

# The Canals Industrial District



## HISTORY

In 1825 work was initiated on the Hamilton Canal which left Swamp Locks Basin and ran parallel to the Lower Pawtucket Canal. The Hamilton Manufacturing Company built their mills on the strip of land between these two canals. Water from the Hamilton Canal dropped into the breast wheel in each mill and discharged thirteen feet below into the lower level canal. The Hamilton Manufacturing Company then became the first corporation to lease water power in units called "mill powers" (about 60 horsepower). The Appleton Mills utilized the same thirteen-foot drop via three sluiceways passing under the complex.



## PROBLEMS

- Barriers created by the canals.
- Poor traffic circulation, lack of access to the industrial peninsula, inadequate parking.
- Blighted and abandoned buildings.
- Challenges of adaptive reuse to meet current space demands.
- Inappropriate "modern" facades on newer buildings.

## ASSETS

- Growth and expansion of area businesses.
- Several mill structures have undergone rehabilitation for industrial/residential uses.
- The visual integrity of the Lower Pawtucket Canal known as the "Industrial Canyon" is still intact.
- Geographic location and presence of canals create a prominent "gateway" development site.

# Pawtucket Canal



*For years, the vicinity of the Pawtucket Canal has been subject to changing development trends.*



*In the 1940s, Freudenberg Nonwovens located its first textile operations in the U.S. at the site of the former Lowell Machine Shop. Over the decades, the company has expanded and contracted, moving several facilities to the south, but now looking to expand.*



*The redevelopment of Canal Place created over 150 residential condominiums, however, the collapse of the real estate market in the late eighties stalled the final phase.*

## OLD USES & NEW POSSIBILITIES

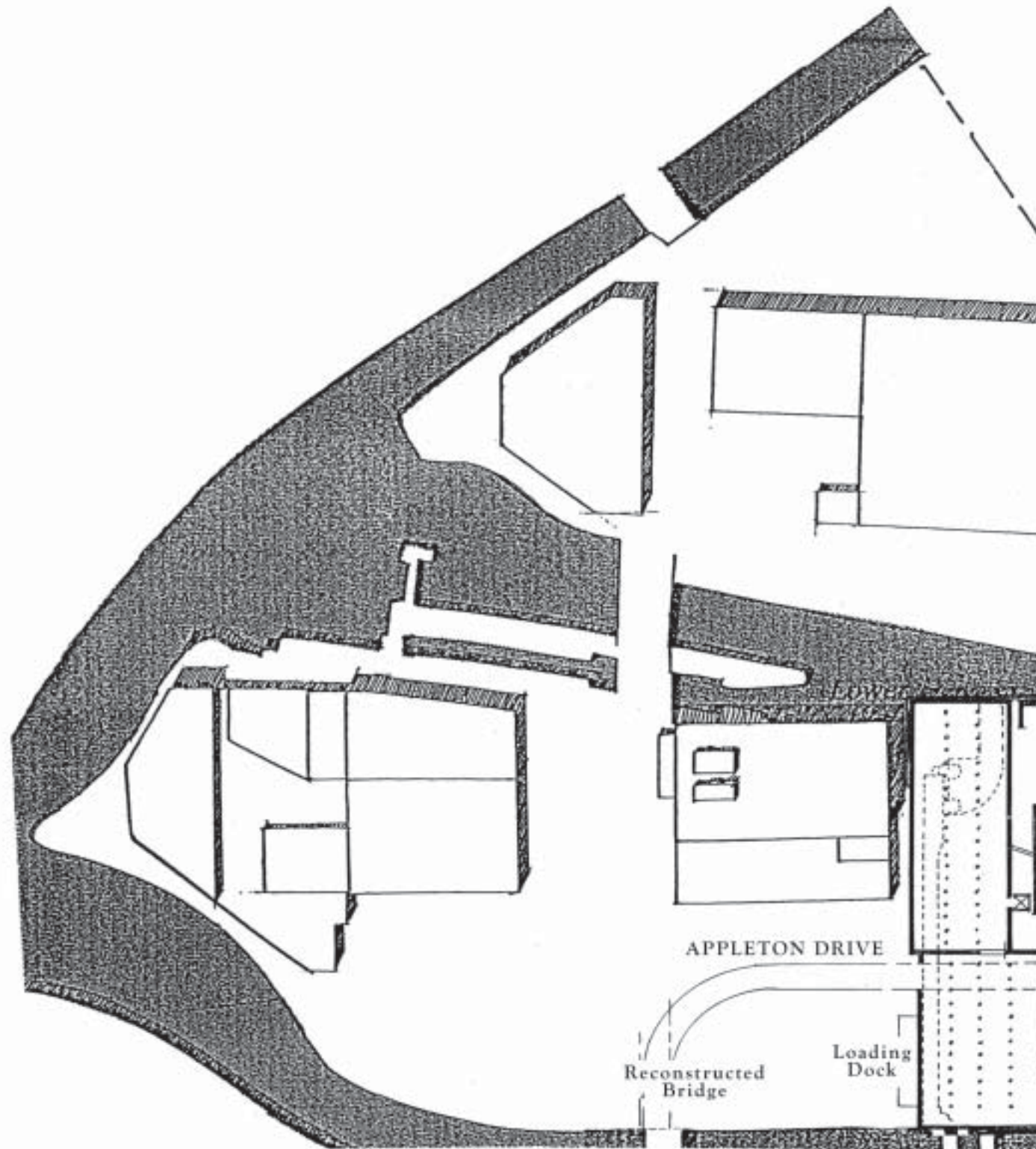
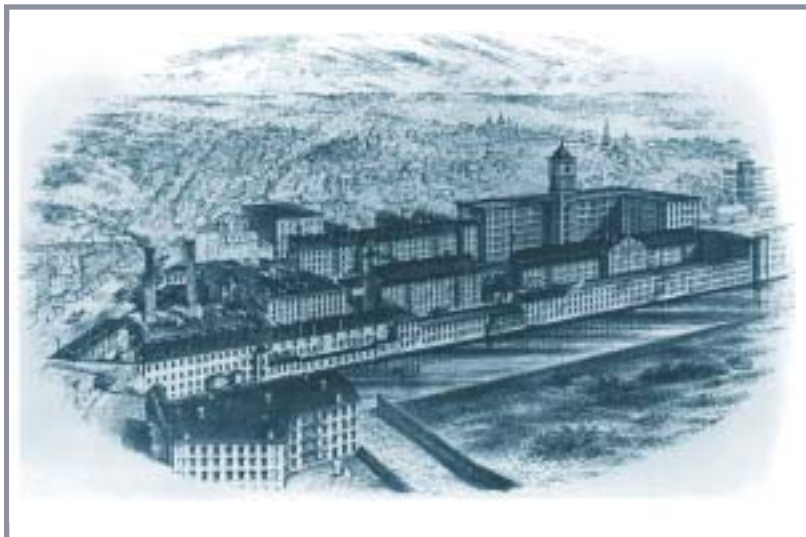
Constructed in 1908, the two buildings of Canal Place III were formerly the Wool Washing Buildings of the Lowell manufacturing complex.

