

METROPOLIS

Bower Marks a New Phase of Transit-Oriented Infill Development in Boston

Designed by The Architectural Team, the two-tower complex counts ample train connections among its sustainable features.

[James McCown](#)

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Courtesy Ed Wonek/The Architectural Team

For the sports-crazed city of Boston, the new Bower residential complex might have the ultimate amenity: a view of Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox, from the landscaped roof.

“On game days, there’s a great energy to seeing the stadium and having lots of people just outside your door,” says Jay Szymanski, principal at [The Architectural Team](#), the local firm that designed the project.

“It’s at a crossroads of a bunch of neighborhoods,” including the Fenway and the Kenmore Square areas, Szymanski continues. “This too is a great amenity.”



Courtesy Ed Wonsek/The Architectural Team

The two-building Bower is an infill Transit Oriented Development (TOD), directly adjacent to the [MBTA's Landsdowne](#) commuter rail station and walking distance to the Orange and Green subway lines. (The commuter rail line goes to Boston's western suburbs while the Green and Orange lines are mostly within the confines of the city and its inner suburbs.) Bower's site was formerly a parking lot.

A joint venture among [Meredith Management](#), [The Green Cities Company](#), and [Nuveen](#), the project represents the first phase of a larger master-planned development that will be known as Fenway Center. "Bower embodies all we try to do with Transit Oriented Development," says Kelly Saito, managing partner at Green Cities, a development company based in Portland, Oregon. (TOD is generally thought of as infill development around existing transit nodes.) To get Bower to be TOD was not easy, Saito explains, because there were tremendous logistical challenges in building the complex—namely, its proximity to active rail and subway lines, the existence of electrical infrastructure, and the compactness of the site.



Courtesy Ed Wonsek/The Architectural Team

The two buildings of Bower—one eight stories, the other 14, comprising a total of 312 rental units—seeks to respond to the location, aesthetically and spatially. The larger building has angled facets like a Japanese Shoji screen and alludes, according to Szymanski, to the movement and vibrancy of the adjacent Massachusetts Turnpike. The smaller building is more orthogonal, and multiple pedestrian plazas and stairways connect the two structures. Not only do these deftly negotiate the change in grade across the site, but also provide a base for vibrant pedestrian activity once the ground floors of the two towers are activated by restaurant and retail uses.

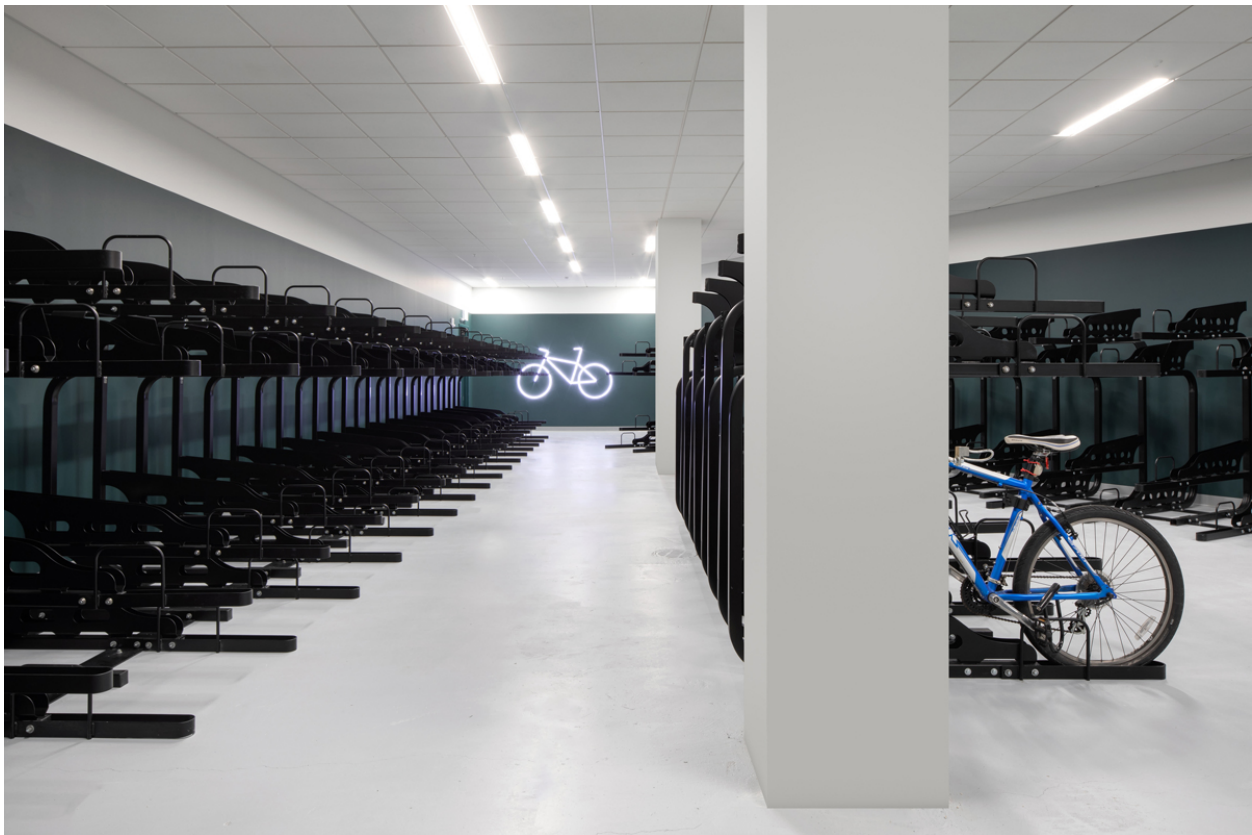
Indeed, the developers envision adding about 40,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, hoping to attract the thousands of pedestrians who attend Red Sox games. “We originally planned a restaurant and a small market grocer,” says Saito. “But with the pandemic, what will happen to the retail and restaurant markets is not clear.”



Courtesy Ed Wonsek/The Architectural Team

The complex is LEED Gold-certified and pursuing a [Fitwel](#) certification, which supports a healthy workplace environment. Other green features include an EV charging station, bike sharing, fitness center, and [Planeta Design Group](#)-created interiors that celebrate [biophilia](#).

One sustainability feature of which the architects and developers are especially proud is the [View Dynamic Glass](#). Its first application in Boston, Szymanski says, this element allows the windows to darken when exposed to sunlight, like “auto tint” sunglasses. “This project is at the forefront of health and wellness. This ‘smart glass’ ties health and sustainability together. It’s technology that the tenants can understand,” Saito says.



Courtesy Ed Wonsek/The Architectural Team

All three of the joint venture partners have stated goals to invest and participate in sustainable, urban infill projects like Bower. Green Cities, especially, says that it is interested in investing in more such developments and already has stakes in other Boston infill complexes such as The Eddy in East Boston, Troy Boston South End, and 315 on A Street in Fort Point Channel.

Szymanski concludes, “Bower is among the most the most significant infill developments in Boston in a generation. It’s fantastic working with clients who are pushing the envelope.”