

Reflections

at New York Life Investment Management, LLC, Parsippany, N.J.

By Donna Boss,
Contributing Editor

Hot-side equipment that can be moved among this B&I operation's food concept stations gives staff maximum flexibility when preparing and serving meals for breakfasts, lunches and catered events at Reflections cafeteria located in a new office complex in suburban New Jersey.

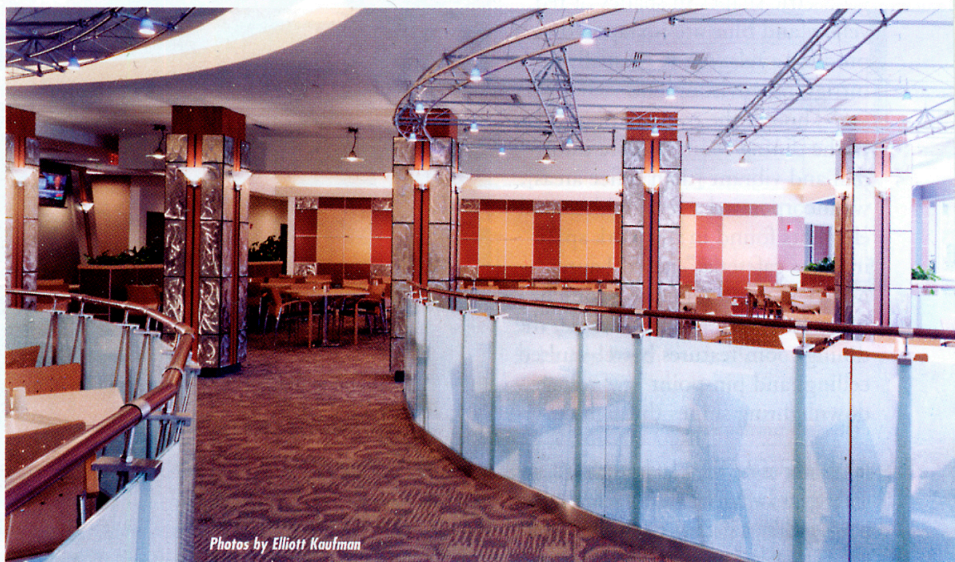
Display cooks flipping burgers on grills, preparing pizzas to bake in a deck oven and sautéing veggies and pasta on specialty ranges are a stark contrast to the computers and spreadsheets found in the offices of white-collar workers at the corporate headquarters of New York Life Investment Management, LLC, in Parsippany, N.J. A notable difference between the dining and work environments was an integral part of the master plan for this suburban office complex, which was built in 13 months — from April 2000 to May 2001.

"We were asked to develop a cafeteria that would be the antithesis of this corporate workplace," explained Peter Biber, principal of The Biber Partnership AIA in Summit, N.J., the firm that served as architects and interior designers for the entire 256,750-square-foot office and dining complex that was constructed to replace two separate NYLIM office buildings. "The dining environment was planned from the beginning to be a place in which employees could gather and have fun."

According to Anthony Luisi, a vice presi-

dent at New York Life Investment Management who oversees foodservice operations that are managed by A Corporate Affairs headquartered in Whippany, N.J., the lively, kinetic new cafeteria space was also designed to offer employees a place to renew and refresh while remaining on campus. to 22

Designed to offer an environment in which employees can relax and renew, NYLIM's Reflections cafeteria features self-service and display-cooking stations (above). In the dining room (below), pin-point low-voltage downlighting shines through curvilinear and gridded ornamental trusses. Architecturally designed planters and railings help to define intimate seating groups.



Photos by Elliott Kaufman



Additional seating for 50 is positioned in a hallway separating the dining room from this landscaped B&L courtyard.

Photo by Elliott Kaufman

Reflections

◆ *from 21* Currently, 515 employees are housed in this ultra-modern, upscale workplace that includes a 6,000-square-foot computer center, a 150-seat call center, training facilities, a full-service cafeteria and executive dining rooms, and a fitness center. The facility was designed to accommodate some 895 employees.

In the office part of the complex, The Biber Partnership selected architectural elements such as a space-defining canted curved wall that surrounds core elements including conference rooms, break areas, file rooms and restrooms. Support equipment is strategically placed in "town centers" that were architecturally designed to scale down the size of the workspace. Various geometric shapes in shades of red, yellow and blue are juxtaposed to produce a relaxing yet visually intriguing environment.

