

When neighbors closed the door on expansion, **Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital in Ann Arbor, Mich.**, negotiated a lot swap with the local Red Cross—positioning them both for growth.

BY AMANDA WOLFE  
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

THE CLINIC MAGGIE MARCANTONIO HAD PURCHASED IN 1998 was old and the team needed more space. Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital sat on a large piece of land, so expansion seemed natural. But despite the practice's long history in the area, Marcantonio ran right into a "not in my backyard" mentality with residents nearby. "People hear the word *expansion* and they tend to worry," says Jacqueline Luurtsema, practice manager.

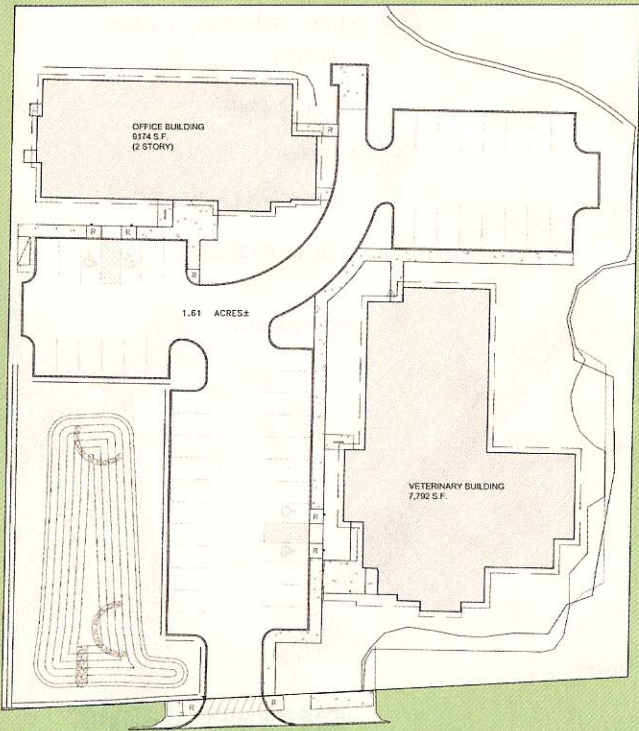
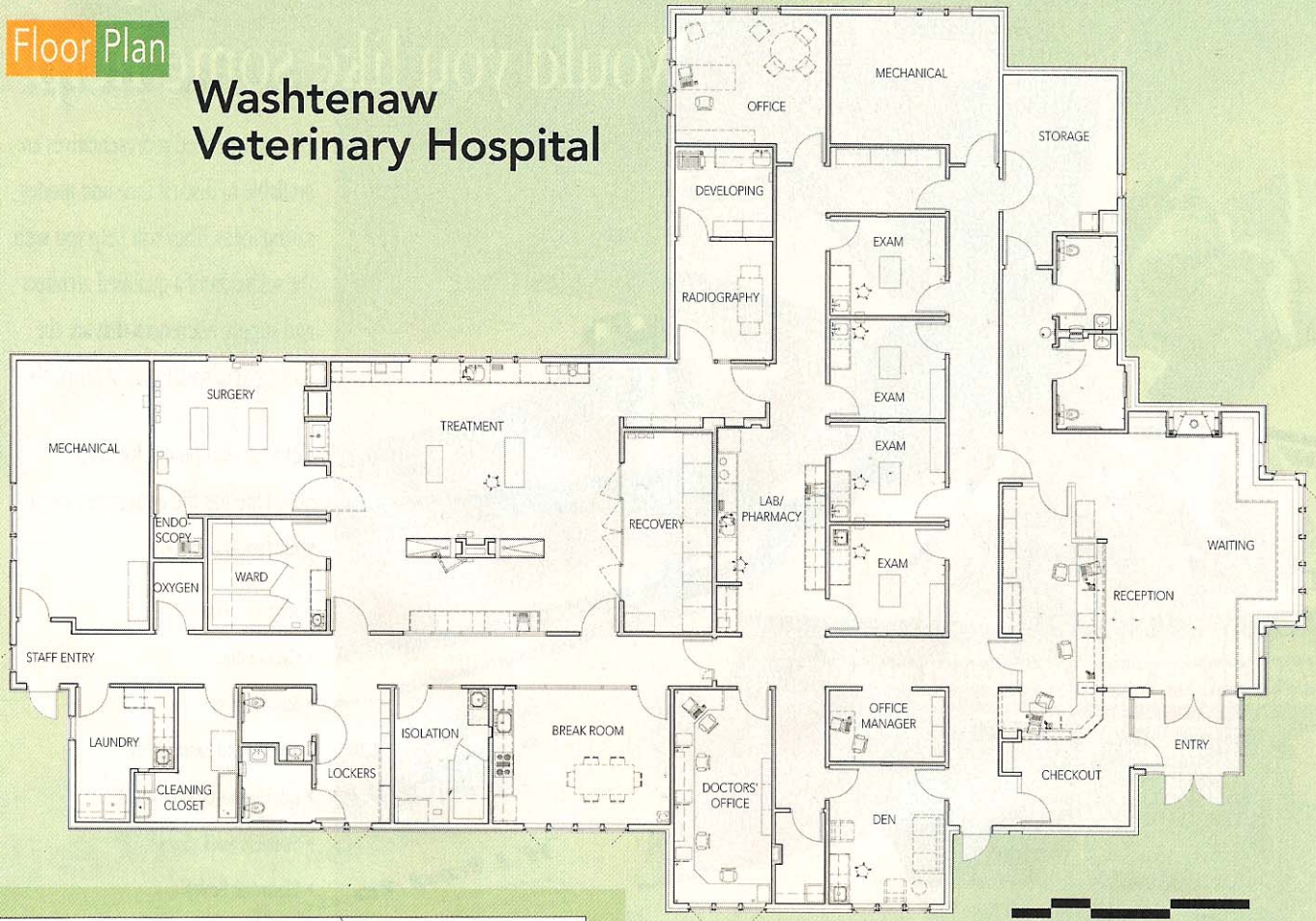
So Marcantonio began scouting locations for new construction. Then luck struck. While searching for alternative locations in Ann Arbor, Mich., Marcantonio learned that the local Red Cross wanted to move out of its 40-year-old building. The facility was in disrepair—and there wasn't enough room for the organization to expand. Soon the idea for a land swap between Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital and the Red Cross developed. The veterinary hospital would swap its large piece of land for the Red Cross' plot, which was closer to town and in a terrific location for a veterinary facility. ▶

