

The background of the entire page is a complex, white line-art illustration on a light gray background. It depicts a series of overlapping, curved architectural elements, possibly representing a modern building's facade or a series of steps. The lines are thin and create a sense of depth and movement, with some lines curving upwards and others downwards, creating a dynamic, almost organic structure.

# 212 STUART STREET

LANDMARKS  
12.11.2018

TRANSOM REAL ESTATE

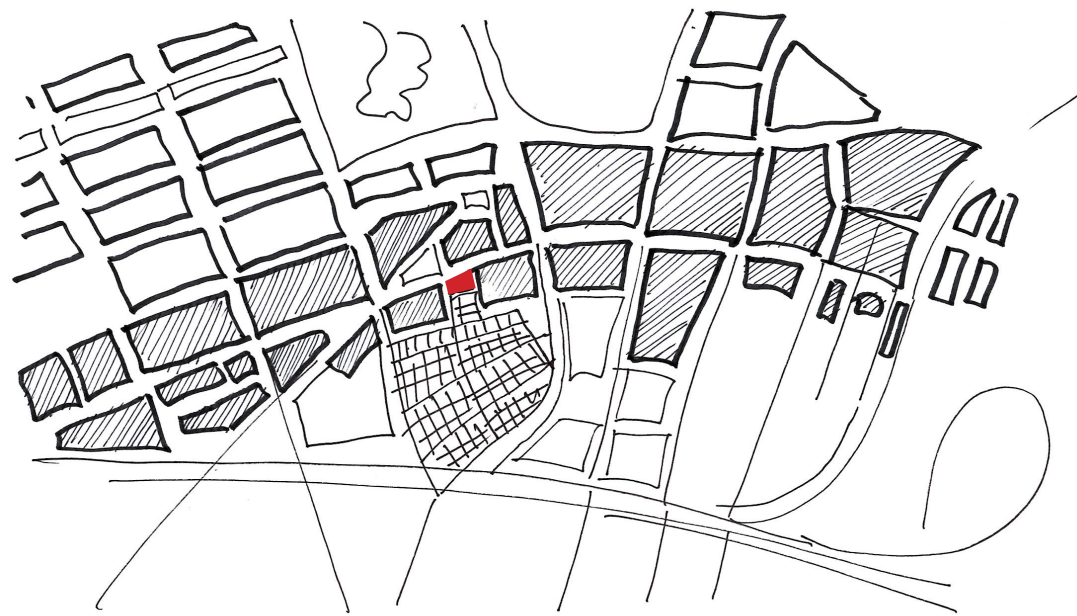
HÖWELER + YOON ARCHITECTURE

SASAKI ASSOCIATES



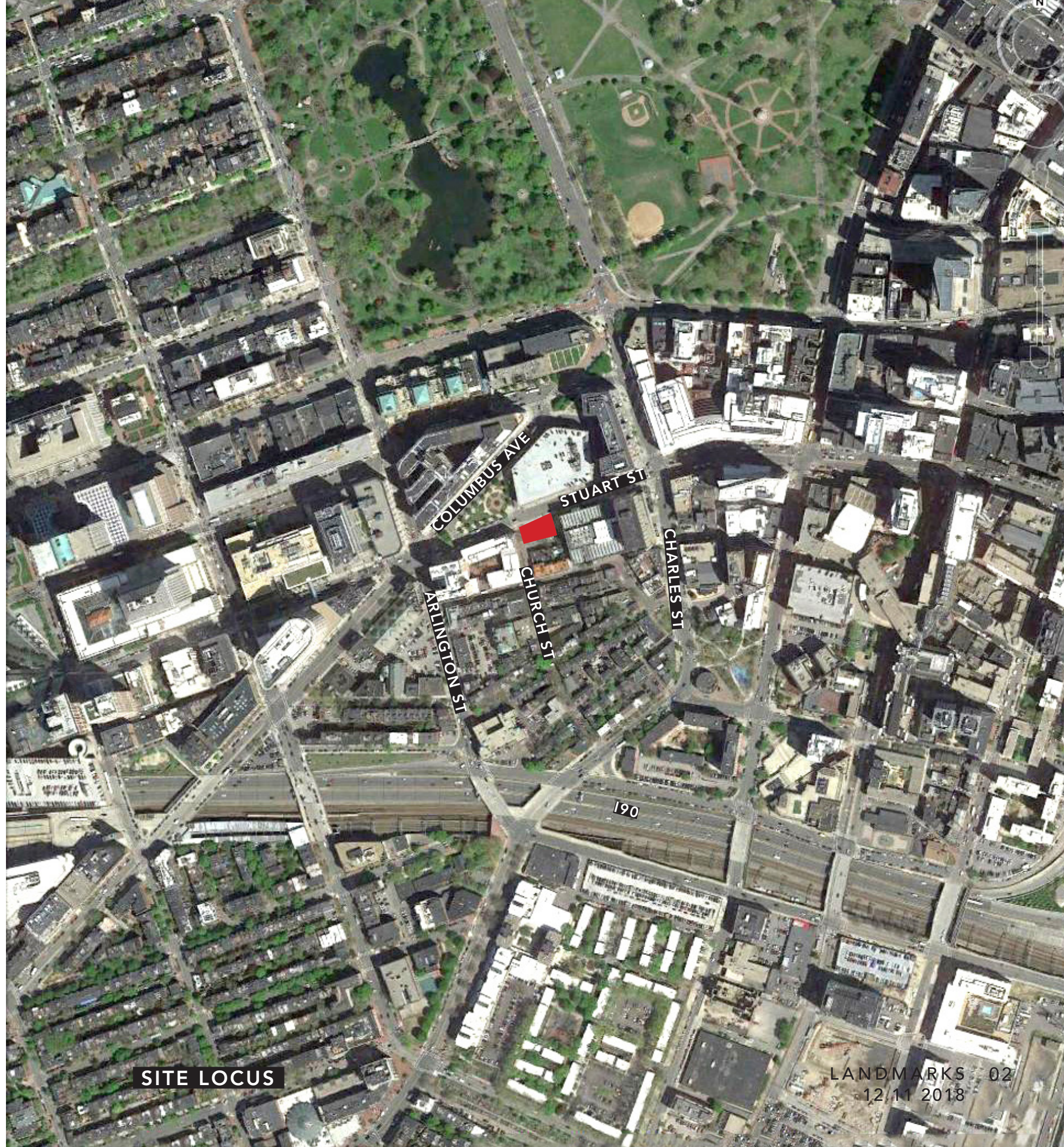


BOSTON NEIGHBORHOODS



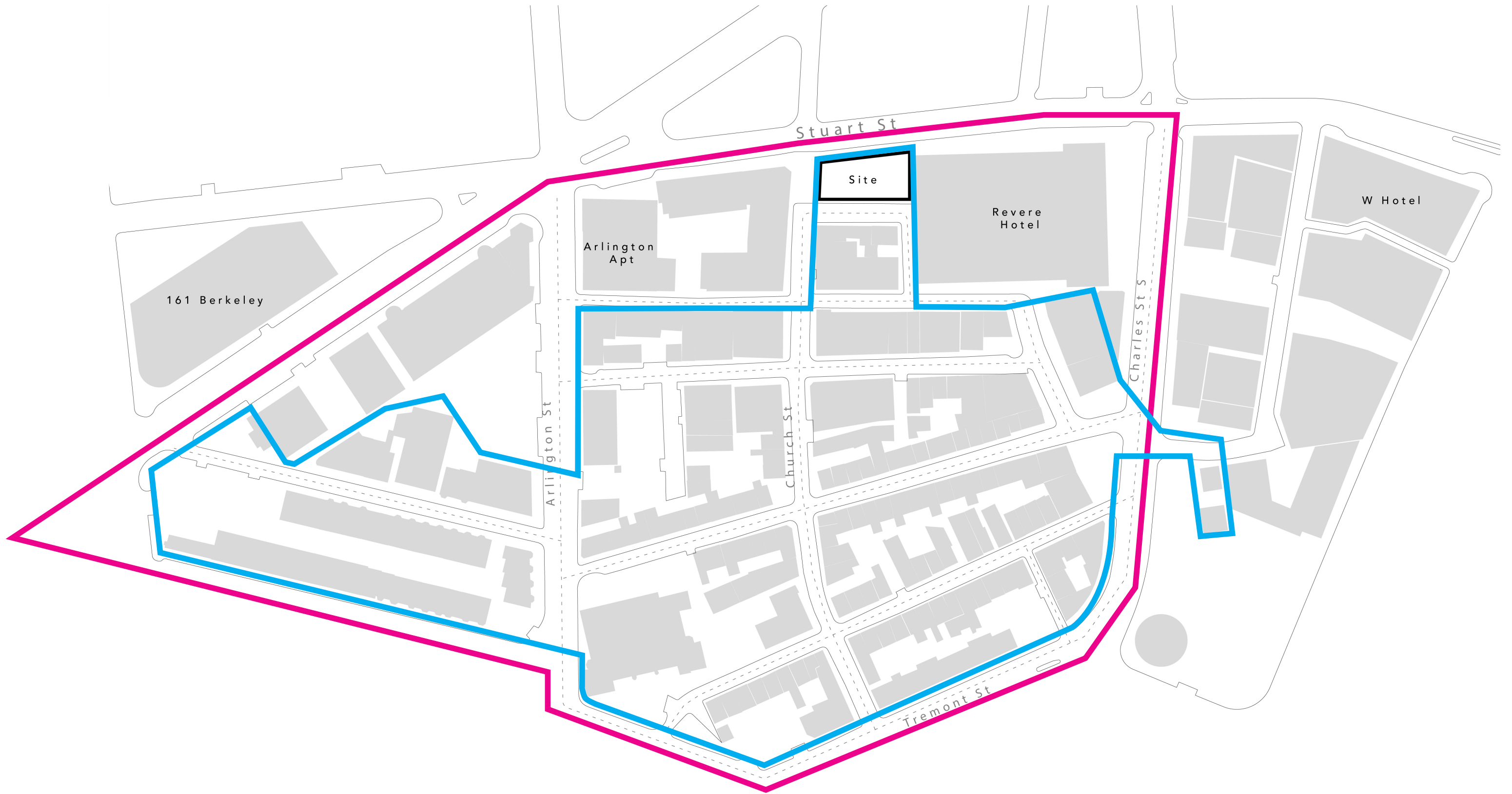
HIGH SPINE

212 STUART STREET



SITE LOCUS









212 STUART STREET

EXISTING CONDITIONS

LANDMARKS 04  
12 11 2018





VIEW FROM NORTHWEST



VIEW FROM NORTHEAST



VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST



VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST





BERKELEY BUILDING: 495'

LIBERTY MUTUAL: 303'

380 STUART: 336'

333 STUART: 250'

PARK PLAZA: 170'

1 CHARLES ST: 190'

THE ARLINGTON: 167'

PROPOSAL: 199'

REVERE: 226'

W HOTEL: 276'

240 TREMONT: 272'

AVA: 360'

TUFTS: 233'

