



1-1-2009

Penn Vet Buildings Evolve to Meet Changing Needs

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From the day the doors of the University of Pennsylvania's Veterinary Medicine Department opened on October 24, 1884, our buildings have been struggling to keep up with the changing needs of faculty and students. The initial structure, which included a main building, a wall-enclosed yard, box stalls for 20 horses and a blacksmith shop, was located on a triangular plot of ground bound by Pine Street, 36th Street and Guardian Avenue. The approximate cost: \$20,000.

This first structure was followed by an animal hospital that opened on September 1, 1885. In 1886, the first full year of the hospital's operation, 352 cases were seen. The hospital served patients for 16 years before being torn down in 1901 to make way for an expansion of Penn's Medicine Department. The Veterinary Department moved to a "temporary/permanent" home at 38th and Woodland Streets, while a new building was being built a block away at 39th and Woodland Streets. Occupied in 1907, the first section built was the Arch entrance on 39th, with successive sections built toward the east on Woodland over the next six years.

The quadrangle of the new building enclosed a grassy plot in honor of the school's first dean, **Rush Shippen Huidekoper**. In 1947, a third floor was added to the Quadrangle facility.

New Bolton Center

In 1937, Bolton Farm in Bucks County was donated to Penn. Acquired by the school to provide for its three major functions—education, research and service—it was never a fully active campus. The property was sold in 1952, and operations moved to the aptly named New Bolton Center in Chester County. By the following year, two cement buildings with a total of 5,000 square feet were completed and became the headquarters of clinical work and research.

Manor House, a structure dating to 1710, was part of the original farm. Before the farm was sold, owners restored, remodeled and enlarged the building, which was later named Allam House, in honor of **Dean Mark Allam**.

The School's Field Service Unit under the direction of **Dr. William Boucher** was moved from Media, Pa., to the new campus, initiating a clinical teaching program. In 1957, the caseload was one-and-a-half farm animals a day (referrals only). After discussion with area veterinarians, services were offered to the public to increase the caseload.

From top to bottom, the George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals, 1964; the Marshak Dairy, 1996; aerial view of New Bolton Center, 2007; rendering of the James C. Moran Jr. Critical Care Center; expected completion date 2009.



Philadelphia

The Gladys Hall Rosenthal Building was the next building to be constructed on the Philadelphia campus; it was completed in 1963 and named in 1974. At that time, the building included the C. J. Marshall Memorial Library as well as research labs for pathology, microbiology, virology, immunology, biochemistry and parasitology along with faculty and administrative offices.

The Veterinary Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania was completed in 1981, and was renamed the Matthew J. Ryan Veterinary Hospital in honor of the speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Ryan, who supported the school over three decades, died in the spring of 2003. Here 26 specialties and subspecialties exist under one roof, serving the needs of more than 31,000 patient visits a year.

The Vernon and Shirley Hill Pavilion, Penn Vet's new academic center, officially opened in November 2006. The building features state-of-the-art lecture halls and seminar rooms and has wireless networking on the first and second floors. The unique "information commons," also known as the Steven W. Atwood Library, optimizes the convergence of library information with technology.

The Rosenthal Imaging and Treatment Center located at the Ryan Veterinary Hospital, was dedicated in the fall of 2007. The facility houses medical imaging and radiation therapy equipment, as well as two examination rooms, a fully equipped anesthesia prep room, a patient recovery suite and a conference room.

Looking ahead

To ensure the best use of school resources today and in the future, architectural consultants were engaged to create master plans for both campuses. These plans propose a series of projects that are intended to meet the changing needs of researchers, clinicians, staff, students and, of course, animals.

From open lab concepts with shared support space in Philadelphia to the construction of a new isolation and colic facility at New Bolton Center, the plans were designed to improve operational efficiency. Indeed, the school and its hospitals are prepared to meet whatever needs of the Penn Vet community lie ahead. ■



Right from top to bottom: Architectural rendering of the veterinary hospital, c. 1912; aerial view of the Matthew J. Ryan Veterinary Hospital, 1981; Gladys Hall Rosenthal Building, 3800 Spruce Street, c. 1963; Vernon and Shirley Hill Pavilion, 38th Street and Woodland Avenue, 2006.