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Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0026549

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE: Massachusetts
COUNTY: Suffolk
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE AUG 14 1973

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Back Bay Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Same as above

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Described under no. 7.

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
8th and 9th Cong. District

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE:
025

COUNTY:
Suffolk

CODE:
025

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Public and Private

STREET AND NUMBER:
Boston

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE:
025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Registry of Deeds, Suffolk County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pemberton Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE:
025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE OF SURVEY:
1973

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston

STATE:
Massachusetts



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

N 4690720 N 4691300

STATE: Mass.
COUNTY: Suffolk
ENTRY NUMBER:
DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE p.1.

For description of legal boundaries see Continuation page 33

The Back Bay is presently a densely built up area of fashionable apartments, office and business facilities, schools and other institutions. Most of its original structures survive, and despite many variations in architectural style, they are distinguished by a general consistency of character, form, and scale. Enclosed within well-defined bounds, the Back Bay comprises, in effect, an easily discernable enclave of superior nineteenth century architecture in the city proper. Since 1966 the residential portion of the Back Bay has been a legally established architectural conservation district under the jurisdiction of the Back Bay Architectural Commission.

The streets of the Back Bay are arranged in a regular grid of rectangular blocks oriented longitudinally along five main axis avenues and intersected at equal intervals by less important transverse streets. The core of this system is Commonwealth Avenue. Laid out as a grand boulevard along the central axis of the grid, it includes a wide, elm-shaded, pedestrian mall within its 240 foot width and 1 1/8 mile length from the Public Garden to Charlesgate East. The other principle axis streets are Beacon, Marlborough, Newbury, and Boylston. The cross streets, named for English nobility and occurring in successive alphabetical order are: Arlington, Berkeley, Clarendon, Dartmouth, Exeter, Fairfield, Gloucester, Hereford, followed by Massachusetts Avenue and Charlesgate East.

At Boylston Street, between Clarendon and Dartmouth Streets, the original grid was intersected by the diagonal swath of Huntington Avenue. Copley Square, the result of this interruption in the grid, remains the most important public space in the district. The Public Library (McKim, Mead, and White, 1887), Trinity Church (H. H. Richardson, 1877), Old South Church (Cummings and Sears, 1875), and the Copley Plaza Hotel (Henry Hardenburgh, 1912) define the square and characterize its public importance. Across the district from Copley Square, the Storrow Embankment was created as a park in 1931 along the southern bank of the Charles River Basin. It contains, in addition to an automobile parkway, a small man-made lagoon and the Hatch Memorial Shell, where free concerts and entertainments are given during summer months.

By far the largest number of Back Bay structures were originally built as private houses in the second half of the nineteenth century. There are, however, significant numbers of churches, public buildings, apartment buildings, hotels, schools, club-houses, and commercial buildings also represented here.

(See Continuation page 7b)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering ^a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry		
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>a. land reclamation</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

p. 1.

The Back Bay attains great historical importance in three areas:

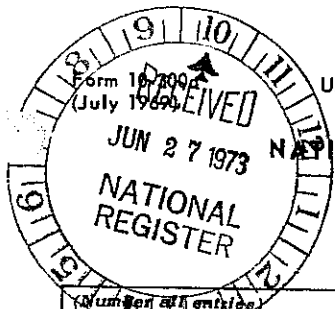
1. as an example of ambitious and progressive city planning in the nineteenth century;
2. as a superb retrospective view of American architecture in the last half of the nineteenth century;
3. as a tangible reflection of the age when Boston was the cultural fountainhead of America.

Cultural

The Back Bay is the consummate physical manifestation of Boston in her intellectual and economic maturation. "In a word, it was in the Back Bay that Boston first established herself as one of the centers of world culture in the arts and sciences."¹ The original Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Public Library, the Museum of Natural History, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and many of the city's famed clubs and private institutions settled here. Writers and philosophers—Oliver Wendell Holmes, William Dean Howells, George Santayana, Henry and William James, and many more of international renown—lived and he worked in the Back Bay; and artists like John Singer Sargent, William Morris Hunt, and Henry Hobson Richardson are inseparably associated with it. Finally, the Back Bay was home for the rich and elite of the city. "Old Order" families and those but recently "arrived" made the Back Bay the center of city fashion and shared in their patronage of the artists and architects who created it. "The abode ... of legendary brahmins and ambitious Silas Laphams, the Back Bay has a thousand associations with American thought and action of the later nineteenth century. In brownstone and brick it symbolizes its epoch in a way that words and figures alone cannot."²

Back Bay Plan

Lewis Mumford has said, "Apart from L'Enfant's plan for Washington, the transformation of Boston's Back Bay is the outstanding achievement in American urban planning for the nineteenth century."³ Originally a tidal backwash separating the Boston peninsula along its western border from the town of Brookline, the Back Bay was dammed and used intermittently but ineffectively through the first half of the nineteenth century for milling operations. The tidal flats were filled in a process that began in 1857 at Arlington St. and continued west until



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Description (Cont.)

