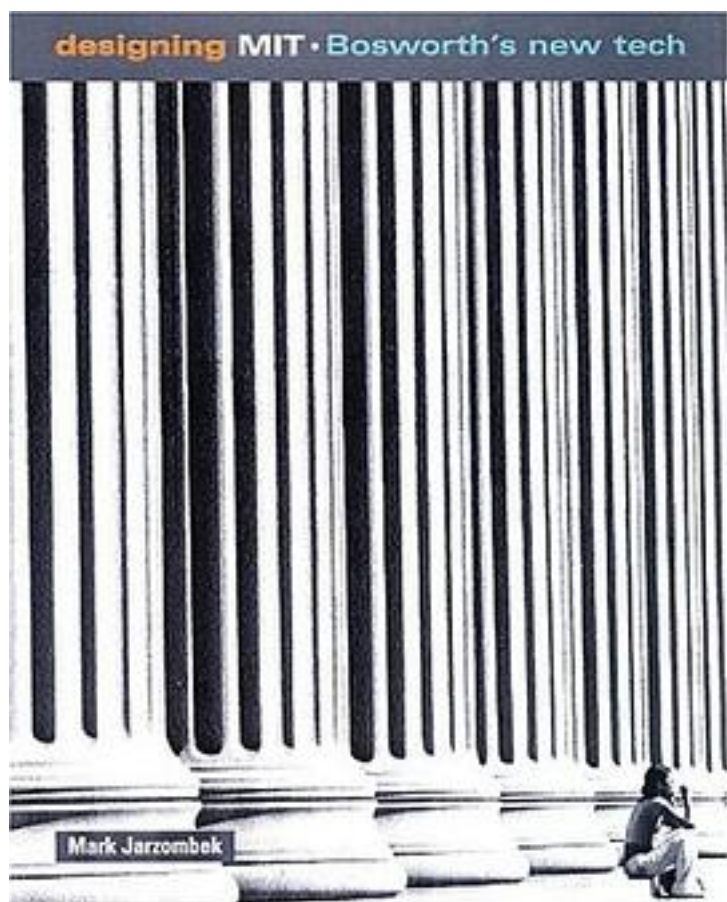


Designing MIT



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Chartered in 1861, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology lay in financial crisis with an assortment of laboratories, classrooms, offices, and student facilities scattered across Boston's Back Bay by the turn of the century. But in 1912, backed by some of the country's leading financiers and industrialists, MIT officials purchased an

undeveloped tract of land in Cambridge, launching a long and complex review of proposals for a new quadrangle. Based largely on the recommendation of John D. Rockefeller Jr., the commission was awarded to MIT and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts-trained architect William Welles Bosworth, known for his ATandT Building in Manhattan, and Kykuit, the Rockefeller mansion in Tarrytown, New York. Designing MIT is the first book to detail Bosworth's challenges in the planning and construction of the Institute's unique Cambridge campus. Beginning with an examination of the competing project proposals--from Steven Child, an emerging landscape designer and student of Frederick Law Olmstead; Desire Despradelle, Chairman of the Department of Architecture at MIT and a leading Beaux-Arts stylist; Ralph Adams Cram, noted for his gothic West Point campus; and John Freeman, one of the country's leading civil engineers--Mark M. Jarzombek provides a captivating cross-section of the architectural debates of the time. Though Bosworth's considerable social and political finesse enabled him to land the commission and balance varied competing interests, he found his classically oriented vision challenged by engineer John Freeman, proponent of Frederick W. Taylor's new principle of Scientific Management. However strained, the conflict ultimately resulted in a far more innovative design than either individual approach, employing new European concepts of industrialism, efficiency, and aesthetics in academic structures. Heavily illustrated with images from MIT archives, the story of Bosworth's new "Tech" offers more than just insight into the designing of a campus. Wrought with artistic clashes, bureaucratic tangles, and contemporary politics, Designing MIT sheds light on the academic culture in the early twentieth century, the role of patronage in the world of architecture, and the history of the Beaux-Arts style in the United States.

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