

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Old City Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
School Street at Providence Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Boston

STATE: Massachusetts      CODE:      COUNTY: Suffolk      CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
City of Boston, Roger Webb, President, Architectural Heritage, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
45 Faneuil Hall Market

CITY OR TOWN: Boston      STATE: Massachusetts      CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Registry of Deeds, Suffolk County

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Pemberton Square

CITY OR TOWN: Boston      STATE: Massachusetts      CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey (14 photos) (5 data pages) (8 plans)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1961-62       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: D. C.      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old City Hall is a monumentally-scaled granite building in the French Second Empire style, about 150 feet wide and 100 feet deep, four stories high, with attic, basement, sub-basement, and a tall four-side mansard dome that rises to a height of approximately 156 feet above street level. The main (south) facade is comprised of a dominating projecting and pedimented central pavilion, five stories high and three-bays wide, and two flanking wings, each four-stories in height and three-bays in width. The center bays of each story of the pavilion are flanked by sets of paired columns and the corners of each end are decorated by paired pilasters. The first story of the main elevation is rusticated and its deep-set round arched windows are topped by keystones. The windows of the next level, also round-headed and with keystones, are two-stories in height and the openings in the wings are separated by paired pilasters. Windows of the fourth story, and also in the basement, have segmental arches. Granite modillioned cornices and entablatures project below the attic story and the wall surfaces of the fourth story are richly articulated by paired pilasters. Externally and internally the design of the Old City Hall is based on the Renaissance detail of the Louvre in Paris.

Excerpts from the architect's own description, published in 1866, follow:

"The face of the entire principal [south] front of the building, and that of the west side, toward the cemetery, are of white granite, from the celebrated quarries of Concord, New Hampshire. The basement on all sides together with the trimmings of the rear and of the east side, ... are of the same handsome material; while the ashlar or face of these two latter facades is of stone from the Old City Hall, which occupied a portion of the site on which the present edifice stands.

"The exterior walls are backed with brick, and are vaulted between the facing and brick. With very few exceptions, all the interior partitions are of brick, many of them containing air spaces which serve for ventilation of the principal apartments.

"The basement, first, second, and third stories, are wholly fireproof, their floor being composed of brick arches laid in cement, supported by iron beams. The staircase halls throughout every story are constructed in a similar manner, and with the stairs, which are of iron, are fire-proof.

"The floors of the fourth, fifth, and attic stories are of the best burnitized timber construction. The roof is also of wood, covered with copper and slate.

"The interior finish of the first or principal story of the building is in butternut. That of all the other stories is of pine.

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1862-65**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by Gridley J. F. Bryant and Arthur D. Gilman and erected in 1862-65, Old City Hall was one of the first major structures in the United States to be built in the French Second Empire style. The success of this monumentally-scaled building helped set off a nationwide program of public building in the Second Empire mode during the 1870's and 80's.

History

In 1860 a building committee appointed to procure plans and estimates for enlarging the Boston City Hall invited six architects to submit plans for the project. The plans by Gridley J. F. Bryant, proposing a new structure in the Second Empire style, modelled after the Louvre in Paris, won the competition. No further action, however, was taken on this scheme until 1862, when the building committee engaged Bryant and Arthur D. Gilman of Boston to design a new city hall in this modern style of architecture. The 1860 plan, which had proposed a building with a center pavilion, two wings, and end pavilions, was modified by eliminating the end pavilions and adding one story to each wing. The square footage per floor was thus almost identical and the basic aspects of the earlier floor plans retained.

Construction began on the foundation and basement on August 4, 1862, the cornerstone was laid on December 22 of that year, and the new City Hall was dedicated on September 18, 1865. The cost of construction had been estimated at \$160,000; actual costs, including the demolition of the old city hall, amounted to \$505,191.42. Of this sum, the architects received \$11,177. The need for additional space resulted in the construction of the City Hall Annex, a steel-frame office building type, in 1911-12. Designed by Edward T. P. Graham, the Annex was located in the rear of the Old City Hall and the structures connected by means of an enclosed bridge above street level.

In 1960 a national competition, held for designing a new and larger city hall, was won by Gerhard M. Kallman, Noel M. McKinnell, and Edward F. Knowles of New York City. The new City Hall, located adjacent to Faneuil Hall, was completed and occupied in November 1968. In early 1969 the Boston Redevelopment Authority widely advertised the proposed sale or lease of Old City Hall and requested that interested parties submit proposals for reuse of the building. After reviewing those submitted, a decision was reached by the Boston Redevelopment Board that Old City Hall

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 168.

Marjorie Drake Ross, The Book of Boston, The Victorian Period (New York, 1964), 94-95.

