

RICHARDSON BLOCK

BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION

STUDY REPORT



Petition #132.87
Boston Landmarks Commission
Office of Historic Preservation
City of Boston

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Report on the Potential Designation of

Richardson Block
109 - 151 Pearl Street, Boston, Massachusetts

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

Approved by:



November 3, 2023

Rosanne Foley, Executive Director

Date

Approved by:



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Bradford C. Walker, Chair

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Draft report posted on *November 3, 2023*

Cover image: Richardson Block, Pearl and High Streets, May 29, 2023, by Wendy Frontiero

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INTRODUCTION

The designation of the Richardson Block was initiated in 1987 after nine petitions for the individual addresses were submitted by registered voters to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the block-long property under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. The purpose of such a designation is to recognize and protect a physical feature or improvement that in whole or part has historical, cultural, social, architectural, or aesthetic significance.

Summary

The Richardson Block is historically significant at the local, state, and regional levels for its associations with the development of New England's nationally prominent leather industry, which was headquartered in Boston. The Richardson Block is also architecturally significant as an extraordinary example of a unified architectural composition for an entire city block of commercial buildings; as a rare example of small-scale, Neo-Grec architecture; for its use of a marble façade on a mercantile building; and as the accomplishment of a nationally known architect, William G. Preston. Large-scale redevelopment in the Central Business District poses a threat to the survival of this intimately proportioned historic block.

This study report contains Standards and Criteria that have been prepared to guide future physical changes to the property in order to protect its integrity and character.

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1.0 LOCATION

1.1 Address

According to the City of Boston's Assessing Department, the Richardson Block is located on nine parcels bounded by Pearl Street, Purchase Street, Gridley Street, and High Street in Boston, Massachusetts, 02110.

1.2 Assessor's Parcel Numbers

The Assessor's Parcel Numbers are:

0304179000; 0304180000; 0304181000; 0304182000; 0304183006; 0304184010; 0304185000; 0304186000; 0304187000.

1.3 Area in which Property is Located

The Richardson Block is composed of nine attached marble and brick buildings situated at the eastern edge of the Financial District of downtown Boston's Central Business District. Fort Point Channel is located approximately two blocks to the southeast and Post Office Square is one block to the northwest. The nine building units in the block are listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (BOS.1939, BOS.1940, BOS.1941, BOS.1942, BOS.1942, BOS.1943, BOS.16597, BOS.16598, BOS.16599, BOS.1944 - NRIND 1986); it also comprises part of the Gridley Street National Register Historic District (BOS.ABS, NRDIS 2014).

1.4 Map Showing Location



Figure 1. Map showing the boundaries of parcel numbers 0304179000, 0304180000, 0304181000, 0304182000, 0304183006, 0304184010, 0304185000, 0304186000, and 0304187000.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Type and Use

The nine attached commercial buildings of the Richardson Block were constructed after the Great Fire of 1872 in 1873, 1875-1876, and 1885 for mercantile use, combining display and warehouse/storage space. Since that time, the block has been in continuous commercial use. At present it is occupied by office, food service, and retail functions. Residential uses now exist in two of the buildings (137-139 Pearl St. and 145-147 Pearl St.).

2.2 Physical Description of the Resource

The Richardson Block occupies a gently sloping site approximately midway between Post Office Square and Fort Point Channel. The property consists of nine attached marble and brick commercial buildings that represent a unified architectural design. The long, narrow site is bounded by Pearl St. on the northeast, Purchase St. on the southeast, Gridley St. on the southwest, and High St. on the northwest. The principal façades face Pearl St., with secondary façades on High St. and Purchase St., and rear walls facing Gridley St.

Most of downtown Boston's historic streetscapes contain either an aggregation of individual building designs or a continuous row of uniform buildings. The architect for the Richardson Block, however, designed the block-long streetscape as one monumental composition, with a pedimented center section (129-131 Pearl St.) flanked by repetitive, nearly identical structures (121-125 and 133-147 Pearl St.) and terminating in five-bay end buildings. The two corners at the High St. intersection are beveled single-bay corners (113 and 151 Pearl St.). Although the block was conceived as a unified, large-scale design by a single architect, the parcels were sold individually and constructed separately. The 1885 red brick building at 115-117 Pearl St. represents a contrasting but compatible infill structure by a later architect, which was inserted between two existing buildings on two still-vacant lots more than a decade after the rest of the block.

Each building of the Richardson Block is a three-bay or two-bay unit organized into nine discrete structures separated by party walls. The Pearl St. façades' common design theme originally included ground-floor storefronts with decorative cast iron piers and pilasters; most had marble façades with incised ornament in the window enframements; a variety of flat, triangular, and segmentally arched decorative lintels; and continuous marble sill courses, string courses, and cornice molding. The original cornice for the entire block was apparently cast iron with ornamental molded brackets. Remaining original cornice is still found atop 129-133 Pearl St., with a pediment on the middle unit at 131 Pearl St., which also has "Richardson Block" engraved into the façade. See the following section on individual building units for further details.

Reflecting the slight slope of the street down to the east, there is a gradual step-down in storefront levels from west to east, while the top story and cornice line remain constant. The secondary façades on High and Purchase streets are clad in brick with marble belt courses and decorative brick trim. The corners of the block display varied shapes: the two corners facing High St. are beveled, with marble facing; the Pearl St./Purchase St. corner is rounded and also faced with marble; and the Purchase St./Gridley St. corner displays a conventional 90-degree angle of red brick walls. The rear (Gridley St.) elevations are constructed of brick with plain brick trim. Monumental granite slabs

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paving forms the sidewalk in front of 123-127, 129-131, and 141-143 Pearl St.; they are punctuated by three early metal and glass coal hole covers.

The architectural design of the Richardson Block is largely intact and well preserved, although most of the window openings contain modern 1/1 replacement sash and marble window trim that has suffered from weathering. Although all of the storefront windows and entrances have been extensively altered, most of the original piers, pilasters, and lintels remain. Several storefronts, at 137-139 Pearl and 141 Pearl St., still retain their historic cast iron stairs with circular glass vault lights. The original roof edges, too, have typically been modified, with many sections of the original metal cornice removed and modern parapets added. A modern glass penthouse has been added to the corner building at 119 High St.

Gridley St. currently serves primarily as a service alley for delivery loading and unloading at the Richardson Block. Its ground level contains decorative cast iron storefront frames, while the upper levels are utilitarian in design. The ground level of the block has ornamental iron storefront frameworks similar to the original Pearl St. façades. The upper floors, however, are clad with rough red brick and have segmentally arched windows with utilitarian trim. The rear elevations of all nine buildings typically feature cast iron piers with granite bases framing the original loading dock openings (now blocked in) at the ground level with dressed granite lintels above; plain brick walls; a mixture of window sash (some 2/2 is extant); segmentally arched window openings with gauged brick lintels; pintels for metal shutters; and plain corbelled brick cornices. The five-story building at 125 Pearl St. has corbelled brick brackets at its eave. A penthouse addition visible on the rear of 137-139 Pearl St. is clad with vertical-seam metal siding. Brick piers at the base of the party walls rise from a granite block at grade and a decorative metal shaft, culminating in a corbelled top supporting the granite storefront lintels, which step down from west to east with the slope of the land. Granite steps survive in several locations. This much-altered and poorly maintained elevation displays considerable modern infill (especially at ground level), blocking in of original openings, utilitarian metal fire escapes, and mechanical equipment.