"Though the overall atmosphere of the dining room is more informal and vibrant [than office areas], we incorporated a few architectural elements found in the work space into the cafeteria," noted Lauren Mitchell, project architect for The Biber Partnership. For example, the dining room features barrel-vaulted ceilings and pin-point low-voltage downlighting shines through curvi-

In the back-of-the-house kitchen, menu items are prepared with a four-burner range, a fryer, a tilting skillet, a steamer, a convection oven and a hot cabinet, as well as work counters.

linear and gridded ornamental trusses. Sculpturally formed column covers are sheathed in stainless steel and marlite. Architecturally designed planters and railings define intimate seating groups. A fully integrated audio-visual system enables the space to be utilized for overflow employee meetings and special events.

Among the distinctive features of this design are the combination of materials, such as glass, marlite, stainless steel, wood, solid surfaces, paint and tile. A combination of pendant lights and lighting placed into metal trusses that hang from the ceiling was selected instead of illuminated



Photo by The Biber Partnership AIA

sneeze guards in order to highlight the displayed food selections without interrupting the views through the facility.

Yet another notable touch added to the cafeteria's interior design is the floor pattern, which Mitchell said, is a "take-off on the stock market tickertape graph that goes up and down."

"One of the best elements of this design," added Luisi, "is the visible natural light and views to the landscaping. Customers can see right through the kitchen to the outside." Also outside the cafeteria building is a courtyard seating area designed by Biber with multi-colored tiles and green shrubbery where employees can dine during appropriate weather.

When food for the Reflections cafeteria is delivered, it is taken from the adjacent loading dock and placed into a walk-in refrigerator, a walk-in freezer or dry food storage area. Sauces, soups, dressings, vegetables and several entrées are prepared in a back-of-the-house kitchen. Adjacent to the cold-storage space is a BOH hot-food line with a four-burner range, a fryer battery, a 30-gallon tilting skillet, a steamer, a convection oven and a reach-in hot cabinet. Also in this back-of-the-house area are several work counters and a slicer.

In the servery area, customers can see many of the menu choices being prepared at stations positioned in an open-arc

design. "We wanted customers to know that the foods being prepared are fresh," noted Biber. At one end of the space is a pizza and pasta section, which is equipped with a roll-in refrigerator and a reach-in refrigerator/freezer where ingredients are held until needed for preparation, a pizza prep table, a conveyor deck oven for baking pizzas, a baker's rack and a thermal shelving unit where finished pies are held. A pasta cooker is positioned on the serving counter adjacent to hot-food wells that are used to hold pasta selections such as ravioli served with a variety of sauces. A yogurt dispenser is positioned at the end of the station.

