



# contract

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*The student lounge in a study nook (opposite left) outside the computer classroom overlooks this two-story space at the heart of the facility (this photo) that is used for casual lectures or just relaxing. The double-height entryway (opposite right) connects east and west wings; the line cutting into the main focal wall represents half a gothic window.*



# About Face

CBT's renovation of Pendleton Hall at Wellesley College has completely turned around the look and function of the building

By Linda Burnett

Applying to college can be a nightmare for high schoolers and parents alike. Big? Small? East Coast? Private? But Wellesley College, in Wellesley, Mass., is indeed the right place for students who are serious about learning. A women's college with 125 years of history, its 65 buildings ranging from Gothic to contemporary in style reflect the campus's growth. But at one time or another all Wellesley students enter Pendleton Hall, the college's main classroom building.

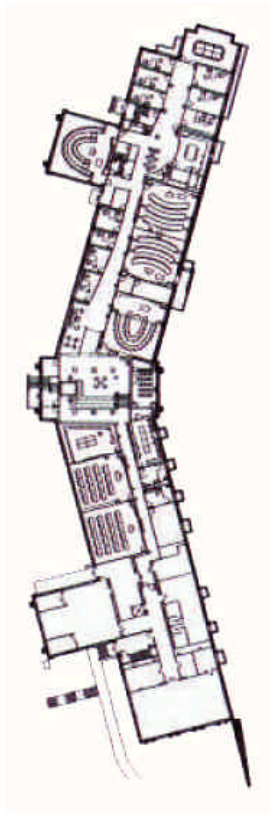
Pendleton Hall's east wing houses the social sciences department—including anthropology, economics, education, political science, and sociology—while the west wing is reserved for fine arts and Japanese. Originally built in the Gothic style in the 1930s and lightly renovated in the 1970s (when its use changed from science to social science), the space didn't invite students to hang out or casually meet professors. When this and other shortcomings were deemed critical in today's interactive educational environment, the College decided a total gutting and complete renovation of the building by Boston-based CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares was in order.

Learning spaces were wholly inadequate. "It wasn't state of the art," admits David Lindauer, a professor of economics who coordinates policy for the east wing's five departments. "Pillars blocked blackboards." And computer labs—now a mainstay of social sciences education—were blatantly missing. To solve these problems, the five department chairs identified three main objectives: to create a better teaching facility, incorporate suitable public spaces for spontaneous interaction, and improve faculty offices.

Traditional classrooms were abandoned in favor of case method classrooms—the type typically found in business and law schools—that encourage interaction with tiered and u-shaped designs that place the instructor in the middle. "It's been a transforming teaching experience," says Lindauer. A series of seminar rooms for smaller, table-top discussions and a tiered computer classroom now offer the necessary variety of available learning environments.



## Project Summary



Visitors enter the four-story building via a double-height lobby space, where a wall featuring a graceful geometric design creates a quiet, metaphorical connection to the building's Gothic exterior. "It's a small simple gesture that is endearing enough to last through time," says CBT principal Robert A. Brown, AIA, IIDA.

A 700-seat lecture classroom was repurposed to become a central meeting space at the heart of the facility, with flexible seating and breakout areas for chats or departmental benefits and dinners. "There was no central space," says Brown. "We aimed for a lounge format." Bleacher seating creates a casual lecture area, and a small library adjoins the space. Up above, a study nook that is open to the floor below is wired to allow students to log onto the computer system.

"What is most unique about this project is that we were hired by the faculty," says Brown. "The facility is under their control. They approved everything, not the facilities department." Now students and teachers casually gather in the public spaces, interaction across departments has improved, and professors have gotten better acquainted as the building is more fully used for social and intellectual events. "The goal was to build a great classroom for both student and teacher," says Lindauer. "But we also wanted it to be a fabulous place to spend time. It came out of putting a few heads together with a lot of opinions." Not always the most effective social experiment, in this case the methodology apparently worked wonders.

*Case method classrooms (above) and a computer classroom thoroughly modernize the learning experience at Wellesley.*

### Who

**Client:** Wellesley College. **Architect, interior designer:** CBT. **Structural engineer:** David M. Berg Associates. **Mechanical engineer:** BLW Engineers. **Electrical engineer:** RD Kimball. **General contractor, construction manager:** Richard White Sons, Inc. **Lighting designer:** The Lighting Design Group. **Acoustician:** Acentech. **Furniture dealer:** Office Environments, Office Resources. **Photographer:** Edward Jacoby.

### What

**Wallcovering:** Forbo. **Paint:** Devoe, ICI. **Laminate:** Formica, Nevamar. **Dry wall, ceiling:** USG. **Flooring:** Ardex, Kaswell End Grain Block Flooring. **Carpet:** Shaw, Crossley. **Carpet fiber:** Dupont Antron, Solutia. **Doors:** Weyerhaeuser. **Door hardware:** Schlage. **Glass:** Blumcraft. **Window frames:** Western Integrated. **Window treatments:** Mecho Shade. **Student, administrative desks:** CBT. **Student, teacher seating:** Keilhauer. **Teacher desks:** Knoll. **Lounge seating:** Bernhardt. **Auditorium seating, training tables:** Knoll Studio. **Seating upholstery:** Knoll, Bernhardt. **Library and conference seating:** Bernhardt. **Office shelving:** Knapp & Voight. **Files:** Steelcase. **Architectural woodworking, cabinets:** The Woodworks. **Signage:** Signworks. **Plumbing fixtures:** Kohler.

### Where

**Location:** Wellesley, Mass. **Total floor area:** 60,000 sq.ft. **No. of floors:** 4. **Average floor size:** 15,000 sq.ft. **Cost/sq.ft.:** \$205.