260 : 152'

MARRIOTT: 152'

TUFTS: 220'

212 STUART STREET

HIGH SPINE

LANDMARKS 06  
12 11 2018

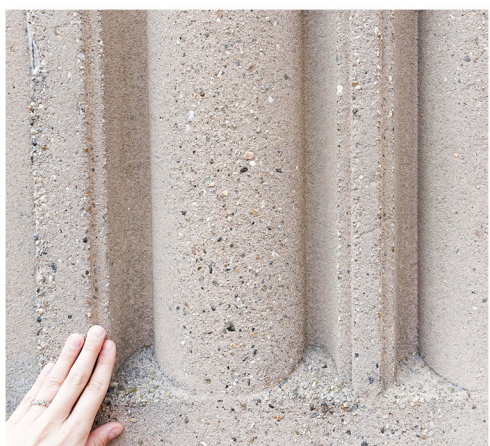
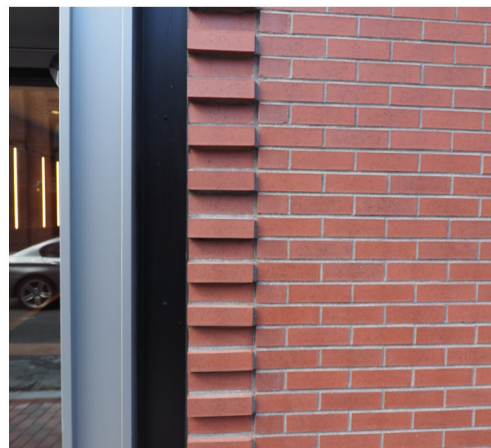
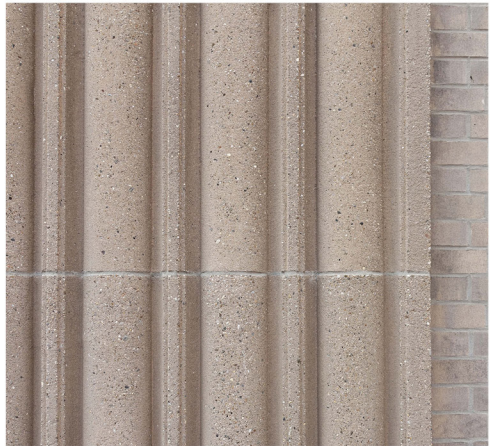
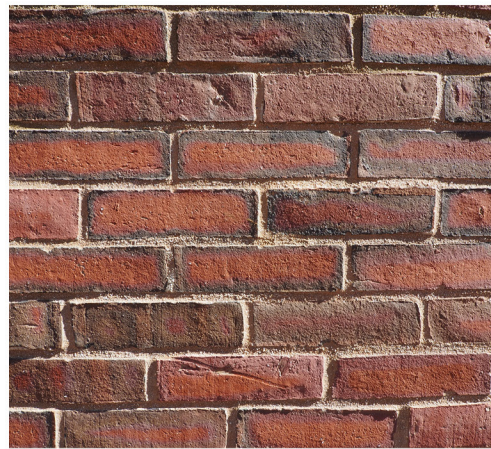




