

## Baruch College's Oldest Building Gets \$90M Upgrade

By [Heather Holland](#) on April 24, 2014 6:35am | Updated on April 24, 2014 12:30pm

GRAMERCY — [Baruch College](#)'s oldest building is finally getting the more than \$90 million makeover it desperately needs, officials said.

Baruch College has secured state funding to upgrade its 85-year-old [Lawrence and Eris Field building](#), at 17 Lexington Ave., which hasn't been renovated since it opened in 1929, said Eric Lugo, director of government and community relations at Baruch. Work will begin next year to replace the antiquated elevators, add another power source and swap a part of its brick facade for glass walls.



*Lawrence and Field Building*

“It’s a very old building,” Lugo said. “The elevators break down often and the building’s electrical infrastructure isn’t equipped to handle all the technology that comes with a 21st-century education.”

Baruch has secured \$90.4 million for the first phase of the project, including \$30 million in state capital funds that were recently allocated.

“We want to make the facade more open and available to the public and the students,” said Manny Romero, a spokesman for Baruch. “That’s primarily the theme of this project. It’ll have a more open feel and make better use of natural light.”

Since the elevators break down so often, the lobby often gets crowded with students waiting for the few elevators that are still functioning, Romero said.

“The new elevators will definitely alleviate some of that pressure,” Romero said.

The 16-story facility contains classrooms, science labs, staff offices, computer labs, study lounges and two theaters.

The building will remain open during construction, though some classrooms and offices will be restructured.

The renovation will move the college’s 74-seat black box [Bernie West Theater](#) from the ninth floor down to the lobby, so that the community will have easier access to shows, he said.

The work will also bring the lobby down to street level and add a wheelchair-accessible ramp, Romero said.

“Right now, anyone with a wheelchair has to go all the way to the back of the building to get in,” Romero said.

A new Con Edison power source will be added to the building to allow teachers and students to use more technology, including computers and projectors, in their classrooms, which they couldn’t do before, Lugo said.

The funds will only cover the first phase of a larger project to fully upgrade the building. The second phase of the project does not yet have a budget or a timeline.

The college will soon begin looking for a contractor for the first phase and officials expect the groundbreaking to happen in 2015, Lugo said. Baruch has not said how long the work will last.

“The university has a lot of aging infrastructure,” Romero said. “It’s critical that we create a more modern environment for our students and the community.”

*Editor's Note: An earlier version of this story misstated the total cost of the first phase of the renovation project. It is \$90.4 million.*