Back Bay District

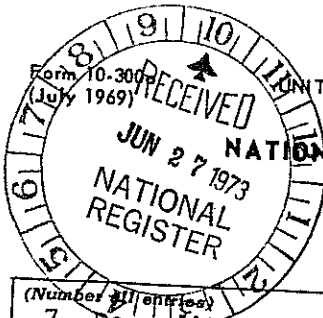
p. 2.

Taken together these buildings comprise a vast number of building styles executed in the sixty formative years of architectural development in the Back Bay. Represented are the Italianate, French Academic, Gothic, Ruskinian Gothic, Panel Brick, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque styles--and the later Revivals, the Italian Renaissance, German Renaissance, Beaux Arts, Chateausque, Georgian, Federal, and Adamesque. While pure examples of every style exist, variations combining elements from two or more styles are common.

Beacon Street, Marlborough Street, Commonwealth Avenue, and most of the cross streets have maintained their residential character and are built up almost exclusively with townhouse and apartment buildings. Of these, the townhouses predominate. They are typically of attached rowhouse construction, eighteen to thirty, but occasionally as much as fifty, feet wide, and built of brick or masonry. They generally consist of an ordered arrangement of entry (side or central), approached by a stone stoop, the principal floors set above a raised, rusticated basement and capped with a mansard roof, often with dormer windows and balustrade or iron cresting.

The consistency with which all houses obey a mandatory setback from the street, the overall uniformity of cornice heights, and the constant repetition and reinterpretation of basic decorative elements, i.e. bay windows, balconies, stairways, cornices, door and window enframements, create a homogeneity and continuity in Back Bay blocks that reinforces the broad, lineal avenue plan. Architectural conservatism and the common lack of aggressive design in Back Bay houses also contribute to the visual subordination of individual buildings and the strongly pronounced assertion of the block front.

On Newbury and Boylston Streets, the original residential character has changed. Newbury Street still retains many fine, original nineteenth century houses, but commercial inroads have introduced storefronts and other exterior alterations. It is now an area of small specialty shops and art galleries. Boylston Street has few original buildings remaining, but contains the area's most important commercial architecture. Though now devoted almost exclusively to business, it remains a cohesive part of the Back Bay through the sympathetic scale of its buildings and the strong unity of the Back Bay plan.



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Back Bay District
DESCRIPTION OF BOUNDS

p. 3.

The Back Bay District includes the property bounded and defined in the following manner:

Starting at the intersection of the midline of Arlington St. and the midline of Providence St.;

Thence running northerly by the midline of Arlington St. to the midline of Beacon St.;

Thence running westerly by the midline of Beacon St. to the midline of Embankment Road;

Thence running northerly along the midline of Embankment Road, crossing Storrow Drive, and extending to the southerly perimeter of the Hatch Shell grounds;

Thence running northeasterly along the perimeter of the Hatch Shell grounds to the rear perimeter of the Hatch Shell;

Thence running northwesterly along the rear perimeter of the Hatch Shell and extending to the southern shore of the Charles River Basin, (known at this point as the boat haven);

Thence running westerly along the northern perimeter of the Storrow Embankment, and intersecting with the extension of the midline of Charlesgate East;

Thence running southerly along said extension and the midline of Charlesgate East to the back lot lines of properties fronting on the south side of Newbury St.;

Thence running easterly along said back lot lines to the midline of Massachusetts Ave.;

Thence running southerly along the midline of Massachusetts Ave. to the midline of Boylston St.

Thence running easterly along the midline of Boylston St. to the western lot line of no. 710 Boylston St., now called the Lenox Hotel;

Thence running southerly along the said western lot line to the southern lot line of no. 710 Boylston St.;

Thence running easterly along said southern lot line, extending to the midline of Exeter St.;

Thence running southerly along the midline of Exeter St. to a point at the juncture of the midlines of Exeter St., Stuart St., and Huntington Ave.;

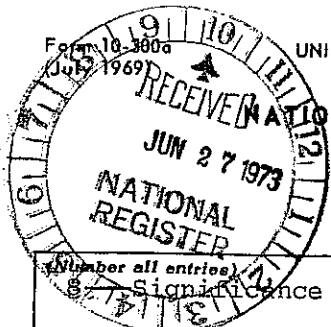
Thence running easterly along the midline of Stuart St. to the midline of Trinity Pl.;

Thence running northerly along the midline of Trinity Pl. to the midline of St. James St.;

Thence running easterly along the midline of St. James St. to the midline of Clarendon St.;

Thence running northerly along the midline of Clarendon St. to the midline of Providence St.;

Thence running easterly along the midline of Providence St. to the midline of Arlington St., the point of beginning.



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Number all entries
8-7 significance (Cont.)

Back Bay District

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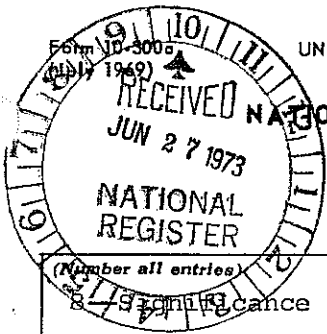
the late 1880's, when all the marsh once separating Boston and Brookline had been reclaimed. With the creation of over four hundred fifty acres of dry, usable land, it was one of the largest land reclamations ever undertaken in America.

