



An Exciting New Future for the Met Warehouse

“Who better to revive a grand old building and reknit the streetscape along Massachusetts Avenue than those who love and understand buildings and cities the most? SA+P already has a wonderful spirit and sense of identity; uniting so many elements of the school in a single building will amplify that strength and create a central resource for the whole MIT community.”

L. Rafael Reif
President, MIT

The iconic Metropolitan Storage Warehouse (Met Warehouse) building on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Vassar Street is a familiar presence to the MIT and Cambridge communities. Now, an innovative renovation project is converting this historic structure into a state-of-the-art hub for design and a home for the largest makerspace on campus, overseen by Project Manus, MIT’s makerspace initiative.

This reimagined building will assemble varied units of the MIT School of Architecture and Planning (SA+P), currently widely distributed around campus, and facilitate the study of interdisciplinary design pedagogies as students confront the world’s most critical global challenges. In the new building, SA+P will engage the rest of MIT, Cambridge, and the world by hosting collaborative programs and activities in architecture, urbanism, design, and the arts—subjects of keen interest to students in many fields of study.

The adaptive reuse of the Met Warehouse will create approximately 110,000 square feet of academic, research, gathering, and makerspaces, including labs and studios for undergraduate and graduate students. As the Institute’s new design hub, the renovated Met Warehouse will establish a dynamic public face for SA+P, bridge the east and west sides of campus, and create a link to the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing and the Kendall and Central Square innovation ecosystems.

Built in stages between 1894 and 1916, the five-story Met Warehouse is one of the oldest buildings in its Cambridge neighborhood. Collaborating with the award-winning architectural firm Diller Scofidio + Renfro, MIT will usher in a new era for architecture, envisioning the future of cities, design innovation, and entrepreneurship, while adapting this remarkable historic structure for contemporary use.

THE MET WAREHOUSE—A NEW DESIGN HUB AT MIT

SA+P equips students to confront society's most pressing challenges, from climate change, to equitable and efficient transportation, to public health. Design education sparks innovative approaches and solutions, as our faculty and students demonstrate time and again.

The Department of Architecture will relocate to the renovated Met Warehouse building, along with research units and studios from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning; the Center for Real Estate; the MIT Program in Art, Culture and Technology; and the Norman B. Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism.



AN INTERDISCIPLINARY COMMUNITY

Drawing on the school's recognized strengths and unmatched collaborative capacity, the following three growing areas of multidisciplinary research and teaching will inspire the development of the Met Warehouse as a vital campus hub. In addition to these areas of focus, SA+P is spearheading leading-edge work across a spectrum of today's challenges, including mobility, climate change, urban health, and social justice.

Design: The Minor in Design (D-Minor) created in 2016 is now the second-most popular minor among undergraduates, and a design major followed in 2018. The reenvisioned Met Warehouse will further foster MIT students' strong interest in design and provide an ideal environment for MITdesignX (SA+P's entrepreneurial incubator, which has helped launch dozens of startups), and a new iteration of the MIT International Design Center, a multidisciplinary community of faculty, researchers, labs, and students.

City Innovation: At MIT, urban planners and computer scientists are tackling immediate challenges as financial turmoil, population shifts, and political disruption are reshaping the identity of cities and nations. An undergraduate major, 11-6 Urban Science and Planning with Computer Science, harnesses the power of technology to understand and address the challenges of global urbanization, including public health, sustainability, data and social equity, and mobility. The Met Warehouse's facilities will enhance the program's ability to train undergraduates in the theory and practice of computer science and urban planning and policy making, employing statistics, data science, geospatial analysis, visualization, robotics, and machine learning.

Transmedia Storytelling: Thanks to transformative digital technologies and greater access to data, storytelling is evolving, and the Transmedia Storytelling Initiative builds on MIT's bold tradition of experimental arts and multimedia. In the revitalized Met Warehouse, SA+P faculty will collaborate with colleagues Institute-wide to mine data and tell stories across multiple platforms. This initiative, launched in 2019 by SA+P and the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, draws on MIT's expertise in architecture, the arts, urban planning, writing, literature, virtual reality, civic media, and computer science.

The Met Warehouse renovation will empower SA+P faculty and MIT students from all fields of study to respond to the world's challenges with innovative thinking and highly collaborative making. It will embody the Institute's motto, "mens et manus" ("mind and hand") in directing creativity, knowledge, and imagination toward solving real-world problems. SA+P looks forward to sharing this vibrant new space with the MIT and Cambridge communities.