

# 787 Bancroft Way: Design Narrative

theLAB Berkeley, Phase III  
Use Permit Resubmittal | September 13, 2021



Our goal is to introduce a new building which transforms and enriches the existing urban fabric through careful spatial interventions and a straightforward, humble materiality.



**Enrich the Urban Fabric**  
787 Bancroft



**Bridge Industrial and Human Scale**  
703 Bancroft



**Reflects the Neighborhood Character**  
theLAB Phase I & II

# Project Vision

The Lab is a multi-phase combination of adaptive reuse, increased open space, new construction, and enhancements to the public realm will improve the environment and support the development of businesses in the surrounding neighborhood.

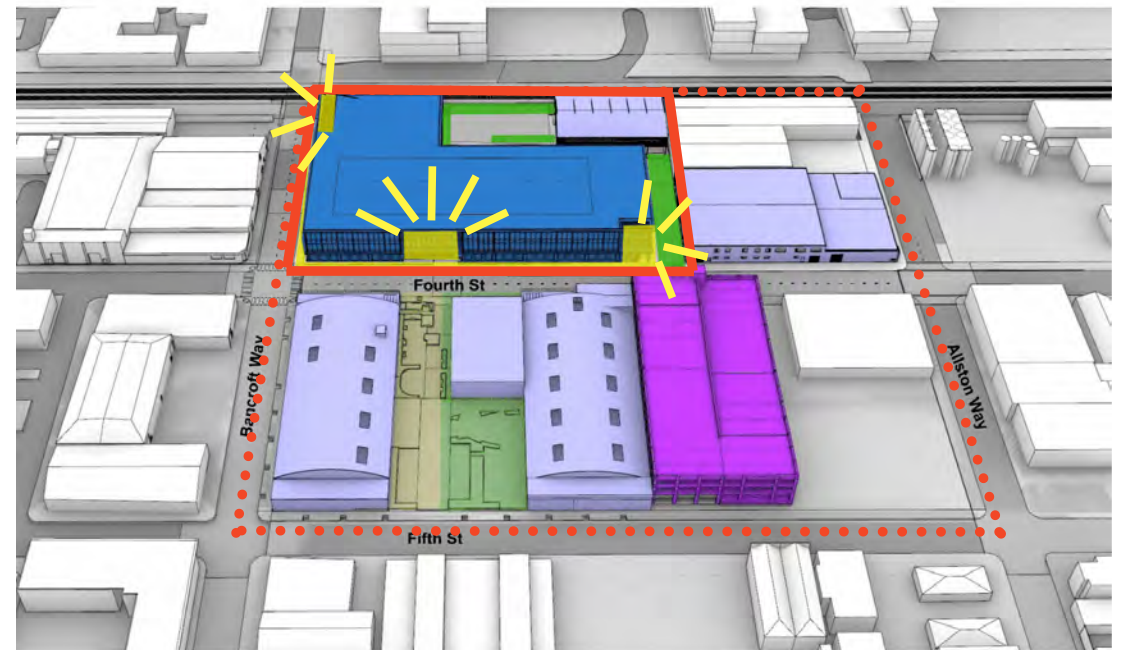
The building's L-shaped configuration and long horizontal proportions maintain the form and character of the surrounding blocks. With two major frontages, the building retains the street walls on both Fourth Street and Bancroft Way while allowing for a generous public open space to the north of the building and public improvements along Fourth Street.

The form and materiality of the building recall the simplicity and honesty of the industrial buildings in the neighborhood while making the block more welcoming and the pedestrian experience more enjoyable. A combination of exposed concrete structure, glass, metal trim, and integrated planters complement the industrial character of the district, while providing new open spaces to the evolving neighborhood and its more pedestrian and bicycle friendly orientation.

The ground floor is slightly recessed to increase the sidewalk width for pedestrian movement and additional planting and seating. The recessed ground level gives the building the same strong horizontal proportions as the previous building, despite being one story taller. The entry and address sign are near the midpoint of the Fourth Street façade, breaking up the long mass on the ground floor.

