



View of Esplanade in front of Charles River Basin site.

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## SITE CHOSEN FOR THE INSTITUTE

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Fifty acres of land on the Charles River Basin will be purchased if conditions are complied with—Location is a dominating one with great possibilities for development—Area is nearly as great as that of Boston Common

Announcement was made by the Institute Corporation, October 11, that a site for the new Technology had been chosen on the Cambridge side of the Charles River Basin opposite the Back Bay section of Boston, between Harvard and West Boston bridges; the purchase of this land being contingent upon the closing of certain streets on the property by the city of Cambridge and the delivery of a good title by the owners.

The tract in question comprises nearly fifty acres of land with a frontage of nearly one third of a mile on the Charles River Basin esplanade and about a quarter of a mile on Massachusetts Avenue. It extends back from the river to the tracks of the Grand Junction Railroad operated by the Boston & Albany. The property is crossed by several proposed and accepted streets as shown on the map, page 483, although these streets have not been actually constructed. The Corporation proposes as a condition of purchase, that the city of Cambridge close all these streets with the exception of Vassar Street which runs near the railroad tracks and parallel with them and which will be extended to Main Street as a teaming thoroughfare.

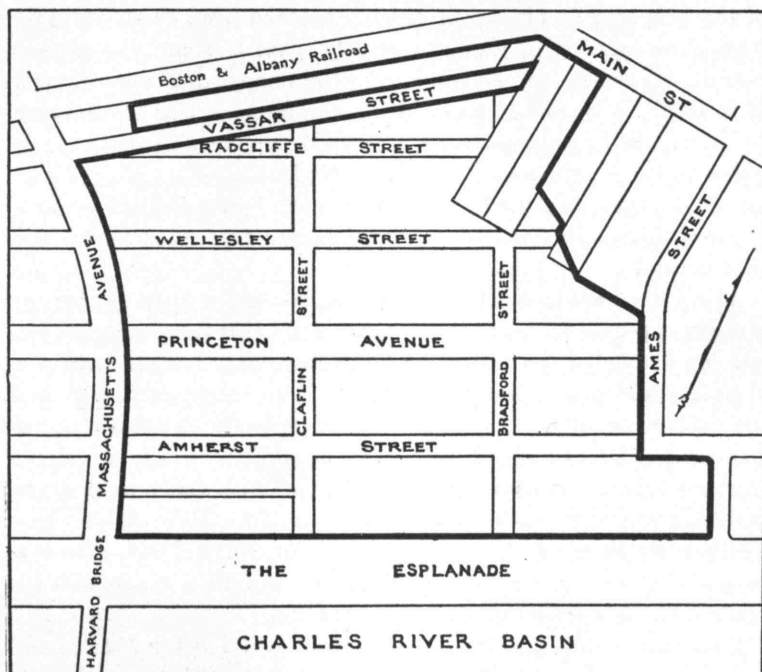
The announcement of the selection of this site was received with profound satisfaction by the Faculty and the alumni as well as by the people of Boston. Although there has been much diversity of opinion as to which one of the contemplated sites should be selected, the strategic character of the land chosen, its wonderful possibilities of development, its generous area and

its accessibility, appeal strongly to every interested person. The chief act now remaining to complete the transaction, is an enactment by the city of Cambridge closing certain streets on the property, and in view of the numerous and cordial invitations which the Institute has received from representative bodies in Cambridge, to locate there, it seems likely that the conditions of acceptance demanded by the Institute will be complied with.

The harmonious development of an imposing building group on the chosen site calls for treatment on a broad and generous scale as befits the most prominent location in Metropolitan Boston. In connection with the esplanade and the beautiful sheet of water lying before it, the imagination of the artist revels in the splendid architectural opportunities presented. But even of greater importance in the building scheme is availability for purposes of education and research with proper regard to growth and departmental balance, desiderata which call for judgment and engineering talent of unusual character. Happily the Institute has within itself all the elements necessary to cope with this important problem, but it will be some months before sufficient specific data has been collected to actually proceed with the details of the building plans.

