

# The Positives and Negatives of Boston's New Luxury Apartment Buildings

*If real estate is all about location, location, location, then why choose one of these over the others?*

The first few new luxury apartment buildings are now open in Boston. On Wednesday, Avalon Exeter in the middle of Back Bay welcomed its first tenants. If you're looking to rent in the near future, you have an embarrassment of riches from which to choose. But, select wisely; each of these buildings has its own pitfalls.

## Waterside Place

**Waterside Place** is the first of the new apartment buildings to rise in the Seaport District, but will soon be joined soon by residential developments at Fan Pier, Pier 4, and Seaport Square. Sadly, Waterside Place ended up looking nothing like the renderings offered up by the developer before construction began, but the building's completion is a promising first step in the progress toward creating this new neighborhood.

**Pluses:** Boston Harbor and City views from many apartments; it's a cool, hip neighborhood, on the edge of greatness; easy access to the ferry to Hyannis and Provincetown; easy access to Logan Airport, Route 93 & Route 1 going north and south of the city.

**Minuses:** Hefty rent for an apartment surrounded by...parking lots (still). You'll pay \$2,700 for a one-bedroom for the privilege of doing your food shopping at the 7-Eleven on Seaport Boulevard and taking the Silver Line to and from South Station...that is, when it's running.

## Avalon Exeter

There aren't many places better to rent right now than at the **Avalon Exeter** in Back Bay. This location is prime real estate, and it pretty much has the "fresh and new"

market to itself. There is the One Back Bay luxury apartments down the street and a smattering of apartments in the Mandarin Oriental, but nothing else like the Avalon will be built in the neighborhood for a good 5 or 6 years or longer.

**Pluses:** You can walk out your door to food shops, clothes shops, bank, and places to eat. You have your choice of transportation options including the Green Line and Orange Line, and you can hop on an Amtrak train to New York City with direct access from your lobby to Back Bay station without going outdoors, and don't forget, there's even a new MassPort shuttle that will take you from your backdoor to Logan Airport, non-stop.

**Minuses:** The constant congestion of Boylston Street and Huntington Avenue might get tiring after awhile and you're basically living on-top of a mall. And, then there's the rent you'll be paying to enjoy the convenience: \$3,950+ for a one-bedroom.

### **Radian**

**The Radian**, located at the edge of the Financial District, Leather District, and Downtown Crossing isn't getting much attention. Yet. It opened just a couple weeks ago and by some accounts is slow out of the gate, with few leases signed. This isn't unexpected, really, so it's not something the owners should be concerned about (and I bet they're not). We're just now getting into prime renting season, and most people rent on a September 1-August 31 cycle, so this building should fill up by the fall. Still, with the competition out there, the owners getting you to pay \$3,410 for a one-bedroom might be stretching their luck.

**Pluses:** The location is great if you're the type of person who likes nice, unobstructed views. The Radian is convenient to the Red Line and Amtrak at South Station and the Silver Line to Logan Airport. You're also rubbing right up against Chinatown, with all it has to offer.

**Minuses:** It's only a matter of time before the South Station Tower office and apartment building(s) open above a renovated South Station terminal across the street, so those wonderful views may be short-lived. And, you're on the edge of the Financial District so there's plenty of surface traffic five days a week, which kind of puts a damper on having a picnic on the Rose Kennedy Parkway, outside your front door. There isn't any supermarket in the area and there's not much to do in your immediate neighborhood after dark. It's only a short walk to the clubs and nightlife of Faneuil Hall, but are you 22-years-old still?

## **The Kensington**

**The Kensington** is a monster of an apartment building (27 stories, ~381 units) in Downtown Crossing and Chinatown that recently opened to a fair amount of fanfare, it being the first new luxury apartment building in downtown since the 1960s. It's sleek exterior design is attractive although not universally loved. Tenants get a full list of amenities from which to choose. There's a pool, fitness room, pet spa, solarium—you'll never need to walk out your front door.

**Pluses:** It's new. You're downtown. It's convenient to major highways. It's near the Red Line, Green Line, and Orange Line, and within walking distance to South Station and Amtrak and the Silver Line to Logan Airport.

**Minuses:** Is that enough to warrant \$4,135 for a one-bedroom?

## **100 Arlington**

An attractive, historic building located at Arlington Street and Columbus Ave, **100 Arlington** is unique among the new luxury apartment buildings in that it's a conversion, not new construction. A one-bedroom will cost you around \$3,800 per month.

**Pluses:** A fantastic location at the edge of Bay Village, Back Bay, and South End. There is a cute, new park across the street, with free Wi-Fi. You can walk to the restaurants of the South End, the bars of the Back Bay, the theaters and nightlife of Downtown Crossing.

**Minuses:** Eh. Being on "the edge" of things isn't as great as being in the middle of things, so 100 Arlington gets a B+ instead of a solid A grade. There aren't any supermarkets in the immediate area, so you'll have to walk to the Shaws in Back Bay to food shop, or at least down the street to the CVSs on Columbus Ave or Tremont Street in order to grab a snack.

## **The Victor / The Merano**

Across the street from the TD Garden / North Station, **The Victor** is currently being leased out, while The Merano has broken ground. The Merano will be a mix of residential, and also include a hotel, a restaurant, and retail. (The Avenir, also on

Causeway Street, opened up a couple years ago, so soon you'll have three new buildings from which to choose.)

**Pluses:** Do you like sports? Do you like concerts? Do you like tractor pulls? Do you like the circus? You'll love it here.

**Minuses:** Do you hate sports? Do you hate concerts? Do you hate tractor pulls? Do you hate the circus? You'll hate it here.

Oh, and the owners of the TD Garden are planning on building a massive mixed-use project on Causeway Street and another two high-rise apartment/condominium towers around the corner, so you'll have years of seeing and hearing construction trucks to look forward to. Still, at \$3,200 per month for a one-bedroom, it's considerably less than what else is out there.

These are the choices from which to choose a new home right now. On tap are apartment buildings at 275 Albany Street (South End luxury living—facing the Southeast Expressway), Northampton Square (enjoy the sights and sounds of the South End—including sirens from ambulances arriving at the Boston Medical Center, directly below), and 1282 Boylston in the Fenway (in the shadow of Fenway Park...literally), among others.