The new area was laid out as a fashionable residential district, the plan being executed by the architect Arthur Gilman in 1856. He had travelled in Europe and was certainly acquainted with Baron Haussmann's accomplishments in replanning and rebuilding portions of Paris. Gilman's design for the Back Bay is a reflection of the burgeoning American interest in French architecture and city planning. With Commonwealth Avenue as its spine (called by Mumford, "The first American boulevard actually to be built"), the Public Garden at its eastern boundary and Charlesgate at its western end, the Back Bay represents the first successful attempt in America at realizing the monumental effect of open spaces, grand boulevards, and imposing vistas, only possible in this kind of large scale city planning.

The cohesiveness of the plan was insured by a number of farsighted zoning and building restrictions, including mandatory building setbacks (20-25 ft. from the street curb), limiting of building heights, and confining of building materials to masonry and brick. In this way the often bewildering array of eclectic styles is unified and subordinated to a composition that emphasizes the block front and accentuates the uncluttered sweep of the Back Bay boulevards. Other original planning considerations designed to safeguard the area's residential character were the conscious exclusion of almost all business and other commercial facilities, and the assigning and occasional donating of chosen building lots for parks or public institutions. Copley Square and the block of Boylston St. on the north side between Berkeley and Clarendon Streets were early reserved for this purpose. Furthermore, the absolute definition of its boundaries, with parks at either extremity and a riverside esplanade bordering one side for its full length, insured a certain exclusiveness and safety from urban blight and commercial inroads that has certainly been a factor in the continuing importance of the Back Bay.

Recreation and park facilities for the district were also a prime consideration; the Boston Public Garden and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall still supply the same need as they did in the nineteenth century. In 1884 the Mall took on an added significance when it became the connecting link between the small downtown parks (the Common and the Garden) and the large rustic parks comprising the Fenway system, Olmstead's "Emerald Necklace".

The almost intact survival of the Back Bay district can be attributed to the number of wise, protective planning measures first implemented there. It has never lost its residential appeal nor suffered the urban blight that has marked comparable nineteenth century neighborhoods in other American cities. Today, Back Bay buildings, even as apartments, retain their original appearance; and the plan remains, essentially unaltered.



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Back Bay District

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Back Bay Architecture

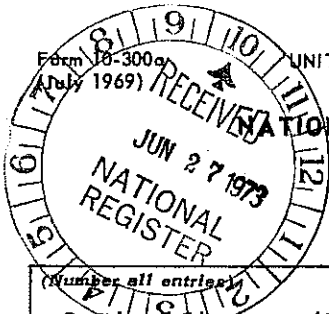
The Back Bay has been called "undoubtedly the finest zone of Victorian houses existing in America,"⁵ an area whose buildings, "chart the course of architectural development for more than half a century."⁶ Though of great stylistic variety, the buildings of the Back Bay reflect the conservative nature of Boston patrons in the reserved compositions of their facades. Architectural restraint was valued, thus there are few "outlandish" buildings in the area. Yet, though not often daring in design, Back Bay buildings are uniformly of excellent architectural character. Almost all were designed by accredited architects, and many were the works of the foremost practitioners of the time, including: Arthur Gilman, Gridley Bryant, H. H. Richardson, McKim, Mead, and White, Peabody and Stearns, and Richard Morris Hunt. The patronage of these architects by Back Bay clients is all the more significant when one "considers the leading position that Boston occupied as the educational and publication center for architecture in America during the period when the district was being built. The fashions established in the Back Bay were reflected, sooner or later, in other cities of the country."⁷ Two Back Bay landmarks, Richardson's Trinity Church (1875) and McKim's Boston Public Library (1889), face one another across Copley Sq. and are perhaps the two most important and stylistically influential buildings designed in America after the Civil War. Each changed the course of American architectural taste in its generation.

Major Elements

Arlington Street Church (1859-1862, N.W. corner Arlington and Boylston Sts.)
Designed by Arthur Gilman, the projector of the Back Bay plan, this Georgian-inspired Italianate church is one of the first harbingers of the Colonial Revival style in America. The parish, presided over for many years by the pioneer Unitarian and abolitionist William Ellery Channing, is considered the "Mother Church" of Unitarianism in America.

Emmanuel Church (1862 and 1899, 15 Newbury Street)
The first Gothic Revival church in the district, it was designed by A. P. Estey. The use of rough-faced Roxbury puddingstone for its walls helped popularize this material and made it one of the most fashionable building stones in the East during the last half of the nineteenth century.

First Parish Church (1867-1868, S.W. corner Marlborough and Berkeley Sts.)
Founded in 1630, the First Church (now incorporating the Second Church of Boston as well) is one of the country's oldest. Their Back Bay house was designed by Ware and Van Brunt in a highly picturesque English Gothic Revival style. It burned in 1967, but the new church retains the original church spire and is a highly successful modern interpretation of the complex Gothic forms of the original. Designed by Paul Rudolph, the church is sympathetic in scale to surrounding nineteenth century buildings, and its reconstruction demonstrates the vitality of this district and the current concern with preserving the architectural character and skyline of the Back Bay.



