The Summit at First Hill
1200 University Street
Seattle, WA

Project Design Team:

Architect:	Mithun
Interior Designer:	Mithun
Landscape Architect:	John M. Bernhard, ASLA
Structural Engineer:	Skilling Ward Magnusson Barkshire
Mechanical Engineer:	McKinstry Co.
Electrical Engineer:	Travis Fitzmaurice and Associates
Civil Engineer:	Coughlin Porter Lundeen
Management/Development:	N/A
Contractor:	Sellen Construction

Project Status:

Completion date: April 2001

Occupancy levels:

At facility opening date:	40%
At date of evaluation:	92%

Resident age (yrs):

At facility opening date average: 78
December 2008 average: 85

Project Areas

Overall Project:

	Units or Beds	New GSF	Total Gross Area
Apartments	102	83,088	83,088
Senior Living/assisted living/ personal care (units)	10	4,815	4,815
Special care for persons with dementia	13	5,716	5,716
Skilled Nursing (beds)	*	485	485
Common social areas (people)		14,489	14,489
Kitchen (daily meals served)		2,084	2,084
Fitness/rehab/wellness (daily visits)		2,757	2,757
Mechanical and service space		6,934	6,934
Administrative, public, and ancillary support		3,179	3,179

*This is a temporary stay clinic bed only.

Residential Facilities: Apartments

	No.	Typical Size (GSF)
Studio units	2	607
One bedroom units	56	677
Two bedroom units	42	978
Two bedroom plus den units	2	1,448
Total (all units):	102	83,088
Residents' social areas (lounges, dining, and recreation spaces)		7,528
Medical/health/fitness and activity areas		2,224
Administrative, public, and ancillary support service areas		4,700
Service, maintenance, and mechanical areas		4,999
Total gross area		101,738
Total net usable area (per space program)		92,840 NSF
Overall gross/net factor (ratio of gross area/net useable area):	1.10	

Assisted Living Facilities: New Construction

	No. Units	Typical Size (GSF)
Studio units	6	423
One bedroom units	4	568
Total (all units)	10	4,815
Residents' social areas (lounges, dining & recreation spaces)		971
Medical, healthcare, therapies, and activities spaces		935
Administrative, public and ancillary support services		57
Service, maintenance, and mechanical areas		1,014
Total gross area		7,792
Total net usable area (per space program)		6,721 NSF
Overall gross/net factor (ratio of gross area/net useable area):	1.16	

Dementia Specific Assisted Living Facilities: New Construction

	No. Units	Typical Size (GSF)
Studio units	12	423
One bedroom units	1	642
Total (all units)	13	5,716
Residents' social areas (lounges, dining & recreation spaces)		1,265
Medical, healthcare, therapies, and activities spaces		326
Administrative, public and ancillary support services		57
Service, maintenance, and mechanical areas		904
Total gross area		8,268
Total net usable area (per space program)		7,307
Overall gross/net factor (ratio of gross area/net useable area):	1.13	

Site and Parking

Site Location: Urban

Site Size:

Acres: .66

Square feet: 22,800

Parking:

Type of Parking For this facility	Residents	Staff	Visitors	Totals
Under building	106*			106*
Total	106*			106*

*There is no designation of resident, staff or visitor parking for this project.

Construction Costs

Source of Cost Data:

Final construction cost as of April 2001

Soft Costs:

No soft cost information was provided for this project.

Building Costs:

New construction except FF&E, special finishes, floor and window coverings, HVAC and electrical	\$25,260,000
Renovations except FF&E, special finishes, floor and window coverings, HVAC and electrical	N/A
FF&E, and small wares	N/A
Floor coverings	Included in above
Window coverings	Included in above
HVAC	Included in above
Electrical	Included in above
Medical equipment costs and FFE and window coverings	N/A
Total building costs	\$25,260,000

Site Costs:

No site cost information was provided for this project.

Total Project Costs: \$25,260,000