



# Inside Out

A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE WALLS OF NORWALK'S CORPORATE OFFICES



Corporate lobby at NordenPark

**Norden Park**  
10 Norden Place  
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Footbridge at Tauck World Discovery



**NORWALK** —There is a place in Norwalk where you can visit a tropical paradise, check out the work of budding artists and fashion designers, see a purple-walled room full of bold neon chairs, and even peer through the eyepiece of a Norden bombsight, "America's Secret Weapon of World War II."

It is NordenPark, the 633,000 square foot building located just south of I-95 near the Westport border. The building features a gigantic American flag that northbound motorists may admire during their daily commute.

The building was constructed in 1961 by Norden Systems, which for years was the only tenant. NordenPark is now a mixed use office building with tenants from various fields of business, including a travel agency, college, healthcare staffing company and Pepperidge Farm.

Norden Systems — now Northrop Grumman Norden Systems — is still the building's major tenant, but has downsized its portion of the building substantially over the past several years.

The owners of the building — a partnership of Spinnaker Companies, Greenfield Acquisition Partners and Summit Development bought it in late

2000 — continue to renovate portions of the building as Class A office space. The building is a work in progress as 81,000 square feet — another take-back from Norden — will be available for lease in January.

"It's a very diverse building," said building manager Mike Brown of Spinnaker Companies. "There's tons of infrastructure available and it's Class A space. It's ideal for data, research and development, industrial. There's full wireless (Internet) connection throughout. There's also a six megawatt emergency generator, so we're entirely lit up in a power outage. The building is unique in that it never goes down. It's just another thing that gives us a marketing edge."

The building sits on an 81.8-acre site — three acres of which are in Westport — that includes tennis courts, a jogging trail and softball field. The owners are considering further developing the property with a mix of commercial and residential use.

The lobby at the corporate entrance reflects the owners' modernization of the building. Modern art sculptures dangle from the ceiling and brightly colored chairs invite visitors to a sitting area. A lightly-colored wood panel elevator shaft adds



Security desk at Northrop Grumman Norden Systems

to the airy, bright, modern feel.

To the right of the lobby is Tauck World Discovery, a travel tour operator that leases 43,000 square feet. A walk through Tauck's office is like being on one of their tours to a tropical destination.

The reception area features large circular port-hole windows and a 12-foot compass painted on the floor.

The reception area and office area are linked by a bamboo bridge with small flowing streams on either side and lush green foliage "growing" out of the floors and walls. Just after the bridge the hallway continues and features back-lit, floor-to-ceiling photos from some of the destinations to which Tauck books tours. The posters display lions, penguins, hot-air balloons, mountain scenes and European streets among other world scenes.

The large reservation area has a thatched roof and the conference rooms bring to mind a cruise ship.

Tom Armstrong, corporate communications manager at Tauck, describes the decor as, "Warren Buffett meets Jimmy Buffett."

Breaking from the world travel motif, Tauck's cafeteria is decorated in a 1950s style with record albums hanging from the ceiling.

"There are themes behind some of the tenant's spaces," Brown said. "It gives the build-

ing a unique feel."

To the left of the office is Pepperidge Farm, which recently leased space in the building.

The cafeteria, fitness center and conference room are also on the first floor. The cafeteria, run by Vito Derario of Pelican Restaurant, has doors leading to a large exquisitely landscaped courtyard.

The conference room has a 61-inch plasma television and video conferencing capability. Like the rest of the building, the conference room also has wired and wireless Internet capability. The room, which will be expanded in the near future, is available to all tenants. Brown said outside companies may also rent the conference room.

The conference room also features a series of large photographs depicting other properties owned by Spinnaker.

A 450-foot hallway lined on both sides by photographs of flowers leads to the lower level of Gibbs College, which leases 64,000 square feet on two floors. The college, which has about 1,000 students, has its own entrance on the back side of the building.

The college has sewing labs as well as numerous computer labs. A glass-enclosed case near the reception desk displays dresses designed by students and artwork from stu-

dents grace the hallway walls on both levels.

The student lounge, book store and library are on the second floor.

CompHealth, a healthcare staffing company, leases 20,000 square feet on the second floor. CompHealth's office is not for those who favor dull, muted tones. The bold lobby features a grandfather clock, U.S. flag, lizard motif, curved purple reception desk and bright walls. The training center has neon green, yellow and orange chairs, while the conference room has purple chairs with long, curved backs.

"The office space is a nice reflection of how we are as a company: very modern and progressive," said John McCusker, a senior search consultant.

In addition to having an open floor plan, the office also has low-rise cubicles so the employees can communicate with each other more easily. CompHealth moved in last December.

"What's so satisfying about having CompHealth is that it truly makes NordenPark a multi-tenant park," said Kim Morque of Spinnaker. "Companies want to know that they have neighbors. We have a great list of tenants with Nor-

den as the anchor."

Northrop Grumman Norden Systems has its own entrance and lobby. Access to its facilities was limited due to the nature of the company's business.

Northrop Grumman employs about 500 people at its Norwalk location and 125,000 worldwide.

Visitors to the Norwalk office are greeted by a bald eagle and U.S. flag sculpture that is protected by glass. A small inscription by the display reads: "Dedicated to all Norden Systems Employees — Past, Present and Future."

Also on display is a Norden Bombsight, which greatly improved the accuracy of dropping bombs and played a key role in World War II. Carl Norden, founder of the company, sold the rights to the bombsight to the U.S. government for one dollar.

The display also has a six-minute video describing the bombsight.

Next to the bombsight display is an enclosed display of a booklet with the names of members of the "Pickle Barrel Club," a bombing accuracy competition. Formed during World War II and made possible by the Norden Bombsight, members of the club boasted they could: "place a bomb in a pickle barrel from 20,000 feet."



Students walk past the library on the second floor of Gibbs College.



The conference room has video conferencing capability.