

STRECKER MEMORIAL LABORATORY

Strecker Memorial Laboratory, opened in 1892, was the first institution in the nation for pathological and bacteriological research. Though pathological medicine had been making rapid advances throughout the nineteenth century, Strecker was the first American institution to devote itself specifically to the discipline. The lab was a special division of City Hospital, another island institution, largely devoted infectious conditions. Strecker would oversee nearly two generations of unparalleled medical research.



The inside of Strecker's third floor, ca. 1985

Romanesque Revival style, particularly popular in the late nineteenth century. This style is characterized by broad arches (like the one over the lab's entrance), modest polychromy (like the mixture of gray stone and orange brick throughout the lab's walls), rough stone facing, and asymmetrical arrangement. The result, despite the lab's small size, is a remarkable sense of monumentality.

In 1907 the lab became home to the Russell Sage Institute of Pathology (later associated with Rockefeller University). After the institute moved, the lab continued its pathological work until its closing in the 1950s. Under contract, New York City Transit has been restoring the ruin's façade while constructing within the building a power substation for the "E" and "F" subway lines.

To continue the tour, follow the white and green "Roosevelt Island Historical Walk" signs. The tour ends with the Lighthouse at the island's northern tip.



Strecker Memorial Laboratory, 1998

Strecker Laboratory's namesake is the Strecker family, who funded the building's construction. At 7,500 square feet, it is the smallest of the island's unrestored ruins. It was designed by Frederick Clarke Withers and Walter Dickson and designated a landmark in 1975. The first floor held a specimen examination room, an autopsy room, and a mortuary. The second floor facilitated more detailed research. The third floor (a 1905 addition by William Flanagan), housed histological examination facilities, a museum, and a library.

Withers and Dickson designed the laboratory in the



Strecker Laboratory, when restored