

# ROTATED RUIN

## Inscribing a New Public Space

The bridge will be demolished. Any attempt to pretend otherwise is hopelessly romantic. With the vast majority of the old steel in a severe state of decay, there is little point in imagining a feasible, or fiscally responsible means of restoration. Our proposal recognizes the reality of this situation, and proposes a vibrant new life for the old machine.

The city of today is no longer run by machines. The beasts of industry no longer organize our world. The new order is a humanist order - it is social, democratic, open and free. The new city is about people and ideas. The new city is organized around the public spaces in which its citizens come together. But the vast majority of Boston's public spaces fail to appreciate the city's intimate relationship to the watery world that surrounds it.

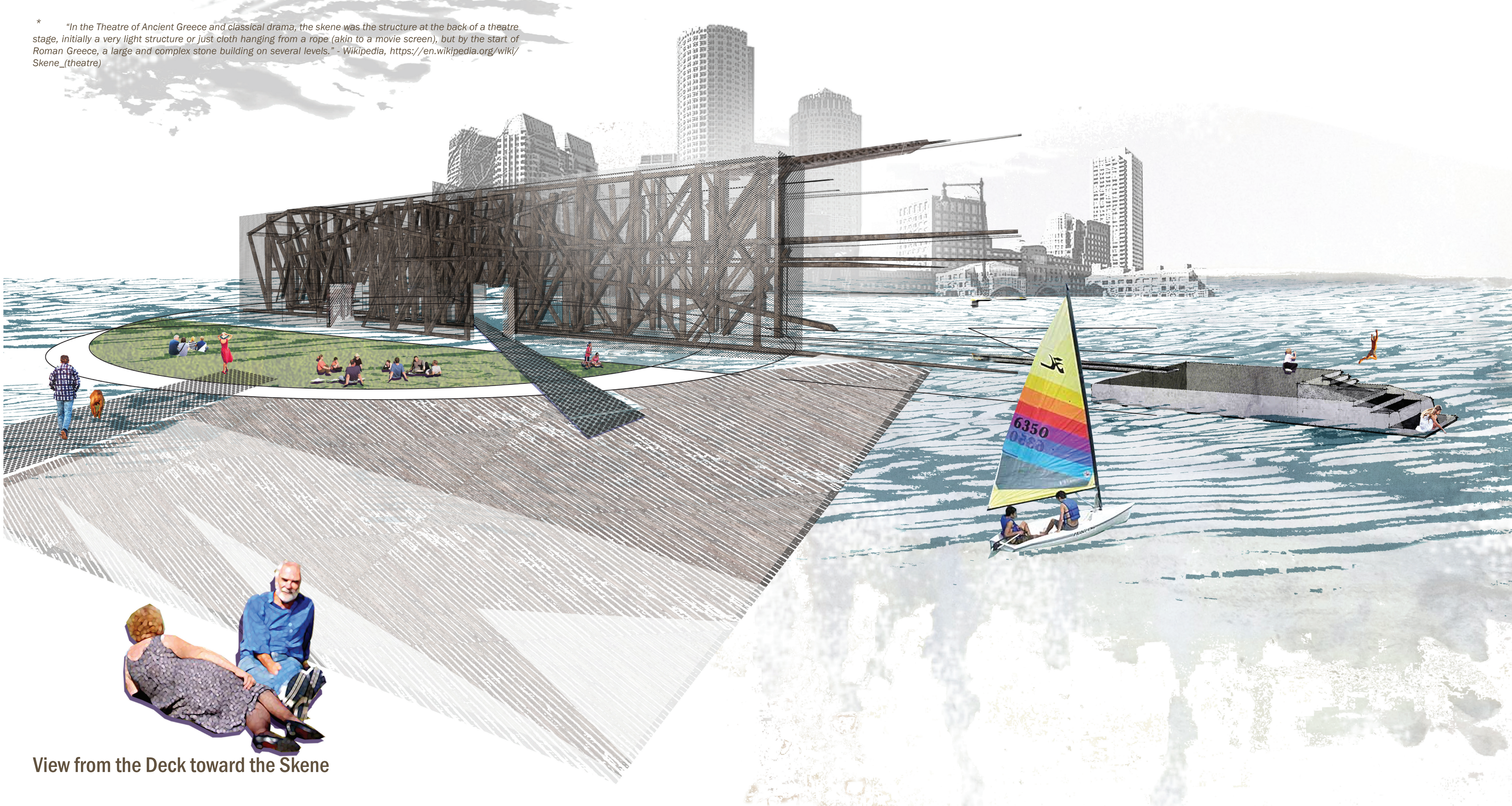
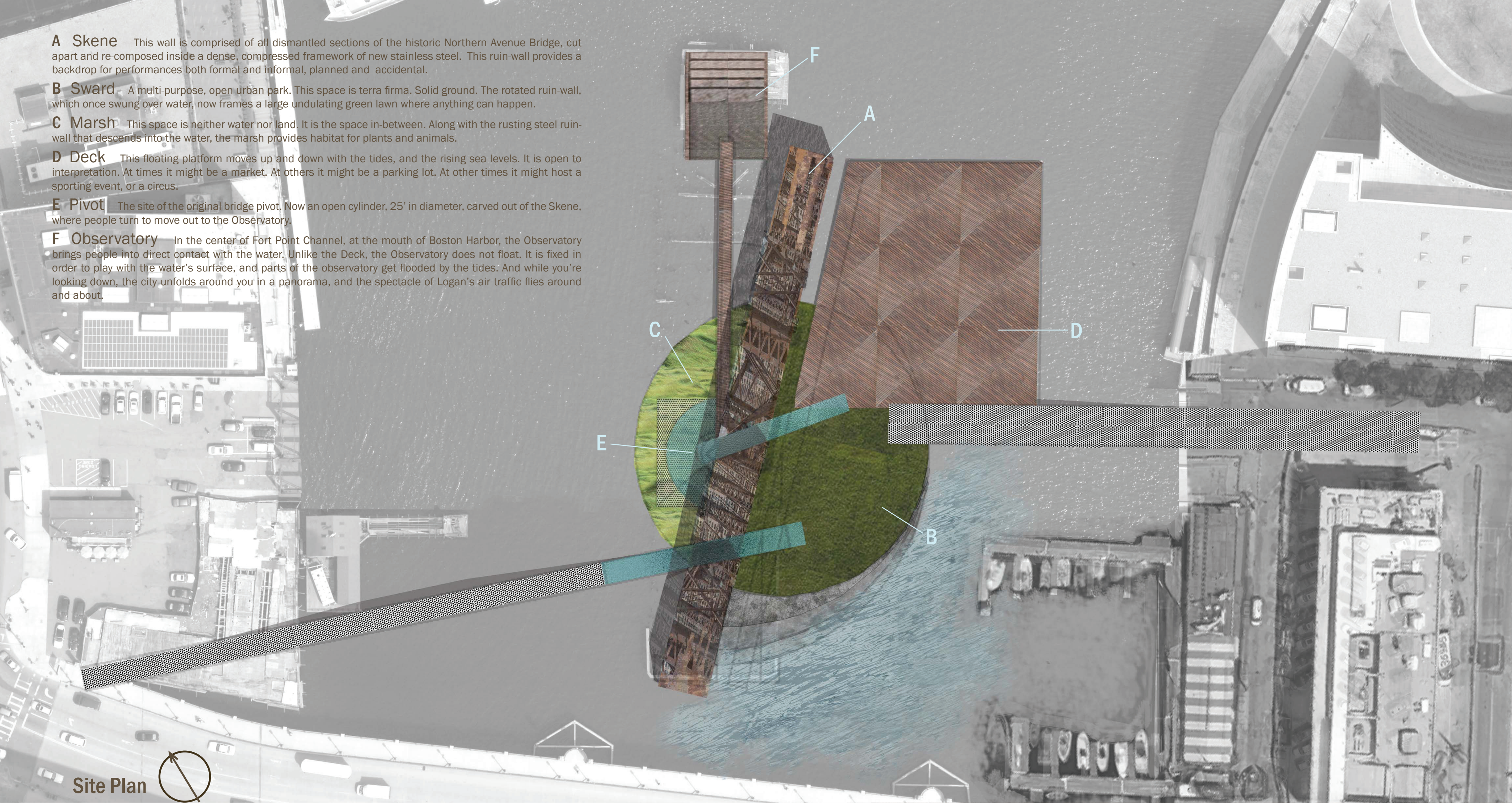
And so we propose a turn - a turn from industrial mechanisms to civic space. From a rusting piece of infrastructure, to terra firma framed by dynamic systems in flux. From the realm of the everyday, to one of performances both real and imaginary.