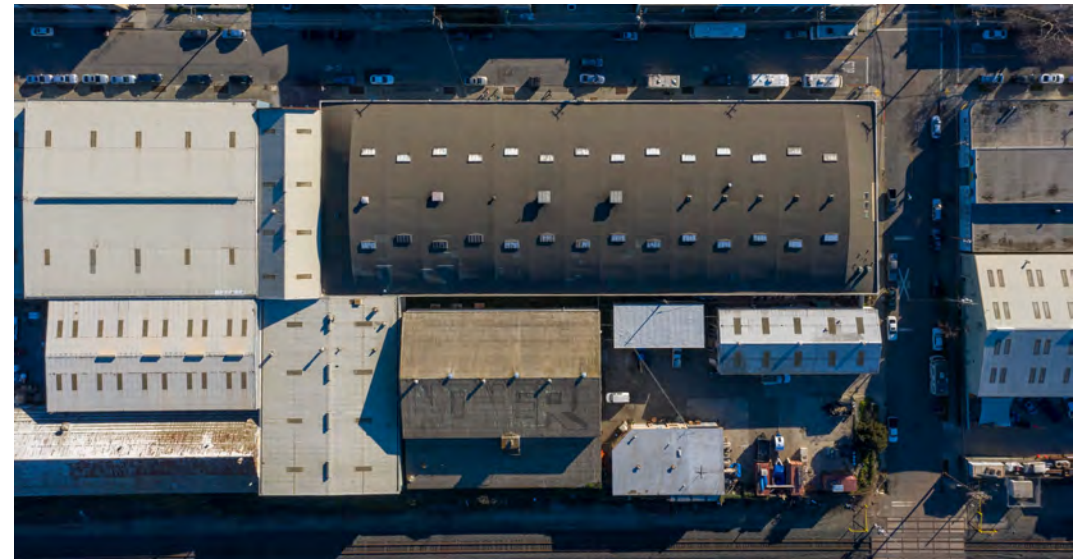
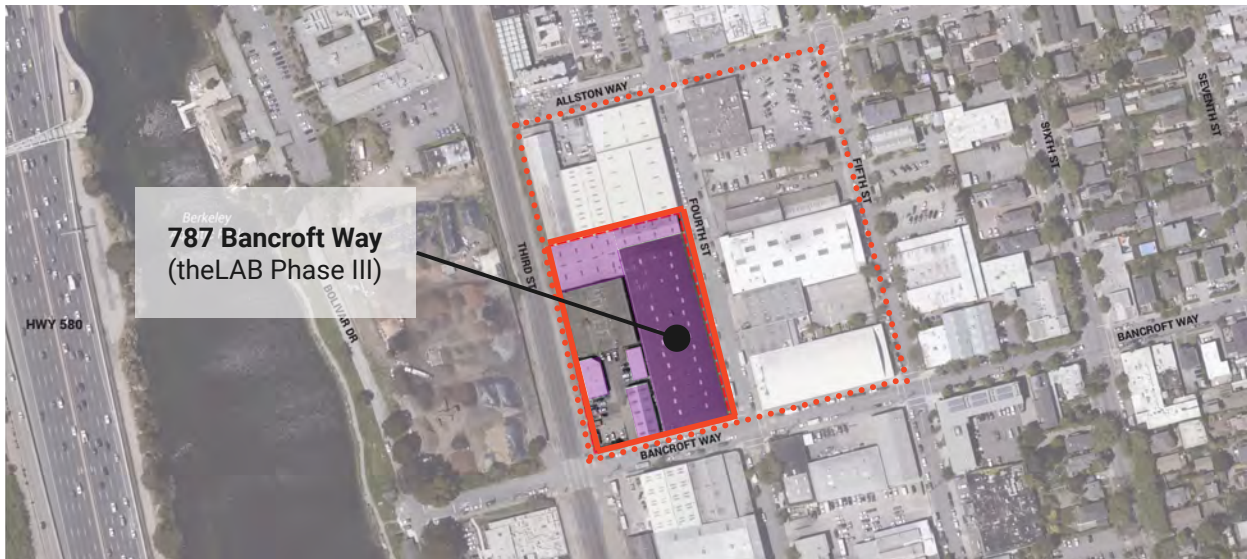
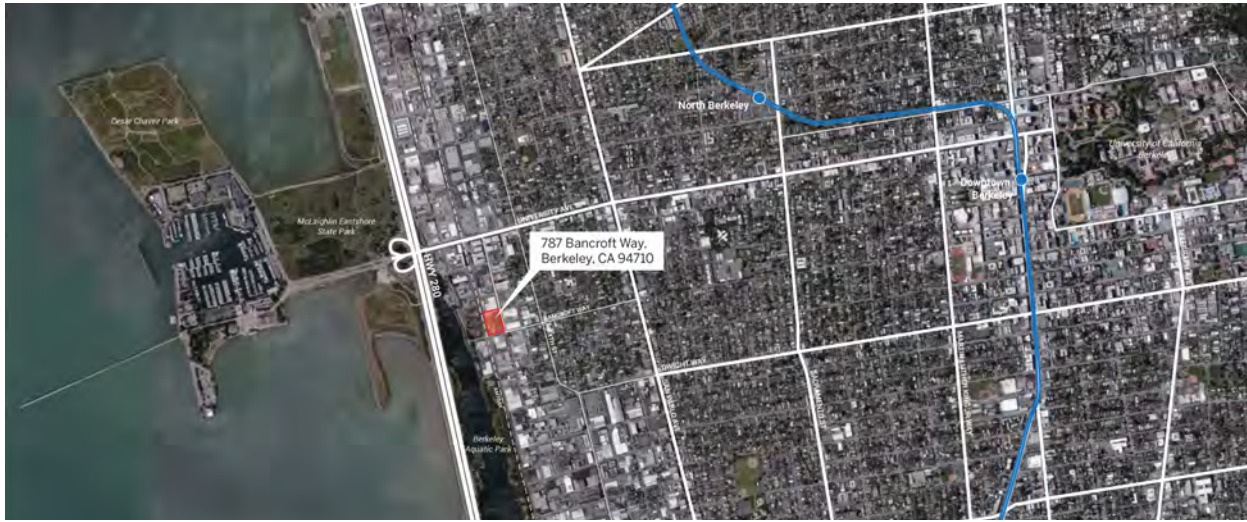
The entry is aligned with a new open space across the street that ties all of the buildings of TheLab into a singular campus-like work environment. Terraces at the Southwest and Northwest corners of the building break down the mass at the corners, provide tenants and outdoor amenities with views, and emphasize the connection between the workplace and neighborhood. The external stair on the Northeast corner provides vertical circulation and further connectivity between the workplace and Northern open space.

