

Newest Roche Bros. furthers evolution of Watertown's Arsenal Yards



By **Catherine Carlock** – Real Estate Editor, Boston Business Journal
8 hours ago

The years-long effort to “de-mall” the former Arsenal Mall in Watertown and create a mixed-use campus in its place will take a big step forward when a Roche Bros. grocery opens this Friday and a movie theater reopens this weekend for the first time since last year.

The 24,000-square-foot Roche Bros. will open Friday at 96 Arsenal Yards Blvd. in Arsenal Yards, marking the first Watertown location for the locally based grocery chain. Features at the store include a “Chop Shop” with smoothies, cut fruit and vegetables, artisanal cheeses and charcuterie fixings, prepared foods, made-to-order sandwiches and a flatbread pizza bar, as well as a café serving espresso drinks.

“This store combines the variety and first-rate shopping experience of Roche Bros., with the innovation and product assortment of Brothers Marketplace”, said Linda SanGiacomo, vice president of marketing for Roche Bros., in a statement. “In Watertown, we will continue to offer the traditional products our customers have grown to love, as well as innovative specialty items that cater to the needs and desires of residents and guests of Arsenal Yards.”

Boston-based real estate firms Boylston Properties and The Wilder Cos. are the co-developers of Arsenal Yards, a development spanning more than 1 million square feet along the Charles River in Watertown. Leasing is underway at Arsenal Yards’ apartment buildings, and restaurants including Buttermilk & Bourbon, Condesa Restaurante & Tequila Bar and Tori Jiro, as well as workout spot Pure Barre and Gordon’s Liquors will open in the coming months.

Beyond the retail and restaurants, Wilder and Boylston plan to have about 400,000 square feet of life-science space on the campus. Cell therapy company SQZ Biotech (NYSE: SQZ) is based at Arsenal Yards, expanding to the campus in 2019.

Tom Wilder, principal of The Wilder Cos., said in an interview that the pandemic accelerated trends that had already been facing the retail industry, including shoppers' desire for authentic social experiences and the need for retailers to sell merchandise through more than one channel – be it online or in person.

“The pandemic has really accelerated the evolution of multichannel retailing,” Wilder said. “If you weren’t multi-channel, you were not going to survive. As a result, it’s actually been a confirmation of everything that we’ve thought Arsenal should be – and it’s been a confirmation that we did it right.”

The former Arsenal Mall property dates back over a century, Wilder said, and creates an authentic experience that today’s shoppers crave.

