

'Iconic' GSK building up for sale



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DURHAM -- GlaxoSmithKline's plans to shrink its building footprint in the Triangle includes the sale of several buildings, including the unique Elion-Hitchings Building in the Research Triangle Park.

The building, designed by architect Paul Rudolph, is an "iconic element" of the park, said Cris Mulder, director of marketing and sales for the Research Triangle Park Foundation, which is the organization that manages the park.

The building at Cornwallis Road in the park has been up for sale since late February, said Robert Sutton, a spokesman for GlaxoSmithKline, along with two other buildings that are being sold as part of the company's plans to reduce its physical presence in the Triangle.

Sutton said the company now occupies about 3.7 million square feet of space in the Triangle, and is planning to reduce that to about 2.5 million square feet once the consolidation effort is complete.

Sutton said about 1,000 employees are planned to be moved into renovated spaces at its Moore Drive campus from the approximately 40 buildings that the company owns or leases in the Triangle area.

Sutton said the renovations are hoped to allow the company to use that space more efficiently, resulting in significant energy and other cost savings.

He said the company is vacating eight buildings in the area including the Crown South and Crown North buildings in the Imperial Center, space at the American Tobacco Campus in Durham, and the Elion-Hitchings Building.

Sutton said the Crown North and South buildings at the Imperial Center Business Park are the two other buildings, in addition to the Elion-Hitchings Building, that are for sale.

Sutton said the Elion-Hitchings Building was designed by Rudolph and was first occupied in the early 1970s by the company Burroughs Wellcome.

The building is designed on a 22.5-degree slant, he said, since he said the ridge that the building sits on is at the same incline.

He said the building was filmed for the 1983 science fiction film "Brainstorm."

The building is named for Gertrude B. Elion and George H. Hitchings, two of the recipients of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1988 who were researchers at Burroughs Wellcome, according to Mulder.

Sutton said Glaxo first established a presence in the Research Triangle Park in 1983 with offices on Moore Drive, which is now the focus of the recent consolidation effort.

In 1995, Burroughs Wellcome and Glaxo merged to become Glaxo Wellcome, he said, and a merger between that company and SmithKline Beecham established the company as GlaxoSmithKline.

Sutton said GlaxoSmithKline has retained a commercial real estate firm for the sales of properties the companies owns that it is vacating, and Mulder said the foundation is working with the company to help market the property.