



PROJECT NARRATIVE

Oakland Street Lofts

9 Oakland Street, Amesbury MA

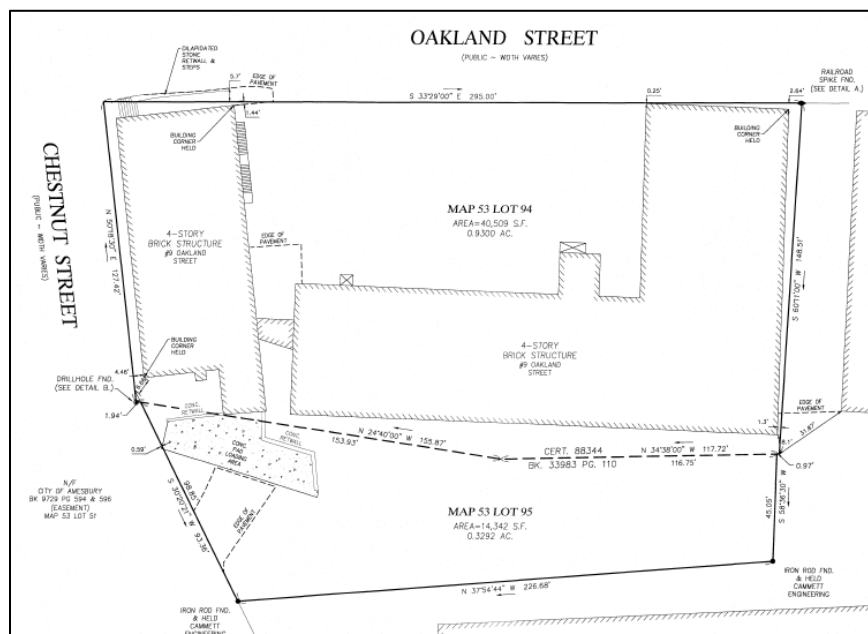
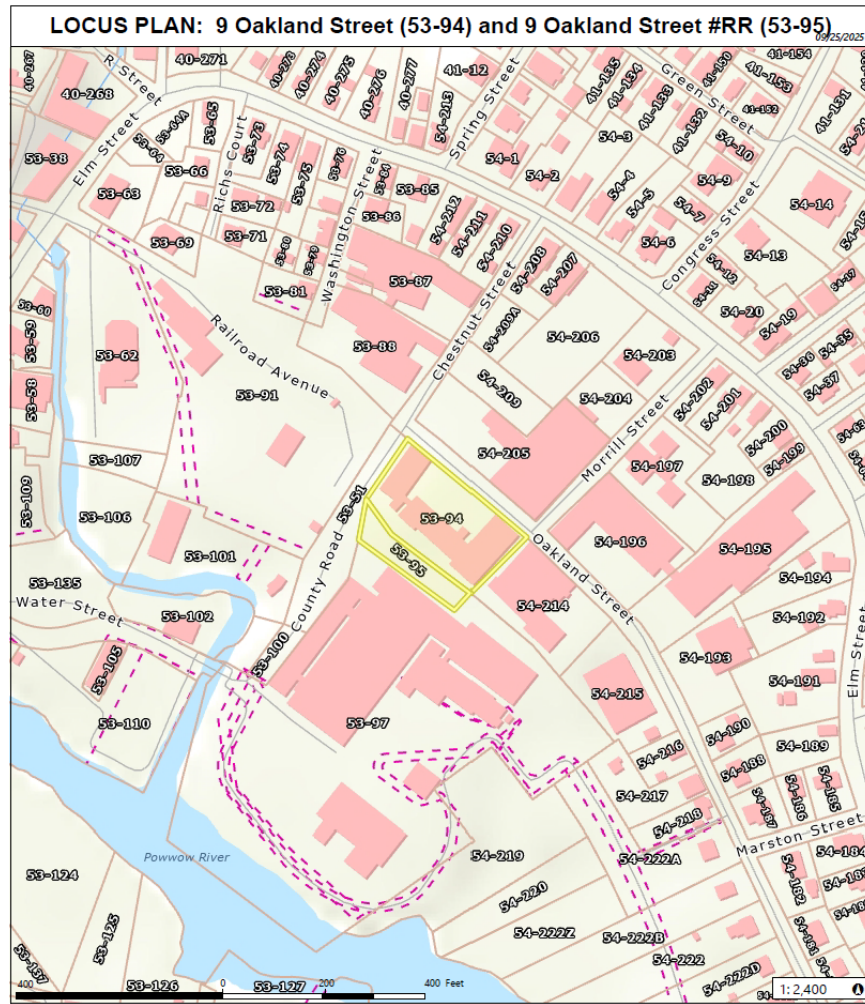
June 3, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project Locus and Existing Conditions	3
Project Overview	7
Basic Project Features	11
Compliance with Historic Preservation Special Permit and Site Plan Approval Criteria	12
Planning Board Discretion and Waiver Authority	12
Historic Preservation Special Permit Applicability	12
Historical Background	13
Neighborhood Context	17

