

# The Fort Point Channel Landmark District

Boston Landmarks Commission Study Report



Petition #201, Boston

# The Fort Point Channel Landmark District

## Study Report

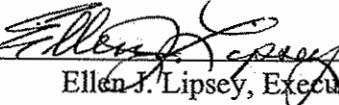
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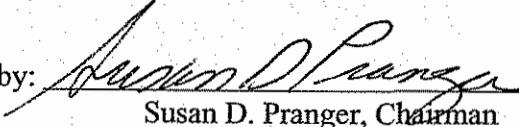


Boston Landmarks Commission  
Environment Department  
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of  
**The Fort Point Channel Landmark District**  
as a Landmark District under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Amended 12/9/2008

Approved by:  9/23/08  
Ellen J. Lipsey, Executive Director Date

Approved by:  9/23/2008  
Susan D. Pranger, Chairman Date

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## **Introduction**

The Fort Point Channel Study Committee hereby transmits to the Boston Landmarks Commission its report on the designation of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District. The designation of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) was initiated in 2001 after a petition was submitted by registered voters to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the proposed landmark district under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. The purpose of such a designation is to recognize and to protect the architectural and historical characteristics that make an area distinctive and worthy of preservation.

As a result of the petition and at the request of the Boston Landmarks Commission, the Mayor appointed and the City Council confirmed a Study Committee to make recommendations to the Commission on the proposed Fort Point Channel Landmark District. The Fort Point Channel Study Committee, composed of five members from the Landmarks Commission and six property owners and residents from the Fort Point Channel study area, began its work together in late 2006 to evaluate the architectural and historical significance of the area, refine the potential boundaries, and develop standards and criteria for design review to ensure protection of the area.

All Study Committee meetings were held in or near the Study Area on a regular schedule. The meetings were open to the public and were well attended by residents, property owners, and other interested parties. At each meeting time was reserved for public comments. To increase public awareness and invite participation in the Study Committee's activities, a website was set up to post meeting agendas as well as to post and update the work of the study committee. In addition, three public meetings were held in the community to publicize the status of the report as the work of the Study Committee progressed. After more than a year and a half of study and deliberation, the Study Report was completed for the proposed Fort Point Channel Landmark District. On September 10, 2008, the nine attending members of the Study Committee voted unanimously to accept the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Study Report and submit it to the Boston Landmarks Commission.

### Intent of the District

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) is Boston's largest, most cohesive, and most significant collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century loft buildings. The purpose of landmark district designation is to enrich and enhance the unique industrial heritage of the Fort Point Channel neighborhood expressed in its architectural form, architectural details, structures, street pattern and streetscapes. In order to achieve this, specific standards and criteria shall be adopted for the FPCLD to:

- Preserve buildings and groups of buildings that create a strong sense of character and architectural cohesiveness in the district;
- Support the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings;
- Protect and enhance the unique character of public view corridors, parks, open space and streetscapes;

- Encourage new construction and in-fill development that respects the scale, character and architectural and visual integrity of existing and potentially historic buildings; and
- Allow for contemporary interpretations of the urban heritage of the District.

### Summary

The Fort Point Channel Study Committee has concluded that the proposed Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) has architectural and historic significance for the following reasons:

The sites and structures that comprise the FPCLD exemplify a kind of enterprise – land-making and real estate development – that was characteristic of Boston and the region, and important to the economic and physical development of both the city and the region. In addition, the FPCLD is an excellent example of the kind of urban loft district that was found in and near the centers of the cities across the United States and played a vital part in the nation’s economy. These wholesaling and warehousing districts often specialized in particular commodities produced or consumed in their regions. In New England, such a commodity was wool – the raw material of the region’s woolen and worsted cloth manufacturers. Boston became the nation’s most important wool marketplace, and the center of the wool trade was Summer Street in the FPCLD.

In addition, the structures that comprise the FPCLD are individually excellent examples of a building type – the urban loft – that was important in the economic history of the city and the region. The FPCLD lofts are also fine examples of a method of construction used in such buildings: warehouse construction. In their architecture, they are fine examples of styles popular in the city, region, and the nation during the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries interpreted for industrial buildings. More important than the quality of individual buildings is their collective effect. The district is distinctive, with integrity of location and setting: it is an unusually well-preserved, clearly bounded, and largely intact district with few incompatible buildings and a moderate amount of exterior alteration. In this respect, it serves as an important national example of an urban loft district from the Late Industrial Period.

Therefore, the Study Committee has concluded that the area described in Section 1.0 of the Study Report be designated as the Fort Point Channel Landmark District, as well as the related “A” Street Protection Area and the Seaport Boulevard Protection Area described in the same section.

The Committee has also recommended that the Standards and Criteria, which have been prepared to guide future physical changes to property and to open space within the district in order to protect the architectural integrity and character of the area, be adopted.

The Committee has further recommended that Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission be established in accordance with Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, that district residents and members of the Boston Landmarks Commission be appointed to the Commission to review exterior changes to property in the district.

***Study Committee Members:***

David Berarducci (BLC), chairman  
Valerie Burns (FPC representative)  
Louis Casagrande (FPC representative)  
Cyrus Field (BLC)  
Thomas Herman (BLC)  
Steve Hollinger (FPC representative)  
Young Park (FPC representative)  
Jeffry Pond (BLC)  
Susan Pranger (BLC)  
Pratap Talwar (FPC representative)  
Michele Yeeles (FPC representative)

***Boston Landmarks Commission staff assisting the Study Committee:***

Ellen Lipsey, Executive Director  
Roysin Bennett Younkin, Architectural Historian  
Gary Russell, Staff Architect  
Kathryn McLaughlin, Architectural Historian

***Consultant for preparation of the preliminary study report, with funding provided by the Massachusetts Historical Commission:***

Sara E. Wermiel, Industrial Historian, with assistance from  
Susan McDaniel Ceccacci, Architectural Historian

## **1.0     Location**

### **1.1     Boundaries of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District and Protection Areas**

Note: For the purposes of orientation, Seaport Boulevard will be considered due North.

The boundaries of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District starting at the northwest corner:

1. The northern boundary, from west to east, begins at the northwestern edge of parcel #0602635000 (308 Congress Street), continues east following the northern edge of this lot and turns north to follow the western side of Sleeper Street, to the northeastern corner of parcel #0602636020 (no address), then turns east, crosses Sleeper Street and follows the rear, southern lot lines of properties on Seaport Boulevard to the corner parcel #0602652003 (44 Stillings Street), then turns south at the northeast corner of that parcel.
2. The eastern boundary, from north to south, begins at the northeastern corner of parcel #0602652003 (44 Stillings Street) and continues south along the eastern side of Stillings Street to the southwestern corner of parcel #0602651010 (29 Stillings Street), and follows the southern edge of that parcel east to Boston Wharf Road. The boundary then turns south and runs along the western side of Boston Wharf Road, which becomes West Service Road, until it reaches the southeast corner of parcel #0602761001 (319 A Street, Rear). The boundary then turns west and runs along the southern lot line of that parcel and parcel #0602761000 (319 A Street) until it reaches “A” Street. The boundary then turns south and runs south along the eastern side of “A” Street until it reaches the northern side of Wormwood Street. The boundary then turns east and runs along the northern side of Wormwood Street until it meets the southwest corner of the “A” Street Protection Area and turns south. The boundary then continues south in a straight line, crossing Wormwood Street and continues to the northeast corner of parcel #0602754010 (33 Wormwood Street). The boundary then runs along the eastern boundary of that parcel to Binford Street. The boundary then continues approximately 80 feet south, corresponding to the width of Binford Street at its western end. The boundary then turns west and runs along the southern side of Binford Street to the northeastern corner of parcel #0602751300 (35 Channel Center Street). The boundary then turns south and continues along the eastern lot lines of the properties on the east side of Channel Center Street and continues approximately 50 feet south of the building on parcel #0602750030 (50-52 Channel Center Street) to include the rights-of-way associated with Iron Street as approved in the Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan. The boundary then turns west.

3. The southern boundary, from east to west, begins approximately 50 feet south of the building on parcel #0602750030 (50-52 Channel Center Street) and continues west along the southern right-of-way boundary of Iron Street to the west side of "A" Street. The boundary then turns north.
4. The western boundary, from south to north, extends north along the western side of "A" Street, to the southeast corner of parcel # (0601166045 (no address) where it turns west and runs along the southern edge of that parcel to the western side of Necco Street where it turns north and continues along the western side of Necco Street to the rear of the buildings fronting the south side of Necco Place on parcel 0601165010 (244 "A" Street). The boundary then turns west and follows the rear of those buildings until it reaches the seawall. The boundary then turns north and follows the seawall back to the northwestern corner of parcel #0602635000 (308 Congress Street).

**The boundaries of the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area starting at the southwest corner:**

1. The western boundary, from south to north, extends from the southwest corner of parcel #0602637010 (64 Sleeper Street) north along the seawall to Seaport Boulevard.
2. The northern boundary, from west to east, extends along the southern side of Seaport Boulevard to Boston Wharf Road.
3. The eastern boundary, from north to south, extends south along the western side of Boston Wharf Road to the boundary of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District where it turns west.
4. The southern boundary, from east to west, follows the northern boundary of the Fort Point Channel Landmark district beginning at Boston Wharf Road and continuing west along the southern boundary of parcel # 0602651010 (29 Stillings Street) to the eastern side of Stillings Street where it turns north and follows the eastern side of Stillings Street, following the boundaries of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District, to the northeastern corner of parcel ##0602652003 (44 Stillings Street) and continues west along the southern lot lines of properties on Seaport Boulevard across Sleeper Street to the northeast corner of parcel #0602636020 (no address). The boundary then turns south and continues along the west side of Sleeper Street to the boundary of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District. The boundary then turns west and continues back to the seawall.

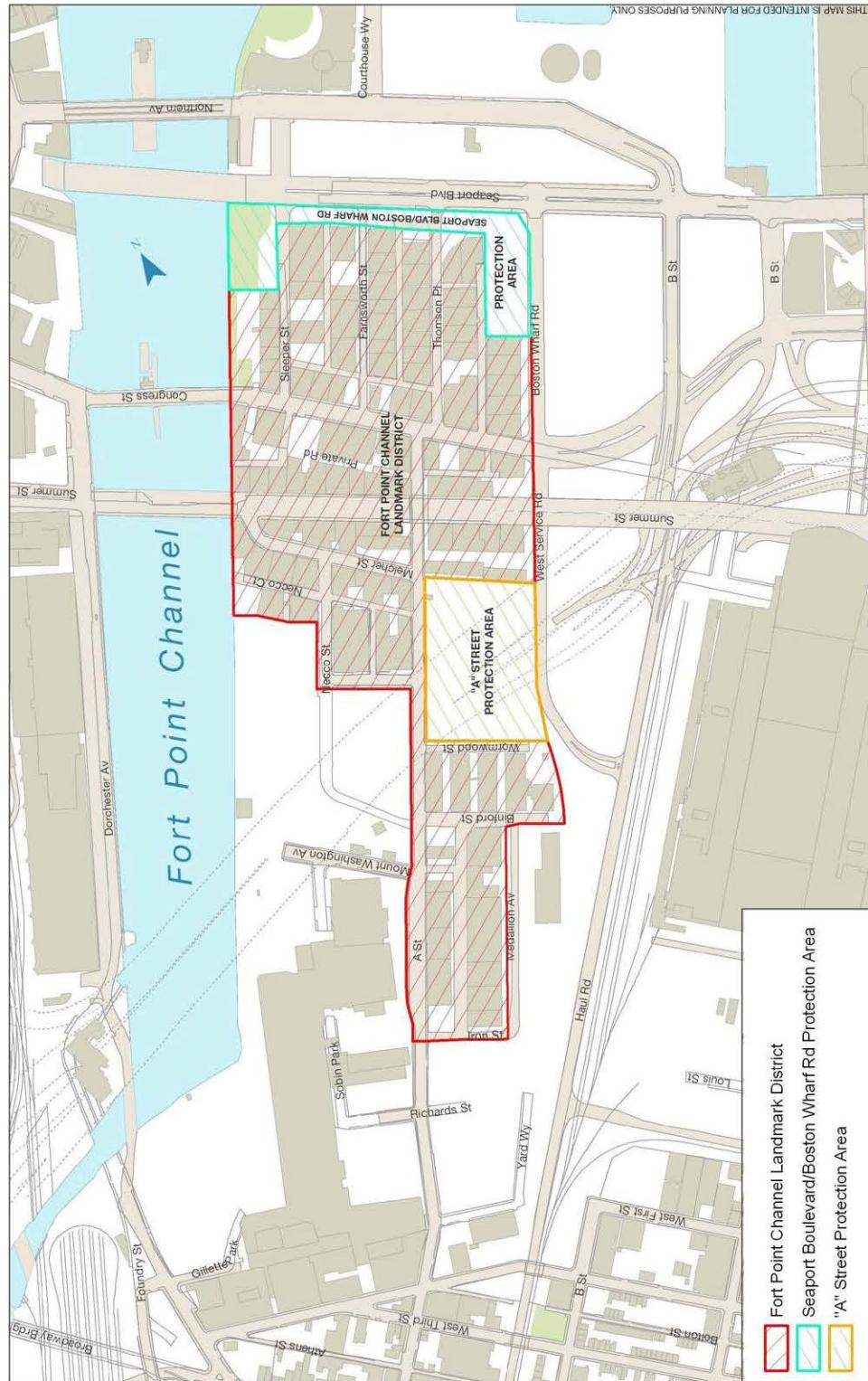
**The boundaries of the "A" Street Protection Area starting at the northwest corner.**

1. The northern boundary, from west to east, follows the boundary of the Fort

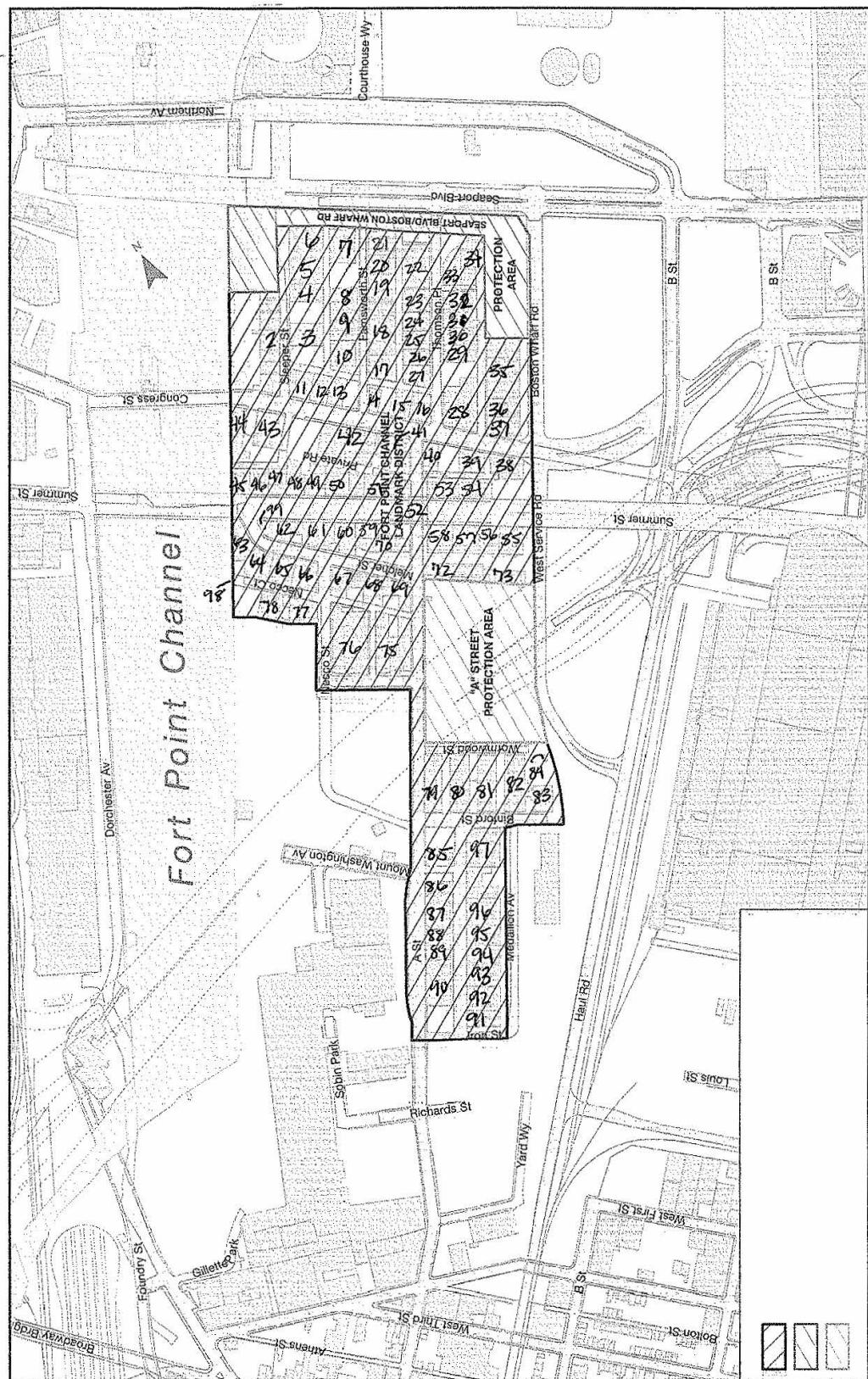
Point Channel Landmark District, extending along the southern lot lines of parcel #0602761000 (319 "A" Street) and parcel #0602761001 (319 A Street, Rear) to the west side of West Service Road.

2. The eastern boundary, from north to south, extends south along the west side of West Service Road in a straight line paralleling "A" Street to Wormwood Street.
3. The southern boundary, from east to west, follows the boundary of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District and extends west along the north side of Wormwood Street to "A" Street.
4. The western boundary, from south to north, extends north along the east side of "A" Street back to the southwest corner of parcel #0602761000 (319 "A" Street).

## 1.2 Boundary Map



### 1.3 Map Showing Buildings Numbered for Reference in the Text.



## **1.4 Area in Which the Property is Located**

Note: For orientation, Summer Street is considered an east-west street (it actually angles from northwest at Fort Point Channel to southeast). Thus, the even-numbered buildings on Summer Street are described as being on the north side, and A Street is described as a north-south street.

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) is located across Fort Point Channel from downtown Boston, on the northwest side of South Boston. All land on the northern side of South Boston – essentially, all land north of First Street – is made-land that was created by enclosing the original marshes and shoals with seawalls and filling in behind them. Several entities created the shoreline, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Boston & Albany Railroad, and the Boston Wharf Company (BWCo). All the land of the FPCLD was created by the BWCo.

Incorporated in 1836 for the purpose of building and operating wharves, BWCo evolved into an industrial real estate company at the end of the nineteenth century, as business conditions and opportunities changed. Between 1837 and 1882, BWCo filled in the marshes to which it had rights in phases, advancing from south to north. The FPCLD is part of this site – the northern section. BWCo not only made the land but also built the streets. Since the district is filled land, it is completely flat, except for the raised grade of Summer Street. The streets follow the grid pattern typical of South Boston with the notable exception of curving Melcher Street, which slopes from an elevated Summer Street at the end of the Summer Street Bridge down to grade at A Street. Three bridges connect the area to downtown Boston: from north to south these are the Evelyn Moakley, Summer Street, and Congress Street bridges. A Street is the main north-south street through the district and connects it with the residential neighborhood south of the district, around West Broadway. Summer and Congress streets are the main east-west streets.

Most of the buildings standing on this site today represent the latter stage of the company's history, when it became a real estate company. The great majority of the buildings are lofts constructed between the 1880s and 1920s, and most are 5-6 stories.

Despite considerable redevelopment around the district, the area is clearly defined, for the most part by its historic boundaries. It is bounded on the north and east by land formerly occupied by railroad yards and tracks, and by the water of the Fort Point Channel on the west. Only at its southern end, in the A Street and Channel Center Street section, is the district defined by recent building demolitions. The boundaries are based on the period of development of the buildings that survive in, and characterize, the district today.

## **2.0 Description**

### **2.1 Property Types and Uses**

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) is a roughly 55-acre site located across Fort Point Channel from downtown Boston, on the northwest side of South Boston. As of the date of this report, it contains 95 buildings and 4 structures (specifically, a bridge, a prominent chimney, a roof sign, and the seawall along Fort Point Channel). The great majority of the buildings (87) are lofts constructed for warehousing and light manufacturing that were built between 1880 and 1930. Very few buildings have been constructed in the district since 1929. Although the midsection of the district has been cleared of historic buildings as part of the work on the Central Artery highway project, the north and south parts of the district remain largely intact and retain much original fabric. As representations of original function, period of development, and building form, the area is remarkably uniform and distinctive.

The FPCLD is further defined by being entirely the creation of a single company: the Boston Wharf Company (BWCo). All land in the area was made by this company, which filled the site mainly from 1837-1882, although the final filling (of an inlet) occurred in the twentieth century. The BWCo built the streets, laid out lots, and also erected most of the buildings, which were designed by the company's two staff architects. While the land surrounding the district, and many parcels within the district, are now being redeveloped, the district itself continues to have clear boundaries that correspond largely with its historic boundaries. The historic district is clearly recognizable.

From the start of its creation in 1836 until recent decades, the FPCLD has been a place of business, a location for activities oriented to water transportation and industry. Until artists moved into lofts vacated by the warehousemen and manufacturers for which they were built, and later, some lofts were converted into residences, the area had no residential population and lacked even public uses, except for a fire station. The area's development must be understood in the context of Boston's and the region's economic development – specifically, changes in industry, commerce, and transportation. The FPCLD derives its historic significance from being a large and remarkably intact example of the kind of warehousing/manufacturing areas that were once vital to the economies of large cities and entrepot cities across the nation.

The main period represented by the buildings in the FPCLD today is the Late Industrial Period (1870-1915), and the main theme is of a warehousing and light manufacturing district on the periphery of a downtown business district, representing a time when Boston's economy was based on commerce and light manufacturing.

To help readers locate buildings discussed in this report, the map number of the building is provided along with a building's address; the map number is signaled by the “#” symbol.

## 2.2 Physical Description

The buildings in the Fort Point Channel district are, with only a few exceptions, loft structures – multi-story buildings used for warehousing and light manufacturing – built between the 1880s and 1920s. The limited range of purposes for the buildings (warehousing and manufacturing), and the fact that most were developed by one company (BWC) within a fifty year time period, and designed by its architectural staff, led to uniformity in construction systems, materials, scale, and massing.

### Building type: lofts

With a few exceptions, the buildings in the FPCLD can be classified as “lofts” – a common but overlooked building type found in cities around the United States. As defined in the 1901-2 edition of *Sturgis' Illustrated Dictionary of Architecture and Building*, a loft is “any upper floor, as in a warehouse, when intended to be used more or less as one large workshop or storage place, and, hence, open throughout without elaborate finish.” The architectural historian Robert Bruegmann defines lofts as “all purpose commercial structures with large, open floors devoted to wholesaling, warehousing, and light manufacturing operations such as clothes making and printing.” Writing about the lofts in Chicago’s turn-of-the-century West Loop “warehouse district,” he noted that such areas “constituted a major part of the central business district of almost every large American city in the late nineteenth century.” Yet he also writes that despite being a common building type and found in most large cities, “too little is known about loft buildings in any city.”<sup>1</sup> The FPCLD buildings are excellent specimens of lofts, and their characteristics can help define the building type.

To expand on the commonalities among lofts, they are boxes with masonry walls – generally brick – and flat roofs. They were medium height, from 5 to 10 stories. Construction was heavy, to accommodate heavy loads. They contained few amenities, little interior finish, and their services and mechanical equipment, including elevator service, plumbing, heating, lighting, and power was simpler than what would be found in contemporary office buildings. Architecturally, they tended to be more spare than elaborate, although the extent of façade ornamentation varied. Nevertheless, ornament was largely confined to the walls that faced principal streets; the building’s side and alley walls were entirely plain or less adorned, constructed with common bricks and having simpler window openings. In other words, the buildings were not treated as unified, three-

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<sup>1</sup> Bruegmann, Robert, *The Architects and the City: Holabird & Roche of Chicago, 1880-1918* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 207, endnote 6, p. 496.

dimensional objects, and architectural ornament was applied to the areas that the public was most likely to see. The buildings often had raised basements lit through windows at ground level, which made the basement spaces usable. Those with raised basements had stairs in the entryway. Inside, the lofts were open except for posts and firewalls or structural partitions that subdivide the buildings.

The lofts in the FPCLD exhibit all these characteristics as well as others that have not been previously noted by American architectural writers. One apparent distinction among FPCLD lofts is between those designed specifically for warehousing and those designed for manufacturing. The purpose-built warehouses have less glazing – more wall area to window – compared with the buildings intended for manufacturing or mixed uses. In these buildings, fire protection was more important than natural light, hence the limited size of openings, which were protected with fire shutters. Most shutters have been removed although some of their hinges remain. Another characteristic of the warehouses was goods doors stacked in tiers, topped with pulleys for raising and lowering goods. Even if a building had an interior freight elevator, the pulley was useful for lowering goods into trucks. Some buildings still have their pulleys (locally called whips) projecting from the roof over the loading doors. The warehouses also had main floors and loading doors at the level of a truck or train bed to facilitate handling goods. (See 18.) Examples of buildings constructed as warehouses are the Atlas Stores (316 Congress Street, #2), Lombard's Stores (313 Congress Street, #43), and J. S. Williams Stores (320-324 Congress Street, #11). Another, smaller example is 25 Thomson Pl. (#30) These were built as storage warehouses, not wholesale stores; a wholesale store, which retailers visited to purchase stock for their shops, had to have a more public face and contain showrooms. Since storage warehouses did not have to appeal to the public, their designers could economize on architectural ornamentation. These warehouses are among the plainest buildings in the FPCLD.

The more fenestrated neighbors of these Congress Street warehouses were built for manufacturing. The manufacturing buildings had numerous or large windows and skylights to bring natural light into the often deep floor areas. Examples of early buildings designed for manufacturing are 347-351 Congress Street, the Chase & Co. candy factory (#41), and 355 Congress Street, Tremont Electric Lighting Co. (#40). Other lofts intended for both storage and manufacturing, like the Stillings Building (364-372 Congress, #28) and Harvey Building (374-384 Congress, #37), have large windows. Elsewhere in the area, Boston Button (326 A Street, #70), the NECCO lofts (253 Summer and 11-37 Melcher streets, #63-66), and the Factory Buildings Trust lofts on Wormwood Street (#79-83) are examples of purpose-built factories.

Whether warehouse or factory, the lofts were constructed with one of three framing systems: ordinary (light timber, joisted); warehouse (heavy timber, plank floors); or fireproof (steel frame with concrete floors or reinforced concrete frame). A factor that influenced the choice of framing system, and therefore a

building's cost, was Boston's building code. The code determined the kind of construction that could be used – whether fireproof or timber – depending on a building's height. Beginning with the 1885 building code, Boston required tall buildings to be fireproof. In 1885, this included lofts designed to rise 80 feet or more above the level of the sidewalk. In 1892, this rule was tightened so that new buildings over 70 feet, or existing buildings when floors were added that brought them above this threshold, had to be fireproof. The 1892 law was in effect when BWCo erected the block of tall wool warehouses on the north side of Summer Street 1898-99, the first fireproof buildings in the district. Other elements of the code shaped the building frames. With regard to floor loads, the 1885 law required light manufacturing buildings to support 150 pounds per foot, while storehouses, warehouses, machine shops had to support not less than 250 pounds. In 1892, the code lumped factories and warehouses together, all of which had to support 250 pounds. Also, the 1892 law limited the undivided space in brick and timber buildings to 10,000 square feet, so that buildings with larger floor areas had to have brick partition walls.

#### Exterior form: rectlinearity and density

With respect to massing, like urban lofts generally from the period, the buildings of the FPCLD fill their lots. But unlike buildings on downtown lots that were developed by many different owners, the lofts in the FPCLD rarely had to have air shafts, light courts, passages, and loading areas. This was because BWCo controlled the land on which it built and BWCo also laid out the streets and alleys, planning them so that streets would provide light, air, and loading access to the buildings rather than having to use part of a building lot for these purposes. Thus, many buildings, notably on Sleeper Street, Farnsworth Street, Thomson Place, and Stillings Street entirely fill their lots. In contrast, an individual property owner of a downtown lot often had to leave part of a site open so as not to be deprived of air, light, and access when the adjoining lots, over which he had no control, were redeveloped. BWCo's control over the land allowed the company to maximize land coverage and therefore to maximize the available floor area of the properties they developed.

The visual results of this control, combined with an economic incentive to build as compactly as possible, were density and rectilinearity. The lofts are rectangular volumes, with walls rising straight up from the sidewalk to flat roofs. Their designers avoided picturesque roof lines, towers, porches, or other architectural features that would add to the cost of construction and reduce the leasable floor area of the buildings. In fact, when lots did not have corners at right-angles, the buildings erected on them still fill the lot and thus have walls that meet at whatever angles resulted. Examples of corners that do not meet at right angles are 6 Necco Court (#66) and 11-15 Farnsworth Street (#17). Developers that bought lots from BWCo in the FPCLD also filled their lots, for example, the American Railway Express Co. at 343 Congress (#42) and the City of Boston,

whose former fire station at 344 Congress Street covers most of its trapezoidal lot (#14).

The combination of density and uniformity of mass create impressive streetscapes, for example along Summer Street, Melcher Street, and Channel Center Street. Alleys lined with tall buildings are some of the densest parts of the district, for example, the ones running north-south parallel with (and east of) Sleeper and Farnsworth streets; one parallel with Congress Street between Sleeper Street and Thomson Place; and one between Buildings No. 1 and No. 2 of the Factory Buildings Trust complex. These enclosed places, often framing views of the buildings in the district, contrast with the wider streets, Summer and Congress streets, which have views of areas beyond the district.

### Style

Since the majority of the buildings in the FPCLD were built for the very practical purposes of warehousing, wholesaling, and manufacturing, we might expect them to be simply utilitarian in appearance. Yet, while an interest in maximizing profit may have inclined the developers not to waste money on decoration, it did not preclude architectural treatment. Many buildings in the district are plain and simple with little allusion to style, but most have at least a few ornamental features that associate them with some recognizable architectural style. Some buildings are architecturally reserved. Others, usually found on the principal streets, have more high-style expressions. Represented in the district are various architectural styles popular in the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Italianate, Panel Brick, Romanesque, Classical Revival, and Early-20<sup>th</sup>-Century Stylized Classical. The styles most common here are the Classical Revival and Stylized Classical styles, which were popular during the period of greatest expansion – from the 1890s through the 1920s.

An outstanding feature of the district is its strong visual coherence, the result of similar massing and other common features. Building mass and density is unusually uniform throughout the area because most buildings are similar in height and are built out to their property lines. Since roofs are mostly flat, or have the appearance of being flat, the buildings all have generally box-like forms. On principal facades, architectural ornament is mostly concentrated at the entrances, windows, and rooflines, emphasizing these major functional parts. No projecting features other than roof cornices, parapet decoration, and three-dimensional ornamental details detract from the basic box-like form. Also contributing to the visual coherence of the district is the predominance of the Classical style. Strong unifying elements found throughout the area are Classical ornamental details, tripartite façade arrangement, and pilaster-panel facade treatment. On Summer and Congress streets, where there is a concentration of high-style Classical Revival style buildings, Classically-inspired light-colored brick facades are a unifying feature.

