BOSTON CITY HALL

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION
STUDY REPORT

Petition #224.07
Boston Landmarks Commission
Office of Historic Preservation
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of

Boston City Hall
1 City Hall Square, Boston, Massachusetts

As a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by: _____ Nov. 27, 2024

Alexa Pinard, Interim Executive Director — Date

Approved by: _____ Nov. 27, 2024

Bradford C. Walker, Chair — Date

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Cover image: North elevation, Boston City Hall, June 16, 2023, by Laura Lacombe

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INTRODUCTION

Boston City Hall is the headquarters for the municipal government of the City of Boston. The building represents the City's commitment to democratic governance and civic engagement. Completed in 1968, the Brutalist building was designed by Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles in response to an open architectural competition initiated by the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1961. At that time, the building served as the keystone for the city's urban renewal efforts to create a "New Boston." The design was intended to foster transparency and accessibility, with the aim of bringing government closer to the people. While popular opinion has not always looked favorably on the building, Boston City Hall is widely recognized as architecturally significant as a bold example of Brutalist architecture. The concrete building presented a significant departure from the traditional brick and brownstone materials associated with Boston's evolution, and its image has become an iconic part of the city's cultural identity. The building's impact on 20th-century urban planning principles is closely linked to the successes and failures of the urban renewal movement in American city planning. The concept of grouping civic and governmental buildings together in a pedestrian-friendly environment influenced subsequent urban design approaches in other cities. It emphasized the idea of creating integrated civic spaces that encourage public interaction. Overall, Boston City Hall holds significance as an architectural and cultural icon, a symbol of civic identity, a public space for gatherings, and a catalyst for urban planning discussions. Its presence has greatly expanded the city's architectural vocabulary and continues to influence debates on architecture, preservation, and civic engagement.

Boston City Hall has faced criticism and calls for demolition because of its architectural style and perceived functional shortcomings. The late Mayor Thomas M. Menino proposed demolishing the building and moving the city's government seat to the waterfront, stating that the building's design did not serve Boston's modern needs.[1] However, City Hall has a dedicated group of supporters who appreciate its historical significance and architectural merit. Many supporters called for the building's designation as a Landmark in 2007, arguing that "Boston City Hall is both a cornerstone and a fertile starting place for an evolving urban revitalization. Boston Landmark status will provide a good framework for managing change."[2] Though it has yet to be landmarked or listed on the National Register of Historic Places, efforts have been made to preserve and adapt City Hall for future use while addressing its functional limitations. In 2017, the Getty Foundation provided significant support for the development of a Conservation Management Plan for the building.[3]

The Boston City Hall Conservation Management Plan (CMP) was completed in January 2021. Recognizing that City Hall is a "working building" subject to changes in use and programmatic requirements as the municipal government evolves, the plan's intent is to help guide the ongoing maintenance and management of the building by identifying areas of low, medium, and high significance, as well as providing recommendations for treatment based on that hierarchy. The plan

[1] Nik DeCosta-Klipa, "Why is Boston City Hall the way it is?" Boston.com, July 25, 2018, https://www.boston.com/news/history/2018/07/25/boston-city-hall-brutalism/
[2] Henry Moss, "Boston City Hall, Boston Landmark Petition Support," letter to Ellen Lipsey, April 20, 2007.
[3] https://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/keeping_it_modern/report_library/boston_city_hall.html?q=%7B%7D

responds to prior concerns of designating the building without a plan in place to update the building.

Landmark designation would require that physical changes to certain elements of the building undergo design review by the Landmarks Commission. Thus, designating the Boston City Hall as a Landmark would align with the CMP's recommendations for Standards and Criteria to guide future changes to the property in order to protect its integrity and character.

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1.0 PROPOSED DESIGNATION

The Boston Landmarks Commission was established by Ch. 772 of the Acts of 1975 as amended to identify and safeguard the public's interest in preserving historic sites that represent distinctive features of the political, economic, social, cultural or architectural history of the city. As part of the process of designating a new Landmark or District, a Study Report is prepared to locate and describe the site; to provide a record of the rationale for creating the designation; to identify the character-defining features; and to list Standards and Criteria that will guide the Boston Landmarks Commission in evaluating proposed changes in the future.

The designation of Boston City Hall as a Boston Landmark was initiated in 2007 after a petition was submitted by registered voters to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the property under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

Boston City Hall meets the following criteria for designation as a Boston Landmark as established in Section 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended:

> *B. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation.*
>
> > Boston City Hall has played an integral role in Boston's history due to its central role in Boston's urban renewal movement and the subsequent economic revitalization that it brought to the City, and due to its recognizable design and distinction as a civic symbol of the City of Boston. On a national scale, its association with the Government Center project made it impactful to urban planning approaches across the country by encouraging the integration of civic spaces that encouraged public interaction with government.
>
> *C. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historical personages.*
>
> > Boston City Hall was erected largely through the efforts of Mayor John F. Collins and his partnership with Edward J. Logue, development administrator of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Their vision for a better Boston, economically successful and free from corruption, directly led to the implementation of the Government Center project.
>
> *D. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship which embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction or development, or a notable work of an architect, landscape architect, designer, or builder whose work influenced the development of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.*

Boston City Hall is often cited as playing a central role in the nation's Brutalist architectural movement, and is notable for its innovative design and masterful craftsmanship using cast-in-place and precast concrete. It is the first work of the acclaimed architectural partnership Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles (later Kallmann McKinnell & Wood).

Therefore, the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. That Boston City Hall be designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended;

2. That the following exterior and interior elements be included in the designation (see Standards and Criteria for diagrams):

    a. The exterior envelope of the building.
    b. The brick paving, both new and original, that connects seamlessly from the plaza outside to the brick floors inside City Hall through the entrances.
    c. Certain interior elements including:
        i. Main third-floor lobby and significant connected spaces that are accessed physically and/or visually through the third-floor main lobby: the brick steps from the lobby to the fourth floor, the fourth-floor outdoor courtyard, the ceremonial stair from the fourth floor to the fifth floor, the multiple levels of the public transaction area including those on the second floor and their connection to the north entrance, and the Mayor's Stair from the third floor to the fifth floor;
        ii. the fifth-floor Mayor's Lobby (reception), Bronze Hallway, and Mayor's Office;
        iii. the fifth-floor gallery and bridge;
        iv. and the City Council Chamber.

3. And that the Standards and Criteria recommended by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission be accepted.

If City Hall is designated as a Landmark, any work in designated areas will need to be reviewed and approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission. Design review by the Commission is not intended to preclude necessary changes from being made to ensure that City Hall will continue to evolve to meet the needs of its users, but it will provide oversight to ensure that they are carried out in an appropriate manner with respect to the historic and architectural significance of the building. Upon the designation taking effect, the Standards and Criteria in this report will serve as guidelines for the Commission's review of proposed changes to the property, with the goal of protecting the historic integrity of the landmark and its setting. The designation would not regulate use nor restrict accessibility to the public.

2.0 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

2.1 Introduction

Per sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended) Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the historic resource. The Standards and Criteria both identify and establish guidelines for those features which must be preserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Designation. The Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.[4] Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute.

The intent of these guidelines is to help local officials, designers, and individual property owners to identify the characteristics that have led to designation, and thus to identify the limitations to the changes that can be made to them. It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are they absolute, but any request for variance from them must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variance. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute.

Proposed alterations related to zoning, building code, accessibility, safety, or other regulatory requirements shall require the prior review and approval of the Commission.

In these standards and criteria, the verb **Should** indicates a recommended course of action; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required.

The provisions of these Standards and Criteria (Design Guidelines) are severable and if any of their provisions shall be held invalid in any circumstances, such invalidity shall not affect any other provisions or circumstances.

2.2 Extents of the Designation

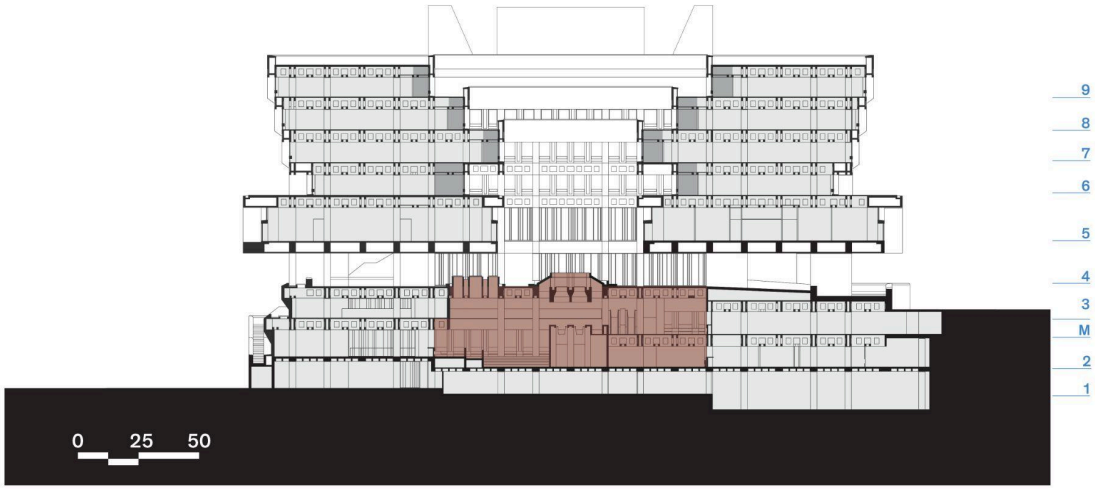
The following exterior and interior elements are included in the designation (also see the following plan and section diagrams):

- The exterior envelope of the building.
- The brick paving, both new and original, that connects seamlessly from the plaza outside to the brick floors inside City Hall through the entrances.
- Certain interior elements including:

