



NORTHLAND

The Northland Newton Development: Site

Needham Street & Oak Street
Newton, Massachusetts

HISTORIC INTERPRETIVE SET
2022.06.22

Stantec Project Number: 210801802

CLIENT
Northland Investment Corp
2150 Washington Street
Newton, MA 02462

CONSTRUCTION MANAGER
Cranshaw Construction
2310 Washington Street
Newton Lower Falls, MA 02462

ARCHITECT
Stantec Architecture
311 Summer Street, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02210-1723

ARCHITECT
CUBE 3 Studio LLC
360 Merrimack Street, Building 5, 3rd Floor
Lawrence, MA 01843

CIVIL ENGINEER
VHB
101 Walnut Street
Watertown, MA 02472

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Stantec Landscape Architecture
226 Causeway Street, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02420-5301

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
Odeh Engineers
1223 Mineral Springs Avenue
North Providence, RI 02904

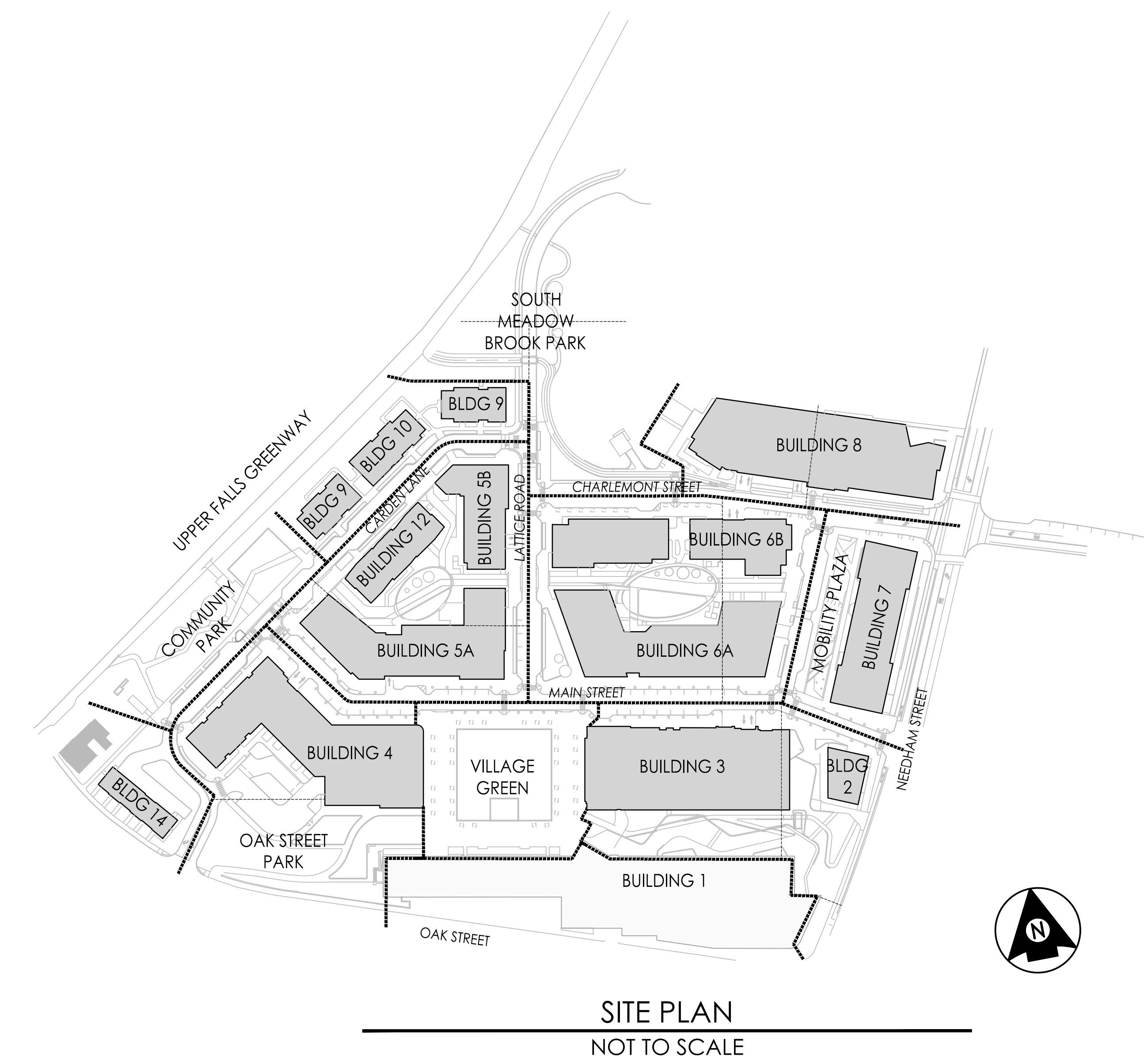
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
AHA Engineers
24 Hartwell Avenue, 3rd Floor
Lexington, MA 02421

LIGHTING DESIGN
Sladen Feinstein Integrated Lighting Inc.
434 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 506
Boston, MA 02118

IRRIGATION DESIGNER
Irrigation Consulting Inc.
20 Merrit Parkway, 2nd Floor
Nashua, NH 03062

SHEET LIST

Selected Materials Plans With Historic Interpretive Elements	
Sheet #	Title
LG-100.1	HISTORIC INTERPRETIVES PLAN
LG-101.1	COMMUNITY PARK MATERIALS PLAN
LG-102.1	B2 B3 & MILL PARK MATERIALS PLAN ENLARGEMENT 1
LG-102.2	B2 B3 & MILL PARK MATERIALS PLAN ENLARGEMENT 2
LG-103.1	VILLAGE GREEN MATERIALS PLAN
LG-104.2	B4 MATERIALS PLAN ENLARGEMENT 2
LG-106.1	B6 & LANEWAY MATERIALS PLAN ENLARGEMENT 1
LG-107.1	B7 & MOBILITY PLAZA MATERIALS PLAN
LG-109.2	SOUTH MEADOW BROOK PARK MATERIALS PLAN ENLARGEMENT 2





PATTERN
DISTRICT



Interpretive Signage Framework

PREPARED FOR NEWTON
HISTORIC COMMISSION

NORTHLAND × STREETSENSE

June 2022

OVERVIEW



Our approach to the interpretive signage program is rooted in the work we've done to-date to differentiate the development and amplify its unique characteristics.

- *Market Immersion*
- *Brand Vision & Identity*
- *Interpretive Signage*

BRAND
FOUNDATION
RECAP





ABOUT PATTERN DISTRICT

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Pattern District is a carefully crafted mixed-use neighborhood in Newton, MA, where stories of the past and the promise of the future converge. Here, centered around the historic Saco Pettee Mill, creativity feels at home. Innovation is naturally rooted. And authentic village life thrives with a texture and tone all its own. Genuinely welcoming and seamlessly woven into the heart of the city, this is where people and generations come together, where merchants shine among homes and workplaces, and where vibrant green spaces spur a sustainable, dynamic future.

## BRAND PILLARS

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### Heart of the Village

Pattern District is the center of community life in Upper Falls, a natural gathering place that knits people together and revives a Main Street spirit through walkability, locally relevant retail, thriving businesses, and multigenerational, multimodal living.



### Wellspring of Progress

Naturally connected to the river that sustained Newton for generations, Pattern District is a fresh source of sustainable innovation and growth — a global leader in green development that powers positive change in tune with the natural environment and human wellness.



### New Patterns, Timeless Textures

Symbolized by the adaptive reuse of the Saco-Pettee textile mill, Pattern District honors the heritage and traditions of its New England locale, while taking its cue from the world's finest boutique hotels — weaving a carefully crafted hospitality experience and modern connectivity into a storied setting.



# An emerald for a new era —

brilliantly green, genuinely  
welcoming, and seamlessly  
woven into the fabric of  
historic Newton.



# Close-Knit Connections

This platform celebrates authentic village life and its interconnected web of people, places, and ideas. It feels at once familiar and hospitality-infused, with a durable, everlasting sensibility.

