

# THE PARKER HOUSE

## BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION STUDY REPORT



Petition # 61  
Boston Landmarks Commission  
Environment Department  
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of

**The Parker House**  
**60 School Street, Boston, Massachusetts**

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

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Rosanne Foley, Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Lynn Smiledge, Chair

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Date

Draft report posted on November 1, 2021

# Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>1.0 LOCATION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Address	1
1.2 Assessor's Parcel Number	1
1.3 Area in which Property is Located	1
1.4 Map Showing Location	1
<b>2.0 DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Type and Use	2
2.2 Physical Description of the Resource	2
2.3 Contemporary Images	2
2.4 Historic Maps and Images	15
<b>3.0 SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>23</b>
3.1 Historic Significance	23
3.2 Architectural (or Other) Significance	31
3.3 Archaeological Sensitivity	31
3.4 Relationship to Criteria for Designation	32
<b>4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 Current Assessed Value	34
4.2 Current Ownership	34
<b>5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 Background	35
5.2 Zoning	35
5.3 Planning Issues	35
<b>6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES</b>	<b>36</b>
6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission	36
6.2 Impact of alternatives	36
<b>7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>8.0 STANDARDS AND CRITERIA, WITH LIST OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES</b>	<b>39</b>
8.1 Introduction	52
8.2 Levels of Review	52
8.3 Standards and Criteria	52
8.4 List of Character-defining Features	52
<b>9.0 ARCHAEOLOGY</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>10.0 SEVERABILITY</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>11.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>57</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The designation of the Parker House was initiated in 1981 after a petition was submitted by registered voters to the Boston Landmarks Commission asking that the Commission designate the property under the provisions of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. The purpose of such a designation is to recognize and protect a physical feature or improvement which in whole or part has historical, cultural, social, architectural, or aesthetic significance.

### Summary

The Parker House was the longest continuously operating hotel in the United States until the COVID-19 pandemic, when the hotel shut down for the first time since their opening. (It has since re-opened.) Due to the presence of the Parker House Annex (1897), which is the oldest extant section of the hotel and remained open during the construction of the new Parker House (1927), the business operated continuously from 1855 until March 2020.

Early innovations in pricing and fine dining positioned the Parker House for success in its long history. The products of its kitchens, most notably the Parker House Roll and Boston Cream Pie, gained national attention, and the dining clubs and company and trade organization boards that met at the Parker House propelled the hotel's early popularity and widespread recognition in the region as a premier space for hosting functions.

Throughout the years, the Parker House has been the host of many prominent figures in history, including Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Mary Todd Lincoln and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Charles Dickens lived in the Parker House while writing his famed work *A Christmas Carol* and performed it for members of The Saturday Club at the Parker House. Important historical figures who worked at the Omni Parker House include Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh. The hotel's long association with Massachusetts politicians and political events, given its location on the direct line between Old City Hall and the Massachusetts State House, also contributes to its significance.

Elegantly designed and well crafted, the main building (1927) at the corner of School and Tremont streets is a tribute to both the Classical Revival style and the craftsmanship of the twenties. The Parker House Annex (1897) facing Bosworth Street demonstrates the careful attention paid to detailing even on a small back street, to signify that this building was part of an elegant, first-class hotel facility. Although it has undergone some exterior alterations (primarily at the uppermost levels), the property retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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

## **Boston Landmarks Commission**

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## 1.0 LOCATION

### 1.1 Address

According to the City of Boston's Assessing Department, the Parker House is located at 60-74 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02108. According to petition #61 filed with the Boston Landmarks Commission, the address given for the Parker House is 60 School Street.

### 1.2 Assessor's Parcel Number

The Assessor's Parcel Number is 0304696000.

### 1.3 Area in which Property is Located

The Parker House is located in downtown Boston on the corner of School Street and Tremont Street, just on the edge of the Financial District. Across from the Parker House on Tremont Street are Suffolk University and the Granary Burying Ground. Across from the building on School Street is King's Chapel. The surrounding area is a densely developed network of narrow streets lined with a variety of six-to 12- story masonry structures, mainly from the early 19th through the turn of the 20th century, interspersed with 30+ story glass skyscrapers built in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

### 1.4 Map Showing Location



**Figure 1.** Map showing the boundaries of parcel # 0304696000.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Type and Use

The Parker House has operated as a hotel since 1855; the buildings that currently house the hotel were completed in 1897 and 1927. The Parker House was the longest continuously operating hotel in the United States until the COVID-19 pandemic happened in March 2020, when the hotel shut down for the first time since their opening. It has since re-opened. Currently operating under the name the “Omni Parker House Hotel,” the hotel has guest rooms, dining rooms, function rooms, kitchens, support space, and two restaurants: Parker’s Restaurant and The Last Hurrah.

The Parker House is located in the Midtown Cultural zoning district and a Restricted Parking District overlay district.

### 2.2 Physical Description of the Resource

The Parker House (Figure 2) occupies a gently sloping parcel bordered by Tremont Street on the west, School Street on the north, Chapman Place on the east, and Bosworth Street on the south, covering about half of the city block defined by those four streets. The land rises from east to west. The complex has three principal components: the main block of the hotel (1927) which has a tower facing Tremont and School streets; a secondary and more utilitarian block, with its own tower, rising above Chapman Place (1927); and the Parker House Annex (1897), which occupies the corner of Bosworth Street (which it faces) and Chapman Place. The buildings stand directly on the sidewalks of the perimeter streets.

The main block of the hotel (Figures 2, 3, and 4; BOS.1973) rises 15 stories above the sidewalk at the site’s low point, on the corner of School Street and Chapman Place, to a flat roof. (It is 14 stories high along Tremont Street). The main block’s three facades—on School Street (14 bays), Tremont Street (four bays), and Chapman Place (three bays)—feature a one- to two-story storefront base clad with black granite; three stories faced with classically-detailed limestone; and a ten-story, plain shaft that is clad with tan brick and surmounted by a cast stone cornice and decorative roof parapet. A copper-clad penthouse is positioned near the northwest corner of the roof. A three-story appendage to the south of the main block, along Tremont Street (Figure 10; BOS.2069), repeats the classical façade of the base of the main block. The secondary block of the hotel complex, along Chapman Place, includes a 15-story, tan brick tower set back from Tremont Street (Figure 12), and an eight-story horizontal brick section along Chapman Place (Figures 13 and 14). Anchoring the southeast corner of the complex is the Parker House Annex, which is 10 stories high and constructed of red brick with limestone and terra cotta trim (Figures 15-18).

Classical Revival in style, the main block of the hotel (1927) begins with a storefront base that is one story tall along Tremont Street, the high point of the parcel, and extends to two stories at the low corner of School Street and Chapman Place (Figure 5). The storefront level is faced with polished black granite; its six bays along School Street and two along Tremont Street are defined by ornamental brass frames with slender pilasters, decorative grillwork in the transom panels, and a marble frieze. The two storefronts that flank each side of the School Street entrance have a recessed

center entrance with splayed sides (Figure 6). The hotel's two principal entrances are located near the midpoint of the School Street façade and in the south bay of the Tremont Street façade. Each has a prominent marquee-style awning, marble facing with rope-molded trim, and a trio of doors encased in a decorative brass frame with spiral pilasters, delicate ornamental grillwork, and foliated brackets (Figure 8). The four storefront bays at the southern end of the School Street façade are surmounted by steel-sash windows, some of which retain stained and leaded glass in their panes (Figure 7). The two storefront windows at the corner of School and Tremont streets are for display only, without entrances. All window openings are rectangular and (aside from the steel sash in the building's base) appear to contain replacement sash, predominantly in a 1/1 configuration. The present storefront materials and design appear to be largely original or early. The marquee awnings resemble entrance awnings seen in early 20<sup>th</sup> century images (see Historic Images 1 and 2), but appear to be modern replacements.

The third, fourth, and fifth floors of the main block are clad with limestone (Figures 5 and 9). The paneled base of this façade section has shaped balusters under the third-floor window openings, Ionic pilasters between the window bays on the third and fourth floors (single on the School Street façade and paired on the Tremont Street façade), corner pilasters with egg-and-dart capitals, and an ornamental entablature with acanthus leaf trim between the fourth and fifth floors, surmounted by a decorative iron railing running the full length of the facades. The third-floor window openings are surmounted by an elaborate entablature at each opening, featuring a center panel with a bas-relief head and ribbon swags, foliated corner blocks, a dentil course, and egg-and-dart molding. The fifth-floor window openings are framed with eared architraves and a semi-circular pediment with foliated cornice molding and foliated keystone; the tops of the arches have been truncated to accommodate air conditioning grilles under the sixth-floor windows.

The ten-story brick shaft of the main block has regularly-spaced, single windows, whose only trim is flared brick lintels (Figures 2 and 3). Ghost-traces of belt courses, spandrel panels, and window surrounds hint at elaborate original ornament that has since been removed. Surviving elements include plain, vertical limestone panels at the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> floors of the Tremont/School Street corner of the building, decorative rosettes between every other window at the 13<sup>th</sup> floor on the School Street side, and three large terra cotta wreaths between windows on both sides of the Tremont Street corner. The roof edge is articulated with a high, molded entablature that features a dentil course and cornice molding, surmounted by a parapet with plain flat piers and sections of molded balusters. On the Tremont Street façade, the parapet is embellished with swags and a broken scroll pediment in the center bay.

The upper two stories of the main block once formed an ornate cap to the building. Historic Images 1 and 2 also show a narrow oriel window rising from floors 6 through 12 at this corner, wreath ornament between every other window at the 13<sup>th</sup> floor (alternating with rosettes), windows with individual balustrades and pediments at the 14<sup>th</sup> floor, and projecting architraves with keystones trimming the 15<sup>th</sup> floor windows. These elements, and perhaps the urn finials that once crowned the parapet's piers (Historic Image 2), were removed in 1947.

The south elevation of the tower is clad with tan brick and is largely blank, with the exception of a single outer bay of windows at each end, on its upper six floors (Figure 12). Brick infill between the sills and lintels of these windows suggests that an earlier, more decorative treatment has been



removed. A shaped white surface which appears to be parged brick at the base of the south elevation of the tower suggests the outline of an adjacent six-story masonry building seen in a postcard image of the hotel (Historic Image 2). According to Bromley Atlas maps and the MACRIS inventory form BOS.2069, this six-story building was demolished sometime between 1922 and 1927. Currently extant in the same location, the two-story appendage to the south of the main block (constructed in 1927; BOS.2069) repeats on the upper portion of its facade, in simplified form, the limestone facing and classical trim of the main tower (Figure 10). The appendage's three storefronts contain single plate-glass windows with decorative brass trim, surmounted by a marble frieze panel. The two stories of windows above have plain flat architraves and stylized "balustrade" panels beneath its second story windows.