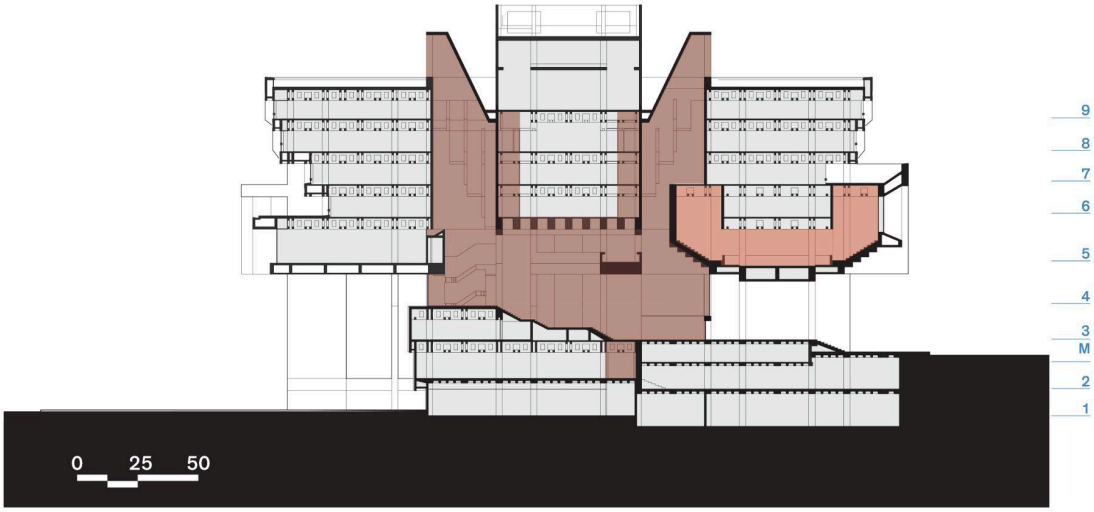
[4] U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf.

- Main third-floor lobby and significant connected spaces that are accessed physically and/or visually through the third-floor main lobby: the brick steps from the lobby to the fourth floor, the fourth-floor outdoor courtyard, the ceremonial stair from the fourth floor to the fifth floor, the multiple levels of the public transaction area including those on the second floor and their connection to the north entrance, and the Mayor's Stair from the third floor to the fifth floor;
- the fifth-floor Mayor's Lobby (reception), Bronze Hallway, and Mayor's Office;
- the fifth-floor gallery and bridge;
- and the City Council Chamber.

Diagrams showing the extents of designation:
(*All areas shown in color are included in the designation*)



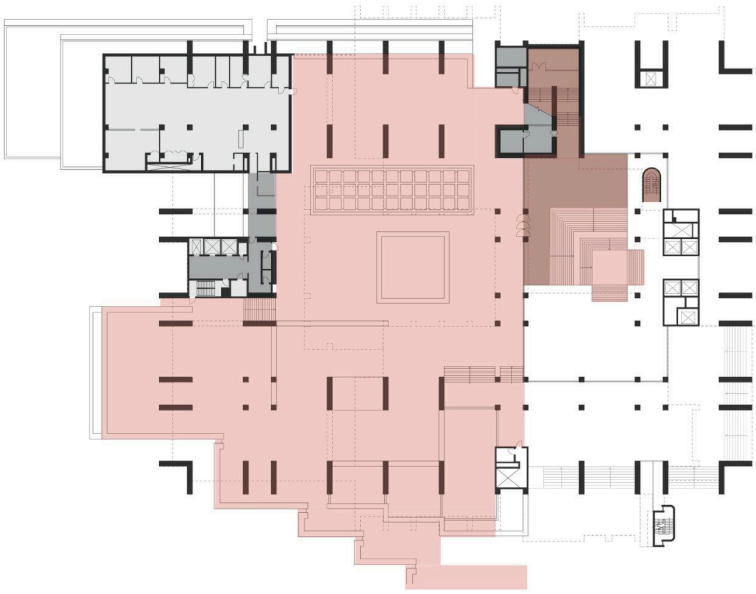
SECTION FACING SOUTH THROUGH THE COURTYARD - DESIGNATED SPACES



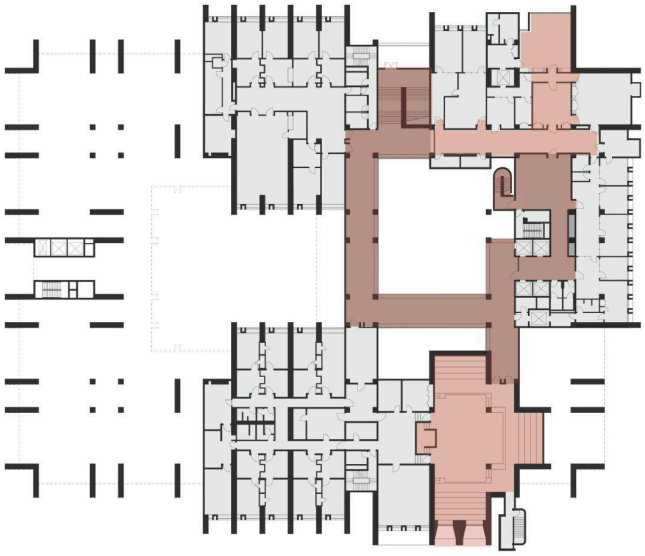
SECTION FACING NORTH THROUGH THE PLAZA LOBBY - DESIGNATED SPACES

FLOOR 2

FLOOR 3



FLOOR 4



FLOOR 5

2.3 Character-Defining Features

Character-defining features are the significant observable and experiential aspects of a historic resource that define its architectural power and personality. These are the features that should be identified, retained, and preserved in any restoration or rehabilitation scheme in order to protect the resource's integrity.

Character-defining elements include, for example, the overall shape of a building and its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment. They are critically important considerations whenever preservation work is contemplated. Inappropriate changes to historic features can undermine the historical and architectural significance of the resource, sometimes irreparably.

Below is a list that identifies the physical elements that contribute to the unique character of the historic resource. The items listed in this section should be considered important aspects of the historic resource and changes to them should be approved by commissioners only after careful consideration.

The specific character-defining features for this historic resource include:

Architectural Style

1. Brutalist architectural style, as expressed by the building's materiality, form, massing, ornamentation, and elements listed below.

Exterior Building Elements

1. Ornamentation (exterior): large, projecting cast-in-place concrete hoods; projecting precast concrete fins.
2. Building materials and finishes: exposed, unpainted concrete showing the texture of formwork; red brick walls, floors and paving.
    a. Continuous transition from vertical brick surfaces of the exterior of the building to the horizontal brick paving of the plaza.
3. Roof type, forms, and features: Flat roof with light shaft perforations, mechanical vents, and mechanical equipment integrated into the design to be viewed from taller buildings above as a "fifth façade."
4. Cornices: The upper three floors act as an oversized, stepped-out cornice made of precast concrete panels and fins.
5. Doors and windows: Continuous glass doors and windows at recessed entrances around buildings; vertical windows at upper levels separated by pairs of precast concrete fins.
    a. Bronze-framed windows.
6. Balconies: Outdoor balconies are formed above the inner courtyard by the staggering of each of the top three floors. Balconies are also formed on the exterior of the building and at the inner courtyard where parts of the building protrude from the facade (see Figure 12 for example).
7. Visible elements of structural systems (columns, beams, trusses, etc.): Massive, poured concrete columns supporting precast Vierendeel trusses support the building's superstructure.
8. Massing of building: Inverted pyramid, set in a tripartite massing forming a brick base, a concrete body, and a stepped-out attic.

9. Courtyard: Central interior courtyard paved in brick with a pyramidal skylight rising out of the center.
10. Topography: Brick-clad terraced ramps on west elevation and brick staircase on east elevation. The windowless red brick three-tiered base of the building on Congress Street.
11. Views to City Hall from: Washington Mall (to the Mayor's Office hoods), Cambridge Street, Congress Street.
12. Views from City Hall to: Faneuil Hall, Government Center, City Hall Plaza, Customs House, Boston waterfront, State Street, the Old State House, Washington Street, Congress Street to the second floor (north) entrance and to the first-floor entrance, Blackstone Block.

Interior Building Elements (see diagrams in Section 2.2)

1. Second floor and mezzanine transaction hall and fixtures within these spaces.
2. Third-floor lobby.
3. Circulation from third-floor lobby to transaction hall.
4. Stairs from lobby to fourth and fifth floor levels.
5. Interior visual and physical access to the courtyard.
6. Mayor's Stair from third to fifth floor.
7. Fifth-floor Mayor's Lobby (reception), Bronze Hallway, and Mayor's Office.
8. City Council Chamber.
9. Continuities between the brick paving plaza surfaces and the brick floor surfaces of interior public spaces. Visitors experience a feeling of being welcomed into and through the building due to the continuous flow of brick paving from the exterior plaza through the second- and third-floor entrances, through the central courtyard, and back out the other side.
10. Welsh quarry tile floors from north second-floor entrance through transaction hall, including stairs.

2.4 Levels of Review

The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for the property. In order to provide some guidance for property owners, managers, and the Commission, the activities which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized to indicate the level of review required, based on the potential impact of the proposed work. Note: the examples for each category are not intended to act as a comprehensive list; see Section 2.4.D.

A. Routine activities which are not subject to review by the Commission:

1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.

a. For building maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind repainting, staining or refinishing of wood or metal elements, lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, etc.

b. For landscape maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning of paths and sidewalks, etc. (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind spot replacement of cracked or broken paving materials, in-kind repainting or refinishing of site furnishings, site lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, normal plant material maintenance, such as pruning, fertilizing, mowing and mulching, and in-kind replacement of existing plant materials, etc.

2. Routine activities associated with special events or seasonal decorations which do not disturb the ground surface, are to remain in place for less than six weeks, and do not result in any permanent alteration or attached fixtures.

B. Activities which may be determined by the staff to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review, requiring an application to the Commission:

1. Maintenance and repairs involving no change in design, material, color, ground surface or outward appearance.

2. In-kind replacement or repair.

3. Phased restoration programs will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review of the entire project plan and specifications; subsequent detailed review of individual construction phases may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff.

4. Repair projects of a repetitive nature will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review; subsequent review of these projects may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff, where design, details, and specifications do not vary from those previously approved.

