



The centerpiece of the renovated building is a grand elliptical staircase rising from the lobby to the second floor.

## NYU School of Continuing and Professional Studies

**A new home for higher education presents a bold face to students with its high-performance curtain wall and deftly planned spaces for learning.**

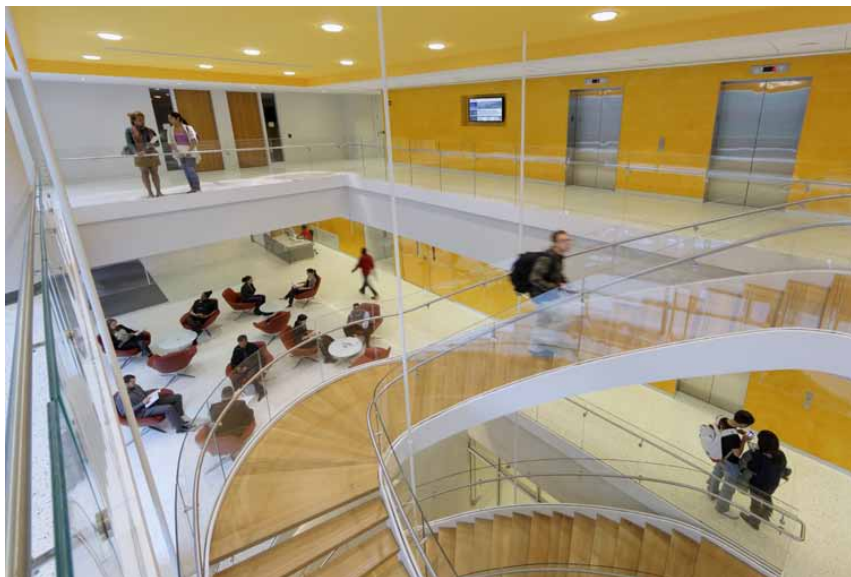
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) gives its more than 5,000 full- and part-time students opportunities to advance their education while pursuing professional careers. In order to fulfill the unique needs of this high achieving group, the school sought a new facility and found it at 7 East 12th Street in Greenwich Village near the main NYU campus. Completed in 1948 as the Fairchild Building, it was originally designed by Harrison & Abramovitz for Fairchild Publications, publisher of popular magazine titles including *W* and *Women's Wear Daily*. NYU acquired the space in 1992 to house some of its administrative offices. It was understood from the start that while the location was ideal the building itself needed an overhaul, inside and out, if it was to project the forward-thinking image of this prestigious 77-year-old institution.

First on the list of challenges—if the renovation was to serve the school's image—was addressing the functional shortcomings of an outdated facade that no longer met energy code requirements. Constructed with corrugated limestone panels and

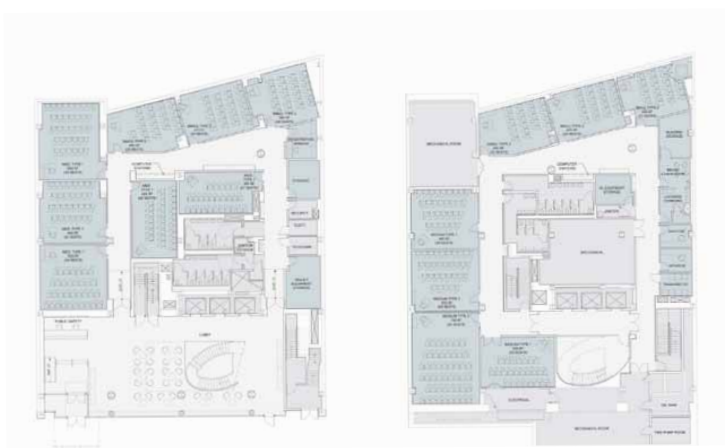
horizontal strip windows, the original building front had outlived its natural lifecycle. Familiar with the firm's body of award-winning institutional work, the university hired New York-based Mitchell/Giurgola Architects to design a new south-facing enclosure and address the second major challenge—reconfiguring the existing office-style interiors to create an open learning environment that let students connect with mentors. Complicating both tasks were the constraints of a tight urban site, the inability to fully vacate the building during construction, and the requirement that work had to be completed without disrupting academic schedules.

A visit to the school today reveals their success. The new curtain wall achieves the architects' energy efficiency and aesthetic goals with insulated glass units incorporating a mix of glazing types: low-iron glass, clear vision glass, clear vision glass with frit on the No. 2 surface, and fritted laminated spandrel glass. Starting at the first floor, horizontal aluminum sunshade louvers span the entire frontage to temper solar gain in the interior spaces, while providing enough daylight to effectively reduce the amount of artificial lighting used within classrooms and lounge areas.

Achieving an efficient daylighting scheme went beyond retrofitting the building's facade. In the interior it was helped out by flexibility afforded by the building's



**This page** By creating openings in existing steel beams, the team was able to make room for ductwork and keep ceilings as high as possible. This move, in turn, allows more daylight into the building.  
**Facing top** The building's steel structure made it possible to create an opening large enough for the elliptical stair.  
**Facing bottom** Plans of the SCPS's first and second floors.