Individual Buildings

119 High St. (1873)

The original building at 119 High St. rises four stories above a raised basement to a flat roof; a modern glazed penthouse level was added in the late 20th century. The structure has primary façades on both Pearl and High streets (five and six bays, respectively), with beveled corner bays on High St. The Pearl St. façade and both beveled corner bays are faced with marble while the High St. façade is brick with marble trim. A continuous granite lintel at the storefront level extends across both façades. Window jambs and lintels feature delicate, incised floral ornament.

The Pearl St. storefront is framed at the east end and beveled corner by wide, rusticated cast iron pilasters; decorative cast iron piers contain modern storefront glazing and entrances. Window enframements on the second floor alternate flat and triangular pediments over rectangular openings; the third floor features segmentally arched openings; and the fourth floor has rectangular openings, all with molded continuous sill courses. Marble pilasters at the east end of the building at the corner bay are rusticated on the second floor and paneled on the third and fourth stories; they display anthemion ornamentation above the second floor and incised floral ornament above the fourth floor. Star washers are set at the second and third stories of the building.

The High St. elevation contrasts sharply with the more delicate Pearl St. façade in materials and detailing, featuring a design that is more complex than the repetitive array of fenestration that characterizes the Pearl St. façades. The High St. wall is clad in brick and trimmed with a variety of continuous marble banding and sill courses with bands of corbelled and sawtooth brickwork. Its symmetrical composition contains a slightly projecting center pavilion with four window bays. On

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the ground floor, this pavilion contains a modern (late 20th century) storefront entrance recessed at an angle in the center bay, flanking wall sections having modern brick bands alternating with recessed metal C-channels, and historic wall-mounted light fixtures. A two-story, segmentally arched bay at the second and third floors of the pavilion contains paired windows with marble sills and lintels, and a marble plaque with the inscription “1873” at the third floor. Flanking this arched opening on each side is a narrow, two-story bay with metal spandrel panels. At the fourth floor, four rectangular windows are framed with plain marble trim. The end bays of this façade contain segmentally arched window openings topped with gauged brick lintels. The storefront on the corner of High and Gridley streets is detailed in a similar fashion to the Pearl St. storefront, with decorative cast iron pilasters, rusticated piers, and a recessed corner entrance.

The original architectural drawings¹ show entrances in the first three bays of Pearl St. and, at the top of the façade, a scrolled bracketed cornice surmounted by a hipped metal roof and wrought iron cresting, which may have disappeared with the installation of an aluminum parapet wall above the fourth floor in 1958. A fifth-floor penthouse was added ca. 1990, employing metal and glass curtain wall construction; its appearance does not impair the architectural integrity of the original building.

115-119 Pearl St. (1885)

The red brick building at 115-119 Pearl St. rises five stories above a raised basement to a flat roof. The six-bay façade is divided into two groups of three bays, perhaps reflecting its original layout as two separate parcels. This well-preserved façade features a modest Victorian commercial style with unusual touches of decorative brick and stonework. The intact storefront frame consists of decorative cast iron piers supporting a cast iron lintel with cornice molding.

At the upper levels, continuous sandstone courses (flush with the brick surface) join the window sills and lintels. The window openings are rectangular. Their lintels have a slight arch effect carved into the bottom edge, and small spheres are carved into the underside of the lintels on the third and fourth floors. The window jambs are cut away and ornamented by decorative brick corbelling at the top and bottom. The wider center pier is articulated by a vertical line of sawtooth brick at each level. Star washers are located between the bays in the lintel course above the second, third, and fourth floors. The cornice features a brick parapet with decoratively arcaded corbelling; the end piers rise above the cornice and are inset at cornice level with square terra-cotta panels.

115-119 Pearl St. is an early insert within an otherwise unified architectural composition. Its incongruity in height and façade materials is balanced by its maintenance of other architectural themes of the adjacent structures in the Richardson Block, in an early attempt by the architect, George W. Pope to harmonize with the strong character of the neighbors, yet make a distinctive visual statement.

123-127 Pearl St. (1875-1876)

The building at 123-127 Pearl St. rises four stories above a raised basement to a flat roof. Its three-bay Pearl St. façade is faced with marble and divided horizontally by a molded stringcourse between the second and third floors and molded, continuous sill courses. A marble cornice molding runs above the fourth floor, surmounted by a cast iron cornice with a molded fascia and modillion brackets.

The storefront is composed of decorative cast iron piers supporting a metal lintel with molded cornice, and modern display windows and base panels. A recessed entrance is set into the west bay, accessed by metal steps.

¹ Boston Public Library, Fine Arts section, William G. Preston's Drawings, v. 12

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Ornamentation of the marble façade is nearly identical to that of 133 and 137-139 Pearl St., which have slightly more robust window trim at the second and third stories. Upper-level fenestration consists of rectangular window openings and delicate, incised floral ornament on the window jambs and lintels. Flat cornice moldings surmount the second floor windows.

129-131 Pearl St. (1873)

The building at 129-131 Pearl St. rises four stories above a raised basement to a flat roof. The three-bay Pearl St. is faced with marble and divided horizontally by a molded stringcourse between the second and third floors and molded, continuous sill courses. A marble cornice molding runs above the fourth floor, surmounted by a cast iron cornice with a molded fascia and modillion brackets. As the centerpiece of the Richardson Block, this structure is accented by a triangular pediment with a palmette acroterion at the peak.

Marble pilasters are rusticated on the second level and paneled on the upper floors with anthemion motifs between the second and third levels. A marble panel carved with the words “Richardson Block” is set between the third and fourth floors.

The storefront at 129-131 Pearl St. has decorative cast iron piers (wider at the outside edges) and modern display windows and doorway. A high metal panel above the storefront may conceal the original lintel and cornice. The recessed entrance is set in the west bay, accessed by metal steps.

Upper-level fenestration consists of rectangular openings on the second and fourth floors and segmentally arched openings on the third floors, all with rectangular sash and delicate, incised floral ornament on the jambs and lintels. The second-floor windows have pedimented cornices. The windows of the Gridley St. elevation for these buildings currently are infilled.

133, 137-139, and 141-143 Pearl St. (1873)

The buildings at 133, 137-139, and 141-143 Pearl St. exhibit a cohesive design. All three buildings rise four stories above a raised basement to a flat roof. Their three-bay Pearl St. façades are faced with marble and divided horizontally by a molded stringcourse between the second and third floors and molded, continuous sill courses. A marble cornice molding runs above the fourth floor, surmounted by a cast iron cornice with a molded fascia and modillion brackets at number 133 and a replacement brick parapet at 137-139 and 141-143. Historic cast iron stairs with vault lights are still extant.