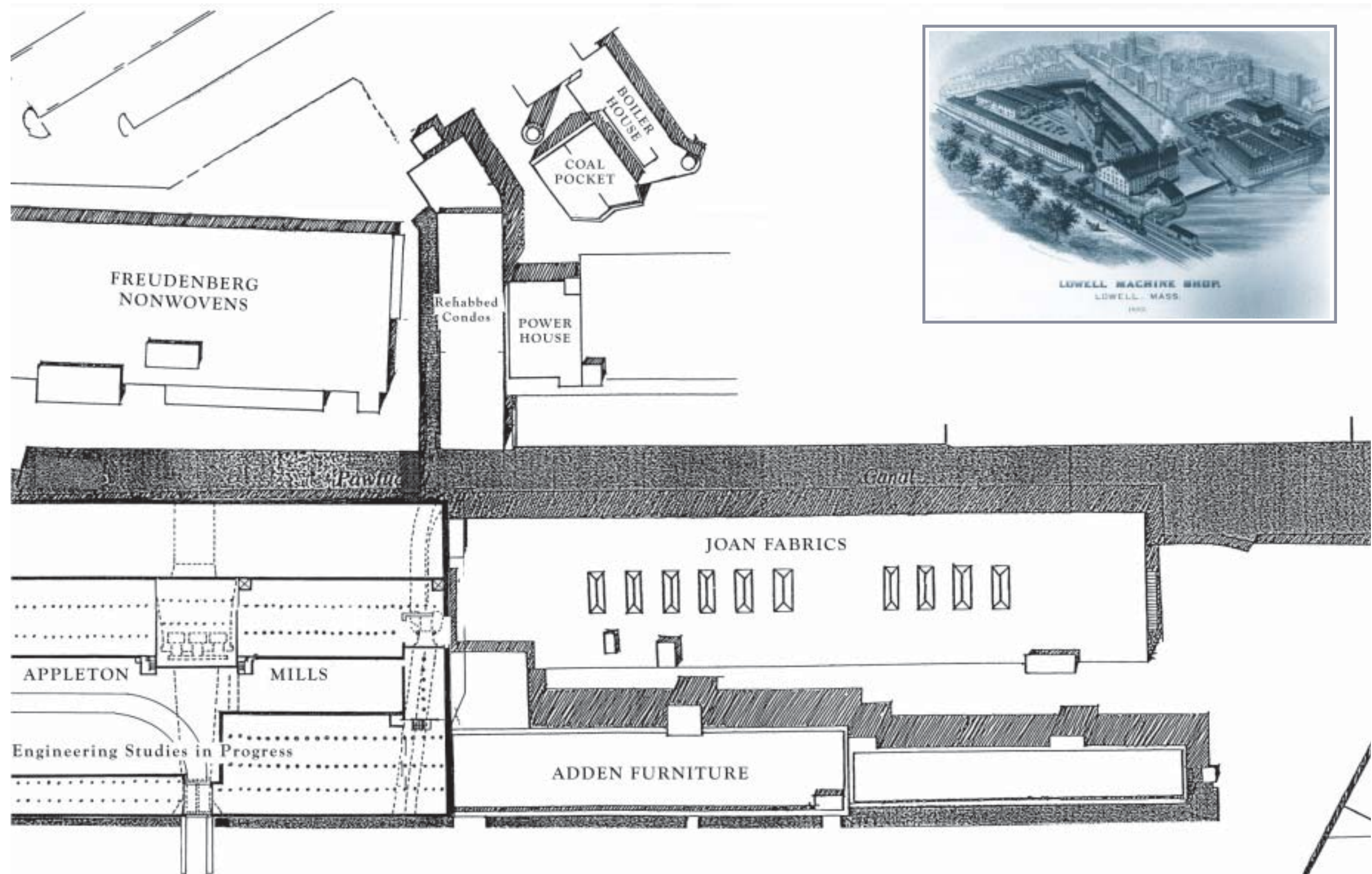
Adjacent to Canal Place, the Lowell Manufacturing Company or "Asset" buildings were originally constructed as a Cotton Picker and Power House, a Coal House, and a Boiler House. Residential redevelopment of Canal Place III began in 1986 but work on the two buildings was never completed. The "Asset" complex draws interest for a variety of uses including power generation but presently remains vacant.