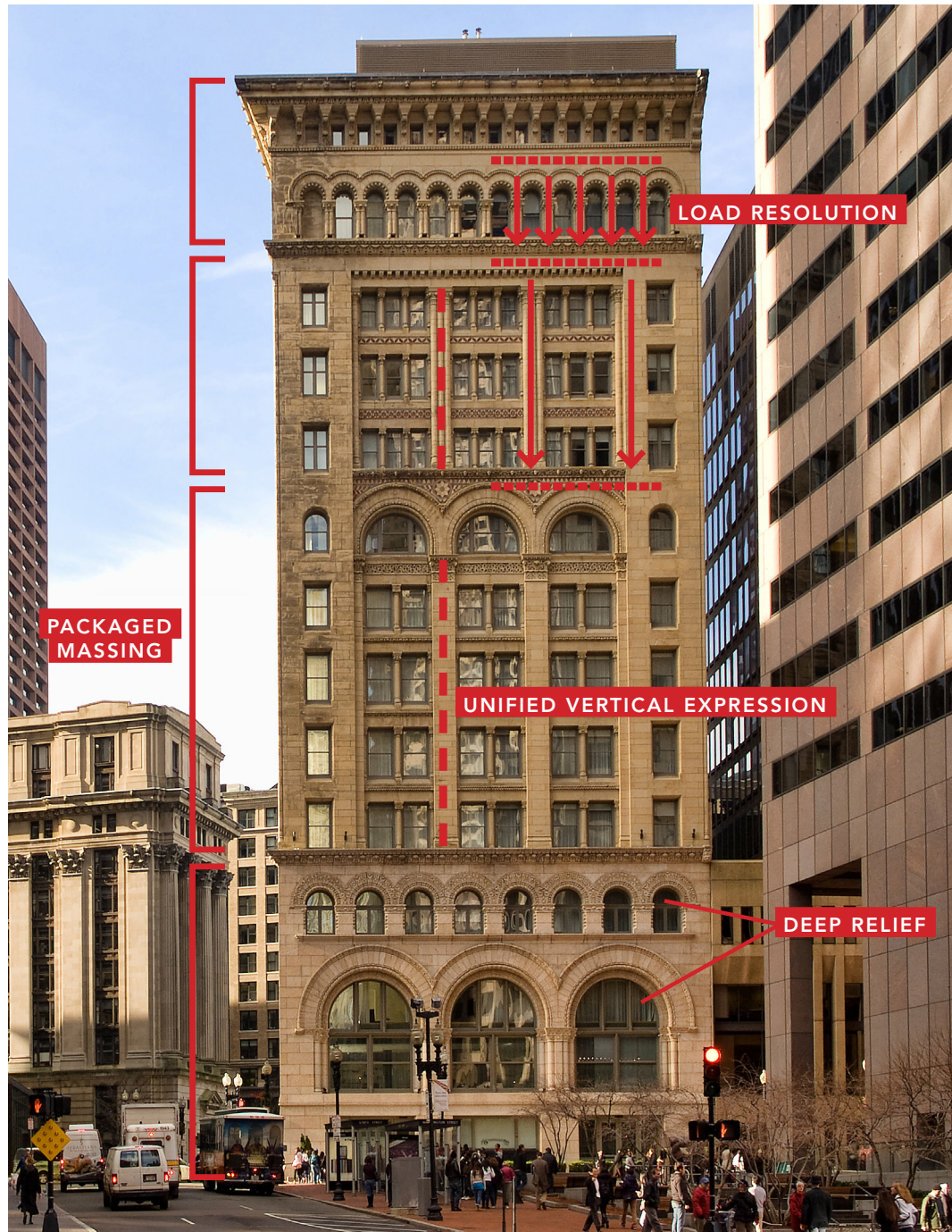
212 STUART STREET

CONTEXT TEXTURE

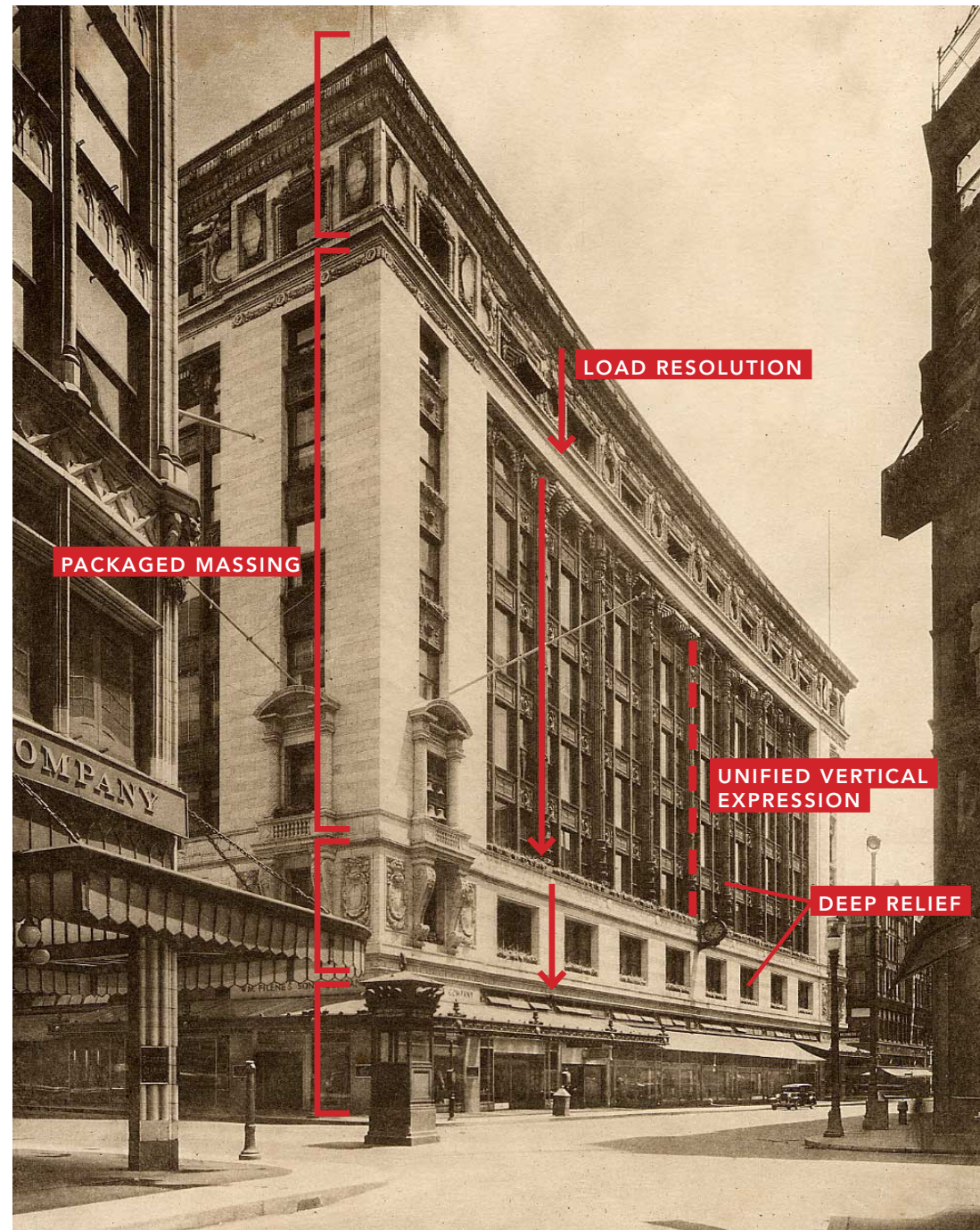








212 STUART STREET

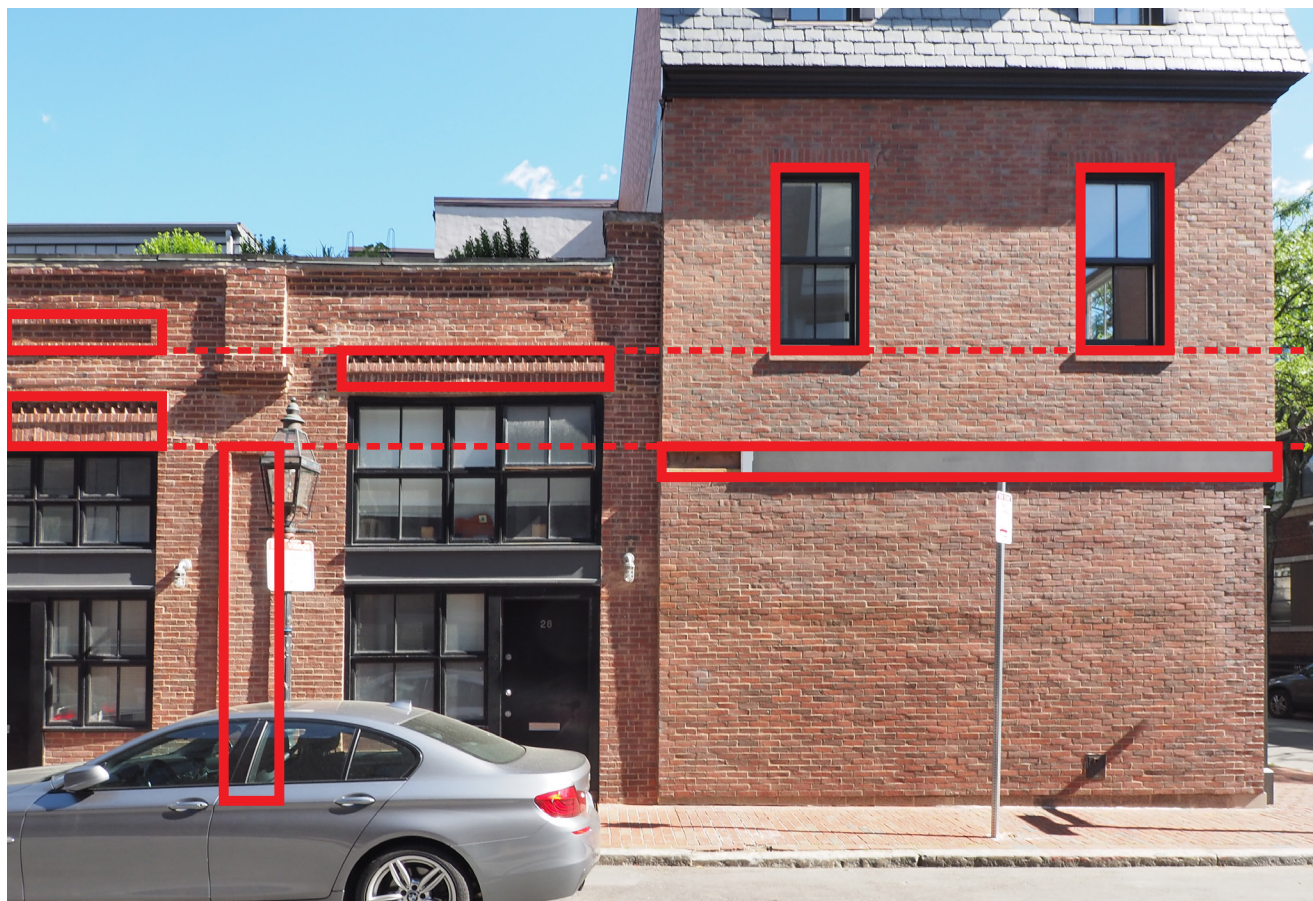


MASSING PRINCIPLES OF BOSTON BUILDINGS



LANDMARKS 09  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

BAY VILLAGE ASYMMETRIES



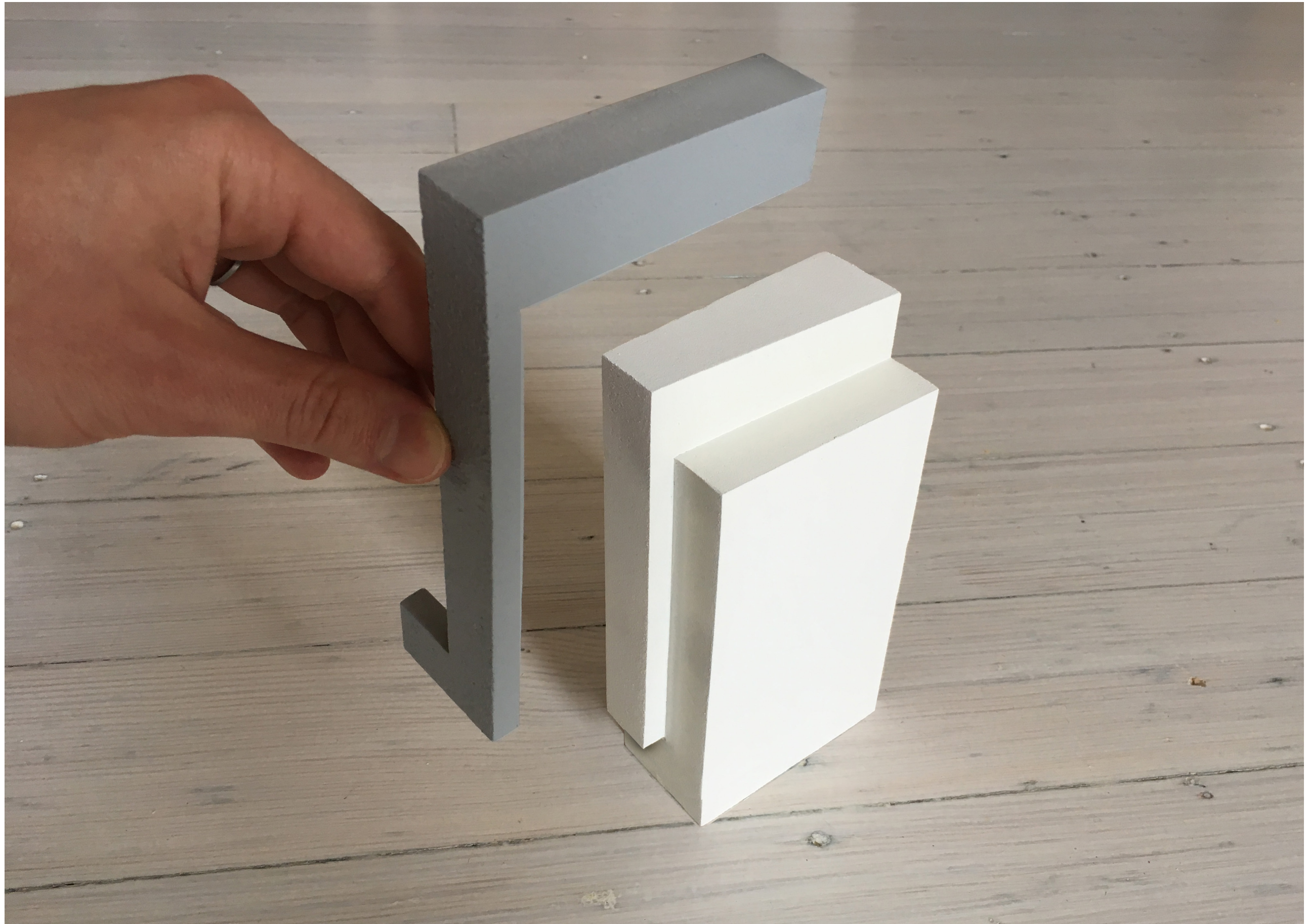
AERIAL VIEW  
PNF SCHEME



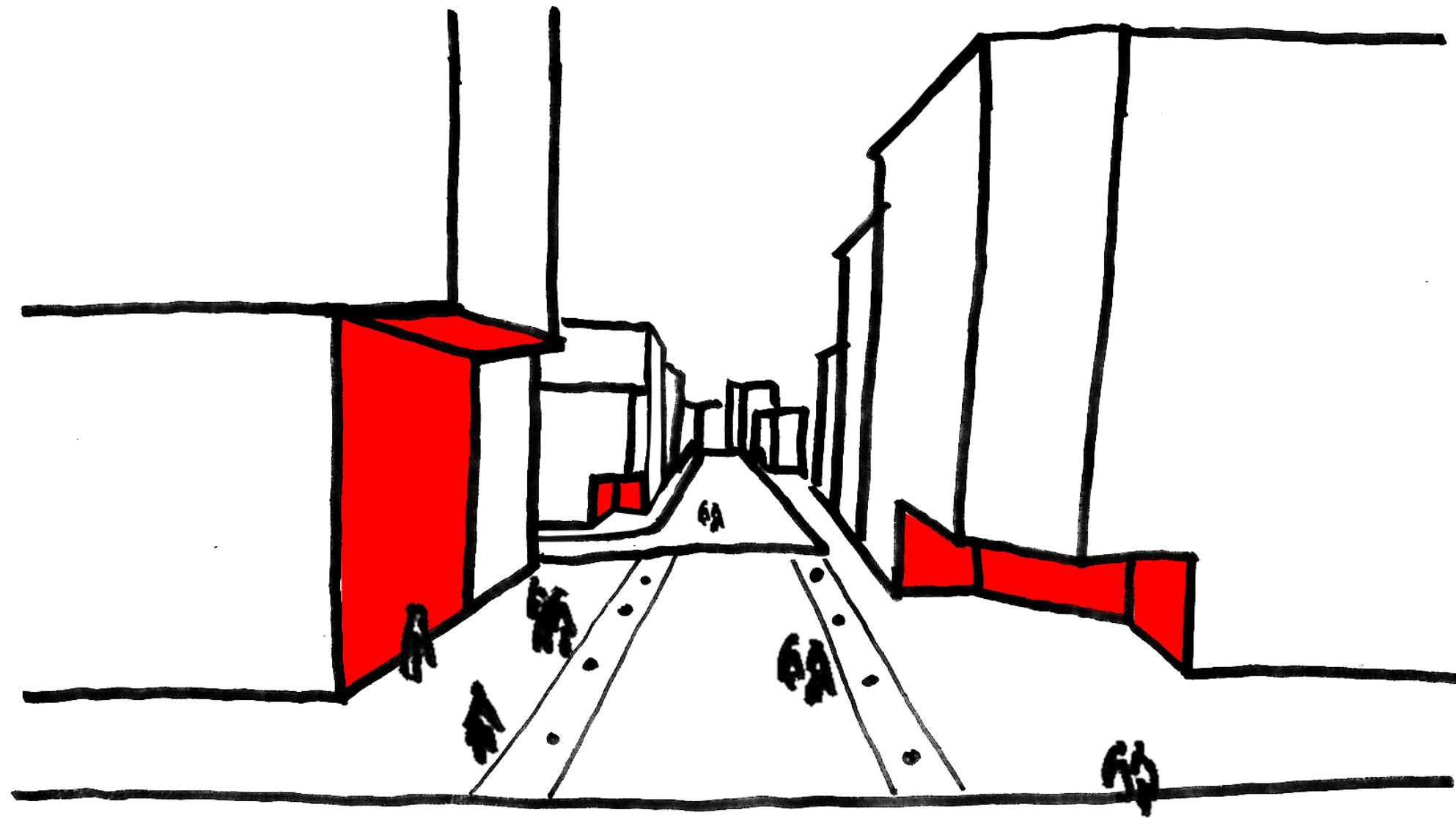
212 STUART STREET

AND MARKS  
12 2018









CHURCH ST. PLAZA – COLLECTION OF UNDERCUTS





212 STUART STREET

CHURCH STREET PLAZA  
PNF SCHEME

LANDMARKS 014  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

CHURCH STREET PLAZA  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 015  
12 11 2018



