



Frequently Asked Questions

Burton Conner Renewal Project | Spring 2020

Introduction

This document seeks to address frequently asked questions about the Burton Conner (BC) Renewal Project. This information is updated frequently, and the most recently added questions are marked with an asterisk (*).

1. Why is Burton Conner being renewed?

- Burton Conner was built in 1928 as the Riverside Apartments and later acquired by MIT. It has served as a residence hall since 1948. Over the years, Burton Conner's exterior envelope, interior finishes, and infrastructure have aged and are in need of renewal.
- Burton Conner is scheduled to go offline for renewal after Commencement 2020 and is targeted to reopen in August 2022. This is primarily for an infrastructure and building systems update, which will include modest updates to finishes and spaces. We expect that building code will dictate that some spaces need to be reconfigured to allow for accessibility updates. DSL will engage the House team and Transition Team on the design process related to these changes.

2. How will the House be involved in the planning process?

- A Burton Conner Transition Team, which includes House team members, student leadership from the house, and DSL staff, was formed in February 2019. Since that time, the group has been working to identify student and community needs, surface renewal related issues and develop strategies to address them, work through logistics of relocation, provide input to project plans as needed, and communicate with key stakeholders in Burton Conner.

3. *What support is available to Burton Conner residents during the renovation?

- While we understand this project creates uncertainty, we are committed to helping Burton Conner during this transition, and we are excited that the Burton Conner community will have an updated facility that can support BC residential communities for many years to come when it reopens.
- The Transition Team is identifying ways to support the Burton Conner community during the course of the renewal period. Residential Education and the Campus Activities Complex staff are working together to provide space for Burton Conner to hold community gatherings and events. DSL is committed to providing funding for programming. A programming board will be established to work on the details of planning events, utilizing programming space, and managing event funding in coordination with the House team. Burton Conner student leaders will have standing in the Undergraduate Association and DormCon while Burton Conner is closed for renewal.
- Some of the Burton Conner GRAs may choose to serve as community liaisons, and the Heads of House and Area Director will remain on campus to support the community.



4. Will all students have to move out during the construction when Houses are being renewed? Will they be able to move to another residence hall with their friends?

- All residents of Burton Conner will need to move out during construction. An empty building allows work to be completed more efficiently and avoids impacts to residents such as utility shutdowns, multiple relocations, and noise.
- DSL will make every effort to offer students housing options that best meet their needs. The goal is to provide positive and supportive living experiences for all of our students, where they feel welcome and included in their new residential communities and are eager to participate fully in the life of the house in which they live during the renewal period.
- Even as BC students continue to foster the continuation of BC community, their new living environments will be opportunities for new experiences and to engage in new house activities, make new friends, and contribute to their new communities. DSL has begun conversations with Heads of House about welcoming BC residents to their houses. These conversations will continue with the houses, RACs, and DormCon in the coming months.

5. *How will room assignments work?

- Housing & Residential Services (HRS) will run a building switch lottery in Spring 2020 for Fall 2020 assignments. Applications will open March 3 and will close on March 23. Students will receive their building switch results on April 6, and Rooming Assignment Chairs (RACs) will begin room assignments according to their in-house processes.
- Burton Conner residents will have priority in the switch lottery process.
- In order to provide students with the opportunity to move with friends to new residences, students will be able to enter the building switch lottery in groups of up to eight students to transfer together. When possible, HRS will move two connected groups of up to eight together to the same residence.
- HRS will work with the RACs to prioritize rooming assignments for transferring students. While students may be able to live with a chosen roommate, RACs will make room assignments according to their in-house processes, and HRS cannot guarantee that all eight members of a group will be able to live on the same floor as the spaces may not be available.
- Students who were living in Burton Conner in spring 2020 and choose to move off campus during the renewal project will be guaranteed housing in Burton Conner when it reopens as long as they are still eligible for undergraduate on-campus housing.

6. *What if I decide to move off campus after I receive a fall assignment?

- Students who wish to cancel their assignment for the fall semester need to submit a cancellation form to HRS no later than June 15, 2020, to avoid a cancellation fee. Cancellations after June 15 will result in cancellation fees. More information can be found on the [HRS website](#).



7. *Communities in Burton Conner have communal belongings that residents would like to use during the renovation period, such as event materials and equipment (e.g., board games, sound system, etc.). How will the community be able to access these items?