Project Locus and Existing Conditions



The property is sited within the Lower Millyard at the intersection of Oakland and Chestnut Streets along a steep grade change heading to the Powwow River and within short walking distance of numerous existing businesses and public transportation.

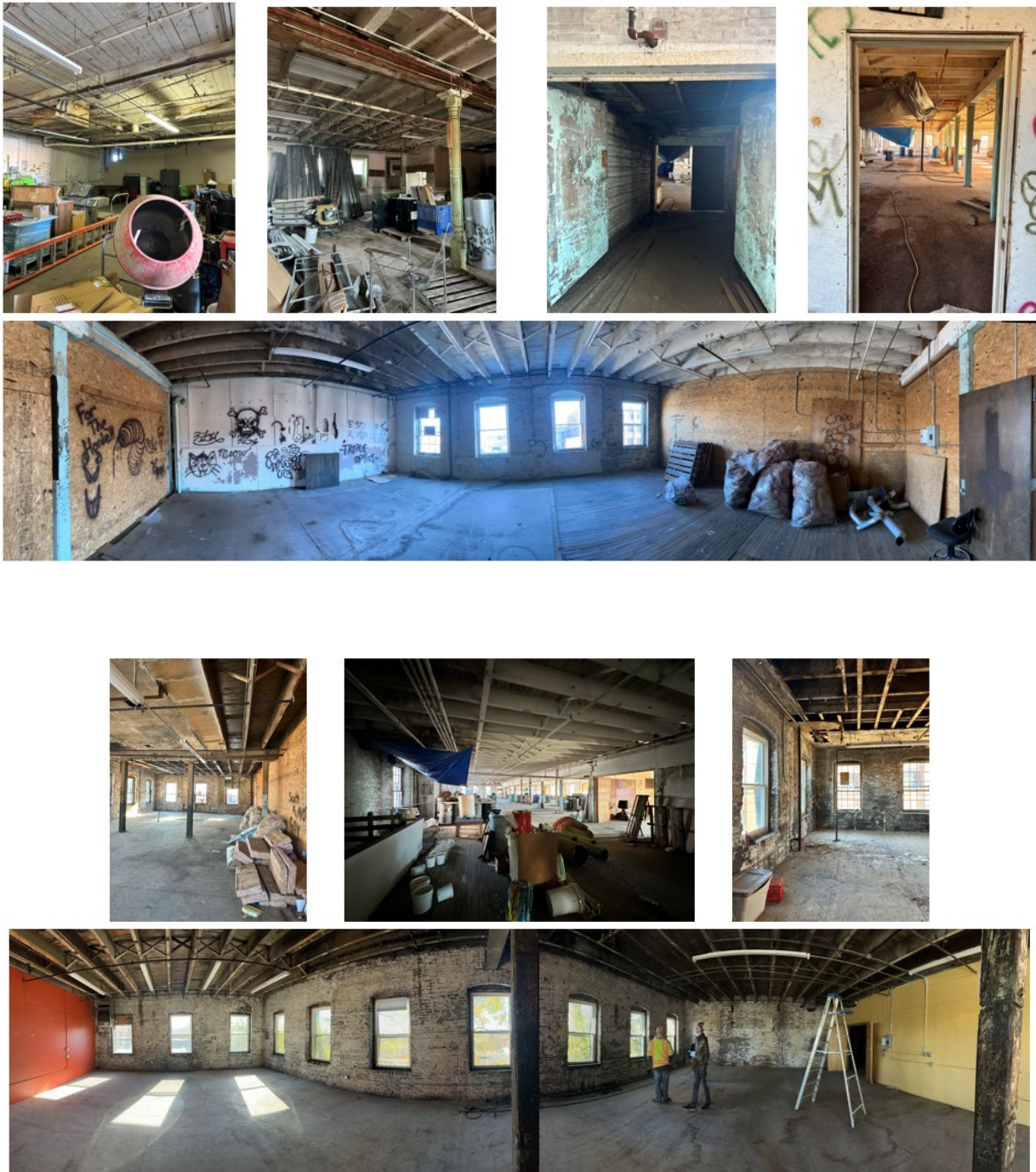
The project site currently includes vacant, unused buildings, formerly used for manufacturing purposes as part of the historic Carriage Mill Complex.