The following discussion of styles is arranged chronologically, treating the styles found on the earliest buildings in the district first. Under each style heading, buildings are discussed in chronological order.

#### Undecorated

Only a few buildings in the district can be said to have no ornamental features that reference particular architectural styles. Among these “undecorated” buildings are the earliest brick warehouses built in the district: Lombard’s Stores and J. S. Williams Stores. Although both have been altered in recent years to adapt them to other uses, it does not appear that any ornament has been removed that would change this undecorated classification.

Lombard’s Stores, 313 Congress Street (#43), built in 1886, is both the earliest extant building and the earliest storage warehouse in the district. Its former neighbor, the Dorr Stores (demolished) – the very first brick building in the district – was described as having a stark, “prison-like appearance.” Lombard’s Stores is a rectangle of common brick, six stories high. The distinctive feature of this building is the contrasting treatment of the exterior walls. Walls of the lower three floors are plain while the upper floors are pilaster-panel type. This treatment is found on the other early warehouses in the district (the Williams and Atlas warehouses) and probably was not an ornamental feature; rather, recessed panels between pilasters indicate the reduced thickness required in the walls of the upper stories. The windows are unadorned, with segmental arch tops. Located in the second, fourth, and sixth bays (counting from Congress Street, back) on each side of the building are hoistways (a tier of goods doors), which correspond to interior partitions that divide the building into three sections, east to west.

The façades of 313 Congress Street were altered in 1985 when the building was converted to offices. The present main entrance, a very large arch, nearly two stories high and five window bays wide, was added at this time. The panel sections of the upper three stories on the Congress Street façade and side panels nearest Congress Street were opened up to accept new rectangular windows, separated at each floor by white metal panels. Hoistway openings were converted to windows and original window sash was replaced. Despite the alteration of its upper portion and new main entrance, Lombard’s is of interest as an example of a building that expresses its function and is unembellished by architectural ornament.

J. S. Williams Stores, 320-324 Congress Street (#11), is similar in its design to Lombard’s Stores. Built in 1888, this rectangular building of red common brick has plain walls in the first two stories while the next four stories take the pilaster-panel form. The present seventh floor was added in a late-20<sup>th</sup> century remodeling. Windows are unadorned, segmental arch windows with granite sills. (Fig. 1.)



Fig. 1. Undecorated warehouse: J. S. Williams Stores, 320-324 Congress Street.

The other buildings in the district with no particularly ornamental features are a group of four factory buildings erected in the 1890s, part of the Factory Buildings Trust complex at 11-37 Wormwood Street (#80, 81, 82, 83). These buildings are rectangular, flat-roofed, and six-stories high, made of common brick. Rooflines are treated with brick corbelling and the windows are unadorned segmental arches. Where original doorways survive, they are unornamented. Yet a fifth building in this group – actually the first one of the five buildings in this complex to be erected – has ornamental touches (see a description of Building No. 1 – #79 – under the heading “Italianate”). It may be that Building No. 1, which stood on a main thoroughfare, A Street, received modest ornamentation to lend respectability to the entire complex, the rest of which was largely hidden from public view.

#### Plain with Stylistic References

Most buildings, even those that are very plain, are treated with a few ornamental details derived from popular styles. These stylistic elements are usually concentrated at the main entrance, at the windows, and at the eaves of the primary facades.

##### a. Italianate

The Italianate appears as a concession to style on a number of otherwise plain buildings in the District. Italianate ornament typically seen on mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century New England industrial buildings include the pilaster-panel wall treatment, bracketed eaves (typically expressed in brick corbelling), and

segmental or round arch windows and doorways. Windows are often trimmed with labeled window caps (a trim over the top of a window with “ears” down part of each side) typically expressed in brick. A number of plain buildings in the district feature some of these details.

The 1887 former Chase & Company candy factory, 347-351 Congress Street (#41), is one such building. This large, six-story structure with a raised basement is built of red common brick with a low-pitched gable roofline on the A Street side. The eaves are trimmed with brick corbelling. A limestone stringcourse separates the first floor from the upper stories. Windows on the first floor and the top floor are rectangular, while those of the above-grade basement and the upper floors are segmental arches. The two main entrances on the Congress Street side are Roman arches with brick surrounds. Italianate details on this building include the projecting corbelled brick eaves, round-arched doorways, and labeled segmental arch window caps.

A rectangular plaque on the main façade bears the initials of the Boston Wharf Company and the date, 1887. This appears to be the earliest building in the area bearing the company’s initials and date of construction. Another early BWC plaque is on 332-36 Congress Street. Later plaques took the form of a Classical-style bronze medallion marked with the company’s monogram and date.

Italianate details are found on Factory Buildings Trust Building No. 1, 249-255 A Street (#79). This is the westernmost of five industrial buildings that make up the Factory Buildings Trust industrial complex (the others are described under the heading “undecorated”). Constructed c. 1895 of red common brick and occupying the block bounded by A, Wormwood, and Binford streets, this six-story building has a flat roof trimmed at the eaves with a corbelled brick bracket motif. The main façade on A Street has two asymmetrically placed Roman-arched entrances. The arches for these entrances extend upward to enclose arched transoms at the second floor level. Another entrance, located at the northwest corner of the building, is set back from the facade in a one-story, porch-like recess. In this porch, a heavy Tuscan column supports a cast iron frieze and cornice. Windows on the first five stories, on the A, Wormwood and Binford Street sides, are segmental arches trimmed with labeled window caps. Features that associate this building with the Italianate style are the corbelled bracketed eaves, the labeled segmental arch window caps, and the Roman-arched doorways at the main entrances.

Three of the five Italianate style buildings in the district date from after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one as late as 1912. These buildings were built long after the time (in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) when the Italianate style was popular for high-style buildings. By the time these later buildings went up, Italianate elements had become a sort of industrial vernacular.

The former Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company warehouse, 42-56 Thomson Place

(#22), built in 1909, is a two-story, red brick building with raised basement and a low-pitched gabled roof. Yellow brick is used to trim the corbelled roofline and window openings on the Thomson Place façade. Segmental arch windows at the first floor level are unusual for their caps of contrasting yellow brick laid flush with, rather than projecting from, the plane of the façade. Except for their two-dimensional form, these caps are like the labeled segmental arches of other Italianate buildings described above. The basement windows have no trim. Second floor windows are rectangular. The rectangular windows are capped with rockface granite lintels. The section of the building at the north end has more large windows than does the rest of the structure and may have been designed to house offices and a showroom. The original main entrance may have occupied the fifth bay, now blocked up. The remainder of the building is accented at the first floor level with several segmental arch windows, a pair of round-arch entrances, and three loading docks (now altered). Italianate features on this structure include the corbelled roofline, labeled segmental arch window trim, and round-arch entrances. The unusual use of yellow brick for the window trim and for portions of the roofline corbelling lends a strongly vernacular appearance to the building. Yellow brick is not generally associated with the Italianate style. It may have been selected to give the effect of light colored stone trim.

Two similar buildings adjoining one another on Thomson Place also feature Italianate details: 25-27 Thomson Place (#30) and 29-33 Thomson Place (#31). Built in 1909 and 1912, both are five stories with raised basements and made of pressed red brick. Their main facades are unarticulated and unadorned, with the exception of a wide cornice above the first floor and bracketed corbelled eaves capped with a simple projecting copper cornice. Windows are rectangular and have no trim other than plain limestone sills. The broad effect of the eaves, the cornice above the first floor, and the regular arrangement of the windows work to create a strong suggestion of the Italianate.

#### b. Panel Brick

Much more unusual than Italianate ornament was the use of elements of the Panel Brick style to trim an otherwise plain building. This style flourished in Boston's Back Bay during the 1870s. The Panel Brick style expressed the nature of the construction material, and by forming it into decorative panels of projecting and receding brickwork, and laying bricks at unusual angles, created patterns and texture. This style allowed for imagination and freedom of expression without reference to any specific historical style.

The Atlas Stores, 316 Congress Street (#2), represents this style. It is six stories of common red brick. It was built in two phases, 1890 and c. 1893, and each wing is divided into three sections by interior partitions. The resulting building is long and narrow, accented along its length by small windows and tiers of hoistways. Like the other early warehouses described above as "undecorated," this building has an unarticulated base three stories high and pilaster-panel walls

in the upper section. What distinguishes the Atlas Stores building are the touches of Panel Brick ornament, including corbelled string courses above the first two floors on the Congress Street facade, brick eave corbelling, and a series of panels of decorative brickwork on the chamfered southeast corner. (Fig. 2.)

Despite the Panel Brick touches, the most distinctive and historically significant features of this building are its unpretentious utilitarian appearance, its relatively unaltered exterior, and the survival of warehouse accoutrements, including not only hoistway dormers and mechanisms, but also iron shutters, still in place in several locations, pintels where shutters are missing, and scuppers on the east and west sides. Scuppers were usually installed to drain away water in the event that sprinklers went off. Even metal fire escapes have been preserved, although these are typically removed when buildings are substantially rehabilitated and other means of emergency egress are provided to take their place. The building was converted to a museum in the 1970s, when a metal and glass addition was made to its west side. However, the rehabilitation and adaptive use of the building was, on the whole, extremely sensitive to the warehouse character of the structure.



Fig. 2. Atlas Stores, 316 Congress Street, with its Panel Brick decoration in the chamfer of the Congress Street façade.

## Romanesque Revival

Several of the earliest buildings in the district evoke the Romanesque Revival style. This style appeared in the United States as early as the middle years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in the 1870s, Boston architect Henry H. Richardson renewed its popularity with his own weighty version. Distinctive to his expression of the style were mass; the use of large, wide Roman-arched entrances; the arcaded treatment of sections of the façade; the use of slit-like rectangular windows and of rectangular windows with transoms; the rhythmical grouping of windows; and the use of ribbons of Roman-arched windows often at the top floor. Examples of the Romanesque Revival style found in FPCLD were broadly influenced by Richardson but departed from some of his characteristic elements. Like many Richardson-influenced commercial buildings in the United States, the FPCLD buildings were executed in brick rather than in stone – a less expensive material and therefore more appropriate for utilitarian buildings. Also, the FPCLD buildings often have segmental arches.

The 1888 American Railway Express Building, 343 Congress Street (#42) is the earliest use of the Romanesque Revival style in the district. Despite its utilitarian original purpose as a stable, this building is an excellent example of the rhythmical design and subtle brickwork that characterizes the best examples of the style. The articulation of the main façade is not merely an application of Romanesque ornamental details to a standard building; rather, the design is worked out as an aesthetic statement in itself. Of special distinction are the lower three floors, which were the first to be built. Here groups of slim rectangular windows contrast with round-arched and segmental-arched windows of varying sizes to create pleasing rhythmical patterns. Interesting surface textures are created by the use of corbelled rectangular panels between piers of different widths. The fourth floor, added later, repeats the segmental-arched-panel treatment. Romanesque features seen here include the use of pinkish-red brick with brownstone trim laid in pink-tinted mortar, the achievement of subtle textural effects in the brick wall surface, the subdivision of the façade into horizontal bands enlivened by rhythmical groupings of windows (Roman-arched, segmental-arched, and rectangular), and the use of wide voussoirs over Roman-arched openings and foliate-carved brownstone trim at the center of the main façade. (Fig. 3.)



Fig. 3. Romanesque Revival, American Railway Express Building, 343 Congress Street, photographed c. 1900 (fifth floor added later).

Alterations have been made to this building over time. Early in its existence, a fourth floor was added and in 1936 its interior structure was rebuilt to convert it to use as a parking garage. Probably at that time, the central section of the roof parapet was rebuilt in the form of a pediment to give the building what must have been considered an updated look. Parapets of a similar design were commonly seen during that period on commercial buildings and on both large parking garages and private home garages. In a recent conversion of the building to office use, the present fifth floor was added. Set back from the main façade with a broad overhanging roof and multi-paned glazing across its width, this section reads visually as a separate element. Alterations to the ground floor include the opening of a new centralized main entrance and making floor length windows out of most other openings. Projections added at the ground floor as part of the adaptive reuse have hidden some architectural detail, but appear to be easily removable and not permanently damaging.

Another early example of the Romanesque Revival style is the Putnam & Company Building, 326-330 Congress Street (#12). Built in 1888, this six-story, pinkish-red brick building has brick corbelling at the roof parapet and double and triple windows set at the centers of recessed panels. Corbelled segmental arches form the tops of the panels at the second through fourth floors. At the fifth and sixth floors, the panels are rectangular with rockface brownstone lintels and decorated with ornamental brickwork. Foliate terra cotta tiles are an important decorative element: these low-relief square tiles are placed at regular intervals along the pilasters and above the windows in the arched-panel sections. They add subtle detailing to the smooth brick façade, as does the corbelling of the arched

panels and the ornamental brickwork above. Double windows are located at each floor of the western four bays. A vertical row of triple windows on the east end of the main façade may reflect some original use.

The Boston Button Company Building, 326 A Street (#70), built in 1890, is another example of the Romanesque Revival. It is six stories on a raised basement, and is made of red common brick with brownstone trim, including a brownstone-trimmed brick parapet at the roofline. The entrances are spanned by Roman arches. A feature of the main façade is the use of pilasters on the upper five stories to separate each set of double windows from one another. Pairs of second and third story windows are surrounded by corbelled arched frames similar to those on the Putnam & Company Building. The windows are segmental arches except for those at the sixth floor and at the basement level on the main façade, which are rectangular with rockface brownstone lintels. On the main façade, window caps are of brick with rockface brownstone keystones and haunches. This treatment of the segmental arch with haunches, or “stilts”, placed just below the springing of the arch is known as a stilted arch (see Fig. 21). Windows on the longer south façade are trimmed with projecting brick window caps. Characteristic Romanesque features of this building are its overall red color, the rough quality lent to it by the rockface brownstone trim, corbelled window panels, and the use of segmental and Roman arches for window and door openings.

Set on the corner of Congress and Farnsworth streets, the small Congress Street Fire Station of 1891, 344 Congress Street (#14), is arguably the most architecturally high-style building in the district. In the early 1890s architectural taste was turning to lighter colors; yellow brick was popular with architects designing in the up-and-coming Classical Revival style. Here it is used as an accompaniment to light colored stone, suggesting through subtle manipulation of the two materials that the entire building was built of stone. The main façade of the firehouse is articulated horizontally into three sections that graduate upward from rough to refined. Rising from rockface granite piers at the ground level, the second level is a blend of sharp-edged, light-colored brick and rockface granite trim. The top level of the facade is treated as a slate roof with a center dormer and parapet. A strong sense of the Romanesque is provided by the beefy quality of the rockface granite pilasters that frame and separate the two vehicle entrances at the ground floor level, and by the primitive treatment of their foliate capitals, imitating the actual appearance of medieval Romanesque capitals. The paired grouping of windows with transoms at the second level is a feature closely associated with the style, following the example of Richardson. The use of foliate-carved detailing on brackets supporting piers at either side of the faux roof are typically Romanesque, as is the carving on a projection from which the central chimney rises. The massive chimney with its ribbed exterior is a strong feature lending medieval, Romanesque character to the building.

In addition to the buildings with features characteristic of the Romanesque

Revival style, several otherwise plain buildings have some Romanesque-derived features. One is the Brown-Durrell & Co. Warehouse, 11-15 Farnsworth Street (#17), 1893, a five-story building constructed of common red brick with rockface granite trim. The roofline on Farnsworth Street is flat with corbelled trim. On the south side, a corbelled stair-step brick parapet partially disguises the low-pitched gable roof. Corbelling at the top of the first and fourth floors subdivides the two major facades into three horizontal sections. A pair of former entrances on the far north end of the main façade are spanned by Roman arches and capped with wide rays of ornamental brickwork. It seems that these were originally the main entrances. Another Roman-arched entrance, located in the easternmost bay on the south façade, is trimmed in a similar manner. There is also a wide, unornamented, segmental arched entrance on the main façade. Windows are segmental arched single windows. The choice of red brick as a building material, extensive use of brick corbelling, segmental-arched windows, and Roman-arched entrances with wide caps give it a vaguely Romanesque or medieval feeling.

Even simpler in its references to the Romanesque Revival is 47-53 Farnsworth Street (#21), 1895. This two-story building is built of red common brick with stone trim. The roofline on the main façade is flat with a projecting corbelled brick eave cornice. The large Roman-arched doorway at the south end of the main façade – the main entrance – is completely unadorned. Most windows are unornamented single segmental arched openings. (The five northernmost second floor windows on the main façade are exceptions: they are rectangular double windows, possibly added at a later date.) Features that suggest the influence of the Romanesque style in this very plain building are the choice of red brick and a brown-shaded stone as building materials, the corbelled eaves, and the use of the Roman arch. The general simplicity of detail and the small size of the windows also lend something of the air of the Romanesque.

### Classical Styles

The styles most commonly seen in Fort Point Channel today are the Classical Revival and an early 20<sup>th</sup> century stylized derivative of the Classical style, here called Stylized Classical. The Classical Revival style took hold in the FPCLD in the 1890s. Although the Romanesque continued to be used during that decade, Classical Revival became dominant, as it did in American architecture generally at that time. The style received a great boost in popularity from the 1893 world's fair, the World's Columbian Exposition, in Chicago. The main concourse of the fair became known as "The Great White Way" for its flamboyant buildings in the Classical Revival style that evoked the effect of white marble. Compared to this grand and luminous architectural display, the dark brownstone and red brick of Romanesque Revival and Victorian Gothic style buildings seemed dowdy and out of date. The antidote to the old dark look was to build in the Classical Revival style using light colored stone or light colored brick. Through the influence of the Exposition, the Classical Revival style and the associated use of light colored

brick became highly popular in this country during the 1890s, a fashion that continued into the early the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The architecture of the Italian Renaissance and of ancient Rome and Greece provided sources for the form and ornamental treatment of buildings in the Classical Revival and Stylized Classical styles. The Renaissance influence predominates in the FPCLD, where a large number of buildings take the tripartite design of the Italian Renaissance palace for their main facades. This is especially true of high-style expressions of the Classical Revival style built in the district in the 1890s and after. The design method, called the “columnar theory of composition”, involved dividing the façade into three sections like those of a Classical column, suggesting a base, shaft, and capital. Depending on the height of the building, the base and capital could include more than one story treated as a single unit. A common way of treating the shaft (or middle) section was to divide it vertically as a series of pilasters with recessed panels between them and to link the pilasters at the top with arches, creating an arcade of arches springing from one pilaster and another. (Fig. 4.)

Tripartite organization had been popular in the 1850s for Renaissance palazzo designs and had long been a feature of New York commercial buildings. But when it was rediscovered in Boston following the heyday of the Picturesque in 1860s and 1870s, it was something of a novelty. An example of the type of tripartite façade that became popular for commercial buildings in the 1890s was McKim, Mead & White’s Classical Revival style Goelet Building (1886-1887) in New York City, a six-story building with an arcaded two-story base, a three-story shaft section, and “frieze” at the sixth story made of a wall pierced with windows, topped with a broad projecting Classical cornice. An early example of a tripartite façade on a commercial building in Boston was the c. 1884 Carter, Dinsmore & Company ink factory at 162-172 Columbus Avenue. Designed by Theodore M. Clark, the building had a rusticated base, three-story arcaded shaft, and a top story of arched windows capped with a patterned brick cornice.

Tripartite composition first appeared in FPCLD buildings in the 1890s and quickly became the façade arrangement of choice in the district. The development of tripartite organization in the district can be seen by contrasting the Boston Button Building, 326 A Street, built in 1889-1890 (#70) with two later Congress Street buildings, 348-352 and 354-358, built in 1894 and 1900 (#15 and #16), all designed by Morton Safford. It is clear that the differences between the former, pre-tripartite building and the latter two are not accidental but rather, reflect new ideas about façade organization. Boston Button’s main façade on A Street is a stack of layers, only two of which are alike architecturally. A few years later, in the Congress Street buildings, the tripartite solution was introduced. In both cases, the open ground floors, with metal lintels spanning between piers filled with large windows, formed the base. In the middle sections, the windows of three stories are grouped between piers and accentuated with terra cotta trim. The top levels of both are arcaded and capped with projecting, ornate, metal

cornices. The buildings form a handsome and harmonious group. An architecturally similar building once stood on the vacant lot on this block.



Fig. 4. Example of tripartite façade, with a base, arcaded midsection, and “capital” top floor accentuated with a brick dentil cornice. Photo of 312-320 Summer Street, c. 1905.

Tripartite façades continued to be widely used in the district during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for Stylized Classical style buildings. However, buildings in this freer interpretation of the Classical style adhered to the tripartite form less strictly, just as their Classically-inspired details came to be more streamlined and interpreted in imaginative new ways.

Also associated with the Classical Revival style in the FPCLD was the use of light-colored brick, because light-colored walls resembled stone. An interest in light-colored exterior materials took hold in American building in the late 1880s. At about this time, New York architects began to order bricks that were not red. A building considered seminal in the fashion for non-red brick was the Telephone and Telegraph Building on Cortlandt Street in New York City (Cyrus Eidlitz, 1886-1887). The novel color of the brick in this building was so influential that other designers simply specified “Telephone” brick when ordering material for their buildings. The Goelet Building, previously mentioned as an exemplary tripartite elevation, was also notable for its tan brick walls and windows framed with brick and terra cotta in contrasting light colors. When the architects of this building designed the new Boston Public Library, around the time the Goelet was being completed, they used buff-colored Roman brick for the library courtyard walls.

In the 1880s, an important architectural terra cotta firm, Boston Terra Cotta Company, introduced special brick colors and shapes, notably “Old Gold” and “Pompeian.” Their light-colored bricks were prominently featured in the façade of the Youth’s Companion Building, home of the publisher of the popular and long-lived children’s weekly. Constructed in 1890-1892 at the corner of Columbus Avenue and Berkeley Street in Boston, this monumental building was striking for its tawny-colored bricks and terra cotta. According to a brochure issued when it was completed, the walls above the red sandstone first story were “a reddish-buff brick, exceedingly soft and pleasant to the eye.... The buff-colored bricks used, together with those from which the clustered columns and other ornamentations are constructed, relieve the great building of any appearance of coldness....The soft color...was produced by a mixture of two or three kinds of clay.” The building was much admired; building-chronicler Charles Damrell, writing in 1895, rated it as “one of the handsomest” in the city. Although Boston Terra Cotta Company closed in 1893, George Fiske, the former treasurer of the company, continued to make bricks and terra cotta through the firm Fiske, Homes & Company at a South Boston plant. An 1895 advertisement for this firm listed “buff, gray, Old Gold, mottled and other colors of front brick and terra cotta.”<sup>2</sup> This company could have made the bricks for the many buildings in the FPCLD with facades of light-colored bricks and terra cotta.

The light color fit in with Classically-inspired styles that came to dominate architecture in the 1890s. In the district, the earliest extant buildings in the FPCLD with light-colored bricks are on Congress Street. The fashion for non-red brick may have started with the Boston Fire Station on Congress Street, completed in 1891; it has yellowish brick in its street facades. The earliest extant loft with a light-colored brick façade is 332-334 Congress Street (#13), which was built in 1892 (finished the first week of 1893 and so has an 1893 completion date). Brick of various non-red shades – buff, tawny – were used to construct all the buildings east of the fire station. In 1894, BWCo erected two large buildings next to the fire station: the missing C. L. Hauthaway Building and the extant 348-352 Congress (#15). Old photos and surviving bits of brick attached to adjoining buildings are evidence that the Hauthaway Building, like its neighbors, had light-colored walls. So, too, do the Stillings and Harvey buildings (#28 and # 37) further down the block. By the latter part of the 1890s, light colored brick was the usual choice for prominent buildings in the district, such as those on Summer and Melcher streets, as well as on Congress Street.

The earliest building in the district to show the influence of the Classical style is 332-336 Congress Street (#13), designed by BWCo architect, Morton D. Safford, and built in 1891. This building cannot be called Classical Revival in the high-style sense; references to the Classical style seen here are subtle and it is not based upon academic precedents. Nevertheless, the features of this building that

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<sup>1</sup> George M. Fiske in Walter Geer, *The Story of Terra Cotta* (NY: Tobias A . Wright, 1920), 72; quote in Charles Damrell, *A Half Century of Boston’s Building*, 82 and advertisement, 99.

are drawn broadly from Classical precedents are the color of the brick and stylized Classical ornamental elements. The brick on the main façade is yellow to give the building a light color recalling the light colored stone characteristic of Classical buildings. Stylized Classical pilasters form the vertical elements of the metal grid that articulates the main façade. Other Classical details are rendered in brick, including brick panels beneath the windows that are trimmed with corbelled dentils, and corbelled modillion brackets trim the roofline. It appears that there was originally a metal roof cornice, probably Classical in style, now missing.

More prominent than any stylistic feature is the grid pattern of intersecting vertical and horizontal metal members that articulate the building's main and rear facades. Stylized fluted iron pilasters serve as narrow piers separating pairs of windows. These curtain walls, with large windows and shallow brick spandrels on metal lintels, display an unusual lightness.

The second Classical Revival style building in the district is 348-352 Congress Street (#15), a full-fledged, high-style expression of the style. Built in 1894 and designed by Morton D. Safford, it is among the finest examples of the style in the district. It is also of special note because, unlike so many others, it has had few exterior alterations. It is a five-story building on a raised basement constructed of rust-speckled Roman brick of an orangey color. Trim is of stone, brick corbelling, molded brick, terracotta, and cast iron. The flat roofline is trimmed with an elaborate, strongly projecting, pressed copper cornice decorated with modillions, lion heads, and floral accents in the Classical style. Divided horizontally into three sections by string courses running above the first and fourth floors, the building takes the tripartite form of a Renaissance palace. At the lower level, the effect of a rusticated stone base was achieved by laying rows of low-relief, molded rope-pattern bricks at intervals in the smooth Roman brick walls. This same rope-pattern brick creates the appearance of large voussoirs above the Roman arch at the main entrance. Cast iron lintels, with a leaf and dart border around the central panels, accent the heads of the wide first floor windows. Brick molded in a leaf and dart pattern frames four rectangular panels in the middle section of the façade. These panels extend upward from the second to the fourth floor to frame sets of rectangular windows. Windows at the second and third floors are accented with terra cotta keystones in the form of Classical scrolls. Molded brick trims the heads of a row of Roman-arched windows on the top floor. (Fig. 5.)

While symmetry is usually associated with Classical design, it was not adopted for the design of this building, or for most of the other examples of the style in the district, despite the high quality of materials used and the aspiration to high-style elegance. Practical necessities held sway over points of design not only here but in many other buildings. In this case the vertical paneling that subdivides the façade at the second to fourth floor level consists of panels of unequal size. From left to right they are arranged: one panel, one bay wide; one panel, two bays wide; and two panels, each four bays wide. Despite the disparity in the sizes of

the panels, this asymmetry is not immediately apparent to a casual observer from the street. Elements of this building related to the Classical Revival style are its Renaissance palace form, the light colored building materials intended to recall the light colored stone of Classical and Renaissance architecture, the use of Roman brick of Classical inspiration, and the use of a wide variety of ornament derived from Classical architecture.



Fig. 5. Classical Revival in the high style, detail of 348-352 Congress Street, 1894.

When other buildings were built west of this building, at 354-58 Congress Street (#16) and 364-372 Congress Street (Stillings Building, #28) in 1900 and 1901 respectively, they also were treated with a tripartite design, rectangular panels subdividing the central section of the façade, a ribbon of round-arched windows at the top floor, and a projecting Classical cornice at the roofline. Each building was individually designed and did not blindly repeat the design of another. In addition to individual variations in design, each is distinguished by different colors of building materials in varying shades of yellow-orange brick. Similarity of style, form, and design relates the three buildings and provides both unity and variety to the streetscape.

The largest single contribution to the growth of the Classical Revival style in the district was made just before the turn of the 20th century. In only two years, 1898 and 1899, a group of seven buildings with imposing Classical Revival style facades were built for wool wholesalers on the north side of newly opened

Summer Street. All but one has been identified as the work of BWCo architect, Morton D. Safford. Classical Revival style features seen in all of these buildings are the use of light colored building materials; Renaissance palace form; Roman arches, pilasters, friezes, cornices, keystones, “thermal” windows in the arches of the arcaded facades; and other Classical features and ornament.

This first cluster of high-style Classical Revival buildings set the pattern for development along the street, ultimately creating for this thoroughfare a high-style urban character with emphasis on the Classical Revival style. Four of the buildings in this original cluster were built next to one another in 1898. As a group seen standing abreast, these imposing buildings are variations on a theme, impressive for the substantial quality of their materials and for their unity of design. Executed in quality materials, they are similar to one another in the tripartite Renaissance palace treatment of their facades and the use of similar building materials and trim. Their bases all consist of brick pilasters, ribbed horizontally with rockface granite strips. Their midsections consist of arrangements of tall arched panels to create the effect of arcades. Their top floors are all treated as ribbons of Roman-arched windows, and all have elaborate projecting copper cornices decorated with Classical style ornament. Brick, stone, and iron building materials play major roles in their designs. Incorporated into the designs of many are cast iron elements. Some are decorative panels and others are treated as friezes separating the lower levels of the buildings from their middle sections. All seem to be decorative adjuncts to structural elements. An unusual detail is the decoration of the smooth surfaces of iron friezes on many of these buildings with low-relief patterns of rivet heads repeated at intervals along their lengths. Similarities of building form and material are modulated through individuality of design and of color, within the basic tonalities of tan and orange.

Close design relationships are seen among individual buildings in this group. 268-272 Summer Street (#48) and 274-278 Summer Street (#49) are very closely related, although not identical. Both are constructed of the same orange-toned brick with trim of tan brick, rockface granite, limestone, and cast iron. They were designed to stand together and to read as two parts of a whole. For symmetry, one building depends upon the other, as can be seen in the mirror-image arrangement of the windows on the two top floors.

Alternatively, 280-290 Summer Street (#50) is an example of a single building made to appear as two, apparently with the purpose of breaking up its wide 16-bay façade. Although the materials and design features are the same for the two facades, their middle sections each have different designs. The west end has three arcades flanked on either side by pairs of windows. The east end is treated simply as three arcades. Although the building is similar in its overall design to other buildings in this group, its façade arcade is unusual in that the arches are low elliptical, not Roman, arches. Also noteworthy are the keystones of the arcade, which are trimmed with carved sheep heads to symbolize the building’s purpose

as a wool merchants' warehouse. This same arcade design and the sheep's-head keystones are used on both facades.

Unlike its neighbor, the eighteen-bay main façade of 292-302 Summer Street (#51), built in 1898, does not attempt to minimize its large size. Here the main façade is not broken up vertically to de-emphasize its width; rather, this building proclaims its size. Across its midsection is a row of no fewer than seven uninterrupted arch panels. To accent the vertical, its base section is only one story high. This ground floor treatment contrasts with that of other buildings in the group, where two floors are expressed as one, hiding behind two-story pilasters. A large-scale and distinctive feature of this building is the off-center pair of monumental, roughly carved, two-story Roman granite entrance arches with enormous projecting keystones. This is one of the most memorable architectural features on Summer Street. (Fig. 6.)



Fig. 6. Summer Street wool warehouse of Jeremiah Williams & Co. in high-style Classical, 292-302 Summer Street, photo c. 1900.