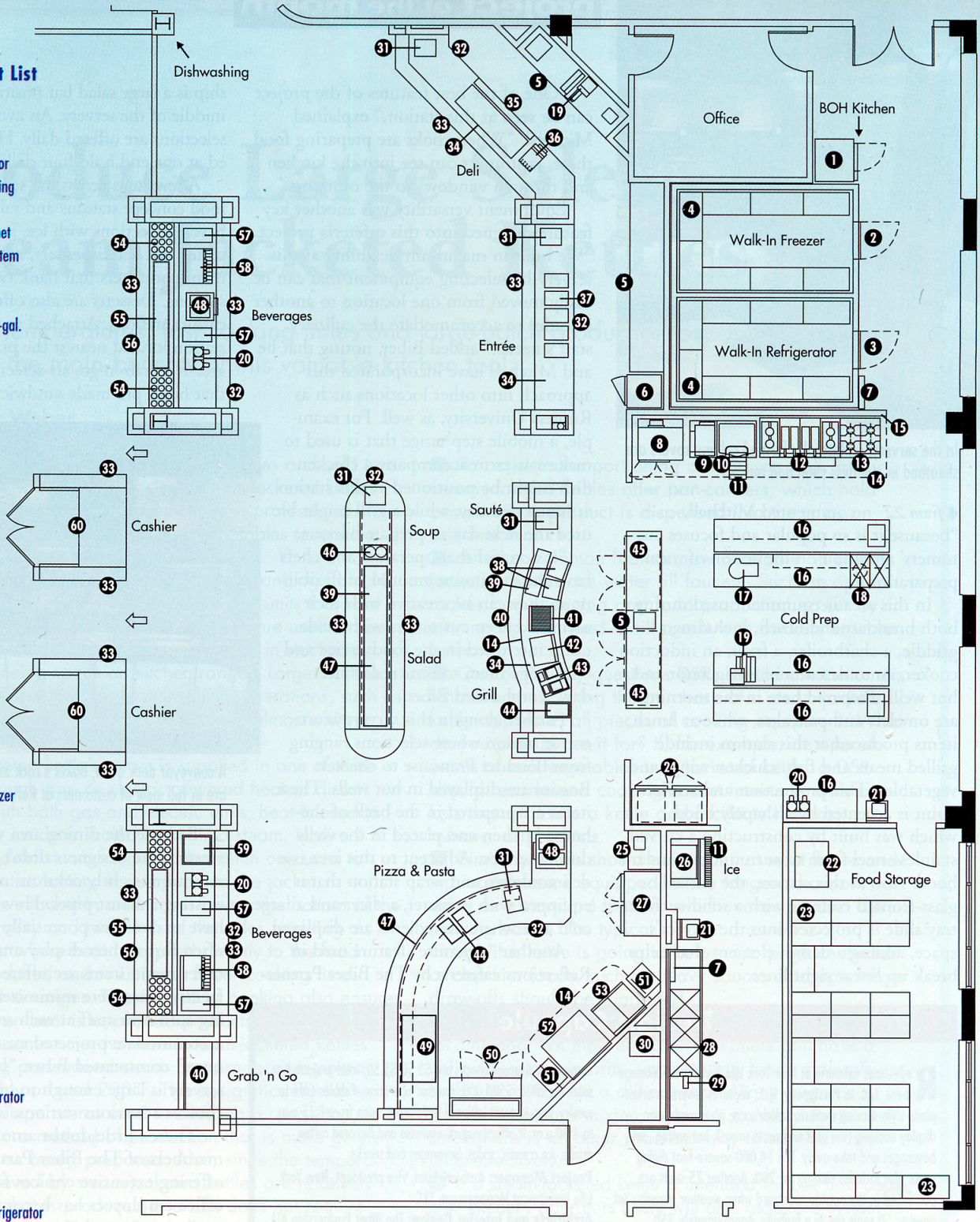
Adjacent to the pizza and pasta area is a display cooking station that features both a grill and sauté equipment. "We give this section a prominent position at all of our project locations,"

to 24 ◆

Reflections at NY Life Investment Management, LLC

Key Equipment List

1. Blast chiller
2. Walk-in freezer
3. Walk-in refrigerator
4. Refrigerator shelving
5. Work counter
6. Reach-in hot cabinet
7. Fire protection system
8. Convection oven
9. Steamer
10. Tilting skillet, 30-gal.
11. Floor trough
12. Fryer battery
13. Range, 4-burner
14. Exhaust hood
15. S/s wall panel
16. Worktable
17. Food cutter
18. Disposer
19. Slicer
20. Coffee brewer
21. Hand-wash sink
22. Soda dispensing system
23. Storage shelving
24. Roll-in refrigerator
25. Counter & hand sink
26. Ice machine
27. Reach-in refrigerator/freezer
28. Potwash sink
29. Sink agitator
30. Janitor's sink
31. Tray dispenser
32. Serving counter
33. Tray slide
34. Protector case
35. Sandwich section
36. Toaster
37. Hot-food section
38. Induction cooker
39. Cold pan
40. Air-screen refrigerator
41. Charbroiler
42. Griddle
43. Fryer
44. Hot-food well
45. Undercounter refrigerator
46. Soup well
47. Sneeze guard
48. Yogurt dispenser
49. Thermal shelving unit
50. Pizza prep table
51. Baker's rack
52. Pizza oven
53. Pasta cooker
54. Utensil dispenser
55. Condiment pan
56. Condiment counter
57. Cup dispenser
58. Ice, soda & water dispenser
59. Ice cream freezer
60. Cashier counter



Eagle, a broadline manufacturer of commercial foodservice equipment, is pleased to sponsor the "Facility Design Project of the Month" department. To learn more about us, visit www.eaglegrp.com.

facility design project of the month



Photos by The Biber Partnership AIA

In the servery, sculpturally formed column covers are sheathed in stainless steel and marlite.

◆ from 22 commented Mitchell, “because it is so popular and focuses customers’ attention on the action of meal preparation.”