# Swapping SPACE

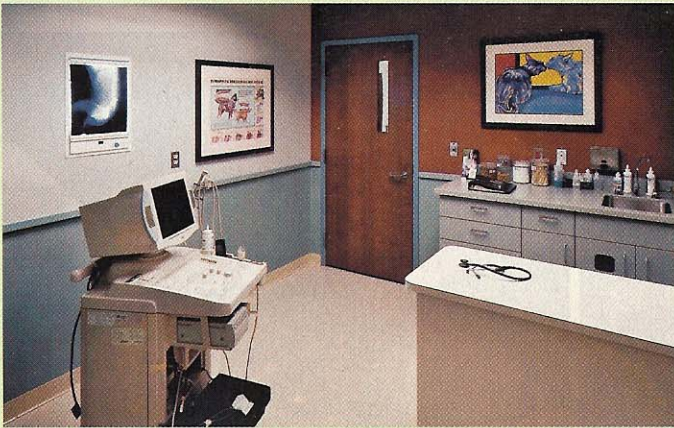


Floor Plan

# Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital



**Exterior:** The main hospital entry features prominent signage. An on-site office building provides space for future expansion, support services, and storage.



**Exam:** Doctors can enter the exam rooms from the private treatment area. Easy to clean and maintain, the rooms have benches with solid bases to prevent pets from retreating under the furniture.



**Break room:** The team's break room has a full kitchen complete with stainless steel appliances and a Corian countertop. The floor is a combination of sheet vinyl and carpet squares.



**Doctors' office:** The casement windows have blinds between the glass panes to simplify cleaning. Cabinets above the workspace ensure there's plenty of storage and elbow room—and room to roam.