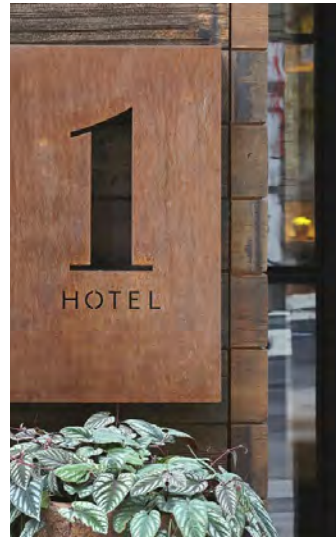
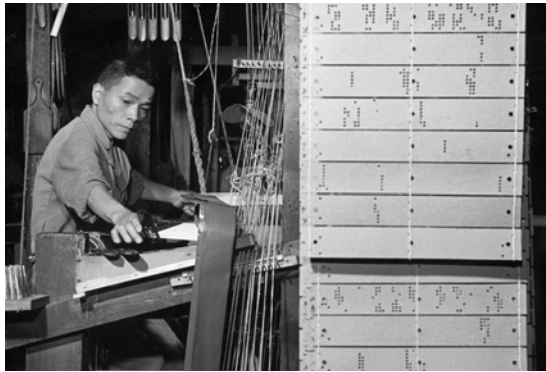
## Key Differentiators

- Leans into “Heart of the Village” pillar
- Core symbol: fabric / interwoven textiles
- Mill as historic focal point of village life

## Graphic Direction

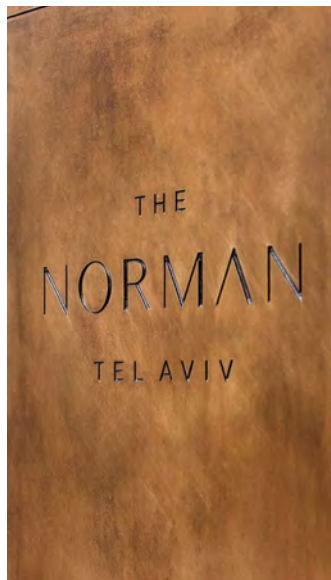
- Warm, lived-in palette
- Whimsical and personal vibe
- Hand-crafted and home-spun





# Close-Knit Connections

BRAND MOOD BOARD



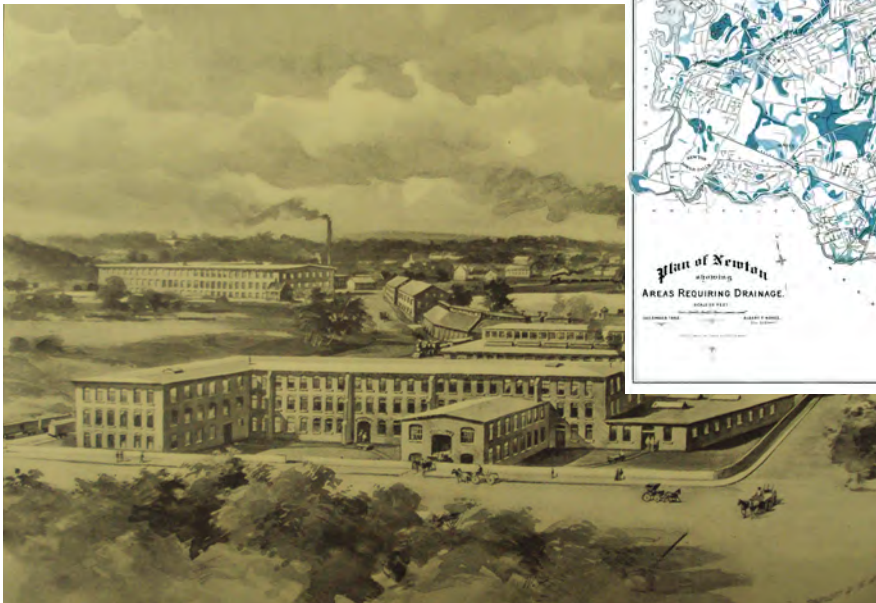
# INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE



## THE TASK AT HAND

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# Craft an interpretive signage experience that tells the story of Pattern District.



## Interpretive Signage Goals

- Reveal the relationships between the historic, cultural, and natural heritage of the site
- Design a multifaceted narrative environment calibrated for a variety of learning styles and contexts
- Channel Pattern District's innovative spirit and thoughtful approach to cultivating community

### TOOL KIT:

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|                   |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Artifacts         | Built Environment | Lighting        |
| Art Installations | Landscaping       | Color           |
| Historic Photos   | Textures          | Sounds & Smells |
| Text & Graphics   | Materials         | Interactives    |

## INTRODUCING OUR THEMES



# **Pattern District represents innovation that is rooted in sustainability and woven with history.**

We're employing the following two themes as a way to organize the numerous stories being told through the interpretive signage initiative.

## **River & Rail**

This theme encompasses stories that explore the history of Upper Falls' establishment and prosperity, particularly through the lens of the Charles River, the Charles River Branch Railroad, and the site's culvert.



## **Textiles & Technology**

This theme encompasses stories that explore the history of the Saco Pettee mill, particularly through the lens of the textiles and technology it generated.

# RIVER & RAIL

This theme encompasses stories that explore the history of Upper Falls' establishment and prosperity, particularly through the lens of the Charles River, the Charles River Branch Railroad, and the site's culvert.

## TEACHING POINT

We want our audiences to learn about the natural conditions and industrial past of Pattern District.

## TAKEAWAY

After seeing the exhibit, we want our audiences to understand that the site's unique context and history are part of its innovative, sustainable future.

## ADVANTAGES

- Amplifies *Wellspring of Progress* pillar
- Lends itself well to conversations about city growth / urban planning, mobility, and sustainability
- Compelling opportunity to contextualize the mill within the larger Upper Falls/Newton community

# RIVER & RAIL

## STORY INVENTORY

- A** The Culvert
- B** Mill Power
- C** A Legacy of Innovation
- D** Historic Industries of Upper Falls
- E** Mill Pond & The Fireworks Factory
- F** Railroad Connectivity



## RIVER &amp; RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

## THE CULVERT

### Objective:

Leverage panels and pavers to indicate the presence and importance of the underground culvert, which connects South Meadow Brook to the Charles River.

### Story Elements:

- Part of South Meadow Brook was diverted to create a mill pond along Needham Street for steam power at the Pettee Machine Works
- The Saco-Pettee Machine Shops and its millpond were located along South Meadow Brook before it meets the Charles River
- Today, Pattern District features multiple parts of the brook, which was modified on-site in the 19th century to support the mill complex

### Key Source:

*Heritage Landscape Report for Newton, Massachusetts*

### Context:

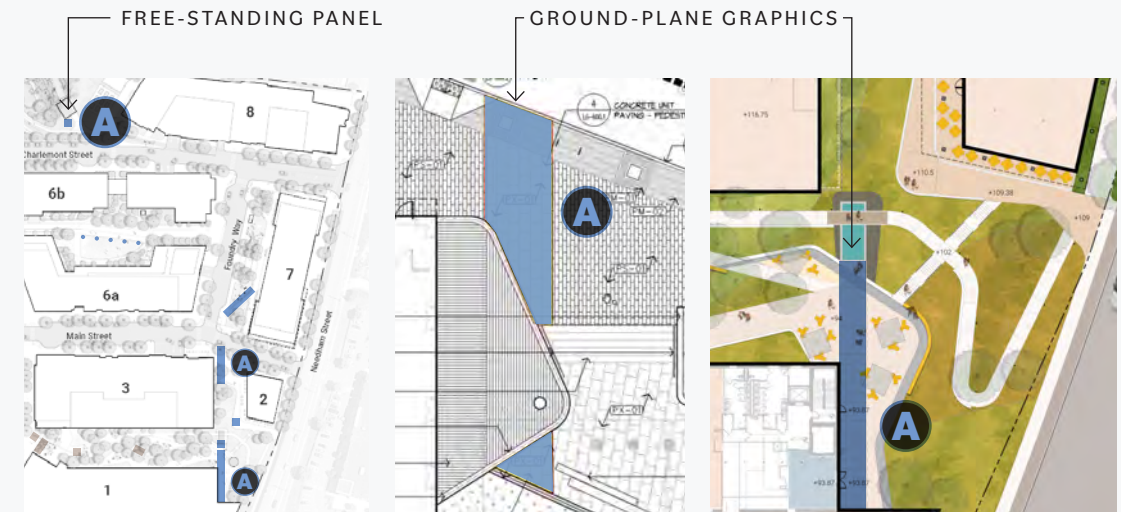
The culvert connects north and south ends of site, unseen until its reveal in Mill Park; Charlemont as the name of both building 8 and its adjoining street is a nod to the river.

### Related Signage:

Mill Power, A Legacy of Innovation

### Design:

- Simple stand-alone sign by Charlemont Street indicating the culvert's point of entry to the site
- Specific path of pavers between buildings 2 and 3 to reflect the presence of the culvert, with supporting explanatory panel





RIVER & RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

# THE CULVERT



Simple stand-alone sign by Charlemont Street indicating the culvert's point of entry to the site



Specific path of pavers between buildings 2 and 3 to reflect the presence of the culvert, with supporting explanatory panel

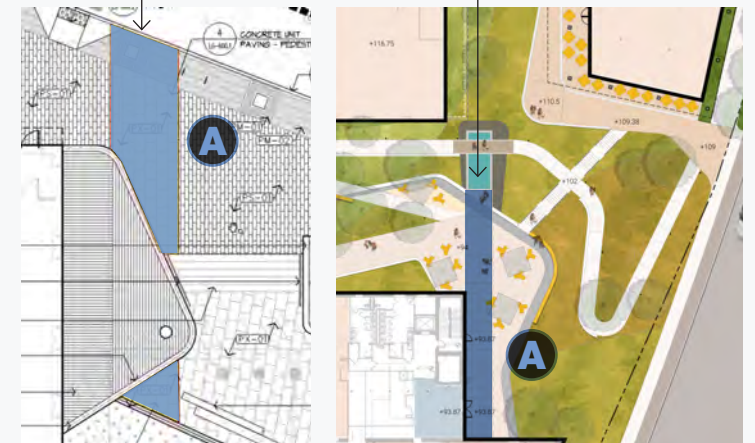


WOOD REPURPOSED FROM HISTORIC STRUCTURE

FREE-STANDING PANEL



GROUND-PLANE GRAPHICS



## RIVER &amp; RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

**MILL  
POWER****Objective:**

Celebrate the culvert's role in powering the historic mill with a panel at the exposed portion that speaks both to its site-specific significance and its role within the larger context of Newton's development.