The storefront at 133 Pearl St. is completely coated with a stucco parging, although its cornice molding is intact. It features two tall, individual window openings and a recessed entrance at the west bay. Original cast iron piers may be concealed underneath. The storefront at 137-139 contains decorative cast iron piers (wider at the outside edges) with a wide, plain metal lintel above and modern doors and display window. Its west bay contains a recessed entrance accessed by metal steps; a newer, slightly recessed entrance has been inserted into its east bay. The storefront at 141-143 is composed of modern brick and stucco infill with decorative timber framing and stucco cladding at the top. The west bay of this storefront contains a recessed entrance accessed by metal steps.

Upper-level fenestration consists of rectangular openings on the second and fourth floors and segmentally arched openings on the third floor, all with rectangular sash and delicate, incised floral ornament on the jambs and lintels. The second-floor windows have a heavier cornice molding than the comparable windows at 123-127 Pearl St., and the third-floor window lintels are shaped with a slightly higher center section rather than a uniformly flat lintel.

145-147 and 149-151 Pearl St. (1873)

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These two buildings were composed as a unit with similar fenestration and trim details and are more elaborate than most of the inner structures in the block. Both buildings rise four stories above a raised basement to a flat roof. Each structure has a three-bay façade along Pearl St. (including the rounded corner at Purchase St.) that is faced with marble and divided horizontally by a molded stringcourse between the second and third floors and has molded, continuous sill courses. The three western-most windows on the fourth floor at 145-147 Pearl St. are surrounded by a brick area, by fragments of a marble cornice molding and a replacement brick parapet. A parged brick parapet culminates at the top of 149-151 Pearl St.

The storefront at 145-147 Pearl St. is composed of decorative cast iron piers and wider cast iron paneled pilasters on the outside edges (one fluted, one rusticated) that support a high metal lintel. The storefront windows and entry are modern infill. A recessed entrance is set in its west bay, accessed by modern brick and granite veneer steps. The storefront at 149-151 Pearl St. features rusticated cast iron piers and modern brick infill. Its west bay contains a recessed entrance accessed by modern brick and granite veneer steps. The corner entrance at Pearl and Purchase streets has a metal door and a metal entablature.

Upper-level fenestration consists of rectangular openings on the second and fourth floors, and segmentally arched openings on the third floors, all with rectangular sash and delicate, incised floral ornament on the marble jambs and lintels. The second-floor windows have pedimented cornices above. The horizontal banding on 149-151 features more elaborate sill courses, belt courses, and lintel courses than other buildings in the Richardson Block. Marble pilasters at the outer edges of the upper levels and framing the curved corner bay are rusticated on the second floor and paneled on the third and fourth floors, with modillion brackets, anthemion motifs, floral roundels, and incised floral ornament in various locations.

The Purchase St. façade of 149-151 Pearl St. is faced with brick. Its four window bays are articulated by flat, marble banding between the brick window lintels at the basement through third floors. A band of decorative sawtooth brickwork supplements the marble band above the second floor openings. Fenestration on the Purchase St. façade varies from floor to floor. The raised basement level features segmentally arched window openings (now mostly filled in) with gauged brick lintels. Windows on the first floor are rectangular, with flat, corbelled lintels; windows on the upper levels have segmental arches with gauged brick lintels.

2.3 Contemporary Images



Figure 2. Pearl Street (left) and High Street (right) elevations. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

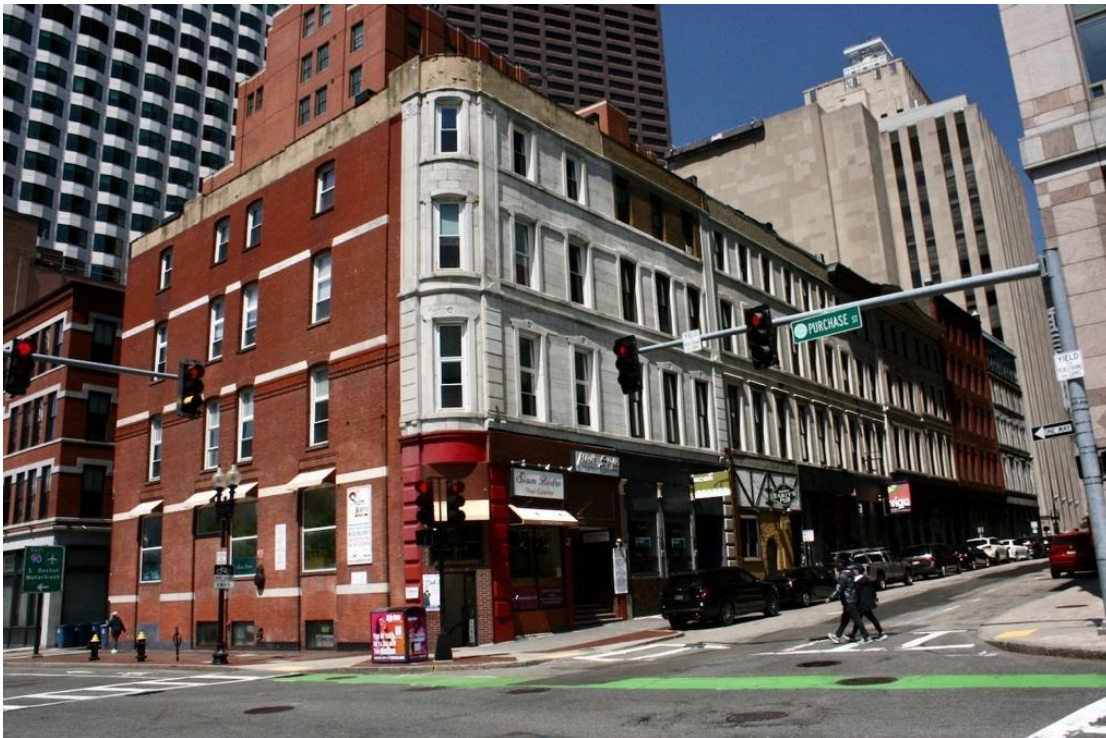


Figure 3. Purchase Street (left) and Pearl Street (right) elevations. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 4. Gridley Street (rear) elevation of the Richardson Block, looking toward Purchase Street. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

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Figure 5. 119 High St. (left) and Gridley Street (right) elevations. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

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Figure 6. 119 High St.: Pearl Street (left) and High Street (right) façades. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

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Figure 7. 115-119 Pearl St. and 119 High St. façades. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

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Figure 8. From left 151-115 Pearl St. façades. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 9. From left, façades at 147-115 Pearl St. and 119 High St. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 10. 129-131 Pearl St. storefront. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 11. 129-131 Pearl St. storefront detail. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 12. 129-131 Pearl St. façade, upper levels and roof edge. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 13. 115-119 Pearl St. façade. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 14. Upper levels and roof edge, 115-119 Pearl St. façade. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 15. 149-151 Pearl St., Purchase Street elevation. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

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Figure 16. 149-151 Pearl St., Purchase Street façade detail. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 17. Façade of 119 High St. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

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Figure 18. 119 High Street: Penthouse addition. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 19. Gridley Street elevations, looking toward High Street. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 20. Gridley Street elevations of 123-127 and 129-131 Pearl St. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.



