

QUEENS NEWS

Kids, nature bond at Alley Pond

THIS nature center is ready to sprout.

The Alley Pond Environmental Center has redesigned its visitors' building — doubling its size — to cut down a waitlist that routinely ranges from 7,000 to 10,000 children each year.

"This will allow us to expand our space to do more programs and bring more students in for classes and birthday parties," said Irene Scheid, who heads the school-trip hotspot.

There will be more classrooms and a rain garden at the center once the project is complete.

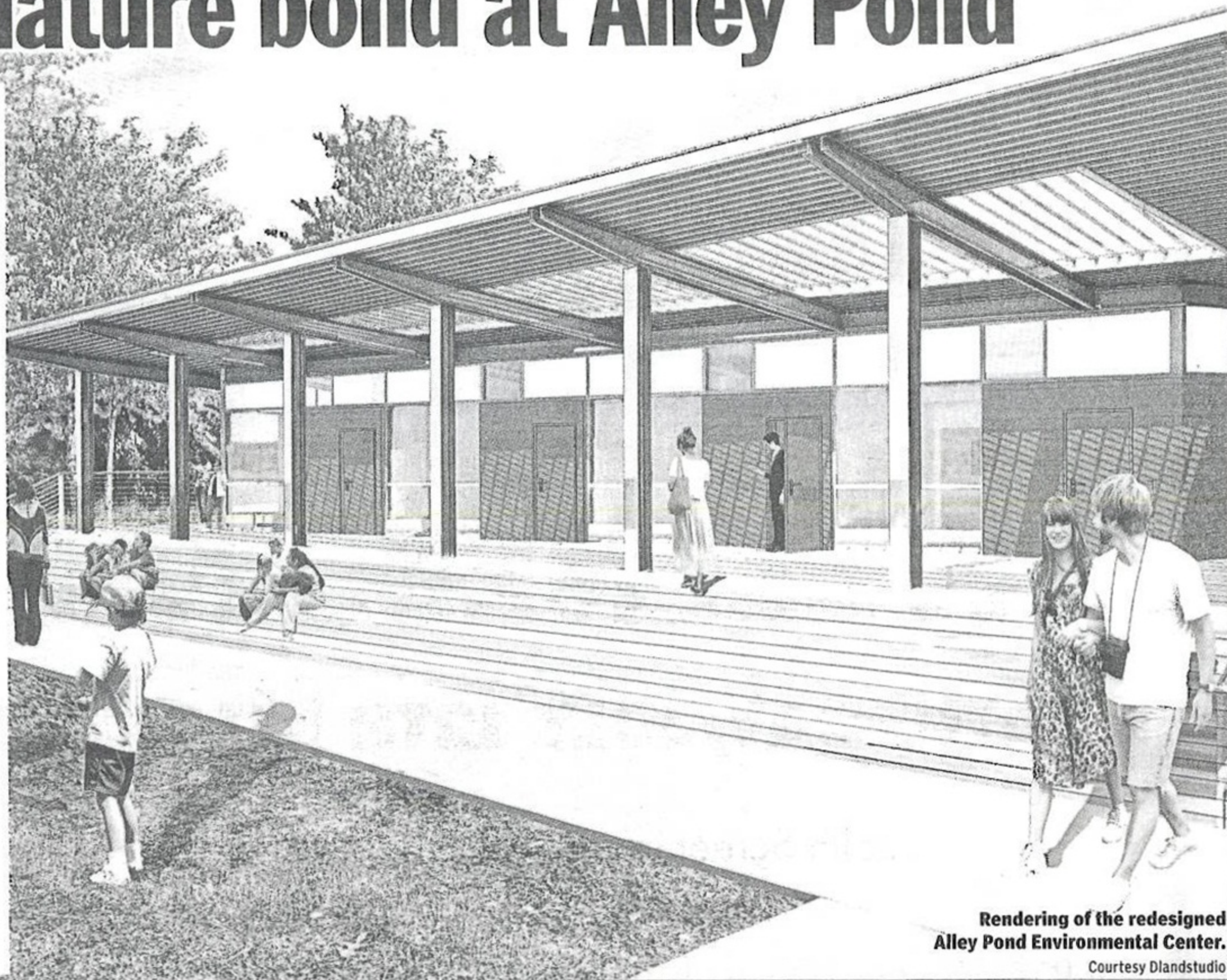
Officials could not say when construction would start.

The center, adjacent to the sprawling 636-acre Alley Pond Park in Douglaston, has taught youngsters about environmental preservation since 1972.

Mayor de Blasio and the city's Public Design Commission awarded the project for its general design excellence Monday.

"It's a huge honor," Scheid said.

Jill Castellano



Rendering of the redesigned Alley Pond Environmental Center.

Courtesy Dlandstudio