

August 2, 2013

VIA COURIER DELIVERY

Mr. Hugh Russell  
Chairman, Cambridge Planning Board  
Cambridge Community Development Department  
344 Broadway Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: 300 Massachusetts Avenue – Article 19 Special Permit Application

Dear Chairman Russell:

We appreciated the feedback from the Planning Board on our proposed development at 300 Massachusetts Avenue at our hearing held on July 9<sup>th</sup>, and look forward to the opportunity to appear before the Board again on August 6<sup>th</sup> to update you on our revised plans and discussions. We left the meeting believing that there were four primary areas of interest that the Board wanted us to follow up on, and we thought it might be helpful to give you a preview of what we will primarily be addressing on Tuesday evening.

1. We heard strong support for our goals and objectives around activating Blanche Street, but there were questions about certain aspects of the plan including the treatment of the roadway, the design of the loading docks, operational questions, landscaping, etc. In response thereto, we continued to evolve our thinking for Blanche Street and will present some new ideas. Copies of the updated landscaping plan and renderings of two options for lighting Blanche Street are enclosed herewith.
2. There was some discussion among the Board about the treatment of the penthouse facade on Massachusetts Avenue, and inquiries as to whether there could be additional articulation to this façade. In response thereto, we have revisited the design of this façade of the penthouse and have enclosed a revised elevation and two renderings showing the proposed refinements. In summary, similar to the façade treatment on the lower floors, we are now proposing a penthouse along Massachusetts Avenue with subtly more articulation, detail, and variety.
3. In response to inquiries about the retail plan for the portions of the building fronting on Massachusetts Avenue and in compliance with the requirements of Section 15.24.1 of the

Zoning Ordinance, enclosed herewith is a copy of our proposed Retail Leasing and Marketing Plan for the retail space.

4. Finally, the Board requested additional information about the materials selected for the façades of the building, in particular, the treatment we intend for the terra cotta and the articulation of the curtainwall glazing. We have studied the use of the terra cotta material to a great extent and have toured numerous properties in the Greater Boston area to get a sense of the potential detailing, colors, and textures. We have enclosed herewith a brief summary showing some of the existing local buildings clad in terra cotta that we studied, and using these as examples, we will be prepared on August 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss in detail how the selected materials will integrate with the existing buildings in the area.

In addition to these design-related questions, the Board did ask us to engage in further communication with our neighbor on Green Street, Ms. Anna Shine, about some concerns that her counsel voiced in comments to the Board. We have and are continuing to follow through with Ms. Shine and her representatives. On Tuesday evening we will be prepared to update the Board as to the status of these discussions.

We look forward to meeting with you and the Board again on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Very truly yours,

Kathryn Lachelt Brown

Enclosures

cc with enclosures:     H Theodore Cohen  
                                 Steven Cohen  
                                 Catherine Preston Connolly  
                                 Ahmed Nur  
                                 Tom Sieniewicz  
                                 William Tibbs  
                                 Steven Winter  
                                 Pamela Winters  
                                 Liza Paden (with 5 copies of enclosures)

# **RETAIL MARKETING PLAN FOR 300 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE**

This Plan has been prepared in response to the provisions in the 300 Mass Ave Project Zoning, specifically Section 15.24.1 of the Ordinance, that calls for a Retail Marketing Plan to be submitted and implemented in conjunction with issuance of a Special Permit for the Project.

This Plan should be considered a living document that will be modified as the Project is developed and leased, to incorporate strategies and embrace actions that will help create a thriving mixed used project. The Plan will be revisited annually until full occupancy of the retail space in the Project.

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## **I. MARKETING THE RETAIL SPACE – LEASING STRATEGY**

Leasing the retail space in the project at 300 Massachusetts Avenue (the “Project”) is critically important to the overall success of the building. In addition to its own corporate resources that will be directed to the leasing effort, Forest City will coordinate closely with the Economic Development Division of the Cambridge Community Development Department to take advantage of the services, programs and incentives they offer, to build on their knowledge of and relationships with local retailers and to benefit from their experience in other retail areas throughout the City.