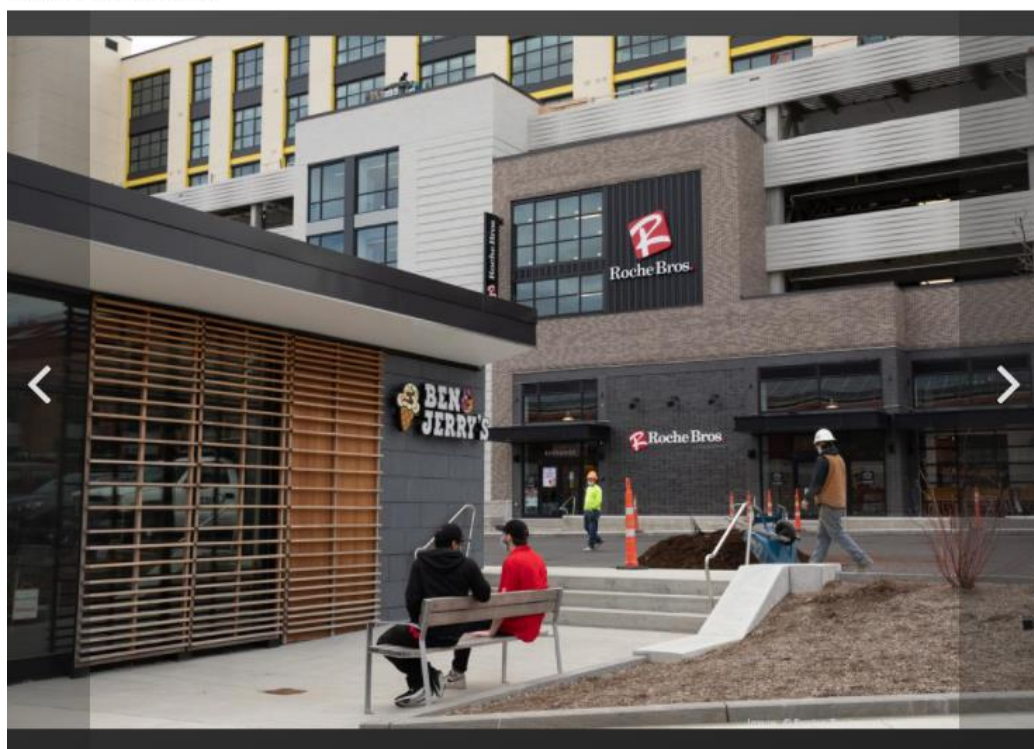
“Exposed brick, 47-foot high ceilings in the City Works space ... you can’t replicate that,” Wilder said. “We’re all seeking authenticity. It’s hard to find the real thing. We didn’t have to do a whole lot to bring it back to life, because the bones were so interesting and so cool. We just wanted to strip off the paint and sheetrock covering up the beauty of it.”

Some of Arsenal Yards’ tenants have not had a smooth past year. The Majestic 7 theater, with plush seating and alcoholic beverage service, was slated to open shortly before the pandemic hit and businesses across the country shuttered. And while [many hotel properties have suffered in the pandemic](#), Wilder thinks it's only a matter of time for visitors to come to the 146-room Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton, which opened in March.

“They happened to open during a challenging time, but I think it’s going to knock it out of the park,” he said.



Indoor and outdoor cafe areas are available at a new Roche Bros. grocery store opening at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



With apartments above, a new Roche Bros. grocery is opening at Arsenal Yards, the mixed-use redevelopment of the former Arsenal Mall in Watertown.



The Roche Bros. deli will offer made-to-order sandwiches.



The Roche Bros. cheese shop sells artisanal cheeses and charcuterie fixings.



A selection of Stonewall Kitchen products at the 24,000-square-foot Roche Bros. in Watertown's Arsenal Yards.



Roche Bros. staffers stock the grocery store ahead of its grand opening on Friday, April 9, 2021.



The "Chop Shop" at Roche Bros. will serve smoothies, cut fruit and vegetables.



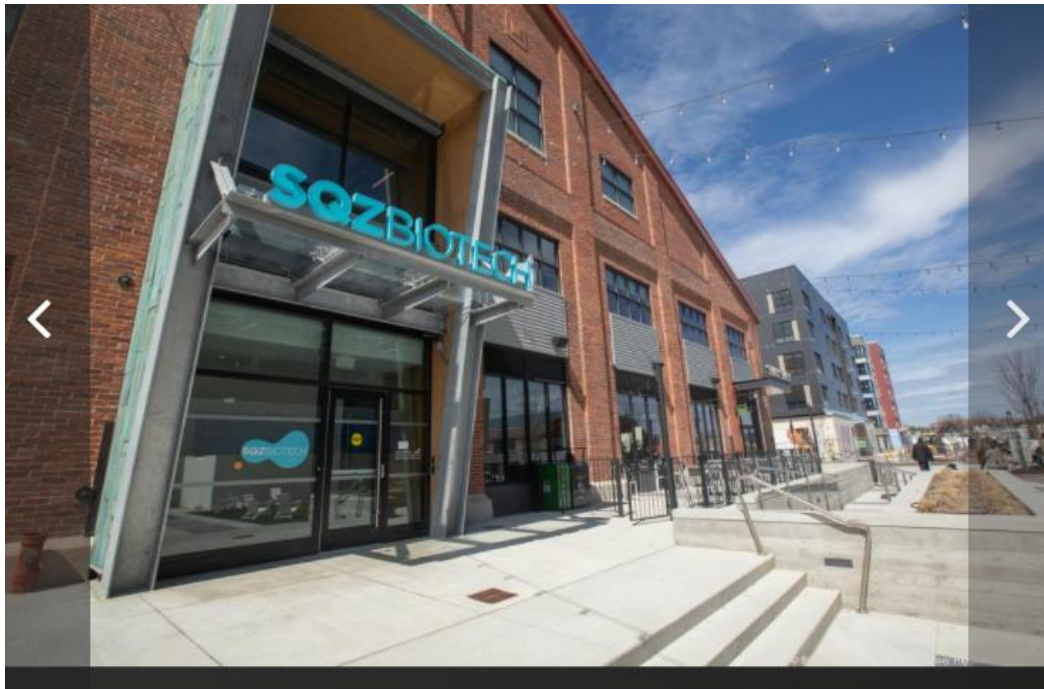
The floral department at the Roche Bros. in Watertown's Arsenal Yards.