A pedestrian walkway spans Chapman Place at the third-floor level of the Parker House (Figure 11). Clad in limestone, this short structure has an arched underside with stone voussoirs. Centered in its façade is a single window ornamented with sill brackets, flat architrave, and a broken-arch pediment that is embellished with scrolled brackets, heavy cornice molding, and a floral basket in the tympanum of the arch.

The Chapman Place section of the hotel complex (1927) extends most of the length of this alley, rising eight stories in the horizontal section along the street and fifteen stories in the tower section facing Tremont Street (Figures 12-14). The Chapman Street block is constructed of tan brick with unornamented, rectangular window openings, which typically contain 1/1 replacement sash and slender cast stone sills. The tower's west (Tremont Street) elevation has two columns of windows in the center, one with conventional openings, one with much smaller windows. Its southern elevation has five bays of regularly-spaced, larger windows. A utilitarian, metal superstructure on the roof incorporates a railing around the perimeter of the tower. The Chapman Place elevation of this secondary block has regularly spaced windows above a one-story base with raised basement. The base is distinguished by two utilitarian service entrances; large steel-sash windows typical at the ground floor; and a plain cast stone band course above. The third floor is characterized by elongated window openings with a continuous cast stone sill course, and a variety of sash: triple-hung windows at the south end of the elevation and, at the north end, two vertical panes topped by a pair of square transom panes. Many window openings have been filled in at the first two floors on the south end of this building section.

The third major component of the Parker House complex is the oldest extant part, the Parker House Annex (1897), which occupies the corner of Bosworth Street and Chapman Place (Figures 15-18). Rising ten stories above a raised basement to a flat roof, the Annex is constructed of red brick with a limestone-clad basement level and stone and terra cotta trim. The building has seven window bays along Bosworth Street and four along Chapman Place. Window openings are rectangular, contain single 1/1 replacement sash, and are trimmed only by plain stone sills and tall, flared brick lintels. The lower three floors of the building are framed by rusticated limestone quoins at the Bosworth Street corners, and a slender entablature (likely limestone) consisting of a dentil course between two bands of molding. The top of the building is distinguished by a bold stone molding that forms a continuous sill course for the considerably shorter windows on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor. The roof edge is crowned by an ornate entablature (possibly metal) composed of a dentil course, egg-and-dart molding, scrolled modillion brackets, another dentil course, and copper cornice molding.

Facing Bosworth Street, the Annex's principle façade is loosely organized into three vertical sections, with a three-bay center section and two windows in each of the outer sections. Centered in this façade is a two-story entrance with rusticated limestone trim around the recessed center entrance (containing a modern, metal and glass doorway) on the ground level, and three window openings above, all framed by bands of floral rosettes and egg-and-dart molding, and a molded cornice (Figure 19). The mullions between the second-story windows in this entrance are embellished with high-relief botanical motifs, and a delicate metal railing extends across all three window openings. Decorative metal railings also span the three center windows on the fifth and ninth floors, and the outer two windows on both ends of the seventh floor (Figure 20).

The Chapman Place elevation features paired windows at the first story and in the end bays of the floors above. A utilitarian service entrance is located at the northern end of this elevation; it is recessed within a round-arched opening.

### 2.3 Contemporary Images



**Figure 2.** School Street (L) and Tremont Street (R) facades (main building). July 2020.



**Figure 3.** Tremont Street (west) facade. July 2020.



**Figure 4.** School Street (north) façade at Chapman Place. July 2020.



**Figure 5.** School and Tremont Street facades; storefronts and base. July 2020.



**Figure 6.** School Street façade, typical storefront. July 2020.



**Figure 7.** School Street façade; detail of stained and leaded glass above storefronts. July 2020.



**Figure 8.** School Street elevation; detail of main entrance. July 2020.



**Figure 9.** School Street façade; detail of trim at third, fourth, and fifth floors. July 2020.



**Figure 10.** Tremont Street façade; south appendage. October 2021.



**Figure 11.** Walkway over Chapman Place. July 2020.



**Figure 12.** View of the main block and Chapman Place towers from Tremont Street. July 2020.



**Figure 13.** Chapman Place elevation, from School Street. July 2020.



**Figure 14.** Chapman Place elevation, from Bosworth Street. July 2020.





**Figure 15.** Parker House Annex; lower part of front façade (Bosworth Street). July 2020.



**Figure 16.** Parker House Annex; upper part of front façade (Bosworth Street). July 2020.



**Figure 17.** Parker House Annex; lower part of Chapman Place façade. July 2020.



**Figure 18.** Parker House Annex; upper part of Chapman Place façade. July 2020.

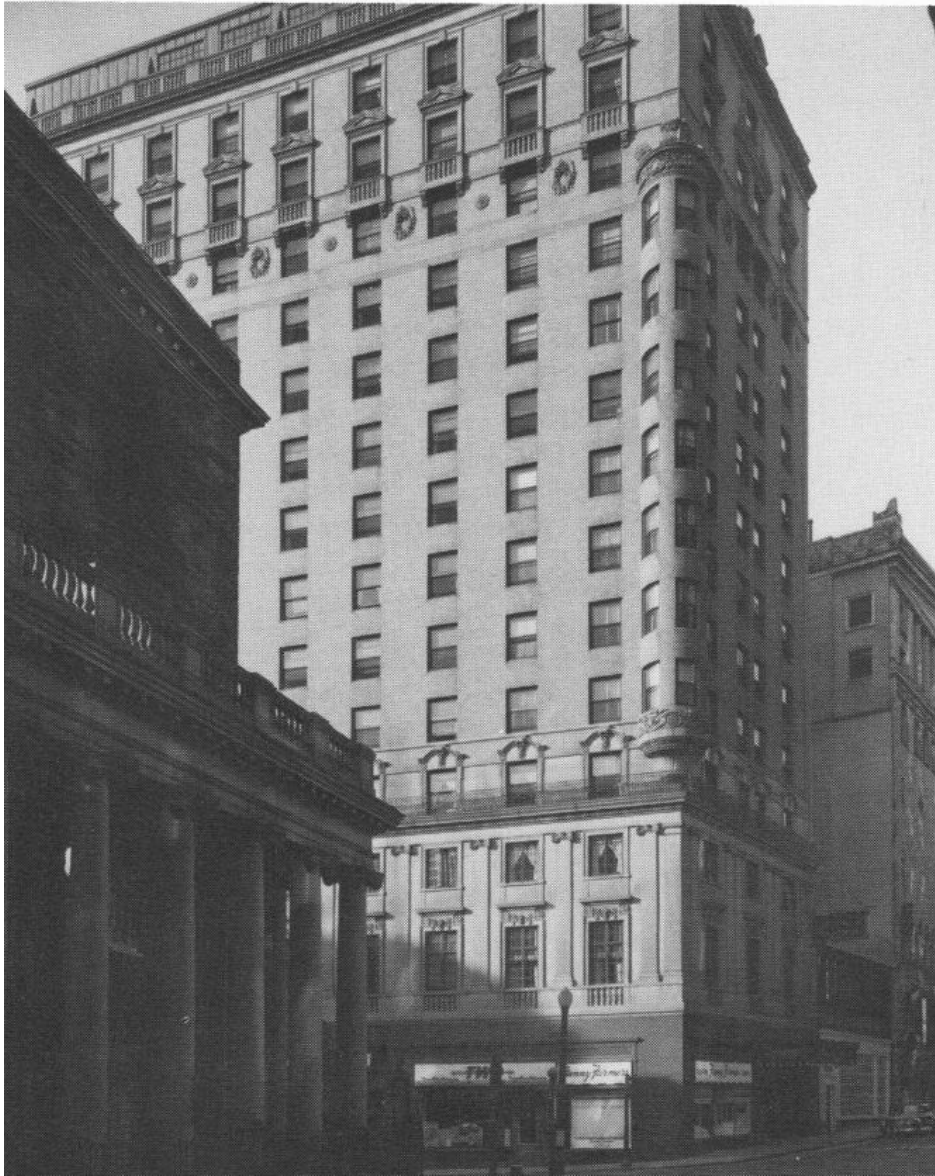


**Figure 19.** Parker House Annex; main entrance on Bosworth Street. July 2020.



**Figure 20.** Parker House Annex; detail of façade. July 2020.

## 2.4 Historic Maps and Images



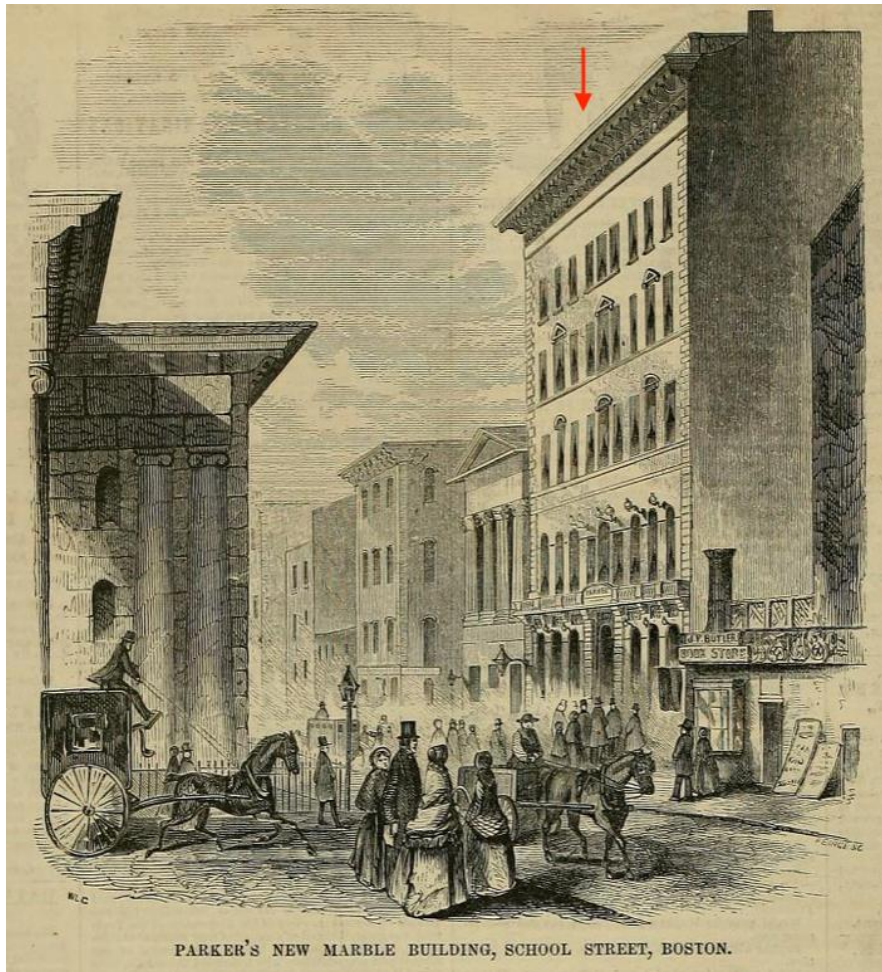
**Historic Image 1.** Parker House, ca. 1927-1947. View looking southeast from Tremont Street. Note terra cotta ornament at top of building and multi-tiered oriel window at corner, removed in the 1940s.

