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## **Aragon Begins Construction on 7,300-SF Floor for Columbia University at 880 Third Avenue**

**Posted By Susan Piperato**

**NEW YORK, NY**—Aragon Construction, New York's premiere general contracting and construction management firm, has just begun construction on Columbia University's newly leased space at 880 Third Avenue, Jack Resnick & Sons' 18-story office tower at the northwest corner of 53rd Street.

Columbia will utilize the new midtown space—the entire 7,300-square-foot second floor—for its Medical Center's Department of Ophthalmology, which will operate under the new name "Gloria & Lewis Flanzer Vision Care Center of Columbia University Medical Center." Aragon is scheduled to complete construction in January and the Department expects to be fully operational at the new facility by next spring.

Aragon has teamed with AIA: Integrated Design Group to create 14 treatment rooms, an elevator lobby, waiting area, office rooms and technical rooms. With over 14 types of light fixtures, eight different kinds of stone and several styles of glass tile being used throughout the space, lighting and finishes are tailor-made to suit the purpose of the room that they are in. In the elevator lobby, for example, visitors will be greeted with warm and inviting light, a soothing stone tile floor and a soft colored wood ceiling while in the waiting room, which will be uniquely lit with a variety of medium/high level light fixtures, patients can appreciate an intricate 50-foot-long by 9-foot-high feature wall of Anigre Quartered Fiddleback wood paneling and back lit glass.

Nothing about the space is typical: from the engineered hand-scraped Hickory wood used on the floors throughout all the corridors to the Acme partition systems that incorporate Rudy Art Glass, high end finishes come together to create a distinctive space for the new Vision Center. In addition, the majority of the materials used in the build out are locally sourced, such as the office fronts, glass partitions and light fixtures. The project will use Echo Spec, an eco-friendly paint, and the lighting system will employ motion sensors.

"We are enthusiastic to be working with Jack Resnick & Sons again," says Aragon Construction Executive Vice President Richard Hartz, noting that Aragon has completed in excess of \$5 million of capital improvements for the landlord over the past few years, a majority of that work at 880 Third Avenue—including the store fronts, lobby and multiple floors throughout the building. "This is also a wonderful opportunity to build a relationship with Columbia University, in what is a thriving sector for our business right now."

Aragon's knowledge of 880's nuances will be helpful as construction progresses. For instance, one particular challenge of the project involves the space's elaborate plumbing system. All 14 treatment rooms will need to have running water. Completing the task will not only require thorough planning and physically laying out all the pieces, but also core drilling and connecting piping into the building risers. "Our familiarity with the building's rules and regulations and the intricacies of its access system will ensure that we succeed here," continues Hartz. Communication between Aragon and the retail tenants below is the final piece of the puzzle which "this landlord is terrific at expediting," he says.