

Ferdinand's Blue Store (Bruce C. Bolling Building)

2260-2270 Washington St.
Roxbury, Massachusetts



BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION STUDY REPORT

Petition #152.89
Boston Landmarks Commission | Office of Historic Preservation
City of Boston

Approved by:



10/21/2025

Elizabeth Sherva, Executive Director

Date

Approved by:



10/21/2025

Bradford C. Walker, Chair

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Report posted on October 21, 2025

Cover image: The historic facade of the former Ferdinand's Blue Store, Roxbury (Boston). Taken on October 3, 2025 by Jennifer Gaugler.

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## 1. DESIGNATION

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

The designation of the Ferdinand's Blue Store building was initiated in 1989 after a petition was submitted by registered voters to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the property under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended (hereinafter "Chapter 772"). 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.

Ferdinand's Blue Store (which is today part of the Bruce C. Bolling Building) meets the following criteria for designation as a Boston Landmark as established in Section 4 of Chapter 772:

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

Ferdinand's Blue Store was listed as a contributing resource to the Dudley Station National Register Historic District. The district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

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 that 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.

Renowned furniture retailer Ferdinand's Blue Store contributed significantly to the development of Roxbury's principal business district, Dudley Square (now called Nubian Square), during the late 19th century and into the mid- 20th centuries. The store's presence was one of the most notable in Dudley Square as the area evolved into a dense, urban commercial and transportation center. The business made a name for itself throughout Greater Boston and the New England region.

Although the facade of the store is the only part that remains, it is a distinctive remnant of a late-19th century department store that is representative of a physical link to the past, documenting the rise of Dudley Station and the eponymous square as an important turn-of-the-20th-century transportation and commercial center.

D. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship that 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.

Architect John Lyman Faxon (1851-1919), who practiced from the 1870s to the early 1900s, designed this five-story department store using a blend of Baroque and



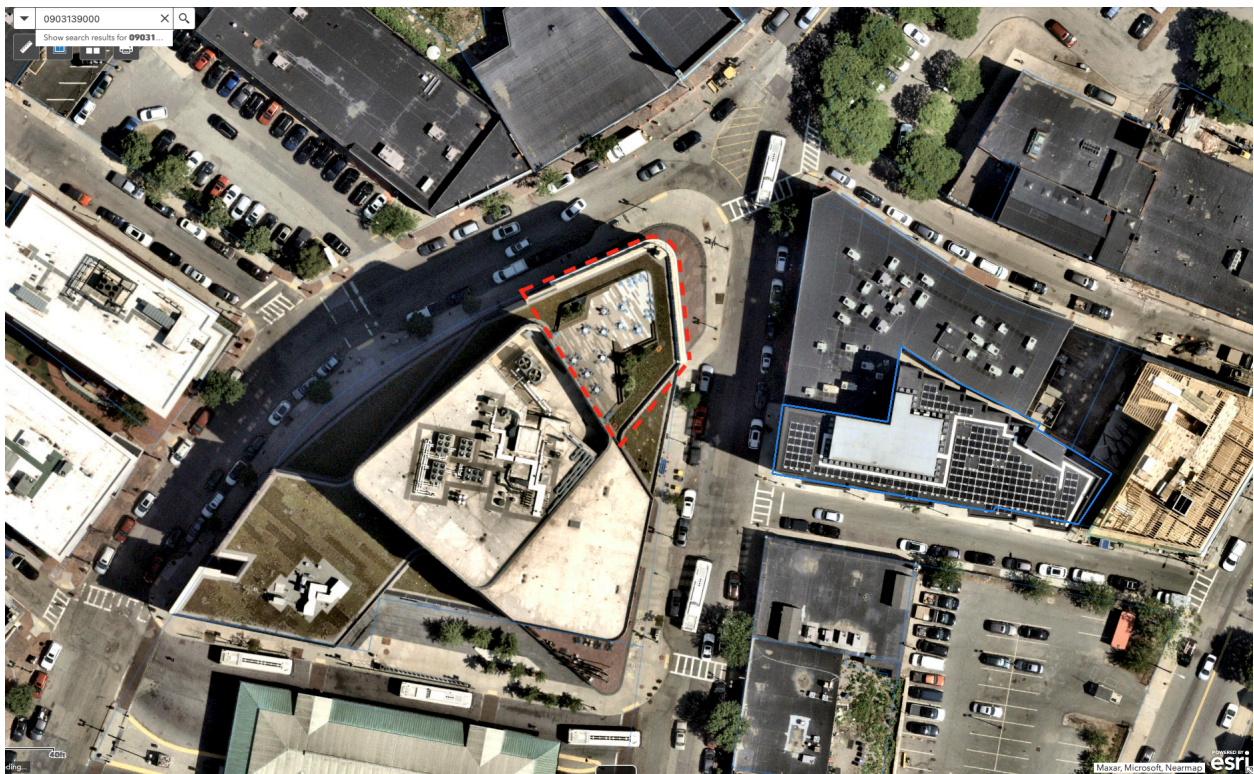
Renaissance Revival stylistic elements. The store was situated at a prominent intersection – the convergence of Washington and Warren streets – in the center of Dudley (now Nubian) Square in the main business district of Roxbury. Faxon’s design included large, metal-framed display windows surrounded by Doric pilasters and limestone entablature. Of special note are the oversize oculus windows with ornate surrounds that distinguish the end and central bays of levels two and five.

Faxon is credited as the architect of several educational and ecclesiastical buildings, three of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places: First Baptist Church in Newton; First Congregational Church in Detroit, Mich.; and the former East Boston High School. His extant works also include Dod Hall and Brown Hall at Princeton University and the Town Hall in Holbrook, Massachusetts.

Therefore, Boston Landmarks Commission staff recommends that the Commission designate the former Ferdinand’s Blue Store (Bruce C. Bolling Building) as a Landmark under Chapter 772. The effect of this designation shall be that review by the Boston Landmarks Commission and/or Commission staff shall be required for any proposed alterations to the following elements (see **Figure 1**):

- The historic facade of the former Ferdinand’s Blue Store.
- The air space above the five-story portion of the Bruce C. Bolling Building facing the intersection of Washington and Warren Streets.

If designated, the Standards and Criteria in Section 7 of this report will serve as guidelines for the Commission’s review of proposed changes to the property, with the goal of protecting the historic integrity of the landmark and its setting. The designation would not regulate use or alterations to interior features or features that are not visible from a public way.



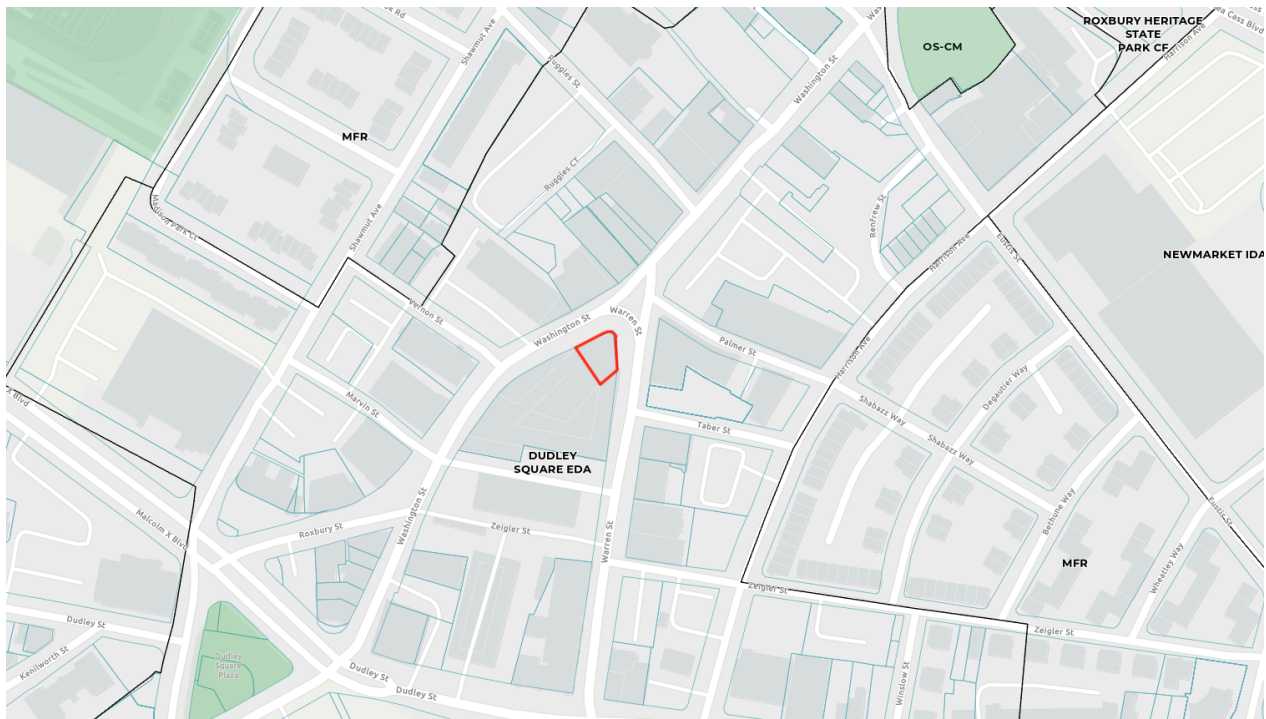
**Figure 1.** Map indicating the extents of the proposed designation with a red dashed line.

## 2. LOCATION AND ZONING

According to the City of Boston's Assessing Department, the former Ferdinand's Blue Store is located at 2260-2262 Washington St., Roxbury, MA 02119. The proposed designation boundary includes a portion of Assessor's Parcel Number 0903139000, as shown in **Figure 2**.

The property is located in the central business area of the Roxbury section of Boston and is part of the Dudley Station National Register Historic District.

According to the City of Boston, it is located in the Roxbury Neighborhood Zoning District and within the Dudley Square EDA (Subdistrict Type: Mixed Use). Zoning overlays are PDA Allowed and Boulevard Planning District.



**Figure 2.** Map showing the location of the proposed designation in Roxbury outlined in red.

### **3. OWNERSHIP AND OCCUPANCY**

According to the City of Boston Assessor's records, the property is owned by the Dudley Square Realty Corp. with a mailing address of 1 City Hall Square, Room 608, c/o Chief Financial Officer, Boston, MA 02201.