**Source:** George M. Cushing Jr. (Text by Ross Urquhart), *Great Buildings of Boston; A Photographic Guide*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1982.



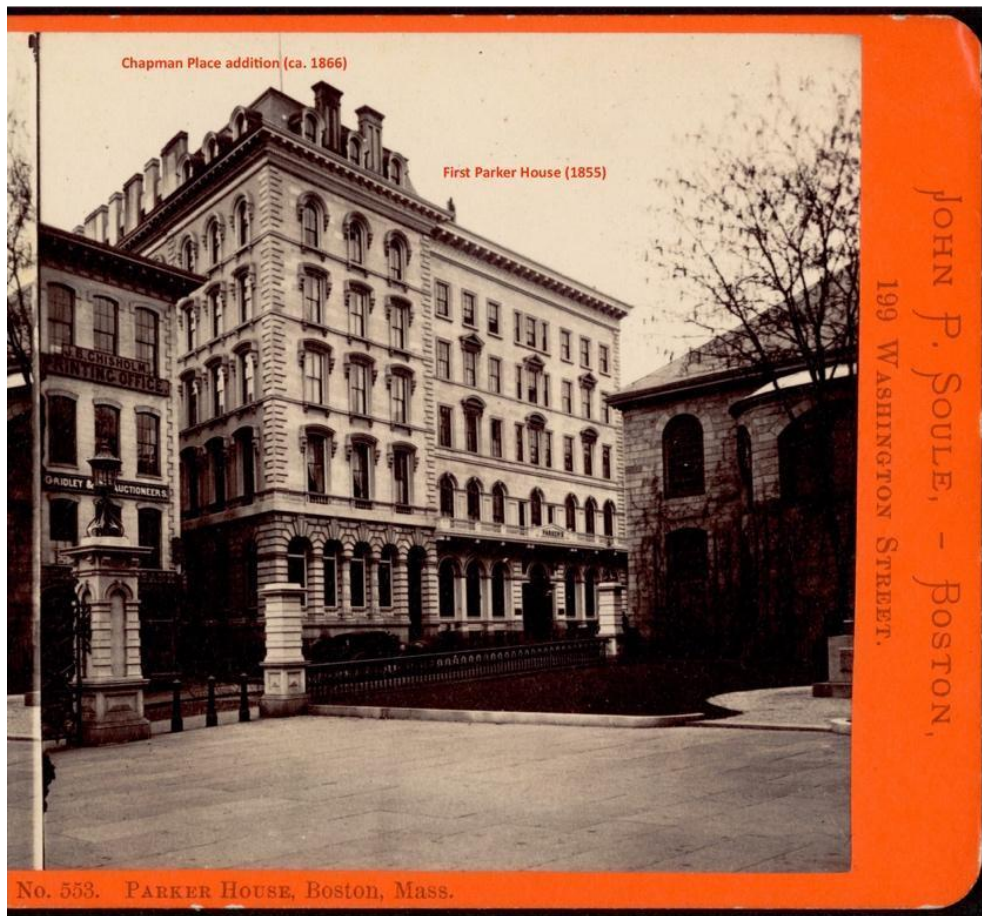
**Historic Image 2.** Parker House, postcard. View looking southeast from Beacon and Tremont streets.

**Source:** "Parker House, School Street at Tremont Street, ca. 1916-1930," Postcard, The Bostonian Society, <http://collections.revolutionaryspaces.org/MADetailB.aspx?rID=VW0053/-#005636&db=biblio&dir=ARCHIVES> (accessed October 27, 2021).



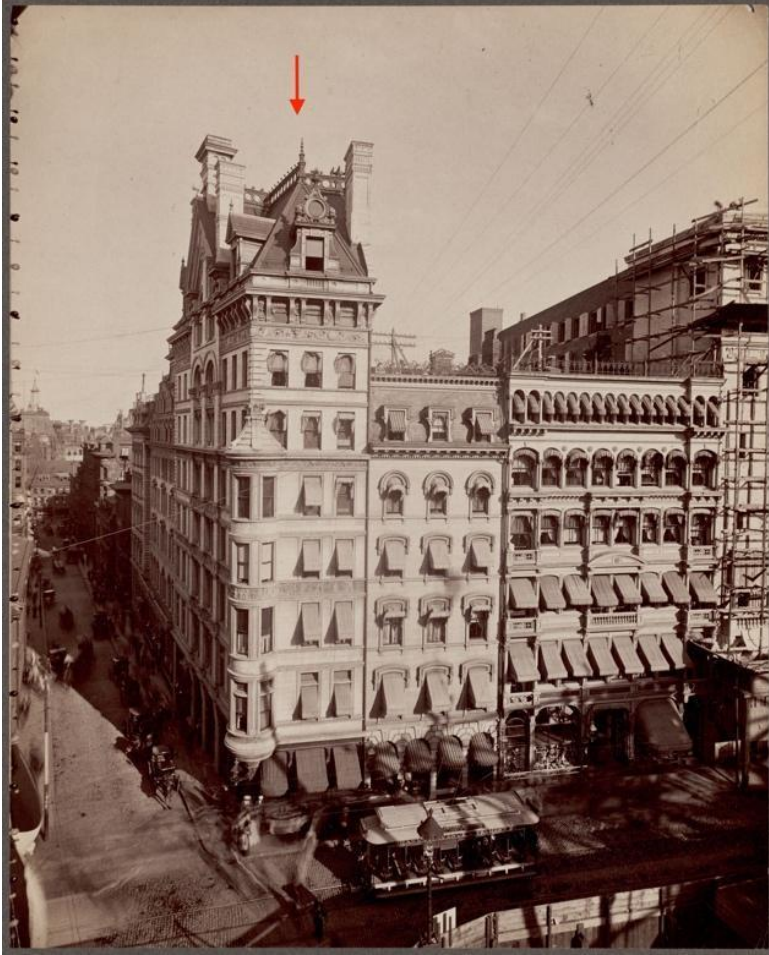
**Historic Image 3.** First Parker House (1855). View looking southeast down School Street from Tremont Street.

**Source:** *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion* 8, no. 7 (February 17, 1855): 112. Available from the Internet Archive, [https://archive.org/details/sim\\_ballous-pictorial-drawing-room-companion\\_1855-02-17\\_8\\_7/page/112/mode/2up](https://archive.org/details/sim_ballous-pictorial-drawing-room-companion_1855-02-17_8_7/page/112/mode/2up), accessed October 27, 2021.



**Historic Image 4.** Parker House, ca. 1870s. View looking southwest on School Street from Old City Hall, showing Chapman Place addition (ca. 1866, left) and First Parker House (1855, right).

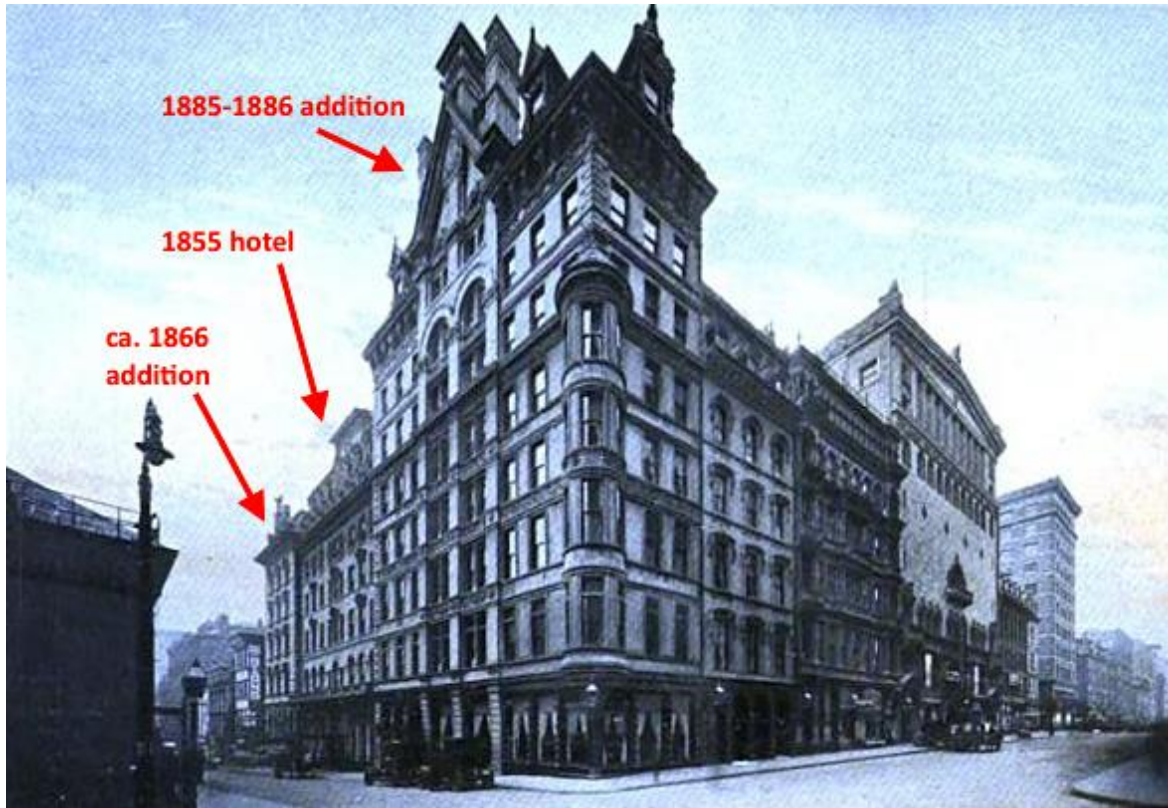
**Source:** John P. Soule, "Parker House, Boston, Mass," Photograph, 1850, Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/ww72c341f> (accessed October 27, 2021).



**Historic Image 5.** Parker House, ca. 1890. View looking southeast from Tremont Street showing the 1885-1886 addition.

**Source:** "Parker House, Tremont Street," Photograph, 1890, Digital Commonwealth, <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/cn69mv44w> (accessed October 27, 2021).





**Historic Image 6.** Parker House, ca. 1910. View looking southeast from Beacon and Tremont streets.

**Source:** *About the Farm: An Illustrated Description of the New Boston Dairy and Other Industries at Valley View, Muzzey, and Hutchinson Farms, which are a Part of the Supply Department of Young's Hotel, Parker House, and Hotel Touraine.* Boston: Printed for J. R. Whipple Company, 1910.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ParkersHotel\\_ca1910\\_Boston.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ParkersHotel_ca1910_Boston.png). Accessed July 2020.



**Historic Image 7.** Left: Parker House in the 1800's; view looking southeast down School Street. Right: Parker House 2000's; view looking southeast from Tremont Street.