In 1899 the section of the street closest to the Summer Street Bridge was developed with three more buildings: 250-254 Summer Street (#45), 256-260 Summer Street (#46), and 262-266 Summer Street (#47). Because of their location, these are some of the most highly visible buildings in the district. Not only are they the first to be seen by those crossing the Summer Street Bridge, but their main facades are also seen head-on from Melcher Street. They take a tripartite design, the lower level of which consists of the first two floors articulated as tall pilasters. They have strongly projecting and highly ornamented Classical roof cornices and are each distinguished by a pair of central arcaded panels stretching up their main façades. Each of these three buildings closely

repeats the design of the other, yet none are exactly alike. Slight variations in the color of brick and trim and window sizes and arrangement are only a few of the subtle differences seen here. They were designed to complement one another but to read as separate entities, following the example of the first group of buildings completed the year before. A distinguishing feature is the monumental Tuscan column that marks the west corner of the lower floors of 250-254 Summer Street. Changes to the lower two floors and windows of these buildings have altered their original appearances. (Fig. 7.)

Classical Revival style buildings very similar to those built on Congress Street in 1894 and on Summer Street in 1898 and 1899 were built for a only a very brief period after 1900. In 1900, 354 Congress Street (#16) was built on the pattern set in 1894 by its neighbor to the east (348 Congress, the earliest surviving high-style Classical Revival building in the district). Similarly, a 1904 wool warehouse at 281-283 Summer Street (#60) was built following the model of the 1898-1899 Summer Street buildings, with variations in stylistic treatment. However, when these buildings were built, their architect, Morton D. Safford, was already taking new directions in his work.



Fig. 7. Summer Street wool warehouse in high-style Classical, 256-260 Summer Street.

Important new design trends were already underway. Changes that were taking place involved the size and treatment of windows. Window openings were becoming wider. It is surprising to look at the secondary Thomson Place façade of 354 Congress and see that it had wide window openings filled with double

window fittings, even though the windows on the building's main façade are narrow single windows separated by wide sections of masonry. A question of architectural style must have demanded an "academic" adherence to the traditional single window type for the public face of the building. However, a year later, in 1901, Safford built a dramatically new-looking version of the Classical Revival style opposite this building, on the corner of Congress and Thomson streets. The main façade of the Stillings Building, 364-372 Congress Street (#28), follows the design model of the two buildings to its west, but its window treatment is completely new. Panels in the pilaster-panel wall of its middle section are opened up to the entire pilaster-to-pilaster width and glazed with triple and quadruple double-hung sash with no masonry separations between them. The only portions of the much larger masonry panels of the earlier buildings to survive here are narrow horizontal panel strips below the windows. Window lintels in the form of decorative iron panels disguise the steel beams that make such wide window openings possible. The much plainer sides and rear of the building, with the exception of its corbelled eaves and small single windows at the top floor, suggest the large-windowed, spare architecture of American factories of the 1910s and 1920s.

A look at the six-story, yellow brick New England Confectionary Company (NECCO) factory built in 1902 at 253 Summer Street and 11-17, 19-27, 29-37 Melcher Street (#63, 64, 65, 66) shows Safford working to balance technological advances with style. Here he combined the new large window type with a more simplified version of the Classical Revival style than he had used in the Stillings Building. One of the most striking buildings in the district, the NECCO factory is notable not only for the distinctive curve of its Melcher Street façade but also for the elegant simplicity of its stylized expression of Classical architecture. In addition, the unadorned south end of a secondary façade on Necco Street is an example of an elegant distillation of form achieved when all ornament and stylistic reference are eliminated. The form of its simple brick piers, broad window openings, and panels below the windows are, for this early date, unexpectedly geometrical. The long west façade of the building, which is seen from the opposite side of the channel and from the Summer Street Bridge, is expressed more traditionally than the Melcher Street façade. Tripartite in design, but plain with segmental-arch windows, it gives little hint of the new technology and elegance of its other side. The Melcher Street façade can be considered the "front" of the NECCO building. Here the building takes the tripartite form in a nod to Classical inspiration. Classical elements used here are limestone Classical cornices, four story pilasters with simple limestone capitals, simple low-relief limestone keystones, Roman-arched entrances with brickwork surrounds, decorative brick roundels, and a strongly projecting copper modillioned cornice. This façade consists of three pilaster-panel window sections embraced and interspersed by brick pavilions that extend the full height of the building. While the outer pavilions frame the façade at either end, the inner pavilions contain Roman-arched entrances with narrow rectangular windows rising above them. Window openings are glazed with triple and quadruple windows to allow light to

flood into this side of the building. Notable in this façade is the contrast between the smooth solidity of the brick and the lightness and textural quality of the articulation of the window grid.

Differences in window-wall ratio that distinguish the channel façade from the Melcher and Summer street facades may reflect the uses for which each section was intended. A 1923 Sanborn map shows that at that time the southeastern portion of the building was dedicated entirely to manufacturing, while the arm that backs up to the channel housed both manufacturing and storage. It seems likely that manufacturing areas were lighted by the larger windows, while the fewer and smaller windows were located in the sections dedicated to storage.

A wool warehouse at 285-297 Summer Street (#59), built in 1903, has much of the same crisp elegance and Classical serenity as the NECCO factory of a year earlier. Its fine brickwork is worthy of note, most especially that of its unusually handsome corbelled brick cornice of heavy Roman arches on corbelled brackets. Projecting strongly from the plane of the main façade, its cascading brickwork offers sensuous textural contrast to the smooth yellow brick facade. Hobnail and cross motifs further enliven the surface of the frieze above the arcade, as does the corbelled dogtooth detail supporting a metal cornice above. Classical features include the use of yellow brick, the pilaster-panel treatment of the midsection of the facade, Roman-arched entrances, and Classical detailing at the main entrances. As is true of the NECCO building, windows occupy the entire expanse between pilasters. Although the distance here between pilasters is not as great, the contrast between the brick and glass is similarly effective.

Through about 1910, buildings in the district continued to be built with strong Classical Revival character. Examples are 281-283 Summer (#60), 312-320 Summer (#53) and 311-319 Summer (#58), all by Morton D. Safford. These have yellow brick walls, tripartite Classical design, pilaster-panel midsections (some with arcaded panels), and projecting cornices at the roofline. During this same period on Congress Street two other buildings of this type were built, designed to complement one another with their tripartite designs executed in yellow brick: 374-384 Congress (Harvey Building, #37) in 1903 and 381 Congress (Colonial Can Company, #38) in 1907. A yellow brick wool warehouse with a two-part facade at 273 Summer Street (#61) belongs to this same group. Built in 1910, it is highly ornamented with stylized, imaginative interpretations of Classical details. This building is unusual for the wide panels of windows on its main façade. They follow the pattern of the Stillings Building and the NECCO factory windows, with sets of multiple windows occupying the entire pilaster to pilaster width.

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, Classical style buildings in the FPCLD became more and more stylized. Elements such as pilasters, friezes, cornices, dentil ranges, and modillion brackets were still used as ornamental features, but in simplified, geometric form, while ornament based directly on Classical precedents became rare. The use of light colored brick for the main facades of Classical style

buildings was abandoned in favor of red brick with light-colored trim of limestone or cast stone. This color preference reflects early 20<sup>th</sup> century trends in American architecture.

Around 1908, architectural treatment took a new turn, away from the more elaborate and highly ornamented Classical Revival style of the 1890's but still derived from Classical precedents. This new "Stylized Classical" style was widely used in the district until the Great Depression. Buildings were sometimes articulated as tripartite façades and other times as two-part façades. They typically have a ground floor with heavy piers carrying a cornice, with tall pilasters above. Within the embrace of the pilasters are, most often, two sets of double rectangular windows separated by a strip of masonry. Below the windows is a brick panel. The roofline may be treated either with a cornice or parapet, usually trimmed with Classically-derived motifs. Examples of this design scheme vary in three-dimensional effect and in the amount of ornament used, but their façades are all articulated as a grid of simple verticals and horizontals drawn broadly from Classical models.

Some early examples of this pattern are seen at 41-45 Farnsworth Street (#20), 63 Melcher Street (#69), 28-32 Midway Street (#95), and 34-38 Midway Street (#94), built respectively in 1908, 1909, 1911, and 1912. A typical feature of the rooflines of this group is either a projecting cornice or a parapet with a stylized frieze of modillions punctuated by large corbelled bracket motifs. On this particular group of buildings are found some very distinctive and exceptionally fine heavy corbelled rooflines. Of similar design and character is 33-39 Farnsworth Street (#19), built in 1909 and trimmed with a parapet of corbelled round arches instead of modillions at the roofline. During the second decade of the century, less emphasis was placed upon three-dimensional roofline trim than is seen in this group of buildings.

Less highly ornamented is 322-330 Summer Street (#54), a somewhat utilitarian-looking six-story Classical style building built in 1910 of yellow brick and limestone. Although it follows the pattern of the typical Stylized Classical building described above, its roofline is given little emphasis. Classical elements are the tripartite design with a pier treatment at the ground floor, a pilaster-panel mid section, a strip of windows at the top floor, and with a very slightly projecting brick cornice of dentils and modillions at the roofline. Instead of traditional Classical ornament, stylized plaques of unidentified inspiration trim the upper portion of the building. Pairs of double rectangular windows with 2/2 sash occupy each panel and are joined visually by common sills and lintels of limestone. Within each panel, a masonry rib separates one pair from the other.

In 1911, the boxy-looking, eight-story Howes Brothers Leather Company building went up at 321-325 Summer Street (#57). The façade is articulated horizontally into two parts and at the roofline is a simple parapet lacking three-dimensional emphasis. The base of piers, the pilaster-panel midsection, and

details such as a Classical second-story cornice, keystones, and other ornament associate the building with the Classical style. Yet, the highly simplified, practical look of this red brick building is far removed from its yellow brick, Classical Revival style Summer Street counterparts of the 1890's.

The 1913 Kistler Leather Company Building, 319 A Street (#72) also articulated the Stylized Classical pattern. The narrow, street-facing main façade of this five-story, red brick building is modest, well-balanced and pleasing. It takes the two-part, rather than tripartite, form and is treated with very little ornament. At the roofline is a parapet trimmed with a projecting cornice of limestone. Low-relief corbelled brackets, one above each pilaster, trim the area below the parapet. The design of the main façade gives no hint of the wide window treatment found on the less public facades, where triple windows occupy the full width of the panels between pilasters.

Two buildings with facades very similar to the main façade of the Kistler Building were built in 1913 and 1917 respectively at 35-37 Thomson Place (#32) and 12-22 Farnsworth Street (#10). The typical Stylized Classical façade design is used here. Low relief roofline ornament is close in design to that seen on the Kistler Building. The feature of these buildings that first catches the eye is the grid-like articulation of the façades and the smooth brickwork of the streamlined pilasters, panels, and cornices derived from Classical architecture.

Even further simplification was possible: 51-61 Melcher Street (#68), a large, nine-story building on a raised basement, is unusually stark in its design when compared to most other buildings in the district. The severe appearance of this red brick building, built in 1916, may be a result of hurried construction in wartime (during World War I). But it may instead be a natural conclusion to a trend of stylization and a result of the failure to adapt the proportions to match the large size of the building. The main façade is divided horizontally into two sections. Rusticated brick pilasters at the ground floor are capped with a Classical frieze and cornice and the pilaster-panel treatment of the upper floors allude to Classical design influence. While pairs of single windows mark the outer edges of the main façade, the central panels of the pilaster-panel façade are opened up, pilaster to pilaster, to accept triple double-hung sash. At the roofline is a crenellated parapet, derived from medieval Gothic design. Crenellations were characteristic parapet treatment for industrial and warehouse buildings at that time.

Another extremely severe building with hints of Classical influence is the eight-story, flat-roofed, reinforced concrete wool warehouse at 367-375 Congress Street (#39). The only relatively unaltered example of reinforced concrete construction in the district, it is highly practical in its design with little attempt at ornament. Built in 1918 and designed by BWCo architect Howard B. Prescott, the concrete skeleton is trimmed with brick infill beneath its windows. The pilaster-panel design and stylized Classical trim at the parapet suggest Classical influence. At

the roofline is a crenellated parapet treatment. Alterations have increased the stark appearance of this building. Now painted a solid gray, the original contrast between the concrete frame and brick panels is no longer seen on the main façade. On the main façade the replacement of steel-frame glass windows with glass blocks has eliminated window articulation that probably originally would have given it a more welcoming appearance.

In these two buildings, which were among the last to be built in the district, windows on the main facades were designed to occupy the entire width of the panels between the façade pilasters. Even though this window design had been introduced to the area just after 1900, these buildings were among the few to take advantage of the benefits that a wall of windows could offer.

## Descriptions of Some Prominent Structures in the FPCLD

### **American Railway Express Co. stables**



Fig. 8. American Railway Express Co. stables, 343 Congress Street, built 1888 (#42)

The simple decoration and repeating patterns in the façade of this massive, four-story brick building create an impressive effect. Designed by the Boston architectural firm of Bradlee, Winslow & Wetherell, the building received a construction permit in 1888 and construction was completed in December of that year. The permit called for a 3 story building, but early photographs show a 4 story building, so a fourth story must have been added at an early date – before the major 1936 renovation of the building.

The building's somewhat unusual façade was an expression of its original purpose: it was built to house wagons and horses for the American Railway Express Company. This use necessitated large doors at ground level and runways to the upper stories. The architects grouped openings in tiers of two sizes, wide and narrow, to create the street façade. The tiers were arranged symmetrically, with five tiers flanking the center of the building in the pattern wide, wide, narrow, wide, wide. The carriage doors were in the first and last bay of each 5-tier wing. The narrow tier marked the location of the ramps and it was here that bearing partitions extended from the front to the back of the building. The wide and narrow tiers each had a distinctive window pattern. In the wide tiers, in the first story, there was a doorway or else a large window; the second story had three windows under a shallow arch, within a brick frame that stepped back at the top. In the next level, three windows were separated by piers, and the fourth story had three windows separated by piers and topped with a shallow arch. The narrow tier contained a single, large, round-arch-topped window at the first story; two

round-arch windows at the second; followed by two stories with windows separated by piers, with the pair at the fourth story capped by a shallow arch. The combination of round and segmental arches seem somewhat incongruous, but the façade was impressive nevertheless. Modern alterations have interrupted the rhythm of the façade: the two openings at the east end of the building were closed and a new one was inserted in the middle of the pier; a large opening for the new main entrance was inserted in the middle of the building; and elsewhere windows were opened down to the ground and made into doors.

The building was gutted inside in 1936, when it was converted from a stable to a truck garage. The iron and timber interior frame was replaced with a fireproof steel and concrete frame. Then in 1999-2000, the building was renovated for office and retail space. After modifications to the first story, the pattern of tiers is no longer obvious. The replacement windows, with large panes of glass in metal frames that are set close to the face of the wall, lacks the texture – from the small panes of glass and deeper reveals – of the original construction. The building also received a one-story addition during this renovation.

### Congress Street Fire Station



Fig. 9. Congress Street Fire Station, 344 Congress Street, built 1891 (#14)

The Congress Street Fire Station, historically home of Engines 38 and 39, served South Boston for 86 years. Around the corner from it, on what is now a vacant lot next to 19-23 Thomson Place, a companion building once stood – the home of Ladder Company 18 (demolished). Ladder 18 moved into 344 Congress Street after Engine 38 was disbanded. The station closed in 1977. The building remains largely intact and a fine example of the public buildings designed by Harrison Henry Atwood during his tenure as City Architect, 1889-91.

The building is two stories with an attic. On its main, Congress Street, façade, the first story has three granite piers, made of rock-faced stones and decorative capitals, between which are the large doors for the fire engines. The second story wall consists of yellow-colored brick with a granite string course and quoins. The attic level has a peaked center section that tapers up to a chimney and is flanked by red shingled panels, which create a mansard effect and highlight the light-colored center section. The design gives the façade a picturesque effect, setting the building apart from its architecturally reserved neighbors. In 2007 an infill building at 346-348 Congress Street was constructed on the lot adjacent to the former Fire station. This building features a protruding section constructed within the air rights of 344 Congress Street.

Its structure is more unusual than its modest dimensions would lead one to expect. Probably in order to keep the ground floor open and free of columns, so as to accommodate the department's engines and horses, the second floor was suspended from heavy timber trusses that occupy the attic level. These trusses are supported on the long walls of the building, and they carry the attic floor and flat roof as well as the second floor. The top and bottom chords are straight and braced with X's along their length, superficially like a lattice truss. Where the diagonals cross, except in the center of the building, iron or steel bars connect the chords; these presumably function as tension members. In the center of each truss, a bar drops down through to a girder under the second floor, to support this floor. Thus, the second story contains a line of bars down the middle. The joists of the third (attic level) floor presumably are carried on the bottom chord of the trusses, but this is not certain.

The truss is like one illustrated in F. E. Kidder in his book *Building Construction and Superintendence, Part III. Trussed Roofs and Roof Trusses*, which the author calls a "Double Warren Truss;" but this example was made of steel.<sup>3</sup> The advantages of the truss, Kidder wrote, were that it could be made shallow and was especially suitable for roofs supported by steel columns. The trusses in 344 Congress are timber and hardly shallow; in fact, they are so deep that a person can stand up in the attic. What are assumed to be tension rods in the truss do not intersect at the ends of the diagonals, but rather at the point where the diagonals cross, which is not standard. Moreover, since the building is not especially wide (although it is irregular – trapezoidal – in shape), the rationale for this particular solution, rather than self-supporting timber or metal girders spanning wall to wall, is unclear.

The building today houses the Boston Fire Museum, which is owned and operated by the Boston Sparks Association. It is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (designated Sept. 3, 1987).

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<sup>3</sup> F. E. Kidder, *Building Construction and Superintendence, Part III. Trussed Roofs and Roof Trusses* (New York: William T. Comstock, 1906), 62-63; elsewhere, p. 287-88, the style is referred to as a lattice truss, but then described as two trusses, one laid over the other.

## Factory Buildings Trust



Fig. 10. Factory Buildings Trust, 249-55 A Street, 11-45 Wormwood Street, built 1895-1897 (#79-84)

As fully developed, this complex included five interconnected, six-story buildings. The first building to be erected, No. 1, was the western most one in the group, located on A Street (249-55 A Street). After this, buildings No. 2, 3, and 5 went up; building 4 was last. Exactly when each one was constructed is uncertain, although No. 1 apparently went up around 1894-95. Presumably the complex was complete around 1897, the year Binford Street opened. The buildings' footprints were similar, although not identical, in dimensions: Building No. 1 measured about 62 x 210 feet; No. 2 and 3, 70 x 210 feet; No. 4, 75 x 210; and No. 5, 71 x 97 feet. The complex's power station, at the eastern end of the group, included a boiler room (100 x 113 feet), engine room (75 x 105 feet), and chimney standing 222 feet tall. Though the boiler room and engine room are no longer extant, the massive brick chimney remains as highly visible feature of the District, serving as a reminder of the historical use of the complex and industrial character of the District as a whole. The group was known as the Factory Buildings Trust. These were not developed by BWCo and the architect is unknown.

The Factory Building Trust buildings are notable for their architectural severity. (See Fig. 18.) Only No. 1, on A Street, exhibits any particular architectural ornament. The windows on three sides, except for the sixth floor, are topped with

projecting brick caps and the window sills are granite. On the east (alley) wall of the building are large, double windows. Even this slight decoration was left off the buildings constructed after No. 1. Nos. 2-5 have the plainest sort of segmental arches (row-lock) over windows and sills made of two rows of header bricks. Perhaps No. 1 received extra attention because it served as the public face of the complex; or perhaps the developers decided to eliminate anything superfluous when they put up Nos. 2-5.

The buildings and their environment are more open today than in the past. Originally all the buildings had fire shutters, most of which have been removed. Gone too are the factories and shops on the west side of A Street and north side of Wormwood that once closed in and partly shaded the site. The openness and light of today fundamentally changes the formerly dark, industrial ambience of the complex, which now contains apartments, office and retail space.

### New England Confectionery Company Factory



Fig. 11. New England Confectionery Company Factory, 253 Summer, 11-37 Melcher (top), 5 and 6 Necco Ct (bottom: connecting bridge from Melcher Street buildings to Necco Court buildings), built 1902; 1907 (#63-66, 77-78)

BWCo built the striking curved buildings on the south side of Melcher Street for the New England Confectionery Company (NECCO). NECCO's history begins in 1847, when Oliver R. Chase of Boston invented a candy machine – a lozenge cutter. He and his brother, Silas Edwin, founded Chase & Company. In 1866, another brother, Daniel, invented the Lozenge Printing Machine, used to create "Conversation Candies," the ancestor of message candies like Sweethearts Conversation Hearts, a Valentine's Day staple. Chase & Co. was one of the earliest manufacturers to locate in the FPCLD, having established there in the 1880s. In 1901, the firm joined with two other candy-making firms – Fobes, Hayward and Co., founded by Daniel Fobes in 1848, and Wright and Moody, dating from 1856 – to establish NECCO. Two years later, the three firms moved into the new manufacturing plant BWCo built for them at Summer and Melcher streets. At the time, this was the largest establishment devoted exclusively to the production of confectionery in the United States. NECCO moved from this plant, to its current plant in Cambridge, in 1927.

The Melcher Street block, extending from Summer to Necco Street, is a fine example of the characteristic features of the more architecturally distinguished buildings in the district: tripartite façade with classically-inspired ornamentation, light-colored brick, ornamented street front and plain rear, and dense development, with the buildings filling their lots. What sets the buildings apart is the curved street wall, following Melcher Street. The buildings are treated similarly, although not identically. An additional notable feature of this group of buildings is the four-story bridge that connects the upper stories of the rear of 19-27 Melcher Street to 6 Necco Court, also built for the New England Confectionary Company. Bridges between buildings, such as this one, were commonly found in older factory complexes. Other examples in the district include the Melcher Street Overpass and the bridge between No. 5 and No. 6 Necco Court. Bridges and overpasses between buildings are character-defining features of the District.

## Summer Street buildings, from Fort Point Channel to the bridge over A Street



Fig. 12. View of Summer Street buildings from the Summer Street bridge over the Fort Point Channel

The tallest concentration of buildings in the district is the imposing group of wool warehouses on the west end of Summer Street. These monumental, Classical Revival style buildings provide a grand entrance to the district for those arriving via the Summer Street Bridge. A focal point of the group is the standout Boston Wharf Company Office Building, 363 Summer Street/10 Melcher Street (#62). Sitting on a somewhat triangular lot at the corner of Summer and Melcher streets, it creates a striking image. From the bridge, the viewer sees the distinctive rounded façade and narrow profile of its west corner together with its broad Classical cornice. On its roof is a large, illuminated sign (#99) reading:

BOSTON WHARF CO.  
INDUSTRIAL  
REAL ESTATE

The sign is highly visible from across the Fort Point Channel and marks a visual gateway into the District from downtown Boston.

It should be noted that buildings in this group on the north side of the street are actually nine stories high at their backs facing Congress Street, because of the elevated height of Summer Street. One of the most impressive sights in the district is the soaring masses of their undecorated and plainly-treated backs, seen either from the alley that runs behind them or from Congress Street looking south through a vacant lot.

### **3.0      Significance**

#### **3.1      Historical Development of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

##### Boston Wharf Company's land-making

Making land by leveling hills and filling the marshes and muddy flats that ringed Boston for the purpose of expanding the build-able area of the town is something Bostonians have been doing since the beginning of European settlement. As a pamphlet from 1910 proudly noted “possibly no city in the world has altered more the physical conformation of its site” than Boston has.<sup>4</sup> And this was written before the huge area of East Boston that would become the site of Logan airport or the expanse east of the Commonwealth Flats in South Boston – future site of the Army Supply Base – had been filled.

Land-making was encouraged by the Commonwealth’s colonial-era riparian law, which “gives shoreline property owners rights to the adjacent tidal flats down to the low tide line or 1650 feet from the line of high tide, whichever is closest to the shore.”<sup>5</sup> The original intent of this law was not to encourage land-making so much as to encourage waterfront landowners to build wharves. Land-making only commenced in a big way during the first decade of the nineteenth century, with the formation of several land development corporations, some of which began to make new land for the purpose of increasing the developable area of the city. Well-known Boston land-making projects include the “Bulfinch Triangle” – today’s North Station district – created by filling the Mill Pond (1807-29), and Faneuil Hall (Quincy) Market, created by filling in the town docks and wharves east of venerable Faneuil Hall (filling completed 1826). Fort Hill, from which Fort Point and Fort Point Channel take their names, was cleared and cut down between 1866 and 1872 and the material used to fill the shorelines at Fort Point and in South Boston. Fort Hill was located immediately south of the central business district as it existed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, in an area bounded by Milk, Pearl and Broad streets.

Real estate developers and speculators were active on both sides of Fort Point Channel at the opening of the nineteenth century. Coinciding with the annexation of South Boston (originally part of the town of Dorchester) to Boston in 1804, men with property interests in South Boston joined to build the first bridge linking the two areas. The South Boston Bridge, a toll bridge, opened in 1805. It was located at the south end of Fort Point Channel, extending from Dover Street in Boston. On the South Boston side of the channel, the South Boston Association, like Boston’s other land-making corporations, began to “wharf out” into the channel. Later, in 1827-28, a more direct free bridge was built from the end of Federal Street in Boston to the Turnpike in South Boston (roughly where today’s

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<sup>4</sup> *Boston's Growth* (Boston: State Street Bank, 1910), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Nancy Seasholes, “Gaining Ground: Boston’s Topographical Development in Maps,” Alex Krieger and David Cobb, eds., *Mapping Boston* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 119.

Dorchester Avenue Bridge stands). The encroachments interfered with boat access to the south end of the channel and encouraged filling on both sides of the channel south of the bridge. Between 1836 and 1839, the South Cove Associates, formed in 1833, filled the former wharves below the Free Bridge on the Boston side. This land became the site of terminals for the newly established railroads. Around the same time, north of the Free Bridge on the opposite shore, the Boston Wharf Company began its wharfing-out and land-making venture.

Incorporated in 1836, the Boston Wharf Company (BWCo) purchased land and adjoining flats from the South Boston Association with the intention of building wharves for docking and warehousing. Its property ran along First Street on the south, from what became Dorchester Avenue to B Street, and then extended north along B Street about 1200 feet (in 1845, increased to 1400 feet), and ran east to the channel. BWCo built its wharves in the usual fashion, first constructing a seawall then filling in behind it. By 1837, it completed the first stage of its land-making: a wharf that extended roughly north into the channel from First Street (today, this area is part of the The Gillette Company plant). It built a seawall twelve feet high, then brought in fill material from Nook Hill, the site of today's Andrew Square, and finally constructed two stone wharves with streets down their centers. This wharf structure can be seen on maps from the 1840s, for example, the 1847 U.S. Coast Survey's *Plan of the Inner Harbor of Boston*.<sup>6</sup>

Over time, the company extended the seawall north along the channel towards Boston Harbor and filled in behind it. Lawsuits and controversy over the boundaries of the company's property, as well as poor vehicular access to the area, slowed the process of making land. No bridge served the northern part of the site until about 1855, when Mt. Washington Avenue Bridge opened and connected BWCo land to Boston proper at Kneeland Street. Also around this time the Midland Railroad obtained a right of way through the BWCo site. Its tracks came from the south along the western edge of BWCo property and then crossed on a pile viaduct and continued on a bridge over the channel, ending at a depot in the newly filled South Cove area. This railroad bridge, roughly where Summer Street Bridge crosses the channel today, also opened in 1855. Both bridges had to be drawbridges to allow boats access to wharves along the channel and in South Bay. The frequent bridge openings tied up traffic on an already congested waterfront. At the same time, the right of the railroad to pass uninterrupted on schedule, meaning that its bridge could not be opened when a train was due, idled ships trying to enter the channel. Nevertheless, the highway bridge and railroad were a boon to BWCo, which proceeded to extend its land north, as it was authorized to do by the state legislature in 1853. The company filled an "L" shaped site up to the railroad tracks, except for an inlet perpendicular to Fort Point channel. The inlet was left open to allow boat access to a future Reserved Channel that harbor planners laid out through the South Boston flats.

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<sup>6</sup> *Mapping Boston*, plate 22, 113.

From this time until the mid-1880s, the BWCo specialized in the storage of sugar and molasses. The company took this direction following the appointment of a new director, Elisha Atkins (1813-1888) – a sugar importer and planter who also held stock in the Bay State Sugar Refinery. Since imported sugar and molasses were subject to duties, they had to be kept in secure storage, “in bond” until taxes were paid. The company established bonded yards, enclosed by a tall fence, on both sides of the little inlet, within which it built large, one-story wooden storage sheds for storing the molasses. (Fig. 13.)

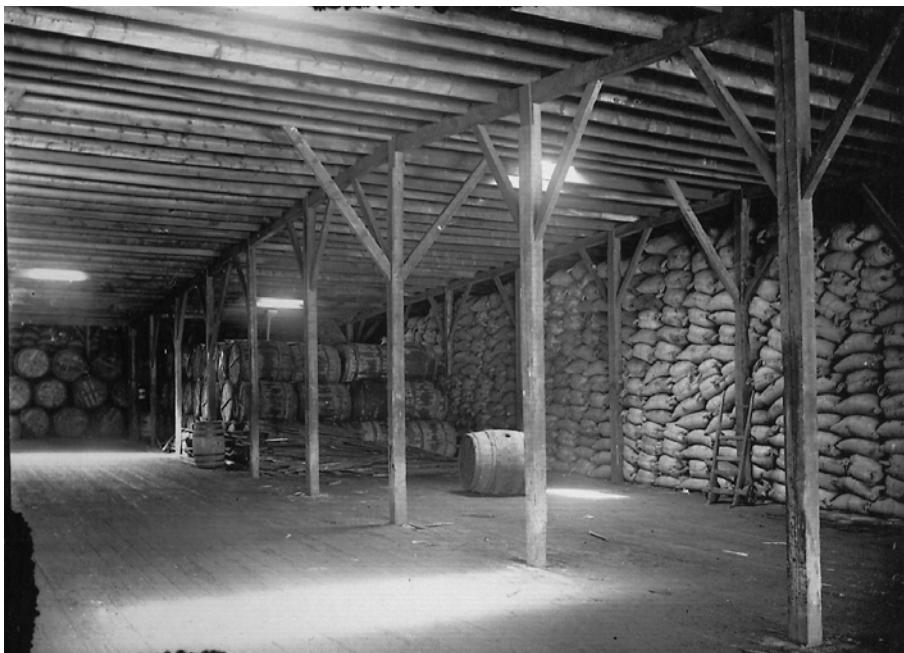


Fig. 13. Interior of a Boston Wharf Company sugar shed, c. 1900.

The next phase of BWCo land-making began after the Civil War, coinciding with the state’s project to improve and develop Boston harbor. The harbor had become inconveniently shallow, which created problems for ships. A board of engineers – the U. S. Commissioners on Boston Harbor – investigated the situation at the behest of the City of Boston, and it concluded that the many wharves and other encroachments built into the harbor interfered with the natural scouring action of the tides. In 1866, the state legislature established a Board of Harbor Commissioners that was charged, among other duties, with remedying the silting problem. The Board adopted the plan proposed by the U.S. Commissioners, which called for building a seawall and filling in the South Boston Flats in order to concentrate the force of the tides. The wall was to run along the east side of Fort Point Channel then parallel with the main ship channel of the harbor, as far as the slate ledge (a natural obstacle in the water). The curve of the seawall where the harbor wall met the Fort Point Channel wall was a key feature of the plan, designed to combine the force of the channel’s outgoing tide with the tide in the harbor. The “ebb current from the south bay … would be led by the curved bank … to follow the line on its eastern side, along the new [sea]wall, till its direction

should essentially contribute to ... the velocity and momentum of the ebb in the ship channel.”<sup>7</sup> This resulted in Boston’s distinctive “fan pier.”