**Story Elements:**

- Newton is surrounded on three sides by the Charles River, which means that waterpower literally fueled the development of the city; five tributaries flow through Newton and empty into the Charles River, including South Meadow Brook
- Mills diverted the water from rivers and brooks into artificial channels called "sluiceways" and used dams to create millponds
- The culvert was part of the waterpower system that adapted the South Meadow Brook to power the entire Saco-Pettee Machine Shops complex

**Key Source:**

*Heritage Landscape Report for Newton, Massachusetts*

**Context:**

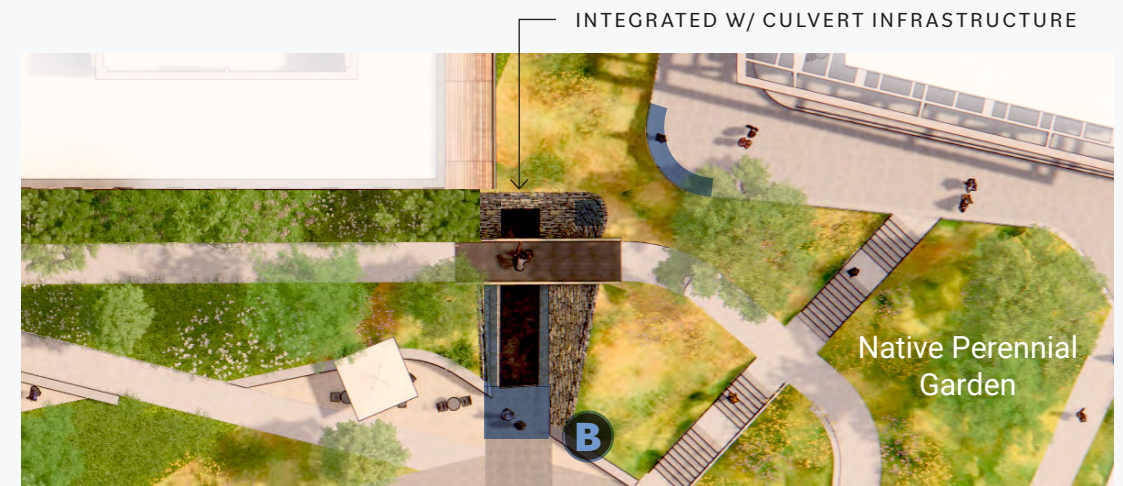
Exposed culvert as a key attraction of site; connects the story of the culvert with the operation of the historic mill as well as Newton's early development.

**Related Signage:**

The Culvert, Historic Industries of Newton, Mill Pond & The Fireworks Factory

**Design:**

- Panel at the exposed culvert that speaks to its role as a source of power for the historic mill



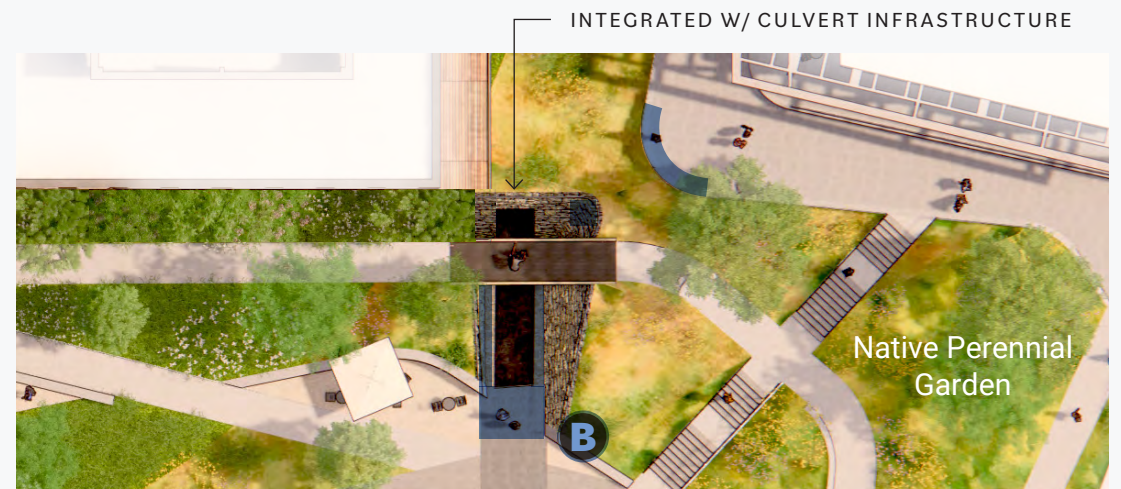
RIVER & RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

**MILL  
POWER**



Panel at the exposed culvert that speaks to its role as a source of power for the historic mill

Images are for illustrative purposes only and not meant to be taken literally.



## RIVER &amp; RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

**A LEGACY OF INNOVATION****Objective:**

Introduce visitors to Pattern District with a tactile panel that delves into its heritage landscape and contextualizes the culvert within the site's legacy of innovation.

**Story Elements:**

- Manmade modifications to natural waterways via millponds allowed greater control over the rate and flow of the water reaching the waterwheels
- As defined by Newton's own Heritage Landscape Report, heritage landscapes are special places, created by human interaction with the natural environment, that help define the character of the community and reflect its past

**Key Source:**

*Heritage Landscape Report for Newton, Massachusetts*

**Context:**

Vantage point overlooks daylight culvert and mill building; nearby entry point from Needham Street.

**Related Signage:**

The Culvert, Mill Power, The Life & Legacy of Otis Pettee

**Design:**

- Tactile panel integrated into railing overlooking the culvert that includes a relief map of the Saco-Pettee complex and millpond

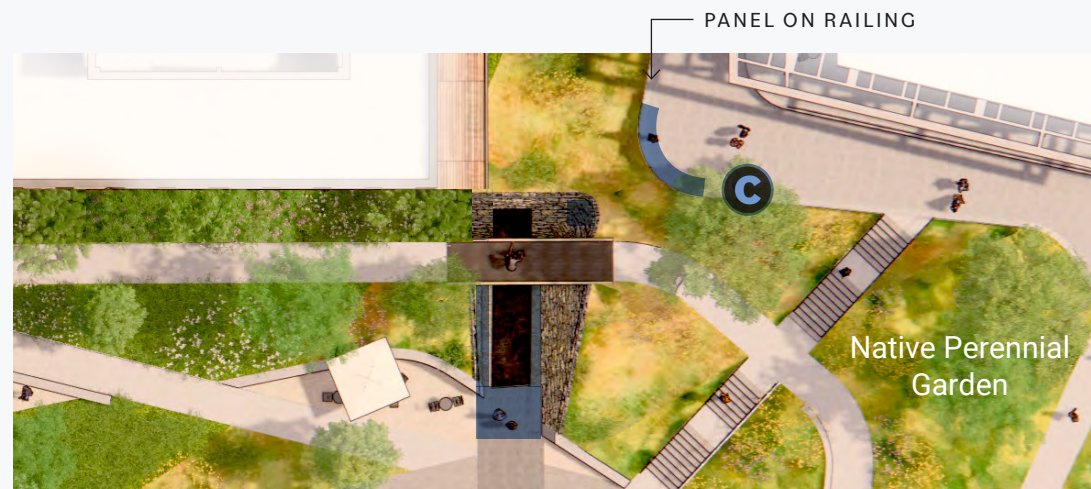


RIVER & RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

# A LEGACY OF INNOVATION



*Tactile panel integrated into railing overlooking the culvert that includes a relief map of the Saco-Pettee complex and millpond*



## RIVER &amp; RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

## HISTORIC INDUSTRIES OF UPPER FALLS

### Objective:

Educate visitors around the variety of industries that have existed in Newton over time by chronicling the establishment of mills in Upper Falls from 1688 to 1907.

### Story Elements:

- John Clark changed the course of Newton's development by accelerating the pace of the town's industrial growth when in 1688 he established the first industry on the Charles River in Newton, a sawmill at Upper Falls. The sawmill thrust Upper Falls into a leading position in Newton's industrial expansion.
- Industrial development in Newton was concentrated in three village areas: Upper Falls, Lower Falls, and Nonantum; Upper Falls was a hub of industrial activities until a building fire in 1907
- By the 19th century, the waterways in Newton supported a wide variety of manufacturing industries, including snuff, cotton, silk, nails, thread, paper, hosiery, furniture, and even a rolling mill that made scythes
- With the Saco-Pettee Machine Shops, Newton also had a mill that specialized in designing and producing the machinery used in other factories to make their products

**Key Source:** *City-Wide Archaeological Survey of Newton, MA*

### Context:

Transient users at the mobility plaza are best served by concise storytelling; sequencing directs pedestrians towards the culvert and the Village Green.