Canal Place III and the "Asset" buildings are structurally sound, although work initiated as part of the Canal Place Condominium Project has left areas of that complex exposed and unfinished. Load-bearing masonry construction and generous floor-to-ceiling heights make all buildings well-suited to commercial use, storage, or residential development.

## The Canal Industrial District

- Redevelopment of the Appleton Mills complex to remove unsafe and unusable structures and create opportunities for new development.
- Facilitate industrial expansion by providing structured parking.
- New access road to service the Appleton Mills complex.
- Reconstruction of existing bridges over the Hamilton Canal and Pawtucket Canals.
- Completion of residential development in Canal Place III.
- Clean-up and renovation of the "Asset" Buildings, including the boiler house and coal pocket.





PLAN @ 1"=100'

# Hamilton Canal

## JOAN FABRICS AND ADDEN FURNITURE

*Joan Fabrics specializes in automotive fabrics and is working on a 24 hour schedule in the main building of the Hamilton Mills. Upgrades to the premises have included window replacements and a landscaped parking area.*

*Adden Furniture, whose products include dormitory and office furniture, operates out of the buildings formerly occupied by Mills No.4 and 6.*



## STATUS

Joan Fabrics Corporation, Adden Furniture, and Freudenberg Nonwovens form a strong network of industries supporting the Canal Industrial District. In spite of the area's growth, vacant and deteriorating mill buildings belonging to the Appleton Mills Complex and Canal Place III continue to slow investment activity. The Canal Industrial District's vacant properties and the lack of established pedestrian and vehicular systems leaves a void that new development and street enhancements can fill.

# The Canals Industrial District

## SOLUTIONS

Strategic infrastructure improvements can be the catalyst for new development in this area.

The City is positioned to play a key role in developing parking for the area's daytime commuters. Improvements to the existing infrastructure will facilitate vehicular access to Jackson Street, while selective land acquisition will allow for the removal of blighted structures, two critical steps toward successful revitalization of the area.

The development of pedestrian linkages to the adjacent downtown will help break the barrier created by the Canals and existing industrial uses, while canal walkways and greenways will beautify the area, increasing its desirability to commercial tenants.



## ZONING

The Canals Industrial District lies primarily within an IA Zone (warehouse/storage/and light manufacturing). A portion of the district which contains Canal Place III is zoned

B3 - General Business. With the exception of minor changes along Jackson Street, the existing boundaries will remain. Amendments to the B3 zone will include parking

requirements for new development.



## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Widening of Revere Street between Middlesex and Jackson Streets to facilitate two-way commercial traffic.
- Development of a new roadway through the Appleton Mills complex.
- Acquisition and repair of bridges spanning Hamilton and Pawtucket Canals.
- New pedestrian walkways to eliminate the barrier of the existing mill structures.
- Assembly of land to provide parking and attract redevelopment interest in the area.

# The Middlesex/Jackson Urban Village



## HISTORY

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, a large portion of the area between Jackson and Middlesex Street was owned by the Appleton Company and used for its manufacturing purposes. The extant structures in this area, associated with the Appleton Mills, include Mills No. 5 and No. 6 between Jackson and Middlesex Streets, and a storage facility at the corner of Jackson and Revere Streets. Land at the eastern end of the Middlesex/Jackson corridor was originally occupied by warehouses and boarding houses for the Hamilton Company.



## PROBLEMS

- Long-term disinvestment and neglect.
- Demolished buildings/structures have left vacant lots awaiting new construction.
- Lack of streetscape and street edge.
- High incidence of blighted and abandoned buildings reduce property values.
- Needed parking for area businesses.
- Absence of open spaces and parks.
- Poor traffic circulation.

## ASSETS

- Open spaces and vacant lots provide valuable space for new development.
- Historic buildings and structures exist intact.
- Proximity to the Gallagher commuter rail terminal encourages new development.

## Middlesex Street



*Beginning in 1889, the Appleton Company sold the majority of its boarding house properties.*



*During the first half of the 1900s these buildings were replaced with newer commercial structures which transformed the north side of Middlesex Street into a retail and service corridor.*



*Today, Middlesex Street is a poorly controlled thoroughfare lined with vacant lots and neglected buildings.*

Existing buildings which date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century include the 1889 Marston Building at 155-159 Middlesex Street, and the Elliot Building at 193 Middlesex Street. The Elliot Building originally contained residences on its upper floors.

Over the last 50 years, the Middlesex/Jackson Urban Village has been characterized by long-term disinvestment and abandonment, with many of its older structures left decaying and neglected. Despite the ongoing problems of minimum maintenance, underutilized land, and vacant lots, the character of the area is enriched by its historic structures. The surviving buildings, many of which are architecturally distinct, leave open the possibility of economic development through rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