According to the Assessor's records, the property has a total assessed value of \$26,930,300 with the land valued at \$7,642,900 and the building valued at \$19,287,400 for fiscal year 2025.

Ferdinand's Blue Store was purpose built in 1895 as a showroom and department store for furniture, home decor items and housewares. The retailer operated as a family-run business until the store was sold in 1971. Within a few years, the building was vacant. In 2007 the Boston Redevelopment Authority acquired the building as part of Mayor Thomas M. Menino's Dudley Vision Project to gut the Ferdinand's interior, rebuild it as a municipal space, and preserve and adapt the facade. In 2008, the team of Mecanoo and Sasaki won the design competition for the project. The transformation was completed during the administration of Mayor Martin J. Walsh. In 2014 Mayor Walsh recommended to the City Council that the structure be named the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building in honor of the council's first Black president. The building opened to the public in April 2015. It is the headquarters of the Boston Public Schools and also contains generous space for retail businesses and nonprofits.



#### 4. IMAGES



**Figure 3.** 1895 lithograph of Ferdinand's Blue Store by Edward R. Howe.

Source: Boston Athenaeum,  
<https://cdm.bostonathenaeum.org/digital/collection/p13110coll5/id/1291/>.



**Figure 4.** Ferdinand's Blue Store in 1899, four years after construction.

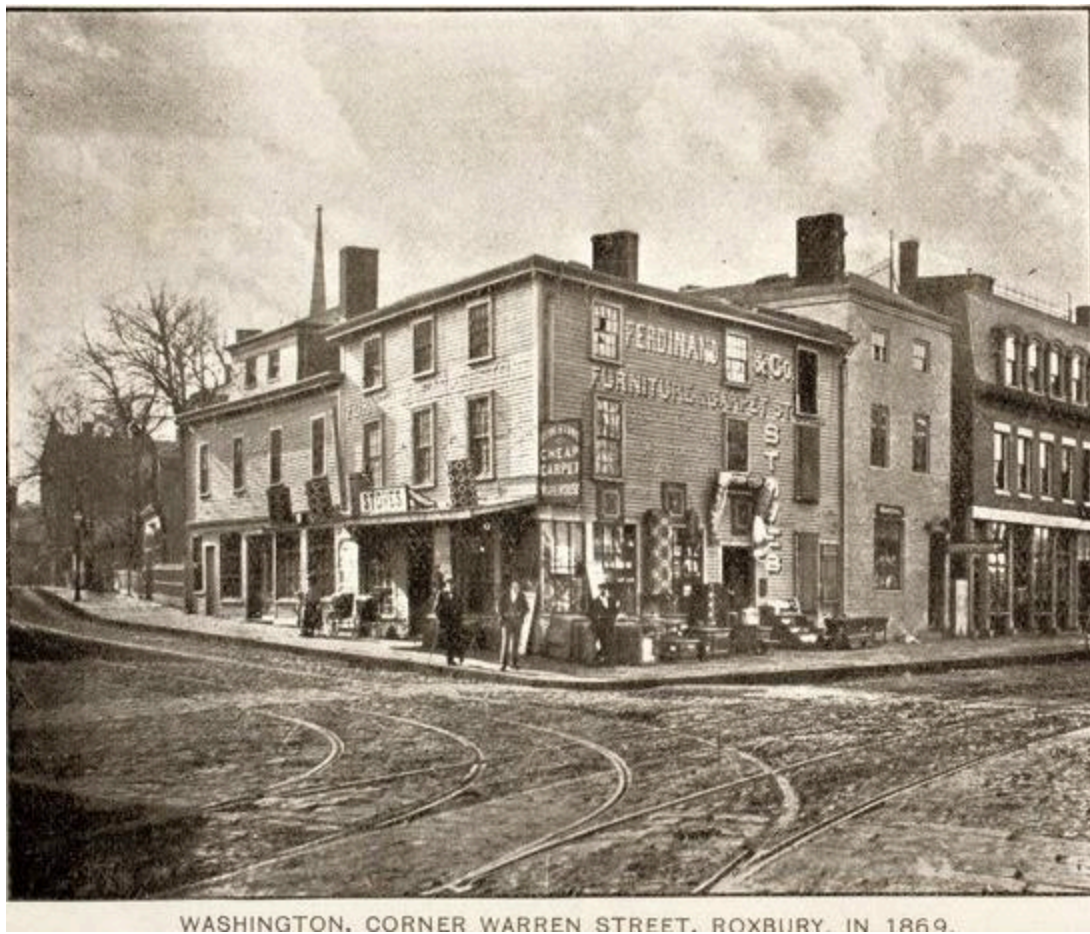
Source: Boston Preservation Alliance,  
<https://bostonpreservation.org/advocacy-project/bruce-c-bolling-municipal-center>.



**Figure 5.** Undated illustration of Ferdinand's Blue Store advertising the mammoth size of the home furnishings establishment.

Source: *Shopping Days in Retro Boston* blog,  
<https://shoppingdaysinretroboston.blogspot.com/2012/03/remembering-ferdinands-of-dudley.html>

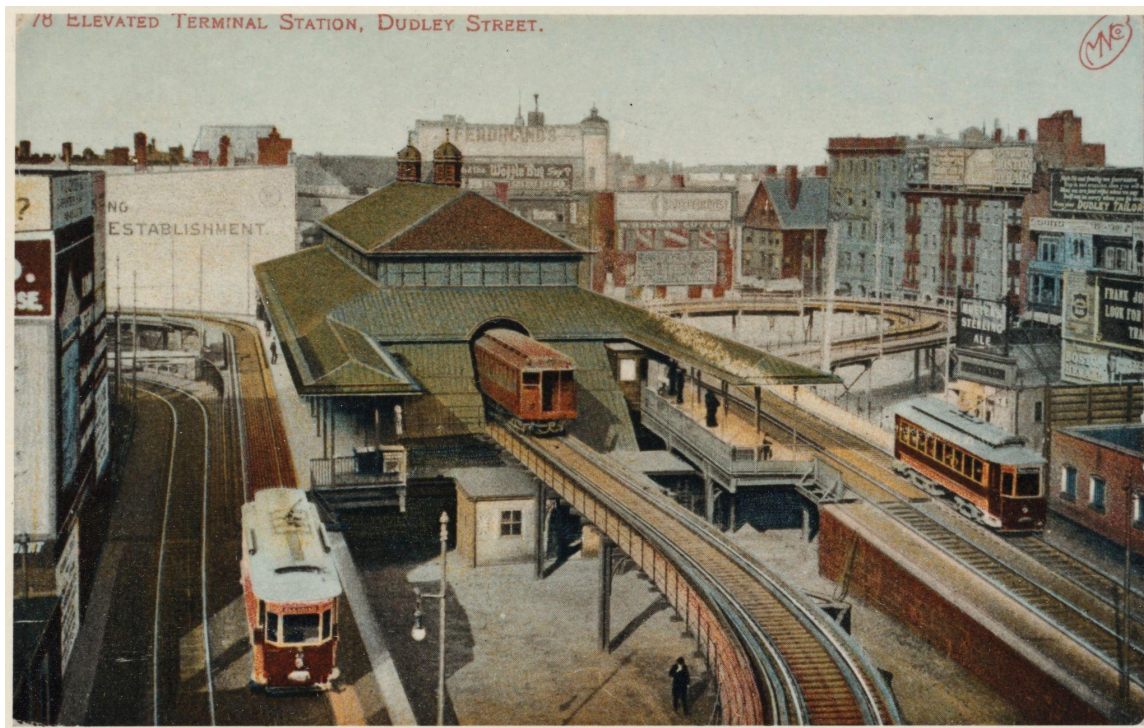




**Figure 6.** 1869 postcard of the original Ferdinand & Co. Furniture and Carpet Store at the corner of Washington and Warren. Streetcar tracks are visible in the foreground.

Source: Historic New England, <https://gusn.us/202337>





**Figure 7.** An early 1900s postcard showing Ferdinand's in background.

Source: Historic New England, [Elevated Terminal Station, Dudley Street | Historic New England](#)



**Figure 8.** A c. 1971 photograph of Dudley Station elevated rail terminal.

Source: By Warren E. Favor. Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/dn401h746>





**Figure 9.** Ferdinand's facade during the early preparation phase of the construction of the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building.

Courtesy of BCA.





**Figure 10.** Construction of the Bolling Building, which can be seen shadowing the Ferdinand's facade.

Courtesy of BCA.



**Figure 11.** The Bolling Building with the restored historic Ferdinand's Blue Store facade.

Photo by Jennifer Gaugler, October 3, 2025.





**Figure 12.** Corner detail.

Photo by Jennifer Gaugler, October 3, 2025.





**Figure 13.** The new facade meeting the restored historic Ferdinand's Blue Store facade on Warren Street.

Photo by Jennifer Gaugler, October 3, 2025.





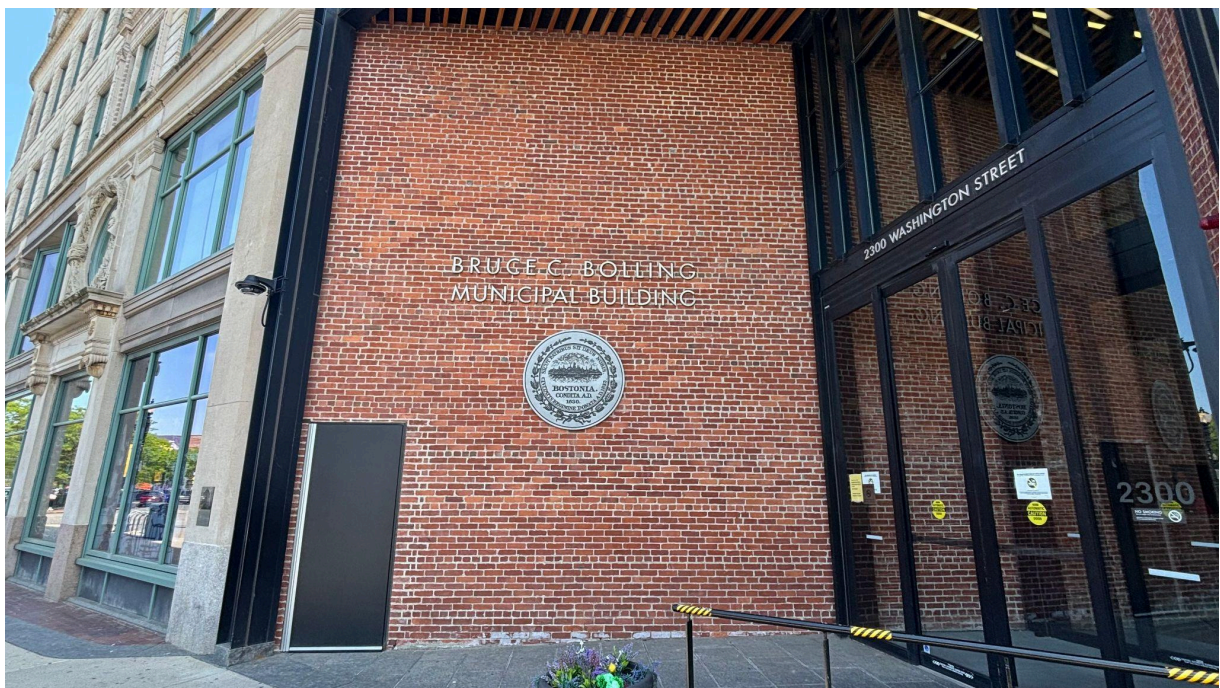
**Figure 14.** Detail where the original facade meets the expansion.

