



160 Massachusetts Ave

Berklee College of Music

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The multifaceted new building at 160 Massachusetts Avenue, completed in the spring of 2014, significantly enhances the Berklee College of Music campus. The 16-story structure brings together multiple programs: a dormitory, a music hall, a cafeteria, and a music production complex. Amenities include practice rooms for musicians, common rooms, and a fitness center. The building also qualifies for LEED silver certification.

Initially, the site for the new building posed problems. While the lot had a small footprint to begin with, Berklee also wanted to widen the sidewalk, which would further reduce the area William Rawn Architects had to work with. Faced with this problem, an increase in height became necessary. However, there were concerns that the neighbors would not approve of a tower, as many of the surrounding buildings in the Back Bay neighborhood are residential and small in scale. With the extensive program needed in the building, architect William Rawn was forced to take a chance and propose a tower of 16 stories rather than 8. The neighborhood endorsed the increased building height, allowing the accommodation of the desired total square footage. The architect was also able to locate the music production complex on two additional underground stories, as this complex did not require any natural light.

The ground floor of 160 Massachusetts Avenue is intended to activate the urban street edge while strengthening Berklee's connections to the city of Boston. Widening the sidewalk along the storefront allows for increased pedestrian traffic, and the transparency of the glass façade allows pedestrians to see the life that is occurring inside the building. Since the building includes a performance space, it is important that the building feels inviting to visitors and everyone who is not part of the college.



Of the 16 stories in this building, 12 are dedicated to the residence hall. There are 369 beds split between the floors, with one single, three triples and two doubles per floor. Resident assistants inhabit the single rooms, while the doubles and triples house freshman at Berklee. There are 6 double height common rooms, each servicing two residential floors. These common areas are used for hall events and programs, and offer incredible views of the Boston skyline. A two-story dining hall services the students who live at 160 Massachusetts Avenue, and is also available to other students at Berklee.

The building comprehensively provides the music students of Berklee with spaces to practice and perform. Twenty practice rooms of three different sizes offer different capabilities, including six with music stands and seating for small audiences. Practice rooms feature upright pianos, five drum sets, and a vibraphone. Three ensemble rooms offer drum sets, piano, amps and a PA system. The cafeteria can be converted to a performance space, with the ability to seat 400 people on two floors, allowing students



and visiting groups to perform in the evenings. The music technology facilities on the lower two levels are extensive and considered one of the largest music recording complexes in the United States, containing three large recording studios, a stage for film and video scoring, project projection studios, classrooms and labs. The nature of this complex gives Berklee an edge in providing students with one of the best musical educations available.

The first ever building done from the ground up at Berklee, 160 Massachusetts Avenue is an innovation in combining living and learning. Students are able to have a classic dormitory experience while taking advantage of the musical program in the building. Students are able to eat, sleep, practice, work out, learn in a traditional sense and learn in musical sense – all without leaving the building. 160 Massachusetts Avenue also provides connections to the city through the transparency of its facade, ensuring that students will engage in all that Boston has to offer.