**Source:** *Heaven, By Hotel Standards* by Parker House Historian Susan Wilson. Revised ed. Boston: Susan Carolyn Relyea Wilson and the Omni Parker House, 2019.



**Historic Image 8.** Parker House in 1866. View from School Street.

**Source:** "Parker House." The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed October 28, 2021.  
<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-89df-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

## 3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

### 3.1 Historic Significance

The oldest continuously operating hotel business in the United States, the Parker House is historically and architecturally significant at the local, state, and national levels for its associations with the hotel enterprise launched by Harvey D. Parker in 1855, and as a fine example of Classical Revival commercial architecture in Boston. Early innovations in pricing and fine dining positioned the Parker House for success in its long history. The products of its kitchens, most notably the Parker House Roll and Boston Cream Pie, gained national attention, and the dining clubs and company and trade organization boards that met at the Parker House propelled the hotel's early popularity and widespread recognition in the region as a premier space for hosting functions. The hotel's long association with Massachusetts politicians and political events, given its location on the direct line between Old City Hall and the Massachusetts State House, contributes to its significance. Due to the presence of the Parker House Annex (1897), which is the oldest extant section of the hotel and remained open during construction of the new Parker House (1927), the business has operated continuously on this site from 1855 to the present. Boston-based architect G. Henri Desmond, through the firms of Winslow & Wetherell, Winslow & Bigelow, and Desmond & Lord, was associated with each phase of design and remodeling from the late 19th century through the 1930s, unifying the work undertaken by different hotel owners and managers, who were well known in the hotel industry. Although it has undergone some exterior alterations (primarily at the uppermost levels), the property retains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Since 2006, the Parker House has been a member of Historic Hotels of America, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. To be part of this program, a hotel must be at least 50 years old; designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark or listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and recognized as having historic significance.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Early History of the Parker House (1854 to 1884)**

The Parker House was the oldest continuously operating hotel in the United States until it temporarily shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the existing main block (1927) and Bosworth Street annex (1897) were constructed during subsequent generations of ownership and management, the site has been continuously associated with the Parker House business since 1854, when Harvey D. Parker (1805-1884) launched his hotel enterprise.<sup>2</sup> A native of Temple, Maine, Parker had journeyed to Boston at the age of twenty and soon found work as a coachman in Watertown. Trips driving his employer to Boston led Parker to frequent John E. Hunt's restaurant in

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<sup>1</sup> "About Historic Hotels of America," National Trust for Historic Preservation, <https://www.historichotels.org/us/about-historic-hotels/>.

<sup>2</sup> Except as noted otherwise, sources for this section are Susan Wilson, *Heaven, By Hotel Standards* (Boston: Susan Carolyn Relyea Wilson and the Omni Parker House, 2019), 17-30; James W. Spring, *Boston and the Parker House. A Chronicle of Those Who Have Lived on that Historic Spot Where the New Parker House Now Stands in Boston* (Boston: J. R. Whipple Corporation, 1927), 122, 139-144, 165; and Jefferson Williamson, *The American Hotel. An Anecdotal History* (New York and London: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), 155-156.

the Tudor Building at Court Square, later the site of Young's Hotel. Parker acquired the basement-level café in 1832, renaming it Parker's Restaurant. As Parker House historian Susan Wilson noted, this restaurant was where Parker "learned the ropes, sharpened his entrepreneurial skills, and developed a following of fans that adored both his food and service."<sup>3</sup> In 1854, Parker expanded his business dealings to the south side of nearby School Street, purchasing the John Mico Mansion (1704), then a boarding house previously known, from 1829 to 1844, as the Boylston Hotel. Parker replaced the building with a five-story, marble-front hotel, which opened October 8, 1855.

Parker's modern first-class hotel was situated only 150 feet from Boston's first example of such a hotel, the Tremont House (opened 1829; Isaiah Rogers, architect; demolished 1894), described as the largest hotel in the country at the time of its construction. Occupying the southwest corner parcel at Beacon and Tremont Streets, abutting Granary Burying Ground (1660), the Tremont House offered a number of innovations, as the first American hotel with a formal hotel lobby that was not chiefly a bar-room, French cuisine in the dining room, and free soap provided with the bowls and pitchers in the guest rooms. Tremont House had eliminated the stables typically associated with inns of an earlier generation, along with the group accommodations that often resulted in travelers' sharing the same guest room, and sometimes the same bed, with strangers.<sup>4</sup>

With the intent of providing updated first-class surroundings and enhanced personal service, Harvey Parker and his business partner, John F. Mills, distinguished their hotel with innovations in pricing and fine dining.<sup>5</sup> Introducing both the European Plan and the à la carte menu to Boston, they established the Parker House as the leading dining location in the city. The European Plan of accommodations provided hotel guests with separate charges for their room and cooked-to-order meals, in contrast to the American Plan then prevalent in the United States, in which meals offered from a limited menu (and on a rigid schedule) were provided with the room charge for a single fee. The à la carte menu allowed guests to order and pay only for what they ate, at any time of the day or evening, a significant shift in catering to customers. In addition to chambers and parlors providing hotel accommodations for about 100 men, the Parker House initially offered two restaurants – one public and the other for "special accommodation of ladies, or ladies accompanied by gentlemen" – along with numerous private dinner and supper rooms for clubs and societies.<sup>6</sup> A café and lunch counter were later added.

The Parker House thrived as a premier space for hosting functions in Boston, due in part to the separation of dining and room charges, which attracted diners who were not guests of the hotel.<sup>7</sup> Dining clubs propelled the early popularity and widespread recognition of the Parker House, chief among them the Saturday Club, a monthly gathering of Boston intellectuals, including poets, writers, and philosophers who organized *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1857. Notable founders and early members included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Samuel Gray Ward, Horatio Woodman, Louis Agassiz, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and Henry

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<sup>3</sup> Wilson, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Williamson, 14-27.

<sup>5</sup> For more detailed accounts of the dining innovations at the Parker House, briefly summarized above, see James C. O'Connell, *Dining Out in Boston. A Culinary History* (Hanover, NH and London: University Press of New England, 2017), 39-43, and Susan Wilson, *Heaven, By Hotel Standards* (Boston: Susan Carolyn Relyea Wilson and the Omni Parker House, 2019), 24-27.

<sup>6</sup> "Parker House, Boston," Advertisement, *Boston Herald* (April 24, 1856 [sic]), reproduced in Spring, 133.

<sup>7</sup> O'Connell, 42.

Wadsworth Longfellow. The Saturday Club began meeting at the Parker House – when William D. Ticknor and James T. Fields maintained their bookstore and publishing house just down School Street, at the Old Corner Bookstore, 277-285 Washington Street (1718, BOS.2127)<sup>8</sup> – and ultimately shifted to the Union Club in 1902.<sup>9</sup> The hotel's advantageous position diagonally across School Street from (Old) City Hall, 41-45 School Street (1862, BOS.1977) from 1865 to 1968, ensured politicians and business executives joined the literati at its dining tables. Members of charitable societies, trade organizations, financial and business institutions, alumni associations, military regiments, sports clubs, and other groups met monthly or annually at the Parker House, and society events such as wedding receptions and private parties filled the hotel's function spaces from the mid-19th century onward.

Known for serving excellent cuisine and fine wines, the Parker House introduced menu items during this period that came to be associated with the hotel in popular culture nationwide. French chef Augustine François Anezin (1824-1881) ran the kitchen from 1865 until his death. His tenure featured development of the Parker House roll, a sponge-based, slightly sweet dinner roll. The recipe was subsequently adapted and distributed in cookbooks of the Boston Cooking School authored by its early principals, Mary Johnson Bailey Lincoln (copyrighted 1883, published 1896) and Fannie Merritt Farmer. Also attributed to Anezin's bake staff is the creation of Boston cream pie, known variously as cream pie and chocolate cream pie, with vanilla custard spread between two layers of yellow sponge cake and the whole frosted with chocolate glaze. In 1996, the cream pie was named the official dessert of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Local tradition holds that the Parker House kitchen coined the term "scrod" to describe white-fleshed fish on the menu, though that claim has not been substantiated.<sup>10</sup>

Touring thespians, musicians, composers, and authors often were guests at the Parker House, given the hotel's proximity to Boston theaters and lecture halls. Charlotte Cushman, Sarah Bernhardt, Edwin Booth, Charles Dickens, and composer Jacques Offenbach were among those who stayed at the Parker House during their professional engagements. A plaque marking the door to the Dickens suite, occupied by Charles Dickens in 1867-1868 during his last visit to the United States, caught the attention of the demolition crew preparing the site for construction of the new (1927) hotel. Without the knowledge of hotel management, the door was turned over to the Bostonian Society and remained in storage for nearly ninety years before its return to the Parker House in 2015 and installation in the lower-level Historical Gallery.<sup>11</sup>

In the late 1850s and 1860s, Harvey Parker had routinely acquired abutting parcels that allowed for extension of his hotel footprint, not only east to Chapman Place, but also south to Bosworth Street (formerly Montgomery Place), and west to Tremont Street. He reportedly induced the City of Boston to extend Chapman Place, formerly a dead-end, through to Bosworth Street in 1882, giving Parker's hotel frontage on four streets. The small but highly desired corner parcel at School and Tremont streets, however, was not purchased until 1883, when Parker succeeded in acquiring the Thomas Burnham bookstore. Before his death, Parker engaged Boston architect Gridley J. F. Bryant

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<sup>8</sup> Wilson, 47.

<sup>9</sup> "Guide to the Collection - Historical Sketch." Saturday Club records, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, 24-26, 30; O'Connell, 43; Mrs. D. A. Lincoln, *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896), 70.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson, 54.

to design the new marble-faced corner block addition (1885-1886, demolished), which rose nine stories and featured a multi-tier oriel window at the highly visible corner. The expansion allowed the Parker House to provide suites for families as well as quarters for transient guests.<sup>12</sup>

Following the death of John F. Mills in 1876, Harvey Parker entered into a partnership with his nephew, Edward O. Punchard, and the longtime hotel steward, Joseph H. Beckman, who led the enterprise into the next generation. Harvey Parker died at his residence at 141 Boylston Street on May 31, 1884, leaving his wife, Julia Ann (Brown) Parker, but predeceased by their sons. He was buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery. Parker left \$100,000 to the Museum of Fine Arts, from an estate valued at \$1.2 million, including houses in Chelsea.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Joseph Reed Whipple and the J. R. Whipple Corporation (1884 to 1925)***

The strength of the Parker House traditions carried the business after Harvey Parker's death, with the trustees of his estate retaining ownership of the real estate until 1925, and new management taking over the operation of the hotel. Joseph Reed Whipple (1842-1912) became proprietor in 1891. He formed the J. Reed Whipple Company to consolidate management of the Parker House and two other hotels he owned nearby: Young's Hotel at Court Square (demolished 1927), and the Hotel Touraine, 62 Boylston Street (1897, BOS.2248). At the Parker House, the Whipple Company oversaw construction of the ten-story Annex, 5 Bosworth Street (1897, BOS.1570), and renovation of the remaining 19th-century interiors (1902). Born in New Boston, New Hampshire, Whipple, known as Reed, settled in the Boston area in 1860, working for a Roxbury grocer. He started as an oyster opener at the Parker House, moving up to the hotel steward by 1869, serving in that position for nine years. Whipple was known as "Mr. Parker's right hand man"<sup>14</sup> when he left in 1876 after eleven years to embark on his first hotel acquisition, purchasing Young's Hotel with Parker House colleague George G. Hall.<sup>15</sup> The partners also briefly managed the Adams House hotel on Washington Street from 1883 to 1887. Continuing his hotel management business independently, Whipple supplied the Parker House, Young's, and Hotel Touraine kitchens with products from farms he owned in his New Hampshire hometown and in Lexington, Mass.

