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UPPER EAST SIDE

So a Mainstay Hospital Can Expand, a Signature Theater Will Go Dark

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Hiroko Masuike for The New York Times

So long, Woody.

The 53-year-old Beekman Theater, an Upper East Side favorite where Woody Allen's character was badgered by an obnoxious autograph seeker in "Annie Hall," will show its final film on June 30.

"It's very sad," said Beth Simpson Crimmins, a spokeswoman for Clearview Cinemas, which operates the Beekman, on Second Avenue near 66th Street. "It's a very strong theater for us, but unfortunately the landlord has exercised a lease option to take back the property."

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, which has owned the property since 1989, plans to raze the Beekman, along with a North Fork bank branch and two existing Memorial Sloan-Kettering buildings, to make way for a breast and diagnostic imaging center.

Christine Hickey, a spokeswoman for the hospital, said Memorial Sloan-Kettering had outgrown an existing breast center on East 64th Street. "There's just no more space in the building," she said. "There's nowhere for us to go."

The new blocklong construction, which can be built without any zoning variance from the city, will be presented to Community Board 8 in July. "It's probably 14 or 15 stories," Ms. Hickey said.

The 510-seat Beekman, known for its late Streamline Moderne tilted-glass facade and the looping, chrome-and-neon sign atop its marquee, is one of the last single-screen movie houses in a city ruled by multiplexes.

"It's a New York City icon, it's an Upper East Side icon, and it's a piece of modern architecture, and we're losing our modern architecture constantly," said Seri Worden, executive director of Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts. The preservation group tried unsuccessfully to persuade the city to designate the Beekman a landmark so the new facility would be built around it.

Others see the situation differently.

"People tend to confuse nostalgia with architectural merit," said Barry Schneider, president of the East Sixties Neighborhood Association. "Preservation is forever. Just because you had a swell date there when you were coming of age doesn't qualify it for historic preservation."

The Beekman will be the latest in a series of period East Side movie theaters - along with the Baronet and Coronet on East 59th Street, the Sutton on 57th Street and Cinemas 1, 2 and 3 on Third Avenue - to be demolished or altered in recent years.

"That's a disaster," David Alcosser, an Upper East Side resident, said of the Beekman's demise, adding, "But I've had family members die of cancer, so it's hard to take a side."

The Beekman name will live on in a theater one block north, the New York OneTwo, which Clearview Cinemas plans to rechristen the Beekman One and Two. But unlike its predecessor, the new Beekman is set back from the street, a letdown for some Beekman boosters like Mr. Alcosser. "When you walk past here, the popcorn smell is phenomenal," he said of the Beekman. "I live across the street, and I walk home on this side just for that smell."