

CDC Gives Nod to Sale of Land for MPC

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CHICAGO, IL (June 10) – The city’s Community Development Commission today unanimously voted to recommend to the City Council the sale of a parcel of land on the southwest corner of 16th and State to Columbia College Chicago for the construction of a Media Production Center. The project, designed by Studio Gang Architects, is the first new construction for the college.



The 38,000 square foot building will feature two sound stages, a motion capture studio, animation lab, classrooms and space for production design, costumes and more. Total project budget is \$21 million.

Officials at the college have worked closely with Third Ward Alderman Patricia Dowell, to ensure that the facility will be a good fit with the primarily residential character of the area.

“I am delighted to support the sale of city-owned land to help create the Media Production Center for Columbia College. We are proud to have this leading educational institution expand into the South Loop in the Third Ward. With this facility, Columbia will be able to meet the educational needs of our future filmmakers and visual artists,” said Alderman Pat Dowell. “I continue to work with Columbia to assure minority hiring and contracting for this project, provide community access to the facility and address parking needs.”

“The redevelopment of this long-vacant parcel of land is important to the ongoing revitalization of the South Loop neighborhood,” said Department of Planning and Development Commissioner Arnold Randall. “With its unique design and environmental features, the Center will become a tremendous asset to the community and the city as a whole.”

W.E. O'Neil Construction Co., the firm selected to bring Studio Gang's architectural designs into being, has a history of working on similar high quality and unique projects. They also have extensive experience working with local communities and the firm has been instrumental in developing the Construction Career Opportunities Program at Dawson Technical Institute. O'Neil has pledged to provide five apprentice construction jobs to graduates of this program.

"W.E. O'Neil Team is excited to be included with Columbia College and their entire team in the planning and development of this unique facility," says Michael Faron, chairman of W.E. O'Neil Construction Co.

Studio Gang is headed by Jeanne Gang, designer of the much-anticipated Aqua tower. Gang, who was the principal designer of Columbia's MPC, was recently featured in a *Chicago Tribune* article by architecture critic Blair Kamin. Kamin dubbed Gang a "rising 'starchitect,'" and credited her with "a gift for coaxing visual poetry out of the most prosaic materials." Ms. Gang and the work of her firm are also featured in the June issue of *Metropolis* magazine.

Gang will present a program on her design at a Chicago Architecture Foundation free Lunchtime Lecture on Wednesday, June 18 at 12:15 p.m., 224 S. Michigan.

Regarding Gang's design for the MPC, Alicia Berg, vice president for campus environment, says that, "working with Studio Gang, we have designed an environmentally sustainable building with a distinctive and significantly transparent façade that will be an asset to the emerging neighborhood. Jeanne and her team have worked with us to keep design elements consistent with the fresh, creative approach that is the hallmark of Columbia College."

As plans move ahead for the MPC, anticipation mounts for students and faculty. "Columbia College Chicago is very excited to be in the midst of planning and fundraising for the Media Production Center, the college's first new construction project," says Columbia President Warrick L. Carter, Ph.D. "The Center will provide students with a state-of-the-art professional production facility that will enable Columbia – one of the top ten film schools – to remain competitive in our increasingly technological environment."

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