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The Plan: Pace Lift! University's Downtown Campus Is Getting a Makeover

BY AMANDA SCHIAVO NOVEMBER 5, 2025 6:00 AM

REPRINTS



THE COURTYARD AT ONE PACE PLAZA CONNECTS THE EAST AND WEST SIDE BUILDINGS.

RENDERING: MOSO STUDIO/FX COLLABORATIVE

Come fall 2026, students attending [Pace University](#)'s Lower Manhattan campus will be earning their degrees in a fully renovated and revitalized building at One Pace Plaza East.

The university — founded in 1906 by brothers Homer and Charles Pace — is getting a makeover of its east side building, which is under construction and slated for completion in April 2026.

Pace, which offers a variety of fine arts and performance programs (and was formerly the filming location for the series “Inside the Actors Studio” from 2005 to 2019), is providing students interested in drama, performance and media with new, hands-on classroom experiences.

“In 2026, this [building] will be housing the newly formed [Sands College of Performing Arts](#),” said Wayne Chen, director of campus planning and facilities at Pace University. “There will be three theaters — a large, medium and small — a double-height dance studio as well as other performance studios, and podcasting studios.”

The largest of the three performing arts spaces at One Pace Plaza East will be the Schimmel Theater, a flexible 400-seat proscenium theater that will also serve as a classroom for students learning lighting, rigging and other aspects

of stage production.

The building will also have two black-box theaters, one with seating for 230 and the other with seating for 99. The 99-seat black box will have a wall that can open up into the One Pace Plaza

WHO'S WHAT AT ONE PACE PLAZA EAST

OWNER: PACE UNIVERSITY

ARCHITECT: FX
COLLABORATIVE

CONSTRUCTION COMPANY:
TURNER

courtyard — which separates the east and west buildings — allowing for new ways to present productions.

There will be a lot of performing arts spaces at One Pace Plaza East, as well as other creative arts classrooms for film and screen studies and production labs. There will be maker spaces with laser-cutting and sewing machines so students can learn to create costumes and do other behind-the-scenes work within the theater program.

One Pace Plaza East will also feature an animation studio, traditional lecture-style classrooms, and a staircase with seating for socialization and conversation. Honestly, what is more collegiate than a group of students chilling on a staircase between classes?

Part of One Pace Plaza East is Maria's Tower, a residence hall for the downtown campus. Named after one of the school's benefactors, Maria's Tower went offline in the fall of 2023 to undergo a complete renovation.

Maria's Tower will welcome students back in 2026, housing 480 residents on floors seven through 16 of One Pace Plaza East. The dorm suites are bright and wide, ranging from single to triple occupancy. Pace also did away with the communal bathrooms that once featured several shower stalls and toilets in one room. Now there will be about eight individual bathrooms — with one shower and one toilet — per floor, allowing for more privacy.

The 18th floor of Maria's Tower, which was once home to the university president and vice president's offices, is being transformed into a communal lounge space for students with a kitchen and coworking area, as well as fabulous views of City Hall and the Brooklyn Bridge.

Tip to tail, Pace has invested about \$250 million into this project. The money has come from federal, state and local grants.

"We're envisioning a timeless building," Chen said. "We envision all of these new programs and spaces as really being able to put Pace on the map for performing arts education."