Alfred Lerner Hall Student Center
Columbia University New York City
Bernard Tschumi

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PROJECT: Alfred Lerner Hall

LOCATION: Columbia University in NYC, NY

ARCHITECT: Bernard Tschumi Architects & Gruzen Samton Associated Architects

PROGRAM: Meeting, Performance, & Social Space

CONSTRUCTION: 1996 to 1999

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 250,000

COST: $85 million

AWARDS: American Architecture Award
The Chicago Athenaeum
New York AIA Merit Award
New York City AIA Design Award
Time Best Design of 1999

NAMED AFTER: Alfred Lerner, CC 1955 & Vice Chairman for the University Trustees

CONTEXTUAL DESIGN: 19th century neoclassical academic composition, historical campus

DESIGN: Normative yet exceptional, normative exterior with an inventive interior
Bernard Tschumi designed the **two distinct parts** of Alfred Lerner Hall to signify both **continuity with the original features** of the campus and **ultra-modern revisioning** of these earlier themes.

The 5,600-square-foot glass campus facade embodies the central themes for the building: **accessibility, visibility, and an open, welcoming space** in which students could interact both **spontaneously and intentionally**.

Two parts of building had to be brick, the space in-between is innovative by using a very light glass structure.

Follows the ‘flemish’ bond brick pattern of historic Mckim, Mead, and White buildings.

The student center is like a **small city**, a **dynamic hub** that acts as a major **social space**

Consists of **public & semi-public activities** that help define public space.

New center acts as a forum, **dynamic place of exchange**

“**At Columbia, it was the system of ramps and the point-fixing of the very light glass structure. We wanted to bring the maximum amount of light into the building itself. But again, movement is what defines space.”** -Bernard Tschumi on Lerner Hall, www.tschumi.com

**FORM**

**PROGRAM**

Connected **two traditional wings** with a system of ramps, and organize program along them.

Today, the building contains a party space, a diverse offering of meeting, rehearsal, and performance spaces, computer rooms and terminals, student mail services (including 7,000 mailboxes), a two-story restaurant, a cafe, a sky-lit gallery and exhibition space, and more.

Design strategy follow **volumetric plan of 1890 plan**

Required functional rooms placed within **double rectangular volumes** (i.e. Broadway wing and campus wing)

Large public spaces placed between **two rectangular volumes** (i.e. main lobby, auditorium, black box theater)

Broadway wing: cinema/assembly hall, bookstore, game spaces, student administration, student clubs, WKCR, and 3 floors fr potential academic or general administrative spaces

Cinema seating of 400 can be opened up as a balcony of the auditorium to increase capacity to 1500