5. Temporary installations or alterations that are to remain in place for longer than six weeks.

6. Emergency repairs that require temporary tarps, board-ups, etc. may be eligible for Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review; permanent repairs will require review. In the case of emergencies, BLC staff should be notified as soon as possible to assist in evaluating the damage and to help expedite repair permits as necessary.

C. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:

Reconstruction, restoration, replacement, demolition, or alteration involving change in design, material, color, location, or outward appearance, such as: New construction of any type, removal of existing features or elements, major planting or removal of trees or shrubs, or changes in landforms.

D. Activities not explicitly listed above:

In the case of any activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, the Landmarks staff shall determine whether an application is required and if so, whether it shall be an application for a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption.

E. Concurrent Jurisdiction

In some cases, issues which fall under the jurisdiction of the Landmarks Commission may also fall under the jurisdiction of other city, state and federal boards and commissions such as the Boston Art Commission, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the National Park Service and others. All efforts will be made to expedite the review process. Whenever possible and appropriate, a joint staff review or joint hearing will be arranged.

2.5 Standards and Criteria

The following Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.[5] These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior building alterations that are visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

2.5.1 General Standards

1. The historic character of the property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided. See Section 2.3, List of Character-defining Features.

2. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.

3. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved. (The term "later contributing features" will be used to convey this concept.)

4. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.

5. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material shall match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

6. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.

[5] U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf.

7. Staff archaeologists shall review proposed changes to a property that may impact known and potential archaeological sites. Archaeological surveys may be required to determine if significant archaeological deposits are present within the area of impact of the proposed work. Significant archaeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be required before the proposed work can commence. See section 2.6 Archaeology.

8. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of a property and its environment.

9. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

10. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved.

11. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies, and awnings shall be compatible in size, design, material, location, and number with the character of the building, allowing for contemporary expression. New signs shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.

12. Property owners shall take necessary precautions to prevent demolition by neglect of maintenance and repairs. Demolition of protected buildings in violation of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, is subject to penalty as cited in Section 10 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

2.5.2 Masonry at exterior walls (including but not limited to stone, brick, concrete, and mortar)

1. All original or later contributing masonry materials shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be repaired, if necessary, by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the masonry using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation should be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Sound original mortar shall be retained.

6. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand raking the joints.

7. Use of mechanical hammers shall not be allowed. Use of mechanical saws may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

8. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile, and method of application.

9. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.

10. Cleaning of masonry is discouraged and should only be performed when necessary to halt deterioration.

11. If the building is to be cleaned, the masonry shall be cleaned with the gentlest method possible.

12. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).

13. Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted. Doing so can change the visual quality of the material and damage the surface of the masonry and mortar joints.

14. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem. Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.

15. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some significant point in the history of the property.

16. New penetrations for attachments through masonry are strongly discouraged. When necessary, attachment details shall be located in mortar joints, rather than through masonry material; stainless steel hardware is recommended to prevent rust jacking. New attachments to cast concrete are discouraged and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

17. Deteriorated concrete shall be repaired by cutting damaged concrete back to remove the source of deterioration, such as corrosion on metal reinforcement bars. The new patch shall be applied carefully so that it will bond satisfactorily with and match the historic concrete.

18. Joints in concrete shall be sealed with appropriate flexible sealants and backer rods, when necessary.

2.5.3 Wood at exterior walls

1. Not applicable

2.5.4 Architectural metals at exterior and interior walls (including but not limited to wrought and cast iron, bronze, steel, pressed metal, terneplate, copper, aluminum, and zinc)

1. All original or later contributing architectural metals shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use the gentlest method possible.
6. The type of metal shall be identified prior to any cleaning procedure because each metal has its own properties and may require a different treatment.
7. Non-corrosive chemical methods shall be used to clean soft metals (such as lead, tinplate, terneplate, copper, and zinc) whose finishes can be easily damaged by abrasive methods.
8. If gentler methods have proven ineffective, then abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed for hard metals (such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel) as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
9. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
10. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.
11. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

2.5.5 Windows (also refer to Masonry and Architectural Metals)

1. The original or later contributing arrangement of window openings shall be retained.
2. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.
3. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.
4. Original or later contributing window sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
5. Deteriorated or missing window sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
6. When replacement of sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, or ornamentation is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. If replacement is approved, replacement sash for divided-light windows shall have through-glass muntins or simulated divided lights with dark anodized spacer bars the same width as the muntins.
8. Tinted or reflective-coated glass shall not be allowed.
9. Metal or vinyl panning of the wood frame and molding shall not be allowed.
10. Exterior combination storm windows shall have a narrow perimeter framing that does not obscure the glazing of the primary window. In addition, the meeting rail of the combination storm window shall align with that of the primary window.
11. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.
12. Clear or mill finished aluminum frames shall not be allowed.
13. Window frames, sashes, and, if appropriate, shutters, should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

2.5.6 Entrances/Doors (also refer to Masonry, Architectural Metals, and Porches/Stoops)

1. All original or later contributing entrance elements shall be preserved.
2. The original or later contributing entrance design and arrangement of the door openings shall be retained.

3. Enlarging or reducing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.

4. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features (functional and decorative) shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

5. Deteriorated or missing entrance elements, materials, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

7. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative) and details shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

8. Storm doors (aluminum or wood-framed) shall not be allowed on the primary entrance unless evidence shows that they had been used. They may be allowed on secondary entrances. Where allowed, storm doors shall be painted to match the color of the primary door.

9. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.

10. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.

11. Buzzers, alarms and intercom panels, where allowed, shall be flush mounted and appropriately located.

2.5.7 Porches/Stoops (also refer to Masonry, Architectural Metals, Entrances/Doors, Roofs, and Accessibility)

1. All original or later contributing porch elements shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained if possible and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

6. Porch and stoop elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/porch and stoop.

2.5.8 Lighting

1. There are several aspects of lighting related to the exterior of the building and landscape:

    a. Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements of architectural ornamentation.
    b. Quality of illumination on building exterior.
    c. Security lighting.

2. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piercing in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

6. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.

7. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:

    a. Reproductions of original or later contributing fixtures, based on physical or documentary evidence.
    b. Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
    c. Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
    d. New lighting fixtures which are differentiated from the original or later contributing fixture in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.

8. The location of new exterior lighting shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.

9. No exposed conduit shall be allowed on the building.

10. Architectural night lighting is encouraged, provided the lighting installations minimize night sky light pollution. High efficiency fixtures, lamps and automatic timers are recommended.

11. On-site mock-ups of proposed architectural night lighting may be required.

2.5.9 Storefronts (also refer to Masonry, Architectural Metals, Windows, Entrances/Doors, Porches/Stoops, Lighting, and Accessibility)

1. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Storefront section).

2.5.10 Curtain Walls (also refer to Masonry, Architectural Metals, Windows, and Entrances/Doors)

1. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (Curtain Walls section).

2.5.11 Roofs (also refer to Masonry, Architectural Metals, and Roof Projections)

1. The roof forms and original or later contributing roof material of the existing building shall be preserved.

2. Original or later contributing roofing materials such as slate, wood trim, elements, features (decorative and functional), details and ornamentation, such as cresting, shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.

4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute material may be considered.

6. Original or later contributing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

7. Unpainted mill-finished aluminum shall not be allowed for flashing, gutters and downspouts. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original material and design (integral gutters shall not be replaced with surface-mounted).

8. External gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless it is based on physical or documentary evidence.

2.5.12 Roof Projections (includes satellite dishes, antennas and other communication devices, louvers, vents, chimneys, and chimney caps; also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Roofs)

1. New roof projections shall not be visible from the public way.

2. New mechanical equipment should be reviewed to confirm that it is no more visible than the existing.

2.5.13 Additions

1. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of buildings. An exterior addition should only be considered after it has been determined that the existing building cannot meet the new space requirements.

2. New additions shall be designed so that the character-defining features of the building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed.

3. New additions should be designed so that they are compatible with the existing building, although they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.

4. New additions shall be of size, scale, and materials that are in harmony with the existing building.

2.5.14 Accessibility

1. Alterations to existing buildings for the purposes of providing accessibility shall provide persons with disabilities the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under applicable law, consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical features, with the goal of providing the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Access modifications for persons with disabilities shall be designed and installed to least affect the character-defining features of the property. Modifications to some features may be allowed in providing access, once a review of options for the highest level of access has been completed.

2. A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of the property:

    a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
    b. Assess the property's existing and proposed level of accessibility;
    c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.

3. Because of the complex nature of accessibility, the Commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis. The Commission recommends consulting with the following document which is available from the Commission office: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division;

Preservation Brief 32 “Making Historic Properties Accessible” by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

2.5.15 Renewable Energy Sources

1. Renewable energy sources, including but not limited to solar energy, are encouraged for the site.

2. Before proposing renewable energy sources, the building’s performance shall be assessed and measures to correct any deficiencies shall be taken. The emphasis shall be on improvements that do not result in a loss of historic fabric. A report on this work shall be included in any proposal for renewable energy sources.

3. Proposals for new renewable energy sources shall be reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case basis for potential physical and visual impacts on the building and site.

4. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings for general guidelines.

2.5.16 Building Site Elements Within the Defined Designation Boundary

1. The general intent is to preserve the existing or later contributing site and landscape features that enhance the property.

2. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has character, scale and street pattern quite different from what existed when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition between the historic property and its newer surroundings.

3. All original or later contributing features of the building site that are important in defining its overall historic character shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods. This may include but is not limited to walls, fences, steps, walkways, paths, roads, vegetation, landforms, furnishings and fixtures, decorative elements, and water features. (See section 2.6 for subsurface features such as archaeological resources or burial grounds.)

4. Deteriorated or missing site features should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

5. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

6. The existing landforms of the site shall not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the designated property’s structure or site.

7. If there are areas where the terrain is to be altered, these areas shall be surveyed and documented to determine the potential impact to important landscape features.

8. The historic relationship between buildings and the landscape shall be retained. Grade levels should not be changed if it would alter the historic appearance of the building and its relation to the site.