Figure 21. Gridley Street elevation of 115-119 Pearl St. Photograph by Wendy Frontiero, June 2023.

2.4 Historical Maps and Images



Figure 22. 1867 Sanborn map. Sanborn, D. A., -1883, Cartographer. Insurance map of Boston. Volume 1. New York: D. A. Sanborn, 1867. Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010593241/>

Source: Library of Congress. Accessed June 2023.

[illegible]

https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03693_002/

Source: Library of Congress. Accessed June 2023.

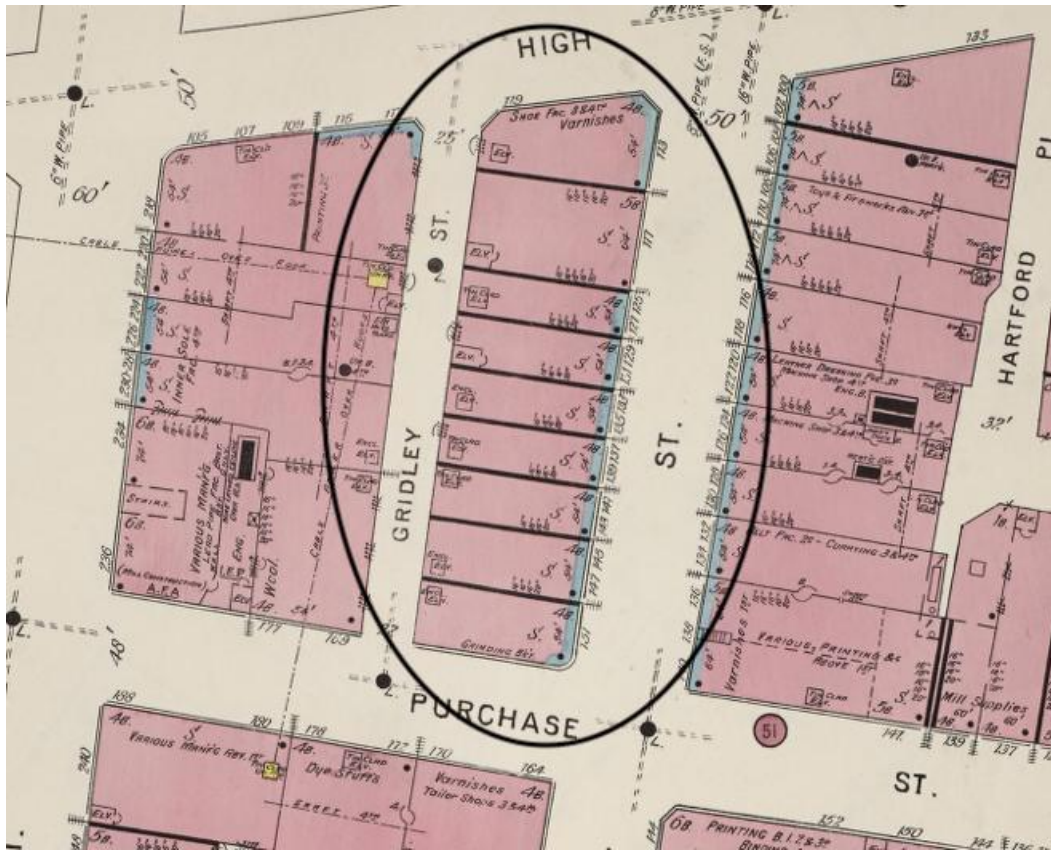


Figure 24. 1895 Sanborn Map. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Boston, Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Sanborn Map Company, Vol. 1, 1895. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03693_008/

Source: Library of Congress. Accessed June 2023.

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Historic Significance

The Richardson Block represents a moment in the 19th century evolution of New England's leather industry, which was headquartered in Boston. This elegant, small-scale structure illustrates a period of economic development that bridged the transition from private, small-scale production to large-scale factory production. Today, this area of Boston's Central Business District that was once home to the region's leather industry is mostly characterized by high-rise office buildings constructed of concrete, metal, and glass. The Richardson Block is also an important example of the work of local architect William Gibbons Preston, who was well known in Massachusetts and New England, as well as in other parts of the country, especially Savannah, Georgia.

The immediate area surrounding the Richardson Block was originally known to European settlers as Fort Field, a large, open area that was used for grazing animals. The land sloped upward to Fort Hill, one of Boston's three original hills and part of the original Shawmut Peninsula. During the 17th century, settlement of this area was sparse and included the eponymous fortifications at the summit of the hill and a battery at its base. Industrial uses such as ropewalks were also established,

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capitalizing on the area's proximity to the harbor. Residential settlement increased by the end of the 17th century, and most of the present streets were laid out and lined with houses by the time of the Revolution.

After the Revolutionary War, land uses in the area changed dramatically. The ropewalks burned in a massive 1794 fire and were rebuilt near Boston Common, while the hilltop fort was removed and its site turned into a landscaped park in 1797. A new period of population growth in the city led to the creation of a fashionable and wealthy residential district here through the early 19th century, characterized by large brick mansions surrounded by generous gardens. Concurrently, greater numbers of wharves began to appear at the waterfront along the southeast side of Purchase St., serving Boston's lucrative China trade and other maritime industries, and foreshadowing later economic and development trends.

Area residents in this period included Thomas Handasyd Perkins (1764-1854), a slave trader and leading merchant in the China trade as well as a philanthropist; and Josiah Quincy III (1772-1864), who was a U.S. representative from 1805-1813, mayor of Boston from 1823-1828, and president of Harvard College from 1829-1845. Jeffrey Richardson II, owner of one of the burned ropewalks, built a substantial home on the site of the Richardson Block in the late 1790s.

The decade and a half between 1830 and 1845 was a period of tremendous growth and prosperity in Boston. For a short time in the 1820s and 1830s, prestigious institutions such as the Boston Athenaeum and the New England Institution for the Education of the Blind were drawn to Fort Hill. By the 1840s, however, the growing value of the land for commercial and industrial purposes caused both wealthy residents and these social and cultural institutions to move farther west in Boston.

Broad St., now part of Atlantic Avenue, was laid out in the 1830s and soon was lined with wharves that were the focus of Boston's prosperous shipping industry. The Fort Hill area was converted to tenements for Boston's rapidly growing immigrant population (particularly the Irish) and quickly became a densely occupied slum. Prompted by unhealthy living conditions and the desire for a larger commercial district, the city leveled Fort Hill between 1866 and 1872 and filled in land along the water to create Atlantic Avenue in 1868.

