

Take a look inside Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences, opening in 2022

The 35-story glass building will include 147 hotel guest rooms.



A rendering of the Sky Lobby Fine Dining Restaurant inside Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences, opening in 2022. –Stonehill Taylor

By [Kristi Palma](#), Boston.com Staff

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An iconic luxury hotel will open in the Back Bay next year inside a 35-story glass building designed with the city’s Emerald Necklace in mind.

The \$400 million-plus Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences, part of Accor, will open at 430 Stuart St. in late 2022. It will be the 134 year-old luxury brand’s first mixed-use property in North America.

The hotel is being developed in a joint venture with Trinity Stuart LLC, which is a partnership between hotelier Gary Saunders, of Saunders Hotel Group, and developer Jordan Warshaw, of The Noannet Group, together with their equity partner Cain International.

“This isn’t your grandfather’s stuffy old building,” said Warshaw, president of The Noannet Group. “It is a really fun place to live, it’s a fun place to stay, it’s a fun place to visit if you live in the neighborhood ... There’s nothing like it in Boston.”

The team is confident that the project will be well received in the aftermath of the [coronavirus pandemic](#).

“Boston has historically been one of the strongest hotel markets — if not the strongest, certainly in the last cycle — in the U.S.,” Saunders said. “As this pandemic comes to an end, we also believe — while we’ve remained optimistic throughout — that there’s going to be a stronger demand for Boston than we’ve seen in a long time.”

The building will include 146 residences, 147 guest rooms, six food and beverage venues, including a sky bar and speakeasy, 16 gathering spaces, a state-of-the-art spa and fitness center, and a three-story sky lobby, which the team called the first of its kind in Boston. A 19th floor ballroom will offer views spanning from the Financial District to Cambridge.



A rendering of the exterior of Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences.
—*The Architectural Team*

Raffles is the perfect fit for Boston because they really “dive into the location,” said Warsaw.

“They’re really at the intersection of local and global,” said Saunders. “We’re a predominantly Boston team and that philosophy was attracting and compelling to us.”

The Back Bay is “an exciting, adventurous, fun neighborhood,” said Warsaw, and the building will encompass that. “It’s one of the most 24-hour neighborhoods in the country.”

Saunders said Raffles Boston will be “a vertical neighborhood” that will have “soul, feeling, texture, and really beautiful grace.”



A rendering of the entrance to Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences.
—The Architectural Team

The building’s residential spaces were designed by Rockwell Group and hotel spaces by Stonehill Taylor.

“At Rockwell, we always start the process of design with a narrative,” said Greg Keffer, partner at Rockwell Group. “And, in this instance, we started to take inspiration from Boston’s heritage of the famed Emerald Necklace.”

Boston’s [Emerald Necklace](#) is a 1,100-acre chain of urban parks created by Frederick Law Olmsted, known as the founder of American landscape architecture.

When choosing colors and materials for the building, the team drew inspiration from Back Bay’s “stately Victorian brownstones” along with the Emerald Necklace, Keffer said — using emerald green, cobalt blue, pale grey, and materials with rich walnut woods, deep heather grays, and cognac leathers. Copper accents are also prevalent throughout the property, a nod to Paul Revere’s copper company.

The lobby's tall front doors offer a "grand and inviting entry," said Diane Nguyen, senior interior designer at Rockwell Group, with two seating areas, chevron wood flooring, hand-inlaid Paulownia wood wallcovering, light suede wall paneling, and emerald green accents. An expansive botanical chandelier inspired by the Emerald Necklace will hang above.

"It covers the ceiling, so it's a really beautiful statement right when you enter," said Bethany Gale, interiors associate at Stonehill Taylor.

Raffles Boston hotel guests will check in at the Sky Lobby, which the team calls a first for the city of Boston, a three-story space on the 17th, 18th, and 19th floors. The Sky Lobby offers two floors of meeting and entertainment spaces, as well as a Grand Stair made of curved oak stairs and copper balusters that spirals through the lobby's atrium.

"The hanging gardens that you see in the image are inspired by the actual window boxes that you see as you walk around the Back Bay neighborhood," Gale said.



