

New York University's Center for Academic and Spiritual Life

New York University is pleased to present its proposal for the new Center for Academic and Spiritual Life located on the south side of Washington Square Park. This important site within the campus core area will be dedicated to the mission of a diverse set of spiritual life space and critical academic programming needs. The proposed design of larger flexible working spaces allows the building to be used for a multitude of university needs such as classrooms, music practice and rehearsal rooms, conference spaces and others. The first floor will be a new Catholic Center at New York University, owned and operated by the Archdiocese of New York.

QUICK FACTS

Building Name: NYU Center for Academic and Spiritual Life

Address: 58 Washington Square South / 238 Thompson Street

Primary Future Use: Dedicated spiritual life space; multi-use rooms for academic needs (spiritual, classrooms, music rehearsal and curricular spaces, conference rooms); first floor Catholic Center at NYU, owned and operated by Archdiocese of New York

Building Statistics	"AS-OF-RIGHT"	PROPOSED
FAR	5.5 shown below (6.5 allowed)	4.9
Square Feet (above grade)	79,643	61,373
Height in Stories	11 plus rooftop mechanicals	6 plus rooftop mechanicals
Height in Feet	134 feet plus rooftop mechanicals	89 feet plus enclosed rooftop mechanicals

Architects: Machado and Silvetti Associates, LLC
<http://www.machado-silvetti.com/index.php>

Existing Conditions: Vacant lot, NYU acquired in May 2009 from the Archdiocese of New York

Zoning: R7-2 zoning district, with a portion located in a C1-5 commercial overlay

Approvals Needed: As-of-right option will not be pursued; instead NYU will seek a variance from the Board of Standards and Appeals to modify lot coverage and front and height setback regulations. The aim is a building that is lower in height and meets the University's needs.

Special Features: To maximize building efficiency, the new building will connect on most floors to the adjacent Kimmel Center for University Life (the two buildings will remain distinct in identity, but can share programmatic workload to maximize use of space). The new building will also be connected to the University's new cogeneration plant.

Sustainability Goal: LEED Silver

Project Schedule: Fall 2009 through Summer 2012

AS-OF-RIGHT VS. PROPOSED BUILDING MASSING

The “as-of-right” building massing is undesirable for the University. It would result in a tall structure with small floor plates that do not serve the designated needs. It would not allow the level of efficiency and utility of the building that is contemplated in the University’s plan. Finally, it would not allow the design that the University feels is the most appropriate for the site.

Therefore, NYU will seek a variance to modify lot coverage and height and front setback regulations from the Board of Standards and Appeals. This would result in a shorter building that extends out to the street wall (consistent with many of the buildings on the south side of the park) with larger floor plates that can better accommodate the University’s needs.

AS-OF-RIGHT



Viewed through Washington Square Arch

As of Right

NYU PROPOSAL (Variance Required)



NYU Proposal



CONTEXT OF NYU PLANS 2031

With the acquisition of the site, this project folds into the broader framework of the “NYU Plans 2031” space initiative. Launched in 2006, this effort aims to guide the University’s growth in a strategic, thoughtful and long-term manner through 2031, the University’s bicentennial. NYU Plans 2031 sets guidelines and principles for growth in the core, neighborhood and remote sites. The University projects a need of as much as 6 million square feet in growth in that time period and has committed to locating at least half of that outside of the core and neighborhood areas.

Key goals of the 2031 space initiative are:

- Better and more strategic planning (assessing critical needs and ideals for a university campus and better understanding how to situate those needs in a complex urban environment)
- Transparency
- Community mindedness

Center for Academic and Spiritual Life within NYU Plans 2031

In the context of the broader planning efforts, this site is located within the campus core, will serve critical needs that have been identified as optimal to be located within a 5 minute walk of the main campus facilities; and will be built with consideration of the context of the site. The square footage of the site will count against the 6 million square feet.

The proposal for the site is consistent with the planning principles which were composed by the Community Task Force on NYU Development.

- The proposed building is contextual and the design is sensitive to its surroundings and location on Washington Square Park.
- It will be a facility that serves the NYU community as well as the broader neighborhood.
- The proposed building is intended to be constructed and to operate in a manner that maximizes programmatic and schedule efficiency.

Institutional Need

The priority needs identified for this important site are spiritual life space, classrooms, music rehearsal and curriculum rooms, and general conference space.

Spiritual Life Needs: To date, the University has haphazardly attempted to meet the space demands of its diverse spiritual community. The University has an affiliation with over 20 chaplains and there are nearly 25 student groups dedicated to spiritual life. While some University spaces can serve some of these needs, existing facilities have proven to be inadequate. The space needs include places for worship, communal meals, prayer, meditation and club activities.

Classroom Needs: The University is in the process of decanting classrooms throughout the campus from higher to lower floors. This strategy was recommended by a Classroom Utilization Study which examined the inefficiencies and complications in buildings (such as the Silver Center) which locates classrooms on higher floors requiring elevator access. This also makes room in those higher floors for other University priorities to move in.

Music Rehearsal Needs: Student demand for music practice and rehearsal space – related to their degrees as well as extracurricular in nature – has far outpaced the University’s capacity and inventory. Particularly challenging for the University has been locating adequate space for the symphony, repertory and other large ensemble groups.

Proximity to the main campus for these uses – particularly the spiritual life and classrooms -- is critical. For many students, a frequent daily schedule includes not only classes and study but also worship; therefore, the ability to move between classes and other activities is vital. In addition, for a subset of students, religious practices forbid the use of mechanized transportation at certain times, making it important to be able to reach the site on foot.

Proposed Purpose and Use

The new building will house a group of needs – both sacred and secular—which share a common need for a range of smaller and larger flexible floor plates as well as opportunities for coordinated scheduling. The new facility will have an area dedicated to spiritual life including offices and support space for the affiliated chaplains; spaces to accommodate larger gatherings for prayer, meditation and other activities; and a mixture of rooms sized to meet the diversity of needs. In addition, the site will house classrooms, music rehearsal and practice rooms, as well as conference spaces. The plan is to develop the site so that most of the building can be flexibly used in an interchangeable, and highly efficient, manner.

The building will also house the newly constructed Catholic Center at NYU on the first floor of the building which will be owned and operated by the Archdiocese of New York. Acheson Doyle Partners is an architectural consultant for the Catholic Center portion of the building.

PROPOSED DESIGN

The proposed design is intended to honor its prominent location on the south side of Washington Square Park, its proximity to the historical Judson Church, and its visibility through the Washington Square Arch. The building should reflect the context and history of the site as well as to evoke imagery that identifies NYU’s first center for spiritual life. As a part of its rich historic context, the form of the proposed building is simple in mass and reinforces the street wall.

PROPOSED DESIGN



Internal View North



Thompson Street Entrance

Projected Schedule for Approvals and Construction (may change)

May 2009	NYU closes on property, acquires empty lot
June 2009	Application submitted to BSA
	NYU introduces project at Community Board #2 Institutions Committee
July 2009	Community Board #2 Zoning Committee reviews and votes on NYU application
Fall - Winter 2009	Construction commences

In connection with its application to the Board of Standards and Appeals, the University will prepare an Environmental Assessment Study for the project. In addition, we will be working to further refine the façade design and finalize the choice of materials.