Boston became a distribution center for the shoe and leather industry in the early 19th century, when much of the manufacturing was still carried on in central shops in outlying towns and marketed by Boston merchants. As early as 1828, total sales from Boston jobbers (i.e., wholesale merchants) exceeded \$1 million. Boston's leather industry originally clustered around Quincy Market and the North End but began to move southward to Pearl St. by 1849, with the result that "block after block of dwellings on High St. were leveled to make room for warehouses."² In the early 1860s, Jeffrey Richardson III, having inherited the property from his father, built a terrace of eleven granite-fronted commercial buildings along Pearl St., which he then sold to merchants (it is probable that the current structure was named to honor Jeffrey Richardson III, in deference to his having built the earlier terraced structure).³ Confirming the importance of the translocation of the shoe and leather industry, the New England Shoe and Leather Association was headquartered at 107 Pearl St. by 1869. A 19th-century history observed that, "Until 1872, Pearl Street was the greatest boot and shoe market in the world."⁴

Massachusetts continued to be a regional and national center for the production of leather products through the 19th and early 20th centuries, as technology changed from the central shop system to

² Mikhail Koch, National Register nomination for the Leather District (1983): 8-1.

³ Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS), BOS.1939, Richardson Block, Inventory Form B Continuation Sheet.

⁴ Quoted in BLC Building Information Form for 113 Pearl St (1980): 2.

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large-scale factory production. In the 1830s, the Greater Boston area manufactured one-third of the country's total output of boots and shoes. By the end of the Civil War, New England produced about 80 percent of all shoes for domestic markets, and Boston's trade in leather goods was valued at more than \$50 million. Although manufacturing was still typically conducted outside of the city, Boston was a center for technological innovation, trading, and marketing.

Boston was New England's dominant urban, industrial, and commercial center during the late 19th century. It was therefore particularly stunning when the Great Fire of November 8-10, 1872, destroyed 776 buildings on 65 acres of land between Washington, Milk, Broad, and Summer streets. A contemporary newspaper account described the immediate effect:

Embraced within this district was the entire wholesale trade in clothing, dry goods, boots and shoes, leather and wool, and a large share of the trade in fancy goods, hardware and crockery. . . . For a time trade was dispersed into strange localities, tenements were transformed into salesrooms, every vacant inch of store room within a mile radius was made available, and a temporary colony of corrugated iron buildings sprang up like mushrooms on the Fort Hill territory for the accommodation of the boot, shoe, leather, and iron trade.⁵

The area was quickly and densely rebuilt with mercantile and warehouse buildings, and leather-related enterprises continued to occupy the area around Pearl and High streets. Hide and leather companies proliferated, along with sales offices and showrooms of wholesale boot and shoe manufacturers. However, the district soon began expanding southward to Summer St., around Church Green. By the early 1880s the whole industry was moving into much larger-scale buildings in the blocks in the present Leather District around South Station. By 1889, the firms occupying most of the Richardson Block sold novelties and patent medicines. Only a few leather-related businesses remained and these dealt mostly in harnesses and saddlery, rather than the larger boot and shoe trade.

Recovery from the 1872 fire occupied the energy and talent of Boston's leading architects of the period, who produced many high style "commercial palaces" that set a standard for the Boston region. Among the most distinctive styles employed in the first decade of rebuilding were polychrome Ruskinian Gothic and the French-influenced Neo-Grec. These structures were generally four to five stories high with stone façades and prominent ground-floor storefronts. Their high-style designs are typically detailed with decorative cast iron or carved stone piers, banded courses, decorative cornices, and mansard roofs. Most of these structures originally housed commercial and display spaces on the ground and second floors, and light manufacturing and storage on the upper floors.

French academic architecture and urban design was an important theme for the post-fire reconstruction, influenced by Baron Eugene Haussmann's transformation of Paris in the 1850s and brought to America by architects who had studied abroad. Streets in the commercial district were widened; principles of uniform scale, modular rhythms, and monumental streetscapes were employed; and Neo-Grec styling was fashionable in new development. The style typically was executed in brick and cast iron, but marble was also used to evoke a more classical appearance.

A contemporary newspaper article commented that "the southerly side of Pearl street compares well with the opposite side. . . . [T]he combined architectural display when all the gaps shall have been filled will entitle the street to rank as one of the finest in the business section of the city."⁶ The article noted that "From High street to Purchase street the several stores are to have a façade in common, and the entire block is to be called 'Richardson's Block.' The central store of the block and

⁵ "Memoirs of Boston's Great Fire of 1872" from *Boston Morning Journal* – Volume XL – Number 13, 509.

⁶ *Boston Daily Globe*, Oct 10, 1873.

all those between it and Purchase street are completed. The store at the corner of High and Purchase street is in progress and two or three lots are yet vacant. The architect is Mr. W. G. Preston.”⁷

The individual structures that comprise the Richardson Block were designed as a unified, monumental composition by a single architect, William B. Preston; however, the parcels were sold individually and constructed separately. All but one of these structures was developed between 1873 and 1876 according to Preston’s original design for the streetscape. The last part of the Richardson Block to be constructed, 115-119 Pearl St., was designed by George W. Pope and inserted into an unbuilt portion of Preston’s marble-fronted streetscape, illustrating a not uncommon 19th-century practice of ownership and construction.

3.2 Architectural (or Other) Significance

The Richardson Block is illustrative of Boston’s regionally and nationally prominent industrial history in the late 19th century. It also represents a fine early example of the work of an architect important to the commercial, institutional, and residential development of Boston and the surrounding region, and a second architect who made profound contributions to the development of working-class housing during Boston’s exponential population growth in the late 19th century. The Richardson Block is significant as an uncommon survivor of the initial, small-scale reconstruction of Boston’s downtown business district after the Great Fire of 1872; as an extraordinary example of a unified architectural composition for an entire city block of commercial buildings; and as a rare example of the use of marble for a mercantile façade in Boston and New England.

The restrained and elegant forms, composition, and detailing of the Richardson Block were strongly influenced by French architectural ideas brought to Boston by architects who had studied in Paris. The Neo-Grec style generally interpreted antique architectural themes in brick and cast iron, although marble was occasionally used to evoke a more classical appearance. Typical of the Neo-Grec style are the building’s pedimented and segmentally arched windows, flat pilasters, the horizontal emphasis of the façade (through fenestration and banding), and ornament such as acroteria and incised floral details. Less than a dozen buildings in this style are known in Boston, all of which were similarly constructed in the 1870s. Very few of these early post-Fire buildings survive in the Central Business District, where they are now dwarfed by modern skyscrapers.

The Richardson Block is not as elaborate as many of the post-Fire buildings or as many of Preston’s later buildings. However, its modest scale was proportional to contemporary surrounding development and to its narrow site, and its relative simplicity may have been influenced by an accelerated design and construction schedule for post-Fire economic recovery. Nonetheless, it is distinctive as a well-conceived and finely articulated design that addresses the scale of an entire block.

William G. Preston, architect

William Gibbons Preston (1842-1910) was a highly prominent and particularly versatile architect in Boston during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. His work is distinguished by a portfolio of prominent public buildings and consistently high-quality designs in a variety of fashionable architectural styles. The son of noted Boston architect, Jonathan Preston (1801-1888), William Preston was associated with many important residential, commercial, and institutional buildings primarily in Boston and eastern Massachusetts, but also in Georgia, Washington D.C., and Rhode Island. Examples of his work are also found in New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, South Carolina, and New Mexico.

