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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

City approves Harvard's plan for \$100-million Tata Hall in Allston

Posted by Matt Rocheleau September 16, 2011 12:57 PM

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(Courtesy: Harvard Business School, William Rawn Associates, & Reed Hilderbrand)

A sketch of the planned Tata Hall viewed from Harvard Business School's Kresge Hall looking toward Soldiers Field Road and the Charles River.

By **Matt Rocheleau**, Town Correspondent

The city has approved Harvard University's plan to build a \$100-million, seven-story building to be used primarily for housing on the Business School campus in Allston.

The [proposed](#) 150,000 square-foot Tata Hall was announced by the school last fall after the university [received a \\$50-million gift](#) to fund the new 180 dorm-style facility that will also include academic components.

The donation from India's Tata Group Construction is the largest gift from an international donor in Harvard Business School's 103-year history.

Work on the building, set to begin in November, will employ 210 construction workers, and the facility's completion, expected by late 2013, will lead to hiring of around 20 permanent workers, city officials said.

The arch-shaped stone and glass building on Soldiers Field Road will overlook the Charles River and provide housing for the Business School's Executive Education program, which the city's redevelopment authority described as "a short term business program that attracts business talent from around the world."

"The \$100 million state of the art project is an indication of Harvard's

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The \$100-million state of the art project is an indication of Harvard's commitment to its Boston campus, the Boston Redevelopment Authority said in announcing its unanimous vote Thursday night to approve the university's plans.

The dorm rooms will be clustered into study group suites with kitchen facilities, several small auditorium-style classrooms and a common meeting space "to help building community among program participants," the city said.

In late 2009, the university [halted construction of a \\$1.4 billion science facility](#) in Allston, subsequently causing strained relations with neighborhood residents, after the plummeting stock market ravaged the value of Harvard's investments.

This past spring, the university [began work on its first major project since](#) the science complex development stalled – a \$20-million investment to convert a 78,000 square-foot building along Western Avenue into a laboratory for innovation and entrepreneurship.

Later in the spring, [crews broke ground](#) on Charlesview 2, a \$207-million mixed-use project on land that Harvard had swapped previously with the complex's owners.

The university made a "substantial cash payment" to cover the relocation costs for that project, which is being developed by The Community Builders, Inc. and financed through private debt, tax credits, and other funding, including a \$106-million loan from the state's affordable housing bank.

[Earlier this summer](#), the school [announced a new approach](#) of dividing its ambitious plans into smaller projects and forming partnerships with outside developers and investors in order to build on its large mass of land holdings in Allston, where [some residents have remained skeptical](#) of the school that has failed in multiple instances to live up to its promises to the community in recent years.

In recent months, the school has been [working to sign leases](#) at vacant retail and commercial properties it owns in Allston. In June, Harvard [swapped some of its Allston land](#) with the Skating Club of Boston. And, in early July, the [university opened Library Park](#), which, for some Allston residents, was a step toward renewing their faith in Harvard's commitment to the neighborhood.

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