The pedestrian entrances to the site are located off Fourth Street. Vehicular access to the site is provided on Bancroft Way. This entry location reduces the curb cuts along Fourth Street to enhance the pedestrian experience and connectivity between buildings on either side of the street.



# WEST BERKELEY

The project is located in West Berkeley - a neighborhood with a diverse range of uses, building types, scales, and a rich industrial past. 787 Bancroft and the Lab will help the neighborhood evolve into the next chapter in the area's economic growth through a combination of new construction and adaptive reuse.



# theLAB Phases

787 Bancroft is the last phase of a multi-phase development that creates a light manufacturing and R&D campus in West Berkeley. The replacement of underutilized structures with a new building dedicated to R&D and light manufacturing uses serves the purpose of fostering growth of advanced technology services, while encouraging the availability of buildings for manufacturing uses and jobs. A series of public realm improvements and small scale parks stitch the project into the existing fabric of the neighborhood.

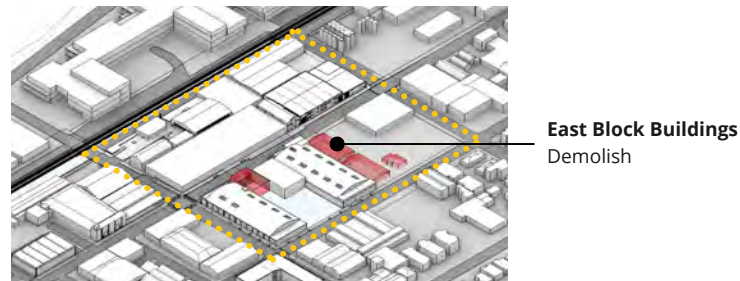
## PREVIOUS PHASES

### PHASE 0 - EXISTING CONDITION



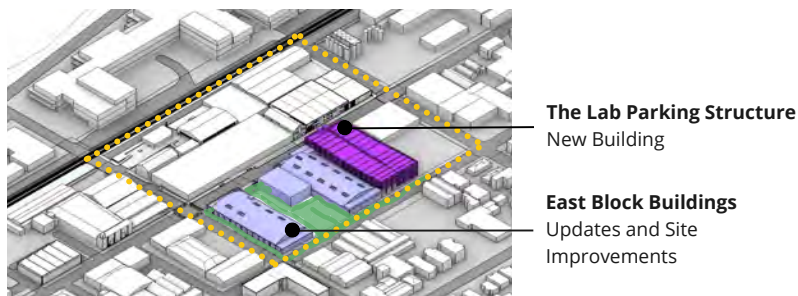
### PHASE I

- Demolish 4 Structures on East Block



### PHASE II

- The Lab Parking Structure - Build New
- East Block Buildings - Updates



## CURRENT SUBMITTAL PHASE

### PHASE III - A

- Demolish Structures on West Block
- 703 Bancroft - Protect and Relocate

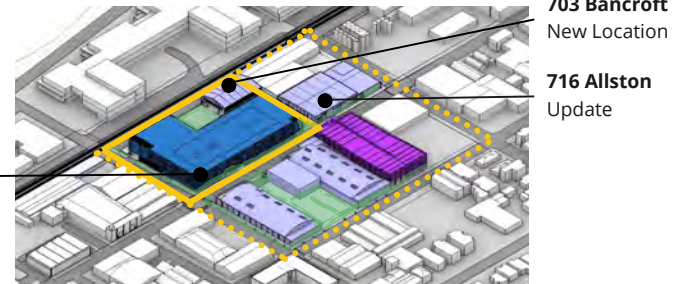
West Block Buildings Demolish



### PHASE III - B

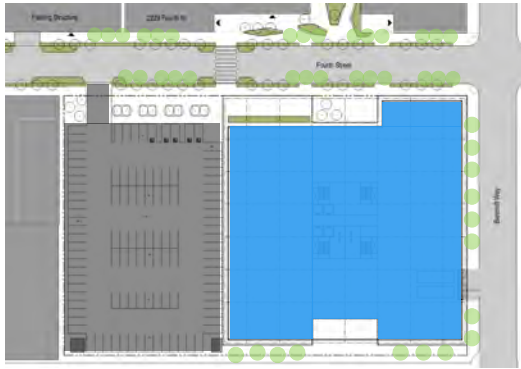
- 787 Bancroft - Build New
- 703 Bancroft - Relocate
- 716 Allston - Update

787 Bancroft New Building and Site improvements



# BUILDING PLACEMENT

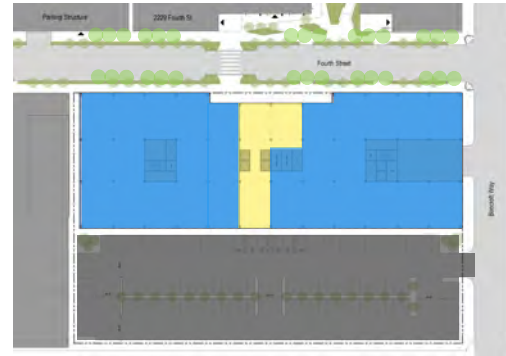
The L-shape configuration of 787 Bancroft maximizes the building frontage along Bancroft and 4th street, creates open space adjacent the public right of way, and discreetly places parking on the interior of the site. Our team explored a variety of building configurations and placement. The L-shape configuration created the best pedestrian experience along 4th street.



