Altieri

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT) METROPOLITAN WAREHOUSE

ARCHITECT
Diller Scofidio + Renfro with
Leers Weinzapfel Associates

LOCATION
Cambridge, Massachusetts

SIZE
200,000 GSF

COMPLETED
2026



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AWARDS
2026 Project of the Year, The Architect's Newspaper Best of Design

MIT Building W41, the Metropolitan Warehouse, is a late 19th and early 20th century masonry storage facility in Cambridge designed and built by Peabody & Stearns. The five contiguous sections of the approximately 500-foot long building were built successively between 1894 and 1911. It is the first building of its type and use in New England. The first section, designed by Frederic Pope, is a 5-story brick building in the style of a medieval castle complete with crenellations at the parapet. MIT acquired the building in 1962 and continued to use it as a storage facility (over 1600 individual storage rooms) until 2016. Met Warehouse is listed on the State Register of Historic Places for its significant role in the social and developmental history of the area. It has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

The adaptive reuse of this historic brick building has been designed for principal occupants: School of Architecture + Planning (SA+P), Department of Urban Studies (DUSP), Project Manus (MIT's makerspace initiative), and others. The gut renovation combines old and new, and provides makerspaces, studios, academic and research offices, gathering and collaboration areas. It meets the minimum requirements of LEED Gold certification.

The building - not originally designed for human habitation - presented a range of MEPF systems design challenges including restrictive ceiling heights. A highly collaborative project team supported the architect's vision with inventive systems design that included reducing and/or eliminating duct and pipe distribution in order to display existing heritage features such as arched ceilings and to highlight the distinction between the existing building and new construction. Further, the architect's vision included exposed building systems, so it was critical to design MEPF systems with an eye on what the occupants and users will see. Coordination of roof ductwork equipment and location was critical to avoid sightline issues with local historical commission. The project is also pioneering a new all-electric heating/cooling solution by using on-site heat pumps that extract heat from and reject heat to the MIT campus chilled water return loop.

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