What parties would undertake the work of building the walls and docks, and filling the land, took some years to sort out. In 1867, in connection with the projected work, the state revoked BWCo’s license to expand north, and BWCo sued the state to get it back. The following year the Harbor Board came up with a compromise: the state would give BWCo title to a parcel and in return BWCo would drop its lawsuit and claims to additional land. BWCo would build a wall along its site and fill it. The Board would contract for the construction of the harbor-side seawall and for filling the northern flats. (Fig. 14.) These agreements formed a package, and when the Governor and council rejected one of them, the whole plan fell apart. But even before the deal was rejected, BWCo sold its parcel to the Boston, Hartford, and Erie Railroad Co. (BHERR), which had taken over the old Midland tracks, even though, since the deal had not been ratified, it did not own the land. The Board then proceeded to work out another complicated deal, now involving BHERR; Boston and Albany Railroad, which agreed to buy flats east of the BHERR site; and the BWCo. But before *this* deal could be implemented, BHERR declared bankruptcy. BWCo held a mortgage to the site and got the property back. In view of the brightening prospects for the area, including the City’s promise to build a bridge connecting the new state lands with downtown Boston, BWCo decided to improve the property itself rather than sell it. Thus, following the original plan, it built a light seawall along the channel and filled behind it with material brought over from Fort Hill, which was being chopped down. The seawall had a wooden dock along its length to accommodate vessels and to protect the wall. By 1870, the company had filled an area north of the railroad tracks, as far as the proposed alignment of the new (Congress Street) bridge.

The state decided to undertake the rest of the project itself and sell the land created to pay for the work. In 1873, the Harbor Commissioners began work on the fan pier land and dock along the main ship channel. Land east of this was sold to the Boston and Albany Railroad, which used the same contractors that were building the Commonwealth’s land to fill its site, to the same construction specifications. The fill in this section consisted of clay dredged from the ship channel in the harbor and clean gravel. The dredging was part of the state’s harbor improvement plan, as it deepened the ship channel. BWCo was not obligated to dredge, nor did it have to be picky about what it used to fill its land: in addition to material from Fort Hill, rubbish from the Boston conflagration of 1872 was dumped in its site. The work of filling both the BWCo and Commonwealth sites was completed by 1882. (Fig. 15.) Very importantly for BWCo, even before all the filling was done, Congress Street Bridge opened, in 1875. BWCo built Eastern Avenue, later renamed Congress Street, across its site (the road continued on to C Street). This new bridge, along with a repaired and

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<sup>7</sup> Edward Philbrick, “The Improvement of the South Boston Flats by the Harbor Commissioners of the State of Massachusetts,” American Society of Civil Engineers *Transactions* 7 (Feb. 1878), 20.

reconstructed Mt. Washington Avenue bridge (1870-71), provided better access to the site from downtown Boston.

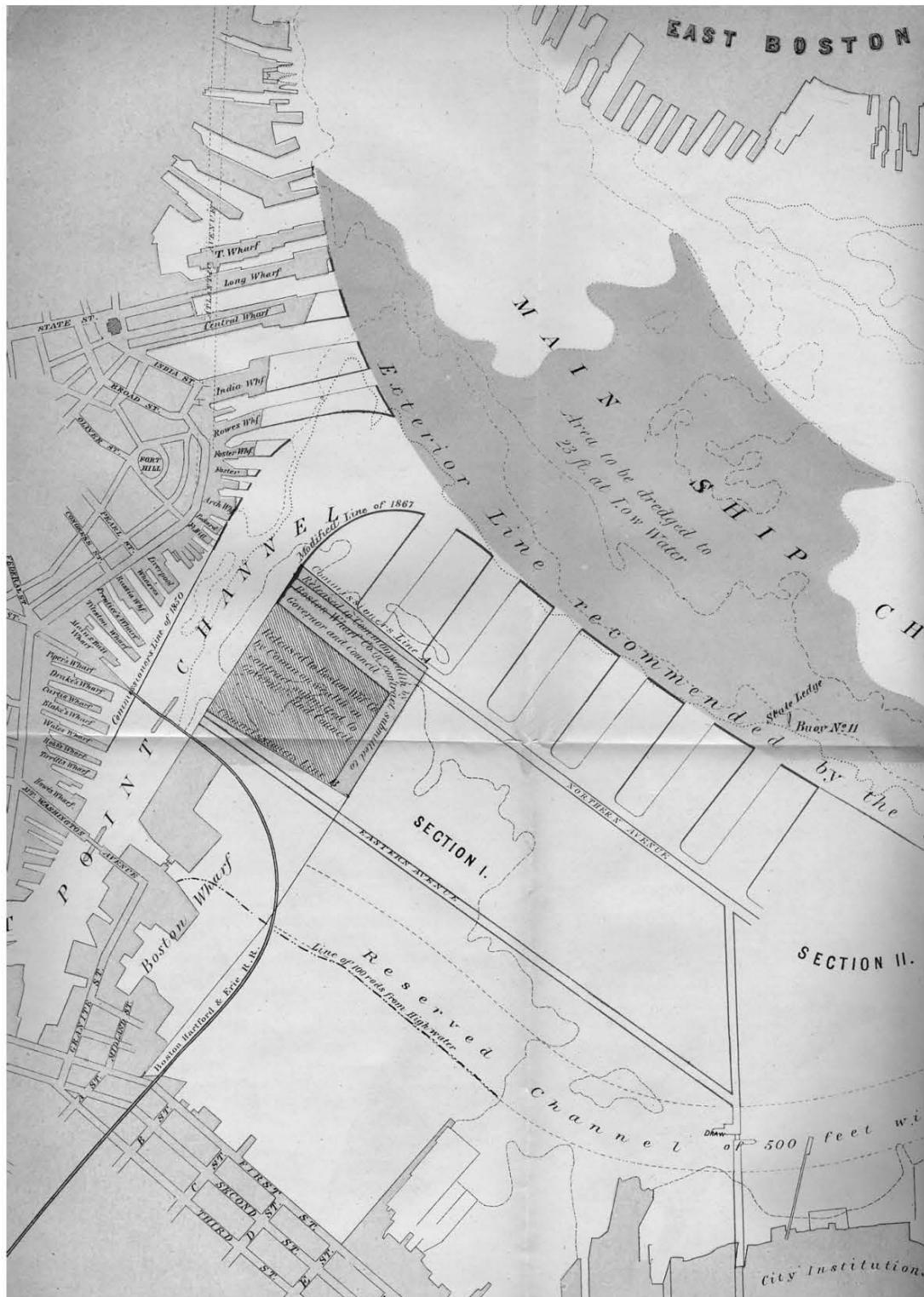


Fig. 14. Plan for the occupation of flats owned by the Commonwealth in Boston Harbor showing the extent of Boston Wharf Company's filling as of 1867.

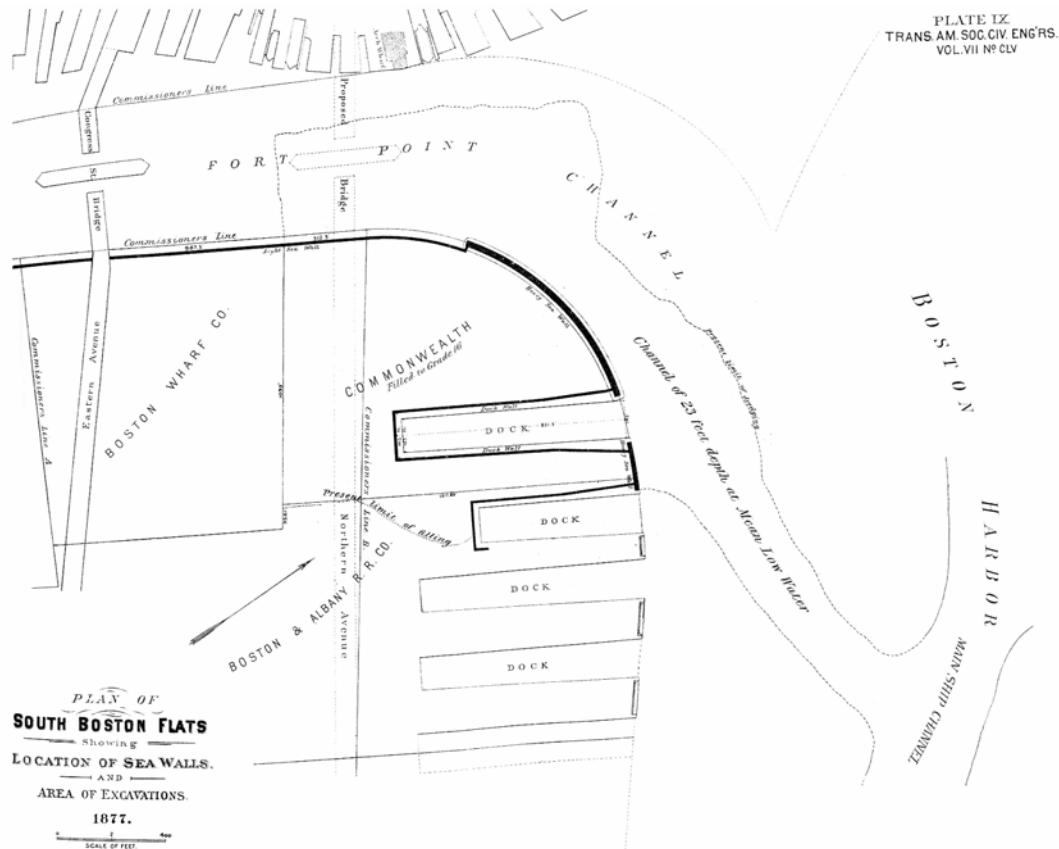


Fig. 15. Plan of South Boston Flats showing Boston Wharf Company's property as of 1877.

#### From sugar storage to industrial real estate development

The completion of the land-making coincided with a change in the BWCo's business model, from a public storage business oriented to docks on the channel, to a developer of industrial and warehouse properties served by ships docking in the harbor as well as rail and trucks. There was little evidence of the company's future direction as of 1880. Except for its wooden sugar sheds around the inlet near Mt. Washington Avenue and the railway structures on the eastern side of the site (including a round house), the BWCo's land was only sparsely occupied. (Fig. 16.) This situation changed during the 1880s, when revenues from sugar storage declined and the company looked for new products to store. With the opening of Congress Street Bridge, the site could become an extension of downtown.

The company's foray into warehouse and factory development began where Congress Street Bridge touched down on its property. In 1882, BWCo built the first brick loft in the district on the south side of Congress Street near the bridge: a warehouse called the Dorr Stores (eventually numbered 321-327 Congress

Street, demolished). This loft was used for storing wool, cotton, and general merchandise. On the north side of Congress Street, along the channel, sheds went up for another merchant – Nickerson's Wharf. By 1889, several brick lofts had been built along or near Congress Street, some of which stand today. On the south side of Congress, between the channel and Dorr's, stood Lombard's Stores (later sold to Eben Jordan of Jordan, Marsh & Co.), which consisted of a wooden shed at the channel (demolished) and a 6-story brick loft (313 Congress, 1886, #43). Across Congress Street stood the 6-story brick storehouse of J. S. Williams (320-324 Congress, 1888, #11), public warehouseman and weigher, and Putnam & Co.'s building (326-330 Congress Street, 1888, #12). Also constructed at this time was a large stable for American Railway Express Co. (343 Congress, 1888, #42) and the first three brick lofts (buildings separated by firewalls) for Atlas Stores at Congress and Sleeper streets (#2). To give access to this building, BWCo built a street perpendicular to Congress that it named Sleeper Street after Jacob Sleeper, the company's president from 1860-1883; the street opened in 1887. This and many other streets laid out in the FPCLD were entirely within the BWCo's site, which gave the company the opportunity to name them and they did, after company officers and prominent tenants.

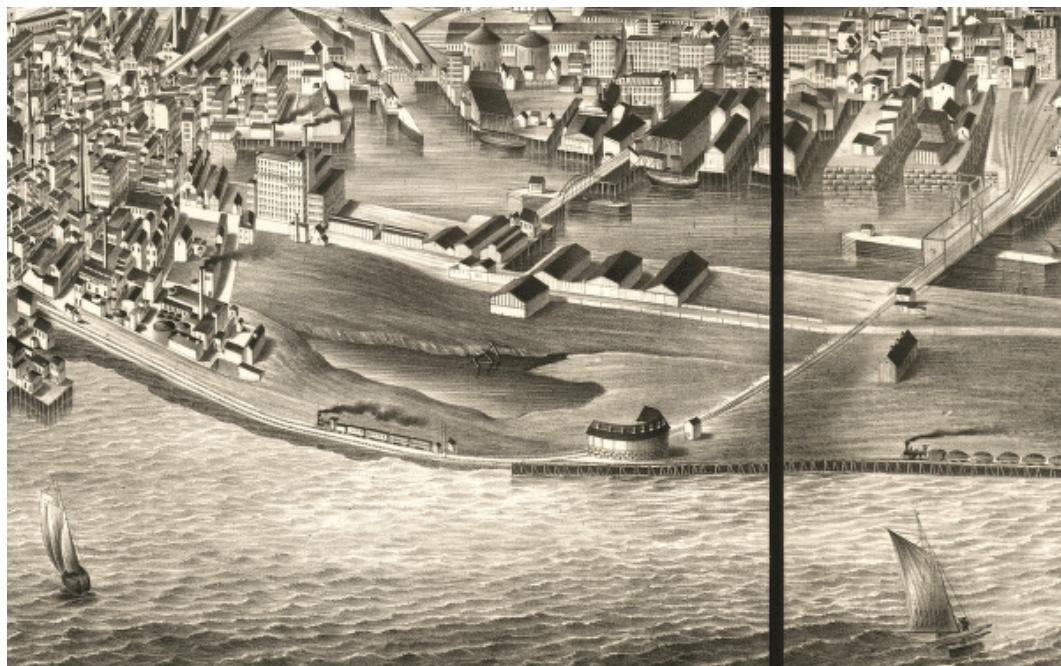


Fig. 16. View of Boston Wharf Company's site, c. 1880.  
The buildings along the channel near the Mt. Washington Avenue Bridge (center of the illustration) were BWCo's storage sheds.

BWCo did not limit itself to warehousing, but also sought to interest manufacturers in their property. Manufacturers were some of the earliest occupants. Chase & Co., candy makers and predecessor of New England Confectionery Company, moved into a 6-story loft at the corner of A Street and

Congress (347-351 Congress, #41). On the opposite side of A Street, Tremont Electric Lighting Co., machine and lamp manufactures, occupied a 4-story loft (the western side of the present 355-359 Congress, #40). Another early manufacturer in the area was C. L. Hauthaway & Sons, maker of leather dressings and ink used in shoe manufacturing, which in 1887 occupied a 2-story wooden factory nearby on A Street (demolished).

This and many of the early buildings in the area were wood frame. C. F. and A. M. Hamburger, dealers in rags and waste paper, had a wooden warehouse across from Tremont Electric on Congress Street (demolished). James & Abbott's lumber yard occupied a large area along the channel north of the railroad tracks across the BWCo site. Elsewhere stood low warehouses and sheds for storing glass and crockery, lumber, wagon stock, theater scenery, and of course, sugar and molasses. This pattern continued through the twentieth century: wooden buildings went up along newly laid out streets, many of which were later replaced with brick lofts.

Over the decade of the 1890s, much development took place in the area despite a national economic depression that began in 1893. The BWCo built new streets parallel with Sleeper Street: Farnsworth Street by 1891 and in 1896, A Street Extension (later named Pittsburgh Street, now Thomson Place). Spur tracks ran down the streets so rail cars could make deliveries to the buildings. On the north side of Congress Street, west of Putnam & Co.'s warehouse, BWCo built two, six-story brick lofts, one of which is still standing 332-336 Congress (#13), while the other, a shoe factory, is now a vacant lot at Farnsworth and Congress. The development of the north side of Congress continued in a westerly direction with the Congress Street fire station (#14); a 5-story loft into which C. L. Hauthaway & Sons moved (1894, demolished); and another 5-story loft (348-352 Congress, 1894, #15). Behind this block, on Farnsworth, a 5-story warehouse went up (11-15 Farnsworth, #17). Finally, for a brief time, on Congress Street to the west of Farnsworth Street, stood the ballpark of the Boston ball club of the Player's League (demolished). This league lasted for just one year, 1890, but the ballpark remained standing at least until 1894, when the Boston club of the National League played there. The ballpark came down when BWCo put in Pittsburgh Street and finally in 1900, Stillings Street, the westernmost historic street parallel with Sleeper on BWCo property.

Meanwhile during the 1890s, the southern end of the district became a manufacturing zone. Boston Button Co. occupied a 6-story loft on A Street (326 A Street, #70), which towered over all other buildings south of it when it was completed in 1890. South of the railroad tracks, lining the east side of A Street, were the plants of Rochester Brewing Co., Albert & J. M. Anderson Machine Shop, and Boston Plate & Window Glass Co. (all demolished). A notable project in this decade was undertaken by Samuel Wormwood and associates south of these buildings on a roughly 3-acre site purchased from the BWCo, between Wormwood and Binford streets. The complex consisted of five principal

buildings, all six-story brick lofts, which like the BWCo's buildings covered almost the entire site, with only narrow passages between the buildings, which, with the streets on the north and south sides, allowed in air and sunlight (map #s 79-84). Known as the Factory Buildings Trust, the complex offered factory space to let – somewhat analogous to what we today would call industrial incubator space. The buildings were supplied with electric light and power from its own power plant, situated at the eastern end of the complex (demolished, but the plant's massive chimney survives). South of Binford Street on A Street stood the first of the lofts that eventually would line A Street and Channel Center Street.

The pace of loft construction got a particular boost around 1900, when the Summer Street Bridge opened and extended Summer Street from downtown to BWCo land. The sequence of events that led to the construction of the Summer Street Bridge commenced when the railroads with terminals in the South Cove area, which through mergers had been reduced to two in number, agreed to build a new, union station. This involved a realignment of their tracks to the Boston side of the channel, which allowed the railroad bridge and the tracks crossing the BWCo property to be removed, freeing the land for development. The union station project – which resulted in South Station – was a great undertaking that included filling old docks and wharves and constructing new bridges, tracks, and a large terminal building. The station opened in 1898. Then, roughly where the railroad bridge had stood, the railroad built a highway bridge that brought Summer Street to South Boston.

These events were arguably the most important for physically shaping the streetscape we see today in the FPCLD. A historian of the BWCo considered the erection of the Summer Street Bridge nothing less than “an epic event in the history of the Boston Wharf Company.” Even though Congress Street Bridge had been in place for over two decades, Congress Street never became an important route in South Boston. The tracks of the railroad, after 1873 owned by the New York & New England Railroad (NY & NE RR), crossed it at grade; likewise, more tracks crossed A Street at grade, separating Congress Street from BWCo's bonded yards. Summer Street, intended to give access to the new state piers, avoided this problem by being built above grade; it ran at an elevated level through the BWCo site and continued on a viaduct over the railroad's tracks and yards east of the BWCo land. Congress Street was then terminated at the train yards. Summer Street provided easy access between BWCo's site and downtown, and the grade separation made it an important thoroughfare in South Boston. (Fig. 17.)

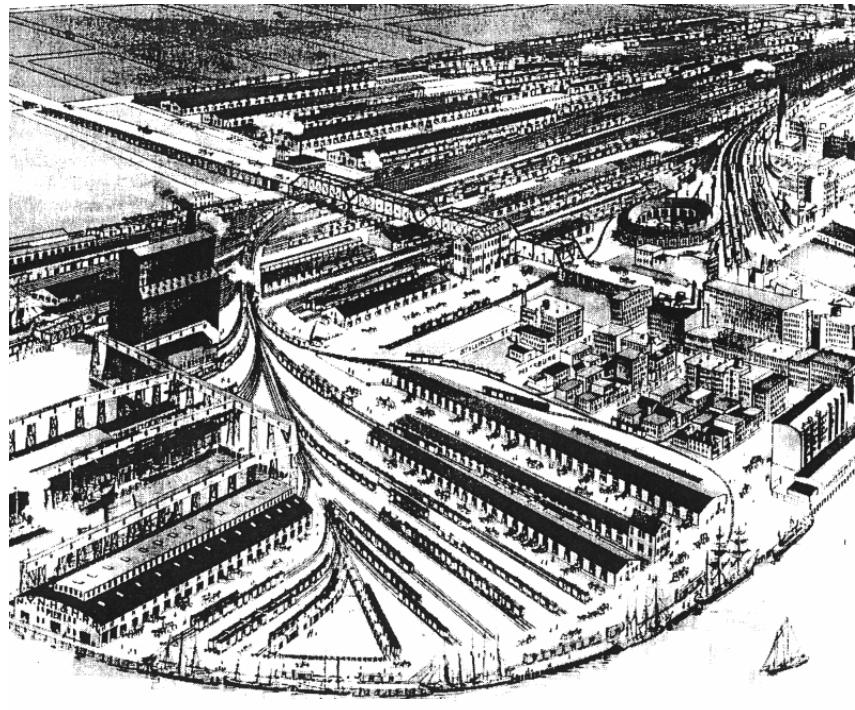


Fig. 17. View of South Boston from the Fan Pier, showing BWCo's site with Summer Street extended across the site and continuing on a viaduct, c. 1903.

As work on the bridge progressed, BWCo laid out new streets according to plans for the eventual development of the land, "which anticipated the actual construction in such a manner that the work of building on both sides of Summer Street and its adjoining streets was remarkably simplified." The raised grade necessitated a bridge over A Street (1900, #52) and created the most striking urban design feature of the district: a road curving from the elevated Summer Street down to grade at A Street. Named Melcher Street for BWCo's Superintendent, Lewis Melcher, the road was laid out in 1897.

BWCo was a real estate company by this time. It built structures to suit specific tenants, which it leased or sold to them. It also sold land. BWCo identified its buildings with the company's initials and date; early on, it started to identify its buildings with round, bronze plaques that contained the company's monogram and date of construction. These plaques can be seen on many of buildings in the district today, and the company continued the tradition by putting plaques on its new buildings.

Leading the company in the direction of real estate development was the energetic and well-connected businessman, Joseph Ballister Russell (1852-1929). He was appointed a BWCo director in 1882, and in 1886, during the tenure of his father (Charles T. Russell) as president of BWCo, Joseph became the company's treasurer, a position he held for four decades. His younger brother, William Eustis Russell, served as governor of Massachusetts 1891-1894. Joseph helped

develop the company's property into an industrial district, constructing factories and warehouses and finding tenants for the space. Russell lobbied hard to bring the Summer Street highway bridge into existence, and his success in accomplishing this was important to the company. He served as director for several Boston banks; the New York, New Haven & Harford Railroad (which took over the tracks through BWCo land); and West End Street Railway Co., and later as president of Boston Elevated Railway Co., among many business interests and positions. He also served as president or vice-president of the Boston real estate exchange and president of the Boston Chamber of Commerce in 1912.

In addition to Melcher Street, the company laid out streets north of Congress, parallel to Sleeper Street. Development of the north side of Congress Street progressed from west to east, and concluded with the massive buildings at 364-72 Congress and finally 374-84 Congress (#28 and #37). Summer Street, between the channel and A Street, was developed as a monumental city street, lined on the north side with 9-story, fireproof lofts. The buildings on the north side, which went up 1898-99, were intended for wool merchants. The opposite side of Summer Street developed more slowly, between 1903 and 1910. Boston Wharf Company took offices in the prominent 1905 building at the corner of Summer and Melcher streets (#62). East of the A Street bridge on the south side of Summer Street stood the buildings of Dwinell-Wright Co., tea and coffee importers (#58); Howes Leather Co. (#57); and Joseph Middleby, Jr., maker of bakery and confectioners supplies (#55 and #56).

The south side of Melcher was built up in 1902 for the recently organized New England Confectionery Co. (NECCO), formed by the merger of three candy making firms, including Chase & Co. NECCO occupied a group of buildings that ran from 253 Summer to 29-37 Melcher streets, as well as two lofts behind this block (on an narrow street called Necco Court), the latter ones built in 1907, the same year the Necco Court opened (#63-66, #77-78). The rest of the block on Melcher, to A Street, contained two wool warehouses and a factory occupied by French, Shriner & Urner, shoe manufacturers (63 Melcher, #69). South of this block, at A Street and Necco Court, a large factory was built for the George E. Keith Company, another large shoe manufacturer, with factories throughout Massachusetts (#75). Meanwhile, lofts went up on the east side of A Street south of Binford Street, and on the Midway Street, which opened between Richards and Binford streets in 1897.

The land south of Necco Court on the west side of A Street – comprising the area of the old sugar yard – with the exception of the Keith Co. factory, contained only large storage sheds. In 1924, BWCo contemplated building up Necco Street, which ran south from Melcher Street to the bonded yards, with lofts that, according to a company history, were to be “splendid new buildings, equipped with every desirable advantage that modern engineering extends.”<sup>8</sup> But economic conditions did not warrant this development at the time. Plans stayed on hold

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<sup>8</sup> *One Hundred Years of the Boston Wharf Company*, 18.

during the Great Depression and World War II, after which no new loft construction occurred.

When development tapered off in the 1920s, the site was almost completely covered with buildings (the exception was the bonded yard area). By 1929 the BWCo had erected some ninety buildings.

#### Rise and fall of America's great wool marketplace

While many people equate cotton textile manufacturing with the textile industry generally, in fact wool cloth production was a separate and important branch of the industry, and its development followed a somewhat different course. The general outlines of the wool cloth manufacturing in New England were the same as those of cotton – from dominance in nineteenth century, followed by a geographical shift in production to the southern states, and finally a collapse of the industry in the face of overseas competition. However, the timing of these events differed in the cases of cotton and wool manufacturing. In the case of wool textiles, employment and production continued to be concentrated in New England well into the twentieth century, long after cotton textile manufacturing had moved south. Wool was harder hit by the development of synthetic fibers than was cotton. Overall demand for wool cloth fell in the second half of the twentieth century as Americans simply bought less wool clothing. These developments impacted the woolen and worsted mills that were the mainstay of New England's industry. Nevertheless, in the first half of the twentieth century, wool manufacture persisted and even flourished in New England. One of the byproducts of this persistence was Boston's continued dominance as a wool market. This market was located in the FPCLD.

American-grown wool was highly varied and uneven in character. Wool varied according to fineness, length, and strength of fibers, as well as color, luster, suppleness, intermingled black hairs, cleanliness, and amount it would shrink when washed. To classify it required dozens of categories. In this respect wool differed from other agricultural commodities, like cotton and wheat, which fell into far fewer categories. Because of this variability, the work of a wool merchant was complex, requiring much knowledge of the material and entailing risk because of uncertainty over prices. Price information was not as available for wool as it was for other agricultural commodities like wheat or cotton, which were handled through exchanges. An effort in the 1890s to establish a wool exchange in New York City foundered on the great variability of wool. Manufacturers had to actually see samples of wool in order to choose material suitable for the particular products they intended to make. Dealers looking for a certain kind of wool to fill an order would visit other merchants to buy from them. Moreover, many wool manufacturing firms were small and produced small runs of the designs they offered. The varied requirements of the manufacturers, and the variability of the raw material, created an important role for the wool merchant. And the need for a convenient place where buyers could see the wool, and from

which wool could be dispatched for quick delivery when it was required, supported the development of a centrally-located wool market. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the manufacture of wool apparel fabrics (called woolens and worsteds) grew and became geographically concentrated in New England. Boston – the largest commercial center in the region – developed into the nation's principal marketplace for apparel wool, the place where the nation's largest wool merchants had their offices and warehouses.

Boston took an early lead in this direction in the nineteenth century when New England was a center of both sheep raising and wool textile production. Wool dealing as a distinct line of business evolved along with the growth in wool manufacturing: merchants who were selling agents for textile mills began to buy and deal in raw wool as well, and eventually some firms specialized in wool trading. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, first the mid-west and later the far west became the leading wool growing regions. Imports from Australia and South America also increased. Buyers from the Boston wool houses bought product from all the sheep raising states and countries (or took it on consignment); wool was brought by rail and ship to Boston. The bulk of this wool arrived ungraded. In Boston, the dealers graded the wool – grading is an art, the value dealers add to the raw material – and packaged graded lots in quantities to suit their customers at the mills, ready for delivery when required. Attempts were made periodically, for example by Western wool growers and New York entrepreneurs, to dethrone Boston as the nation's largest wool marketplace, but they did not succeed. As long as the raw material remained varied, along with the requirements of manufacturers large and small, the middleman served a valuable function in the production process. And as long as wool manufacturing remained concentrated in New England, Summer Street reigned. (Fig. 18.)

Thus, just as it had a centrally-located leather district to serve the shoe and boot industry, Boston had a wool district. Because of the seasonality of the industry and, in the twentieth century at least, the often large fluctuations in demand from year to year; wool tended to accumulate and merchants needed a lot of space to store it until customers bought it. Thus, they built large warehouses, where they sorted, graded, and packaged wool, and had their offices. In the mid-1880s, wool warehouses clustered on Federal Street and nearby, along Franklin, High, and Purchase streets and Atlantic Avenue. Wool storage expanded in the downtown in the 1890s: the new land created on the east side of Atlantic Avenue was developed with huge wool warehouses. Following the opening of the Congress Street Bridge, the industry spread across the channel to the South Boston. The first of BWCo's brick lofts, the Dorr Stores on Congress Street (demolished) was used partly for wool storage. The trickle of wool dealers across the channel turned into a flood in the early twentieth century, when the wool merchants generally relocated to the Fort Point Channel area. The precise motivation behind this migration is unknown but can be guessed at. On the one hand, there was the push of expanding retail and financial/office businesses in the downtown – firms that could outbid wholesaling firms for space. On the other hand was the pull of

the new, substantial buildings that the BWC Co erected, which had good ship and rail connections yet were near Boston's downtown. BWC Co anticipated that wool merchants would be important tenants for their lofts: to coincide with the opening of the Summer Street Bridge, the company developed the block on the north side of Summer Street, between the channel and A Street, as fireproof wool warehouses.



Fig. 18. Interior of a wool warehouse, c. 1930s.

Until the 1940s, wool wholesaling flourished along with New England's wool manufacturing industry. By 1919, the region had become the center of the nation's woolen and worsted industry. Between 1870 and 1920, employment in the wool manufacturing in the region increased 80%; yet, with greater automation and improvements in productivity, the quantity of wool used at the mills increased at double this rate. The wool merchants took over lofts when the other sorts of warehousing and light manufacturing firms left them. Wool merchants came to dominate the FPCLD; lofts throughout the FPCLD as well as in adjacent areas in South Boston were stuffed with wool. Jeremiah Williams, wool merchant, along with other investors built a large wool warehouse to the east on Summer Street, at D Street. Three large warehouses erected outside the FPCLD at 401, 415, and 423 Summer Street, built 1917-19, were advertised as the largest wool storage facility in the world.

