

New Haven Register

Yale Breaks Ground for Health Facility

Mary E. O'Leary, Register Topics Editor
07/01/2008

NEW HAVEN — Another piece of Yale University's expansion north was celebrated Monday in a groundbreaking ceremony for its Health Services building — a unique creation on a triangular plot across from the Grove Street Cemetery.

The flaring walls and lack of right angles were designed by Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects of Atlanta, Ga. and reflect the irregular shape of the historic burial site across the street; the exterior plays off the stone wall surrounding it.

While the juxtaposition of a health care facility across from a cemetery will always be the butt of jokes, the neighborhood and university representatives were all smiles Monday for another reason.

This is part of a new phase of development for Yale up Prospect Street, and the continuation of an improved relationship with adjacent neighborhoods, which started under Yale President Richard C. Levin.

Levin, who said the current health services building on Hillhouse Avenue opened 37 years ago when he first came to Yale as a graduate student, praised the new facility as a "little bit edgy" and one that should take the university through several more generations of students.

The 138,000-square-foot infirmary and sub-acute health care center, which will open in June 2010, will continue to serve more than 33,000 students, faculty, staff and their dependents, as well as retirees, and will employ more than 500 individuals.

It will feature 100 exam rooms, imaging center, inpatient and out-patient infusion centers, an area for minor surgical procedures, labs and a pharmacy and is seeking silver level LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) designation.

It is next to the new police station, which has

incorporated the Dixwell-Yale University Community Learning Center for use by neighborhood groups and is a block from the site of two new residential colleges on Prospect Street between Canal and Sachem streets, which by 2013 will bring student amenities and activities to a part of the campus that has felt isolated.

"The entire area ringing the cemetery will now become an integral part of Yale," Levin said.

Levin credited Mayor John DeStefano Jr. with encouraging Yale to expand in this direction, which is expected to have more positive private development spin-offs with possible conversion of the Winchester Repeating Arms factory at Munson Street into apartments and retail, now under review by Forest City Enterprises.

Paul Genecin, director of Yale University Health Services, also said labor management teams at the center were a successful example of best management practices adopted after the last employee contract.

The center is also adjacent to the Ella Scantlebury Park, which is being updated and improved with a \$500,000 contribution from Yale after it worked with the Dixwell Enterprise Community Management Team on what the community wanted.

Management team Chairwoman Roxanne Condon said hundreds participated in the dialogue, including a group of 10- to 12-year-old Webster-Grant School ambassadors, who prioritized cleanliness, safety and recycling for the park. One of the first improvements in the park, which will include a full basketball court and a half-court for smaller children, will be a splash pad to open July 19.

Judith Madeux, deputy director at the health center, said the center cannot provide health services to neighbors, but it is open to offering health education and nutrition programs as prioritized by residents.

"I'm excited about the finished product and all of the outreach they are going to do with the community," said Alderman Gregory Morehead, D-22.

Yale will provide seven scholarships to train neighborhood youths to become emergency medical technicians.