Due to the presence of the Parker House Annex, which is the oldest extant section of the hotel and remained open during construction of the new Parker House hotel from November 1925 to May 1927, the Parker House recorded continuous hotel operation on this site from 1855 to 2020 (when it temporarily shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic). J. Reed Whipple engaged the Boston architecture firm of Winslow & Wetherell to design the Parker House Annex (1897) at the southern end of the hotel, expanding the building's footprint to Bosworth Street. The ten-story fireproof addition, then the tallest building in the immediate vicinity, was finished with a new entrance on Bosworth Street, a staircase of Italian marble, bathrooms in guest rooms, and a roof-top garden intended for use as a "sun parlor."<sup>16</sup> The same year, the J.R. Whipple Company began construction of

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<sup>12</sup> "Enlarging the Parker House. Changes for the comfort of the guests proposed by the proprietors." *Boston Daily Globe* (1872-1922), Dec 02 1883, 15. ProQuest. Web. 22 July 2020.

<sup>13</sup> "Harvey D. Parker's Will: He leaves \$100,000 to the Museum of Fine Arts - Other bequests." *Boston Daily Globe* (1872-1922), Jun 05 1884, 3. ProQuest. Web. 22 July 2020.

<sup>14</sup> "J. Reed Whipple dead. Veteran Boston hotel man fails to recover after operation." *Boston Daily Globe* (1872-1922), Jun 16 1912, 3. ProQuest. Web. 27 July 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Inventory forms for Parker House Hotel (BOS.1973) and Parker House Annex (BOS.1570).

<sup>16</sup> "Every known convenience. New addition to the Parker House will make a model hostelry." *Boston Daily Globe* (1872-1922), Dec 7, 1895, 9. ProQuest. Web. 27 July 2020.

the Hotel Touraine on Boylston Street, also designed by Winslow & Wetherell. A successor firm, Winslow & Bigelow, designed the renovation and redecorating of remaining 19th-century spaces at the Parker House (demolished) in 1902.

At the time of his death, J. Reed Whipple was planning construction of another hotel to add to his chain, on land he had acquired at Newbury and Arlington streets; the Back Bay site would later be developed by other interests as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, 15 Arlington Street (1927, BOS.3913). Whipple was among the most prominent hotel men in the United States, and, like Harvey Parker, widely known for his affinity for details and his thorough knowledge of every aspect of his hotel operations, leading *The Boston Globe* to observe, “One never knew whether to look for him in the kitchen, the cellar or the office.”<sup>17</sup> In 1920, Northeastern Hotel Corporation formed to acquire Young’s Hotel, the Parker House, and Hotel Touraine, quickly changing its name to the J. R. Whipple Corporation. The J. R. Whipple Corporation took title to the old Parker House on October 2, 1925 and closed the hotel on November 23, 1925 to begin demolition for the new construction.<sup>18</sup>

### ***The New Parker House (1925 to present)***

Building on the seventy-year reputation of Harvey Parker’s hotel business, the Parker House opened anew on May 12, 1927.<sup>19</sup> Claude M. Hart (1865-1928), general manager and president of the J. R. Whipple Corporation, spent thirty-seven years at the Parker House; he had previously worked for J. Reed Whipple at Young’s Hotel. The Boston architectural firm of G. Henri Desmond and Israel P. Lord designed the fourteen-story, 800-room hotel, incorporating at its southeast corner the Annex (1897) on Bosworth Street, which remained in operation during demolition of Harvey Parker’s expanded hotel building and the new construction. The George A. Fuller Company was the contractor.

The fireproof building included storefronts on the ground floor, and interior common spaces displayed oak and walnut paneling, elaborate bas-relief ornament on plaster ceilings, bronze elevator doors, and an “Early American” decorating and furniture scheme typical of the Colonial Revival. A multi-tier oriel window at the corner of School and Tremont Streets, extending from the sixth through twelfth floors and offering sweeping views of the cityscape, evoked a similar feature at the same location of the demolished 1886 building (see above). In 1947, portions of the terra-cotta ornament on this oriel fell to the sidewalk, leading to removal, for safety reasons, of the entire oriel and ornament on the shaft and crown of the building.<sup>20</sup>

Glenwood J. Sherrard (1895-1958), a Dorchester native, purchased the Parker House through his company in 1933. The J. R. Whipple Corporation had consolidated business operations by closing Young’s Hotel when the new Parker House opened, yet financial difficulties during the Depression led to a mortgage foreclosure in January 1933, whereupon the Parker House became bank-owned

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<sup>17</sup> “J. Reed Whipple dead.”

<sup>18</sup> Suffolk deeds, 4729:481 (1925); “Old Parker House Will Close Today.” *New York Times* (1923-Current file), Nov 23 1925, 12. ProQuest. Web. 20 July 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Except as noted otherwise, sources for this section are Susan Wilson, *Heaven, By Hotel Standards* (Boston: Susan Carolyn Relyea Wilson and the Omni Parker House, 2019), 93-97, 104-109; “New Parker House Opens This Morning.” *Boston Daily Globe* (1923-1927), May 12 1927, 11. ProQuest. Web. 20 July 2020; and “Keys of New Parker House Dropped into Boston Harbor.” *Boston Daily Globe* (1923-1927), May 13 1927, 17. ProQuest. Web. 20 July 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Inventory form for Parker House Hotel (BOS.1973).



and the Hotel Touraine carried on under separate ownership. Already an established hotel man, Sherrard returned to Boston from his tenure as managing director and president of the Hamilton Hotel in Hamilton, Bermuda, and president of the Bermuda Hotel Association. With the repeal of Prohibition in late 1933, Sherrard brought back Desmond and Lord to reconfigure the lower-level grille room at the Parker House into a tap room, add a new cocktail room to the top story, and design the rooftop ballroom (1935), the first of its kind in Boston. Glenwood Sherrard, whose Boston hotel portfolio also included The Somerset on Commonwealth Avenue and the Hotel Bellevue on Beacon Street, presided over the Parker House's centennial celebration held in 1956, one year late due to an often-repeated error in an earlier published history of the hotel.<sup>21</sup>

While the famous and infamous individuals who stayed, dined, celebrated, or worked at the Parker House in the 20th century are too numerous to mention, the hotel's continual association with Massachusetts politics, given its location on the direct line between Old City Hall and the Massachusetts State House, adds greatly to its historical significance. James Michael Curley (1874-1958), who served the city and Commonwealth as a "common councilor, alderman, state representative, congressman, Massachusetts governor, four-time Boston mayor, and two-time prison inmate,"<sup>22</sup> was a constant presence at the hotel and had lunch daily in the main dining room. Edwin O'Connor's novel, *The Last Hurrah* (1956), with a protagonist loosely based on Curley, is memorialized in the eponymous longtime Parker House bar, established in 1971. In a 1992 letter to Parker House manager Paul Sacco, U. S. Senator Edward M. Kennedy observed, "The Parker House has a significant place in some of the happiest memories of my family." Those memories were political, among them John F. Kennedy's announcement of his first candidacy for the U. S. Congress (1946), and personal, such as his proposal of marriage to Jacqueline Bouvier (1953) and subsequent bachelor's party.<sup>23</sup> More recently, events of political importance include a reception honoring the retirement from politics of three-term Massachusetts governor and U. S. presidential candidate Michael Dukakis (1991); announcement of U. S. Senator Paul Tsongas's withdrawal from the presidential race (1992); gubernatorial campaign events for future Massachusetts governors Mitt Romney, Kerry Healey, and Deval Patrick; and the inauguration breakfast for re-elected Governor Charles Baker (2019).

From 1968 to 1996, the Parker House was under the ownership of the Dunfey Family Corporation and its successors and acquired companies. The corporation – operated by brothers John ("Jack"), Bud, Bob, Walter, and Jerry Dunfey – purchased the nationwide Omni Hotel chain in the 1980s, and positioned the Parker House as the chain's flagship property. In 1996, Robert B. Rowling and TRT Holdings, Inc. of Dallas, Texas acquired the Omni chain and subsequently renovated the Parker House.<sup>24</sup> Building preservation work begun in 1996 included a roof replacement project and "repairs at the brick masonry, decorative cast stone window surrounds, copper roof, window units, structural steel, and a full replacement of the cast stone cornice."<sup>25</sup> The interior of the Parker House was also reconfigured from 800 guest rooms into 551 larger guest rooms and suites. In 2008, the Omni Parker House Hotel celebrated the completion of a \$30 million renovation and restoration

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<sup>21</sup> Wilson, 95-96, 104-105.

<sup>22</sup> Wilson, 62.

<sup>23</sup> Wilson, 59-60, 67.

<sup>24</sup> Wilson, 96-97, 106-108.

<sup>25</sup> "Repair of Historic Masonry Facade and Window Replacement," WJE, accessed October 26, 2021, <https://www.wje.com/projects/detail/omni-parker-house-hotel>.

project which included repointing the masonry, restoring and remounting the decorative rooftop cornices, and updating interior furnishings and artwork.<sup>26</sup>

### ***Winslow & Wetherell***

The Parker House Annex was designed by the prestigious Boston firm of Winslow & Wetherell consisted of Walter T. Winslow (1843-1909) and George H. Wetherell (1854-1930), who practiced under that name from 1888 to 1898. Together with their successor firm Winslow, Wetherell, & Bigelow, the two architects were responsible for many distinguished commercial and civic buildings in Boston in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Walter T. Winslow trained in the office of Boston architect Nathaniel J. Bradlee, one of the city's best and most prolific mid-19th century architects, and studied in Paris before returning to Bradlee's firm, where he became a junior partner. Bradlee & Winslow was active in rebuilding downtown Boston after the fire of 1872. George H. Wetherell (1854-1930), who had studied architecture at MIT and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, was made a partner in 1884, and the firm's name was changed to Bradlee, Winslow & Wetherell. Bradlee is thought to have continued advising the firm after he officially retired in 1886, as the firm name did not change again until he died in 1888 and the business became known as Winslow & Wetherell. In 1898, the pair elevated to partnership Henry Forbes Bigelow, who had studied in Europe after graduating from MIT's school of architecture in 1888. The trio practiced as Winslow, Wetherell & Bigelow from 1898 to 1901, when Wetherell left the firm. From 1901 to 1908, the office was known as Winslow & Bigelow.