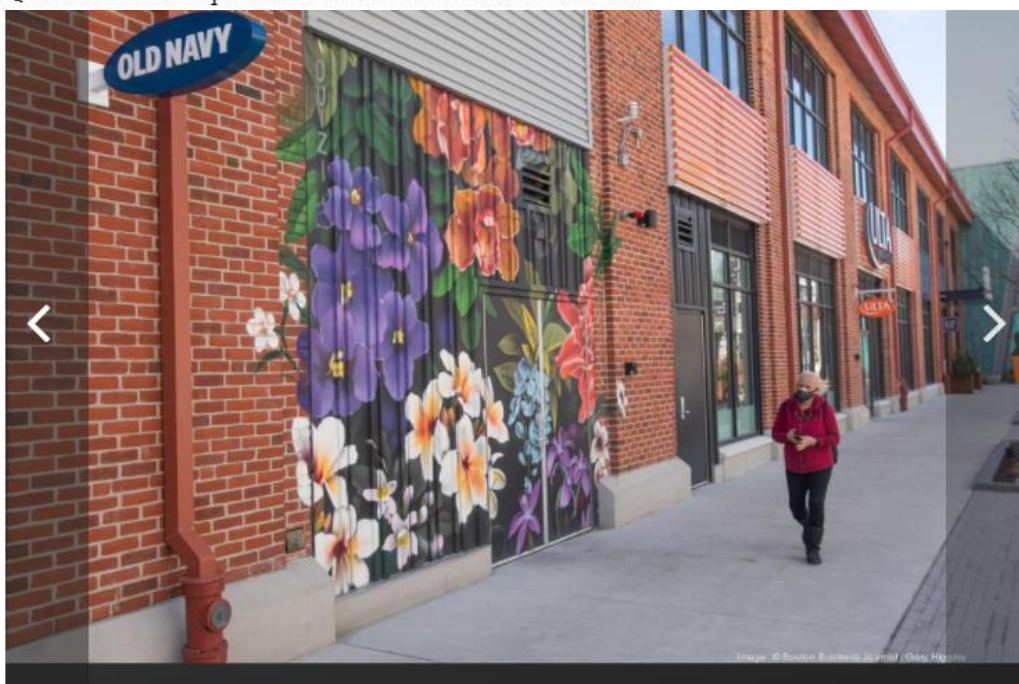
The checkout area of a new Roche Bros. grocery store opening at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