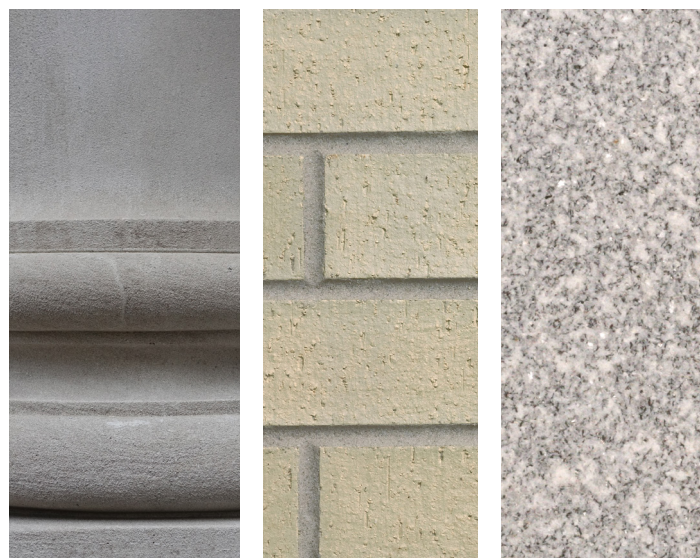


PARK SQUARE / HIGH SPINE MATERIALS



SHAWMUT STREET MATERIALS





PARK SQUARE /  
HIGH SPINE MATERIALS

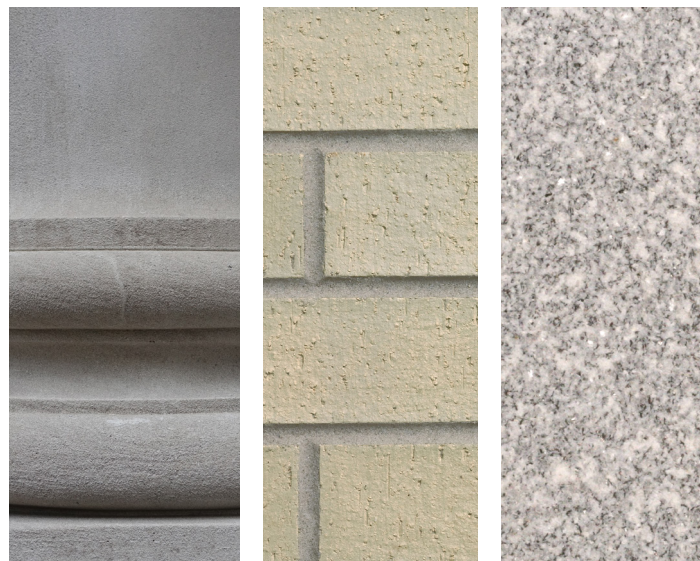
PROPOSAL MATERIALS

SHAWMUT STREET MATERIALS

212 STUART STREET

LANDMARKS 017  
12 11 2018





PARK SQUARE /  
HIGH SPINE MATERIALS

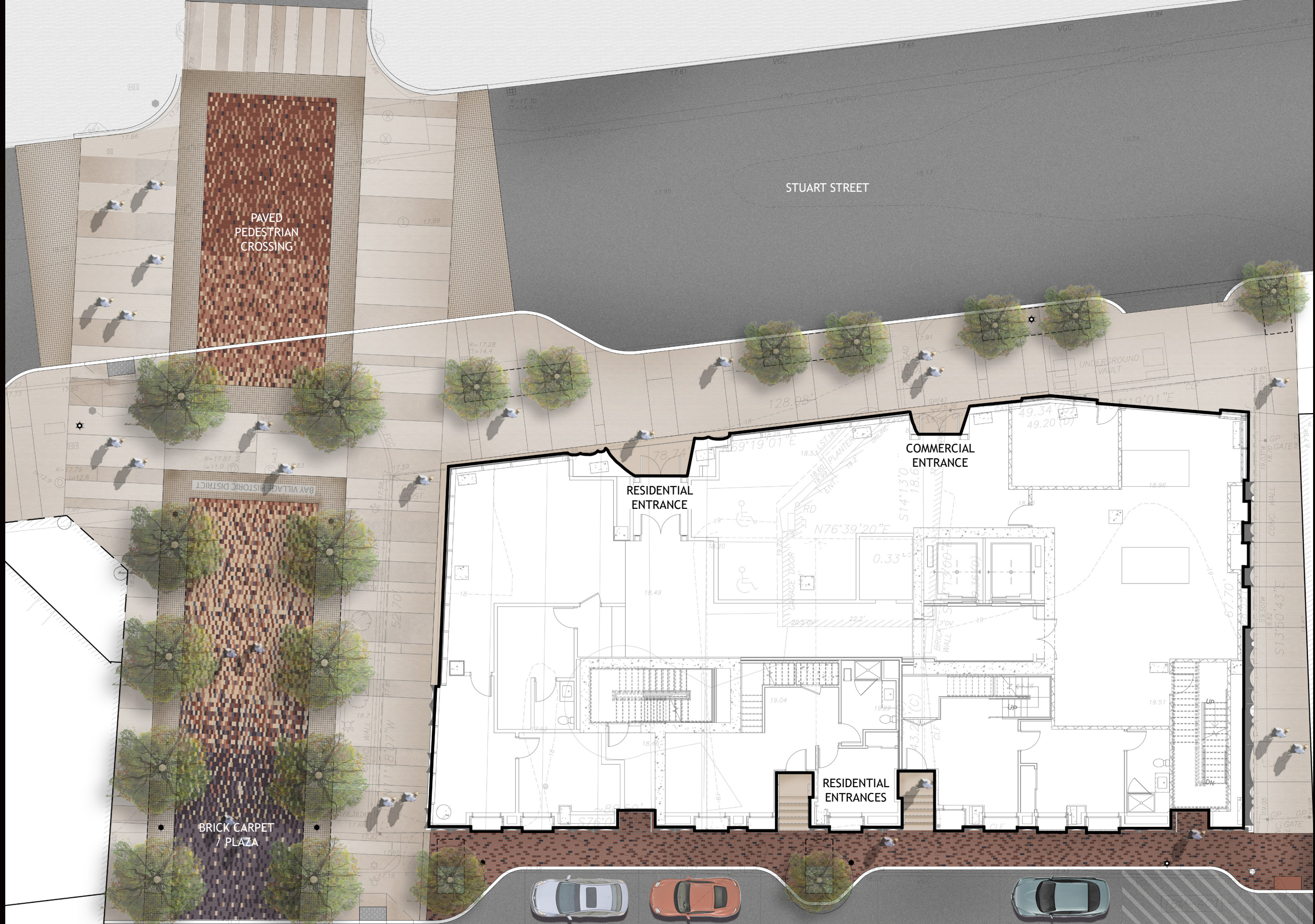
PROPOSAL MATERIALS

SHAWMUT STREET MATERIALS

212 STUART STREET

LANDMARKS 018  
12 11 2018









INDIANA LIMESTONE MILLED SCALLOPS



QUARRA STONE FABRICATION SHOP



MARKS 020  
1 2018



212 STUART STREET

INDIANA LIMESTONE MILLED SCALLOPS

LANDMARKS 021  
12.11.2018





ART STREET



AERIAL VIEW  
PNF SCHEME



212 STUART STREET

AND MARKS  
12 2018



AERIAL VIEW  
REVISED SCHEME



212 STUART STREET

AND MARKS  
12 2018



AERIAL VIEW  
REVISED SCHEME







212 STUART STREET

CHURCH AND WINCHESTER  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 026  
12 11 2018