**Exterior:** Known as "the lodge" for its rustic look, the hospital's windows flood interior spaces with natural light.

A look at the numbers

VETERINARY ECONOMICS

### Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital

2729 Packard Road

Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Phone: (734) 971-5800 • Fax: (734) 971-8299

washvethosp@ameritech.net

**Owners:** Maggie Marcantonio,  
MAM Veterinary Hospital LLC

**Associates:** 2

**Hospital team:** 8 full time

**Practice type:** Small animal

**Building size:** 7,792 square feet

**Number of runs:** 4 hospital indoor

**Number of cages:** 8

**Number of parking spaces:** 23 client, 14 staff

**Construction cost:** \$1,712,575 (building only,  
excludes land purchase, landscaping, parking lot, etc.)

**Site improvement fees:** \$369,755

**Professional fees:** \$378,008

**Equipment cost:** \$157,519

**Furnishing cost:** \$73,067

**Computer cost:** \$21,671

**Year built:** 2005

**Architect:** Bradford and Theresa Angelini,  
Angelini & Associates Architects

113 East Ann St.

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Phone: (734) 998-0735

Fax: (734) 998-0319

bangelini@angeliniarchitects.com

angeliniarchitects.com

# HOMWORK

1.

GO TO

[WWW.SIMMONSEDFUND.ORG](http://WWW.SIMMONSEDFUND.ORG)

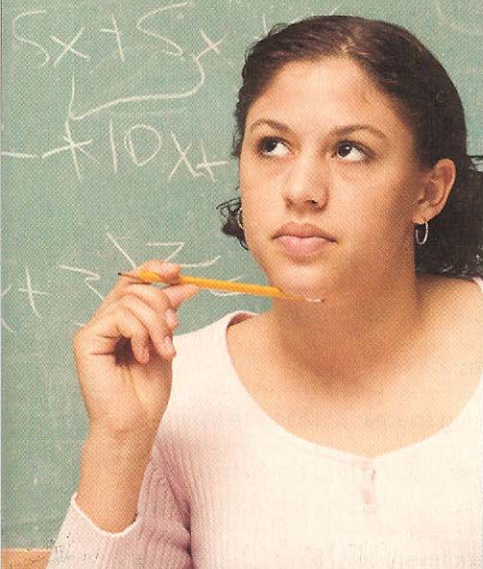
2.

READ SEF AWARD DETAILS

3.

CONTACT MY SCHOOL'S  
STUDENT AFFAIRS  
DEPARTMENT OR  
THE SEF AT

[SEF@SIMMONSEDFUND.ORG](mailto:SEF@SIMMONSEDFUND.ORG)



The Simmons Educational Fund (SEF) Student Business Aptitude Award is your chance to earn your school's award of \$1,500 and a chance to compete for the national award of \$10,000 and a trip to the Western Veterinary Conference.

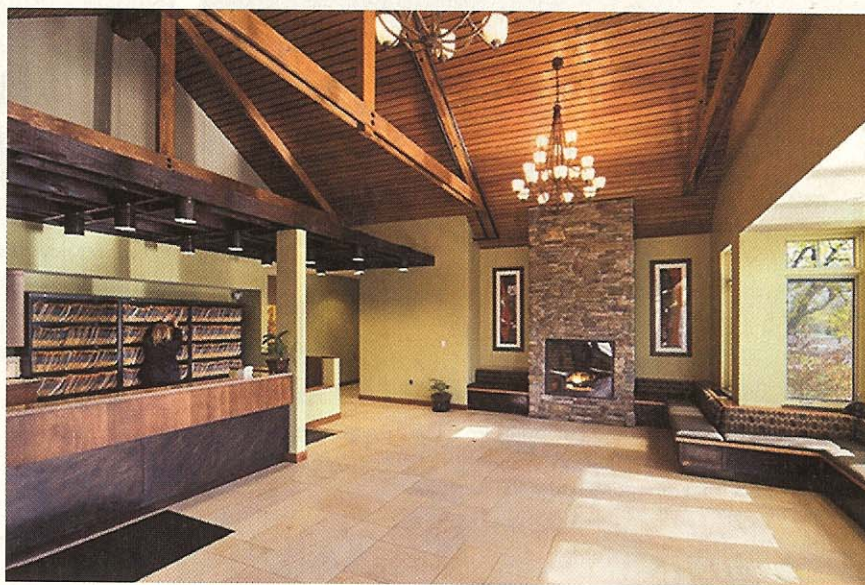
SEF is an independent, non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting business education in the veterinary community. Simmons & Associates, SEF's founding organization, specializes in veterinary practice sales and appraisals.