The focus of the approach of the Project’s marketing strategy is to identify specific retailers and pursue them actively—preferably small, independent businesses that are ready to add another location or to relocate – that are a good fit for the project and complement the other retail uses in the building.

Forest City has already started its marketing and leasing program for the Project. The objective of this early effort is to create awareness in the retail community and highlight the opportunities for introducing a successful retail business here. We have hired Jesse Baerkahn from Graffito SP (previously President of CityRetail) as our retail broker for helping us market and lease the retail space. Kathryn Brown, Vice President with Forest City, has been charged with overseeing Forest City’s active tenant outreach and will be responsible for overseeing our relationship with Mr. Baerkahn and to help identify retail tenant prospects.

## **II. ECONOMIC REALITIES OF RETAIL – RETAIL INCENTIVES PROGRAM**

Forest City’s approach to leasing the retail portion of the building is well orchestrated. From the very start of this Project, the ground floor design of the building has been the subject of close attention to make sure the retail space is designed to be flexible for various retail users and functional to meet the needs of a variety of tenants. We have specifically designed the retail space to have appropriate depths for a variety of retail uses. On the eastern portion of the building, we have a larger retail space that has the ability to be divided up into a variety of sizes, to accommodate multiple operators of various sizes. With respect to the building design on the ground floor, we are intentionally leaving that façade blank so that each retailer is able to design their own storefront in a manner that encourages individuality and diversity in appearance. Additionally, the retail space on the western side of the building will have outdoor patio space specifically dedicated to that operator, while the retail on the eastern portion of the building will have a zone in front for seating or accessory uses.

For retail to be established and to be sustained successfully over time and to have its intended effect of enlivening the Cambridgeport Revitalization Development District and this portion of Massachusetts Avenue, it may be desirable or necessary to offer retailers, especially early tenants, incentives that can reduce their risk and increase their viability. While Forest City will use incentives and benefits that have been proven to be effective elsewhere or that make sense to try here, it is likely that Forest City will need to negotiate special packages for individual retailers tailored to address the specific needs of his/her business.

Forest City will put together a toolkit of economic incentives to be combined in different ways for potential tenants as necessary to help them achieve business success, including but not limited to:

- a) rent abatement during tenant buildouts (i.e. rent commencement will not occur until open for business)
- b) rent concessions— below “market rent” and/or reduced rent for a period of time at the start of the lease term
- c) contribution to fitting out the interior of the space
- d) landlord work that includes (at landlord’s cost) demising of the retail spaces, providing appropriate utilities and connections thereto/from, construction of code compliant egress and ingress, and certain storefront improvements.
- e) marketing and advertising support

It should be noted that while rent is an important factor in determining the attractiveness and affordability of a retail space, it is only one of a number of variables that a tenant considers when choosing to lease a site. Often equally or more important considerations are:

- 1) pedestrian volumes in the area and in front of the building,
- 2) visibility of the location
- 3) success of other retailers in the vicinity

- 4) convenience
- 5) on-street parking and loading.
- 5) licensing and permitting (i.e. availability of liquor licenses, ease of City process for filing and obtaining other permits and approvals, and any City requirements for special permits based on Tenant's use).

If some or all of these conditions are lacking, a low rent or no rent cannot alone guarantee a successful retail operation. This plan aims to address these five items and to work hard to create the conditions that make retail work.

### **III. SITE ACTIVATION PLAN**

The components of Forest City's site activation plan include an array of elements that will individually and in combination contribute to activating the Project area.

#### **RETAIL**

The street level retail program consisting of 15,000 SF of space for retailers at the ground level of the building is the cornerstone of the Site Activation Plan.