Photo by Jennifer Gaugler, October 3, 2025.



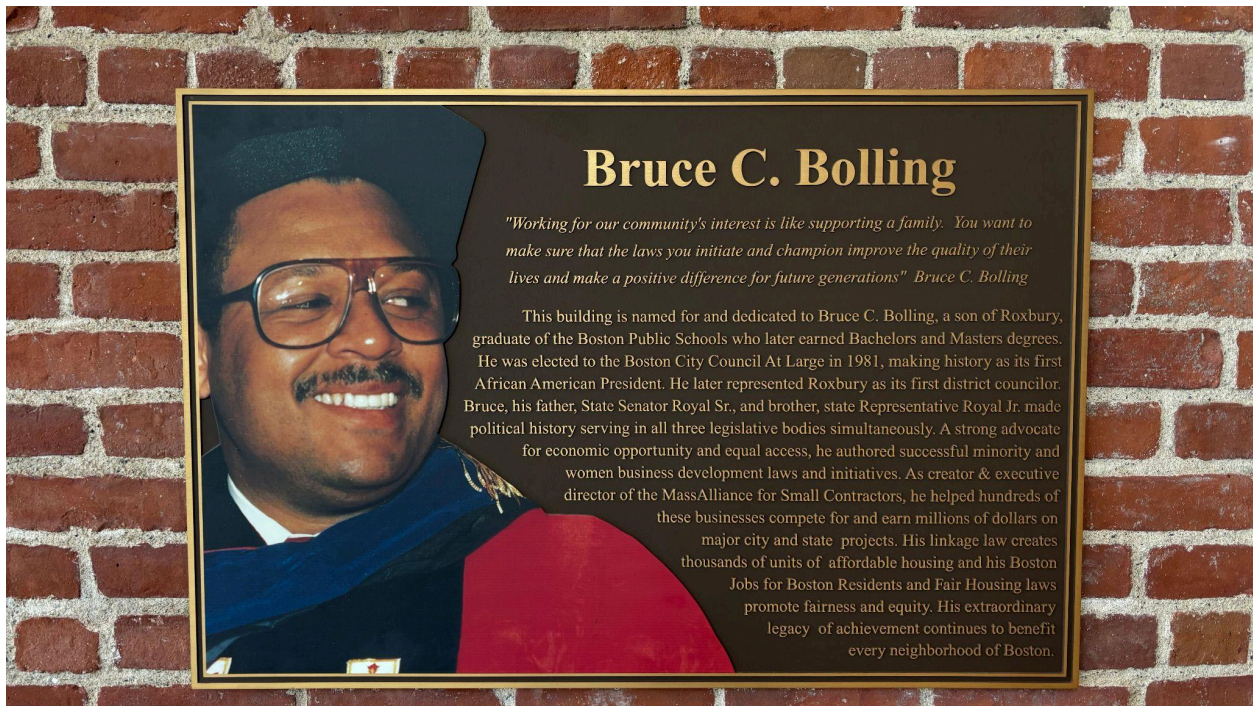


**Figure 15.** The new facade meeting the restored historic Ferdinand's Blue Store facade on Washington Street.  
Photo by Jennifer Gaugler, October 3, 2025.



**Figure 16.** Main entrance of the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building. At the left, a segment of the Ferdinand's Blue Store facade is visible.  
Photograph taken May 13, 2025, by David Shaw.





**Figure 17.** A plaque honoring the late Bruce C. Bolling is on display inside the building.

Photograph taken May 13, 2025, by David Shaw.

## 5. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION -

Ferdinand's Blue Store, constructed in 1895, was an expansion of a smaller home furnishings enterprise that proprietor Frank Ferdinand established in 1867 at the intersection of Washington and Warren streets. Designed by John Lyman Faxon, the store was built by John S. Jacobs & Sons.

Ferdinand's Blue Store was erected to conform with its flatiron-shaped lot at the southwest corner of Washington and Warren streets; the narrow, corner end contains the main entrance. Highly detailed, the structure was built of limestone, terra-cotta, decorative brick and granite, topped with a large, ornamental copper cornice featuring cast lion heads. Display windows for viewing merchandise flank the main entrance. Merchandise could also be viewed through the accordion-paneled display windows surrounding the second floor. The display windows at floors one and two are surrounded by Doric pilasters and limestone entablature. The second and fifth levels present six large oval windows above the main entrance and at each end of the facade. Extending the emphasis in these bays are tripartite windows on the third and fourth floors with Renaissance-inspired, carved limestone detailing. Floors three and four are clad in cream, yellow and tan brick set in a banded pattern. The trim at the third and fourth floor is terra-cotta, which was used to clad the fifth floor and mimic the intricately carved limestone, including an elaborate frieze. Marble medallions were installed at the top floor.

## 6. HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

### 6.1 Historic Significance

#### Introduction

Perseverance and adaptive ingenuity have been core ideals of Roxbury, Massachusetts, since the town was founded by northern European settlers in 1630. Even as it has swayed between periods of soaring highs and bitter lows, eras of vitalization for its culture and communities weighed against times of struggle and abandonment, the neighborhood has stood firm. Despite decades of change that include several accidental as well as deliberate efforts to diminish it, Roxbury still stands, bearing the marks of its years while retaining and revering the monuments to its esteemed heritage and local achievements.<sup>1</sup>

Amid perhaps Roxbury's greatest period of prosperity, it was Ferdinand's Blue Store, the ornate and intricate luxury furniture retailer and vital neighborhood fixture, that was arguably the best physical and practical embodiment of this relationship. Through the immensity of its classically influenced appearance and its location in the middle of Roxbury's commercial center—Dudley Square—Ferdinand's gained wide renown and helped Roxbury become a cultural and entrepreneurial center not just for Greater Boston, but for New England and beyond.<sup>2</sup> Yet, this would not come without price, for the very methods that enabled Ferdinand's to ascend to the pinnacle of its industry caused a more understated challenge, one in which its infrastructural bounds and new methods of mass production and marketing served to undercut many of the existing professionals of the trade. Ironically, this same fate was akin to that which would befall the Blue Store nearly a century later, where efforts purported to streamline and modernize Roxbury's community function would carve gaping wounds that nearly delivered the neighborhood a death knell and caused the

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<sup>1</sup> Boston Landmarks Commission. *Roxbury: Exploring Boston's Neighborhoods*. Boston, MA: Boston Landmarks Commission, 1995. [https://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/Roxbury\\_brochure\\_tcm3-19123.pdf](https://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Roxbury_brochure_tcm3-19123.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Parsons Brickerhoff. *Engineering and Urban Design - Services Relative to the Reconstruction of Dudley Square*. Boston, Massachusetts: City of Boston, 2012.

permanent closure of Ferdinand's.<sup>3</sup> While the original Ferdinand's Blue Store never returned to operation, the surviving structure would later become a key practical, even ideological, component of modern efforts to return the city to its respected station. Ferdinand's can be seen as both an enduring benchmark representing the height of New England architecture and design, alongside the drastically rushing tides of commercial innovation, but also a century-spanning icon whose rise, decline and determined resurgence mirrors the story of the people and neighborhood at large.<sup>4</sup>

### **Roxbury and Industrial Background**

The land that would become Roxbury has been occupied for centuries by Native American peoples, most notably the Massachusett (Massachêuck) tribe; archaeological findings confirm its presence as far back as 10,000 BCE.<sup>5</sup> The Massachusett suffered great hardship even prior to the settlement of their land by foreign peoples, as sea trade with European merchant ships had introduced new forms of disease – notably leptospirosis, influenza, smallpox, and scarlet fever – throughout the charted ends of the continent. These introductions quickly evolved into virgin soil epidemics that rapidly spread and ravaged Native villages across the area beginning in approximately 1616, in a period now called the “Great Dying”; these outbreaks would kill as high as 90 percent of the Indigenous population.<sup>6</sup> The following centuries would see the tribe and its neighbors further marginalized with many settlers killing their leaders by colonial deception, theft of resources and hunting grounds, land treaties that were forged and immediately violated, and their people gradually forced into assimilation and Christian practice, all amid ongoing waves of devastation from European diseases.

By the outbreak of King Phillip's War in 1675, the Massachusett were already confined entirely to European “praying towns,” where they lived under apartheid-style conditions worsened further by the conflict and its related hysterias, despite the tribe's deliberate neutrality. Land theft under increasingly perfidious methods continued until the Massachusett sold their last territories under pressure in the early 1800s. Their remaining people were forced to scatter and attempt to assimilate into the surrounding communities.<sup>7</sup> See the Archaeological Sensitivity Statement (Section 6.3) for specific information about the known and potential ancient Native uses of this property.

A critical factor that made Roxbury so desirable to settlers was its centrality to the region that was swiftly developing around it. While its foundations lay roughly 3 miles from Boston's borders, the city enjoyed immediate significance through its stationing along the only land route that granted the other settlements and colonies access to its larger neighbor. Moreover, Roxbury's abundant farmlands, lumberyards, stone quarries, and fruit orchards, as well as its access to water power from nearby Stony Brook, were every bit as critical to its development as trade centrality and its geological fortifications; the latter also made it a valued military hub.<sup>8</sup> Still, there were challenges. While Boston's maritime significance offered innate long-term stimulus to its commerce sector, the comparative development of Europe's own, even pre-Industrial production and supply chain networks meant American goods were often too costly, difficult to transport, and redundant to their own consumer market to make them a viable commercial acquisition.<sup>9</sup> For a time, Boston's woodworkers and craftsmen found success in pivots toward shipbuilding, where eager collaboration

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<sup>3</sup> “Dudley and Roxbury: Community Uprooted: Eminent Domain in the U.S.” Loyola University Chicago. Accessed June 12, 2025. [https://www.luc.edu/eminent-domain/sit\\_essays/bostonma/dudleyandroxbury/](https://www.luc.edu/eminent-domain/sit_essays/bostonma/dudleyandroxbury/).