Images of existing conditions





Images of Interior Conditions



Project Overview

Amesbury is a vibrant community and its downtown features a wealth of historic architecture, open space along the Powwow River, a diverse mix of small businesses, shops and restaurants, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The Lower Millyard is a neighborhood brimming with potential to add value to all of these existing aspects of the downtown that make it special.

The redevelopment of the Carriage Hill Lofts at 1-9 Oakland Street is a linchpin project, infilling a key gap between the downtown and the rest of the Mills. The project proposes to rehabilitate and preserve the existing buildings and to construct a new building. The proposed mixed use development will provide much needed housing (124 units), including affordable housing, for existing and new residents to enjoy everything the downtown has to offer. The project also features 9 units of artist live/work studios, which is listed in the Master Plan as a top three most important issue for residents regarding culture in Amesbury.

As a mixed use project, the redevelopment will also feature commercial spaces along the primary street facing portions of the ground floors. The commercial spaces act as an amenity for all Amesbury residents and serve to contribute to the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk with large windows, signage, lighting and outdoor spaces.

The building addition utilizes the challenging existing grade change to provide a three level parking garage, effectively screening the majority of the parking from view. Housing above the parking garage makes efficient use of building footprint to provide the desired density of apartments. On site parking consists of one space per one bedroom unit and approximately two spaces per two bedroom unit. Parking for the commercial uses is provided in the municipal lot nearby, promoting neighborhood circulation in lieu of destination parking.

The look and feel of the development is driven by the existing architectural detailing of the mill building, which boasts brick corbeling, soldier courses, iron tension caps, ghost signs and other interesting features. The project will incorporate historically appropriate elements such as new divided lite windows with 12 over 12 muntin pattern, traditional siding materials at additions, black metal canopies, industrial light fixtures and massing to scale with the rest of the neighborhood. The major addition to the building is clad in complimentary traditional brick detailing of similar scale and character. The top floor throughout is clad in a darker grey metal panel with vertical reveals and set back from the edge of the building. Carefully considered modern accents such as storefront glass at connector pieces serve to compliment the historical fabric.

Given the configuration of the existing buildings, frontage and steep topography, the property does not contain an abundance of open space, but careful attention will be paid to include shade trees and lower plantings where possible. Native and drought tolerant species will be used to reduce maintenance and irrigation requirements and to ensure the property looks and functions well into the future. All stormwater will be captured by on site retention systems.

Adaptive reuse is the most sustainable type of construction as the embodied carbon within the existing building is maintained and the quantity of new materials is reduced. The building will also feature other sustainable and resilient components such as energy efficient electric heat pumps, energy recovery ventilation, LED lighting, low flow plumbing fixtures, continuous insulation, low-E windows, electric vehicle charging stations and the roof will be solar ready.