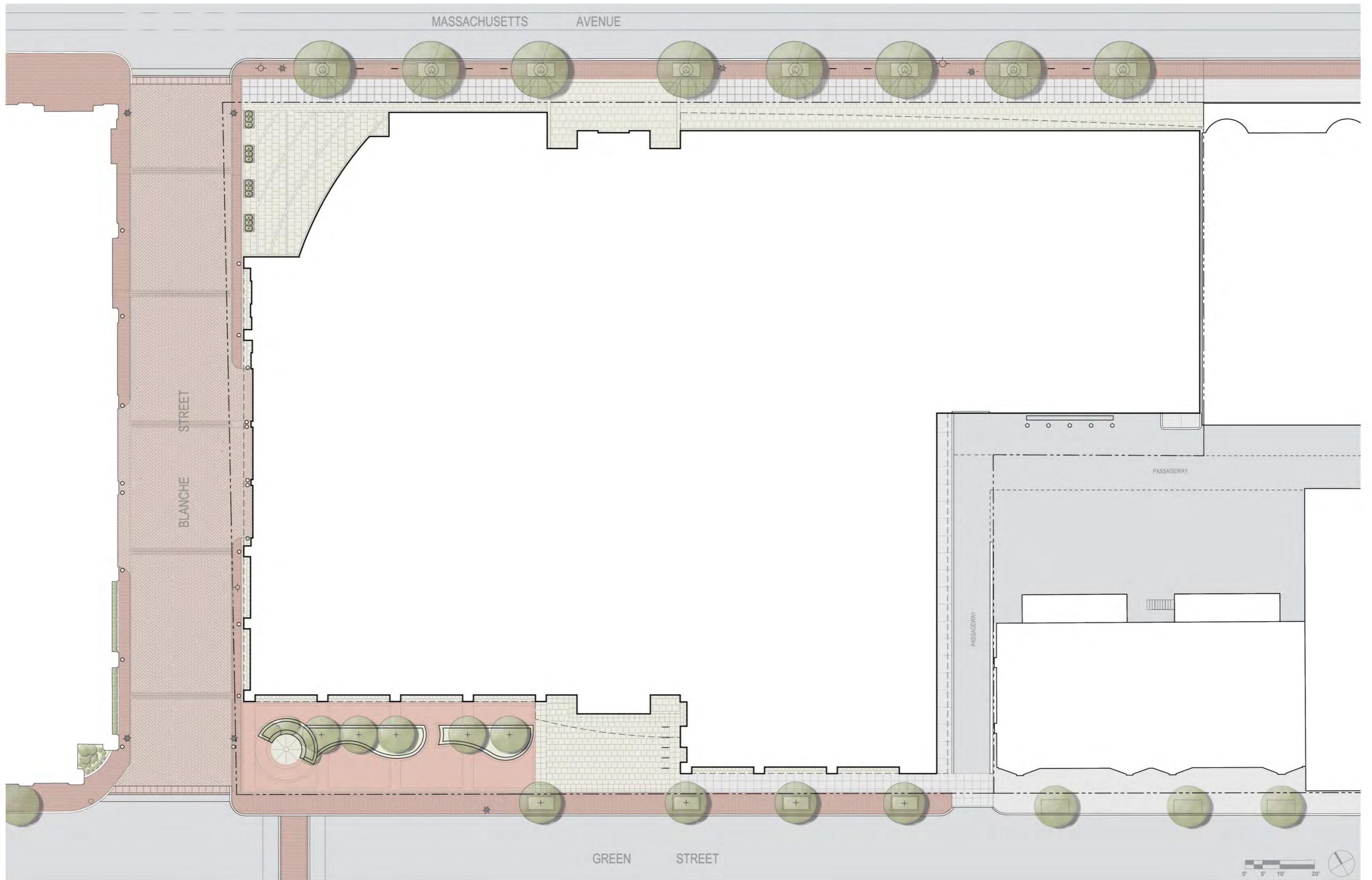
However, the retail program must very deliberately contribute to activating Massachusetts Avenue in this area by spilling out onto the sidewalks to make the retail presence visible and thus successful. Eye-catching signage will help define that presence. Outdoor seating for restaurants and cafes is a must for as many months of the year as possible. Merchandising on the sidewalk in ways that are attractive and enticing also generates customer interest.