Looking at the industry in its heyday, during the first half of the twentieth century, we find the nation's woolen mills concentrated in New England, with the majority in Massachusetts, and Boston merchants handling a large share of the nation's wool clip. An investigation of the industry during the 1930s found that 60-75% of wool grown in the U.S. passed through Boston. Moreover, for the years 1933-35, nine wholesale firms alone handled 41% of all U.S. wool, and eight of these

firms were located in Boston – and not only in Boston, but on Summer Street. The Boston Wool Trade Association had 230 firms as members. Open top trucks, piled high with bags of wool, plied Summer Street. The pulleys that project from roofs over the tiers of loading doors (called “whips”) were used to raise and lower bags from and to the trucks. The large sheds in the old sugar yard became storehouses for imported wool that was subject to duties. Representatives from the mills came into Boston to inspect the wool; independent agents roamed from firm to firm looking for product to fulfill orders; representative of foreign producers went on sales-calls to the merchants with their bundles of wool samples. When wool merchants wanted to take customers out to lunch, they went to nearby Jimmy’s Harborside, where tables would always be ready for the men in the business. According to a history of the wool industry published in 1926, Summer Street was “known the world over in wool circles.”

During the period 1920 to 1946, the textile industry fluctuated greatly – cast down by an agricultural depression that began in 1920, then recovery, then the Great Depression, followed by prosperity during World War II. After 1947, the industry went into a steep and irreversible decline. Several factors contributed to this decline. One was favorable labor costs in the southern states relative to New England, something that had already lured away cotton textile manufacturing. Wool firms began to open plants in the South and close them in the North. Another was the increased use of synthetic fibers. When synthetic fibers were blended with wool, they did not affect output and employment at the mills, but did reduce the demand for raw wool. Later, synthetics replaced wool for many purposes; Americans in the second half of the twentieth century simply wore less wool clothing. In 1947, over half of the nation’s establishments (453) and nearly two-thirds of all production workers in the wool and worsted industry (about 105,000 employees) were located in New England. Twelve years later, in 1958, the number of establishments had fallen 41% and employment had dropped a stunning 71%. Production and the number of looms fell dramatically. After this, the industry continued to decline, gradually but inexorably. Eventually the remaining mills had to compete not only with southern mills, but with foreign manufacturers. The wool and woolen industry in the United States declined to a shadow. In 1989, there were 47 woolen mills in New England. Today, only one mill in New England purchases wool to spin and weave at its plant.

Associated with this manufacturing decline was the shrinking and eventual disappearance of Boston’s wool market. During the second half of the twentieth century, when the number of mills dwindled, salesmen representing the dealers went out to the mills with samples, rather than mill agents coming into Boston to buy. As customers disappeared, the reason for maintaining large stocks of wool in Boston also vanished; rather, wool could be warehoused near the source. In 1951, about half of the space in BWCo buildings was devoted to the wool industry. By 1963, only 200,000 square feet was used for wool. Wool merchants continued to keep offices in Boston into the 1980s; some were located on D Street in South Boston and Lincoln Street downtown. The last of the Summer Street

wool firms, Forte, Dupee, Sawyer Co., left its building at 311-319 Summer Street in 2000. All that remains of this vanished industry in the FPCLD is a historic marker sponsored by the Boston Wool Trade Association, placed on the 259 Summer Street in the autumn of 2002.

### Art for wool

By the 1950s, development of the FPCLD as a site for warehousing and manufacturing had come to an end. BWCo completed its land-making when it filled the inlet, partly by 1919 and finally out to the seawall at some point between 1928 and 1948. The loft built in 1929, a reinforced concrete building at 51 Sleeper Street, turned out to be the last of the type. The Great Depression, World War II, and the changing city and regional economy stalled and then ended further loft development.

As Boston's wool market declined along with New England's wool textile industry and business sought suburban locations with good highway access, prospective tenants for BWCo's lofts from traditional industries dwindled. Vacancies became widespread. Then, in 1976, artists discovered the area when a group of artists forced out by fire from the Plante Shoe Factory in Jamaica Plain rented the fifth floor of 34 Farnsworth Street. Fort Point's brick and beam loft buildings, with their high ceilings, freight elevators, weight-bearing floors and plentiful large windows, attracted a large artist population quite quickly. In the 1980s, they occupied buildings on A, Farnsworth, Congress, and Melcher streets. After Forte, Dupee, Sawyer Co. vacated the top three floors of the loft it occupied – no longer needing the space for warehousing wool – artists moved in. By 1979, so many artists had located in the area that an Open Studios event could be held. In 1980, artists created the Fort Point Artists Community (FPAC) as a tax-exempt 501(c )3 corporation with the mission “to enrich the Fort Point area with an artist live/work population that contributes to the district's and the City of Boston's cultural life.”

BWCo cooperated with the artists and helped the artist community develop. Many of the artists who set up studios in the FPCLD lofts also lived in their studios, although city building codes did not allow this. The artists subdivided floors, put in kitchens and bathrooms, and created live/work spaces. They also provided means of emergency egress from the buildings, which were now partly residential. As their numbers grew, the artists organized to negotiate leases collectively with BWCo. Around 1995, artists leased floors in eighteen different FPCLD buildings. But as lessees, and often illegal residents, the artists' tenancy was precarious.

In the late 1990s, after the completion of the Big Dig and the cross channel connection to the third harbor tunnel, the wider world discovered the potential of the district as a place to live and work. Today, when artists' leases expire, the buildings are redeveloped, mainly for offices, retail, and high-end residential. For

example, until February 2002, 288-304 A Street (#75) was home to several arts and community organizations and over 50 artist studios. The building was redeveloped for office space. One former tenant, the Revolving Museum, left Boston for Lowell. Buildings at the southern end of the FPCLD on A and Channel Center streets had been occupied by perhaps 100 artists when Beacon Capital Partners purchased the property for redevelopment.

Nevertheless, many artists continue to live and work in the FPCLD and some have secured their continued presence in the district by becoming building owners. In 1982, with initial funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, FPAC developed the 249 A Street Cooperative, a 43 studio artist life/work limited equity coop. From 1992-94, FPAC developed the Artists Building at 300 Summer Street, a 47 studio artist life/work limited equity cooperative. In 1999, FPAC and four other neighborhood cultural organizations created the Fort Point Channel Coalition (FPCC). In 2005, FPCC in a joint venture with Keen Development developed three buildings into Midway Studios with 89 live/work artists' rental studios at 15 Channel Center Street (formerly Midway Street). As part of the larger Channel Center project of Beacon Capital Partners and working closely with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Midway Studios has 40% of the studios as affordable housing. Midway Studios was developed using historic tax credits.

Alert visitors to the district will sense they are in an artistic milieu when they discover outdoor artworks throughout the district. Representatives of artist groups serve on committees concerned with planning the future of the area. The Seaport Alliance for Neighborhood Design (SAND) worked with consultants to the Boston Redevelopment Authority to help create a plan for the area, the Seaport Public Realm Plan. Artists and other community members petitioned the city to designate the neighborhood a Landmark District in 2001.

#### Change and continuity

The appearance of the FPCLD today reflects continuity and change. To begin with some of the changes: many buildings have been demolished, notably those located south of the FPCLD on A Street. The current uniform and monumental appearance of the district is a late stage result of the loss over time, even as recently as 1999 and 2000, of all the former timber structures and many of the one-story brick sheds. (Fig. 19.)



Fig. 19. Congress Street, looking east, c. 1905,  
showing the varying scale and materials formerly in the area.

Historic structures on the west side of A Street, adjacent to but outside of the District, were removed when the parcel was taken over for Central Artery work. Likewise, on the east side of A Street, in the "A" Street Protection Area, the former brick and frame structures of the glass works, machine shop, and brewery, as well as the railroad roundhouse, are gone and the land is used for parking. The southern boundary of the FPCLD was determined by recent demolition. A consequence of this demolition and clearing is a break in the density and uniformity of the street walls at this point. The north and south sections could be knit back together when the land is redeveloped.

BWCo once owned most of the buildings and treated them conservatively, and consequently much original fabric has been preserved. For example, a group of buildings on Thomson Place and Farnsworth Street was rehabilitated for the use of Thomson Financial. The exteriors of the historic buildings were preserved, while connections were made between the buildings to create an integrated space. BWCo's dominance as a property owner waned as it sold off its holdings. Negotiations for the sale of the remaining 44 buildings in the company's portfolio in 2003 and resulted in the purchase of large holdings by several developers including Berkeley Investments and Goldman/Archon Group in 2004-2005. Resale of these buildings has been ongoing.

The area is tamer and more orderly today than it was when trains threaded through many of the streets and teamsters loaded and unloaded delivery trucks. All the old bridges across the channel had been movable, and their openings had been a cause of frequent traffic backups. Neither Congress nor the Summer Street bridges open any longer, so traffic can flow unimpeded across the channel. The

Mt. Washington Avenue Bridge, closed to vehicles in 1898, was removed in 1909, and a new fixed span bridge, the Evelyn Moakley Bridge, gives access to the north end of the site. Shipping in the channel declined over the course of the twentieth century and largely ceased in the late 1950s. Today the channel waters are still and usually devoid of boats. The rail spurs that served the buildings in the district (like the extensive rail yards that surrounded the district) are gone.

Photos from the opening of the twentieth century show a dense place, almost entirely covered with buildings. This was a manmade environment, unrelieved by nature. For example, there were no street trees or parks; rather, the utility poles – wires being above ground – substituted for trees. The streets were rough cobblestone: surfaces were hard and stark. And the industrial character extended into the area beyond the borders of the FPCLD, to the train yards that once occupied the Fan Pier and area west of the district, and the lofts, stables, machine shops, sugar factory, and foundries to the south. As recently as the 1980s, the former Factory Buildings Trust complex at Wormwood and A streets conveyed “a 19<sup>th</sup>-century factory ambience now rare.”<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 20.) This ambience is rarer still today. While we can understand the wish of new residents and office workers to banish the gloom and grime of past times, the dense and sublime feel of the historic section is part of what makes it a distinctive place.



Fig. 20. Factory Buildings Trust lofts,  
Wormwood Street from the intersection of A Street, c. 1905.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Stott, Factory Buildings Trust in “South Boston,” draft industrial archeology report on firms in South Boston.

Despite the losses and changes, the district retains its historic character to a remarkable degree. While buildings have been lost, few modern ones have been added. Of the 95 buildings in the area today, only seven date from after 1929, and most of these are very recent – one, the Hood Milk Bottle, was moved to the area from another location. Windows and doors have been replaced in many buildings and additional floors have been added to some and while these changes rarely attempt to recreate original fabric, with a few disturbing exceptions (e.g., the large, new arched entry and white walls of 313 Congress Street), most alterations are respectful and compatible. More importantly, some buildings retain their original windows and doors. Bridges between buildings, commonly found in older factory complexes, are a notable feature of the area. Although some of the bridges that formerly existed are gone, several survive (e.g., between 6 Necco Ct. and 19-27 Melcher Street, and 51-61 Melcher Street and 281-83 Summer Street). And some modern bridges have been added: two new bridges span the alley between Farnsworth Street and Thomson Place, connecting buildings occupied by Thomson Financial.

What one finds in the area today is a visually uniform collection of mainly five and six story brick lofts, each one covering all or most of its lot. The losses and change of use do not compromise the special feel the district. Standing on an alley in the north part of the district, one can imagine the activity of bygone times. What remains here is a distinctive, well-preserved, and historically significant district. The losses only serve as a reminder of how vulnerable the district is to demolition and character-eroding change.

#### Principal Architects and Builders Working in the District

The principal designers of the BWCo buildings were Morton D. Safford (1842-1921) and Howard B. Prescott (1874-1956). They served as staff architects for the BWCo, the former from 1893-1917, and the latter from 1917-1939. While each was staff architect for the company, Safford is responsible for considerably more buildings. Little information has turned up about either man. Safford is listed as an architect in Boston city directories for the years 1893-1920, during the time he worked for the BWCo. Likewise, Prescott is listed in city directories for the years 1895-1918 in a partnership (Prescott & Sidebottom) and then alone from 1919-1939. Prescott & Sidebottom, but not Safford, were included on the list of Boston architects in Damrell's *A Half Century of Boston's Building*; neither belonged to the Boston Architectural Club at the time (c. 1895). Buildings developed by BWCo during the periods of their employment were for the most part attributed to one of the two men.

The Congress Street Fire Station at 344 Congress Street was one of several fire stations designed by Harrison Henry Atwood (1863-1954) during his tenure as City Architect, 1889-91. Atkinson was an office-trained architect, having apprenticed and worked in the offices of S. J. F. Thayer and the former City

Architect, George A. Clough. Active in Republican politics, Atwood served as a State Representative for the 8<sup>th</sup> Suffolk district for three years before being appointed to the City Architect position. Following a period of private architectural practice, he was reelected four times to the lower house, 1915-1928.

A number of the BWCo buildings from the late 1880s and 1890s were constructed by building firm C. A. Dodge & Co. This company built the J. S. Williams Stores (320-34 Congress, 1888), Boston Button Co. building (326 A Street, 1890), Atlas Stores (316 Congress Street, 1890, c. 1893) as well as several lofts on the north side of Congress between Sleeper Street and Thomson Place (some of which are no longer standing) and undoubtedly other buildings in the area. The firm was established in 1885 but it succeeded an earlier company, Vinal & Dodge, founded in 1879. By the 1890s, in addition to contracting, the firm dealt in building materials. The firm had an advantage when it came to getting BWCo contracts in that it was a BWCo tenant in the 1890s, having its yard at 244 A Street, a few steps away from BWCo offices at 274 A Street, where Morton Safford had his office. The firm worked principally in Boston.

Three buildings have been attributed to J.M. and C.J. Buckley, however they are not listed as architects in city directories; no other buildings are known to have been designed by this pair. This attribution, made by an earlier researcher, has been retained in case it provides a lead for future scholars.

### **3.2 Historical Significance**

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District is situated on landfill created by a private real estate development company. New England is famous for its 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing corporations, such as the pioneering textile firms of Waltham and Lowell. Real estate corporations were another regional business specialty, although their activities are less well-known today. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many companies – from the Front Street Corporation, South Boston Association, and Broad Street Association early in the century, to the suburban land sub-dividers of later decades – formed to make land; to lay out and subdivide land; and to build, sell, and manage structures, both for business and residential purposes. This sort of development organization was associated with Massachusetts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several other states prohibited corporations from owning real estate or buildings that were not used by them in their business operations. Illinois was one such state. New England investors created a “Massachusetts Trust” in Chicago to circumvent the Illinois law.

The Boston Wharf Company is an important example of a Massachusetts real estate development corporation. BWCo's land-making created a sizable section of South Boston, roughly 96 acres in total. Exactly how this achievement ranks compared with that of other private land-making companies is unknown, as no list

of companies and the amount of land they filled is available. However, BWCo can be counted among the larger real estate companies. It made land and built infrastructure – streets, sewers, and lights – and also built structures on the land for sale or lease. This achievement is of local, regional, and national importance as an example of the work of a major company in a line of business that was a New England specialty.

The FPCLD represents the sort of urban loft district on the periphery of the commercial core that was once a standard and vital part of American cities. Boston was an important colonial-era port and it continued (and continues) to be a principal entrepot city. Goods arrived by ship, railroad, and highway, and thus the city has always had warehouses and yards for transshipment and storage. The FPCLD originally served as a wharf for goods storage – in the mid-nineteenth century, for sugar and molasses principally. Later, the area developed into a site for industrial activities, including general warehousing and light manufacturing. Multi-story loft buildings were the characteristic type of structure in urban warehouse/manufacturing districts. The FPCLD has a large and well-preserved collection of lofts, which collectively still represent the legacy of the district's original economic purpose and is a fine example of this type of district.

Another historically significant aspect of the area is its former importance as a center of the wool trade. During New England's reign as the center of wool cloth manufacturing in the United States, Boston merchants dominated the trade in apparel wool. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the largest of the wool merchants had warehouses and offices on Summer Street in the FPCLD. This history is recognized with a historic marker attached to 259 Summer Street. The district itself, given the many lofts built specifically for the wool trade that are still standing and not significantly altered, embodies this history.

The FPCLD compares favorably with other loft districts, including, for example, the Historic Warehouse District (HWD) in Cleveland, Ohio. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, the HWD was originally Cleveland's commercial center and it includes twenty-eight historic structures, constructed from the 1850s to 1921. Compared with the FPCLD, the HWD is smaller, and because of demolition (surface parking lots comprise 40% of the district) and the longer timeframe over which it developed, its streets lack the uninterrupted appearance and uniform character of many of the streets in the FPCLD.

Warehouse districts in other important trading cities have been listed on the National Register, including the Cupples Warehouse District, St. Louis, Missouri; Oakland Waterfront Warehouse District, Oakland, California; Cincinnati East Manufacturing and Warehouse District, Cincinnati, Ohio; Walnut Street Warehouse and Commercial Historic District, Kansas City, Missouri; and St. Joseph's Commerce and Banking Historic District, St. Joseph, Missouri. What makes the FPCLD stand out is its size (87 historic lofts) and intactness and consequently, historical ambience.

### 3.3 Architectural Significance

The buildings of the FPCLD are significant as excellent representatives of the loft type of structure, and for the high quality of their design. They are distinguished examples of architectural styles that were popular during the period of their development, interpreted for warehouses and industrial structures.

The district is architecturally significant as an unusually coherent and well-preserved collection of late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup>-century lofts. Not only individual buildings, but entire streetscapes survive largely intact and unaltered, preserving the visual identity of the area as a loft neighborhood. The district is remarkable for the cohesiveness of its design as embodied in its architectural styles, building materials, massing, density, and scale. Such visual coherence is, in part, a consequence of the district's exclusively industrial-warehouse purpose. In addition, the area was developed by a single real estate company (the Boston Wharf Company). The predominance of Classical Revival styles is a consequence of the period within which many of the extant buildings were developed, the 1890s to 1920s, when Classical Revival styles were in fashion. Finally, many buildings in the district were designed by a single architect, Morton D. Safford.

The density of the district is a function of BWCo's ownership of the land and its ability to lay out streets and lots to maximize ground coverage. Thus the visual character of the streetscape is partly due to the nature of the district's development, by a single, important real estate development company. The density, therefore, is related to the historically significant nature of the land ownership.

With respect to architectural design, the FPCLD is significant for the excellent state of preservation within its bounds of entire streets of loft buildings built in styles that were popular in the city, region, and the nation during the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Within the area, Congress Street and Summer Street are of particular architectural significance. Buildings on Congress Street represent the range of architectural trends popular from the 1880s to 1918, including architecturally modest early warehouses, a factory trimmed with Italianate-style ornament, a high-style Romanesque Revival fire station, a building with an early skeleton frame facade, examples of high-style Classical Revival style buildings, and an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Stylized Classical style wool warehouse of reinforced concrete. Summer Street is remarkable for the stylistic and visual coherence of its streetscape dominated by imposing high-style, yellow brick wool warehouses in the Classical Revival style. Other streets in the district, especially Melcher, Channel Center, and Farnsworth streets, are of interest for their concentrations of Stylized Classical loft buildings, representative of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century taste for a distilled expression of the Classical style.

### **3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation**

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) meets the definition of and following criteria for designation found in sections two and four of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended:

***A. Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as provided in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.*** The Fort Point Channel neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

***B. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events have occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.*** The site and structures that comprise the FPCLD exemplify a kind of enterprise – land-making and real estate development – that was characteristic of Boston and the region, and important to the economic and physical development of both the city and the region. In addition, the FPCLD is an excellent example of the kind of urban loft district that was found in and near the centers of cities across the United States and played a vital part in the nation’s economy. These wholesaling and warehousing districts often specialized in particular commodities produced or consumed in their regions. In New England, such a commodity was wool – the raw material of the region’s woolen and worsted cloth manufacturers. Boston became the nation’s most important wool marketplace, and the center of the wool trade was Summer Street in the FPCLD.

***D. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, representative of elements of architectural or landscape design or craftsmanship which embody distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style or method of construction or development, or a notable work of an architect, landscape architect, designer or builder whose work influenced the development of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region, or the nation.*** The structures that comprise the FPCLD are individually excellent examples of a building type – the urban loft – that was important in the economic history of the city and the region. The FPCLD lofts are also fine examples of a method of construction used in such buildings: warehouse construction. In their architecture, they are fine examples of styles popular in the city, region, and the nation during the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries interpreted for industrial buildings. But more important than the quality of individual buildings is their collective effect. The district is distinctive, with integrity of location and setting: it is an unusually well-preserved, clearly bounded, and largely intact district with few incompatible buildings and a moderate amount of exterior alteration. In this

respect, it serves as an important national example of an urban loft district from the Late Industrial Period.

### **3.5 Relationship to Criteria for Protection Area Designation**

The Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road and A Street Protection Areas meet the definition of and criteria for designation as Protection Areas as found in sections two and four of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended:

***Areas which are contiguous to and constitute an essential part of the physical environment of any Landmark District.*** The Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area is contiguous to the northern boundary of the FPCLD. The A Street Protection Area is contiguous to the eastern boundary of the FPCLD. Both Protection Areas are historically related to the District as the former location of rail tracks that serviced the District, in the case of the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area, and the former location of rail yards and buildings along A Street, in the case of the A Street Protection Area. For their proximity to and historical associations with the District, these Protection Areas constitute essential parts of its physical environment.

***Areas that are visually related to the Landmark District but are not necessarily of sufficient historic, social, cultural, architectural or aesthetic significance to warrant designation as such.*** Though historically related to the FPCLD, the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road and A Street Protection Areas are now devoid of any remnants of their historic condition. In their current state, they are not of sufficient significance to merit inclusion in the boundaries of the District. These areas are, however, visually integral to the District, and their redevelopment will impact the overall character of the District.

***As areas the dimensions of which do not extend more than 1200 feet from a boundary of the Landmark District.*** No portion of the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road and A Street Protection Areas extends more than 1200 feet from the boundaries of the FPCLD.

## **4.0 Character-Defining Features**

The historic and architectural significance of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) discussed in Section 3 is conveyed by urban design and architectural features of the District. Together these features define the character of the District and should be carefully considered when alterations to the District are proposed.

### **4.1 Urban Design Features**

#### *Urban Form*

The District's distinctive urban form is expressed in the massing of the buildings and in the streets, alleys and sidewalks. As a private business district geared to wholesaling and manufacturing, without commercial or residential uses that would draw the general public, warehouses were constructed to the full capacity of their lots, typically with minimal spatial allowance for streets and sidewalks. The urban form that resulted from this practice was strong street walls of large, closely-spaced buildings throughout the District. Though this created a district-wide visual coherence, variation in street width and layout within the District created zones of unique expression of this form.

With a few notable exceptions discussed below, most streets in the District are generally 40-50 feet wide and laid out in a grid. Alleys, which were integral to the service operation of the District, are prevalent, including north of Congress Street, between Summer and Congress streets, and behind the buildings on Summer Street east of A Street. These passages are typically 25 feet wide. The effect of the solid planes of the high walls of the warehouse buildings relative to the narrowness of these streets is a sense of enclosure, with alleys providing natural light and air. This is especially characteristic of the streets north of Congress Street, from Sleeper Street to Thomson Place, and also on Channel Center Street, Melcher Street, and Necco Court.

Summer and Congress streets at 100 and 75 feet wide, respectively, are the widest streets in the District. The breadth of these streets relative to the narrower streets lends them prominence and formality within the District which is also reflected in their architectural treatment. Though these streets do not share the sense of enclosure felt on narrower streets, the narrow sidewalks and height of the buildings fronting them create very strong, formal street walls.

A distinctive departure from the gridded street pattern of the District is Melcher Street which curves down from the elevated Summer street to grade level at A Street. The unusual layout of the street created unique building forms that respond to its shape: a curvaceous façade at 259 Summer/10 Melcher streets on the north side of Melcher Street, reminiscent of a ship's prow, and a sinuous block of buildings on the south side of Melcher Street.

The strong urban form of the District is interrupted in a few locations by demolition. The northern end of the district, north of Necco Court, has suffered a few losses: two key buildings on Congress Street were lost to fire and a row of two-story sheds on Stillings was razed and the site partly filled with a garage. The fabric also breaks south of Necco Court in the A Street Protection Area, cleared for transportation work. The District's characteristic urban form resumes at Wormwood Street, along Binford and Channel Center streets. Contextually consistent infill construction has restored bits of missing fabric on Farnsworth Street and Thomson Place.

#### *Height and Rooflines*

Buildings in the district range from one to nine stories in height, but on most streets they are typically five or six stories high. This is true, for example, on Congress Street where there are only two notable breaks in the even rooflines: at 367-375 Congress, an eight-story warehouse, and the low-rise Congress Street Fire Station. The wool warehouses on the north side of Summer Street between the channel and A Street form a solid, seven-story wall. Buildings on Farnsworth are mostly five and six stories, but at the north end of the street, a nine-story building stands opposite a two-story building. Thomson Place buildings are more varied, with five- and six-story buildings interspersed with two- and three-story structures. This variation in height is not jarring and, in fact, is regular enough to create a rhythm.

The relatively uniform height of the buildings on many blocks combined with the predominantly flat roofs make for a general uniformity in rooflines. A few very low-pitched gable roofs can be found, mainly on several Congress Street buildings. After about 1895, any pitch in the roof was hidden behind projecting cornices or parapets, which squared off the top of the buildings.

Roofline treatment is a highly significant feature of Fort Point Channel buildings. On plain buildings, the roofline may be the one place that the designer included decorative details, such as the corbelling on the early undecorated warehouses. Also seen on these early structures is a very low-pitched gable roof with the gable expressed openly and left undisguised and treated with very little trim or projection.

#### *Industrial Setting*

Historically, the FPCLD catered only to business, and was thus an industrial district. It was unadorned, without parks or public spaces (apart from the streets). Being landfill, the FPCLD was particularly devoid of vegetation and lacked topsoil. No street trees or grassy plots took up valuable space or interfered with deliveries which arrived via rail spurs that ran down streets and alleys. Small

parks have recently been introduced as land uses have changed. Stone pavers, still extant in some place, lined the streets and added to the composition of hard surfaces in the district. This manmade setting of brick walls of buildings, stone-paved streets, and railroad tracks is a characteristic feature of the district.

## 4.2 Architectural Features

### *Minimal Ornamentation*

Typically the main façades in the district have been given at least a minimal amount of ornamental treatment and articulation. Even on the plainest of buildings, the main entrances and rooflines have received decorative attention. In most cases, some reference to style governs the choice of architectural features, patterns of articulation, and ornament. Secondary façades typically are even plainer than main façades, but they are not always without ornament, especially if they face a side street rather than an alley.

### *Stylistic Unity*

Most buildings in the district take their stylistic inspiration from Classical architecture. The majority were built in the 1890s through the 1920s, when the popularity of the Classical Revival style and of stylized 20<sup>th</sup> century expressions of the Classical style were at their height. While a sampling of all of other styles (and also of “undecorated” or no-style) can be seen on Congress Street – the first street to be developed with brick lofts – even there, Classical styles dominate on the later-developed eastern end. Summer Street, opened in 1898, is completely lined on both sides with Classical Revival and Stylized Classical style buildings. On Congress and Summer streets, the district’s major thoroughfares, density of fabric and uniform massing is combined with unity of style, design, height, scale, and building materials to create distinctive and memorable urban streets.

Due to the prevalence of Classical styles, the way the facades of buildings are treated is unusually consistent. This style has influenced not only the choice of ornament but also horizontal and vertical articulation of facades, choice of type and arrangement of doors and windows, and treatment of rooflines. A characteristic feature of building in Classical styles is tripartite façade organization, in which the main facades are subdivided into three horizontal sections. The Classical style has also encouraged the vertical treatment of a large number of main facades with pilasters alternating with recessed panels.

Treating two buildings as one and designing individual buildings so that they repeat form and stylistic elements of other buildings on the street is another unifying theme in FPCLD. This continuity reflects the District’s unique history of being developed by a single owner with a single company architect designing roughly half of the buildings. Examples of planning for stylistic unity can be seen in the arrangements of Classical Revival style buildings on Summer and Congress

streets. The intentional design of individual buildings to complement adjoining buildings is also seen in several other places in the district. Some examples are 374-384 and 381-389 Congress Street (#37 and #38); 327-333 and 337-347 Summer Street (#56 and #55); 33-39 and 41-45 Farnsworth Street (#19 and #20); 191-205, 207, and 213 A Street (#90, #89 and #88); 28-32 and 34-38 Channel Center Street (#95 and #94).

#### *Projecting Cornices*

Projecting cornices are an important feature of the streetscape throughout the district. Contrasting with the prevailing rectangularity, projecting cornices contribute significantly to the ornamental and three-dimensional appearance of the buildings and the streetscape. Many buildings in the district have projecting cornices. Projecting cornices are a key feature of high-style Classical Revival buildings, like those on Summer Street, where every building has one and some are large and highly ornamented. Projecting cornices are also common to Stylized Classical style buildings, such as those seen Farnsworth Street, Thomson Place, Channel Center Street, and at other locations.

Projecting cornices in the district are made of a variety of materials. They may be of pressed copper or sheet metal. They may also be formed simply of brick corbelling, or combinations of brick corbelling and pressed copper or sheet metal. Pressed copper is most often seen in high-style Classical Revival buildings on Summer and Congress streets. The oxidized green patina on those cornices adds color to the individual buildings and to the streetscape as a whole.

#### *Ornamental Parapets*

Ornamental parapets are widely used in the district. They are seen on buildings representing a variety of periods, although they were most popular after about 1910. Parapets are vertical extensions of the façade of a building above the roofline to soften the harshness of a flat roof or to conceal a pitched roof. They are typically finished with stone coping and may be accented with decorative stone or tiles. They are very often given textural ornament with decorative brick corbelling. In a few cases coping may be of cast stone, which was used only very late in the period of development of the district in the place of limestone. Parapets are sometimes also trimmed with copper or pressed metal cornice to give them more three-dimensional emphasis. They may be straight or shaped, for example, finished at the skyline with crenellations or in the form of a pediment (usually placed at the center of the parapet wall). Many parapets in the district have crenellated rooflines, a form that was popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century for industrial and utilitarian buildings. In the FPCLD, shaped parapets enliven the rooflines and add variety to the streets, still in keeping with the general simplicity and reserve of the architecture.

#### Wall Openings and Fittings

Windows, window fittings, and sash; shutters; pedestrian doors, door fittings, and doors; and loading docks and hoistways and their fittings, are important elements of building design that reflect the period of development and original purpose of the district.

#### *Window Openings and Windows*

The most common window openings in the district are rectangular or spanned with segmental arches. Window caps are most often formed from brick and sills are most commonly stone. Deep reveals, a feature of the brick buildings that dominate the building stock in the district, lend a sense of mass to individual buildings and articulate their facades.