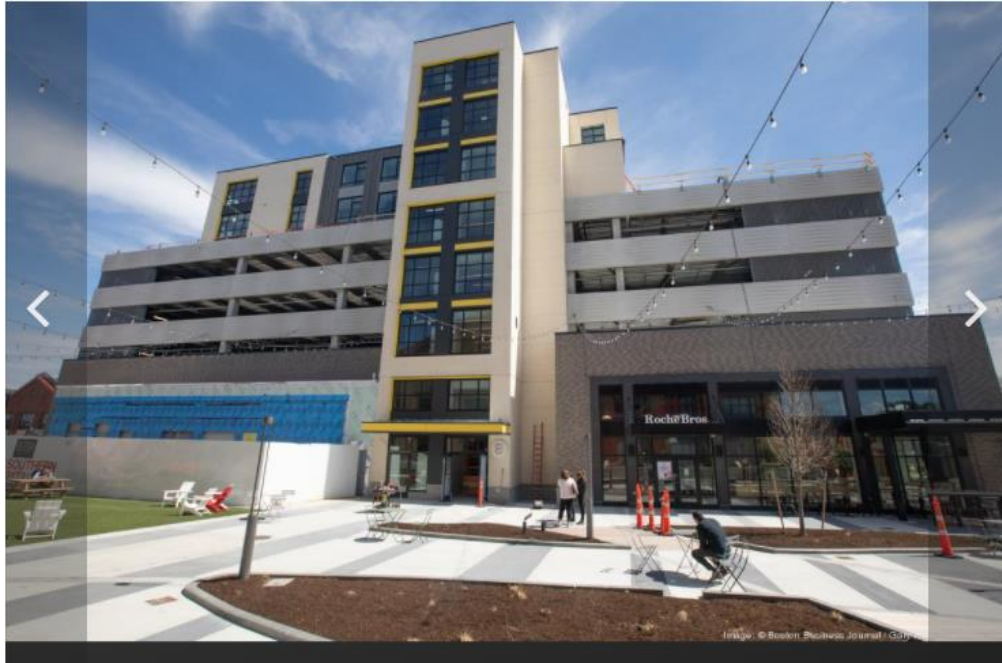
A coffee shop at a new Roche Bros. grocery store opening at Arsenal Yards.



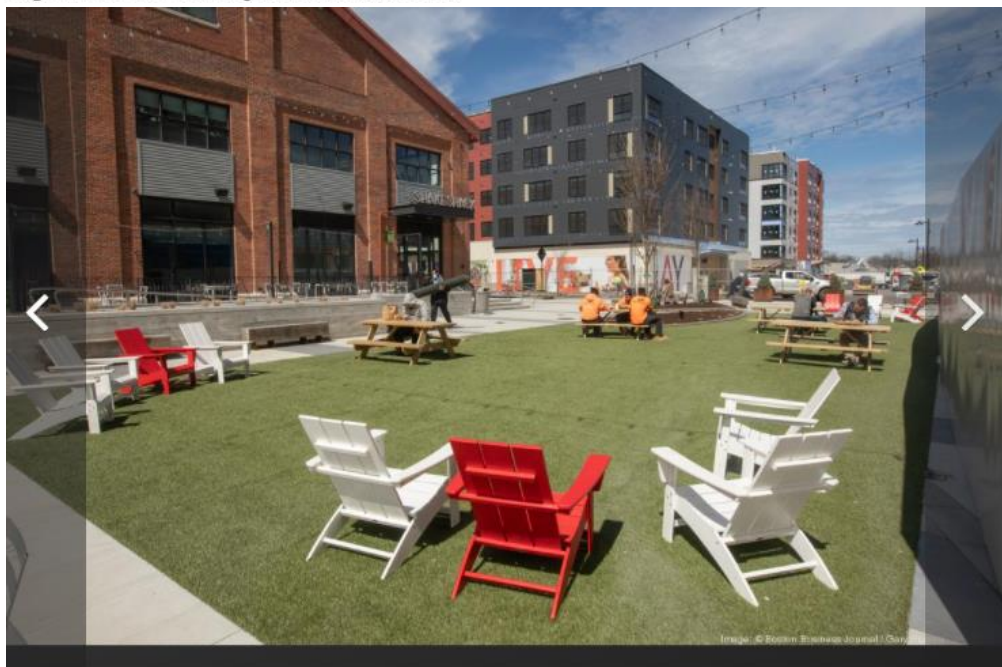
SQZ Biotech is headquartered at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



One of several original mural art installations at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



Apartments are now for lease above a new Roche Bros. grocery store opening at Arsenal Yards, a large mixed-use development in Watertown.



