

Our team approaches the challenge from the perspective of a Boston that embraces the water. Our coastline has been shaped continuously over time by both the city and nature. Rather than retreat, we look at this challenge as an opportunity to shape a new mode of living and a new engagement with the shoreline. Using the piers as an inspiration, we study how to use the concept of new structures as a way of protecting and providing amenities to the existing building.

What happens to Commercial Street once the water inundates it is a design challenge that inspired us. It provides the basis for the new landscape and a renewed and resilient Prince Building. By enlisting the experience of a landscape architect who specializes in the coastal zone, we recommend an adaptive edge composed of hard and soft elements designed to receive the ebb and flow of water.

Beyond and supporting the Prince Building, the new coastline needs to be responsive to the changing climate. Our challenge is to create a landscape that works with both a raised entry level for the Prince Building and provides space for recreation directly on the shore edge, without impeding access.

A larger challenge of climate change, beyond sea level rise, is one that is very important to the team. To that end, we look at how the narrow streets of the North End and Beacon Hill help to shade and shelter the residences that line them. Natural ventilation and screening are important elements to mitigate the effects of extreme weather predicted to accompany climate change.

We consider carefully the idea of replicability. The Prince Building is one of several similarly challenged structures along the North End edge. How can this concept be taken to other sites? In order for the concept to work, it needs to be extended to multiple sites, creating a new paradigm for urban coastal development. The district approach we feel can be applied to other neighborhoods, and the form and solutions similarly adapted to unique needs.

One of the key challenges is financial. How can this be funded and continue to be funded so that the shoreline and buildings can continue to adapt? Our financial experts looked at several funding methods before deciding on the concept of the ground lease. Not only does it provide a continuous and increasing income stream, but the concept of a limited lease term anchors the development to a process of reevaluation of goals, design and funding needs which are critical in a changing climate.

By combining architecture and landscape design with financial expertise, our team has proposed a viable, implementable and replicable solution to living with water.