#### **SIDEWALKS**

Sidewalks are being designed to accommodate these "spill-outs". Sidewalks will also have benches and conveniently located bike racks so that people can take their coffee outside, stop and chat, or read the paper, use their laptops and patronize the nearby retailers. Other more passive but nonetheless welcoming elements that encourage use of the streets in the area include pedestrian scale lighting, attractive plantings and shade trees.

#### **ON-STREET PARKING**

The presence of on-street parking on Massachusetts Avenue is beneficial to activating the streets and sidewalks. The parked cars provide a buffer for pedestrians making them feel safer as they walk along and diminish the effects of traffic as they sit and enjoy a cup of coffee or a meal at a sidewalk café.







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KLING STUBBINS

300 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA

Blanche Street View  
August 06, 2013





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KLING STUBBINS

300 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA

Green Street  
July 9, 2013



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300 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA

Massachusetts Ave Looking East  
July 9, 2013





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KLING STUBBINS

300 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA

Massachusetts Avenue Looking West  
July 9, 2013



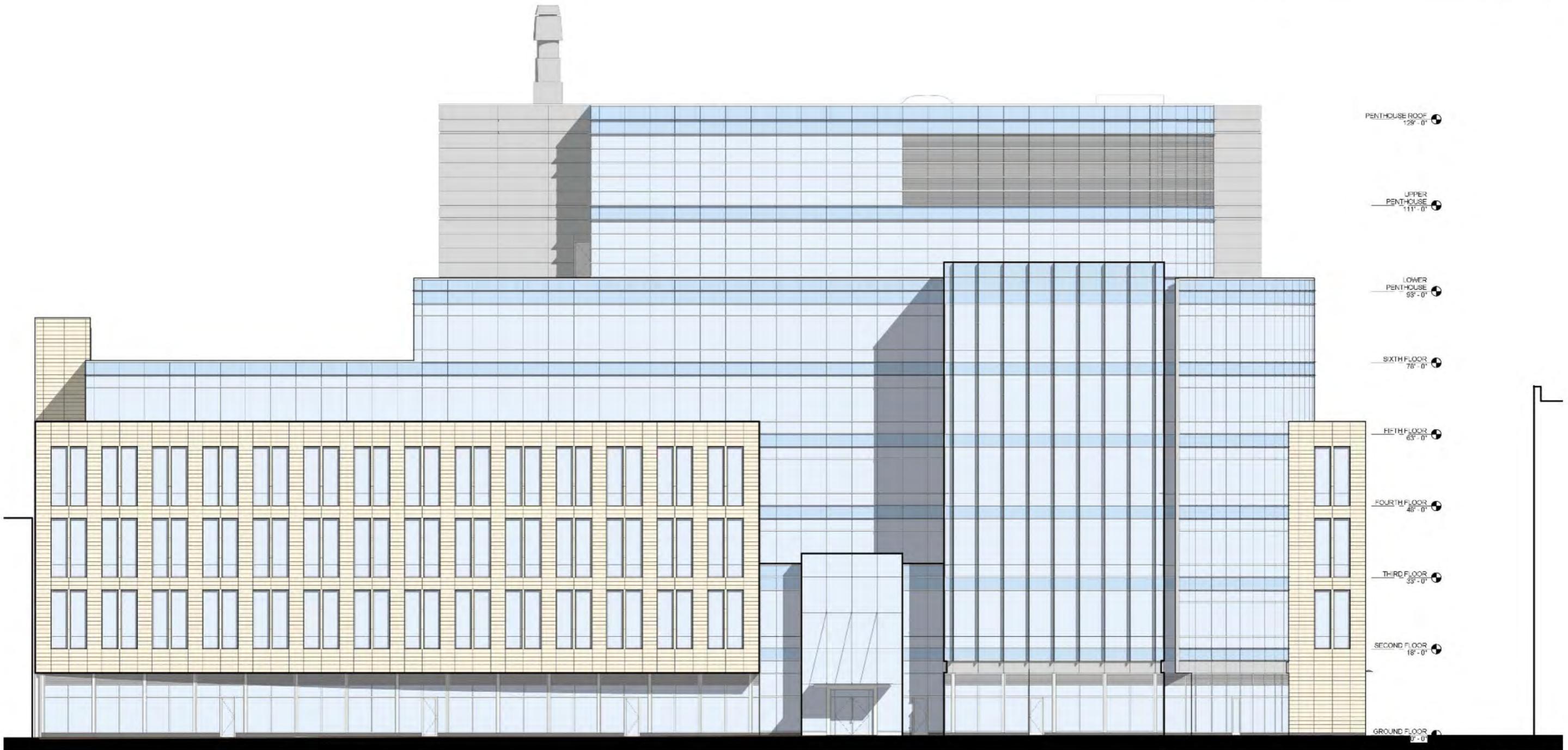
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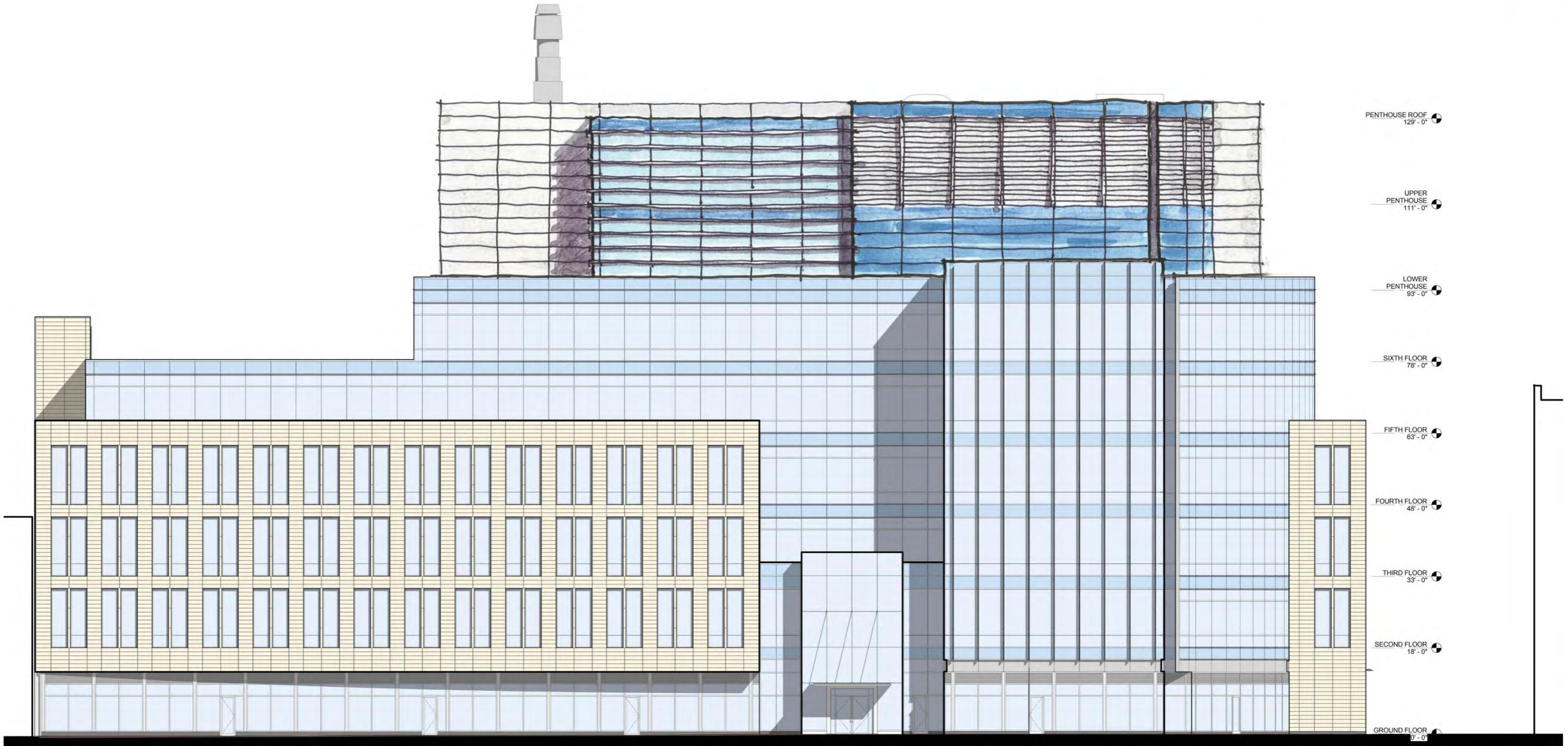
KLING STUBBINS