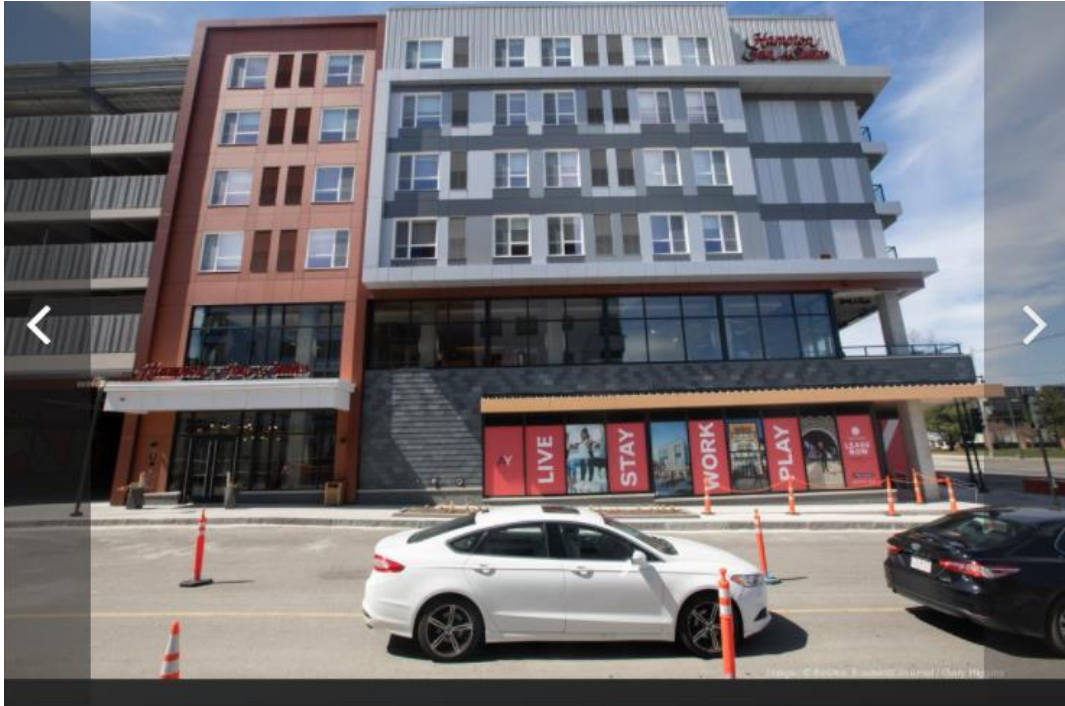
Green space connects retail, restaurants and apartments at Arsenal Yards, a large mixed-use development in Watertown.



One of several original mural art installations at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



New apartments are constructed at Arsenal Yards, a mixed-use development at the former Arsenal Mall in Watertown.