While many of the arched window openings in the district have no ornamental trim, arches were often given decorative treatment in the form of window caps, hood-moulds, or stone elements. Segmental arched windows with projecting window caps of decorative brickwork can be seen on the 1887 Chase & Co. candy factory (#41) at the corner of Congress and A streets and in the 1895 Factory Buildings Trust Building No. 1, 249-255 A Street. On both of these buildings wide caps frame the tops of the arches and extend downward to frame the upper portions of the sides of the windows, forming what look like drooping ears. An example of a hood-mould can be seen on 312-320 Summer Street (#53) over the windows of the fourth and fifth floors and on the windows at the second and third floors in the bays at the far sides of the façade. (See Fig. 4.) A decorative feature frequently associated with segmental arches in the district is a “stilt” placed just below the springing of the arch. These stilts often are stone in a contrasting color and may be smooth or rough in finish. (Fig. 21.) Both the labeled and stilted treatment of segmental arches is found on many buildings of various architectural styles in the district.



Fig. 21. Stilted arches, formed of a segmental arch with contrasting stilts at the springing line. Photograph of 34-46 Farnsworth Street.

Window sash in the district is made of a variety of materials, including wood with single glazing, hollow metal with single wire-glass glazing, steel with single glazing, and steel with wire-glass. Probably most of the buildings originally had wood sash with single glazing, especially on their main façades. Windows on secondary facades sometimes have more panes than those on main facades, allowing for more light in manufacturing buildings, without the cost of large panes of glass. This variety of window types within a single building is distinctive. Popular muntin/sash configurations, noted where original or early window sash survive in the district, are 1/1, 2/2, 4/4, and 6/6.

Many buildings in the district have been rehabilitated, or are undergoing rehabilitation, and the replacement windows and fittings rarely duplicate the materials of the originals. Original fittings for the large fixed windows on the ground and second levels of the fronts of the most prominent buildings were probably wood. With a few exceptions, the original materials, configurations and proportions have been completely altered, usually replaced with metal fittings and double-glazing. Replacement windows in upper floors typically are metal with double glazing. It appears that these often do repeat the muntin patterns of the originals. Many double-hung sash windows have been replaced with fixed windows that repeat the pattern of double-hung sash. All of these replacement choices have compromised the historic appearance of a large number of buildings in the district. Because the proportions, detailing, and reflectivity (both of the painted wood and of the glazing) of the originals have not been duplicated, subtle elements of historic character have been lost, not only from individual buildings but also from the district as a whole. Where original windows and fittings survive, they are significant.

### *Shutters and Fire Escapes*

Only a few examples of fire-resisting metal shutters survive on buildings in the district. Iron pintels, on which shutters once were hung, can be seen on buildings throughout the area. The existence of such a large number of pintels on buildings in the area is evidence that fire shutters were once ubiquitous in this neighborhood. Surviving shutters and pintels are significant.<sup>10</sup>

In contrast to the rare survival of fire shutters, fire escapes are still quite prevalent in the district, and are prominent features on many primary or secondary facades (Fig. 22). The structural patterns that they create on individual buildings and the rhythm of light and shadow that they contribute to larger streetscapes are characteristic features of the district. Where historic fire escapes survive, they are significant.



Fig. 22. Typical fire escape balconies and stairs in Fort Point Channel.

### *Entry Doorways and Doors*

Doorways are rectangular, segmental arches, or Roman arches. The Roman arch is very common, especially for high-style Classical type buildings. The most common ornament for major doorways is trim of brick or stone or a combination of the two. Most door hoods and surrounds project from the façade plane, especially on Classical Revival style buildings and on the more prominent buildings. Because most of the buildings in the district are of solid brick

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<sup>10</sup> Boston's building codes required shutters on the windows of tall lofts that faced narrow streets. For example, the 1885 code called for warehouses and factories over 45 feet high to have fireproof shutters and doors on every window or entrance that faced a street or alley that measured 20 feet wide or less.

construction, deep doorway reveals are typical. Deep reveals lend a sense of mass to individual buildings and articulate the facades.

Heavy, single or double-leaf, paneled, wood doors with glazed upper panels were characteristic of both main and secondary entrances. Many original wood doors have been replaced with metal glazed-panel doors with metal jambs and fittings. Where they survive, original doors and door fittings are significant architectural features that lend distinctive historical character to the area. The preservation of original doors is especially important because of their high level of visibility, at locations where they can be seen, touched, and used by those who enter the buildings. (Fig. 23.)



Fig. 23. Detail of original doorway with double-leaf, paneled, wood doors and original window. Photo of 20 Melcher Street.

#### *Loading Docks and Doors*

Loading docks are wide openings situated at a height that makes them easily accessible from the bed of a railcar or truck. Many are placed directly on a

building's main façade while others are located on a side street or on a side that faces an alley. A few are located in courtyards or driveways situated within the embrace of the building. A distinctive loading dock arrangement of this kind is located at 319 A Street, where a full bay of the building is cantilevered over a railroad loading zone. The railroad ties, bumpers, and cobbled surface that identify the historic function of the service area remain intact. Most loading docks in the district have granite thresholds and granite jambs. Some have metal thresholds and metal protective jamb strips instead. Since many buildings in the district have been converted to other uses, loading docks have often been converted to windows. Their original use is easily recognizable by their squarish proportions, by their height from the sidewalk, and by the granite trim. In such conversions, however, they have lost their doors. Relatively few loading dock doors are still in place in the district. The loading dock doors that survive may be paneled wood doors or fire-resistant metal sheathed doors. (Fig. 24.) Loading docks that still preserve original or relatively early doors are rare examples of a once character-defining element. The docks and their doors are significant.



Fig. 24. Loading door with original wooden door, 311-319 Summer Street.

### *Hoistways*

Hoistways can be seen on a large number of buildings in the district. Even in buildings equipped with elevators, hoists were used to raise and lower goods. Often narrower than loading dock openings, hoistway openings may be located either on the main façade or on a secondary façade of a building. Like loading docks, they typically have granite thresholds/sills and granite jambs for durability. They are located one above another, one per floor. Many hoistway openings have been converted to windows. Hoistway doors are relatively rare survivors. Hoistways and their doors are significant. Care should be taken to preserve examples of this once exceptionally common feature of the buildings of the district.

Only a few buildings in the district still preserve their small, gabled, hoistway dormers and the hoist mechanisms they protect. Examples of the preservation of these dormers and mechanisms are rare. Although in converted buildings they cannot serve the practical purposes for which they were made, efforts should be made to preserve examples of these features whenever possible. An example of such preservation can be seen on the west façade of the Atlas Stores building, now the Children's Museum (#2).

### Building Materials

Consistency of building materials also contributes to the coherent visual character of the district. Brick is the principal building material here. Although wood buildings were historically found in the district, none survive today. Even though almost every building in the area is built of brick, there is great variety in the types and colors of brick used and in the kinds and colors of materials used for trim.

#### *Brick Color*

Brick color is an important element of the character of the district. Both red and non-red bricks are used here, in a variety of tones. Red brick is associated with buildings in the undecorated, Italianate, Panel Brick, Romanesque, and Stylized Classical styles. In many cases, pressed red brick is used on main facades and common red brick on secondary facades. Variations on non-red brick in the district include shades of yellow, tan, yellow-orange, and light rust. These different shades of “yellow” brick are used for the main or most visible facades of buildings in the Classical Revival style. Their secondary facades are usually of red brick.

Light-colored brick predominates on Summer Street where all of the buildings are Classical in style. Only two buildings on Summer Street are of red brick. Most of the buildings on Congress Street also have facades of light-colored brick, although red brick is the color of buildings on the west end where the earliest

buildings in the district were built. The predominance of light-colored brick on Summer and Congress streets distinguishes them in character from intersecting streets and from all other streets in the district where red brick is used almost exclusively. For example, there is just a single yellow brick building on A Street, a small Classical Revival style building at 227-229 A Street (#86).

#### *Ornamental Brickwork*

The most common decorative element in the area is ornamental brickwork. There is hardly a building where some form of ornamental brickwork cannot be found, and in a large number of buildings, decorative brickwork is profuse. It is nearly universally found here in the form of corbelling at eaves or in parapets. Brick is also used extensively to create other architectural trim – heads for windows and doors and features such as string courses. A large number of buildings in the area have their brick facades articulated as pilasters with recessed panels. The pilaster/panel motif is seen on a large number of buildings in the area.

#### *Specialty Brick*

The use of specialty brick is widely seen on Classical Revival style buildings on Summer and Congress streets. Although more expensive than regular brick, it was a high-quality but less expensive alternative to stone. Specialty brick is non-standard brick made in unusual colors, sizes, glazing, and forms. It adds subtlety of color, texture, and three-dimensional ornament to a building and was adopted for some of the finer, more style conscious buildings in the area. For example, light-colored “Roman” brick – longer and narrower than standard brick – can be seen in several buildings, reproducing the effect of ancient Roman construction. Other specialty bricks include bricks in unusual colors or specially molded forms. Some are speckled with a variety of colors, rather than being of a single uniform color. Some take the form of Classical ornamental motifs, such as egg and dart, leaf and dart, and bead and reel. Specially molded bricks with a rounded bead are used at several locations in the district for decorative building corners.

#### *Trim*

Building trim in the district is most typically of natural stone: granite, brownstone, or limestone. Brownstone is associated with buildings in the Romanesque style, limestone with Classical styles. Granite appears on buildings of all periods and styles. It was chosen for its strength and durability. Cast stone is used on a very few later buildings as a limestone substitute.

Cast iron is another material widely used here as trim. Cast iron posts, lintels, and fittings are used at the ground floor level of several buildings in the area. In one building, cast iron is used to create an early example of a skeleton wall (front and rear of 332-336 Congress Street, #13). In many cases cast iron panels in the form of a frieze/cornice divide the ground floor from upper floors. Some iron panels

used as friezes, seen especially on several buildings on Summer Street, are ornamented with patterns of rivet heads at intervals along their length. Even more common is the choice of cast iron panels, imitating decorative wood panels and sometimes trimmed with Classical egg and dart motifs. They are used as decorative window and door lintels. Sometimes they are limited to a few locations on a building. At other times they are much more extensively used on a single building for window lintels (e.g., Stillings Building, 364-372 Congress Street, #28). Where such panels have broken off, structural steel I-beams are revealed.

On Congress and Summer streets, granite, limestone, and cast iron are predominant for trim. On secondary streets, where the buildings are mostly of red brick, trim of brick, granite, limestone and cast iron are most often seen. In the newer sections of the district, including the south end of A Street and Channel Center Street, cast stone is sometimes used in place of limestone.

Stone and cast stone are used for window sills and caps, door sills and caps, string courses, eave and parapet decoration, and parapet copings. Granite is the first choice for foundations and for trim in locations that take a lot of hard wear, such as the thresholds and edges of doorways, loading docks, and hoistways. Even for buildings where trim on upper floors is of some other material, granite may be the choice for ground floor trim.

## 5.0 Economic Status

The economic status of properties in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) is difficult to pinpoint as properties are continually changing ownership and being proposed for redevelopment for varying uses. City of Boston Assessors records from 2007 were used to analyze the economic status of properties in the FPCLD for this report. According to those records, assessed values of buildings and land in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District in 2007 amounted to approximately \$555 million for buildings and \$122 million for land, totaling approximately \$677 million.

Assessing records indicate several classifications of property types within the FPCLD. These include commercial buildings, commercial land, commercial condominiums, industrial properties, residential condominiums, and combined residential and commercial buildings. The economic status of these property types is discussed individually below.

### Commercial Buildings

2007 assessments on the total value of buildings in the FPCLD classified as commercial range from approximately \$272,500 to approximately \$24,217,500, with the median assessed value amounting to approximately \$7,131,266.

### Commercial Land

2007 assessments on properties in the FPCLD classified as commercial land range from approximately \$60,200 to approximately \$1,532,000, with the median assessed value amounting to approximately \$738,500.

### Commercial Condominiums

2007 assessments on the total value of properties in the FPCLD classified as commercial condominiums range from approximately \$95,500 to approximately \$2,043,000, with the median assessed value amounting to approximately \$283,000.

### Industrial Properties

2007 assessments on the total value of properties in the FPCLD classified as industrial range from approximately \$2,027,000 to approximately \$14,588,000, with the median assessed value amounting to approximately \$4,567,100.

### Residential Condominiums

2007 assessments on residential condominiums range from approximately \$155,900 to approximately \$2,099,200 with the median assessed value amounting to approximately \$483,750. (The residential units at 300 Summer Street and 249 A Street are part of a co-op and not separately assessed).

### Residential/Commercial Buildings

2007 assessments on the total value of properties in the FPCLD classified as combined residential and commercial buildings ranged from approximately \$502,500 to approximately 14,035,500, with the median assessed value amounting to approximately \$6,196, 250.

Exempt

There are two parcels in the FPCLD listed as exempt. 344 Congress Street, the Boston Fire Museum is exempt; its building value is assessed at \$626,000, land value at \$219,000 for a total property value of \$845,000. The Children's Museum is divided into two parcels for assessment, and one of these is listed as exempt. Its building value is assessed at \$14,735,300, land value at \$4,492,700 for a total property value of \$19,228,000. The second parcel listed for the Children's Museum is classified as commercial.

## **6.0 Planning Context**

### **6.1 Background**

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) is included within a number of planning initiatives completed over the last decade. Planning initiatives which most directly impact the District are summarized below.

#### The Seaport Public Realm Plan (1999)

In 1999, the BRA issued a public realm plan for the South Boston Waterfront called "*The Seaport Public Realm Plan*" (*Public Realm Plan*). This plan established a set of planning principles that became the waterfront's planning framework and set the basis for the South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan and the South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan Amendment.

The Public Realm Plan emphasizes three major strategies. As part of the first strategy, the waterfront can be defined into three subareas. Each relates to a body of water and with its own unique character. These subareas include the Fort Point Channel District, the Piers District and the Reserved Channel District. The plan addresses the unique opportunities specifically associated with Fort Point Channel and its importance as a great public space between the Downtown and the South Boston Waterfront. The plan envisions the Fort Point Channel as an intimately scaled, narrow channel similar to a riverfront in the heart of an historic European-style city with active edges, small boats, and abundance of water activities, with multiple bridge crossings. The land area along the eastern edge of Fort Point Channel and extending to the harbor is envisioned as hosting the most diverse mix of uses in the entire planning area, with public, civic, residential, retail, hotel, commercial, industrial, manufacturing, warehouse, research and development, and office uses.

The second strategy is to strengthen street connections that link new and existing developments to the water. The two connecting orientations include the east-west connection to downtown and the north-south connections to the South Boston community and the Harbor. These connections will be strengthened both through new streets and improvements to existing streets, open space and pedestrian links.

The third element is ensuring mixed-use neighborhoods with strong residential components throughout the waterfront area. The plan's recommendation is not to create another downtown district dominated by office and other commercial uses that go dark after 6 o'clock in the afternoon and on the weekends. Rather, the plan advocates an appropriate mix of retail, office, hotel, residential, open space and community facilities which will bring life to the waterfront and create an active and rich 24-hour district.

The Public Realm Plan provides the following specific guidelines and recommendations for the Fort Point Channel area:

- Encourage residential, cultural, civic, retail, restaurant, recreation and entertainment uses closer to the waterfront.
- Protect and enhance industrial, manufacturing, warehouse, research and development and office uses in South Boston, and preserve the economic viability of water-dependent users reliant upon the Harbor and the Channel.
- Support development of affordable housing throughout the South Boston neighborhood including artist live-work space in the Fort Point Historic District.
- Provide well-paying jobs at a variety of skill levels that are part of a diverse economy including in the port and industrial sectors.
- Design a compact walkable environment with small-scaled streets, blocks and neighborhood parks with local connections to the waterfront.
- Appropriately integrate the new convention center into surrounding areas.
- Connect the Seaport to the proposed Urban Ring Transit System.

#### The South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan (2000)

In order to implement the *Public Realm Plan*, the BRA decided to prepare a Municipal Harbor Plan for the South Boston Waterfront to achieve a public realm more in keeping with Boston's urban character and mixed-use economy than would have resulted under the strict application of the State's Waterways Regulations. The *South Boston MHP* was submitted to the State's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs in July 2000.

A series of substitute use and dimensional requirements was presented with corresponding offset provisions that, when implemented, will create an inviting and active public waterfront environment. The principles upon which the City, working in concert with the Municipal Harbor Plan Advisory Committee, residents, landowners, and the State, based their work in the development of the *South Boston MHP* were intended to:

- Enhance open space access
- Avoid privatization of the shoreline
- Minimize adverse effects of wind and shadow
- Identify substitutions and quantifiable offsets to ensure enforceability
- Promote offsets that are valued by the public consistent with the opinions expressed in public comments
- Ensure that developments are carried out in a manner that protects public rights in both filled and flowed tidelands

The Fort Point Channel water body itself was addressed in the *South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan* and a set of planning objectives was created to relate the channel to the five main goals of the *Public Realm Plan*. These planning objectives are listed below:

- Promote access to Boston Harbor as a shared natural resource

- Preserve and enhance the industrial port
- Plan the district as a vital, mixed-use area
- Develop the district as an integral part of Boston's economy
- Enhance the South Boston community

In spite of the BRA's effort to incorporate all the stakeholders' concerns in developing the *South Boston MHP*, not all the planning issues in the Fort Point District South were fully addressed. The Gillette Company in particular was concerned about the potential impacts of adjacent residential and other non-industrial development on the ability of the South Boston Manufacturing Center (SBMC), which generates a significant amount of truck and employee traffic, to remain at its current location. Additional concerns included the ability of the SBMC to receive raw materials, manufacture and package finished products and to move those finished products to market.

The Secretary ultimately approved the *South Boston MHP* in December 2000, but only on the condition that the Fort Point District South and the Fort Point Industrial District be further master planned by the BRA to include detailed measures to protect industrial truck routes, and the definition of buffer zones to prevent conflicts among land uses. The master plan should also fully incorporate the needs of The Gillette Company, one of the largest water-dependent users in South Boston. This commitment by the BRA initiated the planning process of the *100 Acres Master Plan*, and the corresponding basis for an *MHP Amendment*.

#### The Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan (2002)

During the development of the *South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan* a group of interested individuals began to focus on the Fort Point Channel, ultimately recommending that a more detailed planning effort be undertaken for this important city resource. Out of these discussions came the proposal to develop the *Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan (Watersheet Activation Plan)*. This planning effort represents the cooperative and collaborative efforts of the BRA, Fort Point Channel Abutters Group, and the Fort Point Channel Working Group.

The *Watersheet Activation Plan* contemplates a number of public amenities designed to activate the Fort Point Channel. The construction of public access along the channel's edges, now largely in place due to the public-private partnerships between the Central Artery Project and various landowners such as The Gillette Company, is an example of such amenities. The Gillette Company has made nearly 2,200 linear feet of upland available for permanent and interim Harborwalk construction, along with associated open space, and the company has also agreed to absorb the significant annual cost of maintaining the Harborwalk in accordance with a detailed maintenance plan.

The plan further contemplates certain public uses in the so-called “Seawall Basin” south of Summer Street, including rowing, canoeing, racing, water taxiing, youth programs, water festivals, lantern festivals, paddle boats, kayaks, floating islands, floating art, floating horticultural displays, an art barge, model boat racing, light festivals and displays, a floating park, fountains, pedestrian bridge, small boat program, an interpretive water trail and tidal art.

These public uses will benefit from a number of improvements such as lighting of existing bridges, a floating pavilion, a public boating facility, a landside support facility, an art barge, and fountains, as well as a pedestrian bridge designed to link the 100 Acres area more closely to the existing and future transit facilities (subways, trains, buses) in the vicinity of South Station.

Some initial public amenities that have been completed include the Harborwalk and Binford Street Park, and several benefits secured through the amnesty Chapter 91 Licenses for the Gillette (i.e., a proposed floating dock) and the former Boston Wharf companies.

#### The 100 Acres Master Plan (2006)

In September, 2006, the BRA published the 100 Acres Master Plan, which provides the framework for transforming 35 acres of surface parking lots around the Proctor & Gamble/Gillette (“P&G/Gillette”) plant, the USPS facility, and Fort Point historic structures to a vibrant 24-hour, mixed-use neighborhood anchored by over 11 acres of new public open space and almost 5.9 million square feet of development. The Master Plan is the culmination of over five years of collaboration between residents, property owners, City and State agencies, and other interested parties.

Key elements of the plan include:

- Defining a land use plan for the district;
- Recommending appropriate building heights and density;
- Preserving industrial uses while encouraging an increased mix of uses, and providing buffers around industrial uses to prevent conflicts with nearby commercial and residential uses;
- Ensuring that at least one-third of development is housing, including an expansion of artist housing, and aggregating residential elements around open spaces;
- Extending Harborwalk along the entire length of Fort Point Channel;
- Providing an open space connection from the South Boston Bypass Road/Haul Road to the Fort Point Channel;
- Identifying the P&G/Gillette Plant as a critical water-dependent use on the Fort Point Channel; and
- Establishing limits on the future build-out of the 100 Acres area, and implementing phasing of this development based on available and projected transit infrastructure capacity.

The Plan provides the framework for growth in the 100 Acres for the next 20 years. When complete, the area will contribute significantly to Boston's urban fabric, housing stock, and overall economy.

This plan also incorporates a range of significant infrastructure improvements, which include:

- Improved connections between the highway systems to the local street network;
- Providing improvements to A Street;
- Providing direct truck access from A Street to the South Boston Bypass Road/Haul Road;
- Establishing individual development parcels and the local street network; and
- Identifying the private land parcels needed to upgrade the transportation infrastructure.

A key component of the Master Plan is an agreement between the major private land owners and the City on its implementation. All of the above infrastructure and public realm improvements will be phased and executed as part of the planned new private development. It is estimated that the value of the private land being contributed to new roadways and parks is \$191 million dollars, and the cost of this construction is approximately \$100 million dollars.

## **6.2 Current Planning Issues**

### Crossroads Initiative

The Crossroads Initiative, launched in 2004, aims to reconnect neighborhoods to the Harbor and to each other with the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway as the centerpiece. Twelve streets were identified as, "Great Streets," or vital connections between the residential and business districts that were once separated by the Central Artery. These streets will receive design attention to improve them as pedestrian environments, enhance elements for wayfinding, increase activity along sidewalks, improve traffic flow, and create new opportunities for art and performance. The implementation of the initiative is estimated to take place over a period of 7-10 years. Congress and Summer Streets are among the twelve streets slated for improvements as part of this initiative, and planning is currently under way. Widening of sidewalks, planting of street trees, and lighting are among the improvements which will impact the District.

## **6.3 Future Planning Issues**

The area of the FPCLD north of Summer Street is currently included in the Fort Point Waterfront Subdistrict within the South Boston Waterfront Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD). The IPOD is a temporary planning designation which will be supplanted by permanent zoning following additional planning efforts. After the work of the Fort Point Channel Study Committee is completed, this area

will receive the planning attention that the area south of Summer Street received which resulted in the 100 Acres Master Plan.

#### **6.4 Current Zoning Summary**

The FPCLD is currently subject to several zoning regulations:

The area of the FPCLD which lies north of Summer Street is subject to Article 27P, the South Boston Waterfront Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD). The District lies within the Fort Point Waterfront Subdistrict of the IPOD. The IPOD is a temporary planning designation which will be supplanted by permanent zoning following additional planning efforts. The Article states, “Planning and rezoning shall promote the preservation of the scale and character of this subdistrict.” The interim height permitted in the area of the FPCLD north of Summer Street is 75 feet with a Floor Area Ration (FAR) of 5. Permission to exceed this height and FAR may be granted by the Board of Appeal only if (1) the proposed height and FAR are in substantial accord with the height and FAR of the existing building and (2) the BRA finds, through Large Project Review, that the additional height and FAR will result in a design that is architecturally compatible with the existing building and surrounding subdistrict, and that the Proposed Project is consistent with the Planning goals of the Article. The height of a Proposed Project shall not exceed the height of the existing building by more than one story, which shall not exceed 18 feet in height.

The majority of the area of the FPCLD which lies south of Summer Street, within the 100 Acres, is subject to the regulations of two Planned Development Areas (PDAs): PDA 53 and PDA 69 (some individual properties within this area are not included in the PDAs.) PDA 53 governs the area of the District south of Binford Street along A and Channel Center streets. Within the FPCLD, the plan calls for rehabilitation of at least 13 buildings, permits demolition of 3 buildings (formerly 16-22 Midway St, 46-48 Midway Street, and 50-52 Midway Street), and allows for construction of two infill buildings. For existing buildings, heights are limited to 80 feet, with no allowance for additional floors, not including mechanical equipment. Allowable FARs for these buildings range from 1.93-4.97. The two sites identified for infill construction on the sites of the demolished buildings are limited to 125 feet in height and FAR of 6.68 and 7.76.

In January 2007, the Zoning Commission approved the BRA’s Master Plan for Planned Development Area (“PDA”) 69, South Boston/100 Acres, which codifies the framework provided in the Fort Point District/100 Acres Master Plan, the culmination of over five years of collaboration between residents, property owners, City and State agencies, and other interested parties, for transforming the surface parking lots around and among the Proctor&Gamble/Gillette plant, the USPS facility, and Fort Point historic warehouse structures to a vibrant 24-hour, mixed-use neighborhood. The PDA Master Plan also codifies the relationship between development rights and consequent public obligations associated with

privately-owned development parcels within the 100 Acres PDA Master Plan Area (as defined below).

The PDA Master Plan sets forth the development concept for the area, including the planning objectives and character of the development, the proposed uses of the area, and the range of dimensional requirements contemplated for each of the proposed uses.

Key elements of this PDA Master Plan include:

- Defining the street layout, open space system, and overall land-use plan for the district;
- Recommending appropriate building heights and density;
- Ensuring that at least one-third of new development consists of housing, including an expansion of artist housing;
- Providing an open space connection from the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center to the Fort Point Channel, and creating a variety of other neighborhood parks, plazas and recreational fields;
- Providing buffers around industrial uses to prevent conflicts with nearby commercial and residential uses;
- Establishing limits on the future build-out of the 100 Acres area, and implementing phasing of this development based on available and projected transit infrastructure capacity.

The Fort Point District/100 Acres Master Plan anticipates that the 100 Acres PDA Master Plan Area may ultimately accommodate up to 5.9 million square feet of gross floor area of new development. This PDA Master Plan authorizes the initial build out of approximately two-thirds of that amount, or approximately 4.1 million square feet of gross floor area. The residual 1.8 million square feet of potential development may take place if to the extent it is demonstrated that:

- (a) Actual density achieved as construction proceeds on the surrounding land within the South Boston Seaport District is less than the density assumed in the transportation analysis underlying the Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan,
- (b) Significant improvements capable of supporting additional development are made to the transportation infrastructure within the 100 Acres, the South Boston Seaport District, or both, or
- (c) Analysis conducted subsequent to the enactment of this PDA Master Plan establishes that the existing transportation infrastructure serving these areas can support buildout in addition to the initial 1.4 million square feet of gross floor area authorized by this PDA Master Plan.

In order to ensure an appropriate balance of uses, a minimum of one-third of the gross floor area of the new buildout must be devoted to residential and artist live/work uses. Other uses, which cannot constitute more than two-thirds of the buildout, may be a combination of industrial, manufacturing, research and development, office, commercial, retail, open space and recreational, tourism-

related, and art and cultural uses, as well as supporting uses such as accessory and non-accessory parking.

The PDA Master Plan requires approximately 6.9 acres of new and expanded open spaces and recreational fields as well as approximately 9.8 acres of new streets and sidewalks. Area transportation upgrades will involve the reconfiguration and extension of existing public rights-of-way and the creation of new rights-of-way within the area, to be constructed primarily on land owned by the Proponents.

The PDA Master Plan calls for building heights ranging from 100 feet to 180 feet and identifies three “Special Sites,” where Proposed Projects are eligible for additional building height beyond 180 feet if such proposals provide exceptional public benefits in addition to those required by this BDA Master Plan. These benefits at a minimum must include significant contributions toward one or more of the following objectives:

- Increasing the city’s housing supply;
- Expanding the city’s economic base;
- Enhancing the environment;
- Strengthening transportation infrastructure; or
- Otherwise substantially exceeding project mitigation requirements.

The buildup of the PDA Master Plan Area is expected to occur in multiple phases over approximately twenty years. Portions of the area will not become available for new development until existing activities on those areas are relocated. Market factors will also impact the rate of development, and a proponent’s ability to construct a given Proposed Project within the PDA Master Plan Area will depend upon multiple factors, including the Proposed Project’s financial feasibility. Individual agreements between property owners referencing their contributions to the public realm and other city expectations are further clarified in a series of Memoranda of Agreement, which are public documents and should be referenced.

## **7.0 Alternative Designation Approaches**

The Fort Point Channel Study Area has been proposed for Boston Landmarks Commission designation as a Landmark District (see Section 3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation). This designation would provide for the review of most exterior alterations or repairs as well as demolition, new construction, and changes to open space. Adjacent areas to the north and east of the District have been proposed for Boston Landmarks Commission Designation as Protection Areas (see Section 3.5 Relationship to Criteria for Protection Area Designation). This designation would provide for the review of demolition, land coverage, height of structures, landscape, and topography.

Alternative designation categories under BLC legislation are Architectural Conservation District and Protection Area. The former may provide less stringent guidelines for districts of local significance. A Protection Area provides only limited design review, and is designed to protect areas that are adjacent to and constitute an essential part of the physical environment of Landmarks, Landmark Districts, and/or Architectural Conservation Districts.

The Fort Point Channel Study Area is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Listing on the National Register provides an honorary designation and limited protection from federal, federally-funded or federally-assisted activities. It creates incentives for preservation, notably the federal investment tax credits and grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. National Register listing does not provide any design review for changes undertaken by private owners at their own expense.

The Commission has the option of changing the boundaries for designation.

The Commission has the option of not designating.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

The Fort Point Channel Study Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. That the FPCLD be designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission as a Landmark District and the area to the north identified as the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area and the area to the east identified as the A Street Protection Area be designated as Protection Areas under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended (see Sections 3.4 and 3.5 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark and Protection Area designation);
2. That the boundaries of the District and Protection Areas illustrated in Section 1 be adopted without modification;
3. That the attached Standards and Criteria recommended by the Study Committee for the District and Protection Areas be accepted;
4. That the Boston Landmarks Commission establish a Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission in accordance with Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, which stipulates that there be five District Commission members: two members and two alternates from the District and three members from the Boston Landmarks Commission. In accordance with Chapter 772, the Mayor shall appoint all members and alternates from the nominees submitted to him. Such appointments must be confirmed by the City Council. The Study Committee further recommends the following provisions for the selection of members and alternates from the District:
  - a. At least one member and two alternates shall have established primary residency in the District of no less than two years.
  - b. The other member shall be a commercial property owner in the District for no less than two years, or an owner of a business in the District for no less than two years, or designated owner's representative of said business. They are not required to be a resident of the District.
  - c. All members and alternates from the District shall serve staggered three-year terms, as provided below:
    - i. For the initial appointment of members and alternates from the District, the Fort Point Channel Study Committee shall, by majority vote, nominate one member and one alternate

to serve a term of two years, and shall nominate one member and one alternate to serve a term of 3 years.

- ii. Nominations for subsequent members and alternates from the District shall be solicited by the Boston Landmarks Commission from the resident, business, civic, neighborhood, block or tenants organizations that have been established within the neighborhood. In addition, self-nominations for the roles of member and alternate will be allowed, per the same qualifying criteria described in (a) and (b) above. In the event that such nominations are not forthcoming within sixty days of written solicitation by the Boston Landmarks Commission, the Boston Landmarks Commission shall make the nominations.
- iii. The same procedures as described above shall be followed for the replacement of a member or alternate who is unable to complete his/her term or who no longer meets the definition of member or alternate as described in (a), (b), and (c).
- iv. Prior to the appointment of members and alternates to the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission, the Boston Landmarks Commission may assume the powers and responsibilities of the District Commission.

