

JOHN HARVARD'S

JOURNAL

Construction of the Allston science complex will halt. The Charlesview housing site, across Western Avenue (to the right), will come under Harvard's control—but development of a proposed arts and cultural hub at this key intersection with North Harvard Street remains a vision for the future.

Arrested Development

BOWING TO financial reality, the University announced in December that, as expected, it will halt construction on its huge science facility in Allston—the first part of an ambitiously envisioned campus expansion during the next half-century. Moreover, Harvard is in effect rebooting its planning effort for that expansion overall. That implies a longer deferral of Allston development—and raises the prospect of significant changes from the prior vision of new homes for the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) and Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), a cultural and performing-arts complex, expansive laboratories, new undergraduate residences,

relocated athletic buildings, and other facilities.

Science Facility Frozen

FORMAL NOTIFICATION came in a letter from President Drew Faust. Addressing the science facility first, she wrote that the University “will pause construction” after completing current work in early spring. The letter gave no projected duration for the “pause,” and introduced a new wrin-

kle: continued analysis of “strategies for resumed activity, including co-development.” This suggests that Harvard is exploring options for a partnership with private investor-developers, local hospitals, other institutional users of laboratory space, or pharmaceutical companies (which have made large investments in research facilities in Cambridge and the Longwood Medical Area in the recent years).

These options are more conservative

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than those announced in February 2009, when Faust made public the decision to review construction on the project (estimated to cost \$1.3 billion to \$1.4 billion). Faust said then that the facility's foundation would be brought up to surface level—representing perhaps 30 percent of the construction cost—but that purchases of materials needed to build the four laboratories themselves would be deferred while Harvard undertook a thorough review of the project's scope and pace. The options, she said, included proceeding as originally

planned (if economic conditions improved rapidly); reconfiguring the building “in ways that yield either new cost savings or new space realization”; and pausing construction completely. The first option is obviously moot. The second—redesigning the facility—is now contingent on the needs of a possible co-developer.

The early-2009 decision reflected the realization that the financial crisis would severely erode the value of the endowment, as well as curtail Harvard's ability to borrow funds for capital projects with-

out impairing its top credit rating. (A recent debt offering for other construction was rated Triple A; see “Two Projects Proceeding,” below. But the ratings of Caltech, Dartmouth, and Rockefeller University have been downgraded recently. For Harvard, a lower rating would raise borrowing costs, possibly make large interest-rate swaps more expensive, and perhaps hamper some endowment investment strategies.)

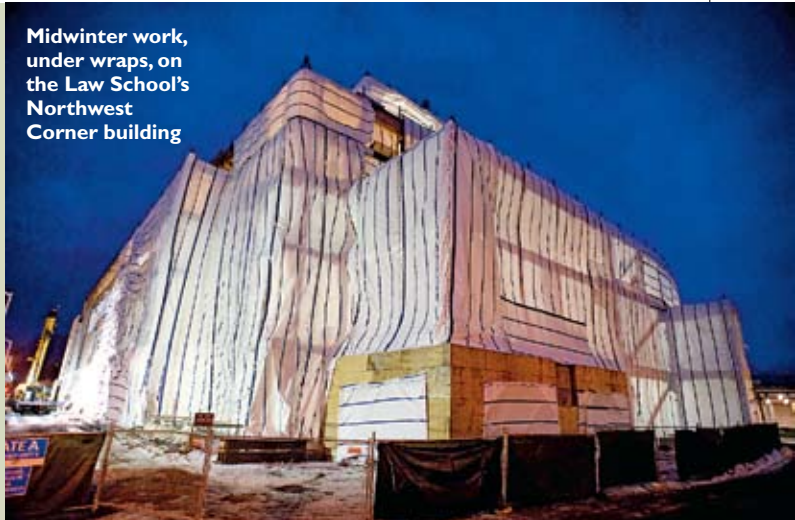
The recent decision to “pause” and search for partners to restart the project

Two Projects Proceeding

In January, the University placed a \$480-million debt offering, in part to retire existing borrowings but also for \$219 million of “project costs,” the majority associated with Harvard Law School's Northwest Corner building (see “Legal Legroom,” January-February 2007, page 61, and “Sun, Wind, and Steel,” November-December 2009, page 16N). That 250,000-square-foot project was well begun before the financial crisis unfolded in 2008, and is being completed; occupancy is expected in the fall of 2011. Although it was anchored by two large gifts raised during that school's recent capital campaign (of \$25 million and a reported \$30 million, respectively), the overall costs are estimated to be in the range of \$220 million to \$250 million, necessitating the financing. (The law school will likely have to begin servicing the debt and paying for operation and maintenance—multimillion-dollar new expenses—in fiscal year 2012.)

The other major campus construction—a complete renewal of the now-mothballed Fogg Art Museum, previously estimated to cost \$350 mil-

Midwinter work, under wraps, on the Law School's Northwest Corner building



lion to \$400 million—was authorized by the Corporation in December. Although that decision was not formally announced, exterior demolition began in late January. Thomas Lentz, Cabot director of the Harvard Art Museum, pronounced himself “pleased and relieved” that the work can proceed, given the cost of the “complex” overhaul and prevailing financial conditions.