### Related Signage:

Mill Power, A Legacy of Innovation, Railroad Connectivity

### Design:

- Ground-plane timeline to delineate the founding of each industry by year (e.g., 1688 — SAW MILL)
- Free-standing panel to frame the conversation of Upper Falls' industrial relevance and reliance on water



# HISTORIC INDUSTRIES OF UPPER FALLS



Ground-plane timeline to delineate the founding of each industry by year (e.g., 1688 — SAW MILL)



Free-standing panel to frame the conversation of Upper Falls' industrial relevance and reliance on water



## RIVER &amp; RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

## MILL POND & THE FIREWORKS FACTORY

### Objective:

Acknowledge the 19th century fireworks production facility that relied on the millpond created from South Meadow Brook along Needham Street.

### Story Elements:

- In 1886, the United States Fireworks Company moved its manufacturing business from Portland, Maine to Newton Upper Falls
- The factory was supposedly located around the mill pond so as to have a ready way to douse fires
- The company went into decline after an explosion and fire in 1919

### Key Source:

The Makers of the Mold by Kenneth W. Newcomb

### Context:

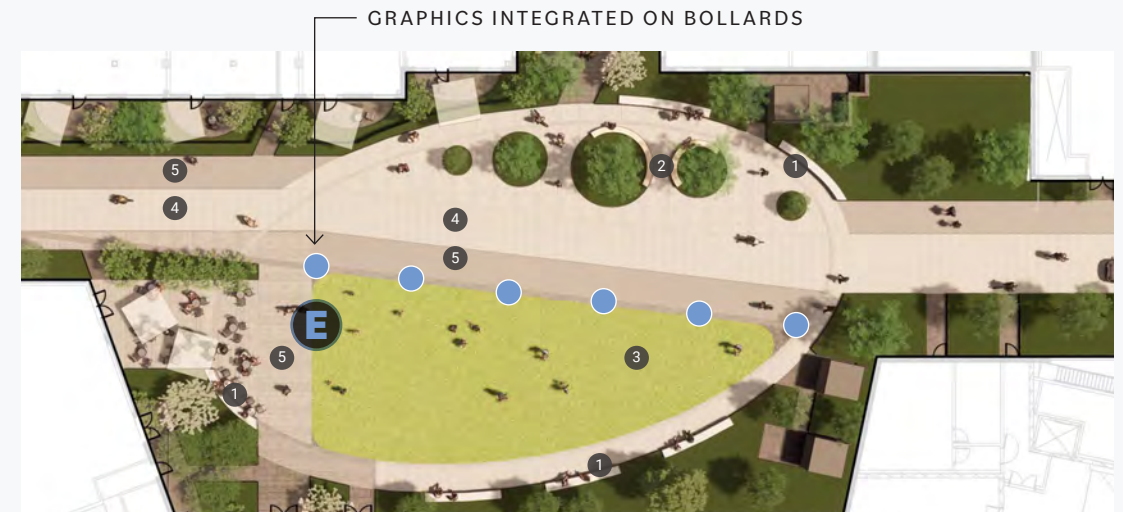
Residents and passersby may be interested in this unexpected piece of the site's history; connected to culvert storytelling sequence.

### Related Signage:

The Culvert, Mill Power

### Design:

- Bollards to feature a firework motif; one to include a concise plaque that references this history



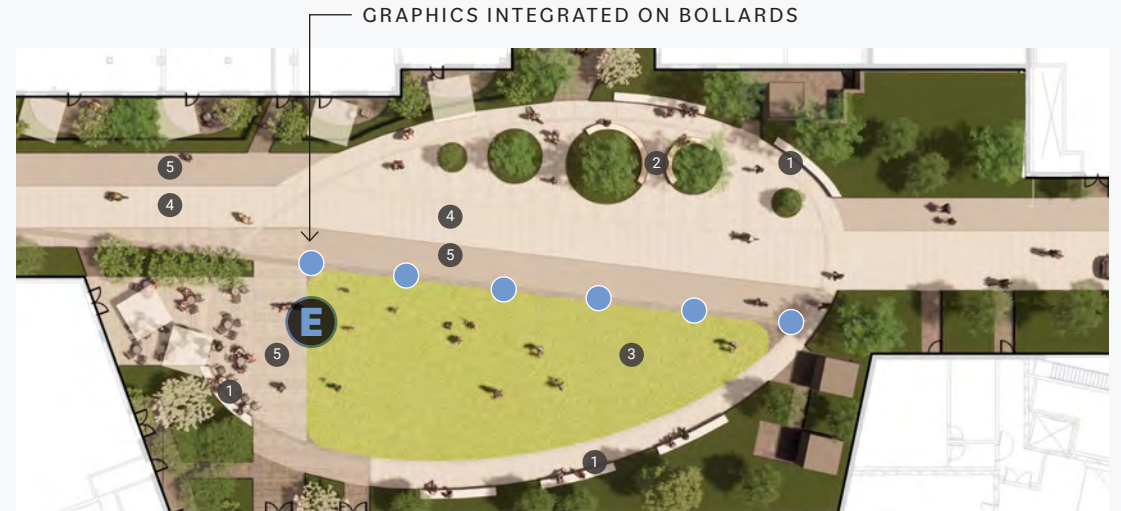


RIVER & RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

# MILL POND & THE FIREWORKS FACTORY



*Bollards to feature a firework motif; one to include a concise plaque that references this history*



## RIVER &amp; RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

## RAILROAD CONNECTIVITY

### Objective:

Educate visitors — especially children — about the railroad’s significance at local and regional levels as it relates to Newton’s growth throughout the 19th century.

### Story Elements:

- Newton was one of the first suburban developments in New England due to the establishment of the Boston and Worcester Railroad
- The Charles River Branch Railroad played a crucial role in Upper Falls’ industrial prominence
- When Otis Pettee’s effort to lure the Boston and Worcester Railroad to Upper Falls failed, Pettee decided to build his own line, which was eventually folded into the Boston & Albany line

### Key Source:

*Heritage Landscape Report for Newton, Massachusetts*

### Context:

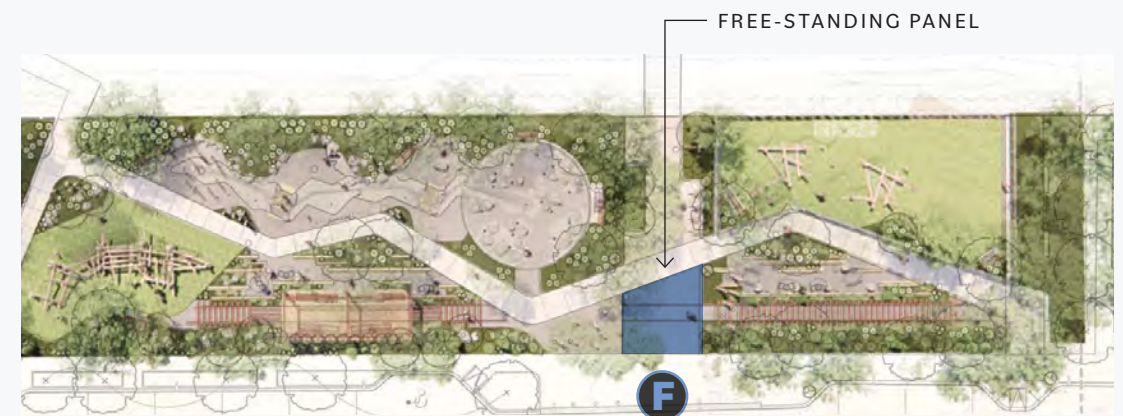
Upper Falls Greenway features a dynamic playscape with opportunities for interactive elements geared towards children, including a path of reclaimed rails.

### Related Signage:

Historic Industries of Upper Falls,  
The Life & Legacy of Otis Pettee

### Design:

- Free-standing double-sided panel low to the ground to engage younger audiences and introduce surrounding interactive elements tied to the Greenway’s history as a railroad



RIVER & RAIL STORY SPOTLIGHT

# RAILROAD CONNECTIVITY



NEARBY IN THE VILLAGE GREEN — REUSE OF HISTORIC TRAIN SHED STRUCTURE

Free-standing double-sided panel low to the ground to engage younger audiences and introduce surrounding interactive elements tied to the Greenway's history as a railroad



RAILS RECLAIMED FROM HISTORIC TRACK



# TEXTILES & TECHNOLOGY

This theme encompasses stories that explore the history of the Saco Pettee mill, particularly through the lens of the textiles and technology it generated.

## TEACHING POINT

We want our audiences to learn about the mill's function, its founder, and its relation to punch card production.

## TAKEAWAY

After seeing the exhibit, we want our audiences to understand that the mill's history and spirit of innovation fuel the vision and future of Pattern District.