John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America, A Social and Cultural History (Boston and Toronto, 1961), 177.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		42 ° 21' 29"	71° 03' 35"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/2 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service. DATE 7/6/70

STREET AND NUMBER:  
801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE D. C. CODE

**12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ <i>Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</i></p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ <i>Keeper of The National Register</i></p> <p>Date _____</p>
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7. Description

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"The grand entrance is from School Street into the first-story hall, which is paved with squares of black and white marble; and, as the visitor enters, he beholds the magnificent staircases, which are, perhaps, the most striking and effective feature of the interior. The construction of the risers and treads and outside stringer is of iron; the ornamental moulded face stringers, newels, rail and balusters, being of solid oak. The continuous platform, which forms the landing in each story, is carried on eight oak columns, covering an iron column within, the columns standing in pairs, fluted, and having rich Roman Ionic capitals carrying entablatures. The stairs diverge from the centre of the hall, opposite the main corridor in the first story, after rising 10 steps, in two separate flights, to the right and left, and are continued thus, in a double flight, to the fifth story. Standing as they do, in a clear, unobstructed space of 28 by 72 feet, and lighted above by five elaborately coffered and panelled skylight openings in the ceiling of the fifth story, at the height of 90 feet from the lower floor, the effect of these staircases is extremely spacious and imposing, and they are probably not equalled, either for dimensions or superiority of design and finish, by any in the country. [This spacious effect has been somewhat reduced by the installation of two elevators, one in 1874 and the other a few years later, in this stairwell].

"The corridor, leading from the School-street entrance to the staircase hall, is 14 feet 5 inches in width....

"The sub-cellar of the building is used for a heating apparatus for the whole structure, and for the storage of fuel. The basement story is 12 feet in height in the clear...[has 2 entrances and contains about 17 rooms and offices].

"In the first story are the offices of the City Treasurer (two rooms), connecting with which is a large brick vault, enclosing burglar and fire proof safes...[and a total of 11 rooms and offices]. These apartments are all 17 and a half feet in height, and afford ample space for the business to be transacted in them.

"In the second story is the Mayor and Aldermen's room, 44 feet 4 inches by 44 feet 8 inches, and 26 feet 4 inches in height, extending upward through the third story. In plan it is an unequal octagon, the four cardinal sides being considerably longer than the diagonal ones; each side is filled by a richly moulded arch, supported by coupled Room Ionic columns and pilasters, - the columns finely executed, in close imitation of Sienna marble.

"The ceiling is panelled to correspond with the outline of the walls, having rich centre pieces in the four principal panels, together with a large and very elaborate one in the centre. [Due to the demand for more office space, the grand effect of the high-ceilinged mayor's office was later

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sacrificed in order to remodel the room into two floors. This floor contained a total of 12 rooms]...The rooms in this story, with the exception of the Mayor and Aldermen's Chamber, are 13 feet in height.

"In the third story, which is twelve feet in height, are 13 rooms]...

"The Common Council Chamber is located in the fourth story, directly over the Mayor and Aldermen's room. It is a square apartment, measuring 44 feet 8 inches on a side, and 27 feet in height to the ceiling, which is octagonal. It has galleries on three sides, capable of seating 250 persons. The galleries do not project into the apartment, but are constructed over the adjoining rooms and staircase gallery, and are entered from the fifth story. The walls of the attic and dome overhead are supported by a range of 10 handsome composite columns, standing on the line of the front balustrade of the three galleries.

"The ceiling is coved and enriched with panels, ornamental drops, and other appropriate details. [This chamber, though now remodeled somewhat, still remains two stories high as built]. [The fourth floor contained a total of 13 rooms].

[The fifth or attic floor contained nine rooms and there were nine more rooms in the two upper stories of the tower].

"The dome is surmounted by a balcony, from which rises a flagstaff, whose height above ground is 200 feet. Four well-executed lions' heads look out fiercely from the corners of the balcony, and magnificent gilded eagle surmounts the centre of its front." [The four lions' heads have disappeared completely and the last eagle, a copy of the original, was removed from the dome of Old City Hall in 1939, after being damaged by a hurricane. This copy rests in the Mayor's Office in the New City Hall].

Except for the changes noted above, the Old City Hall appears much as it did when completed in 1865. The structure is in good condition and is now undergoing renovation. The building will be open to visitors when this work is completed.

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8. Significance

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Landmark Corporation, a subsidiary of Architectural Heritage, be designated as developer. Their plans call for the structure to incorporate restaurants, retail stores, and historical exhibit space on the ground floor levels with offices above. Work on the Old City Hall is now underway.

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9. Major Bibliographical References Continued page 1

James M. Fitch, American Building, The Forces That Shape It (Boston, 1948),  
287.

Walter H. Kilham, Boston After Bulfinch, An Account of Its Architecture,  
1800-1900 (Cambridge, 1948).

Elizabeth R. Amadon, "Historical Report: Old City Hall, School Street,  
Boston, 1865," (Typescript, Architectural Heritage,  
Inc., Faneuil Hall, Market, Boston, Mass., October,  
1969), 38 pages, plans, maps, and photos).

George L. Wrenn, III, "The Boston City Hall, Bryant and Gilman, Architects,  
1862-1865," Journal of the Society of Architectural  
Historians, Vol. XXI, No. 4. (December, 1962), 188-192.

The City Hall, Boston (Published by authority of the Boston City Council,  
Boston, 1866).