The Renzo Piano-designed project, which will renovate the core building and its antiquated systems, will also yield additional gallery space and a new entrance along Prescott Street and art-study centers for faculty, student, and visitor use on the upper levels. Previously announced gifts from Emily Rauh Pulitzer, A.M. '63, and David Rockefeller '36, G '37, LL.D. '69, provided more than \$70 million to advance the work. Other financing has not been reported, and fundraising continues. Lentz hopes that—following a planned 36 months of construction and up to a year to move the collections back to the reconstructed facility—the museum can reopen for the fall term in 2013.

Renderings of the reconstructed Fogg Art Museum from Broadway at Prescott (upper left) and Quincy (lower left) streets; the contractors begin.



reflects both the known financial realities and various adjustments the University has made during the past year. The scientists once headed to the Allston complex are being provided for elsewhere: the stem-cell researchers in Cambridge, and the bioengineering scientists in Cambridge and Longwood, while the Medical School's systems biology department remains in Longwood. Those decisions have two consequences:

- Given the tens of millions of dollars (and possibly more) needed to refit existing laboratories for the scientists diverted from Allston, and to relocate other professors to accommodate these moves, it is unlikely the University would want to incur those large costs again, soon, simply to gather stem-cell, bioengineering, and systems-biology staffs in Allston.

- Overhead funds paid with sponsored-research grants are an important means of defraying capital costs for laboratory buildings and facilities. With scientists diverted from Allston, and growth in their ranks slowed, the population of investigators whose grants would help pay the indirect laboratory costs will be smaller, making it harder to cover additional debt costs that Harvard would have to incur to erect the new Allston facilities. (See "Further Financial Fallout," January-February, page 45, for information on the faculty retirement-incentive offers and the plan to reduce new professorial appointments, at least within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.) Faust's letter said that "Harvard's significant momentum in the life sciences" will "in no way" be slowed by the delay in the Allston science complex, and that faculty recruiting will continue. But the trajectory has clearly changed.

According to a News Office interview with executive vice president Katie Lapp, who oversees Allston, "We expect to take the next year to look at possible opportunities, including co-development with private partners or other institutional partners that may make sense for that site, as well as for other Allston sites that Harvard owns." The last phrase points to the larger Allston program.

Campus Planning Paused

BROADER "campus development," Faust's letter said, "will be pursued as resources allow and only after a targeted, evaluative process" that is about to begin. The Uni-

HARVARD PORTRAIT



Emma Dench

"I was very morbid as a child," says Emma Dench, professor of the classics and of history. "I liked dead things and dead people"—and when she visited the Roman baths in Bath, England, at seven, she says, "I realized the Romans were very, very dead." Obsessed with them, she walked the 73.5-mile length of Hadrian's Wall with her family at age 11. Today she teaches Latin writers like Livy and Cicero and history courses on the Roman empire. Dench's father is the noted Shakespearean actor Jeffery Dench (her aunt is film star Dame Judi Dench) and her mother, Betty, was a speech therapist. (As a child, Emma played Peaseblossom in a 1968 film of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.) The family lived near Stratford-on-Avon. Dench graduated from Wadham College, Oxford, with a double first in 1987, then taught classics for a year at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in upstate New York, which proved to her that she is "a city person." She returned to Oxford and took her D.Phil. in 1993; her dissertation, on "central Italian mountain men," appeared as *From Barbarians to New Men* in 1995. (*Romulus' Asylum*, on the multiethnic character of ancient Rome, came out in 2005.) Dench taught ancient history at the University of London's Birkbeck College from 1992 until 2006, and joined the Harvard faculty in 2007. She and her husband, artist Jonathan Bowker, have a 10-year-old son, Jacob. Every summer they travel, typically in Central America. "I hate the Romans—they were violent, sexist, racist, arrogant, and not very nice to anybody who got in their way," she says. "But I love to hate the Romans."

A panoramic view of Allston: the science site (center), Harvard stadium (right)



versity “will meet its obligations to file an updated Institutional Master Plan before its current plan expires in 2012.”

In effect, this means that translating Harvard’s broad Allston vision into actual zoning and approvals under Boston’s regulatory review process will take more time, and will likely involve change—perhaps significant—from the internal work done so far. Harvard’s planners and consultants have developed an outline for new roads, infrastructure, green spaces, and broad quadrants (academic buildings, laboratories, cultural facilities, and so on) for use of its landholdings in Allston. As guidelines, those appear to be intact. But apart from the now-suspended science complex, none of the outlined objectives exist in the form of committed users of the space, nor concrete proposals for architectural design or ensuing development.

Now, Faust’s letter explained, a new

Work Team—Coleman professor of financial management Peter Tufano, who is senior associate dean for planning and University affairs at Harvard Business School; Institute of Politics head Bill Purcell, the former mayor of Nashville; and professor in practice of urban planning and design Alex Krieger, chair of the department of urban planning and design at the Graduate School of Design—“will recommend strategies for achieving our shared vision of a cohesive scientific, academic, and learning campus environment situated in a sustainable and livable community in Allston.”