- Residential Education and HRS are arranging storage options for equipment and materials that Burton Conner communities will need during the renewal period. Communities will need to collect and catalogue their communal belongings, designating items to be stored short-term (for use during the renewal period), long-term (stored until the building reopens), or to be discarded.
- For long-term storage, curation of special belongings will be important to ensure that items stored for two years are useful and meaningful for the students who will inherit them when BC reopens.

8. *Will there be storage provided for Burton Conner residents' personal items over the summer?

- In an effort to provide support to the Burton Conner community during this time of transition, Housing & Residential Services will provide complimentary storage for Summer 2020 to Burton Conner residents who plan to return to undergraduate campus housing for the Fall 2020 semester. More information will be made available to Burton Conner residents during the month of April.

9. Will Burton Conner and other renewed residence halls change to tier 1 pricing once they reopen? Can returning Burton Conner residents from the Class of 2023 be "grandfathered" so they don't have to pay tier 1 rates?

- In the past, when other residence halls have undergone major infrastructure and building system renewals, or new ones have been constructed, rates have been set at tier 1 pricing. Burton Conner and all other future renewed residence halls will change to tier 1 pricing when they reopen.
- MIT's financial aid program is designed to meet student need for educational expenses, and financial aid packages are adjusted related to the standard increases in the costs of attendance each year. Financial aid packages are calculated based on the double room rate in a tier 1 building and a full meal plan.
- "Grandfathering" rates presents many complications and questions about fairness. Housing rates are set with the assumption that they reflect the condition of the building. It is important that different students are not paying different rates for the same space/amenities in the same building so we will not "grandfather" Burton Conner students from the Class of 2023 who may choose to return to the building.

10. *How will the building change during renewal?

- As stated above, this renewal is primarily for an infrastructure and building systems update, which will include modest updates to finishes and spaces. HRS and their partners in Campus Construction and the Office of Campus Planning are currently gathering data and surveying the building to better understand the full scope of renewal work. As a result, some spaces may be reconfigured.
- Projects of this scale include the requirement to make the building accessible according to current codes. This presents a great opportunity to make the building even more welcoming and inclusive to all who may want to live there. Some physical changes to the building, such as making some rooms larger and some doorways wider, will be required to meet current accessibility codes.



- The Transition Team will have opportunities to provide input on any potential changes to student residential and program spaces. Plans will also be shared with the Burton Conner community for input as they are being developed.

11. *After the renovation, will Burton Conner still be a cook-for-yourself community?

- Yes, Burton Conner will remain a cook-for-yourself community.

12. *When Burton Conner renovations are complete, will murals be allowed?

- Creative expression is an important facet of campus life at MIT. Principles regarding student artwork in residential buildings were developed by an Undergraduate Housing Working Group in 2018–2019 with the goals of supporting opportunities for student artmaking, ensuring that art is curated, and aligning these activities with priorities for effective stewardship of the building. HRS has been supporting a pilot approach in Next House and is currently reviewing a proposal for student artwork in New House. As the most recent renewal project, New House will offer a helpful pilot to guide how artwork is supported in buildings following future renewal projects. Care will be taken to permit artwork on panels in locations that were designated for displays as part of the New House architectural design process. DSL, the House Team, and the students who are planning for the reopening of Burton Conner in 2022 will have the opportunity to build upon these initiatives as they consider the role of student art in the life of the community.

13. Which residence hall will be renewed after Burton Conner?

- No decisions about the next renewal project have been made yet.

14. What are the plans for New Vassar? Will it be used as a “swing” dorm during the renewal of all residence halls?

- New Vassar has a Founders’ Group, which is currently working to develop the residential experience that will be offered in the residence hall. The Founders’ Group includes students, staff, faculty, and the House leadership team.
- As with our other residence halls, it is important for New Vassar to have its own identity, so the new community will not serve as a “swing” dorm in the short or long term.

Being a swing dorm would be disruptive to the New Vassar House team’s and House leaders’ ability to establish a House identity and cohesive spirit if a large number of spaces are reserved for another residence hall that functions independently from New Vassar. Because residential renewal projects are likely to extend for two years (typically half of a students’ time on campus), we want students to welcome and embrace their new communities as positive additions to college life, cherishing the friendships that they made in their former residence while working to develop a new group of friends and experiences in their new residence halls.

An additional reason New Vassar will not be a “swing” dorm: New Vassar is a dining dorm, and residents will be required to purchase a meal plan. While we continue to see a growing number of students enrolling in MIT meal plans, not all students wish to be on a meal plan.

15. Where can questions be directed throughout the planning process?



- The easiest way to reach us with questions, ideas, or concerns is by emailing burtonconner-renewal@mit.edu.