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Back Bay District

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First Baptist Church (1871, S.W. corner Comm. Ave. and Clarendon St.)
Designed by H. H. Richardson, this building is on the National Register.

Trinity Church (1875-1877, Copley Square)
Also designed by H. H. Richardson, this church is a National Historic Landmark.

Old South Church (1874-1875, N. W. corner Dartmouth and Boylston Sts.)
Cummings and Sears designed this National Historic Landmark.

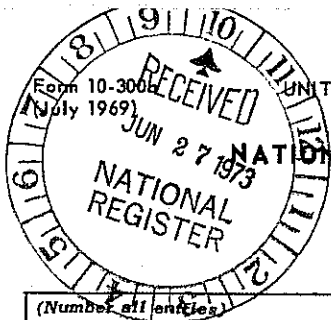
Museum of Natural History Building (1862, 234 Berkeley St.)
The Boston Society of Natural History, one of the earliest such societies in the country, was founded in 1830 and counted many eminent scientists, including the botanist and geologist, Louis Agassiz, among its members. The building is three stories, tri-partite in plan, and includes a rusticated brownstone basement supporting pressed brick walls and monumental pilasters of the same material in the upper two stories. The whole is capped with a full entablature, balustrade, and pediment. Designed by Wm. G. Preston, it is the most important mature example of the French Academic style in the Back Bay. When the society moved to the present Museum of Science, the building was happily converted to commercial use by Bonwit Teller's.

Boston Art Club Building (1881-1884, S. W. corner Newbury and Dartmouth Sts.)
Now a public high school, the Art Club building was designed by W. Ralph Emerson. It is one of the city's most outstanding examples of the Queen Anne style with its freely and asymmetrically planned three story brick exterior, enlivened by picturesque window and gable treatments and decorated with ornate cut brick devices.

Algonquin Club (1887, 217 Comm. Ave.)
The Algonquin is one of Boston's most famous private clubs and occupies the most opulent clubhouse in the Back Bay. It was designed by Stanford White and has a five story limestone front, in the Renaissance Revival style. It is one of the earliest buildings in this stylistic mode, subsequently popularized throughout the country by the firm of McKim, Mead, and White. A projecting central entrance supports a two-story superposed porch flanked by octagonal bays. The upper stories are treated successively with smooth surfaced and ornately carved and panelled limestone bands.

Boston Public Library (1887-1895, Copley Square)
The Library, designed by McKim, Mead, and White, is on the National Register.

Hotel Vendome (1871, 1881, corner Dartmouth St. and Comm. Ave.)
The Vendome is the finest evocation of the Second Empire in the city. Designed by Wm. G. Preston, it is a large six-story structure faced with Tuckahoe and Italian white marble and is stylistically reminiscent of French Renaissance architecture, though much of the facade is incised with elaborate, contemporary Neo-Grec detail. For decades the Vendome was Boston's premier hotel and hosted most of the notables who visited the city, including Ulysses Grant and Sarah Bernhardt. The electric lights installed here in 1882 were the first in the city. Despite a fire in 1972, the hotel



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8-Significance (Cont.)

Back Bay District

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retains its original facades and is currently undergoing conversion to apartments.

Copley Plaza Hotel (1910-1912, Copley Square)

Occupying the original site of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Copley Plaza was the later fashionable rival of the Vendome and is today the last of the great early Back Bay hotels still operating. Its design, attributed to Henry Hardenburgh (architect of the Plaza Hotel and the Dakota Apts. in N.Y.C.) employs a quattrocento Renaissance Revival facade with a massive but graceful swell front and flanking wings masterfully detailed in rusticated limestone blocks.

Berkeley Building (c. 1915, 420 Boylston St.)

The Berkeley building is one of the most beautiful commercial buildings in the city. It is six stories high with decorated white terra-cotta facades facing Boylston and Berkeley Streets. Though much of the detail is derived from fin de siecle Beaux Arts traditions, the influence of the Chicago School is evident in the facade's tripartite bay windows with large glass surfaces and in the emphasis of the vertical structural elements.

Major Elements- Domestic Architecture

No. 12 Arlington St. (1859-1860)

Designed by Arthur Gilman, this is the finest surviving mansion of those originally fronting the Public Garden and is one of the first houses erected in the Back Bay. It is a large, five story structure faced with Nova Scotia sandstone and designed in a traditional Franco-Italianate style. The stark detail of the facade contrasts with the richly carved Corinthian portico. The house was joined with no. 1 Comm. Ave. in 1893 when Mrs. J. Montgomery Sears, a Boston "Grande Dame" and patroness of the arts, found she needed more room for her growing collections. Visitors to no. 12 Arlington Street included the musicians Paderewski and Kreisler, Prince Henry of Prussia, and the artist, John Singer Sargent, who painted Mrs. Sears and her daughter in the house.