A rendering of the Grand Stair at Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences. —Stonehill Taylor

The hotel's 147 guest rooms will include 15 gallery suites and 14 garden suites, as well as a presidential suite, all located on the 6th through 14th floors.

The hotel will offer king and queen rooms as well as suites with different themes, such as gallery suites inspired by Boston artists and garden suites with custom-made botanical wall coverings. Some beds will boast custom-made metal headboard screens with leaves that "almost sprinkle down the back of the headboard," she said.

"Again, it was really looking at that idea of the Emerald Necklace and how we bring all these beautiful green spaces into the hotel," Gale said.

Guests will discover fine art and sculptures throughout the hotel as well, said Warshaw, noting.

"Art is an incredibly important part of this hotel," he said.

The fourth floor of the building will be dedicated to health and wellness, with a state-of-the-art spa and fitness center available for both residents and hotel guests. The spa will include private and couples' treatment rooms and a 20-meter pool, oversized hot tub, rain showers, lounge areas, and floor-to-ceiling windows with "expansive views of Boston," according to the team.



A rendering of the indoor pool at Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences. —Rockwell Group

Boston will offer six food and beverage venues: a two-story signature restaurant, an intimate sky lobby fine dining restaurant overlooking the Back Bay, Charles River, and Cambridge with a “dazzling” chandelier made of handblown glass petals, a “dramatic” sky terrace lounge with expansive views of the South End, a signature sky bar, a Raffles Patisserie, and a “hidden” speakeasy, according to the team. The latter can be accessed by secret passageway on the 17th floor.

“I think it may be the only upstairs speakeasy anywhere, certainly around here,” Warshaw said. “It’s a really fun, late-night bar.”



A rendering of the Sky Lobby Fine Dining Restaurant inside Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences. —*Stonehill Taylor*

Also on the 17th floor will be the Writer’s Lounge, a signature Raffles space that will be used by hotel guests and residents. The Raffles Writer’s Lounge rooms worldwide pay homage to famous writers who have all spent time at Raffles properties, such as Ernest Hemingway, W. Somerset Maugham, and Noël Coward.

“This is just a wonderful place for a guest to sit and have a cocktail and peruse the special book collection that will be curated for this Writer’s Lounge,” Gale said.



A rendering of the Writer's Lounge at Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences.
—*Stonehill Taylor*

Residents can choose from one- to three-bedroom condos on the building's 21st to 33rd floors and seven penthouses with "impeccable views" on the 34th and 35th floors. The 15th and 16th floors contain pied-a-terre homes. Residential sales will begin in the spring.

Six amenity spaces on the 21st floor will be exclusive to residents, according to the team: The Secret Garden, The Residents' Library, The Emerald Terrace, Residents' Private Dining Room, Nantucket Cottage Tasting Kitchen and Wine Lounge, and The Sports Lounge, where residents can watch movies, play poker, billiards, or practice their swing in a golf simulator room.

The Secret Garden, a space where residents can relax and drink tea on the 21st floor, is "the hidden and unique gem of the private amenity offerings," Nguyen said.



A rendering of The Secret Garden at Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences. —Rockwell Group

The penthouses will include three or four bedrooms, all with private terraces and one with a grand spiral stairway connecting the two floors.



A rendering of the penthouse at Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences. —Rockwell Group

The first Raffles opened in Singapore in 1887, and there are currently 15 properties worldwide and 15 in development, including in London, Moscow, and Boston, said Giulio Artico, vice president of design and technical services, luxury, North and Central America, for Accor.

The architects had to take into account a certain tower when designing Raffles Boston. “There’s a real challenge in nestling an all-glass building against an iconic all-glass form like the Hancock Tower,” said Gary Kane of The Architectural Team (TAT). “It’s not easy to stand out next to the Hancock. We were looking for an elegant, distinctive profile against the sky.”



A rendering of a balcony at Raffles Boston Back Bay Hotel & Residences. —*The Architectural Team*

“Boston is just a natural fit because it’s got a great history and it’s just indicative of what the brand stands for,” Artico said. “Across all its properties, just like you’ll see in Boston, Raffles is known to create beautiful iconic properties, warm and friendly service, always timeless, always local.”