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Shawmut Design and Construction break ground on The American Repertory Theater at Harvard University, The David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance

July 05, 2024 - Front Section

Cambridge, MA According to Shawmut Design and Construction, a \$1.6 billion national construction management firm, construction is underway on the new home for the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University located at 175 N. Harvard St.

A building to foster groundbreaking performance, public gathering, teaching, and international research, the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance was designed by Haworth Tompkins (architect and design lead) and ARC/Architectural Resources Cambridge (architect of record) in collaboration with theater and acoustic consultant Charcoalblue. Shawmut Design and Construction serves as the project's construction manager.

"We are honored to be leading the construction of the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance," said Kevin Sullivan, executive vice president of Shawmut Design and Construction's New England region. "This project exemplifies our deep commitment to the community. By prioritizing environmental sustainability and adaptable design, we are building a vibrant hub for creativity and connection that will serve the local area for years to come. Our shared goal of minimizing embodied and operational carbon, maximizing wellbeing, and enhancing resiliency ensures that this center will not only be a beacon for the arts but also a pioneering global model for sustainable construction."

The David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance will contain interconnected, adaptable multi-use spaces designed to support creativity and embrace future change. The center will include two flexible performance venues—the West Stage, where large-scale productions will be produced, and the East Stage—as well as rehearsal studios and teaching spaces, a public lobby, and an outdoor performance yard to host ticketed and free programming. The center will also include dressing rooms, technical shops, and administrative offices for the organization, as well as a café.

Designed with a blend of environmental and social strategies to minimize embodied and operational carbon, maximize wellbeing, boost biodiversity, and enhance resiliency, the David E. and Stacey L.

Goel Center for Creativity & Performance embraces Harvard's ambitious sustainability priorities. The building is designed to achieve the Living Building Challenge core accreditation from the International Living Future Institute in recognition that it gives more to its environment than it takes.

West Stage

Conceived through core principles of openness, artistic flexibility, collaboration, sustainability, and regenerative design, it will be constructed with laminate mass timber, reclaimed brick, and cedar cladding to minimize its lifetime carbon budget. The building's chilled water, hot water, and electric utilities will come from Harvard's new lower-carbon District Energy Facility. It will capture additional clean energy from rooftop solar panels and leverage natural ventilation to reduce energy usage and enhance occupant comfort. Additionally, a green roof and extensive plantings will aid stormwater attenuation while increasing biodiversity and occupant wellbeing.

"Theater is about exploring our shared humanity in a space where people of all backgrounds come together and are invited to open their hearts," said Haworth Tompkins director Roger Watts. "Through an inspiring and collaborative design process, our building aims to extend that open invitation to Allston and the wider world, and to provide a framework that supports the expansion of creative practices within a radical yet simple architecture of adaptable space, natural tactile materials, fresh air and light."

"Working with Harvard, the A.R.T., and our design partners on this important community space draws on two of ARC's core values: our passion for arts and culture and our commitment to providing carbon-neutral design. We look forward to opening night of the new center, and to continuing our creative collaboration with all those involved in bringing this inclusive new space to life." said Philip Laird, principal, ARC.

"It is thrilling to see the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Performance & Creativity begin to rise at 175 N. Harvard Street," said A.R.T. Terrie and Bradley Bloom artistic director Diane Paulus. "Our new home will provide many exciting new opportunities for the A.R.T. to use the galvanizing power of theater to bring people together and build community. I'm grateful to our generous supporters, our brilliant, innovative partners, and to Harvard University for helping us to reach this milestone."

The A.R.T.'s new home will be open to all during designated hours of operation, offering free Wi-Fi, food and beverage service, public restrooms, gathering spaces, indoor and outdoor public art and performance, and room rental opportunities. Construction of the David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity and Performance will continue into 2026.