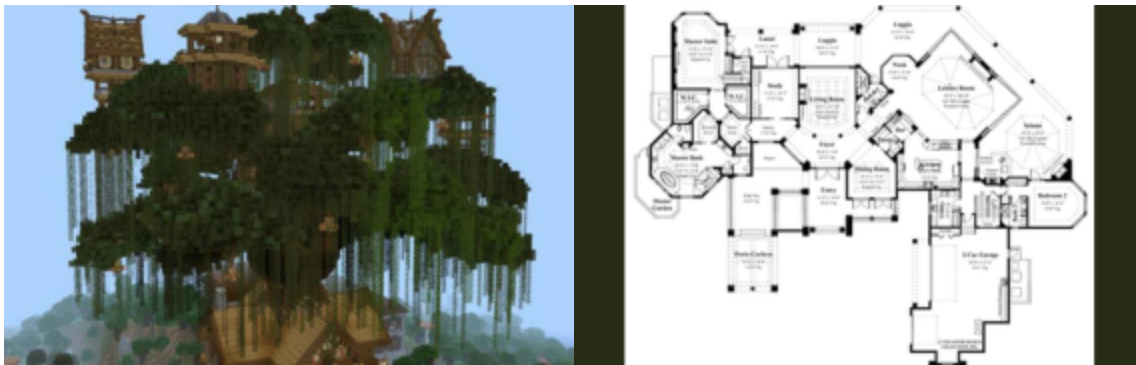




## Green New Deal design will incorporate sustainability, shade, green space, and storm water mitigation

**In what promises to be the first of its kind, the city of Boston will unveil an ambitious design for City Hall: a "CiTREE Hall" tree house engineered by designers at Boston Architectural College**



Tomorrow, April 1, Mayor Wu will unveil a bold new plan for city hall: a teardown of the Brutalist building from the 1960s and, in its place, the planting of a new tree that will house what the mayor is dubbing "CiTREE Hall". This tree house promises to bring Boston's Green New Deal thinking and design to the heart of the city.

**"We are committed to expanding the tree canopy and encouraging citizens to connect with nature,"** Wu said. **"Like our sports teams: go big, or go home. I mean, we are already home to green in our sports teams: from the Red Sox's Green Monster to the Celtics' Big Green. It's time we show our local pride for green infrastructure too!"**

An architectural research group from Boston Architectural College, led by Leif Fixen, has been working on this project for three years, testing materials and platforms that will house the thousands of employees who work at the current city hall. The house will be built inside and around an *Ulmus Bostonia*, a genetically-engineered tree developed by researchers at MIT exactly 2 years ago, on April 1, 2021. It is one of the largest and fast growing trees. Also known as Boston Elm, this tree can reach a maximum height of 40,000 feet with a DBH of up to 6,000 feet. And, when fully mature, it is expected to increase Boston's tree canopy to 100% by 2030.

**"The Boston Elm is the perfect tree for a tree house. It is strong, flexible, beautiful, and very green"** said Kate England, Boston's Director of Green Infrastructure. **"But, perhaps more importantly, in one fell swoop we will be solving issues related to flooding, heat island, and air pollution."**

The new city hall tree house will provide space for members of Mayor Wu's cabinet to work from special chambers at the top of the tree, with spectacular views of Boston's skyline. Other offices will be housed in lower branches, where they will be shaded by higher

branches. A cafeteria with locally sourced fruit from grafted branches is also being considered.

Despite the announcement, several hurdles to implementation remain. For one, City Hall will need to be torn down to allow for the planting of a Boston Elm. Some have suggested planting the Boston Elm within the walls of the current City Hall, allowing it to grow inside the building and making holes in floors and windows as it grows. This would allow for current city employees to continue to use the building until the Boston Elm is the right height to begin tree house construction.

Thanks to Boston's new [Urban Forest Plan](#), the city's expanded Urban Tree Division will be have plenty of staff on hand to care for and maintain the tree. **"We're thrilled to have 3 new arborists on hand to prune and care for the tree"** said Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space, Reverend Mariama White-Hammond. **"Furthermore, we see the tree as a site for learning and demonstrations. This tree will provide members of our PowerCorpsBOS program with numerous opportunities to put their new skills to use, all while furthering the goals of a greener city."**

Issues related to plumbing, electricity, rain, snow, wind, internet, parking, recycling, waste disposal, accessibility, cooling, and heating are still being resolved, but designers are confident that the new tree house - even if it lacks these basic utilities - will be an improvement of the current structure.

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## A CiTREE Hall may be April Foolery, but trees are no joke.

### Join us, and the City of Boston, in growing Boston's urban forest



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