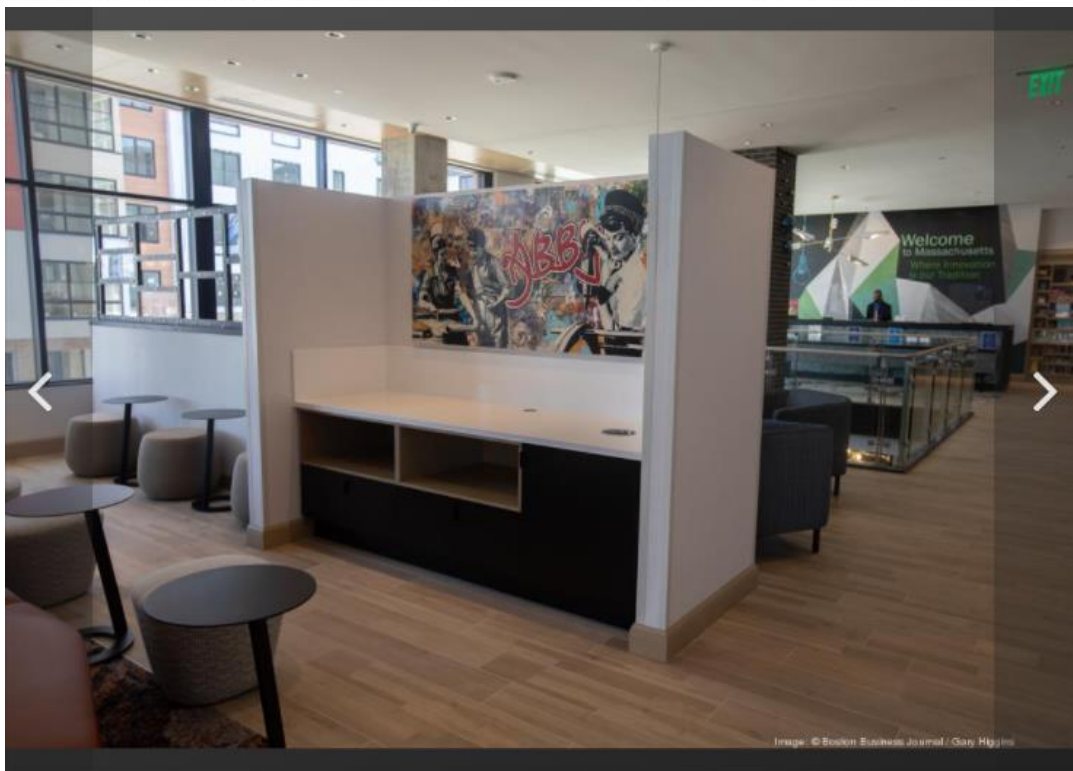
A Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



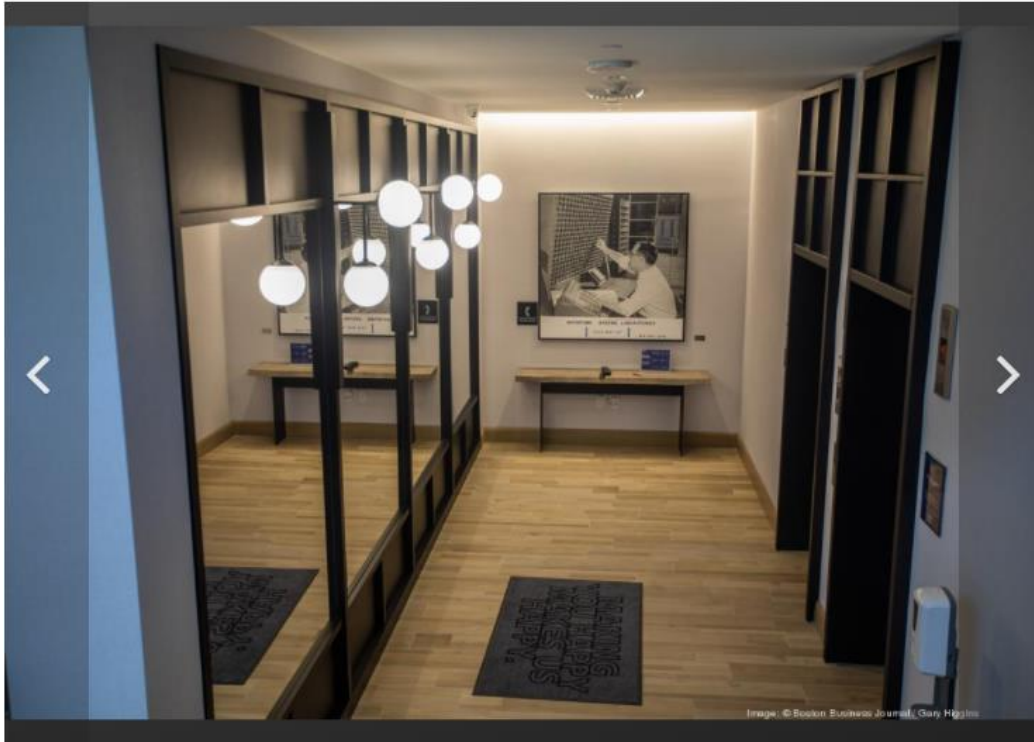
The hotel has 146 rooms.