The firm of Winslow & Wetherell played a significant role in shaping the late 19th-century streetscape in the central business district, especially the Ladder Blocks east of Boston Common and Piano Row south of the Common. MACRIS lists a total of 112 properties in which Winslow participated in his several architectural partnerships; these range from commercial buildings to industrial structures, hotels, residences, town halls, libraries, and a hospital. Winslow & Wetherell (with 49 affiliated buildings on MACRIS) was known for its large commercial buildings and hotels in Boston, including the Baker Chocolate Company factory in Dorchester (1880s – 1910s, BOS.6747, 5638, inter alia; NRDIS), the New England Building in Kansas City, Missouri (1887), the Auchmuty Building on Kingston Street (1889, BOS.1819), the Steinert Hall office, showroom, and concert hall complex on Boylston Street (1896, BOS.2260; NRDIS), the Proctor Building on Bedford Street (1897, BOS.1558), the Jewelers Building on Washington Street (1897), and the Hotel Touraine (1897, BOS.2248); Bigelow was also involved in the latter project. The best-known project of Winslow, Wetherell & Bigelow was the South Street Building, which is particularly distinctive for its use of steel framing (1899, BOS.1982; NRDIS); they also designed a commercial building at 62-72 Essex Street (1899, BOS.1704; NRDIS).

Winslow & Bigelow is well known for the Board of Trade Building on Broad Street (1901, BOS.1580; NRDIS), the Oliver Ditson Building on Tremont Street (1903, BOS.2299; NRDIS), the office of Kidder, Peabody & Co. on State Street, the Compton Building on Devonshire Street (1902-1903), the Post Office Square Building on Federal Street (1904, BOS.1893), the National Shawmut Bank Building on Water Street (1906, BOS.15948; NRDOE), and the Boston Edison Electric Illuminating Co. office building on Boylston Street (1906, BOS.2246; NR).

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<sup>26</sup> "Omni Parker House Celebrates \$30 Million Restoration and Renovation," Omni Hotels & Resorts, May 6, 2008, <https://www.omnihotels.com/media-center/recent-news/080507>.

### **Desmond & Lord**

The J.R. Whipple Corporation's general manager and president, Claude M. Hart, collaborated with principal architect G. Henri Desmond (1875-1965) in the design for the new hotel building in 1925. Before starting his own architecture firm about 1907, Desmond worked as a draftsman in the Boston office of Edward I. Wilson (1893), and a draftsman (by 1896) and architect (by 1901) with Winslow & Wetherell and its successor firm, Winslow & Bigelow, where he rose to the position of chief of design. It appears likely Desmond had a role in earlier commissions at the Parker House – the 1897 Annex and 1902 interior renovations – that led to selection of his firm as architect for the new hotel. In 1916, Desmond entered into a partnership in 1916 with Israel P. Lord (1881-1973), a design instructor at MIT who previously worked as an architect for the Boston firm of Codman and Despradelle.

Desmond & Lord's commissions included the Hotel Lincolnshire, 20-26 Charles Street, Beacon Hill (1924, BOS.15954, LHD, NRDIS, NHL); the 1936 addition to the Suffolk County Courthouse, Pemberton Square (BOS.1573); apartment buildings on Commonwealth Avenue; the Tribunal Building, St. John's Seminary, Brighton (1929, BOS.8532); and municipal buildings such as schools, fire stations, and the Hyde Park Municipal Building, 11 Central Street, Cleary Square (1921, BOS.11069). The firm designed buildings at three state hospitals (Foxborough, Grafton, and Northampton), and the Eastern Airlines Terminal at Logan Airport (with Minoru Yamasaki). The firm also designed several bridges, with Boston examples including the Congress Street Bascule Bridge; Dorchester Bay Bridge, Morrissey Boulevard (1927, BOS.9189); and Boston University-Cottage Farm Bridge, Boston-Cambridge (1927, BOS.9327). After the original principals retired, Desmond and Lord became widely known after World War II for its work in site planning, including partnering with architect Paul Rudolph on the Lindemann Mental Health Center, 25 Staniford Street, Government Center (1970, BOS.4203). The firm also collaborated with Paul Rudolph as consulting architect and designer of many campus buildings at University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.

### **George A. Fuller Company**

The main block of the Parker House was constructed by the George A. Fuller Company, a nationally-known firm of builders founded in Chicago and later headquartered in New York City. Offices were at one time also located in Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Washington D. C., and St. Louis. George Fuller (1851-1900) studied at MIT for a year; worked for a short time for an architect uncle, J.E. Fuller, in Worcester; and subsequently entered the office of Peabody & Stearns, where he became partner at the age of 25 and managed the New York office. In 1882, he formed a contracting company that built some of the largest structures in Chicago (including buildings at the 1893 world's fair), New York, Boston, St. Louis, and Pittsburgh; it was also active in Worcester, Atlanta, and Buffalo.

In addition to its technological capabilities, the firm was innovative in its management practices. According to architectural historian Gail Fenske,

“The George A. Fuller Company pioneered the single contract system of general contract construction in the Tacoma Building of 1886-1889. For the first time, Fuller built a skyscraper within a contractually predetermined period of time for a predetermined price, then ‘delivered’ it as a product to its owner, the Chicago lawyer and businessman, Wirt D.

Walker, ready to occupy. Subsequently, the Fuller Company built up its reputation on taking full financial responsibility for such projects, either on its own or through letting subcontracts to others.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the Parker House, the Fuller Company's known commercial projects in Boston included three for Winslow & Bigelow (successor to Winslow & Wetherell; see above): the Oliver Ditson Building, South Street Building, and Board of Trade Building (the location of Fuller's Boston office). MACRIS lists 43 properties built by Fuller, of which 27 are in Boston, including the Congress Street Trust Building, the Second Brazer Building by Cass Gilbert, the Jewelers Building, the National Shawmut Bank Building on State Street, the Minot Building on Devonshire Street, the Suffolk County Courthouse, United Shoe Machinery Building on Federal Street, the Hotel Essex on Atlantic Avenue, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel on Boylston Street, and the Copley Plaza on St. James Avenue.

Elsewhere, Fuller & Co. built Pennsylvania Station, the Fuller Building (better known as the Flat Iron Building), the U.N. Secretariat Building, and Lever House in Manhattan; the U. S. Supreme Court Building, Lincoln Memorial, and National Archives Building in Washington, D. C.; and roads, bridges, and dams in Cuba and Canada. The company is still in business today.

### **3.2 Architectural (or Other) Significance**

Located at a highly prominent downtown intersection, the Parker House complex is architecturally significant as a sophisticated example of hotel design in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and as the work of two leading Boston-area architectural firms—Winslow & Wetherell and Desmond & Lord—and of the nationally known construction firm, George A. Fuller Co.

The Parker House Annex (1897) is essentially intact and demonstrates the careful attention paid to luxury hotel design even on a small back street. The stone and cast iron elements on the Bosworth Street façade are particularly notable for the distinctive and elaborate detailing that signified that this building was part of an elegant, first-class hotel facility.

Although the hotel's main building at the corner of Tremont and School streets (1927) has lost considerable detail on its crowning two stories, the surviving composition is elegantly designed, well-crafted, and dominates the pedestrian-level view of the complex. The design is a tribute to both the Classical Revival style and the craftsmanship of the twenties through its sophisticated use of black granite, marble, and brass on the storefront base; classically-detailed limestone elements above; and the decorative cornice and roof parapet at the top.

### **3.3 Archaeological Sensitivity**

Downtown is archaeologically sensitive for ancient Native American and historical archaeological sites. There are possibilities for the survival of ancient Native and historical archaeological sites in the rare areas where development has not destroyed them. As the ancient and historical core of Shawmut, now Boston, any surviving archaeological deposits are likely significant. Any historical sites that survive may document 17th-19th century history related to Boston's colonial,

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in the Boston CBD Survey Update Form for 33-59 Congress Street, continuation sheet 4.

Revolutionary, early Republic history especially yard spaces where features including cisterns and privies may remain intact and significant archaeological deposits. These sites represent the histories of home-life, artisans, industries, enslaved people, immigrants, and Native peoples spanning multiple centuries. Downtown's shoreline may contain early submerged ancient Native archaeological sites, shipwrecks, piers, and other marine deposits that may be historically significant.

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

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

B. Structures, sites, objects, man-made or natural, at which events occurred that have made an outstanding contribution to, and are identified prominently with, or which best represent some important aspect of the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, the commonwealth, the New England region or the nation.

The Parker House is significant for being the site of the longest continuously operating hotel in the United States until the COVID-19 pandemic, and for its associations with numerous important aspects of the cultural, political, and social history of the city, the commonwealth, and the nation. Throughout the years, the Parker House has been the host of many prominent figures in History including Charles Dickens, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Mary Todd Lincoln and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Charles Dickens lived in the Parker House while writing his famed work *A Christmas Carol* and performed it for members of The Saturday Club at the Parker House. Important historical figures who worked at the Omni Parker House include Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh. The products of its kitchens, most notably the Parker House Roll and Boston Cream Pie, gained national attention, and the dining clubs and company and trade organization boards that met at the Parker House propelled the hotel's early popularity and widespread recognition in the region as a premier space for hosting functions. Located between Old City Hall and the Massachusetts State House, the hotel's long association with Massachusetts political events and politicians, including James Michael Curley, the Kennedys, and others, also contributes to its significance.

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 Parker House is significant as an example of the high-style materials and detailing of Classical Revival commercial architecture in Boston (see sections 2.2 and 3.2). It is also a notable work of several important designers and builders: i) the firm of Winslow & Wetherell, who played a significant role in shaping the late 19th-

century streetscape in the central business district; ii) the Boston-based architect G. Henri Desmond, who designed numerous buildings in the Boston area; and iii) the George A. Fuller Company, a nationally-known firm of builders founded in Chicago and later headquartered in New York City.

## **4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS**

### **4.1 Current Assessed Value**

According to the City of Boston's Assessor's Records, the property at 60 School Street (parcel 0304696000) where the Parker House is located has a total assessed value of \$124,621,400 with the land valued at \$33,463,200 and the building valued at \$91,158,200 for fiscal year 2021.

### **4.2 Current Ownership**

The Parker House is owned by the Omni Boston Corporation, at Omni Hotel Management Corporation, 4001 Maple Ave #500, Dallas, Texas 75219.

## **5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT**

### **5.1 Background**

Since 1855, the Parker House has served as a commercial property, with the hotel encompassing guest rooms, dining and function rooms, and support spaces, as well as restaurants.