THE ARLINGTON  
APARTMENTS

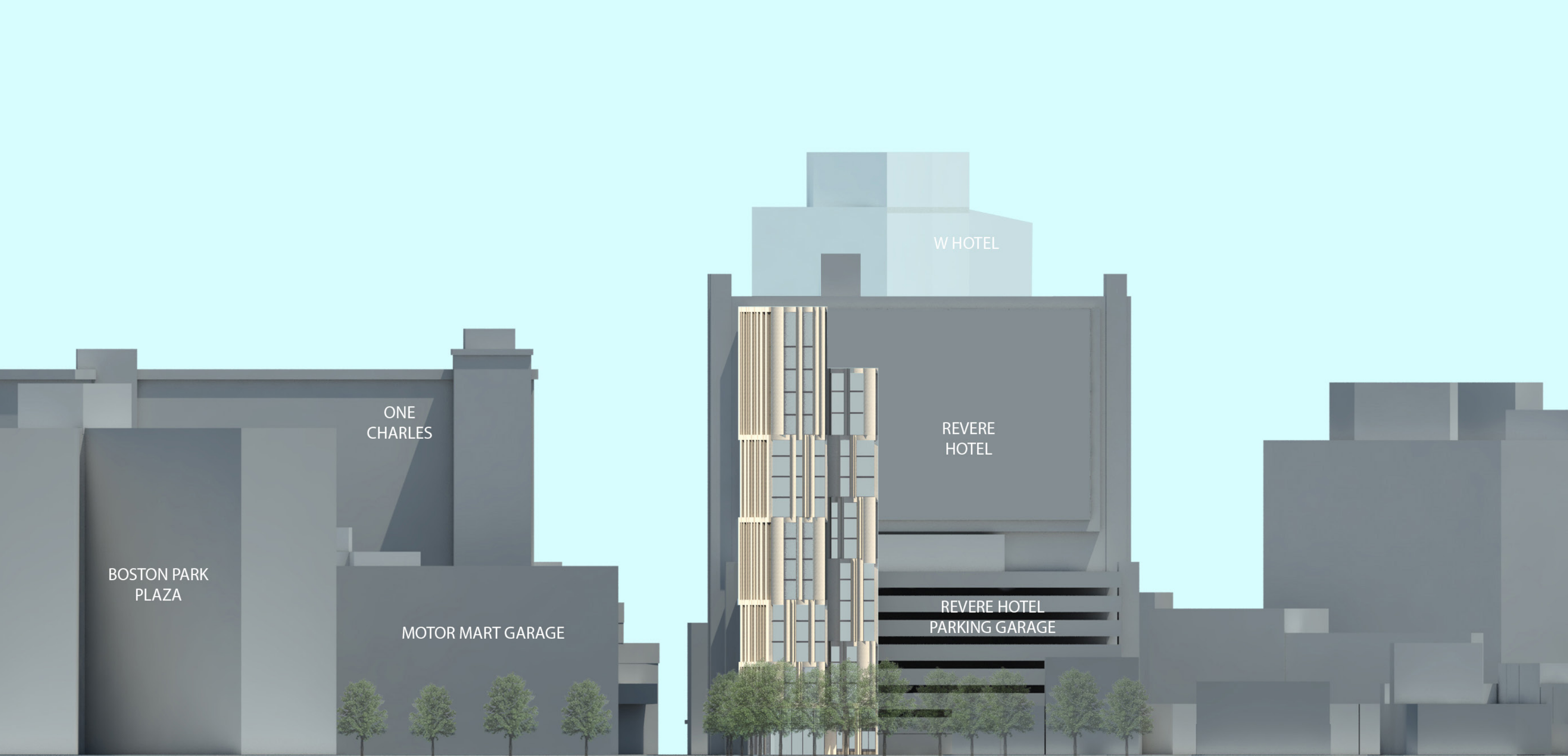
BOSTON PARK PLAZA

SOUTH COVE PLAZA

CHURCH ST  
PLAZA

REVERE HOTEL  
PARKING GARAGE

REVERE  
HOTEL



STUART ST









LIBERTY MUTUAL

THE ARLINGTON  
APARTMENTS

SOUTH COVE  
PLAZA

BOSTON PARK PLAZA

MOTOR MART GARAGE

STUART ST



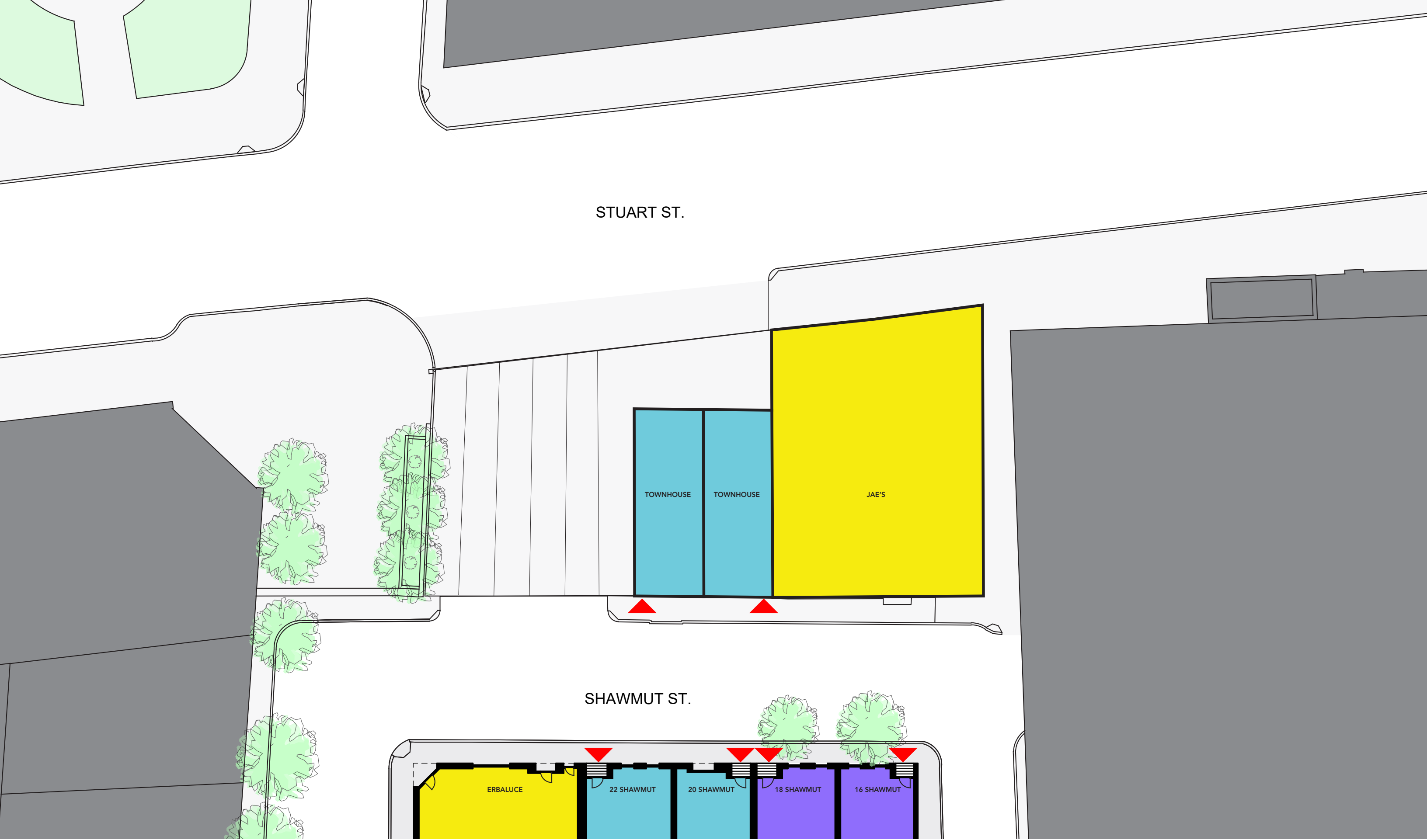
# SHAWMUT ST.