## ADVANTAGES

- Amplifies *New Patterns, Timeless Textures* pillar
- Lends itself well to conversations about the wide-reaching implications of technological innovation
- Compelling opportunity to honor the historic mill building and highlight the risk and reward that comes with early adoption of new technologies

# TEXTILES & TECHNOLOGY

## STORY INVENTORY

- G** Saco Pettee Housing District
- H** The Lexicon of Pattern District
- I** The Bread & Roses Strike
- J** Punch Card Adoption & Advancement
- K** The Life & Legacy of Otis Pettee



## TEXTILES &amp; TECHNOLOGY STORY SPOTLIGHT

## **SACO PETTEE HOUSING DISTRICT**

### **Objective:**

Create awareness around the nearby historic housing landmarks and how they were originally home to mill workers.

### **Story Elements:**

- The old boarding house on Mechanic Street (previously referred to as the “beehive”) was built by Otis Pettee in 1839 for the workers of the Pettee Machine Works; it became a haven for newly arrived immigrants who came to work in the mills; at one time Mr. Pettee operated a bakery located in the building
- The Pettee Company also built a rooming house for its workers called the Mechanic’s Hotel, now known as Elliot Manor, a nursing home
- The Saco-Lowell project is the only known enclave of 20th century workers housing in Newton

### **Key Source:**

The Makers of the Mold by Kenneth W. Newcomb

### **Context:**

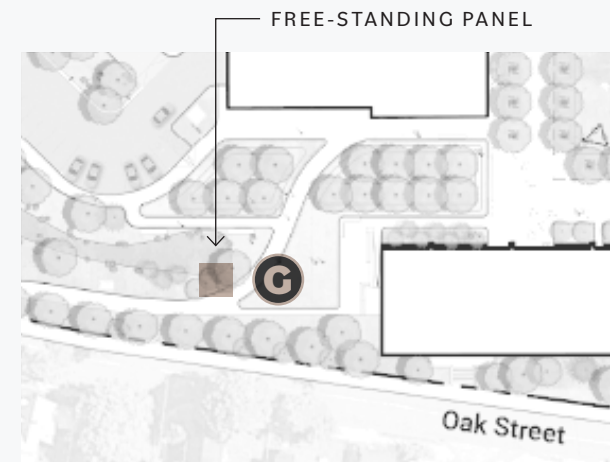
Oak Street Park enjoys both visibility of the historic housing district and adjacency to the mill.

### **Related Signage:**

The Life & Legacy of Otis Pettee

### **Design:**

- A free-standing sign that diagrammatically shows the historic housing district in relation to the mill and the railroad

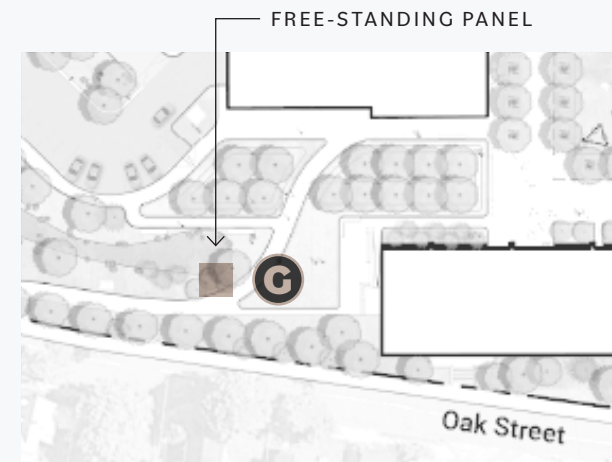
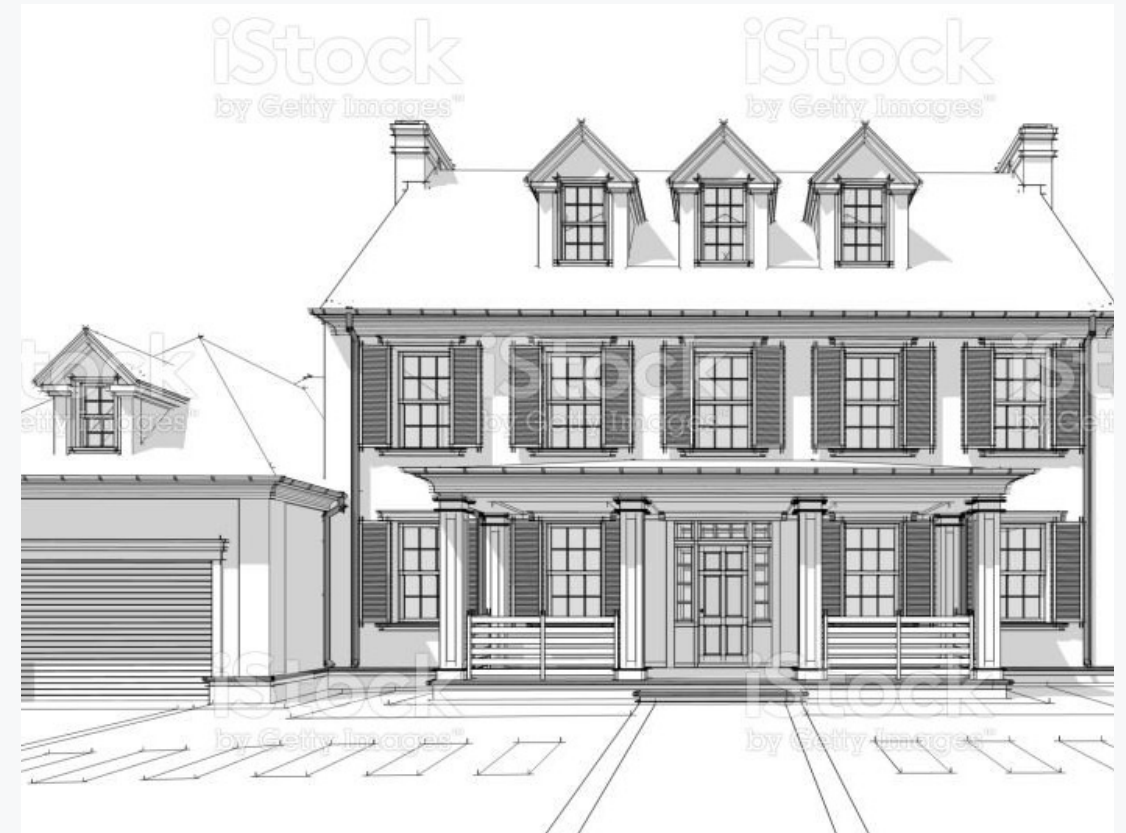


## TEXTILES &amp; TECHNOLOGY STORY SPOTLIGHT

# SACO PETTEE HOUSING DISTRICT



A free-standing sign that diagrammatically shows the historic housing district in relation to the mill and the railroad



## **THE BREAD & ROSES STRIKE**

### **Objective:**

Recognize the walk outs and workers strikes — including the Bread & Roses strike — that occurred at mills across the region during the early 20th century as part of the challenges of industrialization and innovation.

### **Story Elements:**

- In January 1912, mill workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts went on strike against the reduction of working hours (and subsequent pay) in what's known as the Bread & Roses strike; it united workers from more than 51 different nationalities
- As part of a regional movement across New England, around 750 workers at the Saco-Pettee walked out in March 1912, demanding more pay; it lasted about a week, but a month later the workers went on strike again citing failed commitments by management
- Include the quotation from The Makers of the Mold, “Dreamers drew the pattern, Workers cast the mold.”

### **Key Source:**

The Makers of the Mold by Kenneth W. Newcomb

### **Context:**

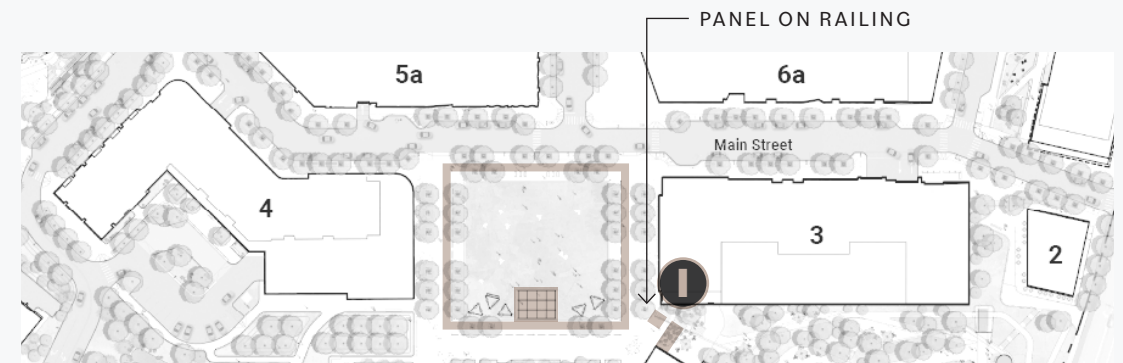
Adjacency to the mill; proximity to signage showcasing workers housing district.

### **Related Signage:**

Saco Pettee Housing District

### **Design:**

- Panel to be integrated into railing that overlooks mill building





## **PUNCH CARD ADOPTION & ADVANCEMENT**

### **Objective:**

Convey the significance of the mill's adoption of the punch card, as well as draw the connection between punch cards and early computing.