<sup>4</sup> “Roxbury, MA.” Roxbury Crossing Historical Trust, September 4, 2020. <https://rcht.org/roxbury-ma/>.

<sup>5</sup> “The Massachusett Tribe.” Winchester. Accessed June 17, 2025. <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/3745/THE-MASSACHUSETT-TRIBE?bidId=>.

<sup>6</sup> “The History of the Neponset Band of the Indigenous Massachusett Tribe.” Massachusett Tribe. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://massachusetttribe.org/the-history-of-the-neponset>.

<sup>7</sup> “The Massachusett Tribe.” Winchester. Accessed June 17, 2025. <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/3745/THE-MASSACHUSETT-TRIBE?bidId=>.

<sup>8</sup> Parsons Brinckerhoff, *Engineering and Urban Design – Services Relative to the Reconstruction of Dudley Square*. Boston, Massachusetts: City of Boston, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> J. Ritchie Garrison, “Boston and Its Furnituremakers, 1650–1860.” Colonial Society. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://www.colonialsociety.org/publications/3297/boston-and-its-furnituremakers-1650-1860>.

formed between different tradesmen and a willingness to embrace what were then new technologies like the industrial mills, which had frightened their European counterparts. By the 1700s, Boston, a city of only 8,000 residents, was arguably one of the world's three most prominent maritime trade centers, behind only London and Bristol. Its ability to locally and cheaply develop small, lightly manned ships to navigate U.S. rivers and waterways gave its sellers and woodworkers unique access to purchasing sectors that were pragmatically out of reach to their overseas competitors.<sup>10</sup>

It was this ecosystem that gave Boston's independent furniture producers their greatest period of relevance. While production costs and local competition prevented them from harnessing the influences of the Rococo-style artistic wave occurring in Europe, their urge to retain this isolated market led them to embrace mass production models centered on cleaner designs which, especially in the case of chairs, consumers tended to buy in bulk.<sup>11</sup> Though there remained selective upheavals, notably a festering resentment from adjacent colonial administrators who complained that the products of manufacturers in Boston and New York were smothering their own markets, Massachusetts' exporters continued to thrive. This mode of operation persisted throughout much of the 18th century, with their first great crisis arriving at the hands of the British during the American Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

The American Revolution saw Roxbury and its citizens play an important role. This could be seen through its famed Shirley-Eustis House, a pre-Revolutionary mansion that was confiscated by colonists and served as an important regional hospital and military barracks. However, this was not enough to prevent Roxbury from suffering significant damage as a result of the fighting, as well as destruction caused by British troops who were forced to retreat and sought vengeance before their departure.<sup>13</sup> The occupying army ransacked Boston and the surrounding region to avenge the losses they incurred at Concord and Breed's Hill, and drove out many local producers in the process. Fortunately for Roxbury, however, the eventual recovery and victory of the colonies, coupled with broader trends of increasing scale and heightened industrial capability in major cities, gave remaining merchants much-needed relief.<sup>14</sup>

The stabilization of the new nation's finances in the early 1790s, supported by its ability to fill massive European trade gaps brought by the Napoleonic Wars in 1793, enabled local producers to thrive even above their pre-war levels, and they would retain this dominance for another half century.<sup>15</sup> This rebound also supported the emergent wave of Boston industrialists, who secured property outside the city for respite after days spent working at the city center.<sup>16</sup> This trend produced the hilltop mansions along Blue Hill Avenue and would ultimately spearhead a new wave of architectural projects that would incorporate elements of Greek, French, Italian, and other Western European styles. Along with many of Roxbury's founding landmarks and roadways that still survive, the estates built along this road, described as "one huge mansion after another," are among the only examples of their kind extant in Greater Boston.<sup>17</sup>

Here though, Roxbury's functional resemblances to the colonial period would begin to gradually recede as the first fruits of Europe's Industrial Revolution made their way to American shores. As before, the early signs of this evolution were largely architectural. As newly set trolley lines made

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<sup>10</sup> "Boston's Conductor behind the Ferdinand Building's Renaissance." Historic Boston, January 4, 2013.

<https://historicboston.org/bostons-conductor-behind-the-ferdinand-buildings-renaissance/>.

<sup>11</sup> "Roxbury, MA." Roxbury Crossing Historical Trust, September 4, 2020. <https://rcht.org/roxbury-ma/>.

<sup>12</sup> "Revolutionary Boston." Historians, December 1, 2010.

<https://www.historians.org/perspectives-article/revolutionary-boston/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Boston's Conductor behind the Ferdinand Building's Renaissance." Historic Boston.

<sup>14</sup> J. Ritchie Garrison, "Boston and Its Furnituremakers, 1650–1860."

<sup>15</sup> "Revolutionary Boston." Historians.

<sup>16</sup> Boston Landmarks Commission. *Roxbury: Exploring Boston's Neighborhoods*.

<sup>17</sup> J. Ritchie Garrison, "Boston and Its Furnituremakers, 1650–1860."



Roxbury a major destination for non-cityfolk who desired access to its services, longstanding farmlands were sold and subdivided to make space for a wave of all-new row houses and other innovative styles of single- and multi-family residences.<sup>18</sup> The concurrent overseas emergence of new systems of commerce and organization of city infrastructure would migrate stateside next to reinforce this gradual, yet escalating trend. The resulting system shock to the established material order would ripple throughout the fabric of American life until its urban communities could hardly be identified as the same ones that had sprung up around their foundations. As marshes were filled and mills gave way to factories, Roxbury's 1868 annexation to Boston would become a milestone that symbolized the community's permanent shift toward modern city life, and an opportunity arose for a new kind of entrepreneur to permanently stamp their name on the city's growingly popular face.<sup>19</sup> While mass production had been a surprise asset to Boston's furniture makers, that mode of operation would ultimately steal more from them than their means of expression. Despite the success stories, furniture making and carpentry in Roxbury had never been easily sustainable or financially assured vocations. As time marched on, the continued encroachment of modern industrial practices squeezing out small laborers, high upfront costs to enter the trade, and increasing competition from furniture producers in other U.S. cities meant that these craftsmen would see their numbers dwindle beyond any realistic point of return.<sup>20</sup> One can navigate shifting tides, but craftsmen in Boston and beyond had now drifted toward new waters entirely. The world had changed. A new, modern period in human history had begun and the rise of factory-based, efficiently produced models of material manufacturing created a market that valued streamlined production, diminished cost and efficiency of transport over intricate, personalized craftsmanship. The simultaneous population explosion in Boston, from a mere 24,000 at the dawn of the 1800s to a massive 178,000 by 1860 was a byproduct of these shifting societal trends. However, it was not a fiscal lifeline away from them, and it did little to save the craftsmen who lingered as their trade dwindled.<sup>21</sup>

While stories of the independent furniture makers of Boston have only momentary linear overlap with the entrepreneurial model that would color Frank Ferdinand's ensuing journey, it was that mode of high-volume product output and rapid consumer engagement that ushered in the demise of the former. The world bred a new form of entrepreneurship that would come to symbolize and define modern consumerism up to the age of e-commerce and probably even beyond. Ferdinand himself bears no exclusive responsibility for these decisions, as the tide was shifting long before he even made his entry into the trade, but the Blue Store arrived at the first real culmination of this pattern. The success of his store and others like it encouraged those who demanded a continuing shift to modern development and distributive models, though the evidentiary focus of these ideas was trained too narrowly on the success of enterprise itself, rather than the concurrent prosperity of the workers, which ensured these operations could function. It was not outwardly apparent until years later, but the rapidity of U.S. industrial shifts intended to orchestrate the further ascension of cities nationwide would wane and ultimately break against the rocky foundations of the existing structures they neglected to account for.<sup>22</sup>

### **Ferdinand's Early Biography**

Frank Ferdinand was born in Portland, Maine on July 21, 1839, to Olive Frances Hanscom, who hailed from nearby Buxton; and the senior Francis, who immigrated from France and worked first on the

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<sup>18</sup> "The Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Center." Boston Preservation. Accessed June 12, 2025.

<https://bostonpreservation.org/advocacy-project/bruce-c-bolling-municipal-center>.

<sup>19</sup> "Dudley Square." Boston Streetcars. Accessed June 12, 2025.

<http://www.bostonstreetcars.com/dudley-square.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Keith N. Morgan, "Dudley Station Historic District", [Boston, Massachusetts], SAH Archipedia, eds. Gabrielle Esperdy and Karen Kingsley, Charlottesville: UVaP, 2012, <http://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/MA-01-RX17>. Last accessed: September 23, 2025.

<sup>21</sup> J. Ritchie Garrison, "Boston and Its Furnituremakers, 1650–1860."

<sup>22</sup> Nemiroff, Micah. "1920s Time Capsule Found in Dudley at Ferdinand's." Bay State Banner, 2008.