SHAWMUT ST  
COCOANUT GROVE LN

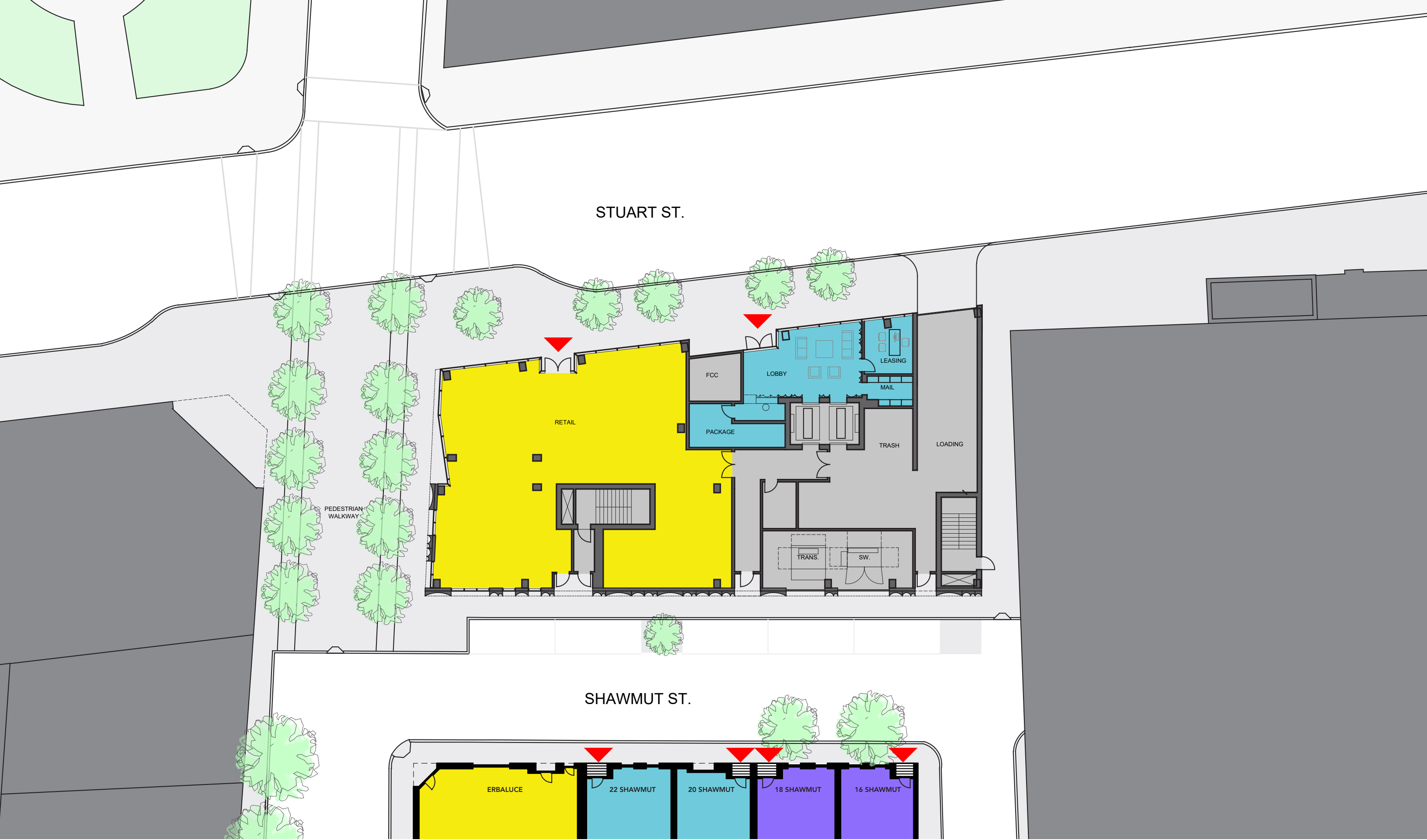
212 STUART STREET

LANDMARKS 032  
12 11 2018









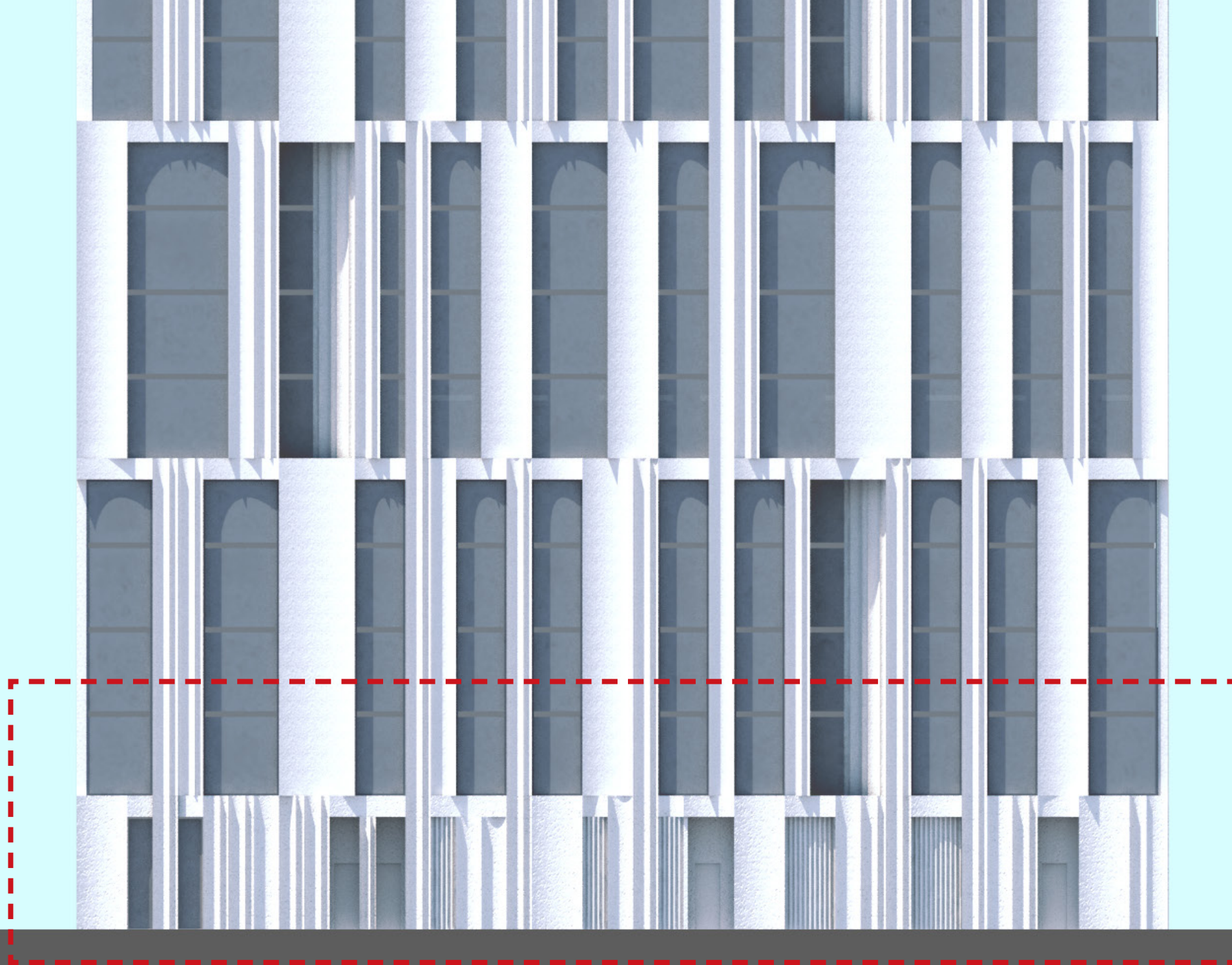




STUART ST.

SHAWMUT ST.













212 STUART STREET

SHAWMUT STREET ELEVATION  
PNF SCHEME

LANDMARKS 038  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

SHAWMUT STREET ELEVATION  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 039  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

SHAWMUT STREET DETAIL  
PNF SCHEME

LANDMARKS 040  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

SHAWMUT STREET DETAIL  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 041  
12 11 2018





CHURCH ST. PLAZA – LOOKING SOUTH  
PNF SCHEME

212 STUART STREET

LANDMARKS 042  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

CHURCH ST. PLAZA – LOOKING SOUTH  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 043  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

CHURCH ST. PLAZA – LOOKING NORTH  
PNF SCHEME

LANDMARKS 044  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

CHURCH ST. PLAZA – LOOKING NORTH  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 045  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

ERBALUCE ENTRANCE – LOOKING NORTH  
PNF SCHEME

LANDMARKS 046  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

ERBALUCE ENTRANCE – LOOKING NORTH  
REVISED SCHEME

LANDMARKS 047  
12 11 2018





212 STUART STREET

THANK YOU

LANDMARKS 048  
12 11 2018



BAY VILLAGE  
AND  
212 STUART STREET:  
Context and Complement

*Historic and Visual Analysis*  
by William Young



December 2018



# BAY VILLAGE AND 212 STUART STREET:

## Context and Complement

### Executive Summary

The historic visual character of Bay Village presents a study in deceptive contrasts. Though largely consistent in its low scale and red brick material, the neighborhood's architecture nonetheless exhibits considerable variation in style from street to street, reflecting the historically distinct phases of its development.

While the district's core is more homogeneous in appearance, its periphery is lined with buildings that resemble those present in adjacent areas. Most significantly of these, the neighborhood's northern perimeter has been bordered for nearly a century by the much taller buildings of Stuart Street and Park Square. Surprisingly perhaps, this fabric's dissimilar scale and materials have not eroded but rather, served to reinforce the visual identity of Bay Village itself. As with many longstanding contrasts, its very familiarity causes it to pass almost unnoticed.

Occupying a pivotal position in the heart of Boston, where a quiet historic neighborhood meets a thrumming retail and hospitality corridor, the project at 212 Stuart Street presents a unique—and uniquely challenging—design opportunity. The very nature of the site demands a development that not only addresses both Bay Village and Park Square but ideally, strives to reconcile their divergent personalities as well.

To resolve this architectural impasse, the proposed new construction reinterprets each area's distinctive design and materials vocabularies and enhances the pedestrian environment that links the two. At the same time, the new building will provide a strong and much-needed edge condition to define and differentiate the intimate, low-rise residential enclave from the commercially oriented area just beyond its doorstep. In this manner, the building will echo the aesthetic of its historic neighbors even as it speaks eloquently of our own time.

### I. Introduction

A virtual microcosm of central Boston's architectural record, Bay Village contains examples



of almost every type and period from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Compact in its topography, the neighborhood is the second smallest of the city's nine locally designated historic districts. Nevertheless, taken block for block, Bay Village may fairly be said to represent a richer, denser array of historic resources than any other.

This phenomenon is the artifact of an extended history of mixed uses, which gave rise in turn to an architectural heterogeneity that has long been acknowledged as one of the neighborhood's essential attributes. Curiously, however, less attention has been paid to the ways in which its buildings of different styles and eras, intended for different uses, co-exist today in visual harmony.

The district's perimeters also promote its strong sense of place. These edge conditions help to define its distinctive individuality—and underscore its visual seclusion—despite existing juxtapositions of material and scale that might seem jarring in another setting.

The present study seeks then to analyze the factors that have defined the neighborhood's existing character. It further aims to explore the 212 Stuart Street project's benefit to the Bay Village context.

## **II. Topographic and Demographic Overview**

### *Nineteenth-century origins*

The downtown Boston neighborhood we call Bay Village was first laid out in the 1820s. (Indeed, the very name Fayette Street records the 1824 visit of the French hero of the American Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette.) Nevertheless, it was for another neighborhood street that this section of the city would long be known, as the Church Street district.

Prominent among the first residents of the neighborhood were middle-class housewrights, shopkeepers and craftsmen associated with remunerative skilled trades (stair builders, carvers, cabinet and piano makers, paperhangers and the like). In many instances, these tradesmen and merchants had not only been involved in the initial development of Beacon Hill but continued to derive their livelihoods by catering to its wealthier households. If their own homes were necessarily smaller in scale and simpler in detail, they nonetheless



mirrored the architectural styles favored by their well-heeled clients on the Hill. This quality is particularly evident on Fayette and Melrose streets, whose respectively Federal and Greek Revival rowhouses invite comparison with their grander counterparts on Chestnut and Mount Vernon streets. (Happily, too, a quality of restraint is becoming to the classically derived Federal and Greek Revival styles.) [Figs. 1-4]

As the nineteenth century progressed and large new residential areas were built up nearby, the blocks west of Arlington Street were developed along comparable aesthetic lines. Dating from this era are Italianate and Second Empire-style single-family rowhouses like those of the South End, which may be found on Cortes Street. Similarly, Romanesque, Ruskin Gothic and Queen Anne apartment buildings such as one might see in the Back Bay are numerous along Isabella. In this fashion, the architecture at the periphery of Bay Village first came to mirror that of its immediately adjoining neighborhoods. [Figs. 5 & 6]

Less benignly, the elevated landfill on which these newer adjacent areas were being developed resulted in a chronic tidal backflow that regularly flooded the district's basements and backyards. This eventually led to a massive public-works intervention that involved raising the grade of the neighborhood by 12-18 feet in order to solve the problem. Existing houses were jacked up to the altered street level, causing some cracking to certain façades still visible today. Later buildings were then constructed to this new grade. [Fig. 7]

Even before this upheaval, however, the neighborhood had become something of a backwater following the construction of the Boston & Providence Railroad terminal in what is now Park Square. Though a handsome building in itself, this facility presented a physical barrier that would remain for decades, effectively detaching the area from the urban core. During this period, a number of commercial and light industrial buildings were erected in the neighborhood, chiefly along Piedmont and Winchester Streets. Joining a number of stables and carriage houses already clustered there, the introduction of these uses suggests that the Church Street district was increasingly seen as a less desirable place to live. Indeed, for several decades it seems to have languished as less of a place in its own right than a transitional zone between more important sections of the city. [Fig. 8]

### *Twentieth century changes*

After the Boston & Providence line moved to the newly built South Station in 1899, the



land formerly occupied by its terminal and freight yards became available for redevelopment. This initiative was initially hampered by a lack of immediate demand and later by a diversion of resources arising from U.S. involvement in the First World War. The booming 1920s soon transformed the area, however, as Stuart Street was widened, and new hotel and office buildings went up in Park Square. Once hemmed in by nondescript railyards, the Church Street district found itself next door to a collection of smart new limestone towers. While the neighborhood retained its distinct visual identity, it was no longer isolated from the rest of downtown Boston but rather, newly central both in feeling and in fact. [Fig. 9]

In these interwar years, the proximity of Bay Village to the thriving downtown theater district invited the construction of buildings occupied by firms involved in the motion-picture and entertainment industries. These businesses included both newsreel production facilities and regional film distribution centers for nearly every major Hollywood studio. Art Deco or Moderne in style like the cinemas of the period, most of these buildings have been converted to residential or institutional use but remain in place today. Wholesalers of theater fixtures, concessions and ticketing equipment were also active in the neighborhood well into the last quarter of the twentieth century. [Figs. 10-12]

Beginning as speakeasies prior to the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, fashionable nightclubs flourished here as well. Among them were the Latin Quarter on Winchester Street (owned by Barbara Walters' father Lou) and, on lower Piedmont, the Coconut Grove, where 492 patrons and staff perished in a 1942 fire. (This tragic event has been commemorated by the renaming of Shawmut Street Extension as Coconut Grove Way.) Running the gamut from posh to gritty, gay bars also operated more or less openly in the neighborhood; these included the Punch Bowl, the Napoleon Club, Mario's, 12 Carver Street and Jacques (the only such establishment still present). Thus, for many mid-twentieth century Bostonians, the area was synonymous with nightlife, both high and low. [Figs. 13-18]

After World War II, even as many sections of Boston began to lose residents to outlying communities, certain downtown neighborhoods experienced an inverse phenomenon. Slowly at first, new people were moving in. Whether bored by suburban life and its perceived monotony or enticed by the social and cultural spontaneity of the historic city center, the newcomers brought fresh energy to these neighborhoods. Freed from long



commutes and the expense of automobile ownership, they could take the T or walk to and from their offices downtown. They could also, in theory at least, go out every night, trying new restaurants, or going to the theater or symphony. More often, however, they *organized*: assembling the crime watches, block parties and ad-hoc committees that led eventually to the well-oiled civic associations so familiar and influential today.