⁷ Boston Daily Globe, Oct 10, 1873

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Preston attended Harvard University, studied architecture in Paris (some sources say he attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts) and also trained under his father.⁸ He is one of four Boston architects who studied in Paris in the 1860s (along with Henry H. Richardson), bringing back an appreciation for French classicism strongly reflected in his early work. Listed in Boston directories after 1861, Preston's first major commissions included the Museum of Natural History building in the Back Bay and the companion Rogers Building for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (its first building at its original Back Bay campus; not extant) in 1863 and 1864, respectively.

Other major commissions in Boston quickly followed, including some of the early houses in the Back Bay (beginning in the 1860s), and the original section of the Hotel Vendome, also in the Back Bay (one of the earliest and most elegant residential hotels in both Boston and the country, which was built at a cost of \$1 million in 1871). Preston's swift rise in reputation is evident in an 1872 advertisement for real estate on Beacon St., which calls out his design as a major selling point: "A splendid new House, finished in hard wood, built by William G. Preston, architect."⁹

In addition to the Vendome, Preston's multifamily residential work included the Aubry, an early apartment house in the Back Bay (149 Newbury St., 1883) and the Hotel DeSoto in Savannah; that 1888 structure occupied an entire city block). He was also prolific in designing suburban houses—many of them apparently summer homes—in the Massachusetts towns of Barnstable, Beverly, Marion, Marshfield, and North Andover and in the fashionable seaside resorts of Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island, and Rye, New Hampshire.

Preston's institutional and civic commissions in Massachusetts, in addition to those described above, ranged from the Tabor Academy Recitation Building (1875) and North Uxbridge Baptist Church (1880) to a huge exhibition hall for the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association (1881-82) on Huntington Avenue in Boston, the Lincoln Public Library (1883), Marion Music Hall (1891), Forest Hills Cemetery Stone Bridge (1892), the massive Armory of the First Corps of Cadets (1895) in Boston, and renovations and additions to Brookline's town hall (1900). In the latter part of his career, Preston designed many notable buildings for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the Fernald State School in Waltham (19 buildings between 1890 and 1907), Brooks Colony in Phillipston and Templeton (approximately eight buildings between 1900 and 1907), the Foxborough State Hospital (1905), the Lyman School for Boys in Westborough, and the State Industrial School for Girls in Lancaster.

Outside Massachusetts, Preston prepared designs for such institutional projects as the War Department Building in Washington D.C. (1866-67), and Memorial Hall at Bowdoin College in Maine (1880). His substantial body of work in Savannah included the Chatham County Courthouse (1887), DeSoto Hotel (1888-1890), Odd Fellows Building (1889-1891), Henry Street School (1892), Savannah Volunteer Guards Armory (1893), and numerous private houses for wealthy clients.

Preston designed over 700 projects in his professional career. Boston projects include:

- the Richardson Block (1873)
- the Mason Building in Liberty Square (1879-82)
- a leather warehouse at 121-123 South St. (1886)
- the Chadwick Lead Works (1887) on High St.
- the West End Street Railway Co.'s Central Power Station in the South End (1892), which was built at a cost of \$500,000 and was reportedly "the largest electric generating plant in the world"¹⁰
- the International Trust Company (1893), described by a contemporary as "one of the handsomest examples of business architecture that has been erected in recent years"

¹¹

⁸ Kennedy, Carol. National Register nomination for the Richardson Block, 1986.

⁹ Boston Daily Globe, Sep 12, 1872.

¹⁰ Charles S. Damrell, *A Half-Century of Boston's Building* (Boston: Louis P. Hager, 1895), 90.

¹¹ Charles S. Damrell, *A Half-Century of Boston's Building* (Boston: Louis P. Hager, 1895), 86-87.

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- a bank building at 145 Milk St. (1906; with notable sculptural figures by Max Bachman on the exterior)
- and, as mentioned, the First Corps of Cadets Armory, Museum of Natural History, and Hotel Vendome.

Preston's work in Boston and its metropolitan area, especially, was eminent and prolific. Two buildings—the International Trust Company Building and the First Corps of Cadets Armory— are designated Boston Landmarks, and a great many others are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or within districts.

George W. Pope, architect

Born in Kennebunkport, Maine, George W. Pope (1822-1896) began his career as a mason. He achieved prominence in Boston as both an architect and builder, perhaps as early as the 1840s. Pope was particularly active in reconstruction of the commercial district after the Great Fire of 1872, erecting approximately 50 mercantile buildings there. His career is also remarkable for his collaboration with the corporate lawyer, banker, and philanthropist Robert Treat Paine (1810-1895), with whom he created three large developments of affordable, attractive, working-class housing in outlying neighborhoods of Boston. Pope's work encompasses institutional, residential, and mercantile buildings for a variety of clients. His known commercial buildings were chiefly Classical Revival and Victorian Eclectic in style, while his residential buildings are typically Queen Anne style.

The earliest works attributed to Pope as architect include the Old North Church Sexton's House (1849), in Boston's North End, Union Congregational Church (1869) in Boston's South End, a group of three attached row houses (1876-1880) on the first block of Commonwealth Avenue, and preliminary plans for enlargement and reconstruction of Boston City Hospital (1877). By the 1880s, Pope's work was characterized by new mercantile and office buildings scattered throughout downtown (on Tremont, Purchase, Pearl, Lincoln, Congress, Stanhope, Boylston, Essex, and East streets), and most remarkably by workers' housing in Lower Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Dorchester. Of the latter venture, Pope's financial partner, businessman and philanthropist Robert Treat Paine, observed that:

I have caused some two hundred houses, largely for single families, to be built and sold, greatly aided in all these enterprises by the wise advice and the indefatigable supervision of my friend, George W. Pope, who took the whole practical charge of construction and sale; my share being chiefly that of working out plans for greater comfort and decency of the occupants.¹²

Pope was extensively involved with the development and consumer financing aspects of Paine's housing developments. He served as a vice president of the Workingmen's Cooperative Bank, which was established by Paine in 1887 as "a partnership between investors and the workingman" and offered innovative, amortizing mortgages that allowed the purchase of homes on an installment plan.¹³ At the end of his life, Pope was president of the Workingmen's Building Association, which acquired, planned, and developed land for Paine's affordable housing projects.

Although Pope is named as architect for many buildings, in his time he was more consistently described as a mason, contractor, and builder. He designed 115-117 Pearl St. for John Howard Lee. The structure is typical of Pope's solid, skillful architectural work. The careful attention to detail found in the building's decorative brickwork is most likely a result of Pope's specialty as a mason.

Other projects in the downtown area that are credited to Pope include 71-73 Summer St. (ca. 1873), a five-story commercial building with a cast iron façade; a six-story building (1888) for the Oliver

¹² Mikhail Koch, Quoted in the National Register of Historic Places nomination for Frederick Douglass Square Historic District, Boston (1996), Sec. 8, p. 7)

¹³ Richard Heath, "Bromley-Heath Public Housing Development History" for the Jamaica Plain Historical Society; www.jpshs.org.