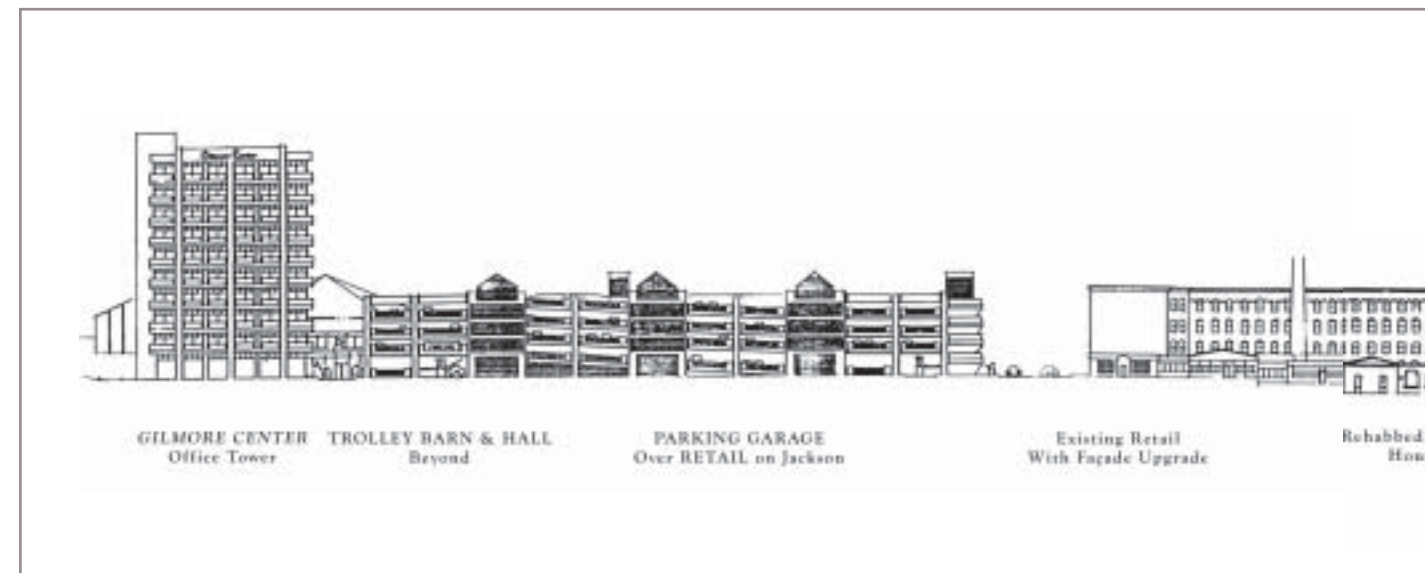
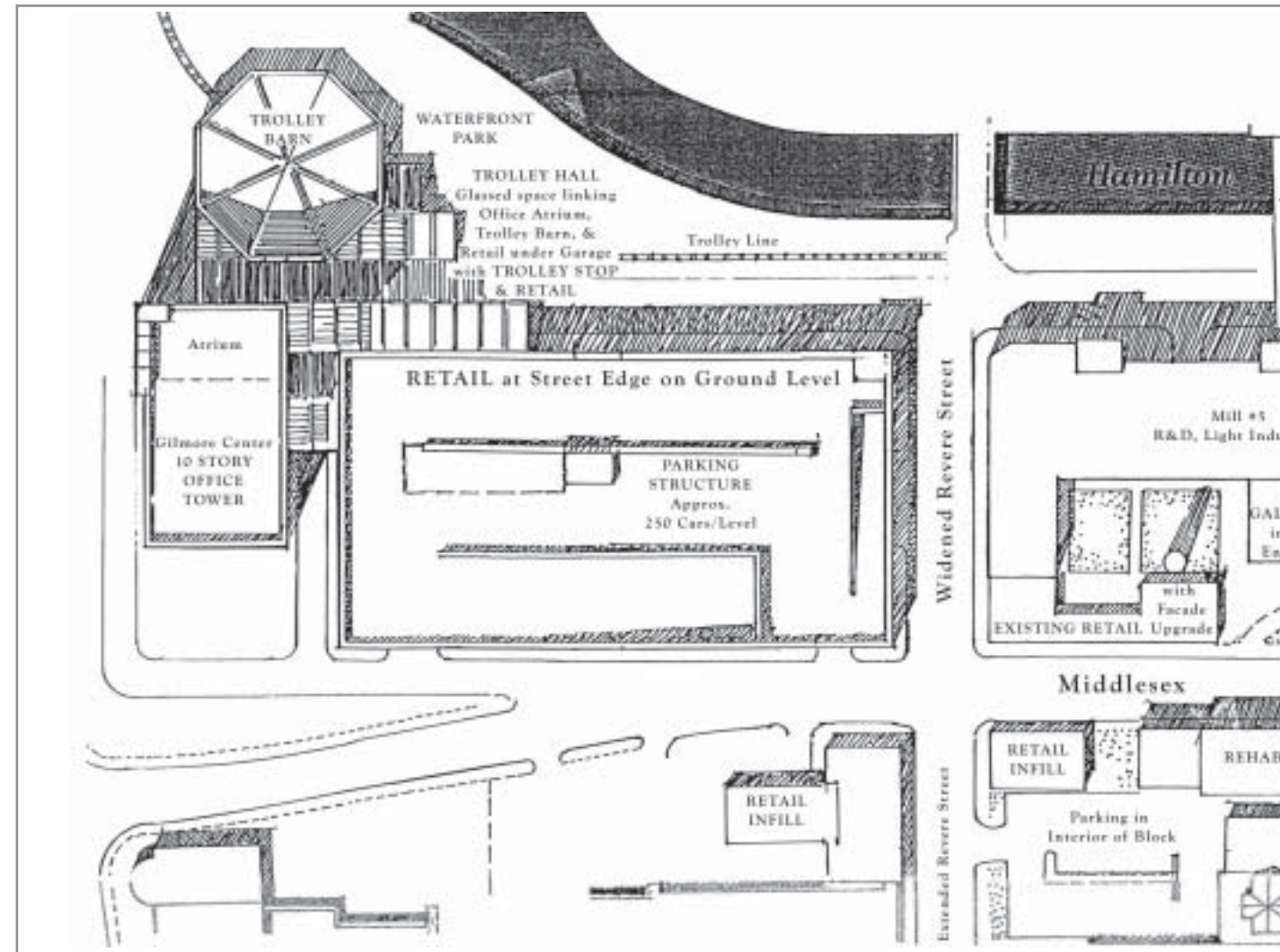
## The Middlesex Urban Village