9. Buildings should not be relocated if it would diminish the historic character of the site.

10. When they are required by a new use, new site features (such as parking areas, driveways, or access ramps) should be as unobtrusive as possible, retain the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape, and be compatible with the historic character of the property. Historic rock outcroppings like puddingstone should not be disturbed by the construction of new site features.

11. Original or later contributing layout and materials of the walks, steps, and paved areas shall be maintained. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that better site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will improve this without altering the integrity of the designated property.

12. When they are necessary for security, protective fencing, bollards, and stanchions should be as unobtrusive as possible.

13. Existing healthy plant materials which are in keeping with the historic character of the property shall be maintained. New plant materials should be appropriate to the character of the site.

14. Maintenance of, removal of, and additions to plant materials should consider restoration of views of the designated property.

15. The Boston Landmarks Commission encourages removal of non-historic fencing as documentary evidence indicates.

16. The Boston Landmarks Commission recognizes that the designated property must continue to meet city, state, and federal goals and requirements for resiliency and safety within an ever-changing coastal flood zone and environment.

2.5.17 Interior Spaces, Features, and Finishes

1. Removal or alteration of character-defining interior spaces, features, fixtures, and finishes is strongly discouraged but may be considered on a case-by-case basis for projects that demonstrably remove barriers to access.

2. Original or later contributing interior materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be repaired, if necessary, by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the materials using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing interior materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation should be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. Alternative materials will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.

5. When necessary, appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, paint removal, and reapplication of protective coating systems shall be applied to historic materials (including plaster, masonry, wood, and metals) which comprise interior spaces.

6. Damaged or deteriorated paint and finishes shall be removed only to the next sound layer using the gentlest method possible prior to repainting or refinishing using compatible paint or other coating systems.

7. New material that is installed shall not obscure or damage character-defining interior features or finishes.

8. New or additional systems required for a new use for the building, such as bathrooms and mechanical equipment, should be installed in secondary spaces to preserve the historic character of the most significant interior spaces.

9. New mechanical and electrical wiring, ducts, pipes, and cables shall be installed in a manner that preserves the historic character of exterior and interior spaces, features, and finishes - refer to the 2021 Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

2.5.18 Guidelines

The following are additional Guidelines for the treatment of the historic property:

1. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process.

    a. The Boston Landmarks Commission specifically recommends that any work on masonry, wood, metals, or windows be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.

2. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property's landscape, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic landscape report and/or consult a landscape historian early in the planning process.

3. When reviewing an application for proposed alterations, the Commission will consider whether later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed on a case-by-case basis. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed include:

    a. Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
    b. Historic association with the property.
    c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
    d. Functional usefulness.

2.6 Archaeology

All below-ground work within the property shall be reviewed by the Boston Landmarks Commission and City Archaeologist to determine if work may impact known or potential archaeological resources. An archaeological survey shall be conducted if archaeological sensitivity exists and if impacts to known or potential archaeological resources cannot be mitigated after consultation with the City Archaeologist. All archaeological mitigation (monitoring, survey, excavation, etc.) shall be conducted by a professional archaeologist under a state-issued archaeological permit. The professional archaeologist should meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology.

3.0 LOCATION

3.1 Address

According to the City of Boston's Assessing Department, Boston City Hall is located at 1 City Hall Square, Boston MA 02114. (The zip code for City Hall's mailing address is 02201.)

3.2 Assessor's Parcel Number

The Assessor's Parcel Number is 0302615000.

3.3 Area in which Property is Located

Boston City Hall is located in the heart of downtown Boston, occupying the eastern third of City Hall Plaza with Congress Street providing the eastern border. The Government Center area is a bustling hub of civic activity, with the John F. Kennedy Federal Building located on the northern edge of City Hall Plaza. The financial district opens to the south of City Hall and historic Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market are located on the opposite side of Congress Street. Numerous other government buildings, courthouses, and civic institutions are in the general vicinity, contributing to the area's importance and activity.

The MBTA's Government Center Station, serving the Blue and Green lines, is located just to the west of the main entrance of City Hall, making it convenient for visitors and commuters to reach the area. The Haymarket and State Street stations are located within easy walking distance of the north entrance and provide additional access to the MBTA's Orange Line.

3.4 Map Showing Location

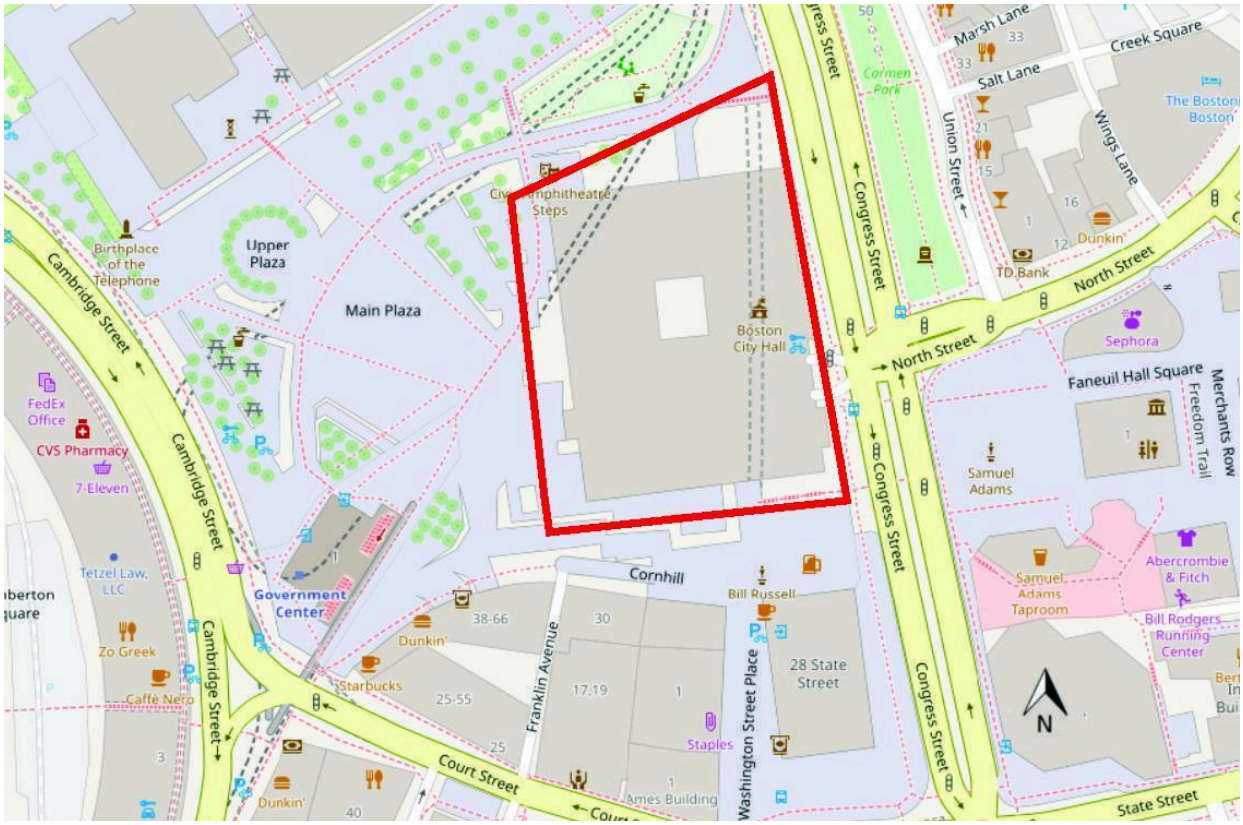


Figure 1. Map showing the boundaries of parcel #0302615000 (MassMapper).

4.0 DESCRIPTION

4.1 Type and Use

Since opening to the public in early 1969, Boston City Hall has been in continuous use as the seat of the municipal government.

4.2 Physical Description of the Resource

Boston City Hall is a striking example of Brutalist (also known as Heroic) architecture, located in the heart of Boston, Massachusetts. Designed by architects Gerhard Kallmann, Michael McKinnell, and Edward Knowles, the building was completed in late 1968. It is situated prominently on a plot of land shaped like a parallelogram at Government Center with the east elevation running along Congress Street.

Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles created a tripartite vertical arrangement for the building, a traditional architectural organization but expressed here in a modern interpretation that resembles an inverted pyramid. From the exterior, the forms, organization, and material selection help identify the general functions that take place in the building. The brick mound rising from City Hall Plaza contains public-facing transactional services; the middle zone uses monumental columns and ceremonial spaces identified by large, projecting, cast-in-place hoods to symbolize the mayor and City Council as leaders of government; the crown composed of repeating windows and precast, projecting fins (simplified paired brackets) extending from the sixth through ninth floors provide a vertical rhythm that represents the bureaucratic office levels. The north end of the east elevation along Congress Street features a brick-clad terraced element that both emphasizes the elevating of the building from the ground level and secures the transactional functions behind a solid mass that is lit from skylights above the terraces.

There are three public entrances to the building. The west entrance rises from City Hall Plaza by way of a brick ramp (originally a set of brick steps, but changed for improved accessibility in 2021-2022) for entry at the third floor. The north entrance leads from the plaza directly into a covered area that extends into the building, leading the public directly into a double-height interior space with perimeter window transaction counters to facilitate public interactions with government, such as licenses, permits and parking ticket payments. The east entrance at Congress Street is deeply recessed and almost hidden from view, serving primarily as an entrance for City Hall staff. This area also accommodates private elevator access to the mayor's office.

A central courtyard was originally designed as a way to allow a public pass-through of the building, intended as a public space that encouraged visual access to the interior shapes of the building while remaining an outdoor space. The courtyard is accessed by a series of brick lined ramps from the west elevation as well as through a mezzanine entrance from the lobby area. In the courtyard, a central, pyramidal skylight and a series of rectangular skylights pass light into the transaction levels below. The courtyard also allowed public access permeability via a stairway down to the Congress Street sidewalk level. Public access through the courtyard is still occasionally permitted when portions are opened to visitors in the summer. The red brick texture throughout the building

achieves a mottled texture through the use of sand-struck and water-struck brick varieties chosen from many New England brick sources.