An interior view of Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton, located at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



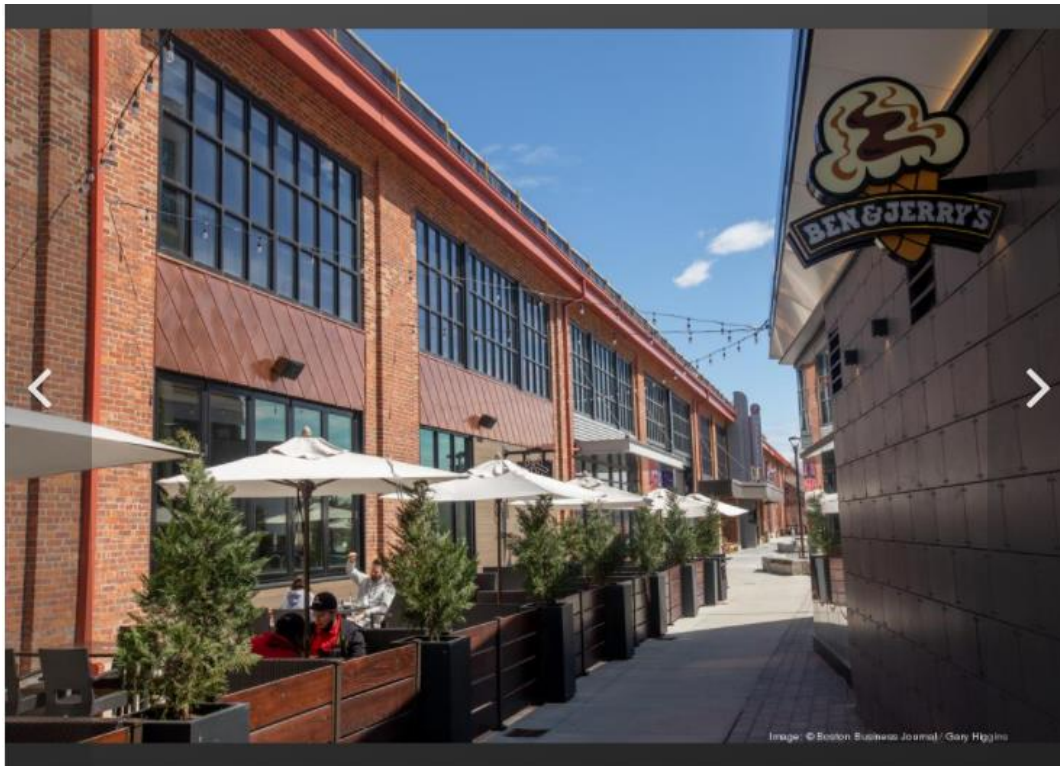
An interior view of the 146-room Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton at Watertown's Arsenal Yards.



An interior view of Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton, located at Arsenal Yards, in Watertown.



The City Works restaurant is located in a historic industrial building with 47-foot ceilings at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.



Ben & Jerry's is among many food and beverage operators at Arsenal Yards in Watertown.