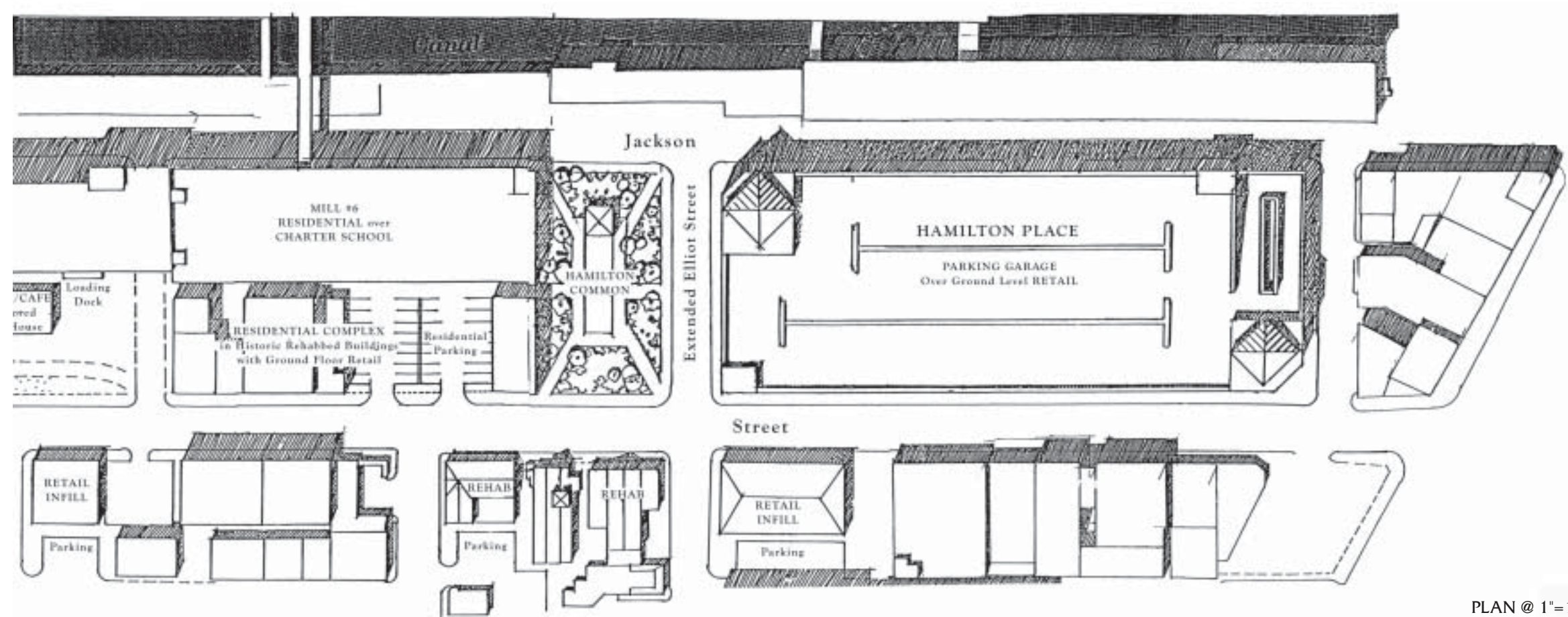
Two new City-sponsored development projects promise to provide major "bookends" to jump-start

reinvestment in the area. A new parking garage at the eastern end of the village will provide additional parking to accommodate the area's increased needs, while the commercial use of the garage's first floor will retain the existing retail street edge. A commercial development envisioned for a site at the termination of Jackson and Middlesex Streets will provide the impetus for further enhancement of the area's western end.

### DEVELOPMENT

- Construction of a new parking garage at the eastern end of Middlesex and Jackson Streets, with commercial and public uses at the ground floor level.
- Development of a large-scale commercial complex at the western edge of Middlesex and Jackson Streets, with parking facilities and incorporation of a Trolley Barn/Museum at the Hamilton Canal edge.
- Design of a public common between the Jackson, Middlesex, and Elliot Street extension.
- Adaptive reuse of historic structures on the north side of Middlesex Street, between Marston and Robeson Streets, as a residential complex with ground-floor retail spaces and on-site parking.
- Infill retail structures on the south side of Middlesex Street, at the corner of Elliot and Pearl Streets, and flanking both sides of the Revere Street extension.
- Rehabilitation of historic structures on the south side of Middlesex Street between Elliot and Pearl Streets.





PLAN @ 1"=100'



Engine Loading Dock Rehabbed Appleton Chambers Rehabbed Elliot Building Rehabbed Spaulding Building Landscaped Residents' Parking Rehabbed Marston Building HAMILTON COMMON Elliot Street Extension Pedestrian Entry PARKING GARAGE Over RETAIL Middlesex Entry Ramps Moulton Avenue Existing Retail Central Street

ELEVATION @ 1"=100'

# Jackson Street

*Jackson Street, lined along its northern edge by industrial buildings and the Hamilton Canal, is terminated by the area's largest vacant lot, which originally contained the mill's coal bunker and a railroad roundhouse. The building now occupied by the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA) was the counting house for the Hamilton Mills, while the parking lot located opposite once contained warehouses and boarding houses. Mills No. 5 and No. 6 were the manufacturing and storage arms of the Appleton Mills and were linked to the main complex by two overhead passageways.*



## STATUS

Ill-planned development following the pullout of industrial manufacturers over the past century has resulted in a lack of parking facilities, poor traffic circulation, and an absence of designed open spaces. The existing demand for parking in the area creates a need to assemble small vacant lots for parking, a sensible alternative to redeveloping higher value commercial spaces for the same purpose.

# The Middlesex/Jackson Urban Village

## SOLUTIONS

A positive approach to returning the Middlesex/Jackson Urban Village to its former status as a thriving commercial corridor is to promote new investment in the area. The City's acquisition of vacant lots and their consolidation to form larger commercial development parcels will facilitate major private sector investment opportunities, while other small developments will enhance the street edge and encourage first-floor commercial use. Existing pedestrian systems, including sidewalks and crosswalks, will be enhanced in order to encourage pedestrian traffic. In addition to extending Elliot Street, a new passive park will be constructed to provide needed green space and a community focal point.