### **Story Elements:**

- Pettee Works' decision to go with a "flexible bend type" punch card was radical given that old tools would need to be scrapped and expensive new machinery installed; this decision is reflective of how the company embraced new technology
- Ada Byron Lovelace drew the parallel between mechanical looms that used punchcards to direct the weaving of beautiful patterns, and Babbage's engine that used punched cards to make calculations

### **Key Source:**

[A Chronicle of Textile Machinery](#) by Saco-Lowell Shops

### **Context:**

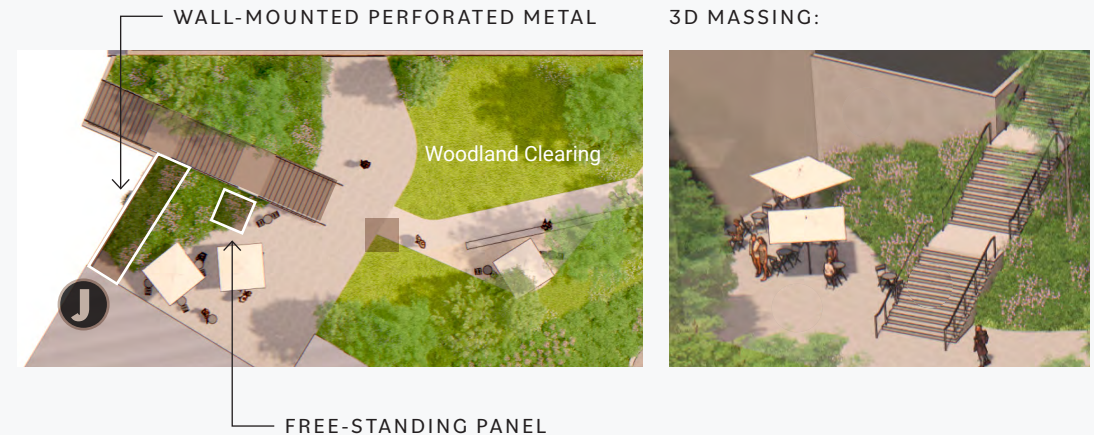
The punch card story relates directly to the mill as well as thematically to building 4B, named after Lovelace; retaining wall visible from inside the mill.

### **Related Signage:**

Mill Power, The Life & Legacy of Otis Pettee

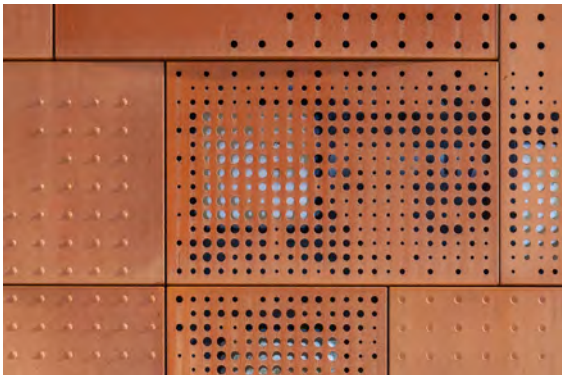
### **Design:**

- An artistic installation mounted on the retaining wall to be made from perforated corten steel and inspired by the design of punch cards
- Supplementary free-standing panel to detail the punch card story

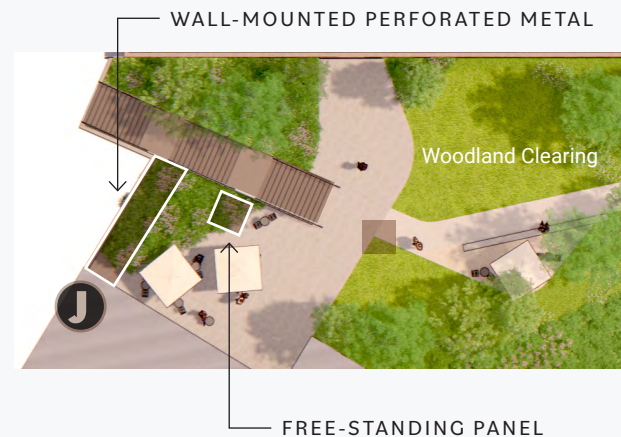
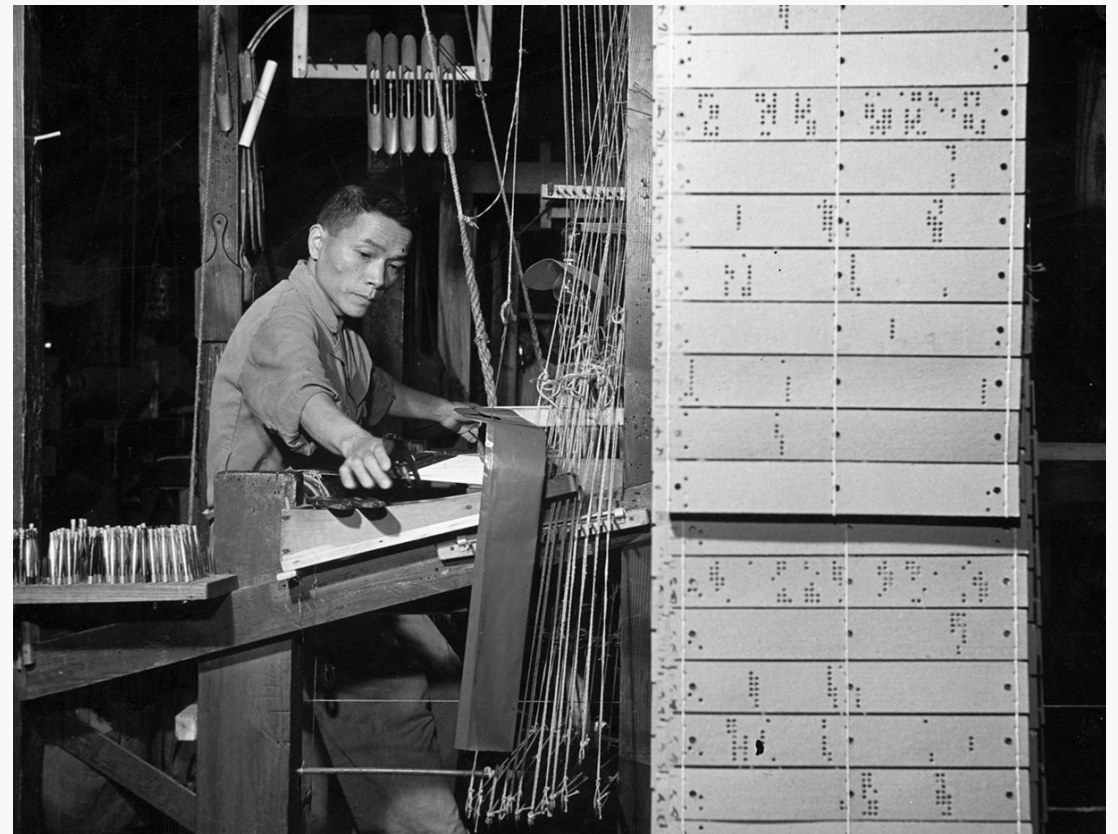


TEXTILES & TECHNOLOGY STORY SPOTLIGHT

# PUNCH CARD ADOPTION & ADVANCEMENT



An artistic installation mounted on the retaining wall to be made from perforated corten steel and inspired by the design of punch cards; supplementary free-standing panel to detail punch card story



## **THE LIFE & LEGACY OF OTIS PETTEE**

### **Objective:**

Introduce Otis Pettee and show how his spirit of ingenuity not only spurred the site's development but also led to global textile production.

### **Story Elements:**

- Pettee is responsible not only for establishing and growing the site — he was instrumental in developing textile manufacturing equipment, bringing the Charles River branch into Upper Falls, and becoming the largest producer of cotton cloth in New England
- In 1837, Pettee signed a contract to supply machinery to the first Mexican mill; cotton mills sprang up in multiple Mexican cities, all supplied by Pettee (who also provided experienced machinists and cotton spinners)
- “My home is here...my land is in a good state of cultivation, fruit trees are beginning to bear, flower gardens and green houses are in a flourishing condition, my family is comfortably situated, and I know of no reason why I cannot do as well here as anywhere else.” – Otis Pettee

### **Key Source:**

A Chronicle of Textile Machinery by Saco-Lowell Shops

### **Context:**

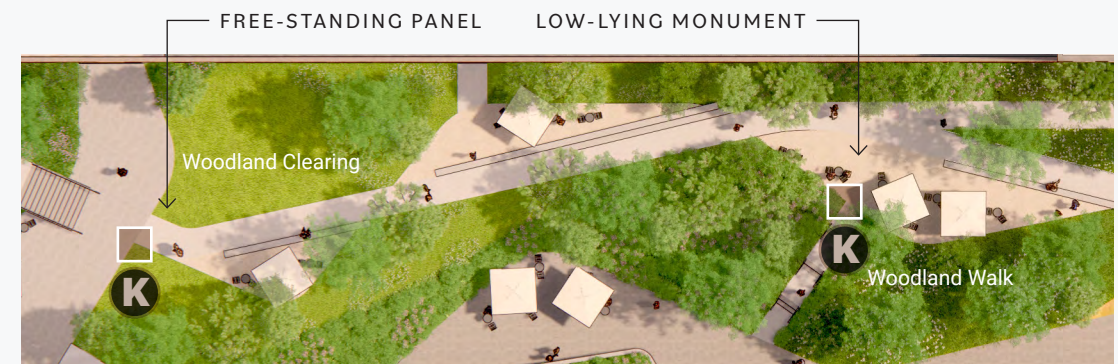
The site's establishment as a place of industry traces back to 1832, when Otis Pettee purchased 12 acres for \$100 per acre.

