

ARCHITECTURAL SHOWCASE

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Stanley Beaman & Sears, Inc. ATLANTA, GA, AND **HLM Design** ATLANTA, GA
The University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital CHICAGO, IL



Project category: New construction (completed February 2004)
Chief administrator: Ken Kates, COO, (773) 702-6070
Firms: Stanley Beaman & Sears, Inc., (404) 524-2200; HLM Design (no longer in business)
Design team: Burn Sears, AIA, Principal-in-Charge: Betsy Beaman, AIA, Director of Design; Kimberly Stanley, AIA, Director of Healthcare Planning; Al Collins, AIA, Project Manager; Regis Mitchom, Design Team Member; Cindy Jaggears, ASID, Interior Design
Photography: Jonathan Hillyer Photography, Inc.
Total building area (sq. ft.): 243,400
Construction cost/sq. ft.: \$279
Total construction cost (excluding land): \$68,000,000

The gothic, ivy-covered limestone buildings that have shaped the University of Chicago campus for many years stand in stunning contrast to the surrounding neighborhood, but their storybook quality, looming gargoyles, and climbing ivy offered rich ideas that inspired the design of the new children's hospital—ideas of growth and enrichment. Drawing from research indicating a strong relationship between education and the health status of children, the design team was motivated by this underlying concept.

The architectural character of Comer Children's Hospital is a decidedly modern one, with a filigree of leaves imprinted into the precast base—not only recalling the character of older campus buildings, but also making a life-affirming statement of its own. The glass curtainwall, layered and tinted in shades of green, springs free from the base like the foliage of a tree, helping



to further animate the building. At night, the entry tower glows with soft lighting that slowly rotates through the full color spectrum, projecting a sense that the building is alive.

The design process was very deliberate in its attention to children and their families, including an emphasis on a strong artwork program that reflects the wide diversity of cultures in the community. The main lobby is intimate in scale, with a curved, fabric ceiling that ensures a quiet welcome for visitors. The centerpiece is a water feature and aquarium, and three "water colonnades" that serve as the quiet backdrop for the seating area.