## ZONING

The eastern end of the Middlesex/Jackson Village area is currently zoned IA (warehouse, storage, and light manufacture), while the western end is zoned B3 (general business). This plan proposes to extend the B3 zoning to encompass the entire Middlesex/Jackson Urban Village area, thereby encouraging a cohesive pattern of use along the Middlesex Street corridor.



## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Bury above ground utility lines during road and sidewalk reconstruction.
- Widening of Revere Street between Middlesex and Jackson Streets to facilitate two-way commercial traffic.
- Create a new landscaped public park along the Elliot Street extension between Middlesex and Jackson Streets.
- Lighting, sidewalks, and sewer upgrade.
- Expansion of Middlesex Street to accommodate two-way traffic.



# The Appleton/Summer Cityscape



## HISTORY

In contrast to the serenity of Summer Street, Appleton Street is a busy thoroughfare with an array of commercial and residential properties. The majority of commercial buildings on Appleton Street date back to the mid-twentieth century. Of the numerous residential properties, probably the most striking are 90 Appleton Street designed in the Queen Anne style, and 100-126 Appleton Street, designed in the Federal/Greek Revival style. Originally built as temporary residences for mill workers in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, these buildings still remain occupied. Two prominent public buildings are the granite-clad Lowell Post Office at 89 Appleton Street (41 Gorham Street), the new home of the Juvenile Court, and the Bell Atlantic telephone exchange at 91-115 Appleton Street.



## PROBLEMS

- Blighted and vacant buildings.
- Uncontrolled auto service sprawl.
- Lack of defined street edge and poorly designed surface parking lots.
- Deteriorated sidewalks and dominant presence of overhead utilities.
- Lack of street furniture and trees.
- Poorly maintained low-income housing units.

## ASSETS

- Viable and stable commercial base.
- Diversity of uses and commercial activity, consisting of predominantly small-scale retail units and residences.
- Buildings of historic significance.
- Summer Street residences overlook the historic South Common.
- Economic development opportunities for the construction of new buildings and the development of vacant lots.

## Appleton Street



*Appleton Street is characterized by a mix of competing commercial uses interspersed with residential development.*



*The mix of uses, the irregular lot sizes, the numerous parking lots, and the lack of a defined street edge give the street a very disorganized and unkempt appearance.*



*Further drawbacks include the poor condition of existing sidewalks and the domineering presence of overhead utilities.*