### **Related Signage:**

Saco Pettee Housing District

### **Design:**

- A free-standing panel to tell the story of Otis Pettee
- A low-lying monument sign to memorialize quote by Otis Pettee



TEXTILES & TECHNOLOGY STORY SPOTLIGHT

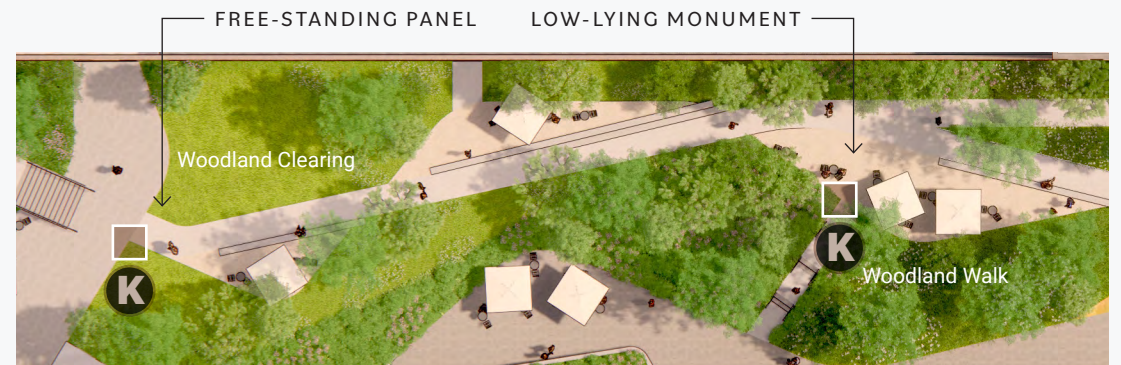
# THE LIFE & LEGACY OF OTIS PETTEE



A free-standing panel to tell the story of Otis Pettee



A low-lying monument sign to memorialize quote by Otis Pettee



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## THE LEXICON OF PATTERN DISTRICT

### Objective:

Draw a connection between the symbols embedded in the logomark and brand quilt to the stories explored in the interpretive signage program.

### Story Elements:

- The culvert and mill are but two of numerous stories represented symbolically in Pattern District’s brand quilt
- Pattern District’s Main Street and Village Green are the “missing pieces” of Newton
- Historically, permission for the establishment of a new town had to be obtained from the General Court; new settlers were required to lay out a main street, the village green, the centrally located church, a school, the town lots and fields or strips adjacent to the settlement before the village was recognized by the government

### Key Source:

The Makers of the Mold by Kenneth W. Newcomb

### Context:

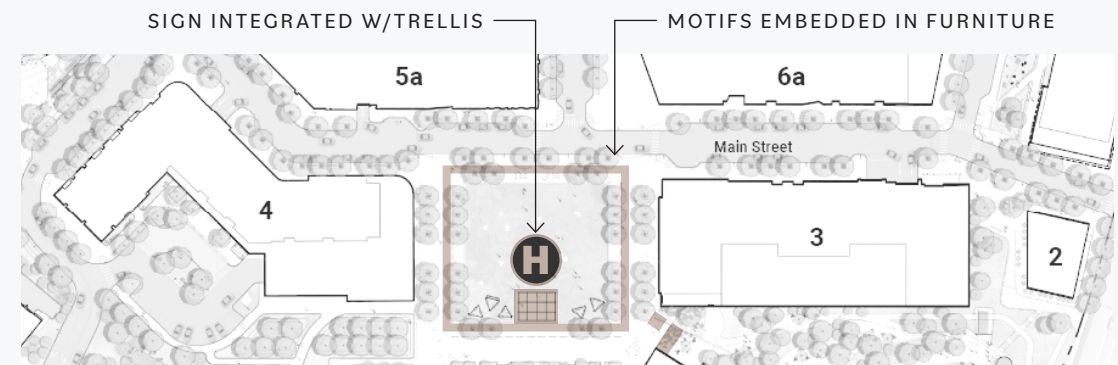
Village Green will have audiences lingering; vibrancy and versatility of Village Green can be reinforced with pattern-inspired signage moments.

### Related Signage:

All signage

### Design:

- Motifs from brand quilt to be integrated with signage and site furniture
- Sign to be integrated into the trellis structure as a homebase for introducing the lexicon

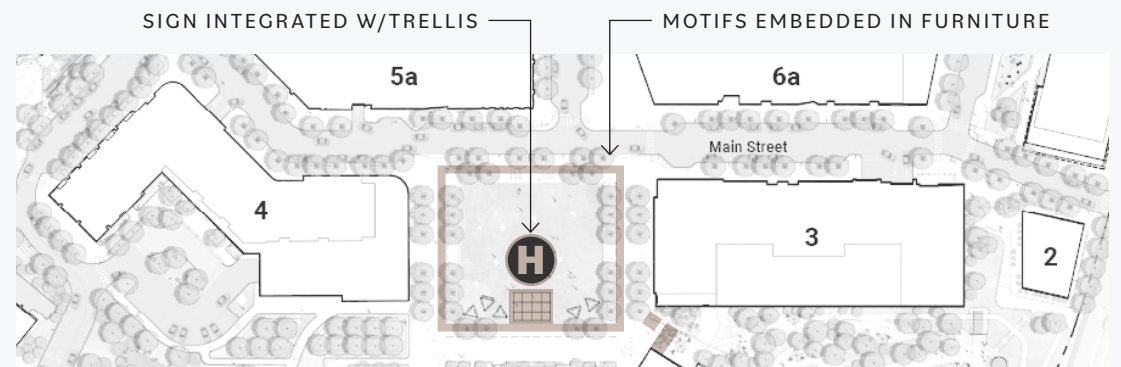


TEXTILES & TECHNOLOGY STORY SPOTLIGHT

# THE LEXICON OF PATTERN DISTRICT



Motifs from brand quilt to be integrated with signage and site furniture; sign to be integrated into the trellis structure as a homebase for introducing the lexicon



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# SUMMARY OF STORIES

## River & Rail

- A** The Culvert
- B** Mill Power
- C** A Legacy of Innovation
- D** Historic Industries of Upper Falls
- E** Mill Pond & The Fireworks Factory
- F** Railroad Connectivity

## Textiles & Technology

- G** Saco Pettee Housing District
- H** The Lexicon of Pattern District
- I** The Bread & Roses Strike
- J** Punch Card Adoption & Advancement
- K** The Life & Legacy of Otis Pettee

\* Indicates reuse of a historic artifact/structure



**Thank you.**

S.