With the proximity of surrounding taller buildings, visual access looking down on the roof of City Hall presents a fifth façade. The roofline is characterized by a series of mechanical vents, equipment, and light shafts that are integrated into the building's design. Interior balconies overlooking the courtyard project from the seventh, eighth, and ninth floors.

The main lobby on the third floor provides a seamless transition from the exterior brick plaza into the building's dramatic and soaring concrete interior, with the continuous brick floor representing public accessibility into the building. A monumental brick stairway rises from the entrance, dominating the space. The brick stairs provide both metaphorical and physical access to the mayor and City Council on the fifth floor, as well as to the central courtyard from a mezzanine level. Access to the fifth-floor spaces also includes a concrete ceremonial winding stairway leading directly to the Mayor's Office, as well as public elevators.

The main lobby's important role in providing centralized public access to the important functions of City Hall is emphasized by visual access: the fifth-floor gallery, delineated by a formed concrete half wall, is open to the lobby, and the underside of the City Council Chamber is expressed on the ceiling. Visual access is also provided to the transaction hall levels through glass doors just inside the entrance. The architects of Boston City Hall used new materials and modern building techniques to convey intuitive expressions of city government on both the exterior and interior of the building. Cast-in-place concrete columns segment the two stories of continuous glass windows and doors around the lobby perimeter. The entire lobby area is bathed in light from the glass walls above the entrances, full height concrete light shafts, and the coffered ceiling's lighting fixtures.

Overall, Boston City Hall's elevations embody the Brutalist architectural style, showcasing a bold and robust aesthetic with a focus on exposed concrete as the primary material, a sophisticated North American expression of the 'béton brut' pioneered by Le Corbusier and others. The geometric shapes, deeply recessed openings, and use of contrasting elements contribute to the building's distinctive character and make it an iconic landmark in the city, throughout the United States, and around the world.

4.3 Contemporary Images

Figure 2. West elevation, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 3. North elevation, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 4. East elevation, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 5. South elevation, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 6. Brick terracing at the northeast corner of the building, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 7. View from northwest, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 8. Contextual view of southwest corner with Faneuil Hall in the background at right, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

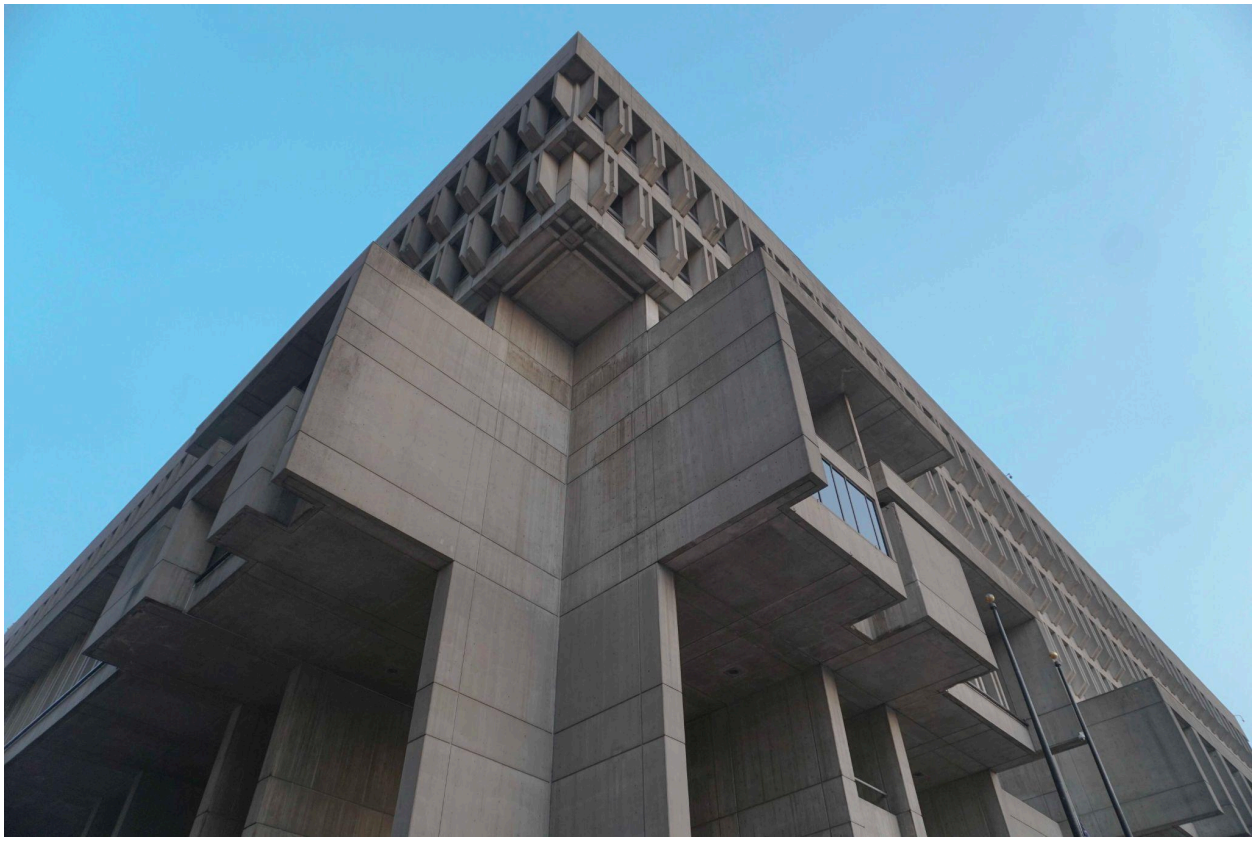


Figure 9. View under eaves at southeast corner, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

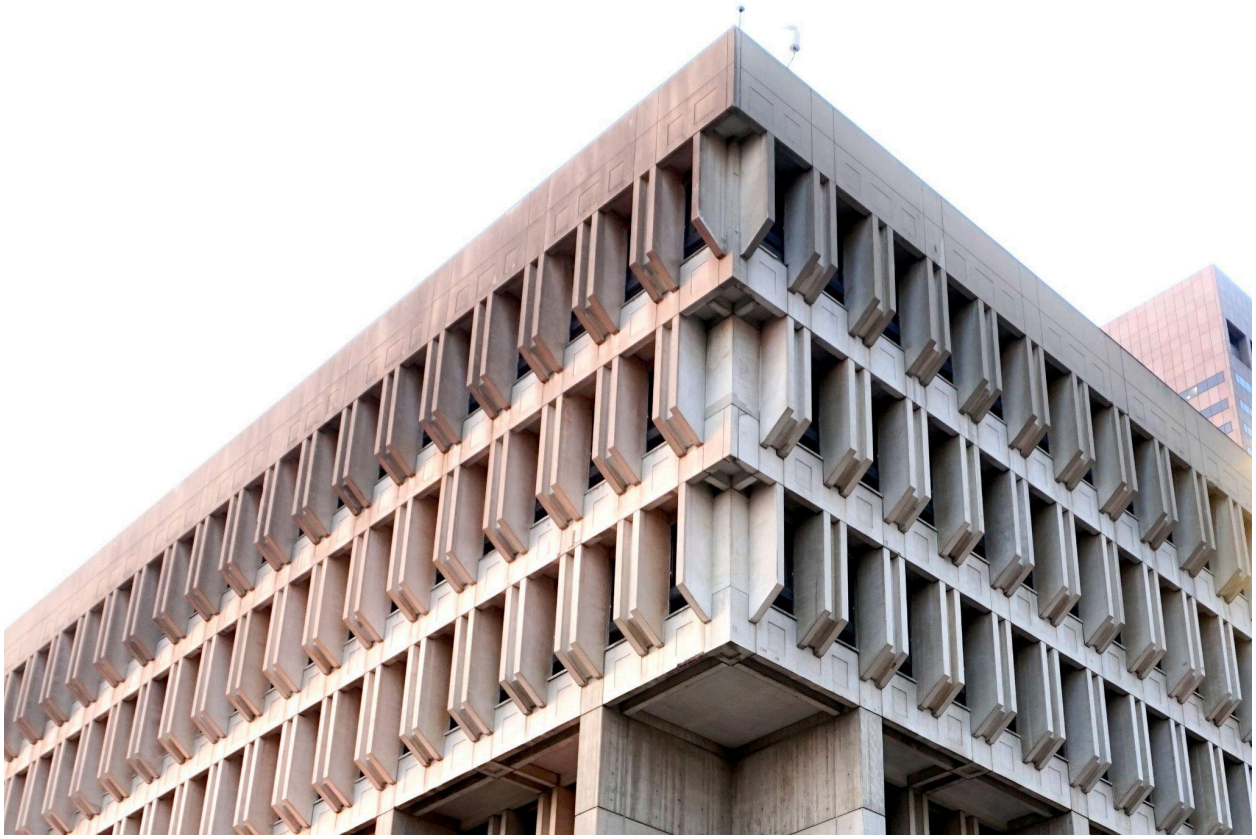


Figure 10. Crown detail (northwest corner) showing alternating windows and paired fins at upper (administrative departments) levels, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 11. Cast-in-place concrete hoods for City Council offices (left) and City Council Chamber (right), June 2023). Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 12. Cantilevered hoods and balconies in the central courtyard. (2018).

Figure 13. Pyramidal skylight in the central courtyard. (2018)

Figure 14. Main lobby, looking northeast from the third-floor entrance up the brick staircase towards the fourth-floor access to courtyard, June 2023. Photo credit: Building Conservation Associates.

Figure 15. Main lobby looking northeast from the third-floor lobby entrance, March 2024. Photo credit: Boston Landmarks Commission.