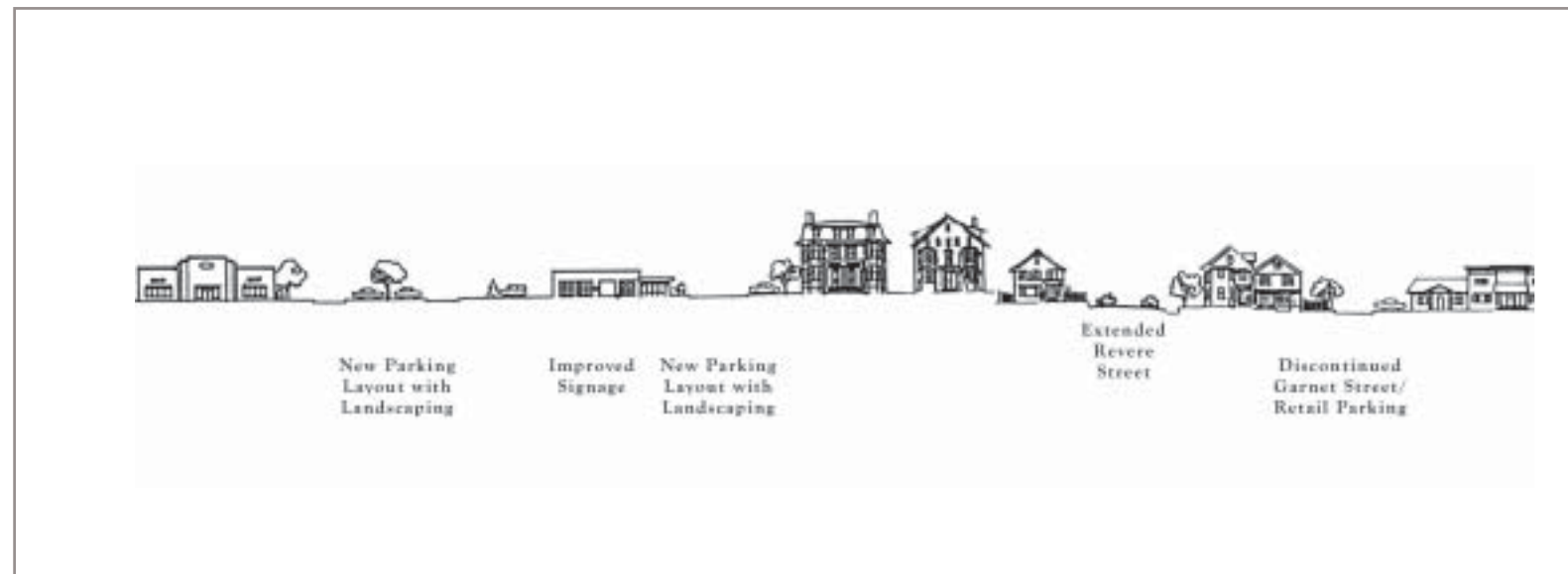
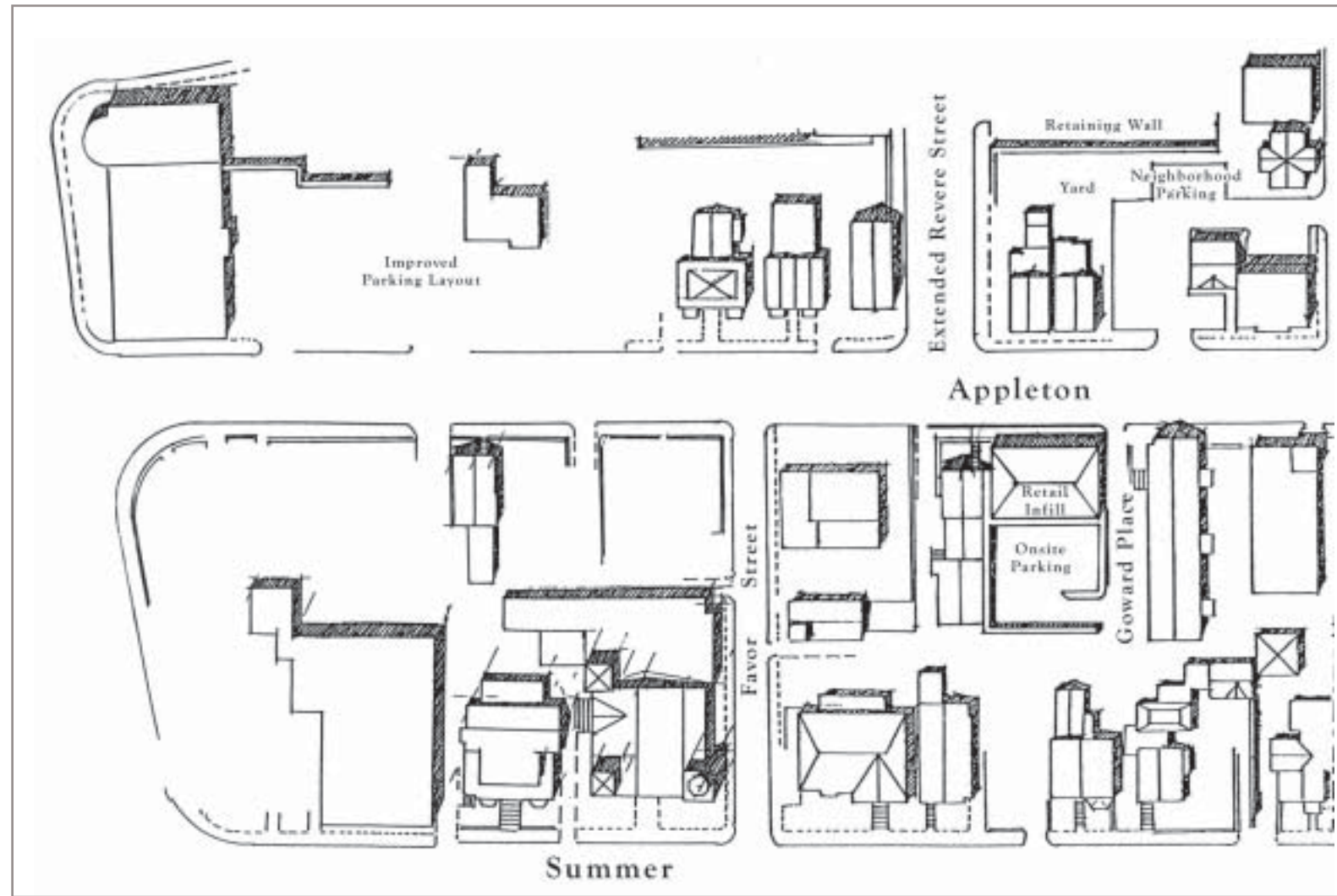


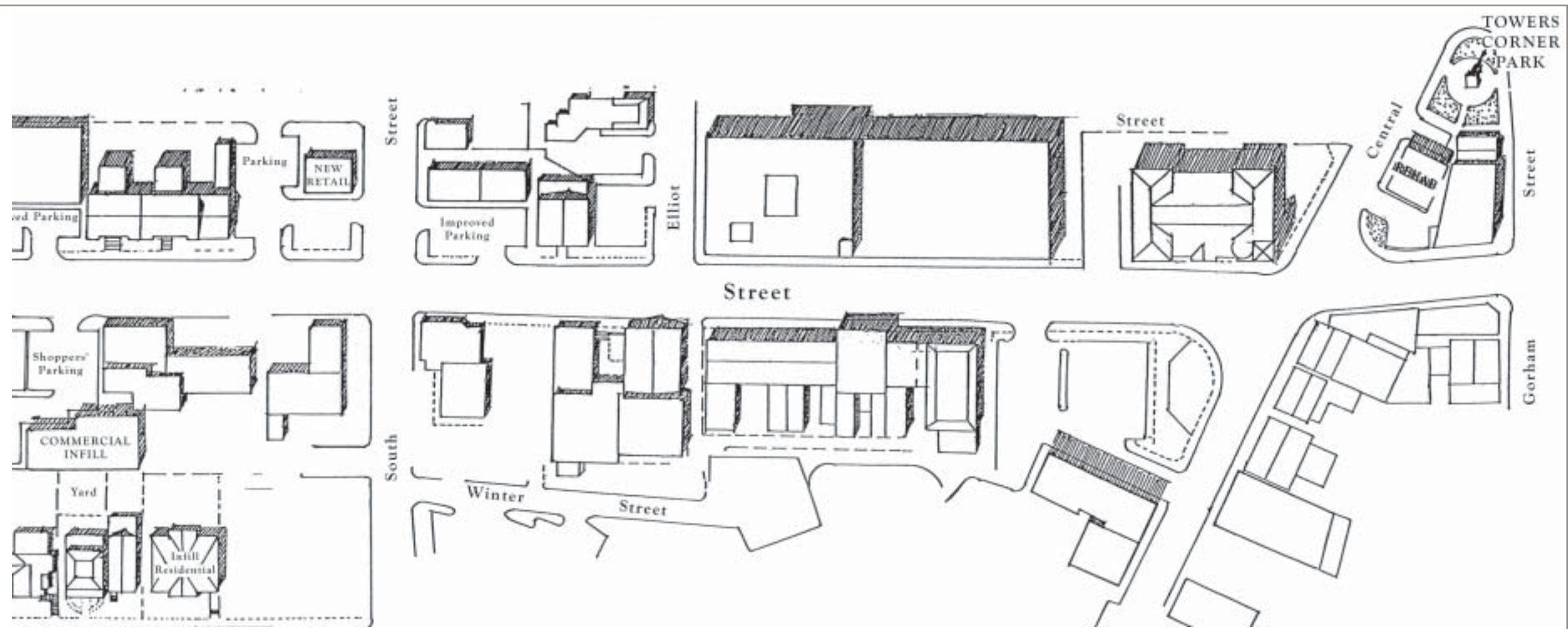
*"Four Sisters' Owl Diner" (Lowell, Massachusetts) -- Don Sawyer*