[www.simmonsedfund.org](http://www.simmonsedfund.org)  
800.846.0062



HONORING THE NEXT GENERATION VETERINARIAN  
Circle 131 on reply card

## HOSPITAL DESIGN



**Reception and waiting area:** To ensure clients' and pets' comfort, the space features a separate entrance and exit and a waiting area large enough to allow for some separation between pets. The chandelier and fireplace complete the rustic look.

The Red Cross built first while the team at Washtenaw stayed in its old facility. The new hospital was ready 15 months later, and the old building was demolished and made into the Red Cross' parking lot. The whole swap worked out pretty smoothly, Luurtsema says. And, on the really up side, the hospital walked away with a merit award in *Veterinary Economics'* 2007 Hospital Design Competition.

If you're thinking of undertaking a land swap, Luurtsema says it pays to know your city's rules and regulations—and be sure you can get the proper zoning. Careful planning, she says, is the most important part of the process. And while land swaps aren't common, it never hurts to keep an ear to the ground for potential deals.

### Hands-on design

Hospital owner Maggie Marcantonio always wanted to work with pets in a way that supported and enhanced the human-animal bond. Owning a veterinary clinic provided the platform for that. But she leaves the medical decisions—and left most of the design deci-

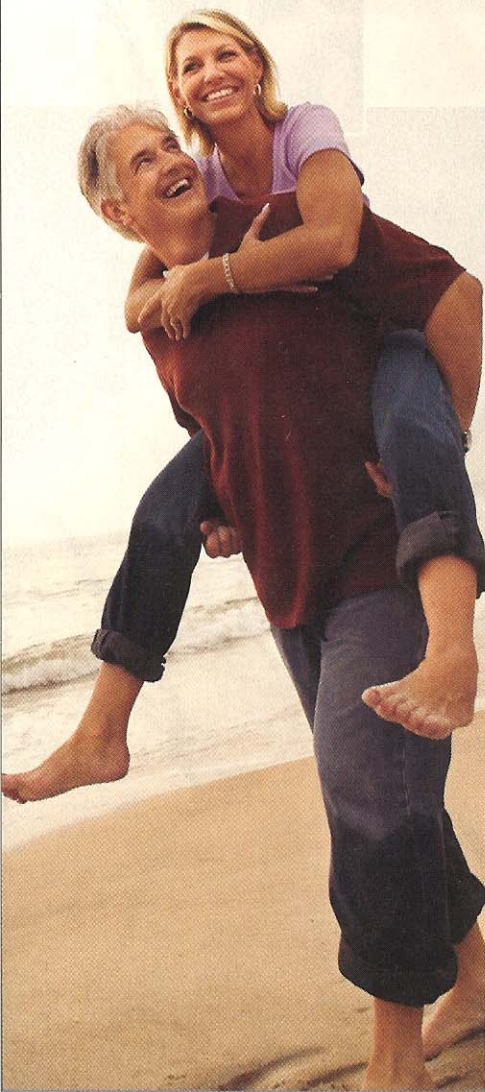
sions—up to the veterinary team. Her philosophy was that everyone at the practice should have input on the new design. "She told us, 'Here are the ideas out there. Now get everyone's input, because you all have a different view depending on where you work in the building,'" Luurtsema says.

One example of the team's hands-on approach: The practice's associate veterinarians visited other veterinary hospitals to get ideas and looked at floor plans, picking and choosing what they liked from each. Workflow was critical for the doctors and they took the time to be sure the design and flow would fit their needs.

And their hard work and research paid off. The doctors have been thrilled with the flow of the facility. Luurtsema says she asked them if they could change one thing, what it would be. "It was hard for them to think of anything," she says.

Lots of decisions affect the final floor plan and traffic flow, of course. For example, the team included a separate entrance and exit for clients and placed the euthanasia room close to the exit so

With Simmons  
as your partner,  
your biggest decision  
should be where  
to retire.



Since 1977, Simmons has been helping veterinarians buy and sell their practices.

Retirement can be sooner than you think. Do you have an Exit Strategy? Let your plans begin with Simmons.

