

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 4 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and/or common Fenway/Boylston Street District

2. Location

street & number Fenway, Boylston, Westland and
Hemenway Street. N/A not for publication

city, town Boston N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Suffolk code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☒ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☒ museum
☐ building(s)	☐ private	☐ unoccupied	☐ park
☐ structure	☒ both	☐ work in progress	☒ private residence
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ religious
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☒ scientific
	N/A being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ transportation
		☐ no	☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple - see continuation sheet

street & number

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds - Suffolk County

street & number Pemberton Square

city, town Boston state MA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Fenway Preservation Survey has this property been determined eligible? _ yes ☒ nodate Winter 1983/84 _ federal _ state _ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Boston Landmarks Commission

city, town Boston state MA

7. Description

Fenway/Boylston Street District

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Fenway/Boylston Street District is located on the northeast edge of the Back Bay Fens(NHL-1971) and is bounded by Boylston Street to the north, The Fenway to the west, Westland Avenue to the south, and the property line running north to south between the Fenway and Hemenway Streets. Distinguished in architectural merit, materials, and design, the District evolved into a notable residential neighborhood due to its proximity to the Back Bay Fens, a major Olmsted landscape. The district includes twenty-one buildings, as well as the Johnson Memorial Gates which stand to the north and south of the juncture of Westland Avenue and The Fenway. There are no intrusions.

The district was designed to include both institutional and residential structures and these building uses continue today, although many of the residential townhouses now serve educational and institutional purposes. The district was built during the 1890's and the first decade of the twentieth century. It faces The Fenway, the parkway designed by Frederick Law Olmsted at the perimeter of the Back Bay Fens, the park he created from marsh and swamp land in the 1880's and which is listed in the National Register.(NR-1971)

Exhibiting the transition from the late-nineteenth century picturesque Queen Anne bow-front townhouses of brick, red sandstone and granite to the flat facades of the Colonial and Neo-Classical Revival styles of light brick, tan terracotta, and limestone prevalent in the first years of the twentieth century, the district presents a coherent record of building tastes in Boston during this short span of time. The buildings are largely intact, with minor alterations to fenestration comprising the principal changes. With prominent structures on the three corners marking the boundaries of this district, it presents a unified appearance, since the intermediate attached structures are of similar cornice, string course, watertable levels, and largely have flat roofs.

The buildings of The Fenway/Boylston Street District are described from north to south:

On the corner of Boylston and Hemenway Streets at 1136-1150 Boylston Street, (map and photo #1), stands what was originally the Carleton Chambers Bostonian Hotel, designed by Arthur H. Bowditch in 1901. This six-story flamboyant essay in Beaux Arts design is constructed of beige brick with tan terracotta trim above a basement story of white limestone articulated with coursed block joints. Noteworthy is the extensive use of tan terracotta, applied as beltcourses, quoins, cornice moldings, consoles, splayed lintels with keystones, pilasters, and modillion cornice. Wrought iron balconies at the third story windows rest on a string cornice molded in egg-and-dart motif and palmettes. The one-story entrance portico is characterized by fluted and banded columns and pilasters with Ionic capitals enriched with foliate swags on the volutes. The acute angle of the street corner is emphasized by the prominent round corner of the building, which is lit by triple windows at each floor, and embellished with paired terracotta pilasters and a cartouche.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received *4/4/84*

date entered

Continuation sheet *10* Fenway/Boylston St. District number *7*

Page 1

At 1154 Boylston Street, (map and photo #2), the corner of Boylston Street and The Fenway, stands the Massachusetts Historical Society (NR-NHL-1966), built from 1897-1899 by the prominent Boston firm of Wheelwright and Haven. Similar in scale to its neighbor, although more restrained in design, the Neo-Classical Revival style building has two prominent round bays, one of which serves as a transitional element at the street corner. Resting on the rusticated limestone story are two stories built of beige Roman brick laid with fine mortar joints. Fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals supporting a full entablature and a balustrade, splayed lintels with keystones, and panels with swags in bas-relief are carved of limestone. The three bay portico with a central projecting bay is supported by columns and piers with Doric capitals. Wrought iron grillwork is used on the double doors and in balconies.