<https://baystatebanner.com/2008/07/02/1920s-time-capsule-found-in-dudley-at-ferdinands/>.

sea before settling down as a confectioner. In his youth, Frank moved to South Boston, where he received his education before leaving to follow in his father's footsteps, traveling much of the world as a sailor in his youth. He had returned to Boston by 1863 and subsequently served two years in the Northern Army during the American Civil War. Frank then married his first wife, Elizabeth A. Ross, after the war's conclusion. Following Elizabeth's death decades later, Frank would marry Anna Louise Andersson in 1915. Yet, it was near the dawn of his first marriage that Frank would officially make his name. In 1869, after working in a furniture house in Boston for a time, he made his move to Roxbury and founded the original Ferdinand's Blue Store.<sup>23</sup>

### Construction

Still, it would still be some time before Ferdinand would lead the store to its apex. The initial structure of Ferdinand's was extremely modest, standing only two stories, unlike its subsequent designs, and was located at 1872 Washington St. Its centrality to the area, however, was present from the onset, as its positioning at the intersection of Washington and Warren streets placed it on one of the key roadways between Roxbury and Boston, and also near the geographic center point of the Dudley Square.<sup>24</sup> Also present was the "Blue" as part of its name, which would immediately be painted along the building's exterior in a probable nod to Frank's years at sea.<sup>25</sup> The last commonality between this initial, modest structure and the grand storefront that would succeed it was the selection itself. Advertised early on as selling "Furniture, carpets, stoves, bedding and house furnishing goods," Ferdinand's had immediately identified the product that would make it an icon, even if the scope and diversity of its selection would not reach its apex until subsequent renovations.<sup>26</sup>

While this earlier version of Ferdinand's did not have its successor's wide renown, surviving narratives illustrate a strong initial period of operation that would reach new heights, thanks to a subsequent social and economic boom that would ripple throughout Roxbury. In 1888, Boston's electric trolley line would be extended to Roxbury, making it the final stop along the western end of this route, which stretched as far as Charlestown. The establishment of these stations would coincide with the sale and subdivision of many of the local farmhouses, and families began flocking to the increasingly accessible and highly desired urban centers and the new row houses and three-deckers that were erected in their place. This influx of residents drove a massive expansion in local commerce, with new banks, theaters, hotels, additional department stores, and venues for entertainment being built to service the growing population.<sup>27</sup> This new infrastructure offered residents an ease and efficiency of travel that had seldom been seen, and with Dudley Station remaining the epicenter of the town's commercial hub, Ferdinand saw a boon that he could potentially leverage: his store stood immediately adjacent to the newly completed train stop. As massive consumer flows were now arriving daily at the station to enjoy Roxbury's expanding roster of shops and attractions, Ferdinand was ready to leverage his new consumer base to drive the Blue Store to new heights.<sup>28</sup>

After the arrival of the new electric trolley, but before Dudley Station had been expanded to its structural apex, Ferdinand initiated what would be the first of two comprehensive renovations that the Blue Store would see during his life. To deliver on his vision, Ferdinand enlisted the services of architect John Lyman Faxon, while the construction work was handled by John S. Jacobs & Sons. This

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<sup>23</sup> "Obituary - Francis 'Frank' Ferdinand." *The Boston Herald*. March 8, 1923.

<sup>24</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure - The 2017 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. Boston, Massachusetts: Bruner Foundation, Inc., 2017.

<https://www.rudybruneraward.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/04-Bruce-C.-Bolling-Municipal-Building.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> "Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building." BCA. Accessed June 12, 2025.

<https://www.bcausa.com/bruce-c-bolling-municipal-building>.

<sup>26</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS. Accessed June 16, 2025. <https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.11401>.

<sup>27</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS.

<sup>28</sup> Boston Landmarks Commission. *Roxbury: Exploring Boston's Neighborhoods*.



renovation would deliver the sprawling facade of the Blue Store that is still visible today, as well as a new address at 9-15 Warren St.<sup>29</sup>

### Golden Age

Completed in 1895, the new Ferdinand's Blue Store sported a towering facade that removed any aesthetic hint of the original, wooden, two-story structure. Ferdinand's stood at five stories now, sporting large display windows along its bottom two floors before giving way to its classically inspired upper section. This visage, maintained across the remaining three levels, blended Baroque elements into an exterior evocative of the Renaissance Revival style, which had gained popularity during this period. To complement this approach, Ferdinand's original, wooden exterior was replaced with towering walls of limestone and yellow brick, and contemporary advertisements vaunted its 12-acre showrooms and the pristine natural lighting they were afforded by the new building's exterior.<sup>30</sup> This expanded, upscale design was made possible by Frank's additional land purchases of the lots directly adjacent to the Blue Store on the southwest-facing side, a maneuver that was duplicated in the 1922 expansion of the establishment.<sup>31</sup> The grand new vision of the store was complemented by its marketing, as newspaper prints had begun advertising the location as "The Largest House Furnishings establishment in the U.S."<sup>32</sup>

Yet, the lofty edifice that the Blue Store now occupied does not appear to have isolated Frank Ferdinand from his long-held value of community support. A contemporary review in the publication "Leading Business Men" read that, while its proportions had increased immensely since its creation, the shift "has not brought about the use of 'red tape' to such a degree that a man must expend five dollars' worth of time in buying a one-dollar article; and the smallest as well as the largest buyer will find that his or her interests are guarded, and that any understandings that may occur where thousands of dollars' worth of goods are sold weekly will be promptly and cheerfully corrected without the least compulsion or ill-feeling." The article further exalted Ferdinand himself and the value his operation had brought to his local partners and peers, stating "[Frank's store] is located near no depots, has never appealed to out-of-town buyers for the bulk of his custom, but has sold at least seven-eighths of his goods right here in the Highlands within a radius of two miles."<sup>33</sup> This high praise further aided the store's reputation, as well as Frank's growing esteem as a community-minded entrepreneur whose personal ventures and expenditures were geared toward helping the Roxbury community, of which he was an active participant. Whether he took pains to extend his fortunes toward Roxbury's Black residents, however, either through work opportunities in his store or via any specifically targeted investment, remains unclear.<sup>34</sup>

Another spell of good fortune arrived in 1901 when Ferdinand's was given a direct physical connection to the Dudley Station rail stop. Prospective customers arriving at this heavily trafficked station literally had a new pathway that would direct them toward the Blue Store and its newly expanded enterprise.<sup>35</sup> The path also led toward the Dartmouth Hotel on its opposite end, giving Ferdinand's another strong access point to outside clientele. This was the dawning of another new era, with the Blue Store no longer needing to rely predominantly on customers from the Roxbury Highlands. Recognizing this opportunity, Ferdinand further exploited this advantage through the commission of large "Blue Store" logos to be emblazoned on the building's exterior, including a significant mural advertisement along the south wall. Whether the targets were the far-off

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<sup>29</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS. Accessed June 16, 2025. <https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.11401>.

<sup>30</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store : 2260 Washington Street, Corner Warren, Established 1869." Boston Athenaeum. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://cdm.bostonathenaeum.org/digital/collection/p13110coll5/id/1291/>.

<sup>31</sup> Sanborn Maps found at <https://goodoldboston.blogspot.com/2011/08/ferdinands-store-roxbury.html>

<sup>32</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS.

<sup>33</sup> "Leading Business Men of Boston Highlands" in *Leading Business Men of the Back Bay, South End, Boston Highlands, Jamaica Plain and Dorchester*. Boston: Mercantile Publishing Company, 1888, p. 150.

<sup>34</sup> Nemiroff, Micah. "1920s Time Capsule Found in Dudley at Ferdinand's." Bay State Banner, 2008. <https://baystatebanner.com/2008/07/02/1920s-time-capsule-found-in-dudley-at-ferdinands/>.

<sup>35</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS.

Dartmouth Hotel clients perusing the neighborhood for perhaps the first time or Dudley Station passengers passing through daily on the dueling elevated rail and streetcar lines, these murals aimed to ensure that no traveler could pass by Ferdinand's without being enticed toward its sprawling assortment of furniture and wares.<sup>36</sup>

After another nearly three decades of steady ascension, the decision was made to expand the Ferdinand's storefront yet again. This time, the assignment would fall to architect Harold Field Kellogg, most known for his Boston-area works such as the Roxbury Boys' Club on Dudley Street, Brighton's Florence Crittenton League Hospital and Home, as well as the Public Services and Pierce-Arrow Sales Company buildings; most of those would be built after his work on Ferdinand's.<sup>37</sup> The construction itself was handled by Turner Construction Co., a local entity.<sup>38</sup> This addition at 17-19 Warren St. would be referred to as the "annex" to the Blue Store. However, it would be improper for this marginalizing title to minimize the ambitious scope of Kellogg's project. The annex would constitute another massive structural advancement, with Ferdinand's now occupying eight floors across four building lots and sporting iron adornments alongside its broadly Neo-Georgian architectural structure. The appearance overall was grand, ambitious, and immediately captivating to prospective customers from near and distant locations. Still, as before, it was the incorporation of the store within its Roxbury neighborhood that would prove to be its greatest asset.

It was a somber irony that Frank Ferdinand himself was unable to bear witness to the summit of his achievements. On March 8, 1923, following a two-week illness and only months after he laid the cornerstone of the grand annex expansion, Ferdinand passed away in his Brookline home. He was 84 years old. Yet, though he did not live to see the annex's full financial impact, Ferdinand was able to witness the project's completion, and the grandeur of the structure was reflected in contemporary memorials that lionized the late furniture mogul. The *Boston Herald* obituary portrayed him as an innovator and a maverick, a well-traveled entrepreneur with a practically overwhelming degree of personal successes, who yet firmly stood by his philanthropic ideals and gave all he could back to his neighbors and local community. The tribute described Ferdinand as a "sailor before the mast" who "made voyages to many parts of the world," and whose "philanthropies were conducted unostentatiously, but it was known throughout the Roxbury district that he had aided numerous families in times of need. He was always deeply interested in the welfare of the youth of his district." These were just a few words among many in a memorial that also lauded his services to the Union Army; his place of worship, the local Dudley Street Baptist Church; and his exhaustive list of professional successes.<sup>39</sup>

These truly were notable, for in addition to being "identified with several other business enterprises in [Roxbury]," Ferdinand had come to be known for the many other hats that he wore. By the time of his death, he had come to be called the "Dean of Furniture Dealers." He was president of the Roxbury Board of Trade, a director of Roxbury's National Rockland Bank, president and director of Terminal Garage, Inc., a member of South Boston lodge of the Masonic Order and advanced to 32nd degree, a Knight's Templar, member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, vice president of the Roxbury Boys' Club, commodore of South Boston Yacht Club, all in addition to his innumerable variation of charitable and philanthropic contributions. While Frank dearly cared for and valued his family, he left no known children, but was survived by his wife, Anna Louise Andersson; a brother, George; as well as two nieces and two nephews. The family would be the Blue Store's new shepherds in his absence.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store Addition." MACRIS. Accessed June 16, 2025.

<https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=bos.11402>; Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>37</sup> "Harold Field Kellogg Biography." Annex Galleries. Accessed June 8, 2025.

<https://www.annexgalleries.com/artists/biography/1219/Kellogg/Harold>.

<sup>38</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store Addition." MACRIS.

<sup>39</sup> "Obituary - Francis 'Frank' Ferdinand." *The Boston Herald*. March 8, 1923.

<sup>40</sup> "Obituary - Francis 'Frank' Ferdinand." *The Boston Herald*. March 8, 1923.