Of note, that team—reporting through the executive vice president—will coordinate the work of Faust, the provost, and the deans “to understand the priorities of the University and the schools over the next decade and will recommend ways in which the University’s growth needs can best be addressed, structurally as well

as financially.” That time horizon—the next 10 years—suggests a foreshortening of planning, but also, perhaps, a more realistic grasp of what can actually be achieved.

But its suggestion that priorities need to be reassessed and ranked means that Allston development is only a piece of the puzzle. When the public-health school was identified as a candidate for relocating to Allston, for instance, the cost of the alternative—updating its Longwood facilities—was estimated to exceed a half-billion dollars. Harvard planners are now evidently going to revisit every school’s facility needs, how these could be met, and where. Development in Allston, where costly infrastructure would have to be created in advance of much academic building, becomes one among contending priorities. As Lapp said in the interview, “Allston planning going forward will be fully integrated into University planning, keeping in mind not only our programmatic needs, but our holdings in Longwood, Allston, and Cambridge. This is an opportunity for us to think about our campus in holistic and strategic ways.” Among those priorities is renovation of the undergraduate residential Houses, a billion-dollar-plus program for which funding has not been arranged yet.

As Lapp suggested, there are indications that the Allston landholdings themselves are being re-evaluated. The “co-development” process involving the science complex applies generally, suggesting a wider review that might result in private or institutional development of Harvard holdings, sale of land or properties to free funds for other capital needs, or any other conceivable option for use. (And with the most ambitious Allston plans pushed into the future, and a broader review of capital needs being put in place, it may be easier for the University to proceed toward a feasible, and long-deferred, fundraising campaign, freed from the complications and

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formidable costs of aggressive new campus development.)

One parcel critical for future concentrated campus development is closer to Harvard control. Just before Christmas, Boston authorities approved a plan to replace the Charlesview housing project, at the corner of North Harvard Street and Western Avenue, with new units at a University-owned parcel farther down Western Avenue. Harvard's prospective purchase of the existing site will help defray the costs of building the new housing, while securing a key site at the center of the Allston campus expansion—when and as it occurs.

These decisions may not have surprised the Allston community, but they did pose new challenges. Residents have participated in hundreds of hours of meetings with Harvard and Boston officials in the past several years, as plans have been drafted and revised. Faust's letter addressed "property stewardship and community engagement" and "campus planning and greening." For the former, she wrote, Harvard will make more of the buildings it owns available for re-leasing, to bring life back to local streets. Rentals proceeded slowly when Harvard offered short lease terms (one to five years); it will now offer 10-year leases on up to 100,000 square feet of space—an indication, of course, that their use for Harvard-related redevelopment is now much longer off in the future. "Greening" involves landscaping, tree planting, and completion of a park behind the Allston public library branch. In mid January, as an amenity, Harvard erected an indoor skating rink on Western Avenue for free community use through the end of March.

Whatever disappointments the December announcement may cause, it reflects new circumstances. Private or non-University institutional investment may advance some uses of Harvard's landholdings in Allston faster than the University can now afford to do on its own.

Yesterday's News

From the pages of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* and *Harvard Magazine*

1920 The editors express hope that an "overalls movement"—"the cultivation of a spirit of moderation in this period of lavish expenditure"—that seems to have gained headway in other colleges will spread at Harvard as a way to end its reputation as a "rich man's college."

1930 The Flying Club bests 13 other college clubs to win the first Loening Trophy for intercollegiate flying, for making the greatest advance in aeronautics.

"Prohibition is becoming more and more of a national and inescapable issue," reports the *Bulletin*. A straw poll of 14 colleges reveals 64 percent of undergraduates imbibe alcohol. At Harvard, 78 percent of students reported drinking; at Yale, 71 percent; but "Princeton polled the wettest vote," at 79 percent.

1940 President Conant leaves for a month's visit to the West Coast—"one of many recent indications," note the ed-

itors, "that Harvard aspires to rid itself of any charge of provincialism....The educational as well as the population center of the country is moving westward."

1945 The 10,800-ton cargo ship *SS Harvard Victory* is launched, carrying a working library for use of the crew as a gift from the University.

1950 Responding to a poll conducted by the United Press, Secretary to the University David M. Little '18 agrees that current undergraduates are in many ways superior to those of a decade or so earlier: "There's no question...that these 1950 boys are more mature, alert, and serious-minded...The GIs who returned to college had a tremendous influence in spreading their habits of hard work among the student body."

1970 Nearly 3,000 rioters battle police for more than four hours in Harvard Square, in what one official calls "the worst civil disturbance in Massachusetts history." Many demonstrators have come from a peaceful antiwar rally on Boston Common, but police eventually employ tear-gas and nightsticks to curb the crowd. Damage to more than 40 local businesses from fire, broken windows, and looting exceeds \$100,000.

1975 As the economy worsens, the Office of Career Guidance reports a surge of interest in banking. "Banking was a dirty word a few years ago, but somehow it seems that if anything is going to survive Armageddon it'll be Chase Manhattan," writes Undergraduate columnist Paul K. Rowe '75.