# SACO PETTEE MILL



# SACO PETTEE MILL



# SACO PETTEE MILL



# SACO PETTEE MILL



# SACO PETTEE MILL



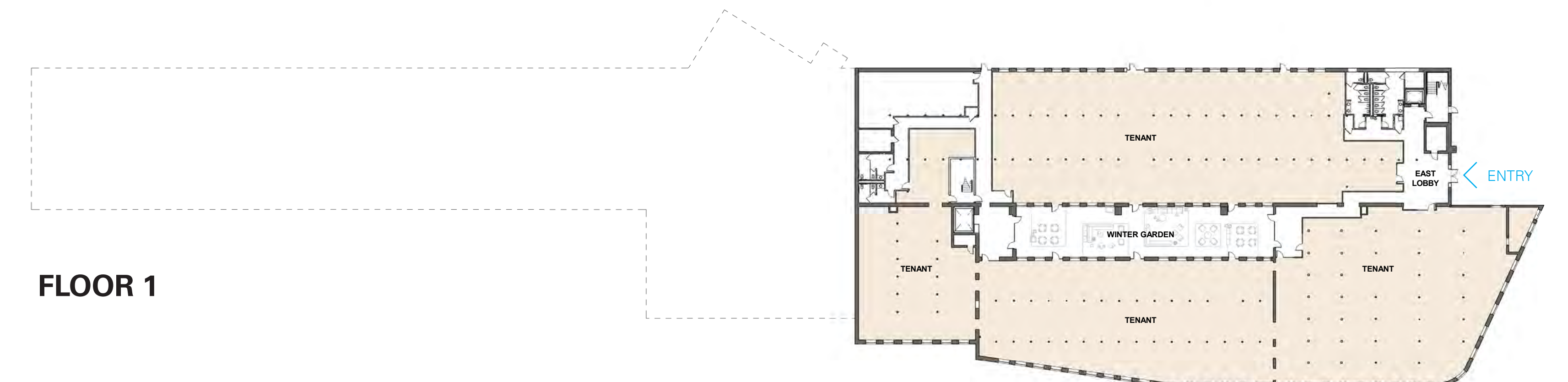
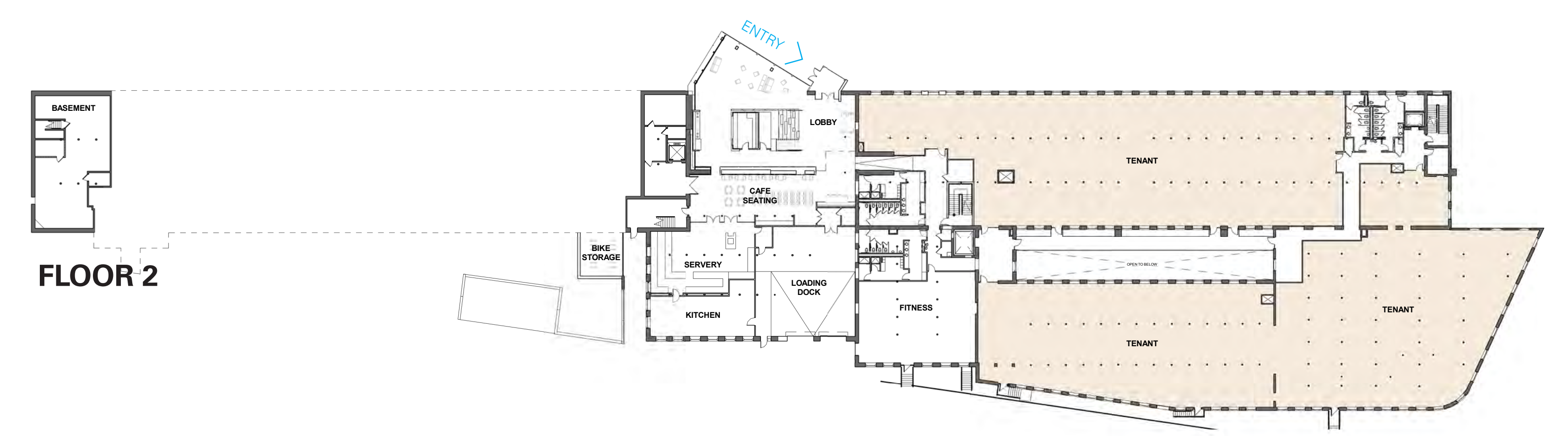
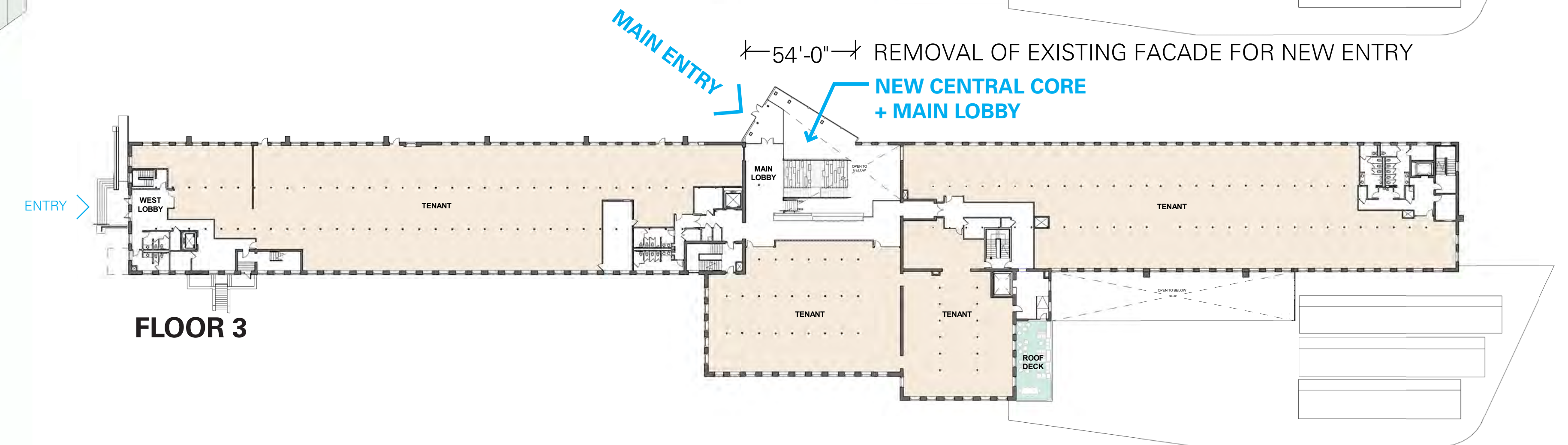
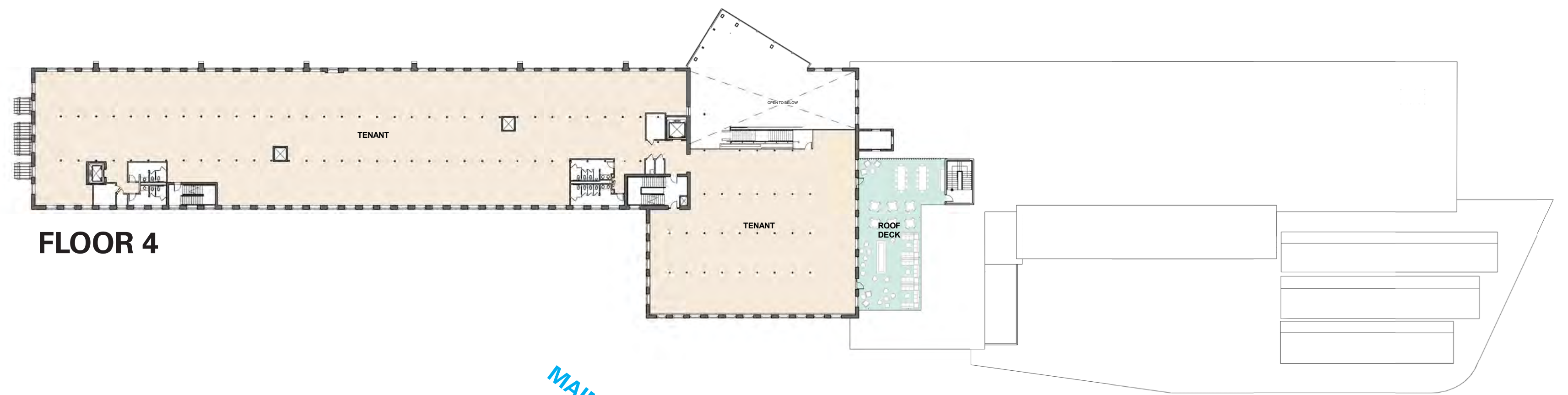
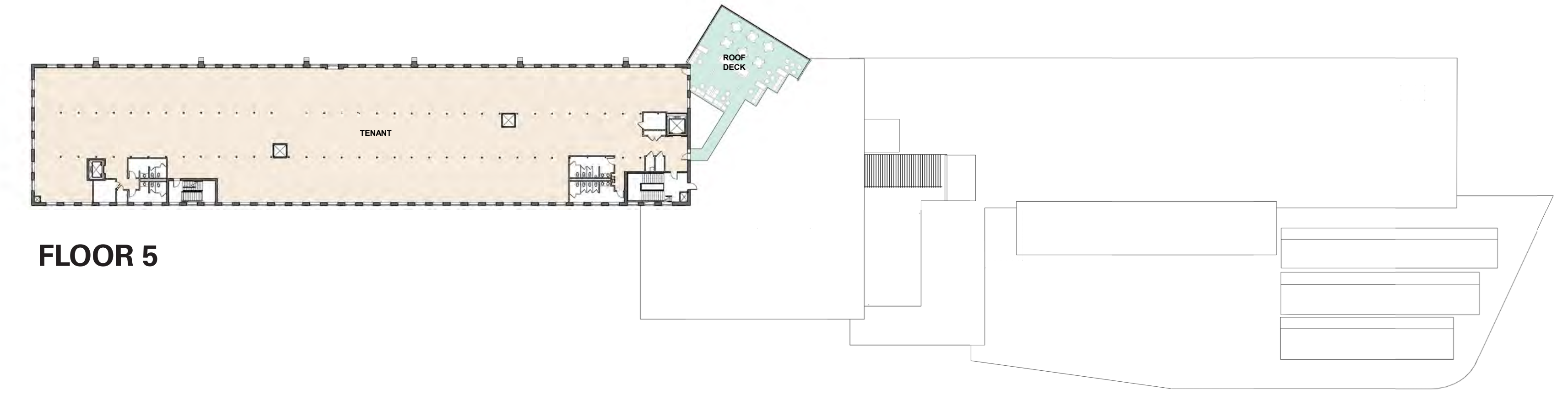
# SACO PETTEE MILL



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693'-0" OVERALL BUILDING LENGTH  
646'-6" CONTINUOUS NORTH FACADE



# SACO PETTEE MILL