As part of the by-laws and Regulations to be adopted by the District Commission, a policy be developed to recognize cases of economic hardship and allow either for the waiver of the standards and criteria or the obtaining of appropriate financial or other assistance to relieve such hardship.

## **9.0 General Standards and Criteria (Design Guidelines)**

### **9.1 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 Landmark District Designation which shall be applied by the Commission and its staff in evaluating proposed changes to the Landmark District. The Standards and Criteria established thus note those features which must be conserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Landmark District Designation. Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the proposed changes must be reviewed by the Commission or Commission staff with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute and their compliance with the Standards and Criteria. Applications for Design Approval and Exemption are available at [http://www.cityofboston.gov/environment/pdfs/appropriateness\\_cert.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/environment/pdfs/appropriateness_cert.pdf) and in the offices of the City of Boston Environment Department, Room 805, Boston City Hall. Hearings are held once a month and complete applications must be received two weeks prior to the scheduled hearing date in order to be placed on the agenda. Early consultation with Commission staff often results in a speedier review process. A Certificate of Design Approval shall be considered valid for two years following issuance of the notice of decision.

The intent of the Standards and Criteria 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. In general, the Standards and Criteria recommend preserving existing features that contribute to the character of the Landmark District; in some cases they have been structured to encourage the removal of additions that do not contribute to the character of the Landmark District.

In these guidelines the verb **Should** indicates a preferred course of action that will guide the decision of the Commission; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements and features. The verb **Shall** is used in reference to the applicant; the verb **Will** is used in reference to the Commission.

It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are the Standards and Criteria absolute. The Commission has the authority to allow variation from any of the Standards and Criteria on a case-by-case basis. However, any request to vary from the Standards and Criteria must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variation. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute. Any variation from the Standards and Criteria shall not be considered a precedent.

As intended by the statute, a wide variety of buildings and features are included within the Landmark District, and an equally wide range exists in the latitude allowed for change. In some cases only minor modifications to properties in the District is recommended, while in other cases the Commission may encourage changes and additions with a contemporary approach, consistent with the properties' existing features and changed uses.

It is recognized that changes to the Landmark District may be required for a wide variety of reasons, not all of which are under the complete control of the Commission or the owners. Primary examples are conformance with the Building and Zoning codes, as well as safety requirements. Adherence to the City of Boston and Massachusetts codes is required in addition to adherence to the Standards and Criteria of the Landmark District.

The response to these requirements may, in some cases, present conflicts with the Standards and Criteria for the Landmark District. The Commission's evaluation of an application will be based upon the degree to which such changes are in harmony with the character of the Landmark District. The statement of intent at the beginning of each section of the Standards and Criteria should serve as an aid in identifying character-defining design features and the most sympathetic approach to proposed alterations. The treatments outlined below are listed in hierarchical order from least amount of intervention to the greatest amount of intervention. The owner, manager or developer should follow them in order to ensure a successful project that is sensitive to the Landmark District.

- ◆ **Identify, Retain, and Preserve** the form and detailing of the materials and features that define the historic character of the structure or site. These are basic treatments that should prevent actions that may cause the diminution or loss of the structure's or site's historic character. It is important to remember that loss of character can be caused by the cumulative effect of insensitive actions whether large or small.
- ◆ **Protect and Maintain** the materials and features that have been identified as important and must be retained during the rehabilitation work. Protection usually involves the least amount of intervention and is done before other work.
- ◆ **Repair** the character defining features and materials when it is necessary. Repairing begins with the least amount of intervention as possible. Patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing according to recognized preservation methods are the techniques that should be followed. Repairing may also include limited replacement in kind of extremely deteriorated or missing parts of features. Replacements should be based on surviving prototypes.
- ◆ **Replacement** of entire character defining features or materials follows repair when the deterioration prevents repair. The essential form and detailing should still be evident so that the physical evidence can be used to re-establish

the feature. The preferred option is replacement of the entire feature in kind using the same material. Because this approach may not always be technically or economically feasible the commission will consider the use of compatible substitute material. The commission does not recommend removal and replacement of a feature that could be repaired.

- ◆ **Missing Historic Features** should be replaced with new features that are based on adequate historical, pictorial and physical documentation. The commission may consider a replacement feature that is compatible with the remaining character defining features. The new design should match the scale, size, and material of the historic feature. See Appendix A for guidance in researching historic conditions of the Landmark District.
- ◆ **Alterations or Additions** that may be needed to assure the continued use of the historic structure or site should not radically change, obscure or destroy character defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. The commission encourages new uses that are compatible with the historic structure or site and that do not require major alterations or additions.

The Standards and Criteria have been divided into four levels:

- ◆ **Section 9.0** – General Standards and Criteria are common to all Landmark District designations
- ◆ **Section 10.0** – Specific Standards and Criteria are specific to the Fort Point Channel Landmark District and apply to each particular property within the boundaries of the Landmark District. In every case the Specific Standards and Criteria shall take precedence over Section 9.3 of the General Standards and Criteria if there is a conflict.
- ◆ **Section 11.0**, Standards and Criteria for the Seaport Blvd/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area are specific to properties which fall within the boundaries of the Protection Area. Neither the General Standards and Criteria nor the Specific Standards and Criteria for the Fort Point Channel Landmark District apply.
- ◆ **Section 12.0**, Standards and Criteria for the A Street Protection Area are specific to properties which fall within the boundaries of the Protection Area. Neither the General Standards and Criteria nor the Specific Standards and Criteria for the Fort Point Channel Landmark District apply.

## **9.2 Levels of Review**

The Commission has no desire to interfere with normal maintenance procedures. In order to provide some guidance for the property owner, manager or developer and the Commission, the activities which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized into:

**A. Activities which are not subject to review by the Commission and do not require an application:**

1. Activities associated with routine maintenance or which do not result in any permanent alterations or attached fixtures, including such items as: in-kind replacement of broken glass, window washing, pruning of vegetation, and holiday decorations.
2. Alterations which are not visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

**B. Activities which may be determined by Commission staff to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption, after submittal of an application:**

1. Maintenance, repair, and in-kind replacement involving no change in design, material, color and outward appearance, including such items as cleaning of masonry.
2. Work which is required to remove or rectify a condition dangerous to the public safety.

**C. Activities requiring Commission review and a Certificate of Design Approval:**

Any reconstruction, restoration, replacement, alteration or demolition (This includes but is not limited to surface treatments, fixtures and ornaments) such as: New construction of any type; removal of existing features or elements; any alteration involving change in design, material color, location or outward appearance; planting or removal of trees or shrubs, changes in landforms.

**D. Activities not explicitly listed above:**

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

**E. Concurrent Jurisdiction**

In some cases, issues which fall under the jurisdiction of the Landmark District Commission may also fall under the jurisdiction of other city, state

and federal boards and commissions such as the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Massachusetts Historical Commission and others. All efforts will be made to expedite the review process. Whenever possible and appropriate, joint meetings will be arranged.

### **9.3 General Standards and Criteria Common to all Landmark Districts**

1. The design approach to the property should begin with the premise that the features of historical and architectural significance described within the Study Report shall be preserved. In general, this will minimize alterations that will be allowed.
2. Changes and additions to the property and its environment which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated materials and/or features, whenever possible, should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.
4. When replacement of features that define the historic character of the property is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of original or later contributing features.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.
6. New additions or alterations should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property and its environment.
7. New additions or related new construction should be differentiated from the existing thus, they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.
8. New additions or alterations should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.
9. Surface cleaning shall use **the mildest method possible. Sandblasting, wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted.**
10. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for the property, the Commission recommends that the proponents prepare an historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process.

11. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved.

The General Standards and Criteria has been financed in part with funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of State Michael Joseph Connolly, Chairman.

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## **10.0 Specific Standards and Criteria for the Fort Point Channel Landmark District (Design Guidelines)**

### **10.1 Introduction**

1. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District (FPCLD) is Boston's largest, most cohesive, and most significant collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century loft buildings. The purpose of the Landmark District designation is to enrich and enhance the unique industrial heritage of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District as expressed by the features that are described in Section 4.0 of the Study Report. These features include but are not limited to urban design features, architectural form, architectural details, structures, street pattern and streetscapes. In order to achieve this, the following specific standards and criteria have been adopted for the FPCLD to:
  - a. Preserve buildings and groups of buildings that create a strong sense of character and architectural cohesiveness in the district;
  - b. Support the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic buildings;
  - c. Protect and enhance the unique character of public view corridors, parks, open space and streetscapes;
  - d. Encourage new construction and in-fill development that respects the scale, character and architectural and visual integrity of existing and potentially historic buildings; and
  - e. Allow for contemporary interpretations of the urban industrial heritage of the District.
2. In these Standards and Criteria, the verb **Should** indicates a preferred course of action that will guide the decision of the Commission; the verb **Shall** indicates those actions which are specifically required to preserve and protect significant architectural elements and features. The verb **Shall** is used in reference to the applicant; the verb **Will** is used in reference to the Commission.
3. Conformance to these Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are these standards absolute. The Commission has the authority to allow variation from any of the Standards and Criteria on a case-by-case basis. However, any request to vary from the Standards and Criteria must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variation. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing(s), in accordance with Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. Any variation from the Standards and Criteria shall not be considered a precedent.
4. These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior building alterations and alterations to the public realm within the Landmark District that are visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

5. These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior alterations to the Landmark District, whether permanent or temporary. In the case of proposed temporary additions, the proposed duration of the addition must be clearly described in an application. The Commission may require a shorter duration of a temporary addition than requested. A Certificate of Design Approval will be strictly limited to the approved duration. An extension of the approved duration will require a new application. Any temporary addition that is not removed on or before the approved date of its limited duration, or is not the subject of an application for an extension, will be cited as a violation.
6. These Standards and Criteria acknowledge that there may be changes to the buildings and landscape of the Landmark District and are intended to ensure the changes will be compatible with the historic character of the District.
7. When changes to buildings with multiple owners, such as a condominium building, are proposed, the entire building will be considered and treated uniformly. Work on any building may, however, proceed in stages.
8. In the case of any activity not explicitly covered in these Standards and Criteria, Commission 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.
9. Applicants filing for a Certificate of Exemption based on financial hardship will be required to produce evidence of substantial financial hardship as cited in Section 4.9 of the Regulations of the Boston Landmarks Commission as adopted on November 30, 1976, Amended July 20, 1977, April 8, 1980, and May 27, 1986. Copies of the Regulations are available at the offices of the Boston Landmarks Commission and online at: <http://www.cityofboston.gov/environment/downloads.asp>. The Commission will review the evidence and make a finding as to whether substantial hardship would result from failure to issue a Certificate of Exemption.
10. The Commission will apply the statement from the enabling legislation, Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, Section 4. Designation by Commission, as follows: “All recommendations [for Standards and Criteria to be adopted by the commission in carrying out its regulatory functions] shall be made in consideration of any master plan, zoning requirements, projected public improvements and existing and proposed renewal and development plans applicable to the section of the city [Fort Point Channel Landmark District and Protection Areas] to be affected by the designation....” (Also see Study Report, Section 6, Planning Context).
11. Items subject to Commission review include but are not limited to those outlined in the following Standards and Criteria.

## **10.2 Standards and Criteria for Existing Structures in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

### **A. General Statement of Intent**

1. Existing structures that contribute to the historic and/or architectural character of the District and their character defining architectural features shall be preserved and repaired, rather than replaced, except as otherwise permitted herein.

### **B. Exterior Walls, General (See also all following sections for Standards and Criteria pertaining to specific features of exterior walls)**

1. Existing character defining elements and features (decorative and functional) of exterior walls including masonry, wood, architectural metals, cornices, parapets, shutter hardware, tie rod plates, loading hoists, Boston Wharf plaques, and other industrial features should be retained and repaired using recognized preservation methods, rather than replaced or obscured.
2. When character defining elements and features (decorative and functional) of exterior walls cannot be repaired, they should be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
3. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
4. New openings will be discouraged but may be approved on a case by case basis.
5. Existing original openings should not be filled or changed in size.
6. Re-opening original openings which have been filled is encouraged.
7. New balconies will be discouraged but may be approved on a case by case basis.
8. If the masonry is to be cleaned, or if graffiti removal is required, the mildest method possible shall be used, and a test patch of the cleaning method shall be reviewed and approved. Sandblasting, wire brushing or other similar abrasive cleaning methods will not be permitted.

9. In general, coating or painting masonry is not an appropriate repair method, but may be approved on a case by case basis.
10. Historic painted advertisements on masonry walls should be preserved.
11. Original mortar should be retained. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand-raking the joints. Use of mechanical saws may be allowed.
12. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile, and method of application, unless the original mortar strength is deemed inappropriate.
13. Sample areas of new mortar shall be reviewed and approved for appropriate color, texture, and profile.
14. Cleaning of wooden or metal elements shall use the mildest method possible, and a test patch of the cleaning method shall be reviewed and approved.
15. Paint removal from wooden elements should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings.
16. Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods will not be permitted on wood surfaces.
17. Repainting of wood should be based on paint seriation studies. If seriation results are inconclusive, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and the period of the building.
18. Miscellaneous equipment such as security cameras, door buzzers and the like that requires attachment to exterior walls shall be fastened so as to avoid damage to historic fabric. When such equipment is removed, patching with appropriate material will be required.
19. Exterior conduits and cables are discouraged. Where their installation is unavoidable, they should be located so as minimize their visibility.

**C. Windows (See also Sections E and F for Standards and Criteria pertaining to Storefronts and Ironwork, specifically the installation and treatment of window grilles)**

1. The original window design, elements and features (functional and decorative) and the arrangement of window openings should be preserved and repaired using recognized preservation methods, rather than replaced. Windows, window fittings, sash, operation, and shutters are important elements of building design that reflect the period of development and the original purpose of the District. Representative window sash in the District includes wood with single glazing, hollow metal with single wire-glass glazing, and steel with wire-glass. Popular muntin/sash configurations are 1/1, 2/2, 4/4, and 6/6. Only a few examples of fire-resistant metal shutters survive on buildings in the District.
2. Deteriorated or missing window elements and features (functional and decorative), should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
3. Retrofitting existing frames and sash to allow for the insertion of an additional pane of glass may be allowed if the alteration does not visually detract from historic fabric of the original window.
4. Before the Commission will consider window replacement, an adequate survey of existing window conditions shall be submitted for review.
5. If it is demonstrated that original windows cannot be repaired, they should be replaced with windows that match the original in material, detail, profile, and dimension. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible the Commission may consider installation of aluminum or aluminum-clad wood replacement window units. The Commission may require the retention of some original windows, preferably in situ, to provide documentation of original conditions. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or air conditioners will not be allowed.
6. The number and arrangement of window panes shall not be changed from the original.
7. True divided light window sash with muntins that match the dimension and profile of the original muntins is preferred. Applied muntins may be allowed if the applied muntins match the original muntin dimension and profile, are identical on the interior and exterior of the window, and have a dark spacer bar between the glass.

8. Glass shall not be tinted or reflective-coated.
9. Several properties in the District have already lost their original windows. Replacement windows for these properties should be based on documentary evidence of the original windows. If such evidence is unavailable, the replacement window design should be based on documentation of original windows on a similar property in the District.
10. Exterior combination storm windows and/or screens may be allowed provided the installation has a minimal visual impact. Interior storm windows are encouraged as a means of retaining historic fabric.
11. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.

**D. Entrances/Doors/Loading Docks/Hoistways (See also sections E and K for Standards and Criteria pertaining to Storefronts and Accessibility).**

1. All contributing entrance, door, loading dock and hoistway elements, materials, and features (functional and decorative), should be preserved and repaired using recognized preservation methods, rather than replaced. Entrance doorways in the District primarily feature segmental arches, Roman arches, or are rectangular openings. Deep doorway reveals are typical. Heavy, single or double-leaf paneled wood doors with glazed upper panels were characteristic of both main and secondary entrances. Where they survive, original doors and door fittings are significant architectural features that lend distinctive historical character to the area. Existing hoistways with their doors are relatively rare survivors though they were once a common feature of buildings in the District.
2. The original entrance design and arrangement of openings should be retained. Where alterations are required, they will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
3. When contributing entrance and door elements, materials, and features (functional and decorative) cannot be repaired, they should be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
4. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
5. Contributing entrance materials, elements, and features (functional and decorative) shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.

**E. Storefronts (See also sections D and K for Standards and Criteria pertaining to Entrances and Accessibility).**

1. Raised first floors are a historic feature of some buildings in the District. Any proposed façade changes intended to accommodate the needs of commercial use will be considered on a case by case basis. The essential character of the building as originally designed shall be preserved. Doorways and major architectural features should be retained.
2. Façade changes for retail use will only be allowed at or below the first full floor level that is above grade.
3. The maximum amount of original material possible shall be retained in new façade design. Salvage and/or storage on site of original material that can not be reused is encouraged.
4. New materials shall be compatible with those of the existing building.
5. Proposed façade changes shall be designed to be compatible with the design of the existing building.
6. Roll-down metal security grates shall not be allowed on the exterior of a storefront. All security devices should be located on the interior.

**F. Ironwork (See also section E for standards and criteria pertaining to storefronts)**

1. All contributing ironwork should be retained and repaired using recognized preservation methods, rather than removed and/or replaced. Cast iron elements including fire escapes, posts, lintels, fittings, pintels (fire-resistant metal shutter hardware), tie rod plates (stars), Boston Wharf plaques, and panels are prevalent in the District.
2. When contributing ironwork cannot be repaired, it should be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
3. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
4. Contributing ironwork shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
5. The installation of window grilles may be allowed on a case by case basis.

Window grilles should be mounted within the window reveal and secured into the mortar joints rather than into the masonry or onto the face of the building.

6. New ironwork elements should be of a design and color that is compatible with the design of the building.

**G. Roof Shape and Roof Projections (See also Standards and Criteria pertaining to Rooftop Additions and Utilities in sections B and G of the guidelines for New Construction including Additions to Existing Buildings)**

1. The sense of the original roof shape and its character defining features should be preserved. In general, buildings in the District are characterized by flat roof shapes with projecting cornices, though a few low-pitched gable roofs exist.
2. Contributing rooftop elements and features such as head houses, chimneys, signs, and skylights that are visible from existing or proposed streets and ways that are open to public travel should be preserved.
3. Roofing materials shall be compatible with the character of the District when visible from existing or proposed streets and ways that are open to public travel.
4. External gutters and downspouts are discouraged unless they are based on physical or documentary evidence of prior existence on the building.
5. Flashing, gutters, and downspouts should be compatible with the existing building in design and materials.

**H. Exterior Lighting**

1. Contributing light fixtures should be retained and repaired using recognized preservation methods.
2. When contributing light fixtures cannot be repaired, they should be replaced with fixtures which match the original in material, color, configuration, size, shape, profile, detail of installation, and quality of light. If using replicated light fixtures is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute lighting fixtures may be considered.
3. Contributing light fixtures shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
4. New illumination may be added in appropriate locations.

5. New lighting will be reviewed on a case by case basis for all aspects of the lighting design including fixtures, installation methods, and the quality of light. Mock-ups of new lighting may be required on a case-by-case basis.
6. Mock-ups of proposed accent lighting will be required.
7. The design and materials of new lighting shall be compatible with the character of the District.
8. Light fixtures shall be attached so as to avoid damage to historic fabric.
9. Exterior conduits and cables are discouraged. Where their installation is unavoidable, they should be located so as minimize their visibility.

**I. Overhead Walkways/Bridges**

1. Contributing overhead walkways and bridges are a character defining feature of the district. All overhead walkways and bridges shall be preserved and repaired to the greatest extent possible using recognized preservation methods, rather than replaced.
2. When contributing elements or features (functional and decorative) of overhead walkways or bridges cannot be preserved, repaired, or are missing they should be replaced with elements or features which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile and detail of installation.
3. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.

**J. Smokestack (See also section B for Standards and Criteria for Exterior Walls pertaining to appropriate treatment of masonry.)**

1. The smokestack on Wormwood Street is a character defining feature of the District. Minimization of antennas and other communication devices is encouraged. New antennas and communication devices shall be located and designed so as to be as minimally visually intrusive as possible, and may be approved on a case-by-case basis.
2. Obsolete antennas and communication devices and their fastenings shall be removed and any holes or damage shall be repaired according to the standards and criteria for treatment of masonry (See Section B).
3. Signage, banners, and advertising shall not be allowed.

**K. Accessibility**

1. Alterations to existing buildings for the purposes of providing accessibility shall provide persons with disabilities the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under applicable law, consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical features, with the goal of providing the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Access modifications for persons with disabilities shall be designed and installed to least affect the character defining features of the property. Modifications to some features may be allowed in providing access, once a review of options for the highest level of access has been completed.
2. It is recommended that applicants consult with staff of the Commission as early in the process as possible when proposing alterations for the purposes of accessibility.
3. Where feasible and appropriate, metal ramps or other reversible solutions to providing accessibility are encouraged.

## **10.3 Standards and Criteria for Demolition in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

### **A. General Statement of Intent**

1. The intent of these standards is to prevent the demolition of buildings and structures or portions of buildings and structures that contribute to the historic and/or architectural character of the District.

### **B. Demolition of Exterior Features, in Full or in Part**

1. Demolition of buildings or structures and portions of buildings or structures is prohibited except in the unusual circumstance when the building, structure, or portion of the building or structure is found by the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission to be incompatible with the character of the District.
2. The demolition of buildings at 46-48 Channel Center Street (formerly Midway Street), and 50-52 Channel Center Street was approved by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 2001 as part of review pursuant to Article 85, Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, as amended, and will be allowed.
3. The Fort Point Channel Landmark district Commission will consider the partial demolition of the building located at 241 "A" Street according to the provisions outlined in Planned Development Area (PDA) No. 53 (see Study Report Section 6, Planning Context). Specifically, demolition of the north and south exterior walls of 241 "A" Street to allow construction of an underground parking garage on the site will be considered appropriate within the context of PDA No. 53.

### **C. Removal of Later Additions**

1. Removal of additions may be considered if the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission finds that the addition does not contribute to the historic and/or architectural character of the District.
2. The following factors will be considered by the Commission in determining whether later additions can, or should be removed:
  - a. Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials, and character
  - b. Historic association with the property
  - c. Design and execution of the addition

#### **D. Demolition by Neglect**

1. Property owners shall take necessary precautions to prevent demolition of buildings and structures in the District by neglect of maintenance and repairs. Demolition of Landmarked 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.

## **10.4 Standards and Criteria for New Construction including Additions to Existing Buildings in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

### **A. General Statement of Intent**

1. These guidelines shall apply only to facades that are open to view from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel. Views shall be considered from the pedestrian level of the proposed new construction.
2. The intent of this section is to guide the form and design of all new construction, including infill and additions to existing buildings, to ensure that new construction is compatible with the historic physical character of the District, allowing for contemporary expression.
3. In general, new construction should reflect the period in which it was built and should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style, period, or method of construction. However, new construction shall strive to relate to the urban context and the particular streetscape of which it is a part in building height, massing, setback, rhythm, scale, proportions, and materials.
4. New construction has the potential for reinforcing and enhancing the unique character of the District. Proposals for new construction will be reviewed for compatibility with the existing architecture including review of such critical factors as land coverage, building materials, building form, scale, height, proportion, method of connection to existing buildings, visual association and urban context.
5. New construction that is affixed to any portion of an existing building shall be designed so that the character defining features of the existing building are not substantially changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed so that if the new construction were to be removed in the future, the essential form, detail, and overall integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired.
6. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will consider design features associated with new construction that are guided by sustainable building design principles provided such features are compatible with the character of the District.

### **B. Rooftop Additions (Including New construction and Roofdecks) (See also Section G for Standards and Criteria pertaining to Utilities)**

1. Rooftop additions should be not visible or minimally visible from existing or proposed streets and ways open to public travel. “Minimally visible” is

defined as any rooftop addition which, when viewed from the areas of review described above, is visible by no more than 12 inches in height, or, due to its placement and size does not call attention to itself nor detract from any significant architectural features. All rooftop additions, including rooftop equipment and utilities, will be carefully reviewed on a case-by-case basis for their appropriateness of location and visibility (See also Section G for Standards and Criteria for Utilities). Additionally, the massing, materials, and details will be reviewed for their appropriateness and impact to the character-defining features of the District.

In any instance, a rooftop addition that is visible from existing or proposed streets and ways open to public travel at the pedestrian level of the building that is receiving the rooftop addition will be subject to the following guidelines:

- a. Rooftop additions shall be limited to two stories in height
- b. Rooftop additions to buildings on Congress, A, and Melcher streets shall not be visible from directly across the street on any adjacent existing or proposed street or way open to public travel, and may be minimally visible within 500 feet of the building receiving the rooftop addition.
- c. Rooftop additions to buildings on Summer Street shall not be visible from anywhere along Summer Street.
- d. Rooftop additions to buildings on all other existing or proposed streets and ways open to public travel shall not be visible from directly across the street on any adjacent existing or proposed street or way open to public travel, and may be minimally visible within 300 feet of the building receiving the rooftop addition.
- e. When the visibility of a rooftop addition is affected by a nearby vacant lot(s), the visual impact will be evaluated both under the existing conditions and also considering possible future construction on the vacant lot(s) in accordance with the guidelines for infill construction (see Section C).

### **C. Heights for Infill Construction and Non-Rooftop Additions**

1. The height of new construction shall be compatible with the height of the adjacent building(s) having common property lines. Height above the height of the adjacent building(s) may be allowable if a) additional stories are located so as to minimize visibility from existing or proposed streets and ways that are open to public travel, or b) if the design acknowledges the cornice height of the adjacent building, reinforces the existing street wall, and is compatible with its context.
2. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will consider heights identified for new construction through the planning process that resulted in Planned Development Areas (PDA) No. 53 and No. 69 within

the context of those PDAs until the PDA Plans terminate and expire (see Study Report Section 6, Planning Context). In addition, a height of 125 feet for a new building on the sites of 46-48 and 50-52 Channel Center Street will be presumed to be compatible with adjacent buildings within the context of PDA No. 53 and the Article 85 review of demolition of the existing buildings by the Boston Landmarks Commission in 2001. A height of 80 feet for a new building on the site of 9-10 Necco Court, identified as Parcel G1 in PDA 69, will be presumed to be compatible within the context of PDA 69.

#### **D. Height for Parcel A<sub>3</sub>**

1. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission considers 327 Summer Street, 337 Summer Street, and 319 Rear A Street to be significant to the District. These buildings are identified in Planned Development Area (PDA) No. 69 as parcel A<sub>3</sub>, which was identified in that document as a site with the potential to receive an addition or new construction that would result in buildings with heights up to 180 feet, and is also eligible to exceed that height (see Study Report Section 6, Planning Context). Within the context of the planning process that resulted in PDA No. 69, the Commission will consider the rooftop addition to 319 Rear A Street and/or new construction in place of 319 Rear A Street and/or Pastene Alley until the PDA Master Plan terminates and expires. The Commission will also consider rooftop additions identified for 327 and 337 Summer Street, subject to the criteria above for rooftop additions (10.4, Section B).

#### **E. Building Footprint Setback**

1. The maximum setback of the building footprint for a new building shall be the existing street wall, except as follows:
  - a. In the event that a new building has two such abutters with different setbacks, it shall have the same setback as one of them.
  - b. A corner building shall have the same setback as its abutters on the primary frontage(s).

#### **F. Lot Coverage**

1. A new building shall occupy the full width of its primary frontage at the existing street wall or setback line.

#### **G. Utilities**

1. The location of mechanical and/or electrical equipment, stair or elevator head houses, satellite dishes, antennas and other communication devices should be integrated into the design of the new construction so as

to minimize the visibility of the utilities. When located on the roof, such equipment should be set back as to minimize visibility from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

## **H.. Site Planning**

1. Vehicular curb cuts, garage bays, and service entrances shall be located on rear or alley elevations whenever possible, so as not to disrupt the street wall on primary elevations.

## **I. Building Materials**

1. Building materials, colors, and finishes of new construction shall be compatible with building materials, colors, and finishes in the District. Use of the following materials which are prevalent in the District is encouraged for all exterior surfaces of new construction within the scope of these regulations:
  - a. For walls--masonry construction similar in color and texture to the majority of adjacent buildings.
  - b. For cornices, when expressed--copper or sheet metal, brick, or, quarried or cast stone.
  - c. For windows and storm sash--wood or aluminum in appropriate colors and finishes.
  - d. For trim, when expressed--brick, granite, brownstone, limestone, cast stone, or metal with an appropriate finish and profile.

However, contemporary new materials, colors, and finishes may be appropriate alternatives and the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission may consider alternatives. Alternative new materials, colors and finishes shall be compatible with the physical qualities of the historic materials that give the District its unique character.

## **J.. Design Features**

1. New construction shall strive to reinforce the existing character of the street wall of which they are a part. The use of elements which give the existing buildings of the District their essential character is encouraged. Where used, they should approximate the proportions and materials of the existing buildings. These elements, which are prevalent in the District include, but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Flat roof shape, or appearance of flat roof shape
  - b. Projecting roof cornices
  - c. Box-like form
  - d. Tripartite façade arrangement (base, midsection, capital)

- e. Minimal ornamentation with ornament concentrated at entrances, windows, and rooflines
- f. General conformation of roof lines and cornices with neighboring buildings.
- g. Grouped window openings with the vertical dimension of individual windows exceeding the horizontal, with deep reveals, and with operable sash.
- h. Rectangular or arched entries with deep reveals and projecting door hoods and surrounds.

However, contemporary design features may be appropriate alternatives and the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission may consider alternative design features. Alternative new design features shall be compatible with the physical qualities of the historic materials that give the District its unique character.

- 2. Bridging over streets and alleys may be considered if consistent with historic bridging in the District.
- 3. Balconies and terraces are incompatible with the expression of facades in the District and will generally be discouraged, but may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

## **10.5 Standards and Criteria for Permanent and Temporary Signs, Banners, Marquees, Canopies and Awnings in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

### **A. General Statement of Intent**

1. Existing signs, banners, marquees, canopies and awnings that contribute to the historic and/or architectural character of the District should be preserved and repaired rather than replaced.
2. All signage will be subject to the Boston Zoning Code in addition to these guidelines.
3. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies, and awnings shall be compatible in size, design, material, location, and number with the character of the building or, when located in the public realm, compatible with the character of the District, allowing for contemporary expression.
4. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies, and awnings should not obscure architectural features of the subject or adjacent buildings.
5. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies and awnings shall be affixed to buildings so as to avoid damage to historic fabric.
6. Signs should be removed or resubmitted for approval when the operation or purpose of the advertised business or event changes, or when the date of an advertised event has passed.

### **B. Signs and Banners (See also Standards and Criteria pertaining to signage affixed to the Wormwood Street smokestack in Section J of the guidelines for Existing Buildings).**

1. The size, design, color, material, location, number, method of attachment, illumination and/or projection of all signs, including menu boxes and directories, and banners will be reviewed for appropriateness.
2. Lettering applied to window glass or signs hung directly behind window glass are subject to review.
3. Sign bands and transoms are appropriate locations for signs affixed to buildings. All signs and banners that are affixed to a building should be consistent in design.
4. Projecting (blade) signs may be allowed provided they relate to façade openings. Projecting signs should not obscure architectural features of the subject or adjacent buildings. Projecting signs should be suspended from metal brackets and not attached directly to the building.