Ditson Co. at Congress St.; 110-114 Purchase St. (1889); and a “splendid and substantial building” (1892-93) of brick and stone at East and Cove streets, which was built at a cost of \$115,000.¹⁴

3.3 Archaeological Sensitivity

Downtown Boston is 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 most likely significant. Any historical sites that survive may document 17th-19th century history related to Boston’s colonial, Revolutionary, and early Republic periods, especially yard spaces where features including cisterns and privies may remain intact and significant archaeological deposits exist. 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.

3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Designation

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

A. Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as provided in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

The Richardson Block was listed individually in the National Register in 1986. It is also a contributing element within the Gridley Street Historic District, which was listed in the National Register in 2014.

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.

The Richardson Block is historically significant for its association with Boston’s nationally significant leather industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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.

The Richardson Block is significant as a rare example of high-style Neo-Grec commercial architecture in Boston and the region, and as the creation of a regionally and nationally significant architect, William Preston. A secondary architect, George Pope, achieves regional significance for his associations with philanthropic developments of working-class housing in metropolitan Boston.

¹⁴ Charles S. Damrell, *A Half-Century of Boston’s Building* (Boston: Louis P. Hager, 1895), 92.

4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's records, the individual properties that comprise the Richardson Block have the following assessed values as of January 1, 2022:

Building Address	Parcel Number	Total Assessed Value	Assessed Land Value	Assessed Building Value
119 High St.	0304179000	\$4,064,355.00	\$1,347,099.00	\$2,717,256.00
115-119 Pearl St.	0304180000	\$4,833,791.00	\$1,602,123.00	\$3,231,668.00
123-127 Pearl St.	0304181000	\$2,457,228.00	\$814,429.00	\$1,642,799.00
129-131 Pearl St.	0304182000	\$2,393,626.00	\$793,349.00	\$1,600,277.00
133 Pearl St. Commercial	0304183000	unknown	unknown	\$1,686,100.00
137-139 Pearl St. Residential	0304184000	unknown	unknown	\$3,453,600.00
141-143 Pearl St.	0304185000	\$1,125,300.00	\$577,200.00	\$548,100.00
145-147 Pearl St.	0304186000	\$1,346,900.00	\$358,900.00	\$988,000.00
149-151 Pearl St.	0304187000	\$2,442,400.00	\$738,900.00	\$1,703,500.00

4.2 Current Ownership

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's records, the individual buildings within the Richardson Block are owned by the following persons or entities with associated mailing addresses:

Building Address	Owner's Name	Owner's Mailing Address
119 High St.	High Pearl LLC	c/o Glanz Properties Inc. 1018 Beacon St., Suite 400 Brookline, MA 02446
115-119 Pearl St.	High Pearl LLC	c/o Glanz Properties Inc.
123-127 Pearl St.	High Pearl LLC	c/o Glanz Properties Inc.
129-131 Pearl St.	High Pearl LLC	c/o Glanz Properties Inc.
133 Pearl St.	One 33 Pearl Street Condo Trust - Commercial condo	c/o Goodman Pearl Partners LLC 133 Pearl St., Room 400 Boston, MA 02110
137-139 Pearl St.	One-37-139 Pearl Street Condo Residential & Comm'l unit)	c/o KB&P Real Estate 1 Pinehill Drive, Unit 101 Quincy, MA 02169
141-143 Pearl St.	John T. Moylan	65 Billings St. Quincy, MA 02171
145-147 Pearl St.	AV Pearl Street LLC	18 Dartmouth St. Watertown, MA 02472
149-151 Pearl St.	149-151 Pearl Street Owner LLC	575 Fifth Ave., Unit 23 Fl New York, NY 10017

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background

From the time of its construction in the 1870s and 1880s, the Richardson Block has been in continuous commercial use for warehouse display and storage, light manufacturing, retail, and office activities. Food establishments were introduced in the storefronts by the 1960s. A variety of mostly small outlets have occupied the block, historically and at present; their character changed from predominantly shoe and boot stores or hide and leather goods purveyors to later include other types of shops, such as an ink manufacturer and a light fixture company with the evolution of the downtown area over the last 150 years. Residential occupants (in 137-139 and 145-147 Pearl St.) are a 21st century phenomenon.

5.2 Zoning

All nine buildings composing the Richardson Block (parcel numbers 0304179000, 0304180000, 0304181000, 0304182000, 0304183000, 0304184000, 0304185000, 0304186000, and 0304187000) are in the Boston Proper zoning district, the B-10 subdistrict (a general business subdistrict type), and the following zoning overlay districts: Greenway Overlay District, PDA Allowed, and Restricted Parking District.

5.3 Planning Issues

On May 18, 1987 nine petitions to Landmark the Richardson Block buildings, 109 - 151 Pearl St., Boston were submitted by registered voters. At a public hearing on June 9, 1987 the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept the Richardson Block petitions for further study.

At the publication date of this Study Report, the Boston Planning and Design Agency is finalizing a major urban planning document called [PLAN: Downtown](#). PLAN: Downtown endeavors to increase density creating a cohesive downtown neighborhood; protect historic fabric; activate first floor spaces; improve access to open spaces; improve access for non-vehicular transit; and increase housing opportunities in this part of the city. This urban planning tool also includes an office-to-housing conversion pilot program, which will offer tax rebates and fast-track permitting to developers and building owners who can create housing in vacant office spaces with a minimum of 17% affordable units. In post-pandemic Boston, office space vacancy is very high in this neighborhood and housing is much needed - the conversion program aims to address both problems. Incidentally, the Richardson Block is an early example of an office/warehouse conversion to residential housing on some of the upper levels of the buildings.

PLAN: Downtown may have some effect on the Richardson Block, as the structure is within the area which the Plan aims to study and survey in order to establish which buildings and spaces hold historic or cultural value. Designating the Richardson Block will ensure recognition of its significance. The authors of PLAN: Downtown, aim to identify other similar historic buildings in the surrounding area that need to be preserved. At this time, there are no current BPDA planned projects within a two block radius of the Richardson Block.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission

- **Designation**
 - The Commission retains the option of designating the Richardson Block as a Landmark. Designation shall correspond to Assessor's parcel numbers 0304179000, 0304180000, 0304181000, 0304182000, 0304183000, 0304184000, 0304185000, 0304186000, and 0304187000 and shall address the following exterior elements hereinafter referred to as the "Specified Features":
 - The exterior envelope of the building.
 - Certain landscape elements including: Granite sidewalk slabs.
- **Denial of Designation**
 - The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Specified Features.
- **National Register Listing**
 - The Commission could recommend that the property be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, if it is not already.
- **Preservation Plan**
 - The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.
- **Site Interpretation**
 - The Commission could recommend that the owner develop and install historical interpretive materials at the site.

6.2 Impact of alternatives

A. Designation

Designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the Richardson Block 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 Specified Features, or extend guidance to the owners under chapter 772.