4.4 Historical Maps and Images

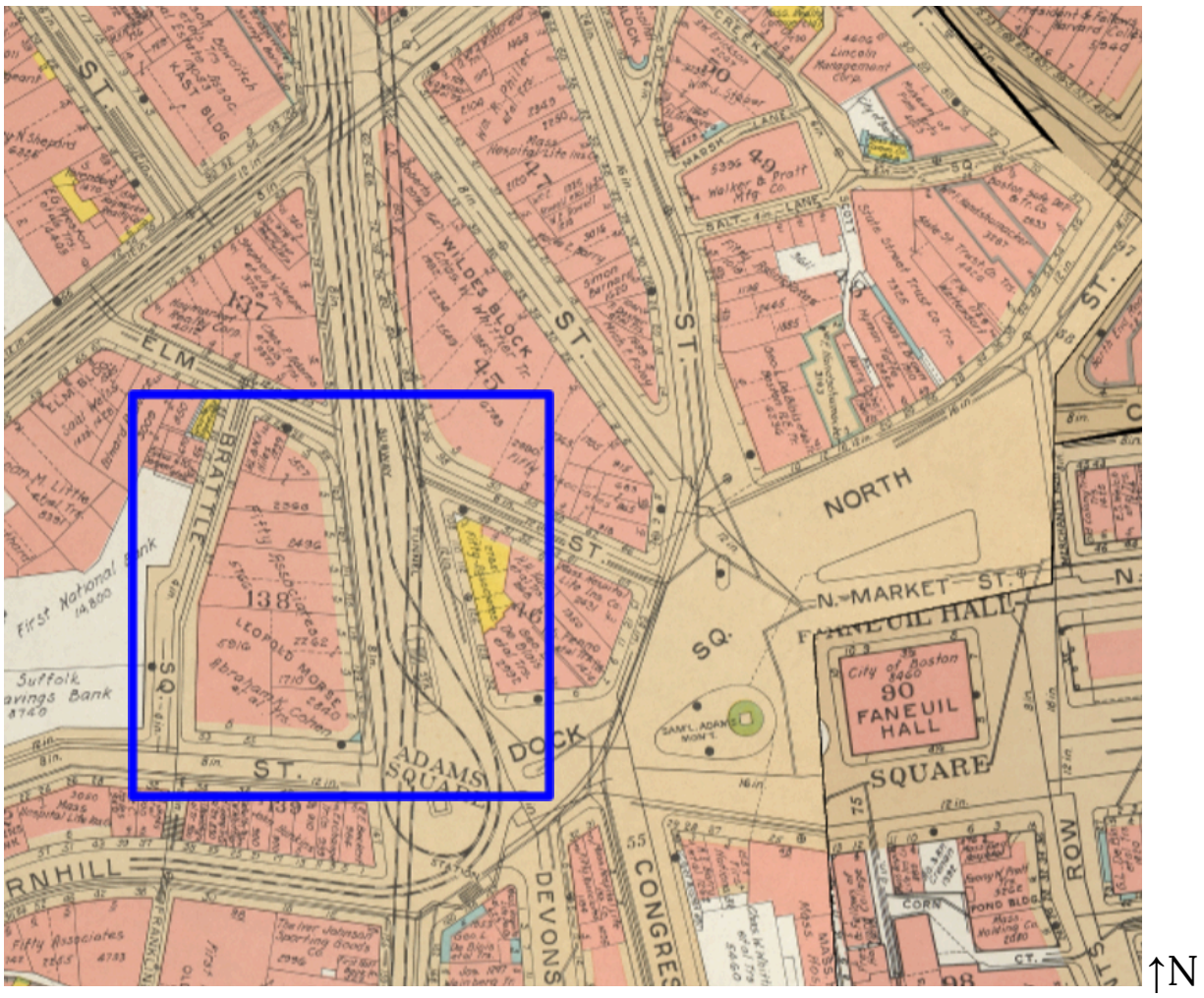


Figure 16. Dock Square in 1938, later the location of Boston's New City Hall. Note Faneuil Hall and Congress Street to the east. Location of New City Hall outlined in blue.

Source: Atlas of the City of Boston: Boston Proper and Back Bay. (G. W. Bromley & Co., 1938, via Atlascope.org)

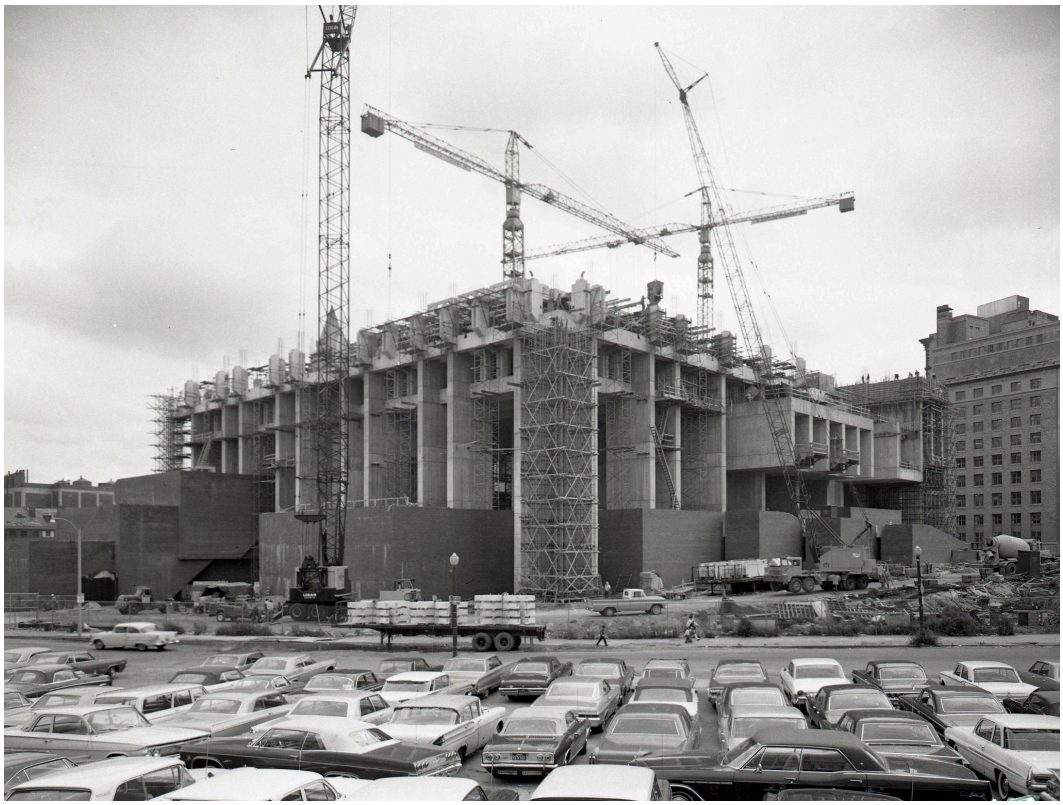


Figure 17. Boston City Hall under construction; looking southeast from JFK Building. (1966)

Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority photographs, Collection #4010.001, City of Boston Archives, Boston

Figure 18. Boston City Hall under construction; looking southeast from JFK Building. (1968)

Source: Historic New England, Kallmann, McKinnell Archives

Figure 19. Historical image of central courtyard showing skylight structure at left.

Source: Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Collection, Library of Congress, Bill Libovich, 1981, HABS MASS, 13-BOST, 71--8

5.0 SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 Historic Significance

The site on which Boston City Hall is located has a substantial history that predates the construction of the building. Before the arrival of European settlers, the land was inhabited by Indigenous peoples, specifically the Massachusett tribe, who called the area Shawmut. Boston was later settled by Europeans when a Puritan group from England led by John Winthrop arrived in 1630. Through the next 300 years, Boston grew and evolved, serving as the center of the rebellion against England in the late 18th century and subsequently flourishing as a hub of commerce and culture in the 19th century. The mid-19th century saw the rise of abolitionist movements leading the fight against slavery, with Boston becoming a center of anti-slavery activism. By the late 19th century, the city faced social and economic challenges. The Great Fire of 1872 devastated a significant portion of downtown Boston, which spurred a wave of rebuilding and urban development. While the early 20th century brought further transformations to Boston, such as the construction of the first subway system in the country, the mid-20th century brought urban renewal projects, including the razing of neighborhoods to make way for developments such as Government Center and the construction of Boston City Hall.

In Boston, the implementation of urban renewal began in the 1950s, after the construction of post-war highways and the promise of better schools, less crime, and lower taxes drew middle-class families to the suburbs. As residents moved out, the city's population decreased from approximately 800,000 to 700,000 from 1950 to 1960. Companies were also moving out of Boston to the suburbs, and Boston's jobs declined from 562,000 in 1947 to 537,000 in 1963. Boston's retail sales fell 5 percent in the 1950s as well. The city was forced to raise taxes because of this decline in revenue, creating a negative cycle that caused more residents to leave Boston and further impacted the city's economy. To add to Boston's challenges, the reputation for graft and corruption by the local political presence was affecting the city's ability to secure funding for renewal projects.[6]

Mayor John B. Hynes was elected in 1949 under the promise of a new, restructured Boston free from corruption. He improved the city government's relationships with the business community, and began a series of urban renewal projects meant to improve the city's housing stock and "begin anew" – the New York Streets Initiative in the South End, the creation of the Central Artery, and the West End development plan. Hynes formed the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) in 1957 to oversee all the city's renewal projects, though the poor outcome from the West End project nearly caused the BRA to be terminated.[7]

John F. Collins succeeded Hynes as Mayor of Boston in 1959, and continued the urban renewal goals set by his predecessor. In 1960, he hired planner Edward J. Logue as development administrator of the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and Logue and Collins worked together to rebuild Boston. They immediately set out to tackle the city's most ambitious urban renewal project: Government

[6] Brian Sirman, "Concrete Changes: Architecture, Politics and the Design of Boston City Hall," Amherst: Bright Leaf, 2018, 8-9.
[7] Ibid, 16-23.

Center.[8] Their goals were to "remove a decadent and blighted area in the heart of the City and convert it to a major center of governmental and private activity," and to simultaneously revitalize and create jobs in the downtown area.[9]

The neighborhood where City Hall is now located was originally known as Dock Square, and later renamed in 1838 to Scollay Square after the real estate developer who purchased a prominent building in the square in 1795. Up until the 1950s, Scollay Square was a commercial center and a junction point for multiple trolley lines. However, the Square had become a central location for many of the city's less desirable businesses, such as burlesque houses and tattoo parlors, and was thus a prime target for early urban renewal efforts.[10] The efforts of the Boston Redevelopment Authority in the 1960s transformed Scollay Square into Government Center, a medium-density center of civic activity that employed 25,000 white-collar workers, with New City Hall at its center.