The permitting pathway for this project is through the Historic Preservation Special Permit with Site Plan Review. The design of the development meets the requirements and intent of that permitting process by restoring historic architecture while revitalizing the property and neighborhood. This project also meets the guidelines of the Lower Millyard Overlay District, advances the City's stated goals and has the potential to spur additional development within the neighborhood.

See the Site Plans and Architectural Plans for additional details. Following are excerpts:



Level 2 (Sheet A02) (Oakland Street at bottom and Chestnut Street at right)



View from Oakland Street



View from Oakland Street and Chestnut Street intersection



View from Chestnut Street



Commercial and Open Spaces near Chestnut Street

Basic Project Features

- Zoning Districts: Central Industrial (IC) and Lower Millyard Overlay District (LMOD)
- Required Permits: Historic Preservation Special Permit (XI.J2) and Site Plan Review (XI.C)
 - The HPSP provisions (XI.J2) provide density and dimensional requirements for HPSP projects that vary from those otherwise applicable in the LMOD and also provide the Planning Board with broad waiver authority. See XI.J2.2.b.
- Frontage: 516' proposed (60' required in LMOD).
- Setbacks: 0.1', 3.4', and 1.3' proposed (0' required for all setbacks in LMOD).
- Lot Area: 54,890 SF proposed (5,000 SF required in LMOD).
- Building Footprint: 37,689 SF +/- (or 68.7% coverage)
- Open Space and Lot Coverage:
 - Lot Coverage: 47,665 SF +/- or 87%
 - Open Space: 7,225 SF or 13%
 - Public Open Space: 1,730 SF +/- (plazas in front of retail)
- Building Height
 - Existing Height: 53'-3" +/-
 - Proposed Height: 55'-11", but top elevation is unchanged as the average grade plane moves down 32".
- Affordable Units
 - HPSP provisions authorize Planning Board to reduce required number of affordable units to 10%
 - 12 affordable units provided (10% = 12.4, which rounds down per Zoning Ordinance)
 - Mix: 1 Studio, 7 one-bedroom, 3 two-bedroom and 1 artist live/work - see Affordable Unit Locations Plan for additional details
- Residential Unit Mix: 124 total units
 - Studio: 14
 - One Bedroom: 69
 - Two Bedroom: 32
 - Artist Live/Work: 9
- Parking: 153 spaces
 - Residential:
 - 153 spaces proposed = 1.23 spaces per unit (waiver requested of 1.5 per unit requirement)
 - Commercial Area: 3,939 SF +/-
 - 3.3 spaces per 1,000 SF retail would yield 13 spaces
 - Project proposes shared use of the proposed 23 surface parking areas, which is expected to provide sufficient parking for the commercial uses. If needed, customers could utilize the nearby municipal lot (< 300 FT from site) and nearby on-street parking.

Compliance with Historic Preservation Special Permit and Site Plan Approval Criteria

The proposed project complies with the applicable development standards and criteria for issuance of the requested special permits and site plan approval – including those specified in the Zoning Ordinance at Sections X.J.5 (Special Permits), XI.C.7 (Site Plan Review) and XI.J2.6 (Historic Preservation Special Permit).

A more detailed statement of compliance is provided separately.

Planning Board Discretion and Waiver Authority

- The Planning Board has broad discretionary and waiver authority under the Historic Preservation Special Permit provisions with respect to dimensional requirements and development standards “if it finds that the proposed redevelopment, alteration, extension or addition to the existing historic structure meets the provisions of Section XI.J2.5, shall not result in overburdening of the site, and meets the historic preservation purpose and intent of Section XI.J2.” See Zoning Ordinance §§ XI.J2.2.b.1, XI.J2.2.b.1.i and XI.J2.2.b.4 (waivers).
- The Planning Board also has independent authority to grant relief from height requirements (as well as front, side and rear yard setback requirements) by special permit pursuant to Section VI.F.10.a. The Applicant is requesting this special permit relief only if and to the extent needed.

Historic Preservation Special Permit Applicability

This project meets the eligibility criteria for a Historic Preservation Special Permit (XI.J2.3) as the Amesbury Historic Commission (“AHC”) voted at its July 10, 2025 meeting and documented in a letter dated July 15, 2025 – based on the existing lot and buildings being more than 75 years old and the AHC’s conclusion that they are “historically significant.”