This turning provides our proposal with its central diagram. The old bridge is dismantled. Industrial mobility is replaced by pedestrian mobility. Now people make the movements (crossing, pivoting, transferring, rotating) that the bridge used to perform. Mobility in downtown Boston is no longer about machines and objects (the past) – it is about people and ideas (the present, the future). Accordingly, this new mobility isn't about efficiency or the quickest path, it's about collision and discovery and performance. It negotiates the ruins of our collective identity in search of the tensions that pull between past and future, city and water, bridge and plaza, everyday and theatrical.

The old bridge will be dismantled. Sections of the bridge will be cut apart, gathered, and stacked together inside a framework (a cage) of stainless steel mesh. Here the old parts will remain, in a position that is mostly open (as if the rust stymied the pivot, and the bridge couldn't muster the energy to open all the way), until it eventually crumbles into the water. The collection of ruined steel will form a new ruin-wall that is simultaneously: 1) a memorial to the old bridge, 2) a scrap heap, and 3) a skênê\* for a new theatrical public space.

The new ruin-wall, in its rotated position, allows water traffic into the Fort Point Channel on its north side. And on its south side the wall forms a backdrop to a grand civic space where geometries of rotation give rise to a new public space for people to gather, occupy, relax. In this new civic theater, pedestrians become everyday performers, entering and exiting through the skênê through two different openings: one path a more-or-less direct crossing over Fort-Point Channel (drawing up to allow boats to pass), and another to allow a path that passes through the skênê to afford people the opportunity to move through the ruin-wall to a pivot point over the exact center of the historic bridge pivot, and then on out to an observation point in the harbor. This round space replaces the historic machinery of 19th century turning, with an inhabitable cylindrical space where people turn from the city to the water, and then move out to a floating observatory in the center of Fort Point Channel, at the mouth of Boston Harbor, where the city unfolds in a panorama, and the spectacle of Logan's air traffic flies around and about.

\* "In the Theatre of Ancient Greece and classical drama, the skene was the structure at the back of a theatre stage, initially a very light structure or just cloth hanging from a rope (akin to a movie screen), but by the start of Roman Greece, a large and complex stone building on several levels." - Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skene\\_\(theatre\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skene_(theatre))



View from the Deck toward the Skene



View from Boston to the Constructed Marsh