Draper Labs to relocate in Tech Square in 1976

By Jeffrey Stein

Draper Laboratories will consolidate its research and administrative activities in its new Tech Square complex in the spring of 1976 if everything goes according to plan.

Completion of the new facility, which will have double the space now available for the Lab's research work, is scheduled for December, 1975, with occupation of the new complex immediately following.

The new facility, being developed by Cabot, Cabot and Forbes for the Labs, will allow Draper to consolidate from the 12 scattered buildings it now occupies in Cambridge to a single complex. The new facility will provide 455,000 square feet of office and laboratory space in three interconnected buildings.

Consolidation of Draper's activities combined with "serious structural problems" in several of the buildings Draper currently occupies provide impetus for the move, according to Joseph O'Connor, Executive Assistant to the President of Draper Laboratories. The Tech Square location was chosen, O'Connor said, to allow the labs to stay in Cambridge, with proximity to both MIT and Harvard University.

"Draper Labs enjoys being a contributor to education in its relationship to MIT," O'Connor said. The Labs employ about 35 MIT graduate students, conduct several undergraduate seminars and research projects, and provide lectures for the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

Draper was originally a part of MIT, beginning in the 1940s at the Instrumentation Laboratories. The Labs were "open off" from the Institute in 1972, after anti-war protests centered on weapons and guidance research done for the federal government.

O'Connor, Executive Assistant to the President of Draper Laboratories, said that while the Labs were part of MIT a "close relationship was maintained." O'Connor added, "The Labs have always been a part of MIT and MIT enjoys being a part of the Labs."

MIT students and community will receive priority in the Labs. The Labs were "spun off" from the Institute in 1972, after anti-war protests centered on weapons and guidance research done for the federal government.

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