Visit us today at [www.simmonsinc.com](http://www.simmonsinc.com) and take the SIM Roadmap Test to see which route is best for you. Or call us at 1-800-333-1984. We have offices in your area.

**SIMMONS & ASSOCIATES**

Circle 133 on reply card

## HOSPITAL DESIGN



**Office:** With its expansive views of the park located behind the hospital, this office, also called the counseling room, is a quiet work, meeting, and consultation space. Carpet helps the space feel warm and inviting.

that clients could slip out quietly.

They also included a color-coded lighting system for all of the exam rooms that helps the team manage client flow. When a client has been shown to an exam room, a team member pushes a button, and a light indicates that this client needs to be seen. When the light turns the second color,

the team knows a doctor has been in. The third color means the visit is complete and the room can be cleaned, and the fourth color means that the room needs to be sterilized.

Lurtsema says this system is also functional for the euthanasia room. Clients can take as much time as they need with their pet and then press a

### Take-away lesson

## A new way of doing things

Moving into a new building can be a big adjustment for the team. And something that's easily overlooked before the move—team communication—may need to be tweaked in the new facility. The strategies you used in the old building might not work in the new one. At Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital's old facility, team members used travel sheets to record client visits. The travel sheets were laminated data-collection forms that included the most common service and medication descriptions with the corresponding computer billing code. And they worked great because they could be easily handed off to the doctor, says practice manager Jacqueline Lurtsema.

Lurtsema and her team tried using the travel sheets in the new facility, but the old system didn't work in the new building. "We had to totally change our system," she says. "It was like making a round peg fit into a square hole." So the group made adjustments and worked through the problems and found new ways of doing things. Now, the doctor or the technician enters the charges directly into the computer in the back of the hospital in order to finish the invoice. The receptionist then just has to cash out the clients.



**Surgery:** Abundant natural light and a view of the surrounding park make this space ideal for the team. Treatment, surgery, and break areas were designed to be visually connected by large glass walls. This interior window allows a doctor to signal for an extra hand if needed.

button when they're ready. That way team members aren't going in and out of the room, and clients can let the team know they're ready without leaving the room. "That has been an unexpected use for the system," Luurtsema says.

While the doctors took control of the floor plan design, the owner focused on the aesthetics. She wanted to create a rustic lodge feeling—a comfortable, warm place for clients and pets. The facility also blends into the surrounding park and wooded area. And based on clients' and the community's reaction, the final design clearly achieved her goal. "When I talk about the building, people in the community say, 'Oh *that* building—the lodge,'" Luurtsema says. "People immediately know what building I'm talking about."

And while the practice lost a few clients with the two-mile move, the practice is now more accessible to clients on the other side of Ann Arbor. A fair trade, Luurtsema says.

### Settling in

With construction complete, all the team at Washtenaw Veterinary Hospital had to do was settle in. There were little

hiccups along the way, Luurtsema says, but they stemmed from issues beyond the team's control. "We were fortunate that when we moved in December, the snow wasn't really bad," she says.

And the benefits of the move outweigh the small inconveniences they ran into. For example, the team loves the large treatment room and finds it much more accommodating for procedures. Windows run along one side of the room, and it faces the park, which makes the space virtually ideal.

The den is another plus. This room, designed to accommodate acupuncture procedures and euthanasia, features comfortable seating and soothing music. The lighting is on a dimmer, all of which creates a calm environment. "Clients appreciate that when it's time for euthanasia, their pet isn't in a cold, sterile environment," Luurtsema says. Clients can get on the floor and spend as much time as they want with the pet.

The biggest difference Luurtsema sees between the new hospital and the old are the appreciative comments from clients. "They've really noticed the changes we made—just for them," she says. ■

**WHY DO WE  
SPECIALIZE IN  
VETERINARY LENDING?  
WE HAVE  
BEST FRIENDS TOO.**



When you have patients who can't tell you where it hurts, the last thing you need is yet something else to figure out, like where to get a business loan.

At Vine Street Financial we understand. We are specialists in the financial needs of veterinary practices. So give us a call at 1-800-758-0038 and pretty soon you'll feel like the leader of the pack.

**VINE  
STREET  
FINANCIAL**

*A division of BB&T*

*An Equal Opportunity Lender.*

Circle 134 on reply card