C. National Register Listing

The Richardson Block is listed on the National Register of Historic Places both individually and as a contributing resource in a district. Listing on the National Register provides an honorary designation and limited protection in cases when federal funds are involved in proposed physical changes. It also creates incentives for preservation, such as tax incentives for income-producing properties and possible eligibility for grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register, affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. National Register listing does not provide any design review for changes undertaken by private owners at their own expense.

D. Preservation Plan

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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. It does not carry regulatory oversight.

E. **Site Interpretation**

A comprehensive interpretation of the history and significance of the Richardson Block could be introduced at the site.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. That the exterior of the Richardson Block be designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended (see Section 3.4 of this report for Relationship to Criteria for Designation);
2. That the boundaries corresponding to Assessor's parcel numbers 0304179000, 0304180000, 0304181000, 0304182000, 0304183000, 0304184000, 0304185000, 0304186000, and 0304187000 be adopted without modification;
3. And that the Standards and Criteria recommended by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission be accepted.

8.0 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA, WITH LIST OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

8.1 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.¹⁵ 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 limitation 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 do not supersede the Standards and Criteria or take precedence over Commission decisions.

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

8.2 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 or developers, 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 8.2.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

¹⁵ 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.

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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 as outlined in Section 8.2. 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.

8.3 Standards and Criteria

The following Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.¹⁶ 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.

8.3.1 General Standards

1. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following: exterior walls (masonry, wood, and architectural metals); windows; entrances/doors; porches/stoops; lighting; storefronts; curtain walls; roofs; roof projections; additions; accessibility; site work and landscaping; demolition; and archaeology. Items not anticipated in the Standards and Criteria may be subject to review, refer to Section 8.2 and Section 9.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided. See Section 8.4, List of Character-defining Features.
3. 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.
4. 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.)
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material shall

¹⁶ 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.

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match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. 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.
8. 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 9.0 Archaeology.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved.
12. 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.
13. 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.

8.3.2 Masonry at exterior walls (including but not limited to stone, brick, terra cotta, concrete, adobe, stucco, 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.

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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 stucco shall be repaired by removing the damaged material and patching with new stucco that duplicates the old in strength, composition, color, and texture.
18. Deteriorated adobe shall be repaired by using mud plaster or a compatible lime-plaster adobe render, when appropriate.
19. 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.
20. Joints in concrete shall be sealed with appropriate flexible sealants and backer rods, when necessary.

8.3.3 Wood at exterior walls

1. All original or later contributing wood materials shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing wood surfaces, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing wood surfaces, 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 is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Cleaning of wood elements shall use the gentlest method possible.
6. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration or excessive layers of paint have coarsened profile details and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Coatings such as paint help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light; stripping the wood bare will expose the surface to the effects of weathering.
7. Damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed to the next sound layer using the mildest method possible.
8. Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting, or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods shall not be permitted. Doing so changes the visual quality of the wood and accelerates deterioration.
9. 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.

8.3.4 Architectural metals at exterior walls (including but not limited to wrought and cast iron, 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.

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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.

8.3.5 Windows (also refer to Masonry, Wood, 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.

8.3.6 Entrances/Doors (also refer to Masonry, Wood, 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.
12. Entrance 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/entrance.

8.3.7 Porches/Stoops (also refer to Masonry, Wood, 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.

8.3.8 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,

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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.

8.3.9 Storefronts (also refer to Masonry, Wood, 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).

8.3.10 Curtain Walls (also refer to Masonry, Wood, 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).

8.3.11 Roofs (also refer to Masonry, Wood, 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.

8.3.12 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.

8.3.13 Additions

1. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of the 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 not obscure the front of the building.
5. New additions shall be of a size, scale, and materials that are in harmony with the existing building.

8.3.14 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.

8.3.15 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.

8.3.16 Building Site

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

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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 9.0 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.

8.3.18 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.

8.4 List of Character-defining Features

Character-defining features are the significant observable and experiential aspects of a historic resource, whether a single building, landscape, or multi-property historic district, 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 character-defining features for this historic resource include:

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1. **Architectural style:** The Richardson Block is an elegantly embellished, Neo-Grec style building typically exhibiting imaginative, cast iron storefronts at ground level; classically-influenced ornament on the upper levels of its Pearl St. elevations; Victorian Eclectic side elevations; and utilitarian rear elevations.
2. **Ornamentation:** At street level, the cast iron storefronts along both Pearl and Gridley streets are ornamented with myriad decorative motifs, including dressed granite bases, rustication, fluting, applied elements, and incised patterns. The upper levels of the Pearl St. façade are intensely embellished with a variety of marble trim across the walls, around the windows, and at the roof edge, including pilasters, string courses, window frames, and cornice molding. A remnant of the original, cast iron cornice with a molded fascia and modillion brackets lines the roof edge on three of the constituent structures (123-127, 229-131, and 133 Pearl St.). Brick and marble trim ornament wall surfaces and window openings on the side elevations, represented in contrasting band courses and window surrounds. Utilitarian gauged brick lintels embellish the segmentally arched windows on the rear (Gridley St.) elevations.
3. **Building materials and finishes:** The Richardson Block displays cast iron storefronts at ground level, marble cladding and trim on the upper stories, an original metal cornice extant on the façades of three of the buildings, hard red brick cladding on the side elevations, and a coarser and darker red brick on the rear elevations. Granite is employed as trim at the base and lintels of the storefronts at both the Pearl St. and Gridley St. elevations.
4. **Roof type, forms, and features (chimneys, cupolas, dormers, etc.):** The buildings composing the Richardson Block have flat roofs punctuated by party walls that project minimally above the roof surface. Relatively small, utilitarian penthouses for elevators and roof access occur on the roof at the rear of the buildings.
5. **Cornices:** Portions of the original cornice survive on 123-127, 129-131, and 133 Pearl St. in the form of metal moldings and modillion brackets.
6. **Doors and windows:** A regular rhythm of frequently spaced windows characterizes the upper levels of the Pearl St. façades and the Gridley St. elevations. Fenestration on the Purchase St. elevation is less frequent but also uniformly arrayed. The High St. elevation has a more complex arrangement of windows. Window openings are rectangular and segmentally arched on the front and side elevations, and segmentally arched on the rear (Gridley St.) elevations. Building entrances are positioned in the shaped outer corners of the block, as well as in irregular (and typically altered) locations within the storefronts. A large modern entrance has been created in the center of the High St. elevation.
7. **Storefronts:** Cast iron storefront survive largely intact on the Pearl, High, and Gridley Sts. elevations. Granite bases, granite or metal lintels, cast iron stairs with vault lights, and cast iron piers and pilasters are typical.
8. **Site Features:** Granite paving slabs containing coal hole covers distinguish sidewalks along the Pearl St. edge of the site.

9.0 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. The professional archaeologist should meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Archaeology.

Refer to Section 8.3 for any additional Standards and Criteria that may apply.

10.0 SEVERABILITY

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.

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