The most striking feature of this final act which has determined the policy of the Institute for many years to come, is the exhibition of courage on the part of the Corporation in securing the new site at an expenditure of approximately three quarters of a million dollars and in making plans for erecting buildings which will cost millions, without halt or hesitation. The purpose and faith which marked the beginnings of the Institute of Technology appear again in the action of the Corporation authorizing this important step forward, a step which is made possible by duPont's generous gift, the increased appropriation from the State of Massachusetts and the splendid coöperation of the Faculty and alumni.

The selection of the new site was made by a committee consisting of the President, Messrs. George Wigglesworth, Frank H. Hart, '89, Edwin S. Webster, '88, and Everett Morss, '85, which was appointed early in June after the various sites had been fully discussed by the Corporation. Although about one hundred sites were offered to the Institute, the five sites considered by the special committee were as follows: near the Stadium in Cambridge; Jamaica Plain near Jamaica Pond; the Allston Golf



MAP OF CAMBRIDGE SITE

The heavy black lines on the plan show the area in Cambridge which it is proposed to buy as a new site for Technology. The lines enclose 1,999,706 square feet of land, or nearly 50 acres.

Club near Cottage Farm bridge; a location in the Fenway; the Charles River Basin site. The committee has been very active during the summer and thoroughly canvassed the merits of these five parcels, and when the final selection was made the committee was unanimous in its decision. The Stadium site was eliminated first. The Jamaica Plain property was not large enough for the purposes of the Institute, and a site in the Fenway of suitable size would have been far and away beyond our means. Between the Allston Golf Club and the Charles River Basin property the weight of opinion favored the latter.

The site selected is more convenient for the students generally, than any other. It is within a very few minutes of the center of Boston by the new Cambridge subway, which runs near one side

of the property and it can be quickly reached from Copley Square by surface cars. It is a comparatively quiet location, the surface cars on Massachusetts Avenue being the only disturbing element. It is ample in size and comes within the ideas of the Institute as to price. It is comparatively free from smoke and dirt. It is likely to be a permanent home for the Institute for fifty or one hundred years to come as the land is extensive enough for any expansion that may reasonably be expected to take place during that period.

Along the Charles River esplanade southwest of Harvard bridge is every opportunity for building fraternity houses and dormitories, although some of the fraternity houses are now located within a very few minutes of the property. It is to be remembered that the esplanade on the river side of the property embraces about eight acres of park, which is in effect an addition to the property. One important consideration in connection with this new location is that it will give generous space for an athletic field with a commodious stadium as well as a gymnasium. It will also afford a proper setting for the Walker Memorial building which will be made a notable center of student social life.

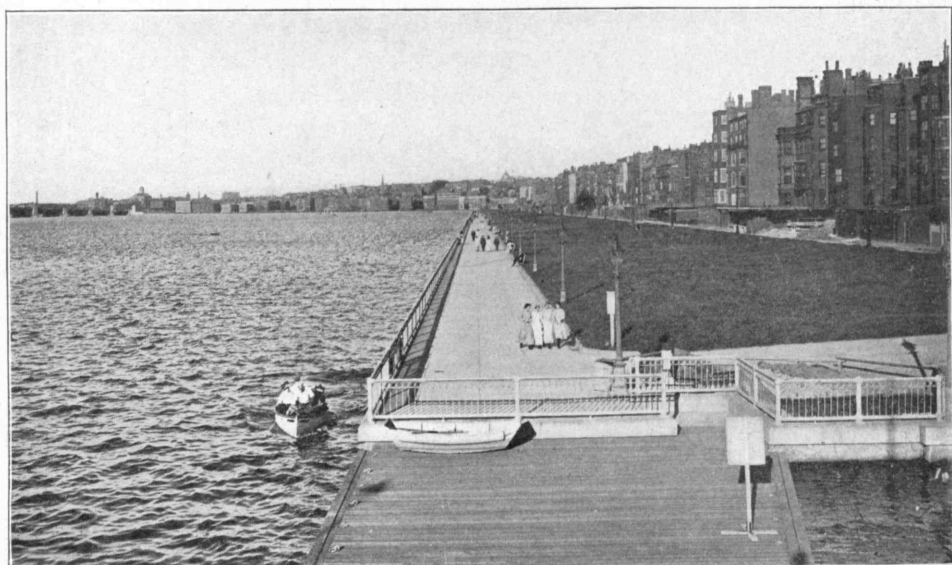
"To be rated of greatest importance," said Doctor Maclaurin, in speaking of the new site, "is the fact that it will offer to Boston a splendid opportunity for improving the Charles River Basin. That is a feature which has wonderful possibilities, opportunities that hardly seem to be realized by the citizens as a whole. Scarcely a city in the world has such splendid opportunities."