Nos. 326-328 Dartmouth St. and No. 165 Marlborough St. (1871)

This ensemble epitomizes the tendency of early Back Bay architects to combine separate houses into visually impressive "blocks". New building codes in the early 1870's did much to deter this practice. The three houses are built in the Academic Brick style with pressed brick walls and sandstone window and door enframements and are capped with Mansard roofs. Designed by Snell and Gregerson, they form a tripartite composition whose cohesiveness is further emphasized by the continuity of building materials and design elements.

No. 164 Marlborough Street (1870)

The Benjamin Crowninshield House is on the National Register

No. 233 Clarendon Street (1879)

Trinity Church Rectory is a National Historic Landmark.

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No. 306 Dartmouth Street

Known as the Webster-Ames Mansion, and designed in the Academic Brick style, this is probably the finest house in the Back Bay. Its interior is exceptional, dating from an 1882 remodelling by the architect John Sturgis and containing lavishly decorated rooms with a palatial Great Hall measuring sixty-three feet long and eighteen feet high, panelled with highly carved oak woodwork. Other interior embellishments include a LaFarge stained glass skylight and a cloistered dome decorated with murals by Benjamin Constant. The house was built for Congressman Frederick Ames and was for many years, until recently, the home of Mrs. Edwin Webster.

No. 32 Hereford Street (1884)

This house is probably the earliest example of the Late Italian Renaissance Revival in America. It was designed for John Andrew by the firm of McKim, Mead, and White and was their first Back Bay commission. Though the basic parti of the house shows strong Queen Anne influence, the facade is a calm composition of brown brick with limestone trim and simple but classically correct detail. Intricate French ironwork balconies appear on the windows of the piano nobile and above the Palladian window of the entrance.

No. 355 Commonwealth Avenue (1882)

The Ames Mansion, built for Governor Oliver Ames from designs of Carl Fehmer, occupies half the block of Mass. Ave. between Marlborough St. and Commonwealth Ave., and is the largest house in the Back Bay. It is designed in the Chateausque style and the detailing of its brownstone facade incorporates design elements from the concurrent Queen Anne style into the basic configuration of a sixteenth century French chateau. It is second only to the house at 306 Dartmouth St.. built by Oliver's brother, in the magnificence of its interiors. Today the National Casket Co. maintains the interiors in perfect condition.

No. 314 Commonwealth Avenue (1899)

Charles Brigham designed this elaborate massing of picturesque towers and gables in the Chateausque manner for Col. Albert Burrage. The limestone facade rises four and one half stories and is laden with deeply undercut French Gothic and early Renaissance ornament, most notably along the gabled and turreted cornice and at the Commonwealth Avenue entrance. The Burrage Mansion's exuberance of form and detail is unique in the Back Bay, where Boston patrons were more attracted to the conservative brick facades and subdued ornament that the majority of buildings here display. However, the Burrage mansion symbolized the change in attitude toward architectural styles which occurred at the end of the century. From then until the end of private town house building in the Back Bay, c. 1915, the range of styles employed was much larger and more diverse than it had been in the nineteenth century.

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p. 7.

Footnotes

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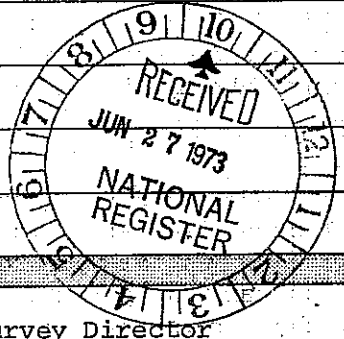
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	42 ° 21 ' 09 1/2 "	71 ° 05 ' 39 1/2 "	0			
NE	42 ° 21 ' 29 "	71 ° 04 ' 26 "				
SE	42 ° 20 ' 59 1/2 "	71 ° 04 ' 12 "				
SW	42 ° 20 ' 40 "	71 ° 05 ' 25 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 340

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Alexander Cassie for Elizabeth R. Amadon, Survey Director

ORGANIZATION: Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE: April 17, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN: Boston STATE: Massachusetts CODE: 025

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: John F. X. Davoren
JOHN F. X. DAVOREN, Secretary of
the Commonwealth, Chairman of the
Title: Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date: June 19, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

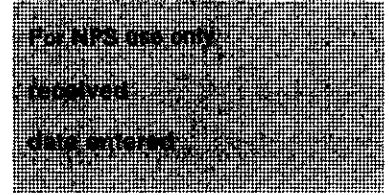
Robert H. Utley
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Date: 8/14/73

ATTEST:
Caro Mandy
Keeper of The National Register
Date: 8 8 73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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Continuation sheet Boston, Back Bay Historic District Amendments Item number 7 Page 1