Despite this overwhelming loss, Ferdinand's store would remain prosperous for some years to come. Possible financial wounds stemming from Frank's passing were most likely eased by the fortuitous timing of the city of Roxbury entering its highest period of affluence and productivity thus far. This span lasted from approximately the 1920s through the 1940s and would see the neighborhood earn the new moniker: "Boston's second Main Street."<sup>41</sup> The benefits of this shift were so pronounced that the Blue Store achieved its strongest period of commercial operation as well, despite the spiritual void felt in Frank's absence. So great was the store's success, in fact, that the Ferdinands opened two additional Blue Store locations, one in Needham and one in Cambridge's Central Square, thereby briefly turning Ferdinand's into a chain. It would still be remiss, however, to credit the family for these achievements solely when so much of it was directly owed to Roxbury's growing diversity as a community.<sup>42</sup>

The city had always carried some unique reputation in that regard, with a far greater proportion of German and especially Irish immigrants than surrounding communities, dating back to its establishment, but these new waves resembled something different. First, the city was bolstered by an exceptionally high influx of Jewish immigrants in the Grove Hall area, and most directly on Blue Hill Avenue, the aforementioned retreat of Roxbury's wealthier business professionals. Yet the real cultural explosion would be generated near the middle of the century, when waves of African Americans fleeing the Jim Crow South migrated to Northern cities, which they hoped could finally offer them the freedom and acceptance that Southern states fought to systematically deny them. Like the others, this wave would play out gradually over several decades, but its effects were profound, with Boston's Black population growing from 23,000 in 1940 to 120,000 by 1980, largely concentrated in Roxbury and neighboring Dorchester and Mattapan. In this same period, the percentage of city residents who were not white jumped nearly 30 percent.<sup>43</sup> And far from the narratives of disparagement that sought to depict these residents as dangerous and culturally corrosive, the real products of these changes were unambiguously positive, with Roxbury's newly cemented Black and similarly marginalized populations casting new lineages of community, expression, positive ideals, and commercial achievement into the city's already storied tapestry.<sup>44</sup> Regrettably, this communal and economic wellspring was not to last, put down by a series of poor, dubiously targeted decisions.

### **"Urban Renewal," Resistance, and the Decline of Roxbury**

A 1960s push for "urban renewal" projects that purportedly aimed to modernize the nation's city spaces and organization arrived with a wealth of convincing promises, yet the manner of their implementation would have catastrophic effects on the city's nonwhite populations; debates over the intentionality of these developmental side effects persist to this day. The most disastrously consequential projects were a proposed eight-lane extension of I-95 and a pair of specific neighborhood renewal directives, the outcomes of which would be drastic inversions of their intended effect. The highway was the more obvious failure initially. From the moment work had commenced, the project was confronted by waves of protesting residents, furious at the excessive neighborhood demolition that the project demanded, which would see hundreds of homes bulldozed and Roxbury effectively cut in half. After months of sustained action, the project had to be abandoned before any construction occurred. While most of the allocated funds were able to be repurposed, ultimately for a new public transit way and the Southwest Corridor walking path, this cessation came only after the preparational destruction of hundreds of "substandard" city living units and the displacement of thousands of residents.<sup>45</sup> Even worse, the ultimate use of the devoted funds dealt an additional wound. The rendering of the Southwest Corridor demanded that the city's

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<sup>41</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>42</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>43</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>44</sup> Boston Landmarks Commission. *Roxbury: Exploring Boston's Neighborhoods*.

<sup>45</sup> Haley Fong, "Civil Rights in Roxbury & the Emerald Necklace," *Landscapes - Northeastern University*. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://landscapes.northeastern.edu/haley-story-map/>.

largely elevated Orange Line rapid transit line, which had been the essential key to Roxbury's decades of economic prosperity and growing community diversity, be dismantled and relocated to the site of the new public pathway. It also called for the track's iconic stop at Dudley Station to undergo a severe structural reduction, one that included the removal of its entire fleet of streetcars.<sup>46</sup> As one of only five public transit lines in Roxbury and by some margin the most important, this made access to Roxbury's downtown more difficult for local as well as outside visitors, and overwhelmingly reduced pedestrian foot traffic in Dudley Square. This slow-bleeding puncture would essentially be fatal to Roxbury's vibrancy and overall collective function. The original Dudley Station, retained the design style of its former structure but now existed in a far smaller and less-distinguished state post-renovation. Its elevated track was dismantled officially in 1987, the same year the Southwest Corridor was completed, with the current, surreal void of its appearance where developed architecture once stood serving as a lingering aesthetic testament to this loss.<sup>47</sup> A final consequence of these events was the ultimate transfer of the majority of land appropriated for these projects to permanent city ownership. This decision need not have carried the same degree of devastating consequence in and of itself had local officials in question not squandered it all on a similarly nefarious urban reform practice, the policy of "redlining."<sup>48</sup>

Beginning in 1935, the redlining practice saw various neighborhoods with high concentrations of Black residents given a "red" high-risk designation, meaning the government would underwrite lending for projects by major urban developers. The two that most dramatically resembled the highway project were the Washington Park and Campus High urban renewal areas, which involved the designation of 502 and 103 acres of land throughout Roxbury, respectively, including Dudley Square. The Washington Park project alone would lead to the displacement of 7,000 of residents, 71 percent of whom were Black and mostly low income. While 1,275 families consisting of hundreds of residents were eligible for public housing under the new program, the number of available units was far short of demand, with particular negligence given to the construction of units designated for the elderly and disabled. The Campus High project displaced an additional 160 families in 1966 to build Madison Park Technical High School, yet offered similarly unfavorable solutions to the displaced. The Orchard Park Housing Development, only one block away from Ferdinand's Blue Store, would attempt to counter these impacts with a three-story, 350-unit housing development for very low-income families, but a reputation for crime and area neglect left a constant string of units vacant until the structure had to be demolished and rebuilt. Even additional partnerships between state and federal officials to help middle- and upper-class African Americans purchase homes in the area increased barriers for securing housing loans in other neighborhoods, thereby increasing the level of racial segregation between adjacent communities.<sup>49</sup> These trends were also worsened by a series of major fires between the mid-1970s and 1980s, which, among other things, destroyed swaths of multistory residential and community buildings, several key administrative and social centers, and some of the most iconic storefronts remaining in downtown Roxbury.<sup>50</sup>

Ultimately, these events collectively led to the displacement of more than a third of Roxbury's residents in the 1960s and 1970s. Treasured local iconography such as Dudley Street Baptist Church and the Rivoli Theatre were razed alongside numerous others, and the buildings that replaced them—including a police station, a courthouse, the Dudley Boston Public Library Branch, and a Boys and Girls Club—were inconsistent in achieving their desired outcomes. Yet, even where there were

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<sup>46</sup> Francesca Maria Hess, "Dudley Street Station," Clio: Your Guide to History. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://theclio.com/entry/66164>.

<sup>47</sup> Haley Fong, "Civil Rights in Roxbury & the Emerald Necklace."

<sup>48</sup> Taylor Blackley, "Rediscovering Nubian: A Changed Name Reveals Overlooked Histories," The Scope Boston, February 3, 2021. <https://thescopeboston.org/5806/news-and-features/features/rediscovering-nubian-a-changed-name-reveals-overlooked-histories/>.

<sup>49</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>50</sup> "Dudley and Roxbury: Community Uprooted: Eminent Domain in the U.S." Loyola University Chicago. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://www.luc.edu/eminent-domain/siteessays/bostonma/dudleyandroxbury/>.



victories, they were insufficient to counter the direct impacts that displaced thousands of residents who were not white, hollowed out the local transit infrastructure, left swaths of reacquired city land either vacant or critically underdeveloped, enforced already discriminatory lending practices, and created a longstanding distrust of future planning and major urban reform projects, as residents now rightly feared the capacity to generate new rounds of displacement, gentrification, and closure of local homes, businesses, community groups, and public spaces.<sup>51</sup>

Cascading effects from these upheavals would contribute to the Ferdinand family's next major move. After keeping the Blue Store operational almost half a century after Frank's passing, at first prosperously and then gradually through tighter and tighter margins and increasing competition from more stable suburban outlets, the Ferdinands decided their work was done. In 1971, the family finalized the sale of the Ferdinand's Blue Store building to Hugh Allen. Allen was a noted entrepreneur and tried to reverse the property's fortunes by renting a portion of the space to the state to use for a new community college in 1972, though the concept was never realized, and despite his efforts, he was unable to draw Ferdinand's any renewed success. By the mid-1970s, the Ferdinand's Blue Store complex was officially shuttered, never again to occupy its premier station at the vanguard of Boston's carpenter class or to carry its mercantile spirit. Allen sold the property shortly thereafter.<sup>52</sup>

For decades after Allen's sale, Ferdinand's sat abandoned as Roxbury Center continued spiraling through lengthy cycles of neglect, punctuated by chaotic and fiercely unwanted periods of upheaval. City officials still created various refurbishment plans for the neighborhood, which regularly considered Ferdinand's as a component, but most failed to reach fruition. In the 1990s, the site was considered a potential new headquarters for the Massachusetts Department of Health, a project supported by Governors William Weld and Paul Cellucci, but Governor Mitt Romney canceled the plan due to questions of economic feasibility, as well as the safety of relocated staff.<sup>53</sup> The only successful construction work on Ferdinand's during this period was hardly construction at all, but rather a demolition, as the towering eight-story annex was leveled in 1992.<sup>54</sup>

### **Modern Recovery & the Bolling Municipal Building**

Yet the mission persisted and in 2007 Mayor Thomas M. Menino unveiled his administration's Dudley Vision Project, which had three main goals: to redevelop the central Police Station, to renovate and expand the Dudley Branch of the Boston Public Library, and to create a new, as-yet-undecided municipal center at the land occupied by the former Blue Store. Menino deserves credit as a sincere, genuinely motivated soldier for the cause of rejuvenating Dudley Square and endured mountains of administrative pushback in doing so. Fortunately for the project, the Boston Redevelopment Authority had already purchased the Ferdinand's lot that same year. However, it was not until 2011, after a final string of administrative hangups and the navigated fallout from the 2008 economic crash that the project finally broke ground. When finally announcing the project's official commencement at the start of that same year, Menino did so without informing any of his staff in advance. Menino died in 2014, one year before the work he initiated at the Ferdinand's site was completed. On Menino's instruction, the funeral procession passed directly through Dudley Square along its route, signifying its personal importance to Menino and Boston as a whole. The remainder of the project was overseen by Menino's successor, Mayor Martin Walsh, and modest revisions were made to incorporate the new Roxbury Innovation Center, which hoped to ensure Roxbury's low-income residents and members of marginalized communities had equal access to Boston's heavily tech-centered economy.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, in addition to the Ferdinand's building, work was

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<sup>51</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>52</sup> Audrea Jones Dunham, "Boston's 1960s Civil Rights Movement: A Look Back." Open Vault - WGBH. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://openvault.wgbh.org/exhibits/bostons-1960s-civil-rights-movement-a-look-back>.