See the following excerpts/images reflecting the site’s history and significance as part of the Carriage Hill Complex.

Historical Background

Inventory No:	AME.486	
Historic Name:	Carriage Hill Complex	
Common Name:	Biddle and Smart - Bailey Automobile Factory	
Address:	12 Oakland St	
City/Town:	Amesbury	
Village/Neighborhood:		
Local No:	15; 212;	
Year Constructed:	C 1889	
Architectural Style(s):	Italianate;	
Use(s):	Automobile Factory; Carriage Factory; Industrial Complex or District;	
Significance:	Architecture; Industry;	
Area(s):		
Designation(s):		
Building Materials:	Wall: Brick;	
Demolished	No	

EXISTING SURVEYS	DATA	DWGS	PHOTOGRAPHS	STATES
HAER INVENTORY				
1. NAME OF STRUCTURE "Carriage Hill Complex"		2. DATE 1889-1925	3. NATURE OF STRUCTURE Carriage factories	4. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION
5. LOCATION: STREET & NUMBER Elm St. between Washington & Oak Streets,		CITY OR TOWN Amesbury	COUNTY Essex	STATE MA
7. OWNER OF PROPERTY United Shoe Machinery, Water St., Amesbury, MA		6. USGS QUAD MAP & UTM GRID REF. West Newburyport 19, 342620, 474644		
8. CONDITION: ☐ EXCELLENT ☒ GOOD ☐ FAIR ☐ DETERIORATED ☐ RUINS ☐ UNEXPOSED ☐ ALTERED ☒ ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC				
9. DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND HISTORY: NUMBER OF STRUCTURES; DIMENSIONS; FABRIC; STRUCTURE & FORM; SURVIVING MACHINERY, FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT; APPROX. AREA OF SITE; ALTERATIONS; PRESENT USE; ENGINEER/ ARCHITECT/ DESIGNER; IMPORTANT EVENTS & INDIVIDUALS. The factory buildings in the Carriage Hill Complex were often occupied by one or more carriage manufacturers, the most important of these companies being Clark, Biddle and Smart, Babcock, and Bailey. In a huge fire in 1888 almost all of the original wood and brick carriage factories on the hill were destroyed, but during the years 1889-1900 these buildings were replaced by the existing structures. During the 20th century these buildings were largely absorbed by Biddle and Smart and the Bailey Company, which produced auto bodies, electric automobiles, and auto accessories. Biddle and Smart produced 41,000 bodies in 1926 for the Hudson Automobile Company. In 1929 Biddle and Smart went out of business, and the buildings were occupied by the Bailey Company which has continued to manufacture window channels and other auto accessories to the present day. The Carriage Hill buildings are identical to textile mills of the period, being rectangular, brick buildings with stair/water towers, 2 to 4 stories high, with flat or shallow pitch roofs. The entire power supply of these companies was steam.				
10. PHOTOGRAPHS & SKETCH MAP ON REVERSE SIDE.				
11. RELATED SOURCES OF INFORMATION: HISTORICAL REFERENCES (PUBLISHED ARTICLES, MANUSCRIPTS, REPORTS, DRAWINGS, PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS) CONTACTS: (NAMES & ADDRESSES OF ANYONE WITH EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OR RELEVANT INFORMATION); TAPE RECORDINGS.				



