MIT construction to finish shortly

By Laura Farhi

The intersecting Whittaker College and Health Services buildings now under construction on the east side of campus constitute "the biggest single building we've constructed since the original group of buildings," according to Director of Physical Plant Paul Barrett.

The buildings, which will open at the end of December, are one of four major construction projects underway at MIT which will be completed by the end of the year. The other facilities are the renovated building at 1 Amherst Street, an additional parking lot on the west side of campus, and a landscape at a site for a potential Arts and Media Technology building.

The infirmary will move from its present location into the Health Services building on Carleton Street during the Christmas vacation, the time of the "lowest population density," said Barrett. Medical equipment, such as x-ray machines, is currently being purchased: modelling of the interior of the building is also underway.

The Whittaker College of Health Sciences, Technology, and Management will contain laboratories for the life sciences, explained Barrett. The basement will house cages and facilities for animal research. The entire building has 250,000 square feet of floor space.

The building at 1 Amherst Street, formerly known as the Webster Building, will be completely renovated by mid-October. The Energy Laboratory, headed by Ford Professor of Engineering David White, is currently moving into the second and first floors of the building, said Barrett. The second and first floors of the building will be occupied in September and October, respectively.

"The building [name] was changed to 1 Amherst Street so that we don't perpetuate the Webster name," said Physical Plant Officer Kenneth Thompson. He explained that the building might later be named after a generous donor.

Construction workers are currently "demolishing one-story buildings that were formerly warehouses" on Vassar Street across from Tang Hall in order to build a parking lot, according to Barrett. The 340,000 square-foot parking lot will hold approximately 100 cars, he added.

Thompson explained that the former warehouses were part of the MIT real estate and had been leased to independent renters "with the reality of how long the site might stay there." MIT gave the owners at least six months notice that they would have to leave, and took the responsibility for finding the owners of other warehouses on its real estate.

Last summer, MIT demolished Building E21, located across from the East Campus and parallel to Ames Street. A "simple landscape" is being put there, said Thompson, and if they reach the "threshold level of funding," an Arts and Media Technology Building will be constructed.

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