300 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA

Massachusetts Avenue Looking West  
August 06, 2013



BLANCHE STREET



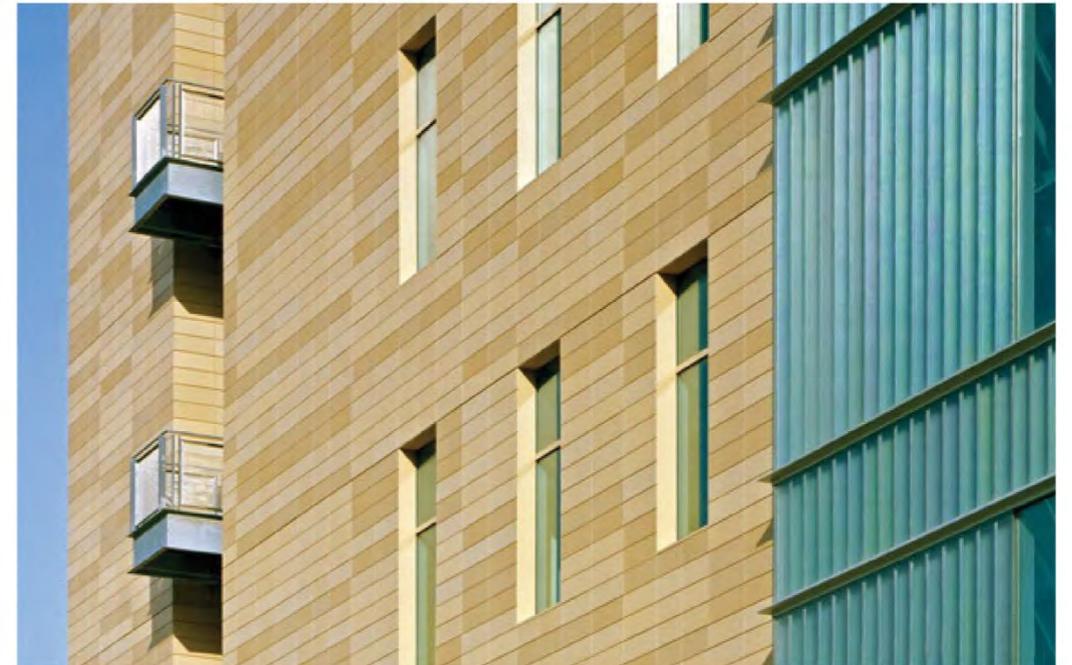
BLANCHE STREET



1. 610 Main Street  
Color: Terra Cotta Beige  
Features:



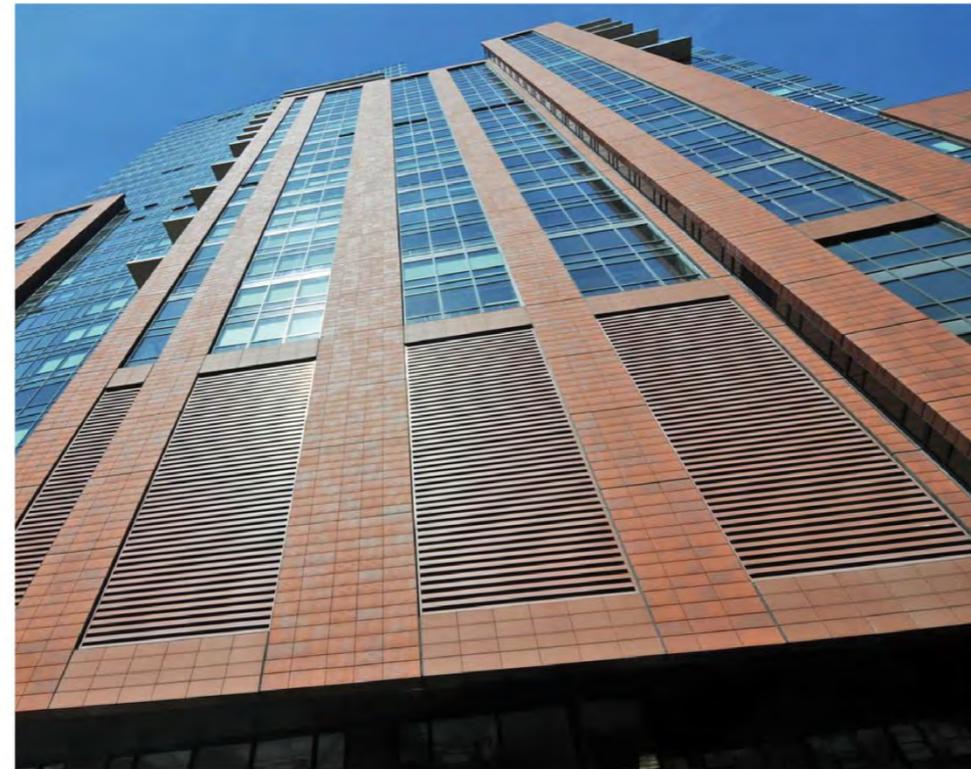
2. Broad Institute  
2.Color: 6.02, 9.05 - (Red Terracotta)  
Features: Variegated color



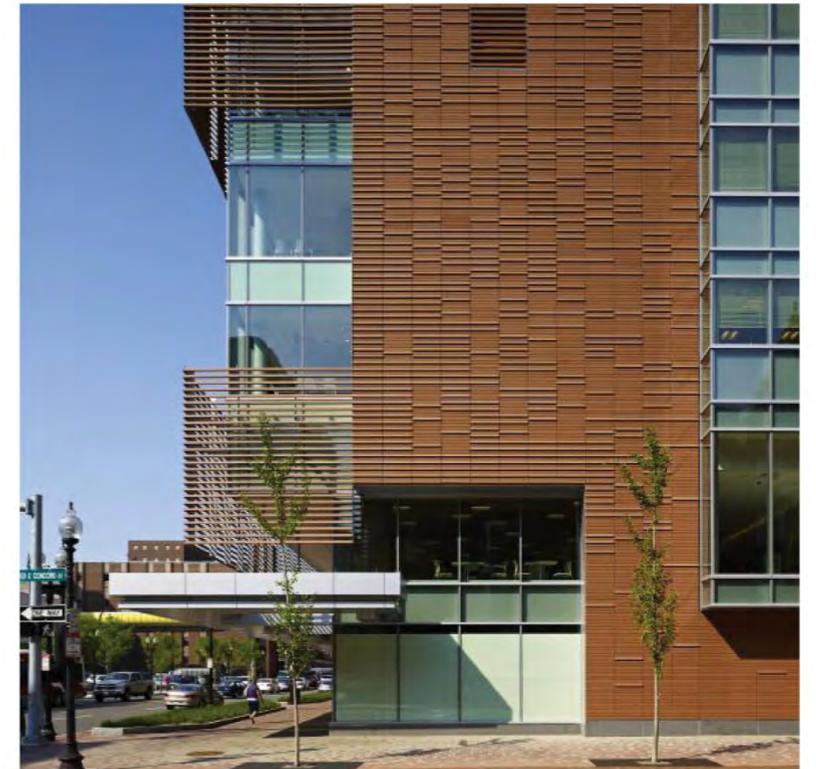
3. 303 3rd Street  
Color: 2.01 - (Yellow/Gold)  
Features: Multiple Textures, Pattern



4. 650 Kendall Bldg B  
Color: 3.01 - (Light Orange)  
Features: Baguettes



5. 75 Province Street  
Color: Oxide Red  
Features: Multiple textures, pattern



6. Boston Medical Center  
Color: 6.02 - (Dark Orange)  
Features: Multiple textures, pattern