At 18 The Fenway stands the Boston Medical Library (map #3), designed by Shaw and Hunnewell in 1891. This six-bay beige brick and white sandstone building was designed as a five-bay Italian Renaissance palazzo, with the sixth bay, on the right, built soon thereafter to appear as a separate town house. While identical in fenestration, the sixth bay is made visually independent by the use of sandstone quoins. The piano nobile is emphasized by elongated round-headed windows. A stone balustrade balcony on consoles joins the front door and the center window of the piano nobile. The design is completed with a cornice which serves as a stylistic division between the Renaissance Revival facade and a High Victorian sixth story of high-peaked dormers which break the roofline pitch. The Neo-Classical Revival townhouse at 22 The Fenway, (map #4, photo #3), was designed in 1900 by Robert Swain Peabody as his residence. The three story, four bay house, now with a modern fourth-story addition, is dominated by a large Palladian type window which spans the two center bays and is surrounded by a prominent recessed stone arch. The simple side hall entry is characterized with limestone jambs decorated with foliate motifs, as well as a lintel with a keystone embellished with a vertical row of beads. A staircase with winders leads down to an entrance to the high English basement. Above the limestone entrance floor, the facade is of tan Roman brick.

Dating from 1900 and also designed by Robert S. Peabody, is the townhouse at 24 The Fenway (map #5, photo #3,7), constructed of tan Roman brick and limestone. The four bay, four story Federal Revival style townhouse has a high English basement and flat roof. Brick banding at the first story suggests stone courses. Below the wrought iron balconies extending the full width of the facade is the elegant entrance, surrounded by engaged fluted columns with composite capitals, a full architrave and frieze, and a split ogee pediment with a heavy swag of fruit in the three-quarter relief between the volutes. The windows with limestone Federal Revival ornamentation retain their double or triple hung six over six wooden sash.

In 1902, Robert S. Peabody designed the townhouse at 26 The Fenway (map #6, photo #3), the most severely Neo-Classical building in the district. The facade, three stories set on a high basement, is of white limestone formalized with articulated joints at the basement and first story levels, and with rectangular windows with classical profiles. The door jambs are carved with beads, palmettes, figures and urns in bas-relief. A guilloche-patterned

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 6/14/84

date entered

Continuation sheet 2 Fenway/Boylston St. District number 7

Page 2

string course separates the first and second stories. The arched windows of the second story are set within rectangular frames which are supported on consoles above panels. A full cornice with two rows of dentils and corner consoles conceals the flat roof.

28 The Fenway, (map #7, photo #3), a Colonial Revival style red brick building with banding on the first floor and white sandstone trim, was built in 1895 by Alexander W. Longfellow, Jr. It is 4 stories high and 5 bays wide. The white sandstone portico of two fluted columns and pilasters, is capped with Ionic volutes and a cornice. The windows are elongated six over six sash on the second story, and six over six sash on the first, third, and fourth stories. There emphasized with splayed keystone lintels, a robust denticulated cornice and stone balustrade cap the flat roofed structure.

Longfellow also designed 30 The Fenway (map #8, photo #3), in the Colonial Revival style, while working in the firm of Longfellow, Alden and Harlow in 1895. The three story, three bay red brick facade, with a piano nobile indicated by elongated windows, is characterized by a wide front door, wide sidelights with wrought iron grillwork, and wrought iron balconies on the second and third stories. Brick banding is used on the first story, and the elaborate cornice features a stone balustrade and a row of elongated dentils in the style of Samuel McIntyre. Such have been replaced with fixed lights.

The firm of Dabney and Hayward designed the Federal Revival-style townhouse at 32 The Fenway (map #9), in 1899. Of red brick and limestone, the house has three stories and a recessed fourth story with copper segmental pediments. A round bay encompasses two-thirds of the facade. A limestone portico with a complete Doric pediment including a triglyph-and-metope frieze, is the outstanding element of this structure, which also boasts English bond brickwork with glazed headers on the upper stories.

The most recently constructed townhouse in the district is the Colonial Revival-style townhouse at 34 The Fenway (map #10), designed in 1910 by the firm of Charles Brigham, Charles Coveney, and Henry Brisbee. Four stories, with the red and white facade characteristic of its style, the high-fired red brick contrasts with the white concrete Doric portico set in the center of the three bays. The four-panel door has tombstone windows. Concrete sills and string course, brick lintel, and a limestone corner balustrade are consistent with the style. At the second story, small-paned French doors open to balconies.

36-38 The Fenway (maps #11,12), an early work of Albert C. Fernald, was built in 1894. Of yellow brick with white sandstone trim, the three story Colonial Revival building has a pair of round bays flanking the central double entry. The horizontal emphasis created by the use of sandstone in a continuous sill banding under the triple windows in the bays, a cornice balustrade, and a first floor of course sandstone with articulated horizontal joints. Elongated windows of the entry floor are embellished with an egg-and-dart molding.