John H. Clark. *Thomas Clark.*

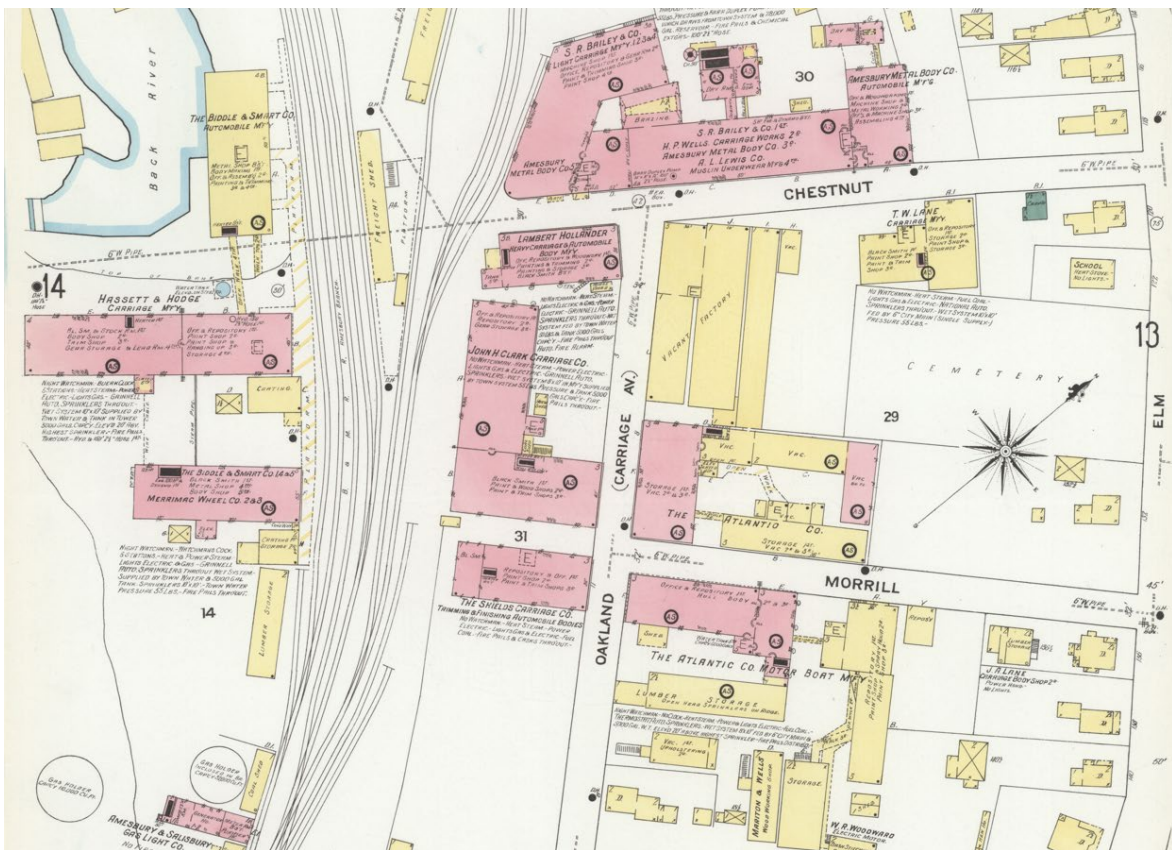
John H. Clark & Co.

OPEN BEACH WAGON (made also in Canopy Top).

This is one of our leading styles of Beach Wagon for 1891. Comfortable, Stylish, Elegant in every detail.

BUILDERS OF

Superior Carriages,
CARRIAGE AVENUE, AMESBURY, MASS.





Amesbury and Salisbury Villager.

VOLUME XXXIX, NO. 29.

AMESBURY, MASS., THURSDAY MORNING, JANUARY 17, 1889.

PRICE FOUR CENTS

AMESBURY'S INDUSTRIES

Manufacturers and Manufacturers.

TABULATED STATISTICS.

The Carriage Business—The Hamilton Mills—The Merrimac Hat Co.—The Boat Business—Banking Business.

By way of introduction to a review of our carriage industry, it is well to state at the starting point, that following the great fire, the report was heralded all over the country "that the carriage industry of Amesbury was entirely destroyed." This was not only a false statement, but an actual injury to the trade itself, as there remained in the town untouched by fire, many of the largest and most successful firms engaged in the trade. There were situated in various sections of the town, far removed from the conflagration, which except the business established on "Carriage hill." The injury resulting from the reports was more manifest from the fact that such widely circulated journals as the New York World, Herald, Tribune and Times, became the mediums by which the wrong report was circulated and thence conveyed to the whole associated press of the country. In view of the alarming statements the contradictory business circulars sent out by the remaining firms failed to repair the damage done, and as first impressions are lasting, so in this instance. The trade of the ensuing summer was not so large as the

it up. Examples are so numerous that it seems strange that the lesson is not learned more readily by all who seek to thrive by industry and energy.