### **5.2 Zoning**

Parcel number #0304696000 is located in the Midtown Cultural zoning district, a General Area subdistrict, and the following overlay district: Restricted Parking District. The parcel is also located in a Parking Freeze Zone named the Boston Proper Zone.

### **5.3 Planning Issues**

On April 15, 1981, a petition to Landmark the Parker House at 60 School Street was submitted. At a public hearing on May 5, 1981, the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept the Parker House for further study.

Since 2006, the Parker House has been a member of Historic Hotels of America, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Historic Hotels of America program recognizes hotels that are historically significant, but it is an honorary designation that does not provide any regulatory protections.



## **6.0 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

### **6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission**

#### **A. Designation**

The Commission retains the option of designating the Parker House as a Landmark. Designation shall correspond to Assessor's parcel 0304696000 and shall address the following exterior elements hereinafter referred to as the "Specified Features":

- The exterior envelope of the building.

#### **B. Denial of Designation**

The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Specified Features.

#### **C. National Register Listing**

The Commission could recommend that the property be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, if it is not already.

#### **D. Preservation Plan**

The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.

#### **E. Site Interpretation**

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

### **6.2 Impact of alternatives**

#### **A. Designation**

Designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the Parker House in accordance with the Standards and Criteria adopted as part of the designation.

#### **B. Denial of Designation**

Without designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the Specified Features, or extend guidance to the owners under chapter 772.

#### **C. National Register Listing**

The Parker House could be 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 19 Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. National

Register listing does not provide any design review for changes undertaken by private owners at their own expense.

**D. Preservation Plan**

A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. It does not carry regulatory oversight.

**E. Site Interpretation**

A comprehensive interpretation of the history and significance of the Parker House could be introduced at the site.

## **7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. That the Parker House be designated by the Boston Landmarks Commission as a Landmark, under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended (see Section 3.4 of this report for Relationship to Criteria for Designation);
2. That the boundaries corresponding to Assessor's parcel 0304696000 be adopted without modification;
3. And that the Standards and Criteria recommended by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission are accepted.

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

### 8.1 Introduction

Per sections 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the enabling statute (Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended) Standards and Criteria must be adopted for each Designation which shall be applied by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes to the historic resource. The Standards and Criteria both identify and establish guidelines for those features which must be preserved and/or enhanced to maintain the viability of the Designation. The Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.<sup>28</sup> Before a Certificate of Design Approval or Certificate of Exemption can be issued for such changes, the changes must be reviewed by the Commission with regard to their conformance to the purpose of the statute.

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

Proposed alterations related to zoning, building code, accessibility, safety, or other regulatory requirements do not supersede the Standards and Criteria or take precedence over Commission decisions.

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

### 8.2 Levels of Review

The Commission has no desire to interfere with the normal maintenance procedures for the property. In order to provide some guidance for property owners, managers or developers, and the Commission, the activities which might be construed as causing an alteration to the physical character of the exterior have been categorized to indicate the level of review required, based on the potential impact of the proposed work. Note: the examples for each category are not intended to act as a comprehensive list; see Section 8.2.D.

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

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, [www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf).

1. Activities associated with normal cleaning and routine maintenance.
    - a. For building maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind repainting, staining or refinishing of wood or metal elements, lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, etc.
    - b. For landscape maintenance, such activities might include the following: normal cleaning of paths and sidewalks, etc. (no power washing above 700 PSI, no chemical or abrasive cleaning), non-invasive inspections, in-kind repair of caulking, in-kind spot replacement of cracked or broken paving materials, in-kind repainting or refinishing of site furnishings, site lighting bulb replacements or in-kind glass repair/replacement, normal plant material maintenance, such as pruning, fertilizing, mowing and mulching, and in-kind replacement of existing plant materials, etc.
  2. Routine activities associated with special events or seasonal decorations which do not disturb the ground surface, are to remain in place for less than six weeks, and do not result in any permanent alteration or attached fixtures.
- B. Activities which may be determined by the staff to be eligible for a Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review, requiring an application to the Commission:
1. Maintenance and repairs involving no change in design, material, color, ground surface or outward appearance.
  2. In-kind replacement or repair.
  3. Phased restoration programs will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review of the entire project plan and specifications; subsequent detailed review of individual construction phases may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff.
  4. Repair projects of a repetitive nature will require an application to the Commission and may require full Commission review; subsequent review of these projects may be eligible for Administrative Review by BLC staff, where design, details, and specifications do not vary from those previously approved.
  5. Temporary installations or alterations that are to remain in place for longer than six weeks.
  6. Emergency repairs that require temporary tarps, board-ups, etc. may be eligible for Certificate of Exemption or Administrative Review; permanent repairs will require review as outlined in Section 8.2. In the case of

emergencies, BLC staff should be notified as soon as possible to assist in evaluating the damage and to help expedite repair permits as necessary.

C. Activities requiring an application and full Commission review:

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

D. Activities not explicitly listed above:

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

E. Concurrent Jurisdiction

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

### **8.3 Standards and Criteria**

The following Standards and Criteria are based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.<sup>29</sup> These Standards and Criteria apply to all exterior building alterations that are visible from any existing or proposed street or way that is open to public travel.

#### **8.3.1 General Standards**

1. Items under Commission review include but are not limited to the following: exterior walls (masonry, wood, and architectural metals); windows; entrances/doors; porches/stoops; lighting; storefronts; curtain walls; roofs; roof projections; additions; accessibility; site work and landscaping; demolition; and archaeology. Items not anticipated in the Standards and Criteria may be subject to review, refer to Section 8.2 and Section 9.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces and spatial relationships that

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<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, et al. *THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR THE TREATMENT OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES WITH GUIDELINES FOR PRESERVING, REHABILITATING, RESTORING & RECONSTRUCTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS*, Secretary of the Interior, 2017, [www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/treatment-guidelines-2017.pdf).

characterize a property shall be avoided. See Section 8.4, List of Character-defining Features.

3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved. (The term “later contributing features” will be used to convey this concept.)
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material shall match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.
8. Staff archaeologists shall review proposed changes to a property that may impact known and potential archaeological sites. Archaeological surveys may be required to determine if significant archaeological deposits are present within the area of proposed work. Significant archaeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be required before the proposed work can commence. See section 9.0 Archaeology.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of a property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
11. Original or later contributing signs, marquees, and canopies integral to the building ornamentation or architectural detailing shall be preserved.
12. New signs, banners, marquees, canopies, and awnings shall be compatible in size, design, material, location, and number with the character of the building, allowing for contemporary expression. New signs shall not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.
13. Property owners shall take necessary precautions to prevent demolition by neglect of maintenance and repairs. Demolition of protected buildings in violation of Chapter 772 of

the Acts of 1975, as amended, is subject to penalty as cited in Section 10 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended.

### **8.3.2 Masonry at exterior walls (including but not limited to stone, brick, terra cotta, concrete, adobe, stucco, and mortar)**

1. All original or later contributing masonry materials shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces and ornamentation shall be repaired, if necessary, by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the masonry using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing masonry materials, features, details, surfaces, and ornamentation shall be replaced with materials and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Sound original mortar shall be retained.
7. Deteriorated mortar shall be carefully removed by hand raking the joints.
8. Use of mechanical hammers shall not be allowed. Use of mechanical saws may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.
9. Repointing mortar shall duplicate the original mortar in strength, composition, color, texture, joint size, joint profile, and method of application.
10. Sample panels of raking the joints and repointing shall be reviewed and approved by the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission.
11. Cleaning of masonry is discouraged and should only be performed when necessary to halt deterioration.
12. If the building is to be cleaned, the masonry shall be cleaned with the gentlest method possible.
13. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
14. Sandblasting (wet or dry), wire brushing, or other similar abrasive cleaning methods shall not be permitted. Doing so can change the visual quality of the material and damage the surface of the masonry and mortar joints.



15. Waterproofing or water repellents are strongly discouraged. These treatments are generally not effective in preserving masonry and can cause permanent damage. The Commission does recognize that in extraordinary circumstances their use may be required to solve a specific problem. Samples of any proposed treatment shall be reviewed by the Commission before application.
16. In general, painting masonry surfaces shall not be allowed. Painting masonry surfaces will be considered only when there is documentary evidence that this treatment was used at some significant point in the history of the property.
17. New penetrations for attachments through masonry are strongly discouraged. When necessary, attachment details shall be located in mortar joints, rather than through masonry material; stainless steel hardware is recommended to prevent rust jacking. New attachments to cast concrete are discouraged and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
18. Deteriorated stucco shall be repaired by removing the damaged material and patching with new stucco that duplicates the old in strength, composition, color, and texture.
19. Deteriorated adobe shall be repaired by using mud plaster or a compatible lime-plaster adobe render, when appropriate.
20. Deteriorated concrete shall be repaired by cutting damaged concrete back to remove the source of deterioration, such as corrosion on metal reinforcement bars. The new patch shall be applied carefully so that it will bond satisfactorily with and match the historic concrete.
21. Joints in concrete shall be sealed with appropriate flexible sealants and backer rods, when necessary.

### **8.3.3 Wood at exterior walls**

1. All original or later contributing wood materials shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing wood surfaces, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piecing-in, consolidating, or reinforcing the wood using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing wood surfaces, features, details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail or installation.
4. When replacement of materials is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Cleaning of wood elements shall use the gentlest method possible.

7. Paint removal should be considered only where there is paint surface deterioration or excessive layers of paint have coarsened profile details and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Coatings such as paint help protect the wood from moisture and ultraviolet light; stripping the wood bare will expose the surface to the effects of weathering.
8. Damaged or deteriorated paint should be removed to the next sound layer using the mildest method possible.
9. Propane or butane torches, sandblasting, water blasting, or other abrasive cleaning and/or paint removal methods shall not be permitted. Doing so changes the visual quality of the wood and accelerates deterioration.
10. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

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

1. All original or later contributing architectural metals shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, or reinforcing the metal using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing metal materials, features, details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, and detail or installation.
4. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Cleaning of metal elements either to remove corrosion or deteriorated paint shall use the gentlest method possible.
7. The type of metal shall be identified prior to any cleaning procedure because each metal has its own properties and may require a different treatment.
8. Non-corrosive chemical methods shall be used to clean soft metals (such as lead, tinfoil, terneplate, copper, and zinc) whose finishes can be easily damaged by abrasive methods.

