Walking Tour of the SUMC Architecture

Background:

Located in the northwest corner of the Stanford University campus, the Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC) occupies 111 acres and includes the School of Medicine, the Stanford clinics, the Stanford University Hospital, the Hoover Pavilion, and the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford.

From 1913 to 1959, The Stanford University Medical Center was housed in a nineteenth-century brick building on Clay Street in San Francisco. After the 1953 decision was made under President Wallace Sterling’s administration to move the medical center to Palo Alto, Edward Durrell Stone was hired to design the new facilities. The Stone buildings included the School of Medicine, research labs, and patient care facilities. His two main design components were interconnected buildings and interior courtyards.

The low, three-story height of the complex, with its many courtyards, columns and covered walkways, emulates the essential character of the central Stanford campus, while the texture, repeating pattern, and color of the tiles remain sympathetic to the rough-hewn sandstone of the earlier buildings.

Stone, though concerned about maintaining a visually interesting environment, also wanted his work to be modern and strong enough to withstand the famous California earthquakes, as well as cool, light, and airy enough to make effective use of the famous sunny weather. Poured concrete adds strength to the buildings, and the patterned grilles keep the building interiors cooler in the summer while allowing natural light to enhance the courtyards and walkways throughout the year.

The ‘60s:

Dr. Robert Alway (1902-1990) facilitated the move to Palo Alto by serving as Dean of the School of Medicine between 1957 and 1964. Great changes were not only physical in nature. A new kind of medical school was born when it moved to main campus. The reinvented medical school had a strong research emphasis that encompassed both clinical medicine and the basic sciences. Prominent researchers were recruited and medical students had fully equipped lab facilities to work in as well as close proximity to the clinics and hospital. In 1968 Stanford University purchased the City of Palo Alto’s entire interest in the Hospital properties and renamed it Stanford University Hospital.

The ‘70s:

The Psychiatry Clinic Building was built in 1971. This is now known as the Redwood Building, home to the Health Research and Policy program (HRP). In 1976 both the Louis B. Mayer Cancer Biology Research Laboratory and the Sherman Fairchild Science Buildings were added. A Hospital core expansion, adding 24 intensive care beds, was added in 1977.
The ‘80s:

The Falk Cardiovascular Research Center was built in 1984 and the Research Animal Facility #1 was added in 1985. The Medical School Office Building (MSOB) was added in 1986 and in 1989 the Beckman Center for Molecular and Genetic Medicine, the Diagnosis and Treatment Center with 340 beds, and the Research Animal Facility #2 were all completed.

The ‘90s:

The Medical School Lab Surge (MSLS) and Lucas Center opened in 1992. In 1993 the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences (PBS) building on Quarry was built and the Stanford University Clinic opened a new outpatient building on Blake Wilbur Drive.

2000 and beyond:

The Center for Clinical Sciences Research (CCSR) opened in 2000. The Clark Center for Biological Sciences opened in June 2003 and the new Cancer Center Treatment and Prevention/Ambulatory Care Pavilion (CCTP/ACP) opened in March 2004. This new comprehensive cancer facility integrates multiple cancer services. An expansion of the Lucas Center (25,000 gsf underground—two levels) was completed in early 2005 and includes high-end imaging equipment including a 7T magnet and a cyclotron. Planning for the Learning and Knowledge Center Complex is also underway and will be include new learning facilities, a conference center, and the Medical Library & Knowledge Management Center.

Further reading and touring:


Campus Outdoor Sculpture Tour. First Sunday of every month, 2pm (Meet at the Main Quad Entrance, facing the oval). Group tours can also be arranged. Call (650) 723-3469 for more information.

Self-guided tours of the collection of art at Stanford University Hospital, call (650) 723-7167.

*Stanford University Medical Center Design Guidelines* (February 1992).

Tour of the Stanford University Hospital, call Carol Richards to arrange group tours at (650) 725-2408.