

Introduction

On December 19, 2019, MIT announced plans to construct a new 550-bed apartment-style residence for graduate students and graduate student families. More information about the project can be found in the below Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why is MIT expanding on-campus graduate student housing?

MIT is fulfilling its pledge to provide graduate students and graduate student families with an array of on-campus housing options by bringing a new apartment-style residence hall online that will add 550 beds on the current site of W89 and the West Lot parking area. The West Lot is located between Simmons Hall and the MIT Police station on Vassar Street.

Guided in part by recommendations from two separate graduate student housing working group reports ([a 2014 Report to the Provost](#) and [a 2018 Report to the Chancellor](#)), MIT is partnering with a third-party developer on the project, which marks the final part of MIT's [October 2017 commitment](#) to graduate students and the City of Cambridge to add 950 beds to our graduate student housing stock.

2. Why did MIT select this site for the new residence?

MIT selected the W89 and West Lot parking site after considering several options across West Campus. The site is the most desirable location because it allows for all 550 beds to be built on one site; it is near other graduate student residential communities; and it can be developed without applying for a re-zoning or variance.

3. Why is MIT partnering with a third party to develop and manage this residence?

MIT has decided to partner with a third party student housing developer who will provide the financial capital necessary for construction and who will operate the building once it is constructed. This approach will give MIT the financial flexibility and bandwidth we need to expedite adding beds, while reserving MIT resources for making capital renewal improvements and addressing deferred maintenance work throughout the graduate student housing system.

4. Who is the third party developer?

MIT is currently in the process of negotiating an agreement with the third party developer. Once the agreement is finalized, more information will be shared with the community. Various faculty and student leaders have been briefed on the firm

and the terms we are currently negotiating.

5. Will this residence be open to single graduate students, graduate students with families, or both?

The new residence will include a mix of unit types for single graduate students and graduate students with families. The unit mix will be informed by MIT's current understanding of graduate student housing needs and preferences collected through reports, surveys, and the Housing and Residential Services office as well as the current availability of off-campus options.

6. Will this residence include other units available for rent by undergraduates or faculty members?

No, the number of units constructed in this residence will meet MIT's commitment to expand its graduate student housing stock. If graduate student housing demand changes in the future, MIT will retain the flexibility needed to update its housing policies accordingly.

7. Will there be a head of house and student government in this residence? How will MIT ensure residents are supported?

This residence will be different than current on-campus housing options. It is modeled after an apartment-style building. The goal is to give MIT graduate students and graduate student families who currently live off-campus in similar buildings an affordable on-campus option. This approach also enables MIT to diversify its on-campus housing stock portfolio so that we can better respond to student preferences for a variety of living arrangements.

Residents in this new community will have access to the same strong support services MIT currently provides to students living off-campus.

8. How will MIT ensure the rates for this new residence hall are affordable for students?

MIT will guide the rate setting for this residence as it does for other on-campus graduate residences. The building's condition as well as rates charged in comparable on- and off-campus housing options will factor into the Institute's guidance on rates.

9. Describe the project timeline, including opportunities for community input.

While we are in the early stages of this project, a preliminary timeline that prioritizes community-input gathering has been established:

Winter-Spring 2020: Planning and design stage that will include opportunities for input-gathering from graduate students

Summer-Winter 2020: Continued design and project development; City permitting to begin

2021: Refine project and secure City permits

2021 or 2022: Anticipated start of site demolition and construction, subject to change as project is defined. Duration of construction and an opening date will be determined once the project is underway.

10. Where will the MIT Police station move?

Plans for the MIT Police station are underway and more details will be shared when available. The project team will be working closely with MIT Police to assess their space needs and to determine a new on-campus location.

11. How will individuals who park in West Lot be accommodated?

The Parking and Transportation Office will work with individual parkers on assignments, taking into consideration proximity to housing and offices. This work will be informed by the findings from [AccessMIT](#) as well as the office's recent experience relocating West Garage parkers.