

City approves 30-story Fenway tower



ARQUITECTONICA

A rendering of the proposed Point project in the Fenway.

By Jack Newsham | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT FEBRUARY 26, 2015

The Point, a proposed tower at the western edge of the Fenway meant to serve as a gateway to the neighborhood, is now planned to be even taller.

The glass-and-steel Park Drive building would cap a stretch of developments by Steve Samuels, whose company during the past decade has built several residential buildings with ground-level retail space in the Fenway. In 2013, Samuels & Associates formally proposed replacing the single-story sub shop at Brookline Avenue and Boylston Street with a 320-apartment glass tower.

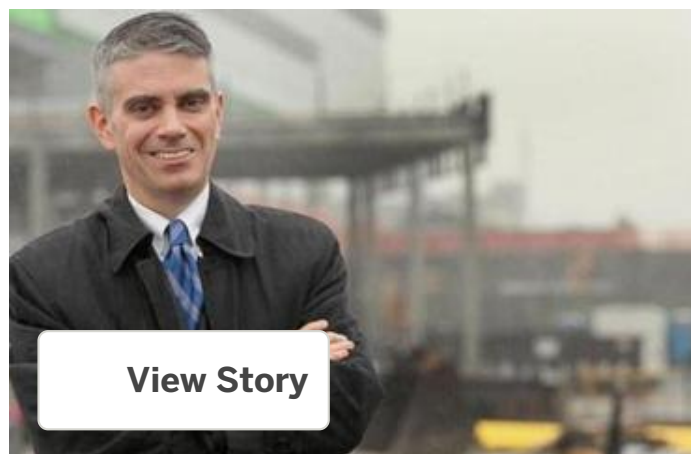
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In December, the developer filed papers with the Boston Redevelopment Authority that propose adding condos and increasing the building's height to 30 stories or 340 feet, from 270. The BRA voted Thursday to approve the \$290 million project, clearing the way to break ground in the spring or summer, said Leslie Cohen, a principal at Samuels & Associates who is leading the project.

"There's been a shift in the market," said Cohen, who added that the building will now include 240 apartments and 109 condos. "Home ownership [is] becoming something that's financeable and available."

Arquitectonica, a noted Miami architecture firm, has designed the building to serve as a gateway to the neighborhood. Its glassy exterior would stand out against the neighborhood's patchwork of brick and stone, and the building would rise more than 10 stories taller than its neighbors.

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Samuels & Associates began acquiring land in the Fenway in the 1990s and spent billions of dollars on redeveloping a low-slung streetscape that was rezoned in the early 2000s.

Starting with the 576-unit Fenway Triangle Trilogy, which opened in 2006, the company has developed a cluster of buildings near the neighborhood's western entrance and others along Boylston Street, including the Van Ness, which is due to be completed in coming months and will include a Target store.

Samuels is also expanding the Landmark Center across the street from The Point's site to bring in more residences and retailers, including a Wegmans grocery store.

All told, the company will have added more than 1,500 apartments and condos to the Fenway over a decade.

It also renovated the retro-chic Verb Hotel, near Fenway Park.

Boston's city government has expressed approval for the Point, with the late mayor Thomas M. Menino speaking in favor of it during his last year in office.

Construction was originally slated to cost \$200 million and generate 1,400 jobs, according to a letter posted online by one of the project's funders, but the project's increased scope and the high demand for construction workers pushed that figure up to \$290 million, Cohen said.



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