<sup>53</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*;

<sup>54</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store : 2260 Washington Street, Corner Warren, Established 1869." Boston Athenaeum. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://cdm.bostonathenaeum.org/digital/collection/p13110coll5/id/1291/>.

<sup>55</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

also done to refurbish several additional historic storefronts throughout the city, and the reintroduction of various dining, retail, and public gathering spaces throughout the neighborhood drove a renewed sense of activity and communal visibility that ensured Roxbury's tides would rise in tandem with the old Ferdinand's site.<sup>56</sup> Following its completion, the endeavor was recognized as the "largest project taken on by the City of Boston in decades."<sup>57</sup>

Menino's and Walsh's redevelopment plans in Roxbury may have been the first to legitimately deliver on their promises to refurbish and revitalize the city for its residents. Specifically regarding Ferdinand's, the restoration had thankfully left its iconic Baroque exterior intact. On its return from vacancy after 40 years, the structure was selected and rechristened the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, a mixed-use center that incorporated storefront, meeting, and transit spaces alongside its primary purpose as the relocated headquarters of the Boston Public Schools.<sup>58</sup> The name change was a symbolic victory in and of itself through the honoring of its namesake, Bruce C. Bolling, a long-serving member and the first Black elected president of the Boston City Council.<sup>59</sup> Bolling (1945–2012) was a member of a family that was prominent in local and state politics.

The 2019 renaming of the area from Dudley to Nubian Square, was also the result of a complex debate over how to assert Roxbury's diverse voices and cultural inheritance.<sup>60</sup> It was originally named for Thomas Dudley (1576–1653), one of the earliest governors of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Like many of his time, Dudley enslaved people of African heritage; it was during his tenure that Massachusetts adopted its "Body of Liberties" in 1641, a document that, in the very bleakest of ironies, made it the first colony to legally sanction slavery. Nubia is the name of the region in Africa along the Nile River, with Egypt to the south and Sudan to the north, the location of the thriving ancient Kingdom of Kush.<sup>61</sup> This name change from Dudley Square to Nubian Square would firmly signify the arrival of the next era in the community's evolution. Community advocates hope the name will shine a direct light on the real sources of Roxbury's prominence and prosperity. "Nubian is everything for enriching and uplifting Black and brown people of all ethnicities," said Randy Rashawn, general manager of Nubian Gallery, which at the time was one of the largest showcases of Nubian art that has been seen in Boston. He hopes the exhibit will help visitors "see the connection from Nubia to what is today; like the makeup, to style, to hair...all of these things that started with people just being themselves."<sup>62</sup>

## Legacy

*"Many neighborhoods are defined by key architectural elements that have served as organizing elements and visual cornerstones for generations. Ferdinand's Blue Store was that key element of Dudley Square. Its loss couldn't be imagined yet its rehabilitation was equally challenging to accept as a reality."*

— Greg Galer, executive director, Boston Preservation Alliance<sup>63</sup>

There is an optimistic and sincere purpose behind the renewed care and reverence shown toward the onetime Ferdinand's Blue Store site. It shows that recognition of local heritage and authentic awareness of the different factors that can drive local prosperity are key to maintaining that

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<sup>56</sup> "The Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Center." Boston Preservation. Accessed June 12, 2025.

<https://bostonpreservation.org/advocacy-project/bruce-c-bolling-municipal-center>.

<sup>57</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

<sup>58</sup> "Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building." Rudy Bruner Award, March 4, 2019.

<https://www.rudybruneraward.org/winners/bruce-c-bolling-building/>.

<sup>59</sup> "Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building." Rudy Bruner Award.

<sup>60</sup> "Roxbury's Dudley Square renamed Nubian Square." *Boston Herald*. December 19, 2019.

<sup>61</sup> "Boston Votes against Renaming Dudley Square." *Daily Free Press*, November 6, 2019.

<https://dailyfreepress.com/blog/2019/11/06/boston-votes-against-renaming-dudley-square/>.

<sup>62</sup> Taylor Blackley, "Rediscovering Nubian."

<sup>63</sup> "The Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Center." Boston Preservation. Accessed June 12, 2025.

<https://bostonpreservation.org/advocacy-project/bruce-c-bolling-municipal-center>.

affluence for future generations. Moreover, it demonstrates that the loss or lack of awareness of these factors can be a key driver toward the devastation of these historic communities, as much as there are still points from which a conscious pivot can drive local recovery.<sup>64</sup> That Roxbury had to be largely demolished and left destitute for decades to realize this fact is a tragedy. The Bolling Municipal Building, a center that places such an overt focus on care and education of Roxbury's latest generation of children, is as worthy a cause as can practically be imagined for the space. Yet, perhaps in a world absent of discriminatory redlining and viciously destabilizing urban renewal projects, Ferdinand's could have survived, Roxbury may not have been driven to such a state of neglect, and uninterrupted investment could have enabled two, separately successful community focal points to exist alongside one another. Something similar may even be said for Roxbury's diminished community of craftsmen, which owes its lineage to the independent laborers gradually sorted out in favor of dreams of impersonal, yet increasingly efficient mass production. Perhaps with devoted care and attention, these shops and their workers could have continued to function in a more modern world and be incorporated into the new production standard that Frank Ferdinand helped build, rather than be left in the past as a result of it.<sup>65</sup> Taking this intellectual exercise to its natural conclusion, one might ponder whether the original annihilation and violent displacement of the state's original population of Indigenous people was ever necessary for colonial growth, or indeed served any positive, mutually exclusive purpose at all. Yet, even with its new purpose and complex heritage, the facade remaining from the old Blue Store exterior stands as a visual testament to ambition, effort, and considered innovation, as well as a model for future residents and professionals if appropriate lessons are retained. For its history, its beauty, and the utterly essential insight it offers toward the best and worst aspects of modern community reform, Ferdinand's has earned its place in Roxbury's rich lineage and deserves its recognition on the roster of Boston's singular historic locations.

## 6.2 Architectural Significance

John Lyman Faxon, the architect responsible for the iconic design of Ferdinand's Blue Store, was a Massachusetts native; he was born in Quincy to first cousins Francis Grey Faxon and Elizabeth Faxon on July 19, 1851. Upon graduating from MIT's architectural school in 1874, he formed a partnership with his uncle, real estate developer J. Warren Faxon, but left to establish his own practice one to two years later. After this, Faxon's life took a brief detour when he relocated to St. John, New Brunswick, and helped to rebuild after the Great Fire of 1877 destroyed 40 percent of the city, displacing 13,000 residents. In January the following year, Faxon returned to Massachusetts, beginning a period that saw him erect his most iconic architectural contributions.<sup>66</sup> Among Faxon's most recognizable works during this period were Holbrook Town Hall (1878), Boston's Hotel Victoria (1886), First Baptist Church in Newton (1888), First Congregational Church in Detroit (1891), Twelfth Baptist Church in Boston (1895), and East Boston High School (1901).<sup>67</sup> Faxon formed a partnership with New York architects Danford N. B. Sturgis and Norman McGlashan in 1909, but Sturgis' death two years later cut this venture short. Faxon died on March 13, 1918, at the age of 66, leaving one daughter from his short-lived marriage to fellow Quincy native Mary Jane Carr.<sup>68</sup>

The iconic Blue Store exterior erected during the retailer's 1895 expansion remains standing and its distinctive Baroque and Renaissance Revival influences have gone largely unblemished even amid

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<sup>64</sup> Jonathan Jew, "Boston Divided," Landscapes - Northeastern University. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://landscapes.northeastern.edu/jonathanjewtest/>.

<sup>65</sup> Roxbury Neighborhood Study. Boston, Massachusetts, 2022. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5beaf0f075f9ee1548698279/t/63e65610a6ab9322c80d19c2/1676039727247/Roxbury+Neighborhood+Study.docx.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> "Faxon's Child." *Boston Daily Globe*. October 4, 1894.

<sup>67</sup> "John Lyman Faxon." Back Bay Houses, January 30, 2016. <https://backbayhouses.org/john-lyman-faxon/>.

<sup>68</sup> "Faxon's Child." *Boston Daily Globe*. October 4, 1894.



successive rounds of renovation. The building stands five stories on a 13,974-square-foot lot, bearing a limestone exterior that gives way to yellow-colored brick on the third and fourth floors.<sup>69</sup> Terracotta, marble, and granite are also incorporated throughout key adornments along the exterior.<sup>70</sup> Its street-facing side is angled into a wedge shape whose curved point of intersection marks the main entryway, positioned at the corner of Washington and Warren streets. Above, the rooftop perimeter sports a deep cornice adorned by a stone balustrade during the Blue Store's peak years, although the balustrade was ultimately removed after the structure fell vacant. Its surviving iconography, though, is fortunate to still include its distinguishing assortment of exterior window designs. The bottom two floors were illustrated primarily by their broad, open display windows, which offered a clear view from the street of the Blue Store's sprawling assortment of furniture and other home goods to Roxbury's window-shopping pedestrians and out-of-town visitors.

