The University of Colorado Denver had occupied a medical campus at 9th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard in Denver for approximately 85 years. The medical campus was created at this site following a gift of the central land mass from a well-known Colorado philanthropist.

The Colorado General Assembly April 9, 1919, adopted Senate Bill 77 creating the Colorado Health Sciences Center and a University Hospital under the jurisdiction of the University of Colorado Board of Regents. Entities within the Health Sciences Center, authorized in Article 8, section 5 of the Colorado constitution include:

- The School of Medicine
- Dental School,
- School of Nursing
- Graduate School of Health Sciences
- and the Colorado Psychiatric Hospital

The University of Colorado Hospital, initially created as an integrated entity, was separated from the university first in 1989. After the state Supreme Court rejected the legislature’s efforts to create a private entity to operate the hospital, it was re-established in the 1991 legislative session under its own board and operates as a public authority under Colorado statutes today (23-21-501-527).

The major campus core area covered more than 30 acres on seven and a half contiguous blocks northeast of the intersection of Colorado Boulevard and 8th Avenue, with the entrance at 9th Avenue. The 9th Ave campus encompassed 18 buildings that total approximately 2.23 million square feet of gross building area. There were more than 10,000 students, faculty, staff, physicians and researchers on the campus and 3,000 daily patients and visitors to the campus. Parking on-campus in 12 surface and two structured lots totals approximately 2,700 spaces.

The land that forms the main portion (Colorado to Birch Street between 8th and 9th Avenues) of the campus was given to the university by Frederick G. Bonfils in a deed dated June 19, 1922. This property deed was restricted.

A similar parcel deeded to the University April 4, 1933, extending from Colorado to Birch Street between 9th and 11th Avenues is not deed restricted. The two parcels comprise the core of the existing campus. With the exception of two purchases in 1937 totaling eight lots, the size of the existing campus changed little until the mid-1960s.

From 1965 through 1969, the institution acquired the majority of properties on Harrison and Colorado Boulevard totaling 3.4 acres between 9th and 10th.

The original campus buildings were constructed on the site during 1924. This included the original hospital building which housed the School of Medicine. Facility additions and remodeling occurred sporadically by adding wings and filling courtyards so that the campus was dominated by what may be described as a mega-structure with a few adjacent free standing buildings. The newest campus facilities included the School of Pharmacy facility (98,000 gsf) completed in 1993; the Biomedical Research Building (200,000 gsf) completed in 1992; the critical care tower expansion to University Hospital, completed in 1996; and a parking structure, completed during 1994.

Prior to the Fitzsimons acquisition and the new Anschutz medical campus development, the former site was neighbor to five other hospitals and health care institutions, forming a health-oriented activity center. The remainder of the immediately adjacent community was a mix of low, medium, and high-income residences which give way to a small commercial strip and low, medium, and high-rise apartments close to two sides of the campus.
In the early 1990s the university identified a need for additional research space for the various functions. Its 1992 Master Plan indicated an anticipated deficit of all types of space at just over 175,000 assignable square feet if the research element of the institution was to expand in areas the institution desired.

The university initially sought 55 acres at the former Lowry Air Force Base, a facility already destined to be closed by Congress. However, although the U.S. Department of Education supported the use for the acres requested, the Plan was deemed too costly by the Board of Regents when the university was asked to pay fair market value for the Lowry property.

The institution then examined sites at the former Stapleton Airport as Denver sought alternative uses for that property when the new Denver International Airport was constructed. However, when the site purchase and development costs were estimated internally, that alternative was not pursued.

The institution next sought federal and state approval for development of a portion of the declared excess property at Fitzsimons Army Garrison shortly after the Base Realignment and Closure Commission determined in 1994 that it, too, would be a candidate for closure.

Fitzsimons Army Garrison ultimately was nominated for closure in July 1995 by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission established by Congress to examine the nation’s military bases and recommend consolidation and closures. At that time, the institution submitted a request from the Department of Education and the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority (FRA), the legal entity created by the City of Aurora seeking to claim jurisdiction over the property. The request was submitted jointly August 12, 1997, by the UC Denver, University Hospital and University Physicians, Inc., a non-profit entity operated by the university to provide financial services to its faculty clinicians.

That application was approved September 29, 1997, with a phased conveyance plan designed to ensure environmental clean-up of any property prior to conveyance and vacation of the property for all Army uses.

With the development underway at the Fitzsimons Army Garrison, the 9th Avenue began the transition to Aurora. Over the next several years as existing buildings such as Building 500 (the old Fitzsimons Army Hospital) and new buildings were constructed, faculty, staff and students were moved to the new campus. By the end of 2009 the campus at 9th Avenue, with the exception of the University North Pavilion located at 1255 Clermont, was vacated.