9. If gentler methods have proven ineffective, then abrasive cleaning methods, such as low pressure dry grit blasting, may be allowed for hard metals (such as cast iron, wrought iron, and steel) as long as it does not abrade or damage the surface.
10. A test patch of the cleaning method(s) shall be reviewed and approved on site by staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission to ensure that no damage has resulted. Test patches shall be carried out well in advance. Ideally, the test patch should be monitored over a sufficient period of time to allow long-range effects to be predicted (including exposure to all seasons if possible).
11. Cleaning to remove corrosion and paint removal should be considered only where there is deterioration and as part of an overall maintenance program which involves repainting or applying other appropriate protective coatings. Paint or other coatings help retard the corrosion rate of the metal. Leaving the metal bare will expose the surface to accelerated corrosion.
12. Repainting should be based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

#### **8.3.5 Windows (also refer to Masonry, Wood, and Architectural Metals)**

1. The original or later contributing arrangement of window openings shall be retained.
2. Enlarging or reducing window openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) window sash or air conditioners shall not be allowed.
3. Removal of window sash and the installation of permanent fixed panels to accommodate air conditioners shall not be allowed.
4. Original or later contributing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
5. Deteriorated or missing window elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
6. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. Replacement sash for divided-light windows should have through-glass muntins or simulated divided lights with dark anodized spacer bars the same width as the muntins.
8. Tinted or reflective-coated glass shall not be allowed.
9. Metal or vinyl panning of the wood frame and molding shall not be allowed.

10. Exterior combination storm windows shall have a narrow perimeter framing that does not obscure the glazing of the primary window. In addition, the meeting rail of the combination storm window shall align with that of the primary window.
11. Storm window sashes and frames shall have a painted finish that matches the primary window sash and frame color.
12. Clear or mill finished aluminum frames shall not be allowed.
13. Window frames, sashes, and, if appropriate, shutters, should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building.

#### **8.3.6 Entrances/Doors (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Porches/Stoops)**

1. All original or later contributing entrance elements shall be preserved.
2. The original or later contributing entrance design and arrangement of the door openings shall be retained.
3. Enlarging or reducing entrance/door openings for the purpose of fitting stock (larger or smaller) doors shall not be allowed.
4. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, details and features (functional and decorative) shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
5. Deteriorated or missing entrance elements, materials, features (function and decorative) and details shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
6. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
7. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
8. Original or later contributing entrance materials, elements, features (functional and decorative) and details shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
9. Storm doors (aluminum or wood-framed) shall not be allowed on the primary entrance unless evidence shows that they had been used. They may be allowed on secondary entrances. Where allowed, storm doors shall be painted to match the color of the primary door.
10. Unfinished aluminum storm doors shall not be allowed.
11. Replacement door hardware should replicate the original or be appropriate to the style and period of the building.

12. Buzzers, alarms and intercom panels, where allowed, shall be flush mounted and appropriately located.
13. Entrance elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist, repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/entrance.

#### **8.3.7 Porches/Stoops (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, Entrances/Doors, Roofs, and Accessibility)**

1. All original or later contributing porch elements shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be retained if possible and, if necessary, repaired using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute material may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing porch and stoop materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Porch and stoop elements should be of a color based on paint seriation studies. If an adequate record does not exist repainting shall be done with colors that are appropriate to the style and period of the building/porch and stoop.

#### **8.3.8 Lighting**

1. There are several aspects of lighting related to the exterior of the building and landscape:
  - a. Lighting fixtures as appurtenances to the building or elements of architectural ornamentation.
  - b. Quality of illumination on building exterior.
  - c. Security lighting.
2. Wherever integral to the building, original or later contributing lighting fixtures shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching, piercing in or reinforcing the lighting fixture using recognized preservation methods.

3. Deteriorated or missing lighting fixtures materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration, and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute materials may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing lighting fixture materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details, and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Supplementary illumination may be added where appropriate to the current use of the building.
8. New lighting shall conform to any of the following approaches as appropriate to the building and to the current or projected use:
  - a. Reproductions of original or later contributing fixtures, based on physical or documentary evidence.
  - b. Accurate representation of the original period, based on physical or documentary evidence.
  - c. Retention or restoration of fixtures which date from an interim installation and which are considered to be appropriate to the building and use.
  - d. New lighting fixtures which are differentiated from the original or later contributing fixture in design and which illuminate the exterior of the building in a way which renders it visible at night and compatible with its environment.
9. The location of new exterior lighting shall fulfill the functional intent of the current use without obscuring the building form or architectural detailing.
10. No exposed conduit shall be allowed on the building.
11. Architectural night lighting is encouraged, provided the lighting installations minimize night sky light pollution. High efficiency fixtures, lamps and automatic timers are recommended.
12. On-site mock-ups of proposed architectural night lighting may be required.

### **8.3.9 Storefronts (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, Windows, Entrances/Doors, Porches/Stoops, Lighting, and Accessibility)**

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

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

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

**8.3.11 Roofs (also refer to Masonry, Wood, Architectural Metals, and Roof Projections)**

1. The roof shapes and original or later contributing roof material of the existing building shall be preserved.
2. Original or later contributing roofing materials such as slate, wood trim, elements, features (decorative and functional), details and ornamentation, such as cresting, shall be retained and, if necessary, repaired by patching or reinforcing using recognized preservation methods.
3. Deteriorated or missing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation.
4. When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. If using the same material is not technically or economically feasible, then compatible substitute material may be considered.
6. Original or later contributing roofing materials, elements, features (functional and decorative), details and ornamentation shall not be sheathed or otherwise obscured by other materials.
7. Unpainted mill-finished aluminum shall not be allowed for flashing, gutters and downspouts. All replacement flashing and gutters should be copper or match the original material and design (integral gutters shall not be replaced with surface-mounted).
8. External gutters and downspouts should not be allowed unless it is based on physical or documentary evidence.

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

1. New roof projections shall not be visible from the public way.
2. New mechanical equipment should be reviewed to confirm that it is no more visible than the existing.

### **8.3.13 Additions**

1. Additions can significantly alter the historic appearance of the buildings. An exterior addition should only be considered after it has been determined that the existing building cannot meet the new space requirements.
2. New additions shall be designed so that the character-defining features of the building are not radically changed, obscured, damaged or destroyed.
3. New additions should be designed so that they are compatible with the existing building, although they should not necessarily be imitative of an earlier style or period.
4. New additions shall not obscure the front of the building.
5. New additions shall be of a size, scale, and materials that are in harmony with the existing building.

### **8.3.14 Accessibility**

1. Alterations to existing buildings for the purposes of providing accessibility shall provide persons with disabilities the level of physical access to historic properties that is required under applicable law, consistent with the preservation of each property's significant historical features, with the goal of providing the highest level of access with the lowest level of impact. Access modifications for persons with disabilities shall be designed and installed to least affect the character-defining features of the property. Modifications to some features may be allowed in providing access, once a review of options for the highest level of access has been completed.
2. A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of the property:
  - a. Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
  - b. Assess the property's existing and proposed level of accessibility;
  - c. Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.
3. Because of the complex nature of accessibility, the Commission will review proposals on a case-by-case basis. The Commission recommends consulting with the following document which is available from the Commission office: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division; Preservation Brief 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible" by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA.

### **8.3.15 Renewable Energy Sources**

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



2. Before proposing renewable energy sources, the building's performance shall be assessed and measures to correct any deficiencies shall be taken. The emphasis shall be on improvements that do not result in a loss of historic fabric. A report on this work shall be included in any proposal for renewable energy sources.
3. Proposals for new renewable energy sources shall be reviewed by the Commission on a case-by-case basis for potential physical and visual impacts on the building and site.
4. Refer to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings for general guidelines.

### **8.3.16 Guidelines**

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

1. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic building conservation study and/or consult a materials conservator early in the planning process.
  - a. The Boston Landmarks Commission specifically recommends that any work on masonry, wood, metals, or windows be executed with the guidance of a professional building materials conservator.
2. Should any major restoration or construction activity be considered for a property's landscape, the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the proponents prepare a historic landscape report and/or consult a landscape historian early in the planning process.
3. The Commission will consider whether later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed. Since it is not possible to provide one general guideline, the following factors will be considered in determining whether a later addition(s) and/or alteration(s) can, or should, be removed include:
  - a. Compatibility with the original property's integrity in scale, materials and character.
  - b. Historic association with the property.
  - c. Quality in the design and execution of the addition/alteration.
  - d. Functional usefulness.

## **8.4 List of Character-defining Features**

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

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

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

The character-defining features for this historic resource include:

- 1. Architectural style and ornamentation.** The Parker House's Classical Revival style is expressed through classically-inspired detailing such as pilasters, entablatures, eared architraves, dentils, egg-and-dart molding, and acanthus leaf trim. In addition to specific elements mentioned later in this list, ornamentation on the main building also includes balustrades at the second level; decorative rosettes installed onto the brick at alternating bays on the 13<sup>th</sup> floor; three terra cotta wreaths at the 13<sup>th</sup> floor; a parapet embellished with swags and a broken scroll pediment; and a clock mounted at the balustrade level on the corner of Tremont Street and School Street. In addition to specific elements mentioned later in this list, ornamentation on the Annex building includes limestone trim with bands of floral rosettes and egg-and-dart molding at the recessed center entrance, and limestone quoins at the corners on Bosworth Street.
- 2. Cornices.** The main building has two prominent classically-detailed cornices: one between levels four and five, and the other at the roof line. The Annex building has a denticular cornice between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors; stone molding between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> floors; and an elaborate cornice at the top of the building.
- 3. Windows.** The main building's third-floor window openings are surmounted by an elaborate entablature at each opening, featuring a center panel with a bas-relief head and ribbon swags, foliated corner blocks, a dentil course, and egg-and-dart molding. The fifth-floor window openings are framed with eared architraves and a semi-circular pediment with foliated cornice molding and foliated keystone. Stained glass glazing is present on the School Street facade.
- 4. Marquee awnings.** The Parker House has two ornamental marquee-style lit awnings on Tremont Street and School Street.
- 5. Railings.** The main building of the Parker House features a cast iron railing that wraps around the North and East facades of the building. The Annex has decorative cast iron railings that span the three windows above the Bosworth Street entrance as well as the three center windows on the fifth and ninth floors, and the outer two windows on both ends of the seventh floor.
- 6. Storefronts and entrances.** There are storefront windows and public entrances located on the ground level of the main building at Tremont and School Streets. The storefront windows have ornamental brass frames with slender pilasters, decorative grillwork in the transom panels, and a marble frieze. The entrances have marble facing with rope-molded trim, and a trio of doors encased in a decorative brass frame with spiral pilasters, delicate ornamental grillwork, and foliated brackets.

7. **Light fixtures.** There are elaborate brass wall-mounted lanterns on either side of the entrance on School Street.
8. **Pedestrian connector.** A limestone-clad pedestrian walkway with a classically detailed window spans Chapman Place.
9. **Building materials and finishes.** The exterior of the Parker House is constructed from brick, brass, cast iron, copper, black granite, marble, terra cotta, and stone. The selection of these materials and the way they are detailed contribute to a sense of luxury and craftsmanship.
10. **Massing of building.** The building is built out to the boundaries of the parcel. The eastern elevation on Tremont Street has a gap in the building massing, with no construction above the third level.

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## **9.0 ARCHAEOLOGY**

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

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

## **10.0 SEVERABILITY**

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

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