It was at this historical moment that urban pioneers both bourgeois and bohemian, straight and gay, began to recognize the charm and convenience of this old but long-overlooked part of the city. Tucked behind bustling Park Square, between the Back Bay and South End, this area was still less than memorably known as the Church Street district. Anticipating that a re-branding might attract more buyers to the area, a local real-estate broker [Fig. 19] coined a new moniker, chosen to reflect the enclave's historic proximity to the South Cove as well as the intimacy of its narrow, tree-lined streets. More importantly, it captured the essence of the place far more vividly than the bland mouthful by which it had long been called. Despite such contrived—and frankly commercial—origins, the novel sobriquet was undeniably apt. And so, like all good nicknames, it stuck: Bay Village it was, and Bay Village it remains.

### **III. Bay Village Becomes a Historic District**

#### *1. Designation*

It was amid this revival of interest in city living that the historic character of Bay Village first came to be appreciated; and with that appreciation came a recognition of the neighborhood's vulnerability to unsympathetic change. This response was by no means an isolated phenomenon: Beacon Hill had won designation as a local historic district in 1955, followed by the Back Bay 11 years later. Recent though these examples were, they nonetheless persuaded many to the benefits of preservation. Following this trend, the early buildings of Bay Village were the focus of a 1969 study by Mary Van Meter. Published in the annual report of the Bostonian Society, this drew still wider attention to the historic visual character of the area. [Fig. 20]

Soon after the creation of the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1975, an official survey of the neighborhood was conducted, including photographic documentation and a brief statement of each property's historic and architectural significance. This effort was followed



by the formation of a mayorally appointed citizens' advisory committee, supported by the Landmarks staff. Working over a period of several years, this group produced a study report on the neighborhood's eligibility for designation. Meant to build an intellectual argument for designation, the report served also to heighten popular support for the measure. Its success on both counts was sealed when the Bay Village Historic District was designated by the Landmarks Commission in 1983. [Figs. 21 & 22]

## *2. The Role of Boundaries*

If comprehensive in many respects, the study report left certain questions unanswered. For example, it proposed as district boundaries Piedmont, Charles Street South, Tremont, Cortes, Berkeley, Isabella and Arlington streets and Marginal Road. Despite these recommendations, however, the map of the district as designated indicates an expanded footprint, extending to include Lyndeboro Place on the east and Shawmut and Stuart streets on the north.

Enigmatically, no rationale for this discrepancy is articulated in the text of the planning document. One can, however, speculate that because these outlying streets possess a handful of early buildings similar to those found in the district's core, it must have seemed reasonable to include them. What seems considerably less clear to today's uninitiated observer is why the north side of Shawmut Street or indeed any segment of the strikingly dissimilar Stuart Street should have been included within the adopted boundaries.

As a planning document, the study report has several noteworthy aspects in its own right. Unsurprisingly, it commends the aesthetic cohesion of streets dominated by buildings in the Federal, Greek Revival and later Victorian styles (found, respectively, on Fayette, Melrose and Isabella and Cortes streets). Additionally, however, the report acknowledges the more heterogeneous character of certain other streets (specifically identified as Winchester, Piedmont and Church). These are observed to be the result of adaptive uses or the presence of the twentieth-century Art Deco or Moderne architectural styles alongside earlier buildings. Unusually, at a time when architectural homogeneity was favored within potential historic districts, the variety of these elements was clearly understood and admired as a tangible record of the neighborhood's vivid past. What might have been regarded in another community as an aesthetic shortcoming was seen in Bay Village as an advantage.



Interestingly, whereas the study report records that 113 neighborhood buildings date from the period between 1824 and 1860, and a further 47 from 1861 to 1900, the area's twentieth-century buildings are numbered at 25. This figure equates to 13 percent of the total, a distinct minority within the ensemble. Architecturally inappropriate or intrusive buildings are not acknowledged; presumably there were too few of these to mention, though one of these was painfully prominent.

As it now exists, the aforementioned "dogleg" section of the district on the north side of Shawmut Street extending to Stuart is partially occupied by only a single building, and a notably intrusive one at that. A former gas station long used as an attendant's booth for a small surface parking lot maintained on the site, this structure would hardly have justified an expansion of the district's footprint. To look at it today, one might well wonder why this area was included within the district boundaries. Those less familiar with the neighborhood would never guess that this eyesore once shared the north side of the street with three interesting buildings of which no trace remains today.

These were a pair of small Greek Revival rowhouses and the remnant of a mid-nineteenth century Gothic church. Given their similarity to the buildings across the street, the inclusion of the houses at 17 & 19 Shawmut Street seems logical and self-evident. Already somewhat shabby looking at the time of the survey in the late 1970s, these buildings later lapsed into a state of extreme neglect and were demolished as dangerous structures in 1999.

If the typicality of these houses governed their inclusion within the district, the building at 212 Stuart Street was an undeniable anomaly. The footprint of the red-brick former church facing Shawmut Street extended farther north, to Stuart; there, its original rear elevation had previously been lost to the widening of the street, and replaced in 1939 with a simple, nominally Moderne-style façade of buff brick. Although the Shawmut Street elevation's gable had been cut down and squared off at that time, enough of its original ecclesiastic appearance must have survived to justify adding it to the newly designated district. But why was the Stuart Street elevation included as well?

Inasmuch as the Stuart Street façade was barely 40 years old and had already been unsympathetically altered at the time of the district's designation, it may well have been



included merely in order to avoid a boundary line running through a building. (This administratively awkward condition exists along the northern periphery of the Beacon Hill Historic District.) Whereas rear elevations are exempt from architectural review in many jurisdictions, the former church possessed two aesthetically independent façades, both of which faced public ways. This fact alone may have presented a regulatory challenge offering no clearer resolution.

Perplexingly, given its prior acknowledgment of the district's later nineteenth- and twentieth-century resources, the study report states, "[f]rom its inception in 1825, Bay Village has been an enclave of small houses." This observation ignores the neighborhood's larger apartment buildings, typically located west of Arlington Street. The statement also fails to consider the role of non-residential buildings, often related to the motion-picture industry, which are present on its core streets.

### *3. The Role of Guidelines*

The regulatory standards, or guidelines, put forward by the Study Committee state their intent "not to freeze the appearance of the district to a certain point of time but, instead, to guide inevitable changes to the buildings composing the district in order to make those changes sensitive to the architectural character of the area and to prevent intrusions of incompatible architectural elements."

In all cases, the Study Report continues, "the design approach to a proposed change . . . should begin with the understanding that the overall character of a district is greater than the sum of its parts, and that a pattern, made up of each building, each landscape element and each detail, exists within a district. It is this aggregate character which is most important." Thus, the purpose of the designation is expressed as the preservation and protection of the distinctive buildings and places located within Bay Village and, significantly, "the encouragement of design compatible therewith."

As the Study Report continues, "In passing upon appropriateness, the commission shall consider, in addition to . . . the historical and architectural value and significance . . . the relationship thereof to the exterior architectural features of other structures in the immediate *neighborhood* [emphasis added]." The last word of that sentence is important, as it connotes an awareness of Bay Village as a locality that exists within a larger context. By



contrast, the use of the word “district” in its place would have indicated that visual reference was to be made to the designated fabric alone.

This language is echoed within the Standards and Criteria’s section on new construction. This short paragraph reads in its entirety as follows: “All new construction or reconstruction is subject to review. Plans submitted for approval must be consistent with *or* complimentary to *historical character and appearance of the neighborhood* [emphases added]. Particular attention will be paid to scale, materials, and rhythm of the street façades.”

The word “neighborhood” re-appears here, reminding us of the district’s participation within a larger urban fabric. More helpfully, two potentially valid pathways to appropriateness are identified as well. The conjunction “or” signifies that appropriateness may in some instances result from the practice of consistency (i.e., replication) and in others, from the pursuit of complementarity (e.g., reinterpretation). Although the standards and criteria do not detail the circumstances in which the one approach may be preferable to the other, a number of possibilities suggest themselves.

First, in that the physical nucleus of Bay Village is also its earliest and most homogeneous portion, new construction within this sub-area might appropriately observe a corresponding fidelity to the existing fabric. Such a course would allow the newly introduced buildings to be absorbed by their older neighbors, whose visual predominance would thus be reinforced.

Second, and as we have also seen, however, the existing buildings at the perimeters of the district often reflect a different pattern. Dissimilar in style and scale to the Federal and Greek Revival houses of Fayette and Melrose streets, these instead often bear a resemblance to the architecture of adjoining areas. Hence the bowfronted Second Empire houses of Cortes Street suggest the South End, and the Queen Anne apartment buildings of Isabella Street evoke those of the Back Bay.

Moreover, some of the twentieth-century buildings on Piedmont and lower Winchester streets are similar to those of the nearby theater district and Chinatown. In each of these instances, the architectural relationship with the neighboring area extends across the district boundary, easing our visual passage from one part of the city to another.



Where these adjoining areas are similar in scale, we barely notice the transition. In other instances, the familiarity of the juxtaposition and the quality of the design itself (as at the Piedmont Street elevation of 100 Arlington Street) serve to erase such discrepancies of scale and material. [Figs. 23 & 24]

A corollary, if somewhat counterintuitive phenomenon may be seen in the Back Bay, South End, Bay State Road and Fort Point Channel districts. In these areas, it is evident that the propinquity of larger buildings immediately outside the boundaries can exert a beneficial effect; namely, by excluding views of aesthetically incongruous areas. In this fashion the presence of a strong edge condition between divergently scaled environments promotes the visual cohesion of both. [Figs. 25-28]

From these local examples we may infer that the proximity of a given site to a district boundary admits the potential legitimacy of a design vocabulary that acknowledges the built character of these adjacent areas. Again, the guidelines' emphasis on what is complementary to the "neighborhood" rather than merely the "district" endorses such an interpretation.

And yet, as if anticipating that this approach could, in less sensitive hands, yield a jarring result, the section concludes, "[p]articular attention will be paid to scale, materials and rhythm of the street façades." This stipulation bears repeating as it is perhaps the tallest order of all, seeming to invite the pursuit of opposing and possibly irreconcilable objectives. Nowhere is this more acute than at the single point of contact between Bay Village and Park Square, which is 212 Stuart Street itself.

#### **IV. 212 Stuart Street**

##### *1. Previous Development*

As discussed above, this currently vacant site was formerly occupied by neglected buildings that the Bay Village Historic District Commission and neighborhood residents had hoped might be preserved. Unfortunately, both 17-19 Shawmut Street and the former 212 Stuart Street itself were demolished at the order of the Commissioner of Inspectional Services as a matter of public safety. [Figs. 29 & 30]



Well prior to the clearance of the 212 Stuart site, however, the Commission had reviewed two ultimately unexecuted redevelopment schemes that proposed the retention of the existing building as the base of substantial vertical additions. While the first of these showed promise, its scope was limited to the 212 Stuart property and the adjoining vacant lots formerly occupied by the 17 & 19 Shawmut Street houses. Presumably the small footprint hampered its financial viability, as the project never advanced beyond conceptual approval.

A second proposal, reviewed in 2008, was able to encompass the abutting surface parking lot and its attendant's booth, which had previously been independently owned. Despite this apparent advantage, an unimaginative design expressed in a confusion of materials was the result; the incorporated remnant of the former church was its sole source of visual interest. (Previous alteration had already rendered the significance of this fragment somewhat arguable, however.) These aesthetic shortcomings, together with an insufficient attention to public-realm improvements, would have yielded only limited success had the project proceeded to execution.