the square

compact plan

parking & additional curb cut along 4th



the rectangle

strong connection to 4th street & East development

no open space on the site

east west solar orientation

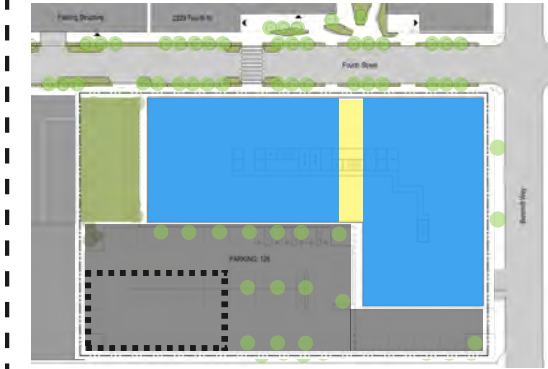


the U

good views

open space isolated

parking & additional curb cut along 4th



the L

additional open space to north

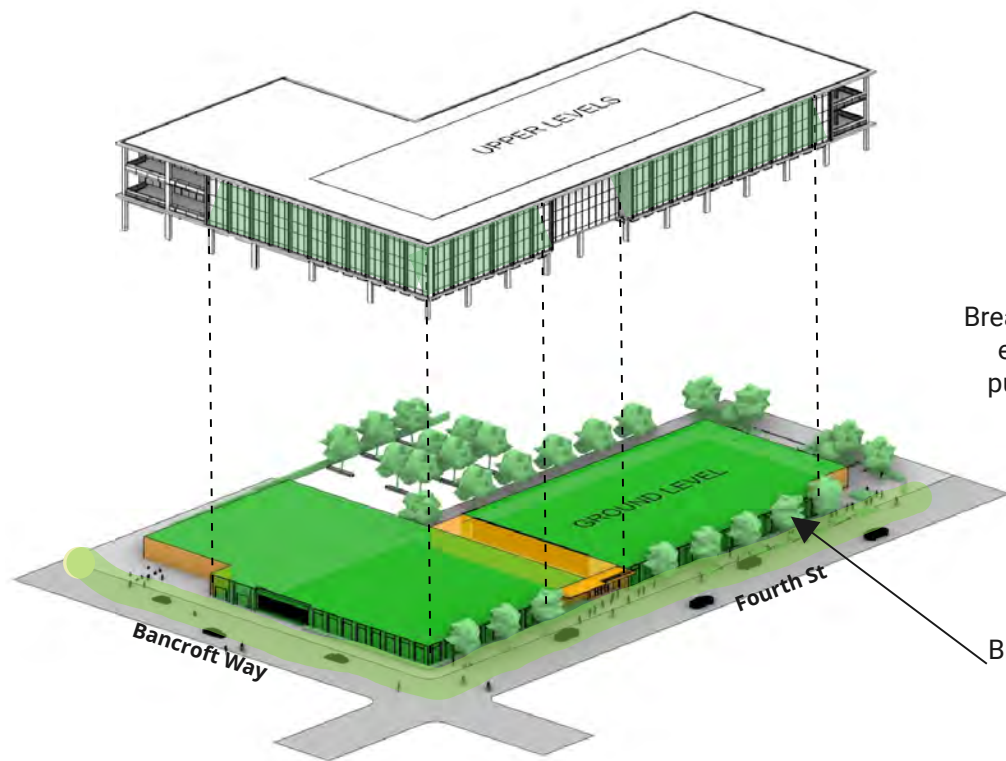
maximizes building frontage along 4th and Bancroft