In this area is equipment used during both breakfast and lunch, including a griddle, a charbroiler, a fryer, an induction cooker, an undercounter refrigerator and hot wells. Prepared here in the morning are omelets and pancakes, while at lunch, items produced at this station include grilled meats and fish, chicken wings and vegetables. This production and service point is accented by a shapely hood, which was built by constructing a curved, stainless-steel form to surround a standard hood. Also at this station, the curved glass-fronted counter with a solid-surface tray slide is projected into the servery’s space, adding a design element that helps break up linear sight lines.

“One of the best features of the project can be seen at this station,” explained Mitchell. “When cooks are preparing food there, customers can see into the kitchen and through windows to the outdoors.”

Equipment versatility was another key feature designed into this cafeteria project. “We built in maximum flexibility at this servery by selecting equipment that can be easily moved from one location to another in order to accommodate the culinary staff’s needs,” added Biber, noting that he and Mitchell have incorporated this approach into other locations such as Rutgers University, as well. For example, a mobile step range that is used to make sauces to accompany a chicken dish might be positioned at this station at lunch one day, while a grill might be used the next day to prepare burgers.

“It’s crucial that operators and chefs have the maximum amount of flexibility, so they can be creative with their menus to keep customers with fickle tastes interested in the foodservice and encourage them to return day after day,” emphasized Biber.

Further along in this servery is an entrée station where selections ranging from flounder Francaise to chicken Rossini are displayed in hot wells. These items are prepared in the back-of-the-house kitchen and placed in the wells during service. Adjacent to this area is a deli sandwich and wrap station that is equipped with a toaster, a slicer and a large cold case where ingredients are displayed.

Another “signature” feature used in Reflections cafeteria by The Biber Partner-

ship is a large salad bar positioned in the middle of the servery. An average of 35 selections are offered daily. Hot wells located at one end hold four daily soup choices.

A few steps across the servery from the food concept stations and salad bar are two beverage sections with ice, soda, water, coffee and tea dispensers, as well as condiment containers that flank two cashier stations. Desserts are also offered near the cashier stations. Attached to one beverage station located nearest the pizza and pasta area is a grab ‘n go, air-screen refrigerator that holds pre-made sandwiches and salads.



A conveyor deck oven, baker’s rack and thermal shelving units are in full view of customers at Reflections’ pizza station.

Because the dining area was built from scratch, the designers didn’t have to work around unsightly columns or re-route existing exhaust pipes. However, they did have to consider potentially long lines that often form when display and made-to-order menu items are offered. “In this facility, lines were minimized by scheduling sufficient staff at each station to accommodate projected customer volume,” commented Biber. “In addition, the servery is large enough to offer a lot of choices at various stations.”

There’s little doubt among Luisi and members of The Biber Partnership that offering extensive choices for corporate office employees has become standard operating procedure at new B&I operations. By selecting interchangeable equipment and keeping the overall package as simple and functional as possible, this project team maximized the odds that NYLIM’s facility will be able to withstand the changeable food interests of 21st-Century customers for many years to come.

— FE&S

Design Capsule

Reflections cafeteria at New York Life Investment Management, LLC, in Parsippany, N.J., features several marketplace-style serving stations: salad/soup, pizza and pasta, display cooking (the grill and sauté areas), hot entrée, deli, beverages and take-away. The 14,000-square-foot dining space also includes seating for 200. Another 75 seats are positioned in the outside courtyard when weather permits. Yet another 50 seats are in a hallway. Approximately 350 customers eat breakfast and lunch daily. Two executive dining rooms are situated on the first floor and used for catered events. Catering is also provided throughout the buildings in conference rooms.

The cafeteria, including the equipment package, cost \$450,000. Employee participation averages 75%. A contract management firm, A Corporate Affair, runs the operation on a fee-based arrangement. Total cafeteria staff includes nine

employees. Average checks are \$3.50-\$5.50; total projected sales for 2004: \$500,000. Another operation, Pebbles Café (a sundry shop in main lobby of building) is open from 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. It offers yogurt, espresso and flavored coffee drinks, ice creams, sodas, beverages and snacks.

Project Manager: Anthony Luisi, vice president, New York Life Investment Management, LLC

Architects and Interior Design: The Biber Partnership AIA in Summit, N.J.; Peter Biber, principal; Lauren Mitchell, project architect; Linda Patten, director of interior design and project manager

Foodservice Consultants: Joe Raymond, Raymond/Raymond Associates, Chester, N.Y.

Contract Foodservice Management: A Corporate Affair, Whippany, N.J.

E&S Dealer: BRC, Westchester, N.Y.