## *2. Transom Real Estate Development*

In contrast to the previous schemes, the present proposal recognizes the opportunity not only to expunge the intrusive parking lot that has long blighted the junction of Bay Village and Park Square but further, to enhance the pedestrian plaza there as a major gateway to the district. This outcome will be accomplished by setting back the ground-floor storefront along Church Street. The pedestrian plaza will not only be more spatially generous as a result; its greater width will be additionally enriched by the introduction of brick pavers, planting beds and tree pits. The visual border will thereby gain a welcome definition, mending what has for too long been a ragged edge. Looking from Bay Village, this promenade will frame a view of the recently restored Statler Park, improving the passage to Stuart Street, while from Stuart, the approach to Bay Village will appear far more inviting.

The design of the building itself also acknowledges the themes of passage and procession; standing Janus-like at this liminal urban portal, it rises from a relatively modest footprint to project an elegantly slender profile. Indeed, when viewed from within the district, its elongated silhouette is absorbed into the backdrop of the Stuart Street skyline. Evening



illumination will discreetly underscore its contribution to our cityscape.

The success of this approach is accomplished in part by its perpendicular articulation. As the building meets the sky, a vertical inflection point divides the whole into two complementary halves, relieving any sense of monumentality, particularly from longer views. A corresponding gesture occurs at grade along Church Street, where the undercut lower floors allow a more generous pedestrian plaza, described above, whose inviting 26-foot canopy is formed by the projection of the upper stories. Equivalent in area to the square footage of three floors, these vertical and horizontal offsets do far more to enhance the relationship of the building to both Bay Village and Stuart Street than any reduction in overall height could meaningfully accomplish.

Favoring re-interpretation over imitation as it surveys Stuart Street, the building avoids narrow historicism but instead quotes from the rectilinear massing and monochromatic palette of its neighbors there. It also nods to the district's own handful of limestone and buff-brick examples, notably the former Twentieth Century-Fox building at Fayette Street and Broadway, now occupied by the Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace, and the Columbia Pictures building at Church and Melrose streets.

This responsiveness to context enables the building's height of 199 feet to provide a welcome transition between the 167-foot height of The Arlington, at the southeast corner of Stuart and Arlington Streets, and the 226-foot height of the Revere Hotel at the southwest corner of Stuart Street and Charles Street South. It will further provide both a transition and visual screen to the heavily glazed tower now being proposed at the roof of the historic Motor Mart garage, which stands just outside the district.

Perhaps still more appreciably, the horizontal coursing displays subtle variations on the north and south façades. Responding to the different scale mirrored by each elevation, the two are expressed inventively as a succession of horizontal courses or tiers. Six in number at the north elevation (facing Stuart Street) and seven at the south (facing Shawmut Street), these tiers allow the building to relate to the dissimilar milieus of those streets while remaining a cohesive aesthetic composition. [Figs. 31 & 32]

This pleasing effect is particularly evident at the south elevation, where the uppermost course (enclosing the mechanical penthouse) is set back to acknowledge the more modest



scale of Bay Village. Scalloped piers whose concavities recall the fluting of classical columns occur at staggered positions along each course; these provide both a vertical counterpoint to the horizontality of the tiers and a dynamic play of light and shade.

At Shawmut Street, where the unsympathetically altered fragment of the former church once stood, the façade has been enlivened further with a series of private entrances. Their recessed stoops and iron gateways recall those of the rowhouses opposite, reinterpreting rather than replicating a familiar characteristic of the area. Similarly, the location of the building's transformers to the basement level and its loading dock to the Stuart Street elevation lends animation along the full Shawmut Street frontage. The latter is enriched further by fine-grained masonry details, ornamental ironwork and planters.

The integration of these features demonstrates an observant study of the proportions, materials and details that characterize the unique neighborhood that is Bay Village. As the authors of the guidelines understood so wisely more than thirty years ago, the word "neighborhood" embraces both the historic district, its immediate environs and the wider city beyond. So, too, does the new 212 Stuart Street.





1. The Federal-style houses of Fayette Street are the oldest in Bay Village



2. The simpler, more rectilinear details of these Melrose Street houses typify the Greek Revival style





3. The State House and Park Street Church were new when Bay Village was first developed



4. Skilled craftsmen, including the makers of pianos like this one, were among the neighborhood's early residents





5. The bow-fronted rowhouses of Cortes Street resemble those of the South End



6. Ruskin Gothic-style apartment buildings on Isabella Street would be equally at home in the Back Bay





7. To relieve tidal flooding, the neighborhood's streets were raised in 1868



8. The Boston & Providence Railroad Terminal at Park Square; Bay Village visible at right





9. After World War I, Park Square was redeveloped rapidly



10. When the neighborhood was Boston's Hollywood hub, United Artists had an outpost





11. This building was long occupied by Twentieth-Century Fox



12. Not to be outdone, Columbia Pictures had a local presence as well





13. The Latin Quarter on Winchester Street was long a premier nightspot



14. The vaudeville legend was a favorite headliner at her friend Lou Walters's Latin Quarter





15. Paper palm trees lined the dance floor at the Coconut Grove on Piedmont Street



16. The Coconut Grove after the fatal fire of November 28, 1942





17. The Punch Bowl catered to a different clientele

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18. So did the Napoleon Club



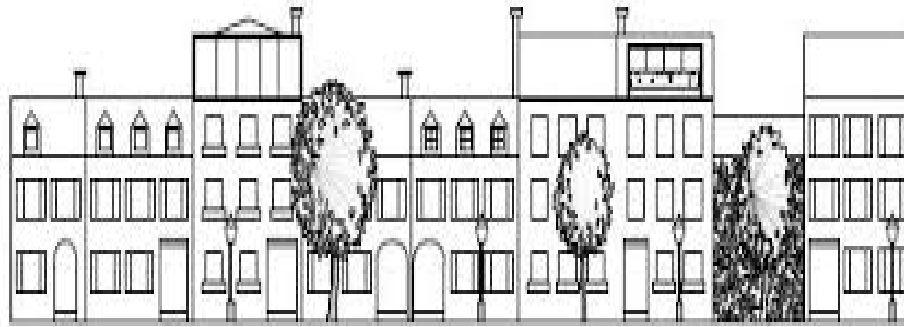


19. Real estate broker Betty Gibson is credited with coining the name Bay Village



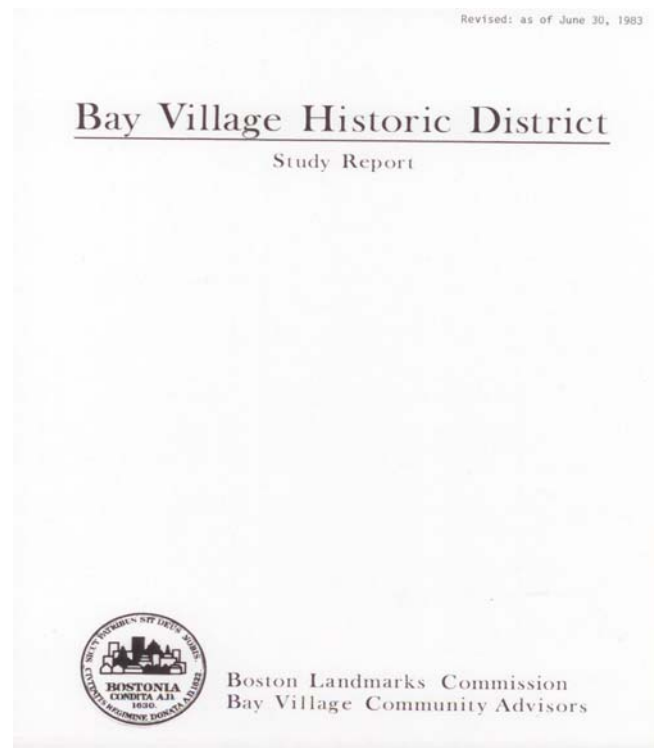
20. Though already a destination, Bay Village was not yet a district





## BAY VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

21. The neighborhood association supported historic protection



22. The cover of the report that led to the designation





23. Though much taller than the Bay Village context, 100 Arlington Street has been a comfortable neighborhood presence for nearly a hundred years



24. At pedestrian level, 100 Arlington Street's handsome materials and rich detail reflect the intimacy of the residential neighborhood





25. The larger-scale buildings of Boylston Street underscore the character of Newbury Street

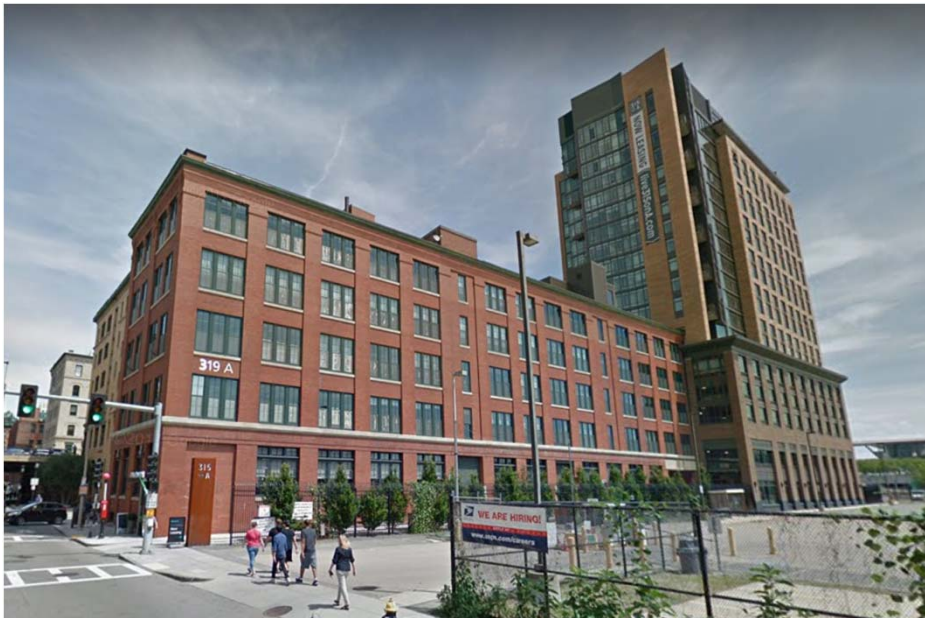


26. Though built on a South End rooftop, this setback addition appears to stand somewhere behind its historic neighbors





27. Large institutional buildings on Comm. Ave. rim the turn-of-the-century rowhouses of Bay State Road



28. New construction exists benignly alongside the historic warehouses of Fort Point Channel





29. The much-altered former church and publishing house at 212 Stuart Street eventually became a restaurant



30. Demolition in progress





31. A new neighbor: 212 Stuart Street in context, view north from Church Street at Fayette



32. A new gateway: enhanced Church Street pedestrian plaza, view south from Stuart Street and Statler Park