The groundwork for the Government Center project had been laid by Hynes in 1957, when he called for a feasibility study for replacing Scollay Square with new federal, state, and private office buildings. The 1958 blueprint proposal by planning consultants Adams, Howard, and Greeley was met with wide approval and the hope that the project would curb disparagement of the BRA and increase property values in the West End. Although some Bostonians protested the razing of Scollay Square, many were in support of it – one developer recalled, "Much of it seems nostalgic and colorful to people looking back at it, but in actuality it was horrendous. It was a terrible eyesore that needed to be changed." [11] Today, the demolition of Scollay Square is viewed with regret-- the loss of 1,500 structures was a terrible blow to the historic fabric of Boston's downtown and would permanently alter the daily human experience of the neighborhood.[12]

The master plan for Government Center was conceived by I. M. Pei in 1961. Crooked streets and haphazard lot sizes were to be erased and corrected, in order to improve traffic movement and to create parcels of land suitable for modern business development.[13] The plan centered on Boston City Hall as the keystone structure, specifying its location, overall dimensions, and the vast open space of the plaza setting around it. Pei specified a low height for the building so it would not overwhelm Faneuil Hall, and positioned it at the southern boundary of the plaza in an attempt to stimulate development in that area.[14] In 1962, demolition of Scollay Square began, sparing only the Sears Crescent Building after public outcry convinced officials to improve the structure and make it an integral part of the Government Center design.[15] Throughout the next decade, Government Center began to take shape with the completion of noteworthy buildings such as the John F. Kennedy Federal Building (Walter Gropius), Government Services Center (Paul Rudolph), and One Center Plaza (Welton Becket & Associates).

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[8] Brian Sirman, "Concrete Changes: Architecture, Politics and the Design of Boston City Hall," Amherst: Bright Leaf, 2018, 23-28.
[9] Edward J. Logue, "Seven Years of Progress: A Final Report," Boston: Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1967, 11. https://archive.org/details/seven-years-of-progress
[10] Thomas H. O'Connor, "Building a New Boston," Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993, 15.
[11] Thomas H. O'Connor, Building a New Boston, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993, 141.
[12] Henry Moss, "Boston City Hall, Boston Landmark Petition Support," letter to Ellen Lipsey, April 20, 2007, Boston Landmarks Commission archives.
[13] Government Center Commission, A Competition to Select an Architect for the New City Hall in the Government Center of the City of Boston, 1961, 8.
[14] Brian Sirman, "Concrete Changes: Architecture, Politics and the Design of Boston City Hall," 2018, 32-33.
[15] Thomas H. O'Connor, "Building a New Boston," Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993, 199-201.

The design of New City Hall was decided upon in 1961 by means of a national design competition under parameters set by I. M. Pei-- the first architectural competition to focus on a city hall since San Francisco City Hall in 1912.[16] The winning design by Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles was a bold and daring scheme that fulfilled many of the hopes that Collins, Hynes, and Logue had originally laid out for the project.[17] The completed building played a major role in reinvigorating the city. It is considered the earliest example of architectural prominence associated with Boston's modernist movement, a notable distinction in a city known as "the cradle of modern architecture in America." [18]

City Hall has served as a major symbol of the City of Boston, the urban renewal initiatives of the time period, and the national Brutalist movement. It has been featured in movies, television shows, and photographs, showcasing its architectural distinctiveness. Overall, Boston City Hall holds local, regional, national, and international significance as an architectural and cultural icon, a symbol of civic identity, a public space for gatherings, and a catalyst for urban planning discussions. Its presence has shaped the city's skyline and continues to influence debates on architectural aesthetics, preservation, urban planning, and civic engagement. The building's international significance as a work of concrete modernism is paralleled by its cultural and economic legacies— as "a miracle in Boston," in the words of competition juror Harold Hodgkinson, that initiated "the rebirth of confidence in this city." [19]

The Government Center complex, and Boston City Hall in particular, helped catalyze growth in Boston's downtown, leading to a more mixed-use, multimodal, and vibrant commercial center with a focus on preservation. Today, high-traffic streets have been reworked to accommodate pedestrian activity, encouraging the development of new residential spaces nearby.[20] On a national level, Boston City Hall's design and its surrounding Government Center development had a profound impact on urban planning principles. The concept of grouping civic and governmental buildings together in a pedestrian-friendly environment influenced subsequent urban design approaches in other cities. It emphasized the idea of creating integrated civic spaces that encourage public interaction. Its creative approaches to urban planning helped not only to revitalize a dying city, but an entire generation of planning principles nationwide.

5.2 Architectural Significance

Boston City Hall represents a pivotal moment in architectural history for the City. It is considered one of the most prominent examples of Brutalist architecture in the United States. It has been featured in international architectural periodicals, such as *Architectura*; *Architectural Forum*; *Architectural Review*; *Casabella*; *Interiors*; *Japan Architect*; *Perspecta*; and *Progressive Architecture*. The building's unconventional aesthetic challenged the prevailing architectural norms of the time, emphasizing the use of materials like raw concrete rather than natural stone for the monumental symbolism of this public building. The building's design continues to inspire critical analysis, being a

[16] Brian Sirman, "Concrete Changes: Architecture, Politics and the Design of Boston City Hall," 2018, 52.
[17] Utile Design, Building Conservation Associates, and OverUnder, "Boston City Hall Conservation Management Plan," prepared for Mayor Martin J. Walsh. Getty Foundation, January 2021, 23.
[18] Ada Louise Huxtable, "An Architectural Shot Heard Round the World," *New York Times*, September 28, 1980.
[19] Harold D. Hodgkinson, "Miracle in Boston," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society: 81.
[20] Utile Design, Building Conservation Associates, and OverUnder, "Boston City Hall Conservation Management Plan," prepared for Mayor Martin J. Walsh. Getty Foundation, January 2021, 32.

significant subject in recent publications, such as John Stewart's *Twentieth Century Town Halls: Architecture of Democracy* (2019) and Arthur Drooker's *City Hall: Masterpieces of American Civic Architecture* (2021).

The surrounding Government Center and City Hall Plaza were conceived of by I. M. Pei as part of the larger urban renewal efforts of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. City Hall was to act as the centerpiece for the large open plaza in the center of the development, symbolizing the building's role in reinvigorating the city politically, economically, and architecturally. A nationwide, two-round design competition was announced in 1961, using Pei's spatial parameters as a guide, and was judged by a jury of architects and business leaders of Boston. The design submitted by Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles was unanimously voted as the winning entry, and was built exactly as designed, even though the City of Boston was not obligated to do so.[21]

The design and construction of Boston City Hall were led by architects Gerhard Kallmann and Michael McKinnell. The building was their first joint commission and remains the most important work of architecture in the lifelong partnership between Kallmann and McKinnell.[22] Gerhard Kallmann (1915-2012), the senior and most well-known architect on the team, was born in Germany and had spent the early part of his career writing exhaustive manifestos on the "new brutalist" and "compositional rigorist" philosophies of architecture. These two approaches would provide the major framework for the design of Boston City Hall.[23] Kallmann met the younger architects Michael McKinnell (1935-2020) and Edward F. Knowles (1929-2018) while the three were teaching at Columbia University.[24] The success of their partnership at Boston City Hall would encourage Kallmann and McKinnell to establish a Boston office together after winning the competition, later designing the Five Cent Savings Bank in Boston, another noteworthy Brutalist structure, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Cambridge. The firm launched the careers of numerous architects, and received not only the American Institute of Architects' Firm of the Year Award in 1984 (as Kallmann McKinnell & Wood), but also was awarded the prestigious Harleston Parker Medal more times than any other architect or firm, as of this writing.

Construction on Boston's New City Hall using innovative construction methods began in 1963 and was completed in November 1968 under the collaborative efforts of Kallmann McKinnell and Knowles, local architectural firm Campbell and Aldrich, and structural engineering firm LeMessurier Associates, Inc.[25] The resulting brick and concrete structure was a monumental achievement of both design and workmanship, leading one architect to marvel, "the ingenious double floor system of precast concrete girders and criss-cross ceiling beams took time to perfect. Those carefully formed and painstakingly poured massive concrete columns didn't just happen." [26] City Hall effectively joined historic "red brick Boston" with the modern world, demonstrating that Boston could "look boldly ahead as well as comfortably back." [27] The red brick of the plaza flowed seamlessly into the building and up the sides of the brick bases, symbolizing the flow of old into new. The permeability of the

[21] "The Way We Were: Boston in the 1960s," Architecture Boston Roundtable, 8:3 May/June 2005, 21.
[22] Utile Design, Building Conservation Associates, and OverUnder, "Boston City Hall Conservation Management Plan," prepared for Mayor Martin J. Walsh. Getty Foundation, January 2021, 23.
[23] Mildred Schmertz, "The New Boston City Hall," *Architectural Record*, February 1969.
[24] Paul Heyer, Architects on Architecture: New Directions in America, Walker & Co, 1978, 256-263.
[25] Brian Sirman, "Concrete Changes: Architecture, Politics and the Design of Boston City Hall," 2018, 91.
[26] Joseph Eldridge, "City Hall -- At Midpoint It Begins to Show Its Style," *Boston Globe*, February 20, 1966.
[27] "The City Hall Look," *Boston Herald*, May 5, 1962.

building, with three entrances converging in the central lobby and allowing pedestrians to pass through on their way from Beacon Hill to Dock Square, symbolized the accessibility of city government. And with the projecting volumes, large-scale concrete hoods, and precast fins creating a vocabulary of government hierarchy on the building's façade, City Hall fits into the tradition of grand civic architecture without being traditional itself.[28]