Perhaps more captivating from a distance, though, were the circular windows to be found on the opposing ends and central, curved corner entryway at the second and fifth floors, which stood out like dazzling moonbeams against the limestone brick, and were only further emphasized by the intricate sculpture work rendered across the stone and dancing along their uniquely carved enframements. The corners of floors three and four would instead forgo these circular designs along their edges in favor of triple windows with segmental lintels, delivering themselves a subtler effect, which yet serves to enhance the more unique adornments of their neighboring floors below and above. Finally, stretching between each fifth-floor circular window are ones crowned with keystone arches embodying an intricate design of equal depth and quality to their neighboring counterparts. To this day, each window has been painted the distinctive "Ferdinand blue" tone, a nod to the building's original shepherd.<sup>71</sup>

It bears noting that the Bolling Municipal Building predominantly occupies structures and spaces around the Ferdinand's facade on the property, rather than the Blue Store's frame itself. There was some truth to this in Frank Ferdinand's day as well for, as stated earlier, while Faxon's Blue Store structure took the most recognizable point of the Washington Street property, the expansions in 1895 and 1922 had each seen the business acquire adjacent acreage from its neighboring venues.<sup>72</sup> More so than Ferdinand's, these lots are where most of the Bolling center is positioned while, as of 2025, the core Blue Store building is the site of the proposed music venue, the Jazz Urbane Cafe.<sup>73</sup>

Other spaces on the land not currently occupied by the Bolling center include a coffee shop named Dudley Cafe and RedRed Kitchen, a fast food-style restaurant serving African cuisine. This shop, however, is currently located at the southwesternmost section of the block, bordering Nubian Station, the only portion of that city block that Ferdinand and his Blue Store never acquired. Dudley Cafe sits on the spot that was formerly occupied by Ferdinand's annex, but as that structure was previously razed, the shop is housed in a smaller building that was erected during Mayor Menino's restorations.<sup>74</sup>

### **6.3 Archaeological Sensitivity**

The Roxbury neighborhood of Boston is part of the traditional homelands of the Massachusett. They lived in the place we now call Boston for at least 12,000 years and are here today. Archaeological investigations throughout Boston document surviving evidence of Native presence throughout the city, even in developed areas.

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<sup>69</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS.

<sup>70</sup> "Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building." BCAUSA. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://www.bcausa.com/bruce-c-bolling-municipal-building>.

<sup>71</sup> "Ferdinand's Blue Store." MACRIS.

<sup>72</sup> "Dudley Square." Boston Streetcars. Accessed June 12, 2025. <http://www.bostonstreetcars.com/dudley-square.html>.

<sup>73</sup> "Vision." Jazz Urbane Cafe. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://www.jazzurbanecafe.com/vision>.

<sup>74</sup> Bruner Foundation, Inc. *Investing in Urban Infrastructure*.

Roxbury is archaeologically sensitive for ancient Native American and historical archaeological sites. The proximity of the neighborhood to natural resources including river, marine, and upland areas make it suitable for Massachusetts Native habitation and use and there are multiple intact ancient Native sites already documented in Roxbury. Open spaces that have not been developed, including yards and parks, may contain significant ancient Native archaeological sites. Historically, Roxbury was a significant part of Boston's 17th–19th century history, and contains intact archaeological sites related to Boston's colonial, Revolutionary, and early Republic history, especially yard spaces where features including cisterns and privies may remain intact and significant archaeological deposits. Unsurveyed areas within Roxbury's industrial core along the Stony Brook may contain significant industrial sites. These potential historical sites may represent the histories of Roxbury home-life, artisans, industries, enslaved people, immigrants, and Native peoples spanning multiple centuries.

#### **6.4 Planning Context**

Ferdinand's Blue Store closed in the 1970s, after which the building sat vacant for decades. On June 9, 2007, Mayor Thomas M. Menino launched the Dudley Square Vision Project to revitalize the area then known as Dudley Square. As part of this project, the Boston Redevelopment Authority acquired the property and gutted the Blue Store's interior while preserving its historic facade. The redevelopment of the site also saw the construction of new municipal offices, civic spaces, and ground-floor retail behind the historic facade and in new additions adjacent to it. In 2015, the building reopened as the headquarters of the Boston Public Schools system. In 2017, the building was renamed by Mayor Martin J. Walsh's administration as the Bruce C. Bolling Building after the first Black president of the Boston City Council.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "Bruce C. Bolling Building in Dudley Square Officially Renamed." City of Boston. Accessed September 19, 2025. <https://www.boston.gov/news/bruce-c-bolling-building-dudley-square-officially-renamed>.

## 7. STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

### 7.1 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 that 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 that 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.<sup>76</sup> 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 shall require the prior review and approval of the Commission.

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

### 7.2 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 that 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.

- A. Routine activities that are not subject to review by the Commission:
  - 1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.
    - a. For building maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind repainting, staining or refinishing of wood or metal elements, lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, etc.
    - b. For landscape maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning of paths and sidewalks, etc. (no power

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<sup>76</sup> 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](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf).

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 that 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 that 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. 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, 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 that 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.

### **7.3 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 may 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 the Commission only after careful consideration. The Commission acknowledges that some changes to the character-defining features may be necessary or beneficial; the standards and criteria established in this report are intended to make the changes sensitive to the historic and architectural character of the property.

The character-defining features for this historic resource include:

- A. Curved five-story flatiron massing, defining the corner of Washington and Warren streets;
- B. Facade materials: limestone, terra-cotta, decorative brick (in a banded pattern) and granite;
- C. Large, ornamental copper cornice featuring cast lion heads and the name "Ferdinand;"
- D. Elaborately carved limestone frieze including the name "Blue Store;"
- E. Large oval windows at the second and fifth stories above the main entrance and at the ends of the facade;
- F. Storefront windows flanking the main entrance on the first floor;
- G. Accordion-paneled display windows surrounding the second floor;
- H. Doric pilasters and limestone entablatures surrounding windows at first and second floors;
- I. Six tripartite windows at third and fourth floors with Renaissance-inspired, carved limestone detailing;
- J. Marble medallions at the top floor;
- K. Flagpole on the roof.

### **7.4 Standards and Criteria**

The following Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.<sup>77</sup> 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.

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<sup>77</sup> 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](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf).

#### **7.4.1 General Standards**

Subject to review and approval under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided. See the list of Character-Defining Features in the previous section.
2. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
3. The period of significance is not determined by this study report. However, proposals for alterations to the property should be presented to the Commission with a clear argument for how they fit the most current understanding of the property's period or periods of significance and their impact on historic or existing fabric of the building.
4. Changes and additions to the landmark that have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the property and its context. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right; if so, that significance should be recognized and respected. (The term "later contributing features" will be used to convey this concept.)
5. Distinctive or significant historic and architectural materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Replacement of missing features should be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. The use of synthetic replacement materials is discouraged, except when substituted for perishable features exposed to the weather or when necessary to accommodate the effects of climate change.
8. Chemical and/or physical treatments (such as sandblasting) shall not be used in a manner that damages historic materials. The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible and the results should preserve the patina that characterizes the age of the structure. Applications of paint or masonry preservative solutions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some point in the history of the property.
9. Demolition of a designated structure can be allowed only as a last resort after all practicable measures have been taken to ensure preservation, or unless required to comply with requirements certified by a duly authorized public officer to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition.
10. Creating new openings in exterior walls should be avoided when possible. Where necessary to accommodate new uses or for achieving accessibility, new openings or changes to existing openings will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

11. 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.
12. 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.
13. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved, excluding references to building ownership, operations, tenants.
14. 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. New signs may attach to the building if approved by the Commission. The method of attachment shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should cause the least damage possible to the building. (See the Masonry section for guidelines on penetrating masonry.)
15. 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.
16. 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. 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.
17. 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.
18. When reviewing an application for proposed alterations, the Commission will consider whether later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) to the building 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 existing 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.

#### **7.4.2 Archaeology**

1. The property proposed for designation is exempt from archeological review due to previous ground disturbance..

#### **7.4.3 Masonry at exterior walls (including but not limited to stone, brick, terra-cotta, concrete, 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 masonry materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation or missing components of masonry features shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. When replacement of existing materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Sound original mortar shall be retained.
6. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand raking the joints.
7. Use of mechanical hammers shall not be allowed. Use of mechanical saws may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.
8. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile, and method of application.
9. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.
10. If the building is to be cleaned, the masonry shall be cleaned with the gentlest method possible.
11. 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).
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. 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.

16. 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.
17. Deteriorated concrete shall be repaired by cutting damaged concrete back to remove the source of deterioration, such as corrosion on metal reinforcement bars. The new patch shall be applied carefully so that it will bond satisfactorily with and match the historic concrete.
18. Joints in concrete shall be sealed with appropriate flexible sealants and backer rods, when necessary.

#### **7.4.4 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 metal materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation or missing components of metal features shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use the gentlest method possible.
6. The type of metal shall be identified prior to any cleaning procedure because each metal has its own properties and may require a different treatment.
7. Non-corrosive chemical methods shall be used to clean soft metals (such as lead, tinplate, terneplate, copper, and zinc) whose finishes can be easily damaged by abrasive methods.
8. If gentler methods have proven ineffective, then abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed for hard metals (such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel) as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
9. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
10. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program that 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.

#### **7.4.5 Windows**

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 window sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation or missing components of window features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
6. When replacement of sash, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, or ornamentation is necessary, it shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. 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.
8. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.
9. Repainting of 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.

#### **7.4.6 Entrances/Doors**

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. Creating new entrance openings should be avoided when possible. Where necessary to accommodate new uses or for achieving accessibility, new entrance openings will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
4. Enlarging or reducing original or later contributing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.

5. 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.
6. Deteriorated entrance elements, materials, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation or missing components of entrance features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
7. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
8. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative) and details shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
9. 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.
10. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.
11. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.
12. Buzzers, alarms and intercom panels, where allowed, shall be flush mounted and appropriately located.
13. 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.

#### **7.4.7 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 lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation or missing components of lighting fixtures should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may 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 that date from an interim installation and that are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
  - d. New lighting fixtures that are differentiated from the original or later contributing fixture in design and that illuminate the exterior of the building in a way that 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.

#### **7.4.8 Storefronts**

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

#### **7.4.9 Roofs**

1. The original or later contributing roof shapes and original or later contributing roof elements (visible from public ways) 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 roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation or missing components of roof features should be replaced with material and elements that match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may 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 roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
6. 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).
7. External gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless based on physical or documentary evidence.

#### **7.4.10 Roof Projections**

1. New roof projections shall not be visible from the public way. (This does not apply to solar panels, which shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis; see 7.4.13 Renewable Energy Sources.)
2. New mechanical equipment should be reviewed to confirm that it is no more visible than the existing.
3. The recreated flagpole is a character-defining feature of the building and it should be retained.

#### **7.4.11 Additions (also refer to General Standards above)**

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.
6. No new additions shall be built on top of the five-story section of the building which is included within the boundary of the designation (see **Figure 1**).

#### **7.4.12 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 should be reversible when possible and preserve as much of the original materials as possible. 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.

#### **7.4.13 Renewable Energy Sources**

1. Renewable energy sources, including but not limited to solar energy, are encouraged for the site.
2. 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.
3. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings for general guidelines.

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