AMENDMENTS TO THE BACK BAY HISTORIC DISTRICT, BOSTON

Archaeological Resources

7. DESCRIPTION

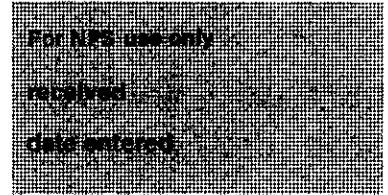
The Back Bay Historic District is known to contain the intact remains of an important prehistoric Indian fishweir or fishweirs which were utilized during the Late Archaic Period (ca. 5000-3000 B.P.). The fishweir is commonly known as the Boylston Street Fishweir Site because of its initial archaeological study in 1939 at the construction site of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company building at 501 Boylston Street (Johnson 1942). Fishweir stakes and/or wattle have also been discovered at other locations in the Back Bay, including: under Boylston Street proper during the 1913 construction of the Boston subway; and at the 1946 and 1954 construction sites of the Old John Hancock Building (between Stuart and Berkeley Streets and St. James Avenue) and the IBM Building (corner of Boylston and Clarendon Streets) (Johnson 1949; see figure 1). The fishweir remains are still intact under the IBM Building, but were removed at the other previously mentioned construction sites. Given the reconstruction of the prehistoric shoreline of the Back Bay, it is highly likely that additional portions of the fishweir(s) are present under the 19th century fill layers within the the district. The unique historical development of the Back Bay as a planned 19th century development has actually preserved the rich organic materials associated with the fishweir(s), resulting by covering the fishweir with a thick mantle of sand and gravel fill above the water table, thus allowing for the excellent integrity of the fishweir site.

Archaeological Investigations

Archaeological investigations of the various sections of the fishweir which have been fortuitously exposed have been limited to data recovery or salvage activities during the construction of 20th century buildings (Johnson 1942, 1949). In an early application of the multi-disciplinary approach to the study of archaeology, these investigations concentrated on defining the paleoecological setting and age of the fishweir. Important associations of the weir with sediment profiles were observed and recorded (Johnson 1942; Judson 1949). Preliminary analysis of the wooden stakes and wattle materials, as well as analyses of paleobotanical remains, pollen, microfossils, foraminifera, and diatoms were conducted (Bailey and Barghoorn 1942; Johnson 1942, 1949). Radiocarbon dates were obtained for a number of samples of the fishweir and samples of wood and peat from strata above and below the weir (Arnold and Libby 1951; Byers 1959; Kaye and Barghoorn 1964).

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Internal Configuration of the Fishweir

The fishweir consists of densely packed vertical wooden stakes and horizontal wattle of branches imbedded in silt and sand and presently at a depth of roughly 30-35 feet below grade (Johnson 1942). The weir is covered by about 13 feet of silt and sand containing shell and other marine resources, which was naturally deposited over time as a result of sea level rise. Above the natural silts and sands is about 18 feet of sand and gravel fill with some trash which was systematically placed in the Back Bay during the 19th century expansion of the city (figure 2). The fishweir has been continuously submerged below the water table throughout the prehistoric, historic and modern periods, thus allowing for the unusually fine preservation of its organic materials. Important classes of data associated with the fishweir include: the wood and branches of the weir itself; molluscs; pollen; sediments; diatoms; foraminifera; insects; fish and other marine animal remains; macrobotanical remains; microfossils.

The stakes which were used in the construction of the weir appear to have been trimmed and sharpened to a point and had been driven vertically through the prehistoric bottom of the Back Bay into a weathered stratum of blue marine clay or peat (Johnson 1942; Judson 1949). It is estimated that the density of weir stakes is about one per square foot (Johnson 1942:27). Stakes are extremely varied in size and species of wood, although hardwood species tend to predominate. At the site of the New England Life Building, brush and branches appear to have been intentionally set horizontally between the stakes, following the north-south orientation of the weir stakes, as a form of wattling (Johnson 1942).

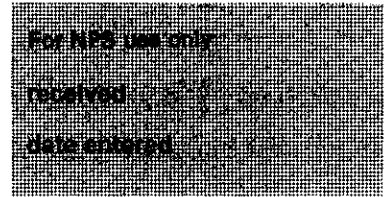
Radiocarbon dates taken from samples of weir stakes or wattles range between 4450 and 4860 B.P. (Byers 1959; Kaye and Barghoorn 1964). The peat stratum below the stakes was dated to between 5600 and 5700 B.P., while a sample of wood from the silts overlying the weir was dated to about 3851 B.P. (Arnold and Libby 1951; Kaye and Barghoorn 1964).

No cultural artifacts other than the modified stakes were found in previous investigations of the weir site.

Archaeological Site Boundaries and Justification

The known distribution of archaeologically identified portions of the fishweir lies within the present boundaries of the Back Bay Historic District. However, the exact horizontal extent of the weir site have not been fully established, since the Back Bay has not been systematically surveyed for archaeological resources. Lacking the physical evidence for the boundaries of the fishweir site, the present boundaries of the Back Bay Historic District serve as the boundaries of the fishweir site, as it is most likely, given the reconstruction of the prehistoric shoreline, that the fishweir(s) extended

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throughout this area. The integrity of the fishweir is expected to be uniform across the Back Bay district, because of the systematic filling of the district in the 19th century.

