Nestled in the forested hills of northeast Connecticut, UConn’s Technology Park was envisioned as a place where industry leaders and business entrepreneurs will collaborate with students and faculty. Langan’s landscape architecture team collaborated with UConn and the architect, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, to design a master plan organized around the landscape, responsibly demonstrating developable zones while protecting wetlands and habitat. Once the master plan was complete, the design team engaged on the first project, the Innovation Partnership Building.

As a stark contrast to its bucolic surroundings, this magnet for innovation and engine for economic growth was conceived as a “machine in the garden.” The building is an abstraction of a New England covered bridge, which the landscape flows under and around. The laboratory bar “floats” over the landscape in the form of a courtyard with planted and stone pods that take their form from washed river rocks. The slope from the entry plaza to the woodland beyond allows the landscape to flow down a stairway and terraced lawn to a lower level of pods and paths that meander and dissolve into a woodland trail system.

Due to the structure below, much of the entrance courtyard is designed with rooftop detailing to include salvaged stone accent features and an extensive green roof. Extending out from the building, the parking lots incorporate bio-retention plantings and infiltration basins planted with native pollinators. The site lighting design complements the building aesthetic, safely guiding pedestrians as night falls over the campus.
The Innovation Partnership Building is centrally located within the UConn technology park master plan.
The technology park was organized on a landscape transect and focused on weaving landscape through the campus and buildings.
The landscape is an integral part of the Innovation Partnership experience, beginning with an entrance terrace offset by planted and sculptural stone pods flowing between and under the building down to the surrounding woodland and flanked by lushly planted parking terraces with integral rain gardens.
Landscape pods were strategically designed to define accessible pathways on a sloped entry terrace. The stone pod in the foreground has openings in the perimeter joints to allow the collection and infiltration of stormwater.
The terrace that runs under the lab bar required careful attention to detail as it transitions from on-grade to roof over the lower-level floor. All stone pods under the lab bar supports were salvaged from old farmer walls found on site.
The landscape flows from the entry terrace down a meandering staircase and gently terraced lawn to provide access to the lower-level lab spaces and eventually merges into the preserved surrounding woodland.
The lower terrace provides a visual extension of the interior spaces and serves as a gathering area in nice weather. Seating pebbles echo the landscape pods inspired by river rock.
The building features over 28,000 square feet of extensive green roof that meets here and intersects a stone seating pod with a custom bench.
An early rendering examines capturing stormwater on the paved terraces and infiltrating though the landscape pods.
Rain gardens form the spine of the parking courts that flank the building providing green infrastructure for stormwater management, shade, screening and seasonal color.
The extensive green roofs of the two lab wings frame the lower terrace and direct views to the woodlands beyond.
The landscape architecture team designed site lighting that complements the building aesthetic and interior lighting and defines a hierarchy of vehicular and pedestrian spaces.
An aerial view shows the green roofs and courtyard as night begins to fall over the campus.
Sunset penetrates under the lab bar, highlighting the entry terrace of planted and stone pods inspired by rounded river rocks.
The UConn Innovation Partnership Building, a “machine in the garden” is surrounded and embraced by the natural landscape.