General attention has recently been called to the possibilities of the Charles River Basin as a recreation center, by various civic organizations coöperating with the Boston-1915 movement. Although it did not prove feasible to construct an island in the Charles River on which to locate the Institute of Technology, it is not unlikely that a narrow island of somewhat irregular form may be constructed near the Harvard bridge to add a picturesque element to the view and to afford the public a recreation ground. It is proposed to break the austerity of the straight lines of the basin by piers, boat houses, etc., and to encourage all kinds of aquatic sports. The prospect of a strikingly beautiful group of buildings on the new Institute site, will give a strong impetus to this movement and it has even been suggested that money may be forthcoming from some source to create an impressive water



VIEW OF BEACON STREET HOUSES FROM HARVARD BRIDGE.

Courtesy of Boston-1915



BOSTON SIDE OF THE CHARLES RIVER ESPLANADE

Courtesy of Boston-1915



approach to the Institute, with broad steps leading to a grand entrance on the esplanade opposite the main approach to the buildings.

The natural advantages of the Charles River Basin are similar to those of the Alster Basin, at Hamburg, Germany, which has been made beautiful and attractive for pleasure seekers, along the lines now proposed for Boston.

As has already been indicated, the sum of money required for building will be perhaps larger than has heretofore been considered. Furthermore, it is imperative that we secure a large amount of money within a reasonable time for other reasons: The gift of General T. Coleman duPont, '84, of half a million dollars is contingent of our securing a million and a half more during the next five years from other sources, while the appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars a year for ten years by the State of Massachusetts was conditional on our having raised a million dollars at the end of a period of five years.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the gift of an Institute alumnus should have made this forward step of the Institute possible, and that the great body of the alumni desires to do its part is a matter of common knowledge. Plans are now being made for a fund which is to be raised for general building purposes, and when the title to the property has actually passed into the hands of the Institute an active campaign will be started. It is believed that the response will be hearty and generous, and whether many very large sums are forthcoming or not it is sure that there will be an enormous number of moderate or small contributions such as characterized the Technology Fund which carried the Institute through a very critical period in its history. It will, however, be impossible for the alumni to give, of their own substance, a sufficient sum to build the new buildings. It is understood that some generous friends of the Institute are likely to assist in a large way, and it is hoped and believed that the sum necessary will be contributed long before it is actually needed.

One of the most important considerations in connection with the site is the fact that for some years, at least part of the Institute work will have to be conducted in the Boylston Street buildings and it is therefore quite necessary that the new Institute should be as convenient to Copley Square as possible, a condition which will be filled by the Cambridge site. This property is

curiously restricted so that we are bound to use these buildings for some time to come and it is out of the question to sacrifice this parcel as it will ultimately be extremely valuable.

The report of the site committee as presented to the Corporation reads as follows:

"The special committee on the site has worked continuously from the time of its appointment and has found the problem presented to it far from a simple one. The selection of a site has not been merely a question of deciding upon the best location and coming to an agreement about price, but it has involved in the case of two of the sites most seriously considered the removal of restrictions, the closing of projected or legally accepted streets and other difficulties not apparent until actual negotiations were undertaken.

"Your committee has been absolutely unanimous in its opinions and decisions, and while it cannot today state that it has actually secured a site for the Institute, it has made such headway that it feels that satisfactory progress can be reported.