In late prehistoric and early historic times, the Back Bay was a tidal cove of the Charles River estuary, consisting of mudflats and salt marshes. Preliminary sedimentological analysis has resulted in an estimation of the prehistoric shore line of the cove (see figure 1). This shallow cove would have been a suitable location for the construction of an efficient and highly productive fishweir. The configuration of the weir stakes indicates that the weir would have most likely been submerged during high tide, but exposed at low tide, thus trapping fish after the tide receded (Dincauze 1973). It is possible that the weir may have extended across the area spanning between Charles Street on the east, Columbus Avenue on the south, Exeter Street (or perhaps even Fairfield Street) on the west, and Memorial Drive on the north in order to take advantage of the natural configuration of the cove (see figure 1). However, additional archaeological testing would be necessary to reconstruct the complete configuration and full extent of the weir(s) within the current boundaries of the Back Bay Historic District.

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AMENDMENTS TO BACK BAY HISTORIC DISTRICT, BOSTON

7. DESCRIPTION

Twentieth Century Commercial Architecture

Commercial buildings, both from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, are well represented in the Back Bay Historic District. Most of these differ in use, scale and massing from the original four and five story residential structures characterizing the Back Bay's 19th-century development. However, important elements are shared by both. These include high style architecture, overall quality of ornamentation and materials and designs by the city's leading architectural firms. Commercial construction in the Back Bay consists of two major types: conversion of existing 19th-century residential buildings or new construction specifically for commercial use. Architectural styles represented include Romanesque, Commercial, Neoclassical and Beaux Arts modes.

Typical Back Bay brick rowhouses remain in large numbers on Newbury Street and, to a lesser extent, on Boylston Street; often, these have had one and two-story 20th century additions made to the front. Number 396-8 Boylston Street, a mansard style dwelling, has a particularly notable 1911 storefront addition revealing Art Nouveau influences in its inset broadly arched metal and glass facade.

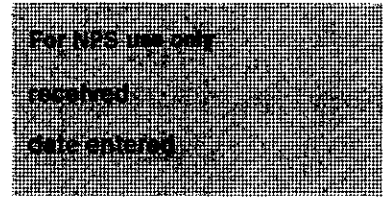
Distinctive examples of the new commercial structures put up in the 1890s include 707-711 Boylston Street, the six-story Richardsonian Romanesque red brick and brownstone structure at the corner of Exeter Street (1892, George W. Pope).

Among the buildings influenced by the Renaissance Revival style are the brick with stone trim Warren Chambers building (415-421 Boylston Street, 1896, Ball, Dabney) 372-378 Boylston Street (1894, W.T. Sears), and 727-731 Boylston Street (1895, G. W. Pope). Beaux Arts treatment can be noted in the building at 571-575 Boylston Street (1914, Henry B. Alden), which is ornamented in brick, terra cotta, and stone.

Technological advances in building construction are also exemplified by the range of the district's commercial buildings. While the earliest buildings feature window openings set into load bearing masonry walls, the development of steel framing made possible the expansion of window areas and the use of cladding in materials such as stone veneers and architectural terra cotta. A number of the early 20th century buildings have a clear pier and spandrel, rectilinear emphasis to their facades, a common trait of the Commercial Style.

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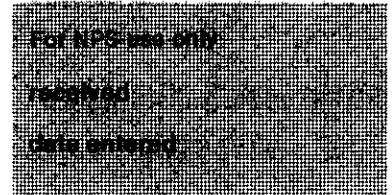
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Numerous handsome examples of Commercial Style buildings remain; the Berkeley Building (414-426 Boylston Street) is a particularly significant exponent. This six-story corner building, designed by the architectural firm of Codman and Despradelle, was built in 1905. The design achieves a strong vertical emphasis by its series of terra cotta piers which separate large window/spandrel areas and rise continuously through five stories above the storefront level, terminating in segmental arches. Rich ornament is focused at the parapet level and in pier moldings flanking the wide central bay on Boylston Street. Another noteworthy example of steel-framed commercial construction with quality detailing is 143-45 Newbury Street (H.B. Allen, 1927), a neo-Gothic style structure with a limestone veneer and copper bays.

The work of the prominent Boston firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge at 885-889 Boylston Street (1907) features Beaux Arts and Mission Style decorative elements, and double-story metal-clad oriel windows. The Boylston Chambers, built by 1908, is a large six-story building at #739; this contains Boston's only known surviving examples of Chicago-style windows. Its use of terra cotta features a flamboyantly decorative cornice above an otherwise simple grid patterned facade. Terra cotta facades are found in other stylistic modes as well, such as the Gothic Revival (e.g., 651-655 Boylston Street, erected between 1908 and 1922), and Beaux Arts (e.g., 400-402 Boylston Street, 1908, A. H. Bowditch.)

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Boylston Street fishweir site is considered to be an important contributing element of the Back Bay Historic District, which includes the significant cultural features of past land use of the district. The fishweir site meets criteria A, C and D of the National Register.