surface parking off of street

no additional curb cuts along 4th street

# BUILDING MASSING AND ARTICULATION

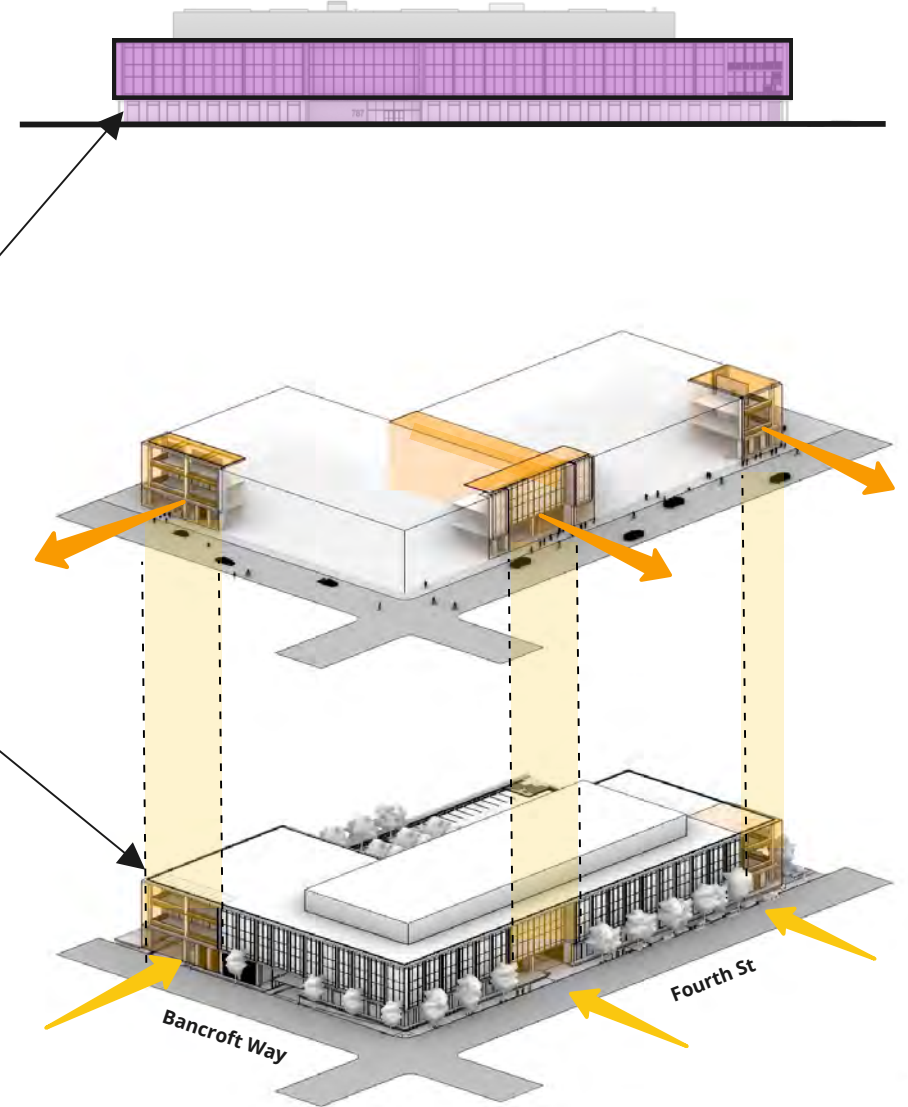
The form of 787 shares the long and low proportions of the other revitalized warehouses with the Lab to create a cohesive building language within the masterplan. The ground floor is recessed to allow for increased landscaping along the sidewalk and for the scale of the building to be broken down. A larger recess at the building entrance is near the center of the building to break down the long mass and align the building to a new open space across 4th street. Large outdoor terraces on both ends of the building break down the scale of the building next to its neighbors. An exterior stair on the Northeast corner creates an active circulation area adjacent to the public way and new Northern park.



**OVERALL MASSING**  
Long and low profile with open ground plane

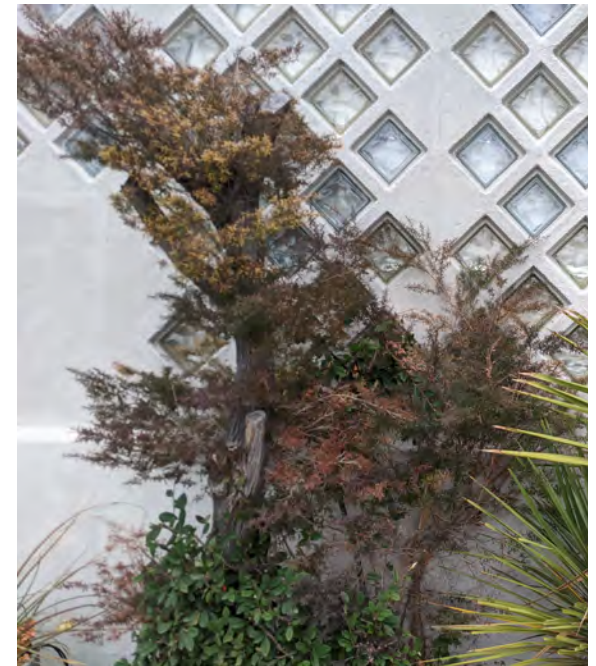
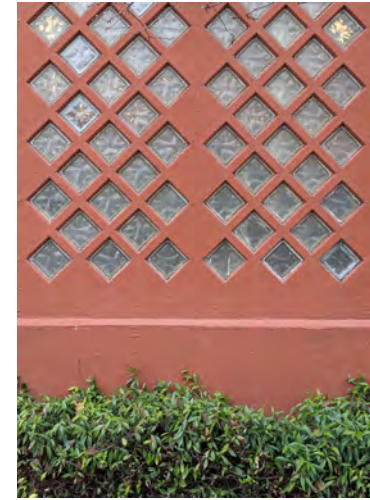
**ACTIVATED TERRACES AND ENTRY**  
Breaks down elevation length and engages workplace with the public realm at parcel's edges