"To say that Amesbury is beautifully situated is expressing it mildly." Men, eminent in the literary world

facturers to keep their business constantly before the world by the most available and successful measures.

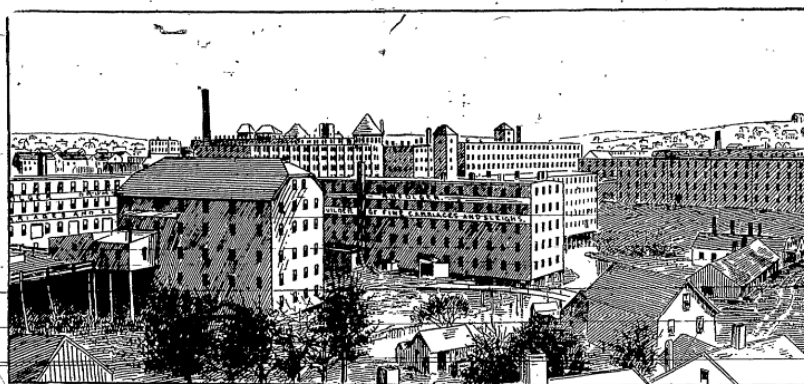
How to do this has been intimated by the methods adopted by the leading magazines and publications of the country.

street cars; (the two last have just commenced business.)

According to figures reported, the number of carriages and sleighs manufactured, citing the capacity of the firms, is 30,000. The hands employed in all branches is 2,048, earning on an

riage business and related works will aggregate \$5,000,000, yearly when the full force of labor is employed.

How Carriages Are Made. This may not be of so much importance to our readers as to city readers



A FEW OF AMESBURY'S CARRIAGE MANUFACTORIES.

CARRIAGE BUSINESS OF 1889.

The following record of the carriage trade in 1889 will give a comparative statement of the growth of trade as presented by the firms doing business in 1889.

FIRM NAMES.	Amount of Business.	Number Persons Employed.	Number Carriages Manufactured.	When Business Started.
R. F. Briggs & Co.	\$300,000	125	1,800	1836
James Hume	170,000	52	1,200	1859
Foster Gale	38,000	20	450	1868
A. M. Huntington	45,000	19	500	1867
E. S. Felch	80,000	45	500	1869

average above \$13.00 per week.

Outside Business.

Outside of this published list there are several individual firms who make a specialty of putting together the wood work for carriages and selling their productions to the manufacturers. The same is also true of the blacksmiths who work outside the regular shops.

of the Boston Globe. Here, where carriage making is the vital element of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, every family knows a buggy and can tell a Goldard from a piano box; a coupe from a four seat carriage! When our mechanics see a fine piece of work, perfect in its mechanical beauty, awaiting shipment at the freight station, they usually inspect every part and criticize its form and make up with as much

Wm. Webber & Co.

SALEM, MASS.

1889 PATTERNS

FRENCH SATTEENS

OPEN TO-DAY.

Freres Koechlin, Messrs. Arnould, Choussier & Co.'s Importations.

AS YET THIS SEASON we have had

FIRST CHOICE

of this best make of

French Satteens,

And are showing the

Handsomest Styles,

Brought to this country. Freres Koechlin's Satteens are

WOMEN TO BE WITH THEM

Neighborhood Context



View towards 9 Oakland Street building from Chestnut Street



View of buildings east of site on Chestnut Street



View of buildings south of site on Oakland Street



View of site looking down Chestnut Street (right side)

The Carriage Mills buildings located at 9 & 21 Water Street share a building typology and grade change with our proposed project. The existing mill building near the corner of Elm Street is three stories in height, but the grade drops down along Water Street, the general building height remains the same and ends up on the far end as a six story building.



Buildings at 9 & 21 Water Street