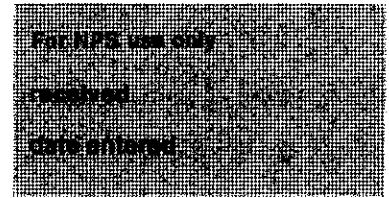
The fishweir site contains the physical remains of events surrounding the prehistoric adaptation to the changing environment. Built roughly during the stabilization of the rise in sea level, the construction of the weir represents a strategem exercised by prehistoric groups to exploit the marine resources of the newly developed Charles River estuary (Dincauze 1973, 1974). The site exhibits the technology and methods of construction representative of the prehistoric use of fishweirs. Although there is considerable information available on the use and construction techniques employed in the construction of fishweirs during the historic and recent periods (chiefly in regions outside of Massachusetts), there are few, if any, known well-preserved archaeological fishweir sites dating to the prehistoric period in the world. Since there is indirect evidence in the form of tools and food processing features that weir technology played an important part in the prehistoric occupation of Massachusetts, the unique preservation of the Back Bay fishweir makes this cultural resource of extreme significance.

Further investigation of the fishweir site will help to delineate the number, the internal configuration and functional attributes, horizontal extent, and dates of use of the fishweir(s). With this information, it will be possible to estimate the effort of labor required to construct and utilize the weir(s), and thus make inferences concerning the size and structure of prehistoric groups inhabiting the Boston area in Late Archaic times. The question of the date and reasons for abandonment of the use of the weir can also be addressed.

The fishweir site contains information which is likely to contribute significantly to the research and understanding of prehistoric settlement and subsistence systems which changed through time; prehistoric strategies for the exploitation of marine resources; the complexity of social organization; population dynamics; technology; territoriality; and the degree of sedentism practiced during the the Late Archaic period (ca. 5000-3000 B.P.). The unusually fine preservation of the wood used in the construction of the weir(s), and the excellent preservation of the cultural and ecological remains (e.g., molluscs, macro- and microbotanical remains, pollen, foraminifera, diatoms, microfossils, bone, etc.) provide data essential for reconstructing the functional and mechanical characteristics of the weir, its specific environmental setting and regional paleoecology.

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AMENDMENTS TO BACK BAY HISTORIC DISTRICT, BOSTON

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Twentieth Century Commercial Development

In addition to the important 19th century residential, institutional and commercial architecture of the Back Bay, the district contains along Boylston and Newbury Streets a significant collection of early 20th century commercial buildings which reflect a variety of architectural modes. As a group, these 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings portray the changing character of the street over a 50 year period of development from 1870 to 1930. The eclecticism common to the period's commercial architecture survives to a considerable extent within the district and can be noted in the multiple story masonry buildings in the Romanesque, Commercial, Neoclassical and Beaux Arts modes which stand along Newbury and Boylston Streets. Although the first level storefronts of many of these buildings have been altered through the years, the upper stories generally remain intact and display a variety of facade treatments, with molded terracotta and pressed metal sheathing prevailing.

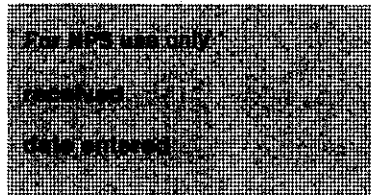
Much of Boylston Street and all of Newbury Street was originally developed in stylish brick row housing typical of the remainder of the district. The 20-foot setback mandated in the Back Bay's original plan has been retained along Newbury Street and much of Boylston Street and reflects the district's original residential use.

Several factors encouraged commercial growth on these two streets. Boylston Street developed its commercial character first, beginning in the 1880s and continuing through 1930 and to the present day. Proximity to the Boston and Providence Railroad Station at Providence Square (now Park Square), just outside the Back Bay district at its northeastern corner stimulated commercial development on Boylston Street between Arlington and Dartmouth Streets. Commercial buildings began to be erected as early as the 1880s. Some of the street's original rowhouses were replaced or altered to accommodate retail and office uses. Similarly, vacant parcels began to be developed with commercial buildings. Building activity continued along the southern end of Boylston Street during the first two decades of the twentieth century and cohesive groupings of those structures remain today.

Newbury Street's commercialization did not occur until the early 20th century with the bulk of lower story conversions and new construction taking place in the 1920s. This development probably relates to the beginnings of apartment conversion in the Back Bay, which necessitated nearby commercial establishments, and to a general westward expansion of Boston's traditional commercial center. Such developments culminated in the reconstruction of Arlington Street with large commercial buildings catering to the upper class, the foremost of which are the Junior League Club of 1929 and the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, built in 1931.

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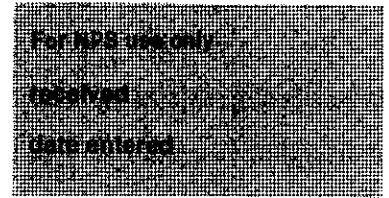
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Though the two streets share the bulk of the Back Bay's commercial development, commercial construction on Boylston Street tends to consist primarily of combined office and retail uses while Newbury Street's commercial uses are confined to specialty retail shops on the lower stories. Upper stories, especially for Newbury Street's many remaining 19th-century rowhouses, have generally been converted to apartment use.

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