

## News Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Phase II Construction Underway on \$120 Million Genetic Medicine Building at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill**

*Architect Lord, Aeck & Sargent Designs Facility That  
Blends With Neighboring Structures, Breaks Down Scale of Large Façades*

CHAPEL HILL, N.C., March 16, 2006 – With Phase I site work complete, the second phase of construction has begun on the 331,000-square-foot Genetic Medicine Building (GMB) at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. When completed in December 2007, the seven-story (plus mechanical penthouse) research building will house three School of Medicine departments along with additional space for the School of Pharmacy. Total project cost for the GMB is \$120 million.

The GMB is the third major design project undertaken by the architecture firm Lord, Aeck & Sargent in recent years by UNC, Chapel Hill. Other projects include the design of the UNC School of Medicine's Biomolecular Research Building, completed in 2003, and the Burnett-Womack Building, a research center renovation project completed in 2005 on which Lord, Aeck & Sargent served as a consultant to the engineering firm Newcomb & Boyd and was responsible for the architectural design, including lab planning and interior design.

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“We have a rich history with Lord, Aeck & Sargent,” said Bob Marriott, UNC associate dean of School of Medicine for resource analysis, planning and management. “They listen well and respond, taking a modern approach to designing science research buildings and laboratories. They’re very good at dealing with the complex structure of a large research university.”

### **Design Blends With Neighboring Structures, Breaks Down Scale of Large Façades**

The GMB is sited on a slope that will form the southern edge of what is planned to become a new quadrangle for the UNC School of Medicine. With a very deep footprint of approximately 40,000 square feet of contiguous space, the Lord, Aeck & Sargent design team was challenged to create a building that would both blend the architectural characteristics of its neighbors and break down the scale of the large façades, said Amy Leathers, lead designer for the project.

The team designed the front of the building, which will face the quad, with a covered loggia anchored by two towers on each of the front corners. The towers give strength to the new edge of the quad and define the entries to the loggia. The loggia provides another link in a system of covered walkways along the future quad and gives the building human scale at its entry. The site drops more than 20 feet to the rear of the building, so the back corners were cut away to reduce the apparent mass of the building from a street called Mason Farm Road, which is being relocated and will face the GMB’s back side.

The skin of the GMB is articulated by a deep brick pier and lintel system, giving it a solid, permanent look. The building’s architectural elements are organized in a traditional expression of base, middle and top. The loggia’s brick and precast columns, topped by a precast band, define the base of the building. The middle section is articulated with tapered brick piers and tall

brick jack arches. The piers alternate in width and depth, creating a major/minor rhythm. The top story is defined by a lighter version of precast piers that repeat the rhythm of the loggia. The lead-coated copper roof sits behind a crisp precast cornice.

### **Light-filled Atrium and Surrounding Areas Invite Collaboration**

The building's square footprint is designed around a central atrium that acts as a light shaft, bringing daylight into all parts of the building. Enclosed laboratories and offices borrow light from the atrium through punched out windows and open doors. The atrium staircase leads to surrounding balconies with wired seating areas and conference rooms facing the atrium. The conference rooms feature translucent glass, allowing for both light and privacy.

"The atrium will be a very active space. Everyone will be brought together here, and the warmth of the daylight will encourage everyone to dwell a while," Leathers noted.

### **What's Housed in the GMB**

When completed, the GMB will include five floors of lab space occupied by the School of Medicine's departments of genetics; biochemistry and biophysics; and pharmacology, and the School of Pharmacy, which currently is housed in two buildings and will be expanding into the GMB. The two additional floors will house research space with 40,000 animal cages, primarily for mice.

The building's program was expanded during the design process. According to UNC's Marriott, "Lord, Aeck & Sargent was almost finished with the Genetic Medicine Building design development phase when we asked the team to add two floors to the design so that the School of Pharmacy could partner on the project with the School of Medicine. We credit the design team with quickly shifting gears and coming back to us with a revised floor plate that added only

two months to the construction process. We're excited about this building and believe that it will lead to recruitment of key faculty members who will enhance UNC's reputation in multidisciplinary medical research."

### **The Project Team**

The Genetic Medicine Building project team includes:

- Lord, Aeck & Sargent (Atlanta and Chapel Hill, N.C.), architect
- Newcomb & Boyd (Atlanta), MEP/FP engineer
- Stewart Engineering (Morrisville, N.C.), civil engineer
- KSi Structural Engineers (Atlanta), structural engineer
- EDAW (Atlanta), landscape architecture
- Mid-Atlantic Infrastructure Systems (Winston-Salem, N.C.), contractor for Phase I site work
- Hunt Construction (Indianapolis), general contractor, Phase II

### **About Lord, Aeck & Sargent**

Lord, Aeck & Sargent is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in scientific, academic, historic preservation, arts and cultural, and multi-family housing and mixed-use markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at [www.lordaecksargent.com](http://www.lordaecksargent.com).

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