"Representatives of the owners of the large tract on the Cambridge river bank east of Massachusetts Avenue, known to your Corporation as the Cambridge site, have pledged themselves as far as possible to transfer the land to the Institute, free from all existing restrictions, on terms more favorable to the Institute than have so far been obtained with reference to other sites of similar value. Your committee has informed these representatives that, subject to certain restrictions being removed and a number of roads closed by proper action on the part of the city government of Cambridge, a good title being given within a reasonable time, the Institute will purchase and pay the price agreed upon. The tract referred to consists of about fifty acres and has a frontage of 1750 feet to the esplanade on the river bank and 1150 feet to Massachusetts Avenue. In view of the possibility of it proving impracticable to the owners of this tract to fulfil the stipulations of this agreement, your committee has not ended its consideration of other sites, and continues to hold important options on other lands."

In response to a request from the REVIEW several well known alumni have expressed their views about the new site as follows: Frank L. Locke, '86, ex-president of the Alumni Association:— It seems to me that the location has many very attractive features: notably, the splendid setting which the Charles River Basin fur-



nishes for the display of the buildings; its accessibility to the center of the city; its proximity to vacant land available for buildings to house the students; and its immediate contact with the water park, offering endless opportunity for sport, exercise and recreation.

To me, the strongest objection to the site has been the fact that it is in Cambridge and that this in all probability will ultimately mean the complete removal of the Institute from Boston.

Few realize, I think, the difficult task which has been imposed upon the Corporation and its special committee in selecting a suitable site. I am sure we may all feel that the problem has been solved in true Technology fashion, and that, considering all points, the most desirable location has been chosen. Now, and more important than the selection of the site, is the hearty coöperation of every Tech man in the upbuilding of a new Technology which shall be a splendid monument to its founders and to the traditions of the institution.

Walter B. Snow, '82, ex-president of the Alumni Association:—No matter what opinion one may have held regarding the site question, he must now be convinced that the committee has chosen the best. It lends itself as does no other suggested location to the most symmetrical and economical arrangement of the buildings and the most effective impression upon the largest number of people. Although Boston will lose the buildings themselves she will be rewarded with the beauty of the prospect across the basin. Few institutions in the country have had before them such an opportunity for serving the æsthetic taste of the public and at the same time fulfilling their own requirements. The site carries with it a unique asset in the matter of the 200 feet wide shaded esplanade extending along its front and containing an open area of about eight acres, across which the basin may be viewed.

The distance from the former site is really negligible when electric car service is considered, in fact as a general proposition the new site is practically as accessible as the old. Rapid developments in Greater Boston's transportation system will soon remove what little objection there may be to the new location on this account.

Thankful as the present generation must be to duPont for his generous financial support, future generations will rise up and call him blessed when they realize that above all else it was his insist-

ence upon ample area that insured the purchase of a tract much larger than was originally considered. So far as we can now foresee this will provide room for normal growth for years to come, and meanwhile make possible the concentration of all activities, educational, athletic and social, within its limits. Only as the work proceeds will the alumni fully appreciate the wisdom and the untiring efforts of the special committee,—President MacLaurin, former Treasurer Wigglesworth, Morss, '85, Webster, '88, and Hart, '89, to whom all credit is due.

A. F. Bemis, '93, ex-president of the Alumni Association:—The essentials for a new site for the Institute are size, convenience, cost, prominence, durability and a good relation to other educational institutions. The first four of these essential features are clearly found in the new site selected on the north bank of the Charles River Basin. It is hardly necessary to say a word in justification of the site in connection with those points. The area is practically the maximum suggested by any one as necessary for the new Technology, and there is clearly no other site obtainable in Metropolitan Boston of equal size, convenience and prominence at a cost within the present or prospective means of the Institute.

Probably the most difficult problem to solve in selecting the new site was that of durability or permanence of its effectiveness. With the very rapid changes that are occurring in the character of localities in modern times, and with even more rapid and drastic changes that should be expected in the future, no new site could be considered at all, that did not offer definite promise of continued effectiveness for the Institute's purposes for the next fifty or one hundred years. A study of other large cities, especially in Europe, will show how the banks of great and beautiful water parks, such as the Alster Basin in Hamburg, the Thames in London, and similar features in Paris, Stockholm and other cities, have been selected for the location of great institutions and beautiful buildings, not only because of their prominence and attractiveness of outlook, but because the permanence of their character has been established and guaranteed by the public good. For this reason it is safe to predict that no location in Metropolitan Boston will remain more permanently effective for a public or semi-public institution than the borders of our new Charles River Basin.