Opening page and top: Jeff Goldberg/Esto; left: Mitchell/Giurgola Architects

This page: Jeff Goldberg/Esto

original structural steel framing. "One of the most challenging aspects of the project was something that happened 'in the ceilings,'" says Carol Loewenson, project architect and Mitchell/Giurgola partner. Because the building was originally constructed as a printing facility, the steel beams throughout were very deep to account for heavy loads. The SCPS plan didn't need the extra floor loading capacity, but it did need to create high-ceilinged, light-filled spaces for students and administrators.

"The particular challenge this presented was finding ways to fit mechanical ductwork throughout the building without compromising ceiling height," says Loewenson. "The team came up with ways to open holes in the existing steel beams in over 100 locations to allow for ducts to penetrate them and thus allow for ceilings to stay as high as possible. This, in turn, allows the natural light at the facade to penetrate the floor plates as deeply as possible."

In addition to functioning well for building occupants, the curtain wall projects a dynamic, colorful

face to 12th Street with a series of vertical anodized aluminum fins and vertical blue and yellow dichroic glass fins. Each curtain wall unit measures 4 feet wide by 13 feet tall. These were fabricated in a factory and sealed off-site before being shipped individually to the school for installation. The units are clipped to the structural steel with steel clip angles. In order to minimize the effect on the building's occupants, panels were installed over the course of a few days.

Beneath the colorful facade, a steel and glass canopy announces the school's entrance, its structure anchored into the curtain wall mullions with a custom-designed tab anchor. The canopy is glazed with laminated fritted glass.

While the building's new exterior focuses on projecting an educational face to the community, its interior is designed to build community within the school. The renovated interior's hallmark is a grand elliptical stair that begins in the building's new atrium-style lobby and rises to the second floor, encouraging students to meet and interact through-



**This page** The stair chassis is constructed with bent plate steel bearing on its landings. Landings are supported by tie-rods hanging from the structure above.



out the intervening light-filled spaces. The grand gesture was also made possible by the building's structural steel framing, which accommodated the removal of lateral beam segments to make room for the atrium space. The effect on the building's interior is transformative. "The movement activates the most important public spaces of the building and its shape is organic and inviting," says Loewenson.

Additionally, she adds, architectural and ornamental metal fabricator and erector A-Val Architectural Metal played a key role in ensuring the project's design intent under very complex conditions. Each stair chassis is constructed with bent plate steel bearing on its landings, landings which are in turn supported by three steel tie-rods that hang the stair by a bolted connection to the steel beams above. Oak treads are affixed onto the steel chassis, and a bent safety glass handrail sits in a stainless steel shoe supported along the edge of the stringer. Around the perimeter of each floor opening,

glass balustrades are supported in a "chair," an L-shaped notch, at the foot of the balustrades with structural sealant.

The bending of the double-curved steel stringer was a challenging customization process achieved by using a customized array of stair guides in the shop. Similarly, fabrication of the curved glass balustrade panels required extensive mock-ups and careful on-site coordination between trades to ensure the proper fit. The close attention paid to the intersection of the perimeter and stair railings was not only to confirm smooth transitions, but also to comply with code requirements for maximum permitted dimension of openings between panels.

Within the completed SCPS, the gracefully curving stair functions as sculpture and social hub, allowing students to get the most out of their interactions within the school so that they can rise to the challenges that wait outside its doors.



The page: Michiel Gurgola Architects

Left column: Michiel Gurgola Architects; right: Jeff Cox/Borg Eiso



**Above** The curtain wall's glazing includes low-iron glass, clear vision glass, clear vision glass with frit on the No. 2 surface, and fritted laminated spandrel glass. It is accented by vertical anodized aluminum fins and by vertical blue and yellow dichroic glass fins.

**Left** 4-by-13-foot curtain wall units are clipped to the building's structural steel.



**Facing** The building as seen from East 12th Street.  
**Above** A steel and glass canopy announces the new school's entrance.

**“The movement of the stair activates the most important public spaces of the building and its shape is organic and inviting.”**

**Carol Loewenson,  
 Mitchell/Giurgola Architects**

This spread: Jeff Gouberg/Esio

**NYU SCHOOL OF CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**

Location: **7 East 12th Street, New York, NY**  
 Owner: **New York University, New York, NY**  
 Architect: **Mitchell/Giurgola Architects, New York, NY**  
 Structural Engineer: **Robert Silman & Associates, New York, NY**  
 Mechanical Engineer: **Joseph R. Loring, New York, NY**  
 Construction Manager: **Structure Tone Inc., New York, NY**  
 Curtain Wall Consultant: **R. A. Heintges and Associates, New York, NY**  
 Structural Steel Erector: **Burgess Steel, Englewood, NJ**  
 Miscellaneous Iron Erector: **Burgess Steel, Englewood, NJ**  
 Architectural Metal Erector: **A-Val Architectural Metal Corp., Mount Vernon, NY**  
 Ornamental Metal Fabricator and Erector: **A-Val Architectural Metal Corp., Mount Vernon, NY**  
 Curtain Wall Fabricator: **Permasteelisa North America, Windsor, CT**  
 Curtain Wall Erector: **Tower Installation LLC, Windsor, CT**