Kallmann's exploration of design philosophy led the team to develop an innovative design melding the compositional rigorist and Brutalist philosophies. The architects described their philosophy as one which "regarded the post-Miesian elegance and minimalism of that time as somewhat exhausted, and had a greater affinity with the architecture of Wright, the late work of Le Corbusier, the Brutalists, and [Louis] Kahn."[29] The architects considered the building "'a celebration of government,' but in a newly symbolic way that derives its strength from function, program and structural logic." [30] Brutalism lent the building its bold forms and textures, while the compositional rigorist approach informed the spatial organization of the building, breaking the boundaries of the classical confines of space. City Hall holds power in its unapologetic opposition of traditional beauty, asserting that its success lies in topology rather than its aesthetics. Through this philosophical approach, it has been widely published and heavily praised, lauded as "[maybe] the most significant Boston building of the mid-20th century,"[31] and counted "among the finest public buildings in the world." [32] In the words of MIT professor of architecture, Albert Bush-Brown, "No bows to the Georgian. No weak-kneed copying of the State House dome. Or the Faneuil Hall roof. Nothing but a whole-hearted affirmation of a new time, new social needs, and the new technology and new aesthetics to declare our faith in the civic instrument of government." [33]

5.3 Archaeological Sensitivity

Downtown Boston is generally archaeologically sensitive for ancient Native American and historical archaeological sites. There are possibilities for the survival of ancient Native and historical archaeological sites in the rare areas where development has not destroyed them. As the ancient and historical core of Shawmut, now Boston, any surviving archaeological deposits are likely significant. Any historical sites that survive may document 17th-19th century history related to Boston's colonial, Revolutionary, and early Republic history, especially yard spaces where features including cisterns and privies may remain intact. These sites represent the histories of home-life, artisans, industries, enslaved people, immigrants, and Native peoples spanning multiple centuries. Downtown's shoreline may contain early submerged ancient Native archaeological sites, shipwrecks, piers, and other marine deposits that may be historically significant.

There have been no archaeological surveys within the City Hall Parcel to determine the extent of preservation within the parcel. It is likely that much has been disturbed or destroyed by development of the building, but it is possible that historically significant components of the former Dock Square, earlier occupations, and even Native sites may survive around and under City Hall.

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[28] Jeff Stein, "Inside Story: What's it like to work at City Hall?," Architecture Boston, 8:3 May/June 2005, 48.
[29] Mark Pasnik, Chris Grimley, and Michael Kubo. *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston.* (The Monacelli Press, LLC, 2015.), 98-99.
[30] Mildred Schmertz, "The New Boston City Hall," *Architectural Record*, February 1969.
[31] Boston Society of Architects, *Architecture Boston*, 1976, 11-16.
[32] Boston Landmarks Commission Survey Form, Boston City Hall, 1980.
[33] Thomas H. O'Connor, "Building a New Boston," Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993, 186.

Surviving abandoned subway tunnels in the parcel abutting to the south as well as other nearby MBTA tunnels may indicate the presence of preserved historic subway infrastructure within the footprint of the City Hall parcel that may be historically significant.

6.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

6.1 Current Assessed Value

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's records, the property at 1 City Hall Square, Boston (parcel #0302615000) where City Hall is located has a total assessed value of $183,217,500.00, with the land valued at $56,946,200.00 and the building valued at $126,271,300.00 for fiscal year 2023.

6.2 Current Ownership

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's records, Boston City Hall is owned by the City of Boston, with a mailing address at 1 City Hall Square, Boston, MA 02114. (The zip code for City Hall's mailing address is 02201.)

6.3 Care and Custody

The care and custody of Boston City Hall is the responsibility of the Property Management Department. This includes management, maintenance, security, and repair as well as facility layout and space planning analysis for City Departments.

7.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

7.1 Background

Boston City Hall was built to serve as a municipal headquarters in 1968, and was designed as the centerpiece of the Government Center urban renewal project initiated in the 1960s. This project created a medium-density area of civic activity employing 25,000 white-collar workers, replacing a historic commercial center of the city that had become downtrodden in the 1950s.[34] Boston City Hall remains Boston's civic center to this day, and is occupied by the Mayor, City Council, the city's administrative and planning departments, and other public-facing functions of the city's government.

7.2 Zoning

Parcel number #0302615000 is located in the Government Center/Markets zoning district, a City Hall Medium Density Area subdistrict, and the following overlay districts: Restricted Parking District; Urban Renewal Area Overlay District; and Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District.

7.3 Planning Issues

On April 10, 2007 a petition to Landmark Boston City Hall at 1 City Hall Square was submitted by registered Boston voters. At a public hearing on April 24, 2007, the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept Boston City Hall for further study.

Boston City Hall is a building that embodies the essence of urban planning in its history, present, and future. Originally conceived as the keystone building within the new urban plan for Government Center, the building was designed as a submission to an architectural competition hosted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (since renamed the Boston Planning and Design Agency). Drawing both admiration and criticism over the course of its history, there have been many proposed planning initiatives to demolish, improve, renovate, and preserve City Hall. It is a building that sparks passionate opinions amongst Boston's residents, city hall workers, and politicians alike. The petition to landmark City Hall marks a point in Boston's history where the building has garnered value and appreciation as a potential landmark and residents have called for its lasting preservation.

City Hall Changes and Planning Initiatives:

The building has been changed and updated many times over the past 55 years. The interiors have been adapted to meet the changing needs of city departments. Fortunately, due to the monumental nature of the masonry and concrete exterior and interior architecture, there have not been any substantial changes that have degraded the overall design.

City Hall was designed as an intensely public building - a civic node where citizens could pass through its central courtyard, as they climbed from Dock Square and Faneuil Hall to Government

[34] Lizbeth Cohen, "Building Government Center: The Boston Redevelopment Authority, 1960-67," In *Heroic: Concrete Architecture and the New Boston*, ed. Pasnik, Kubo and Grimley, New York: Monacelli Press, 2015, 49.

Center and the State House. Pedestrian access through the central courtyard was closed to the public after security measures were implemented due to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. These security measures also changed other aspects of access into the building and the surrounding public plaza.

In 2015, the City administration initiated a master plan study called "Rethink City Hall." The study examined programmatic and operational needs at City Hall and identified ways to improve constituent services. The administration undertook several pilot projects to address the most urgent and public-facing needs identified, such as lighting City Hall; interior and exterior way-finding improvements; improved accessibility by a new direct elevator from the third-floor lobby for better access to the mezzanine event space; accessibility renovations to the City Council Chamber; and improved entry to the third-floor entrance lobby. The City intends to implement further Rethink City Hall master plan recommendations through a phased approach.

The Rethink City Hall study also called for a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CMP), to serve as a long-term resource and working document for the City's Property Management Department and the Public Facilities Department. In 2017, the City of Boston applied for the "Keeping it Modern" Grant by the Getty Foundation. Boston City Hall was chosen as one of 12 recipients worldwide, receiving funding to create a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for City Hall to guide future work. The city hired a team of architects, historians, conservators, and technical specialists to collaborate on the City Hall CMP, published in January 2021.

The Getty CMP is a comprehensive document that highlights the significant elements of Boston City Hall. The CMP, Rethink City Hall plan, and Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report together provide a roadmap with clear strategies and priorities for both caring for the building and allowing it to change and adapt with the times in order to provide the best possible services to both visitors and staff alike.

Per the enabling legislation of the Boston Landmarks Commission (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended), "All recommendations [in a study report] shall be made in consideration of any master plan, zoning requirements, projected public improvements and existing and proposed renewal and development plans applicable to the section of the city to be affected by the designation or amendment of designation."

The Property Management Department (PMD) is overseeing several major planned public improvements within City Hall, some of which are already underway. PMD has provided the following descriptions of these projects:

- A *four-stop elevator connecting levels* 2M, M, 3, *and level* 4, *the level of the courtyard and of the landing at the top of the brick stairs in the Plaza lobby. The elevator will replace current escalators and supplant the need for a separate lift in the Plaza lobby. This will improve public accessibility in the multi-level transactions area and provide for easy movement from the lower levels* (2M, M, *and* 3) *to the fourth floor courtyard.*

- A *multi-phased HVAC project that will replace the roof of City Hall and impact the building's envelope and select interior spaces.*

- *Implementation of recommendations outlined in "Rethink City Hall: Boston City Hall and Plaza Study" Master Plan, which recommends significant improvements to the public service areas and transaction spaces, among others. It advocates for a flexible layout that will greatly improve accessibility, updates to a 21st century service delivery model, and the facilitation of a hospitable and efficient visitor and staff experience. Select projects to achieve these goals include:*
    - *Registry Department: A complete interior renovation of the Registry office suite including modifications to select transaction windows in order to adapt to current service models and improve efficiency and the constituent experience.*
    - *Age Strong Department: An interior renovation of the Age Strong space that includes, modification to select transaction windows that are currently accessed through the interior of their office suite*
- *City Hall Plaza Phase II (Phase I was completed in November 2022) includes significant accessibility and programmatic improvements to the south and southeast sides of the Plaza as well as to the Donnelly Garage. Additionally, it will impact the fourth floor courtyard, upgrading and modifying the large and small skylights, waterproofing the brick pavers, and improving the accessibility of current ramps and egress.*
- *Accessibility Projects: An accessibility audit conducted at City Hall identified a wide range of accessibility modifications to various railings, ramps, doorways, restrooms, and signage throughout the building. The City is required to implement these recommendations and will do so through a phased approach, prioritizing their inclusion as other projects are happening in the building.*

8.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

8.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission

A. Designation
The Commission retains the option of designating Boston City Hall as a Landmark.

B. Denial of Designation
The Commission retains the option of not designating.

C. National Register Listing
The Commission could recommend that the property be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

D. Preservation Plan
The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property, noting that there is a current Conservation Management Plan.

E. Site Interpretation
The Commission could recommend that the owner develop and install historical interpretive materials at the site.

8.2 Impact of alternatives

A. Designation
Designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to Boston City Hall in accordance with the Standards and Criteria adopted as part of the designation.

B. Denial of Designation
Without designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the building, or extend guidance to the owners under chapter 772.

C. National Register Listing
Boston City Hall could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which provides an honorary designation and limited protection.

D. Preservation Plan
A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. Such a plan, which includes the Getty Conservation Management Plan, does not carry regulatory oversight.

E. Site Interpretation
A comprehensive interpretation of the history and significance of Boston City Hall could be introduced at the site.

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