# The Appleton/Summer Cityscape

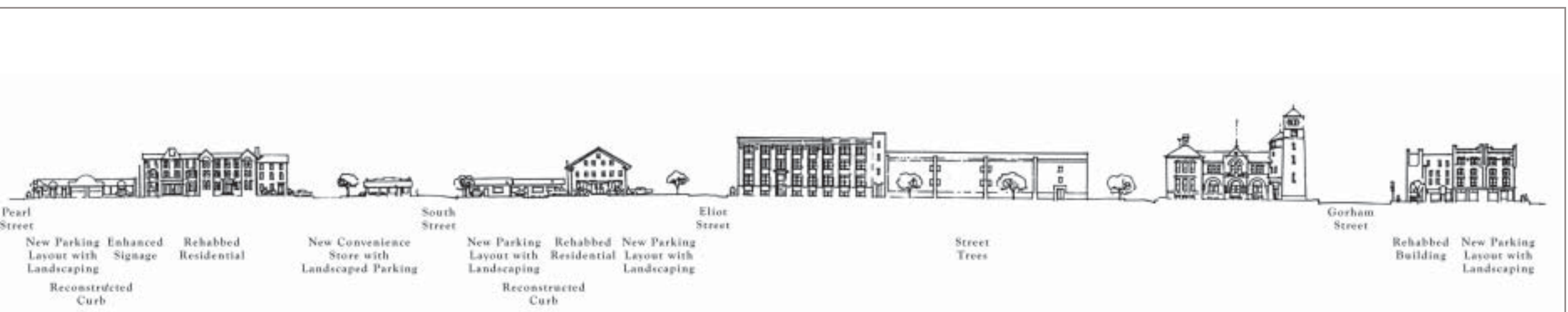
## DEVELOPMENT

- Infill housing on vacant Summer Street lots with scale and detailing consistent with the historic nature of the street.
- Assemblage and development of vacant lots on Appleton Street with appropriate retail infill together with landscaped on-site parking.
- Encourage consolidation and upgrade the rundown and scattered auto service uses.
- Upgrade existing commercial facades and signage.
- Improvement of existing front yard parking lots with controlled access and landscaped edges.
- Selective rehabilitation of residential properties and yards.
- Construction and repair of retaining walls.
- Development of landscaped parking on any remaining vacant lots.
- Design of pedestrian walkways.
- Construction of "gateway" park on prominent lot at Gorham and Central Streets.





PLAN @ 1"=100'



ELEVATION @ 1"=100'

# Summer Street

*Located at the southern edge of the planning area, Summer Street lies within the South Common Historic District. Many residences on this street date back to the 19th Century and were designed in the Italianate, Second Empire, and Stick styles.*

*The Eliot Church at 273 Summer Street is a dominant feature of the South Common skyline and an impressive example of the High Victorian Gothic style. Opposite the church is the former Favor Public School. Constructed in 1895, the building is now occupied by the Lowell Police Department.*



## STATUS

A quiet residential street overlooking the South Common, Summer Street has lost some of its former charm and elegance as a result of the neglect and abandonment of a number of its residences. Plans have been approved for a commercial development on the abandoned lot at the corner of Summer and South street, but other development and rehabilitation projects have been slow to materialize.

# The **Appleton/Summer** Cityscape

## SOLUTIONS

Encouraging private investment in the Appleton/Summer Street area is essential to the area's long term economic success. By acquiring lots and properties in strategic locations, the City will proactively initiate the renewal process.

The acquisition of commercial and residential properties, as well as vacant lots, and their disposition to private individuals and companies, will serve as an effective catalyst for reinvestment in the area.

Infrastructure improvements such as the Revere Street and South Street extensions will not only increase access to the area, but also will create a positive first-impression for potential investors.



## ZONING

The existing zoning for Summer Street is M3 (MultiFamily), while Appleton Street is zoned B3 (General Business).

Only minor boundary changes are proposed for the M3 zone along Summer Street. The existing B3 zone along Appleton Street will be changed to a B4 zone. Tighter control of the City's existing sign code will also help to reduce "visual clutter."

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure improvements, including the extension and repair of existing streets and sidewalks, will improve vehicular and pedestrian access as well as traffic flow. Proposed improvements include the following:

- Extension of Revere Street to connect Appleton Street with Jackson Street.
- Burying all overhead utilities, new street furniture, designated bus stops, and the planting of new trees.
- Two-way traffic flow on South Street to Gorham Street.
- Improved and expanded network of sidewalks and crosswalks for greater pedestrian safety and convenience.
- Intersection improvements at both ends of Appleton Street.
- Implementation of programs for shared parking and controlled access to parking to maximize pedestrian safety.