The Andover Hall Opportunity  
Summer 2017

Celebrating 200 years of teaching and learning, Harvard Divinity School now has a unique opportunity to make history again: to reimagine the heart of our campus – Andover Hall – as a cutting-edge, potentially net-zero energy building. Andover’s transformation from a beloved but badly outdated space to a model learning and research environment can pioneer the standard for other buildings across Harvard and beyond.

In a world challenged by the twin threats of religious extremism and climate change, the Andover Hall project will carry our multi-faith mission and our commitment to environmental sustainability into the rest of the 21st century.

The Case for Renewal

This year, Harvard Divinity School celebrates 200 years of innovation in the study of religion. If we are to dedicate ourselves anew to this mission, we must focus on Andover Hall, our primary space for teaching and learning. HDS has enormous capacity to bring scholars, leaders, and students together for critical discussions of global religion and its influence on virtually every area of human activity. But just as the School’s teaching and research mission has advanced far beyond our traditional strength in educating Christian ministers, it has also exceeded the limitations of our beloved, but aging campus. For this critical project—and to ensure a third century as a world-class divinity school—we need all the support, energy, and ideas of our alumni, friends, and supporters.

Built more than 100 years ago, when the world was a very different place, Andover Hall is the heart of our campus, yet is the only building that has not undergone a major renovation. The annual deferred maintenance costs approach one million dollars. But that is secondary. The most compelling case for a newly conceived Andover is the School’s mission, which has always been intertwined with the educational mission of Harvard University. President John Adams, a Harvard graduate who became the first contributor to the fund that created HDS, wrote, “I never did anything with more satisfaction than by contributing a mite toward removing some of the shackles from the human mind.”
HDS faculty include many of the world’s top experts in all five major faiths. We draw faculty and students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America—as well as Europe and the United States—to reflect the pluralistic, multi-religious and complex reality of the 21st century. Moreover, our graduates’ career paths are as diverse as their backgrounds and include not only the ministry and academia, but global nonprofits, government, journalism, law, business, healthcare, science, and much more. By providing the tools of knowledge and courage, HDS prepares students for lives of activism and service throughout the world.

To accommodate this global mission, the School’s teaching, learning, and meeting spaces must evolve to meet current and future demands. Andover Hall must be recreated and reimagined to emphasize its importance as a convening place for faculty, students and global citizens who construct new narratives and new pedagogies about religion in the 21st century world.

Why is the re-creation of Andover Hall so vital?

• **With one of the most global curricula at Harvard, HDS scholars and leaders require facilities that reflect the interconnected, technology-enhanced, multi-religious world they study, engage with and inhabit.** That means an Andover that facilitates the research and collaboration that make it possible for our faculty to advance knowledge of religion for leaders around the world.

• **Andover is central to the School’s convening power,** enabling HDS to bring together people from all backgrounds for challenging conversations about religion. HDS lacks a large space that can serve modern conference needs. In recent years, the School has hosted Toni Morrison, Jimmy Carter, Paul Farmer, the Karmapa Lama, and others at venues off campus. Some of these would demand a large theatre regardless, but still it is important for HDS to be able to proudly host audiences of 200 – 300 on our own beautiful and unique campus.

• **Technology is fundamental to the learning experience. Our facilities have not kept pace with changes in teaching.** HDS needs to integrate technology into our main teaching and learning spaces to meet the needs of a 21st century Emerson, Tillich, or Harvey Cox—and their cohorts at One Harvard.

• **HDS must also offer students new communal spaces that enable people from vastly different backgrounds to forge new relationships.** With respect to a digital generation, reality is not virtual. You can’t learn to coexist with someone via Skype. You have to share the same space. Students—nearly 30 different faiths and denominations represented in all—ask often for places where they can connect with one another on campus, to do the real work of interfaith interaction. Filling this need is a central part of the plan for Andover renewal.

• **Andover’s condition has an impact on every aspect of HDS’s teaching and research mission.** The building’s current configuration forces us to disperse student services across the campus, as well as the meeting spaces which foster the informal interactions so critical to learning. Some teaching
spaces are cramped and lack flexibility. Space matters – we want to ensure our campus facilities are a draw for people to come here.

Environmental Impact: Renewal with a Moral Compass

Beyond the points above, we believe there is the need for a School that educates ethical leaders to address the moral imperative of our time: environmental sustainability. The Andover project will enable us to dramatically enhance programming and the student experience without building new space or enlarging our environmental footprint.

We have the opportunity to transform the heart of our campus into a “net-zero” energy consumer by creating a building that would generate more energy than it uses. This option has the potential to address, for the first time, issues faced by legacy structures throughout Harvard University and beyond. These include:

- **Design constraints.** Net-zero projects are typically new construction. They begin with designs that maximize the efficiency of the building envelope, for instance by optimizing capture of passive solar energy. As an older building, Andover constrains options for green design. Its renewal will yield solutions that enable Harvard to transform the environmental footprint of the roughly 700 existing buildings on campus.

- **A challenging climate.** Winters in Cambridge mean below-zero temperatures, snow and ice. Summers are humid with temperatures that can rise above 100 degrees Fahrenheit. This project will provide a model for efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning in a climate that can be extreme.

- **Intensive energy use.** Not all space types are equal in their energy usage. Whereas most net-zero energy projects are pure offices, schools, or environmental learning centers, the HDS project will include administrative, classroom, conference, and social spaces to demonstrate efficient lighting and heating in areas that have a higher than usual energy density.

- **Sustainability in an urban environment.** Almost all existing net-zero buildings are no more than two stories tall and are located in suburban or more rural areas where land for solar panels or wind turbines is more plentiful. This project will inform any institution or community that strives to achieve net-zero energy through building retrofits.

HDS Dean David Hempton recently said of the Andover project:

“What was sufficient one hundred years ago is insufficient now. Andover Hall in its present state does not correspond to the interconnected, technology-enhanced, multi-religious world our students inhabit, or facilitate the research and collaboration that make our faculty among the best in the world. Like all of Harvard, we have to adapt our spaces and technology to meet the needs of the next Emerson, the next Channing that walks our halls and inhabits their roles at Harvard and indeed the world.”