**RECESSED GROUND LEVEL**  
Broken into two-building masses to activate the sidewalk and emphasize human scale



# MATERIALITY AND CHARACTER

The construction and materiality building is inspired by the functionality and playfulness of the industrial buildings in the neighborhood. There is a clear expression of the structural frame and a play in rhythm of the cast in place concrete that is also the primary building facade.



# OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

The landscape design strategy for 787 Bancroft and the Lab Masterplan is to transform the two blocks East and West of 4th Street into a singular campus consisting of a variety of open spaces and outdoor experiences. This is done through a series of interventions: Widening the sidewalk for better pedestrian experiences; creating pocket parklets along the street for light activities; adding a mid-block crossing to enhance the Lab campus connectivity; and finally, providing a shaded mixed-use plaza for the workers to extend their daily activities from indoor to outdoor.

The design of the 4th Street streetscape activates the public realm of the block with strategic planting and landscape features that are coordinated with major building elements. Red Maple is selected as the street tree marching along both sides of the street, unifying the campus. With their orange to brilliant scarlet fall color, the red maples contribute to the planting diversity of the neighborhood and create identity for the Lab campus. Sidewalk is widened to incorporate three sets of pocket parklets with gardens and seating benches. Hedges are designed to provide protection from the traffic and comfort to the parklets. Both the layouts of the street trees and pocket parklets are responding to the rhythm of the building façade design. Along the periphery of the main building, a continuous flow-through planter has been established to help with stormwater management as well as create a natural transition between the office environment and public sidewalk.

The North Plaza acts as a crossroads for pedestrian circulation between 787 Bancroft, 716 Allston, and 4th street. It is also the key outdoor area of the site. A variety of destinations are provided for both the occupants in the Lab and the public visitors. Seating under the shaded London Plane trees, hanging out next to the gardens with delicate Japanese Maples, and gathering on the open lawn enrich the ways of working, provide spaces for activities, outdoor meetings, and office events. Both the design of North Plaza and the improvements of 4th street are to establish a sense of place for collaboration in this new vibrant hub for the district.



# OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

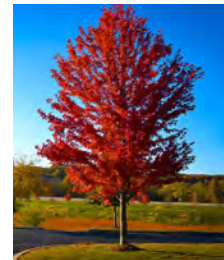
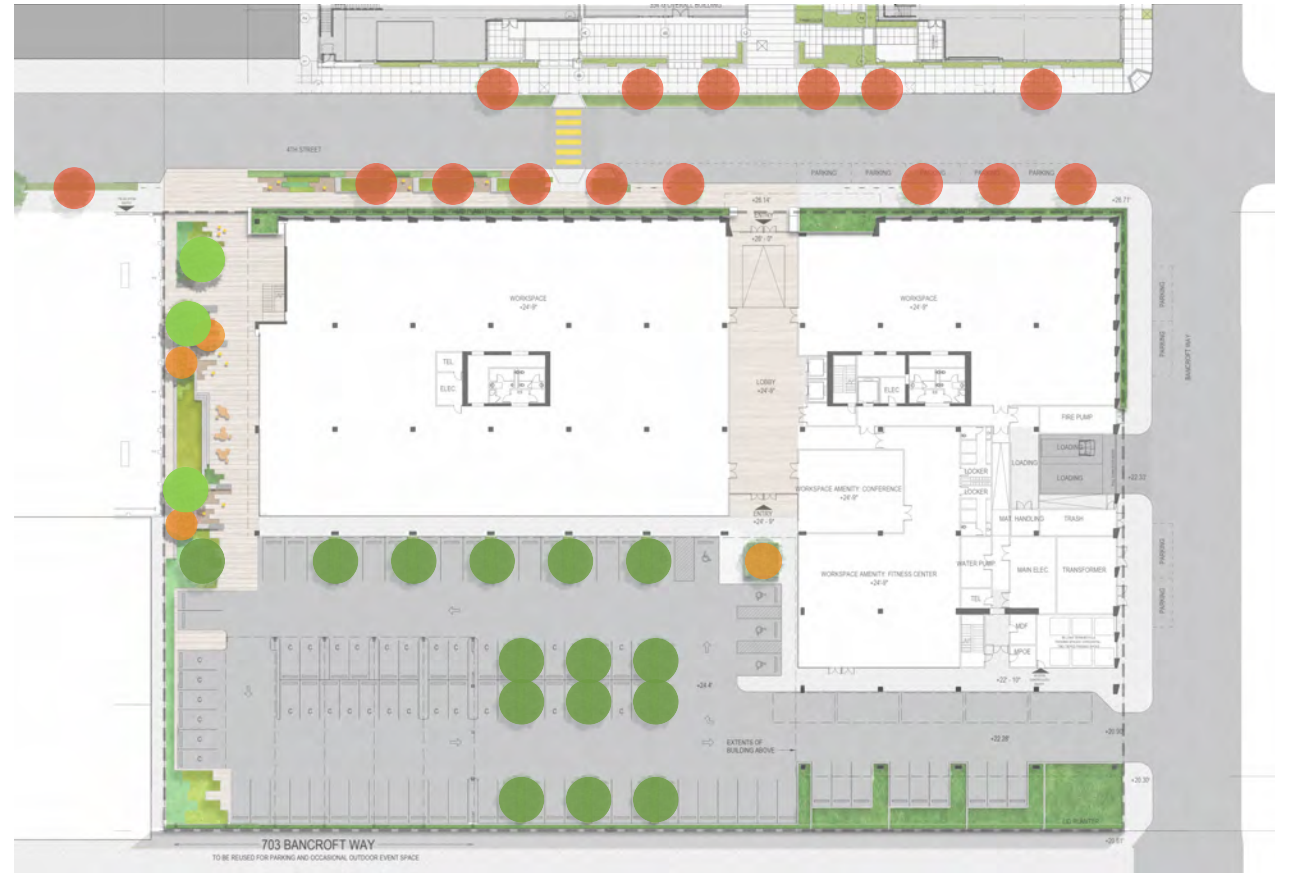
The planting design of 787 Bancroft takes the neighborhood context, the relationship with the main building, and the seasonal plant characters into consideration.

Red Maple is selected as the street tree along 4th street to create a unified scene across theLab campus. Its brilliant fall color and clean oval tree shape will give a distinct identity to the site within the neighborhood and marks the front entrances for the buildings along 4th Street.

In the North Plaza three London Plane trees are placed to provide great shade in summer and visual interests in winter. Japanese Maples are also designed into the plaza gardens. With its delicate leaves and outward spreading branches, these garden trees easily become the visual attraction on site.

In the surface parking area behind the building, medium sized Frontier Elms are used to provide shade for the cars while not blocking too much of the view towards the ocean.

All groundcovers and low plantings will be native or drought-tolerant plants that require low water and less maintenance once established. Plants vary from colors, heights, forms, and textures in different seasons and add year-round visual interest.



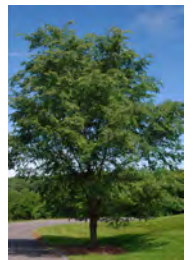
● **Acer rubrum "October Glory"**  
Red Maple



● **Acer Japonica**  
Japanese Maple



● **Platanus hybrida**  
London Plane Tree



● **Ulmus Hybrid "Frontier"**  
Frontier Elm

## HISTORICAL REUSE

With respect to its historic character, the 703 Bancroft building will be relocated to the Northwest corner of the site and adapted as a parking structure and potential tenant amenity outside of working hours. The lower enclosure of the building will be removed to reveal its structural elements and provide clear visibility and sight lines for pedestrians and vehicles. The major elements that are retained will align to the 2nd story of the new building to produce a clear visual datum across the site between old and new.



703 Bancroft - Existing



703 Bancroft - Proposed

## HISTORICAL REUSE



## 4TH STREET FRONTAGE



4TH STREET



BANCROFT WAY



## VIEW FROM TRAIN TRACKS



# NORTHEAST CORNER

