



Media Lab Expansion

The new Media Lab building will support innovative research that cuts across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Designed to accommodate many different possible futures, it develops the valuable site to its maximum potential and is highly adaptable and flexible, able to respond as necessary to emerging and often highly unpredictable research priorities. Essentially, it consists of the maximum amount of high-quality, well-serviced, general-purpose research space that the site can support.

All of the laboratory spaces take the form of common research areas surrounded by mezzanine offices. Instead of being designed around technical systems and equipment as in many older MIT laboratories, they put the people first—providing lots of natural light, operable windows, views, and sociability. Experience with the “Cube” space in the lower level of the current Media Lab building has demonstrated the social and intellectual benefits of this type of open, flexible space. It is expected to provide particularly effective support for the cross-disciplinary, atelier-style research that is characteristic of the Media Lab.

Overall, the building is designed to maximize social and intellectual interaction, and offers important public space for exhibitions and social gatherings. It is organized around a central atrium that connects public spaces on the ground and upper floors—forming a kind of vertical street. High levels of transparency throughout the interior not only provide connection to the outside, but also make the ongoing work of the various laboratories visible. This encourages cross-connections among research groups, and facilitates the sponsor tours and demonstrations that are so vital to the Media Lab.

As appropriate to a building that represents both the School of Architecture + Planning and the Media Laboratory, it embodies the very highest design quality and is a significant cultural contribution. It was designed by the Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki. An exquisitely detailed minimalist structure, it vividly demonstrates the possibilities of current construction technology at its best.

Location

- Corner of Ames and Amherst Streets on MIT’s east campus
- Adjacent and connected to the existing Wiesner Building, designed by MIT Alumnus I. M. Pei
- Faces south, across Amherst Street, towards the Charles River

Size

- Six occupied floors
- 163,000 gross square feet

Space Descriptions

- **Seven labs** face one another across a central atrium in a staggered configuration; that is, the first level of one lab is at the second level of an adjacent lab. The labs are of various sizes ranging from 5,000 - 8,500 square feet.
- **Conference rooms:** The current design includes eight conference rooms on the lower five floors and one additional large conference room in the sixth-floor event space.
- **Social spaces:** The upper atrium (see below), a fifth-floor café, small coffee areas on the third and fourth floors, and generous circulation.
- **Administrative:** 3,200 square feet on the second floor.
- **Exhibition:** The lower atrium is flanked by entry exhibition spaces. The upper atrium could also serve this purpose.

- **Atrium:** The atrium is in two parts
 - An outer, or street, atrium rising four floors from street level, flanked by exhibition spaces that appear to be part of the atrium.
 - An inner atrium that is a social/exhibition space for building inhabitants, rising two floors at the third and fourth floors, reached by a spectacular staircase rising from the outer atrium below.
- **Sixth-floor event space** includes:
 - 100-seat theater
 - 3,500-square-foot multipurpose (demo/exhibition/large meeting) space
 - 2,500-square-foot conference room with outdoor terrace
 - 3,500-square-foot reception/dining area
 - 1,800-square-foot catering kitchen

For further information about the new Media Lab expansion, please see:
<http://expansion.media.mit.edu>.

September 2006