5. Permanent free-standing signs are discouraged and will be approved only on a case-by-case basis. Temporary free-standing signs shall be displayed only during business hours.
6. Illumination should be limited to the sign. Exposed electrical conduits and junction boxes are discouraged. Where their installation is unavoidable, they should be located so as to minimize their visibility.
7. Signs and banners that are affixed to public utility poles should be limited to Congress, Summer, and A streets and shall utilize standard hardware approved by the Public Works department. Private banners displayed on public utility poles are discouraged.
8. Frequent changing of signs and banners in the public realm is encouraged.
9. Billboards will not be allowed.

#### **C. Marquees, Canopies and Awnings**

1. The placement and configuration of marquees, canopies and awnings shall relate to the façade openings and should not obscure architectural features of the subject or adjacent buildings.
2. The materials and colors of marquees and canopies shall relate to the industrial character of the District.
3. Individual awnings shall be mounted within the masonry window opening.
4. Open-sided, shed-roofed awnings are preferable to those with quarter-round or bull-nosed profiles.
5. Valances on canvas awnings should be flexible, i.e. their bottom edges should hang free rather than be attached to a horizontal framing member as rigid valances tend to impart a permanent architectural quality to a fabric-clad feature.

#### **D. Boston Wharf Co. Sign**

1. The illuminated Boston Wharf Co. Sign located on the roof of 10 Melcher Street is a character-defining feature of the District and shall be preserved, preferably in working order.

## **10.6 Standards and Criteria for Public Areas/Streetscape/Landscape Treatment in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

### **A. General Statement of Intent**

1. The intent of these guidelines is to preserve present contributing landscape and streetscape features, and to allow for the further enhancement of public space in the District which respects its historic industrial character.
2. Removal of non-historic, non-contributing landscape and streetscape features from the District is encouraged.

### **B. Streets, Alleys, Sidewalks, Curbs, and Paving**

1. These guidelines shall apply only to existing or proposed streets, ways, and alleys that are open to public travel.
2. Narrow streets, alleyways, sidewalks, and original paving materials are distinctive features of the District. Original layout of paved areas should be maintained. However, consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that the alterations will enhance the District without compromising its integrity.
3. Historic streetscape features, such as railroad tracks, granite curbs and pavers, stone slab sidewalks, and cobblestones, shall be retained wherever possible and incorporated into any streetscape improvement. Restoration of cobblestones is encouraged.
4. New streets, alleys, and sidewalks should be designed and constructed to reinforce the character of the District.
5. Changes in existing sidewalk paving shall be based on historic documentation. Where no historic documentation exists, new sidewalks shall be concrete with granite curbing. Other sidewalk materials at main entrances to buildings may be considered.
6. Crosswalks shall conform to the standard striped delineation of the crossing zone.
7. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will consider the expanded network of streets and sidewalks, the improved connections between the local street network and the highway system, upgrades to A Street, and truck access from A Street to the South Boston Bypass Road/Haul Road that were approved in PDA No. 69 and PDA No. 53 as part of new public open space and infrastructure improvements, within the context of the

PDA, until the PDA terminates and expires (see Study Report Section 6, Planning Context).

8. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will consider the new streets and sidewalks approved in PDA 53 within the context of the PDA, until the PDA terminates and expires.

### **C. Street and Park Furniture**

1. Street and park furniture should be compatible with the character of the District in design and materials.
2. Miscellaneous public hardware and furniture such as trash receptacles, mail boxes, benches and the like should be of a material and color that is compatible with the character of the District, and located to be as unobtrusive as possible.
3. Transit shelters shall be as transparent as possible, and located so as to minimize visual obstruction of historic buildings.
4. News box installation shall meet the requirements and standards of the Public Works Department.

### **D. Public Art**

1. Permanent and temporary public art installations are encouraged. The location and installation method of public art will be reviewed for appropriateness.

### **E. Street Trees**

1. Except for recent additions, an absence of vegetation is a distinctive feature of the District. Street trees were not historically part of the District, which was industrial in character. However, it is understood that trees are an important factor for livability. The introduction of trees in appropriate locations is encouraged, and their arrangement will be reviewed on a case by case basis for their appropriateness. Trees shall be planted in a manner and an environment that fosters their survival.

### **F. Parks and Open Space**

1. The enhancement of existing public parks and open space is encouraged.
2. The introduction of additional parks and open space in appropriate locations is encouraged and will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

3. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will consider the new parks and open spaces that were approved in PDAs Nos. 53 and 69 to be appropriate within the context of those PDAs, until the PDAs terminate and expire (see Study Report Section 6, Planning Context).
4. Landscape design and materials will be reviewed for compatibility with the character of the District. The Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will review such elements as paving, plantings, furnishings, art, structures, landforms, lighting, and signage.
5. Where appropriate, returning existing open lots, vacant or used for parking, to built parcels is encouraged. New surface parking lots will be considered an interim condition. If approved, they must be adequately landscaped. Perimeter screening in the form of trees, shrubs, fences, or other vertical elements are recommended to reinforce the street wall. Such elements as gate structures, lighting, and signage will be reviewed for compatibility with the character of the District.

## **G. Utility Items**

1. Public utility furnishings (telephone panels and booths, meters, traffic lights, signal boxes, wireless communication equipment and the like) shall be designed and located to prevent visual or pedestrian obstruction.
2. Street lights shall be designed to be compatible with the character of the District and should be of a consistent design throughout the District. The designated standard fixture, unless previously approved and installed in an area within the district, shall be the single or double-head Boston Fort Point fixture. Where required by Federal standards, the Boston Pendant fixture will be considered.
3. Existing gas lights shall be preserved.
4. Additional poles for overhead utility wires are prohibited. All new utility wiring should be installed underground. When streets are disrupted for underground installation or repair, they shall be repaired to match the original condition in materials, color, and texture.

## **H. Sidewalk Cafés and Raised Terraces**

1. Applicants seeking approval for sidewalk cafes and raised terraces that accommodate pedestrian travel above the sidewalk level must state whether the sidewalk café or raised terrace will be permanent or temporary. The location, design, and furnishings, both temporary and permanent, of sidewalk cafes and raised terraces will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

2. Sidewalk cafes must meet City of Boston code requirements.
3. Temporary chains or other boundary elements, including planters and railings, all furnishings, lighting, canopies, signage, etc. must be removed when not in seasonal use, and stored where they are not visible.
4. If seasonal café installations require semi-permanent fixation that requires cutting into the sidewalk, the cap used to fill the sidewalk during seasonal removal must be reset flush with the sidewalk.
5. Raised terraces that accommodate pedestrian travel above the sidewalk level shall be compatible with the District in design and materials.
6. Raised terraces and other outdoor café-related attachments to buildings such as lighting, canopies, signage, and the like shall be designed so that the character defining features of the existing building are not substantially changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed so that if the raised terrace were to be removed in the future, the essential form, detail, and overall integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired.

## **11.0 Standards and Criteria for the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area**

### **General Standards**

As provided in Section 4, of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, the only items subject to design review in a Protection Area are:

Demolition;  
Land Coverage;  
Height of Structures;  
Landscape; and  
Topography.

The goals of the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area are to:

1. Protect view corridors into and out of the adjacent Fort Point Channel Landmark District along streets and alleys that run perpendicularly from Seaport Boulevard into the Landmark District, including Sleeper, Farnsworth, and Pittsburg (Thompson Place) streets.
2. To ensure that massing, land coverage, and height of new development is compatible with the adjacent Landmark District.

It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are the Standards and Criteria absolute. The Commission has the authority to allow variation from any of the Standards and Criteria on a case-by-case basis. However, any request to vary from the Standards and Criteria must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variation. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute. Any variation from the Standards and Criteria shall not be considered a precedent.

### **Specific Standards and Criteria**

1. Demolition The Protection Area is currently vacant. Demolition of future buildings shall be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis, considering the building's contribution to and enhancement of the Landmark District, and also considering what is proposed to replace the existing building.
2. Land Coverage (Building Footprints) Building footprints shall conform to the street pattern defined by the perpendicular streets and alleys running south from Seaport Boulevard and shall not obstruct view corridors into and out of the Landmark District from Seaport Boulevard along Sleeper Street, Farnsworth Street, and Thomson Place. Building footprints should not obstruct view corridors into and out of the Landmark District from the two unnamed alleys between Sleeper Street and Farnsworth Street and between Farnsworth Street and Thomson Place. Building setbacks along Boston

Wharf Road shall be consistent with the setbacks of historic buildings in the vicinity of the Protection Area.

3. Height of Structures New construction should produce buildings that recognize the gateway nature of Seaport Boulevard, both to the Landmark District and the larger scale, non-historic area to be built on the north side of Seaport Boulevard. Height of new buildings may exceed that of buildings in the Landmark District provided the design meets the above-stated goals of the Protection Area.
4. Topography Changes in topography may be allowed.
5. Landscape Improvements to the landscape, including streetscape, shall be compatible with the character of the adjacent Landmark District where the Protection Area abuts the Landmark District.

## 12.0 Standards and Criteria for the “A” Street Protection Area

### **General Standards**

As provided in Section 4, of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, the only items subject to design review in a Protection Area are:

Demolition;  
 Land Coverage;  
 Height of Structures;  
 Landscape; and  
 Topography.

The goals of the “A” Street Protection Area are to:

3. Protect the view corridor along “A” Street that connects the northern and southern portions of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District and to encourage maintaining views of the smokestack and Wormwood Street in the adjacent Landmark District;
4. Connect the historic fabric that constitutes the northern portion of the Landmark District with the historic fabric that constitutes the southern portion of the Landmark District by creating an urban street wall along “A” Street that is compatible with the scale of the historic buildings on “A” Street in the adjacent Landmark District;
5. To ensure that massing, land coverage, and height of new development is compatible with the adjacent Landmark District.

It should be emphasized that conformance to the Standards and Criteria alone does not necessarily ensure approval, nor are the Standards and Criteria absolute. The Commission has the authority to allow variation from any of the Standards and Criteria on a case-by-case basis. However, any request to vary from the Standards and Criteria must demonstrate the reason for, and advantages gained by, such variation. The Commission's Certificate of Design Approval is only granted after careful review of each application and public hearing, in accordance with the statute. Any variation from the Standards and Criteria shall not be considered a precedent.

### **Specific Standards and Criteria**

6. Demolition The proposed “A” Street Protection Area is currently vacant. Demolition of future buildings shall be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis, considering the building’s contribution to and enhancement of the district, and also considering what is proposed to replace the existing building.
7. Land Coverage (Building Footprints) Building footprint setbacks along “A” Street shall be consistent with the setbacks of historic buildings in the vicinity of the Protection Area, with the goal of achieving an urban street wall along

“A” Street. Greater setbacks may be allowed if the design reinforces the sense of an urban street wall.

8. Height of Structures New Construction should produce buildings that are compatible with the adjacent Landmark District and the goals of the Protection Area. In determining appropriate height for buildings within the Protection Area, the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will presume that the total building heights identified for parcels U<sub>2</sub> and U<sub>3</sub> in Planned Development Area (PDA) No. 69 are appropriate in the context of the PDA Master Plan and until the PDA Master Plan terminates and expires (see Study Report Section 6, Planning Context). Specifically, the Commission will accord such presumption to the building heights of 180 feet on Parcel U<sub>2</sub> and 100 feet on parcel U<sub>3</sub>. (The PDA identifies Parcel U<sub>2</sub> as a “Special Site” eligible for additional height if design proposals undergo review pursuant to Article 80B of the Boston Zoning Code and provide exceptional public benefits outlined in the PDA). Cornice heights should be compatible with the cornice heights of historic buildings along “A” Street in the adjacent Landmark district with additional height set back.
9. Topography Major changes in topography will be discouraged.
10. Landscape Improvements to the landscape within the Protection Area, including open space and surface paving, shall be compatible with the character of the adjacent Landmark District where the Protection Area abuts the District. In determining compatibility of open space where the Protection Area abuts the District, the Fort Point Channel Landmark District Commission will consider the open space improvements approved in Planned Development Area (PDA) No. 69. until the PDA Master Plan terminates and expires. Permanent surface parking lots shall be discouraged along boundaries that abut the Landmark District.

### **13.0 Severability**

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

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Arthur Wheelock, former owner, Stanley Woolen Co., woolen mill, Uxbridge, Mass.

Jerry Wheelock, former worker in Stanley Woolen Co., son of Arthur Wheelock.

## **Appendix A: Guide to Researching Historic Conditions in the Fort Point Channel Landmark District**

The Bibliography included in the Study Report (Section 13.0) contains useful sources for information about the history and development of the Fort Point Channel Landmark District. In addition to these sources, the Prints Department of the Boston Public Library holds a collection of photographic plates of streetscapes from the Fort Point Channel Landmark District ca. 1900, the Fine Arts Department of the Boston Public Library holds a collection of architectural drawings of some buildings in the District, and the Boston Preservation Alliance holds research files on the Fort Point Channel Landmark District. Additionally, an architectural survey of the District was conducted in 1989 as part of the Central Artery Tunnel Project and contains individual survey forms with photographs and brief architectural descriptions and statements of historic significance for many buildings in the District. This survey is on file in the offices of the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC), Room 805 Boston City Hall. Also on file with the BLC is a photographic survey of every building in the District that was completed in August of 2003. In 2004, the Fort Point Channel neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A copy of the nomination form is on file with the BLC; the original nomination form with photographs is on file with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), located in the Massachusetts Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Blvd, Dorchester. For general guidance in locating primary source materials for researching historic buildings, see the guide below.

### **A General Guide to Repositories of Primary Source Materials for Researching Buildings in Boston**

#### **Inspectional Services Department - Building Permits**

Located at 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, this department is the repository for all building/alteration permits issued from 1886 to the present. Building permits have been scanned and are searchable by a variety of fields, including address, online. Follow this link <http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/building/docroom/> to begin your search. Original building permits are especially useful, listing the original owner, architect, builder, construction cost, dimensions, materials, and date. Alteration permits provide clues as to the building's physical evolution over time. While reviewing these documents, you may find a reference to a "bin number." Save this number as it corresponds to a storage bin at the Boston Public Library where the original blueprints may still be filed. Contact the Library's Research Services Department (536-5400) for assistance locating these plans (only pertains to buildings constructed from 1900-1970).

#### **Boston Public Library - Fine Arts Department (Copley Square)**

This department's extensive card file contains eclectic information on specific Boston buildings and architects, including references to magazine articles, obituaries, prints, photos, and plans. For buildings constructed between 1878 and 1902, consult the *Index to the Boston City Inspection Reports*. Similar to building permits, the inspection reports are often filed with a sample floor plan.

### **Boston Landmarks Commission - National Register of Historic Places**

You may live or work in one of Boston's forty-plus National Register districts (contact BLC staff at 635-3850 to learn if your property is listed). All National Register nomination forms for Boston properties are on file with the Boston Landmarks Commission and contain basic historical information and a bibliography; more recent forms contain specific information on all the properties within the district.

### **Massachusetts State House Library (Special Collections) - Fire Insurance Atlases**

Compiled by private surveyors (such as Bromley, Hopkins, and Sanborn), these maps depict lot lines, building foot prints, and building materials for all parcels within the City of Boston. Boston's first fire insurance map dates from 1874, subsequent maps were published every five years. This collection is a valuable resource for dating individual buildings as well as the topographical development of whole areas. Incomplete atlas collections are held by the Bostonian Society, the Boston Athenaeum, and the Boston Public Library.

### **Massachusetts State House Library (Special Collections) - City Directories**

Published sporadically between 1789 and 1800, and consistently thereafter, the City Directories list heads of households alphabetically and by street address, along with their occupations and ages. The business section contains addresses and advertisements for city merchants, artisans, and manufacturers.

### **Boston City Hall - Assessing Department**

The Tax Assessor's records provide information on present ownership, lot size, and building and land values. Assessing information for individual properties is available online at <http://www.cityofboston.gov/assessing/search/>.

### **Suffolk County Court House - Registry of Deeds (Pemberton Square)**

Though often a tedious process, a title search is the only exact method to establish a chain of ownership for a piece of property. In addition to securing all owners over time, deed research reveals construction dates, original owners, changes in value and uses, and plot plans for parcel subdivisions. While all Boston title searches begin at the Suffolk Registry of Deeds, many research efforts will require a trip to either the Middlesex County Registry (repository for Charlestown's and Brighton's pre-1874 deeds) or the Norfolk County Registry (repository for West Roxbury's pre-1874 deeds; Roxbury's pre-1868 deeds; Dorchester's pre-1870 deeds; and Hyde Park's pre-1912 deeds). The procedure for tracing a title is as follows:

Beginning with the present owner's name and the building address, consult the most recent Grantee Index, an annual list of all Suffolk County property transactions (organized alphabetically by purchaser's name). Proceed backwards in time until a transaction involving the present owner and subject property is located; this will yield a reference to the Book and Page where the deed for the present owner is recorded. Locate this deed. Each deed contains the Book and Page number of the previous property transaction. This process is repeated until the original owner is found, with careful attention given to the description of the buildings and parcels conveyed as well as

changes in boundaries or price. Buildings can be dated by noting the shift in a property's description from "a parcel of land" to "a parcel of land and the buildings thereupon." Retain a record of each deed reference, noting the following: Book and Page number; names and addresses of Sellers (Grantors) and Purchasers (Grantees); dates; prices; and property descriptions. Breaks in the chain of title occasionally occur, indicating unrecorded transactions or inheritance of a property by an heir (see Probate Records). The Registry clerks are available to assist you. Property deeds filed after 1/2/1978 are searchable online at <http://www.masslandrecords.com/malr/controller>.

### **Suffolk County Court House - Probate Records (Pemberton Square)**

Probate records relating to the inheritance of property are often necessary to complete the chain of ownership. The name of the deceased person is listed alphabetically within chronological volumes of an index, yielding a case number. The numerically indexed volumes listing these case numbers in turn provide volume and page references for each instrument related to the probating of the deceased estate (will, inventory, division of estate, etc.). These volumes are then consulted for copies of the instruments, many of which are now located in the Massachusetts Archives building at Colombia Point in Dorchester.

### **Photographs and Prints**

Early photos and prints are often useful in documenting the historic appearance of and subsequent changes to buildings and areas. Large and well-indexed collections of architectural photographs can be found at Historic New England (formerly the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities) and the Bostonian Society; smaller but still useful collections exist at the Athenaeum and the Print Department of the Boston Public Library. Many photographs in the collection of the Bostonian Society have been scanned and are searchable online at <http://www.bostonhistory.org/>.

### **New England Historical Genealogical Society (101 Newbury Street)**

The Society's collection of manuscripts, diaries, published genealogies, and antiquarian histories are an invaluable resource in establishing the social prominence and community involvement of past property owners. For additional information on previous residents and tenants you may wish to consult the obituary index and the U.S Census Records at the Boston Public Library's Micro Text Department.

### **Boston Public Library - Micro Text Department (Copley Square)**

Contemporary newspaper articles and obituaries can provide descriptions and other detailed information on buildings and biographical data on architects and owners. Complete copies of virtually all Boston newspapers are available on microfilm, however only obituaries are indexed. Thus it is helpful to establish the date of construction before searching for relevant articles. Some historic newspapers in the library's collection have been scanned and are searchable online at <http://www.bpl.org/electronic/newspaper.asp>.

### **Boston Preservation Alliance (Old City Hall, 45 School Street)**

The Boston Preservation Alliance keeps files on major historic buildings and districts throughout Boston, which include newspaper articles, planning and development project

permitting documentation and information on past advocacy initiatives. The Alliance also can make available to the public copies of educational materials it publishes on neighborhood history and architecture and records on certain public meetings in which the organization has participated.

## APPENDIX B: FORT POINT CHANNEL DISTRICT DATA

Map #	MHC Inv	Street No.	Street Name	Historic Name of Building/Structure	Completion Date*	Architect	Construction Type	Type	Architecture	Historic loft
1		308	Congress St	H. P. Hood Milk Bottle	1934		wood frame	B	Roadside Fantasy	3
2	5516	308-316	Congress St	Atlas Stores general storage	1890/c. 1893/1973	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Panel Brick	1
3	5561	15 - 21	Sleeper St	Boston Wharf Company	1911/1983		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
4	5562	29 - 31	Sleeper St aka 33 Sleeper St	Boston Wharf Company	1915/1983		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
5	5563	35 - 37	Sleeper St aka 33 Sleeper St	Boston Wharf Company	1911/1983		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
6	5564	51	Sleeper St	United Shoe Machinery Corp.	1929/c. 1988		fireproof/reinforced co	B	Glass wall modern	1
7	5536	44 - 54	Farnsworth St	Boston Wharf Co./Edgar T. Ward Sons Co.	1915/2000		fireproof	B	Classical influence	1
8	5534	34 - 36	Farnsworth St	Boston Wharf Company	1909		warehouse	B	No Style	1
9	5532	24 - 32	Farnsworth St	Bell Telephone Co/New England Telegraph & Telephone Co.	c. 1895/1987		warehouse	B	No Style	1
10	5531	12 - 22	Farnsworth St	Boston Wharf Company	1917		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
11	5517	320 - 324	Congress St	Joseph S. Williams Stores	1888/1998	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	No style	1
12	5518	326 - 330	Congress St	Putnam & Co./Boston Real Estate Trust	1888	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Romanesque Revival	1
13	5519	332 - 336	Congress St	Boston Wharf Company	1893	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
14	5521	344	Congress St	Congress Street Fire Station	1891	Atwood, Harrison H.	suspended floors	B	Romanesque Revival	1
15	5523	348 - 352	Congress St	Boston Wharf Company	1894	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival, HS	1
16	5524	354 - 358	Congress St	Boston Wharf Company warehouse	1900	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
17	5530	11 - 15	Farnsworth St	Brown, Durrell Co. warehouse	1893	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Romanesque influence	1
18		17 - 31	Farnsworth St	Farnsworth Street Garage	1987		new construction	B		2
19	5533	33 - 39	Farnsworth St	Boston Wharf Company	1909		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical/Rsqe	1
20	5535	41 - 45	Farnsworth St	Jones, McDuffee & Stratton Co. Boston Wharf Co.	1908		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
21	5537	47 - 53	Farnsworth St	Boston Wharf Company	1895	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Romanesque influence	1
22	5559	42 - 56	Thomson Pl	Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company warehouse/BWCo	1909		warehouse	B	Italianate influence	1
23	5557	36 - 40	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1900		warehouse	B	Romanesque influence	1
24	5556	30 - 34	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1916		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
25	5555	26 - 28	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1908		warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
26		22 - 24	Thomson Pl	Thomson Financial offices	1992		new construction	B		2
27	5552	12 - 18	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1907		warehouse	B	Classical/Romanesque	1
28	5526	364 - 372	Congress St	Stillings Building/Boston Wharf Co. Boiler Building (See 364-372 Congress St)	1901	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
29	5553	19 - 23	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1907	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
30	5554	25 - 27	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1909	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Italianate influence	1
31		29 - 33	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1912	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Italianate influence	1
32	5570	35 - 37	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company	1913	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
33	5558	47 - 55	Thomson Pl	Boston Wharf Company warehouse	1924/unknown	Prescott, Howard B.	warehouse	B	No style/Hi Tech Mod	1
34	5571	44 - 48	Stillings St	Boston Wharf Company Wholesale Grocery warehouse	1914	Buckley, J. M. and C.J.	warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
35		11 - 37	Stillings St	Stillings St. Garage and Office Building/BWCo	2001	Jung/Brannen Assoc., Inc.	new construction	B		2
36	5565	5 - 9	Stillings St	Boston Wharf Company	1907	Buckley, J. M. and C.J.	warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
37	5528	374 - 384	Congress St	Harvey Building/Boston Wharf Co.	c. 1903	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
38	5529	381 - 389	Congress St	Boston Wharf Company	1907	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
39	5527	369 - 375	Congress St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1918	Prescott, Howard B.	fireproof/reinforced concrete	B	Classical influence	1
40	5525	355 - 359	Congress St	Tremont Electric Lighting Company	1888/c. 1905	Unknown	ordinary-west/ warehouse-east	B	No style	1

## APPENDIX B: FORT POINT CHANNEL DISTRICT DATA

Map #	MHC Inv	Street No.	Street Name	Historic Name of Building/Structure	Completion Date*	Architect	Construction Type	Type	Architecture	Historic loft
41	5522	347 - 351	Congress St	Chase & Co. candy factory	1887/1890		warehouse	B	Italianate	1
42	5520	343	Congress St	American Railway Express Co.	1888/1936/2000	Bradlee, Winslow & Wetherell	fireproof/steel and concrete	B	Romanesque Revival	1
43		313	Congress St	Lombard's Congress St. Stores	1886/1985		warehouse	B	No style	1
44		305	Congress St	Nationwide Life Insurance Co.	1983/2000		new construction	B		2
45	5573	250 - 254	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1899	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
46	5575	256 - 260	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1899	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
47	5577	262 - 266	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1899	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
48	5578	268 - 272	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1898	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
49	5580	274 - 278	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1898	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
50	5581	280 - 290	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1898	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
51	5584	292 - 302	Summer St	Jeremiah Williams & Co. wool merchant	1898		fireproof/steel and concrete	B	Classical Revival	1
52	9155		Summer St	Summer Street Bridge over A Street	1900/replaced		steel girder span/ granite abutment	St	No style	3
53	5586	312 - 320	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1904	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
54	5588	322 - 330	Summer St	F. A. Foster & Co. Dry Goods/Boston Wharf Co.	1910	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
55		337 - 347	Summer St	Joseph Middleby, Jr. Inc./BWCo	1907	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
56	5589	327 - 333	Summer St	Joseph Middleby, Jr. Inc./BWCo	1911	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
57	5587	321 - 325	Summer St	Howes Bros. Leather Co./BWCo	1911	Buckley, J. M. and C.J.	fireproof	B	Stylized Classical	1
58	5585	311 - 319	Summer St	Dwinell-Wright Co., Tea & Coffee Importing/BWCo	1904	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
59	5583	285 - 297	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1903	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical/Romanesque	1
60	5582	281 - 283	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1904	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
61	5579	269 - 273	Summer St	Boston Wharf Company wool warehouse	1910	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Stylized Classical	1
62	5576	10	Melcher St	Boston Wharf Co. Offices	1905	Safford, Morton D.	fireproof	B	Classical Revival	1
63	5574	253	Summer St	New England Confectionary Company/BWCo	1902	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
64		11 - 17	Melcher St	New England Confectionary Company/BWCo	1902		warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
65		19 - 27	Melcher St	New England Confectionary Company/BWCo	1902		warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
66		29 - 37	Melcher St	New England Confectionary Company/BWCo	1902		warehouse	B	Classical Revival	1
		50	Melcher St	See 326 A Street			masonry	B		
67	5538	49	Melcher St	Boston Wharf Company	1910		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
68	5539	51 - 61	Melcher St	Boston Wharf Company	1916		fireproof/steel frame, concrete floors	B	Classical influence	1
69	5540	63	Melcher St	French, Shriner & Urner shoe factory	1909		warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
70		326	A St	Boston Button Co.	1890	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Romanesque Revival	1
71		324	A St	A Street Deli/BWCo	1945		concrete block	B		1
72	5511	319 - 321	A St	Kistler Leather Co./Boston Wharf Co.	1913	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
73		319R	A St	Dwinell-Wright Co. warehouse/BWCo	1923		warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
75	5509	288 - 304	A St	George E. Keith Co. shoe factory/BWCo	1912	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B	Stylized Classical	1
76		10	Necco St	Necco St. Garage	1992		new construction/ pre-cast concrete	B		2
77	5551	5	Necco Ct	New England Confectionary Company/BWCo	1907		warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
78	5550	6	Necco Ct	New England Confectionary Company/BWCo	1907		warehouse	B	Classical influence	1
79	5508	249 - 255	A St	Factory Buildings Trust Industrial Building #1	c. 1895		warehouse	B	Italianate	1
80	5512	11 - 17	Wormwood St	Factory Buildings Trust Industrial Building #2	c. 1896		warehouse	B	No style	1
81	5513	23 - 27	Wormwood St	Factory Buildings Trust Industrial Building #3	c. 1896		warehouse	B	No style	1

## APPENDIX B: FORT POINT CHANNEL DISTRICT DATA

Map #	MHC Inv	Street No.	Street Name aka 21B Wormwood St	Historic Name of Building/Structure	Completion Date*	Architect	Construction Type	Type Architecture	Historic loft
82	5514 33 - 37		Wormwood St	Factory Buildings Trust Industrial Building #4	c. 1897		warehouse	B No style	1
83	5515 41 - 45		Wormwood St	Factory Buildings Trust Industrial Building #5	c. 1896		warehouse	B No style	1
84			Wormwood St	Factory Buildings Trust Industrial Building Chimney	c. 1896		brick	St	3
85	5507 239 - 241	A St		Frederick Barlow Building	c. 1895		ordinary	B Romanesque Revival	1
86	5506 227 - 229	A St		W. S. Coringley & Son/BWCo	1903	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Classical Revival	1
87	5505 215 - 225	A St		Boston Wharf Company	1922	Prescott, Howard B.	warehouse	B Classical influence	1
88	5504 211 - 213	A St		Boston Wharf Company	1915	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
89	5503 207 - 209	A St		Boston Wharf Company	1916	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
90	5502 191 - 205	A St		Boston Wharf Company	1919	Prescott, Howard B.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
91	5548 1-5	Channel Center St (formerly 50-52 Midway St)		W. Herbert Abbott, Inc. Building/BWCo	1913	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
92	5547 1-5	Channel Center St (formerly 46-48 Midway St)		Boston Wharf Company	1914	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
93	5546 1-5	Channel Center St (formerly 40-44 Midway St)		Boston Wharf Company	1916	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
94	5545 15	Channel Center St (formerly 34-38 Midway St)		U.S. Leather Co./Boston Wharf Co.	1912	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
95	5544 15	Channel Center St (formerly 28-32 Midway St)		U.S. Leather Co./Boston Wharf Co.	1911	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Stylized Classical	1
96	5543 15	Channel Center St (formerly 24-26 Midway St)		U.S. Leather Co./Boston Wharf Co.	1914	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Classical influence	1
97	5541 35	Channel Center St (formerly 2-14 Midway St)		American Can Co./Boston Wharf Co.	1902/unknown	Safford, Morton D.	warehouse	B Romanesque influence	1
98		Fort Point Channel		Seawall	19th c/20th c.		timber/granite/concrete wall	St	3
99	10	Melcher St Overpass connecting 6 Necco Ct and 19 Melcher		Roof sign	20th c.			St	3
		Overpass connecting 5 Necco Ct and 6 Necco Ct						St	
		Overpass connecting 281 Summer and 51 Melcher						St	

### KEYS

Source of date: BWCo=Boston Wharf Co. plaque; S=Sanborn map; NR=draft National Register nomination; Bromley=1891 Bromley map; Assess=Boston Assessing Dept.

Original drawing=Midway project/at Bruner/Cott

Historic loft: 1=historic loft 2=building other than historic loft 3=structure other than a building

\*Includes dates of original construction and major additions and substantial remodeling