Alfred L. Darrow built 40-42-44-46-48-50 The Fenway (maps #13-18, photo #4), the earliest residential buildings in the district, in 1892. Clearly of an earlier date than the classically derived buildings heretofore described,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 6/4/84

date entered

Continuation sheet 7 Fenway/Boylston St. District Item number 7

Page 3

this row, which is designed so that the left and right trios are mirror images, is built in yellow-orange brick with rusticated red sandstone basements. Although reflective in color and texture of the Queen Anne style, these buildings display the transition to the classical motifs, in that 40-42 and 48-50 The Fenway form lively asymmetrical facades and rooflines, and the middle pair, 44 and 46 The Fenway are symmetrically arranged with restrained classical detailing and flat roofs.

At 52 and 54 The Fenway (maps #19,20,photo #4) are two related designs in the late Queen Anne style of Hartwell and Richardson, built in 1895. Of yellow-orange brick with red sandstone at the first floor level and surrounding the doors, these three and a half story townhouses reflect the stylistic transition occurring during this decade. Heavy granite watertables and the extensive use of red sandstone in large coursed blocks, contrast with the narrow Roman brick and fine mortar joint. Despite the symmetry of fenestration and swelled bay arrangement, the ornamentation, lively paired dormers piercing the slate covered pitched roof, and high chimneys derive from the picturesque Queen Anne fashion.

Set back on its lot from The Fenway, and sheltered by beech and oak trees is the Henry Bigelow Williams House at 56 The Fenway (map #21, photo #5). Designed by Boston architect Guy Lowell in 1904 and completed in 1906, the five-story, six-bay tan Roman brick and tan terracotta structure with white limestone trim is similar in scale and style to the Carleton Hotel. The Fenway and Hemenway Street elevations are marked by the pairs of three-sided bays flanked by brick pilasters and blocks symmetrically arranged. The Hemenway's street enframing, of limestone, is beneath the piano nobile segmental arch with dentils and a cartouche. Projecting round bay emphasizes the corners. The use of terracotta for the Georgian-inspired ornament is the most distinguishing characteristic of this otherwise large Beaux Arts style block of flats. Original ornate iron balconies and subsidiary and roof cornices were removed in the 1950's.

The Johnson Memorial Gates (map #22, photo #6), a pair of limestone pylons and balustrades marking the entrance from Westland Avenue to The Fenway and the Back Bay Fens, were designed by Guy Lowell in 1902. Each pylon with four engaged columns with Ionic capitals and four bronze lion heads, is surmounted with a heavy cornice with a figural frieze. Curving in a quarter circle from each pier are the balustrades, which include stone benches, behind which are grassy lawns.

8. Significance

Fenway/Boylston Street District

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☒ community planning	☒ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800-1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☒ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify) cultural
Specific dates	1891-1910	Builder/Architect	Multiple	institutions

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Fenway/Boylston Street Historic District possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship as well as significant associations with Boston's rapid residential and institutional development at the turn of the century. It is also important for its associations with many prominent Boston families and as an intact expression of currently popular styles designed by noteworthy local architects. Thus the district meets criteria A, B and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Comprising one block along The Fenway, the parkway designed by Frederick Law Olmsted to encircle the Back Bay Fens, the district reflects an aspect of his contribution to the changing topography of Boston, and the growing metropolitan park system—"The Emerald Necklace". The district reflects the mix of institutional and residential buildings common to the Fenway area, although its scenic location on the Fens favored the development of fine residential townhouses for socially and professionally prominent Bostonians, a trend which did not prevail in the Fens. Built in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, the district boasts buildings designed by the most respected Boston architects of the period and reflects the transition in tastes from the late Queen Anne styles to the American Neo-Classical revival styles prevalent at the turn of the century. The Fenway/Boylston District is outstanding as a reflection of the topographical, architectural, institutional, and social history of the Fenway area.

In 1861, according to Fuller and Whitney's map of the Back Bay, this section of the city was made up of unfilled flats with the Muddy River weaving in and out of the region. The area presently occupied by the Christian Science Church extending west to the Back Bay Fens was known as Gravelly Point. Between 1818 and 1821, Uriah Cotting and the Boston and Roxbury Mill Corporation built two dams dividing the Charles River Basin at this point, and channelled the power source for mill sites that were then to be located along Gravelly Point. The milling operation existed for about thirty years until developing residential land use made the flood basin an unacceptable neighbor.

The area to the west of Gravelly Point and the cross dam was made up of the uninhabitable marshes of the Muddy River and acted as a sewage collector. The railway lines running through the Basin exacerbated the problem of standing water and forced the need for filling the region.

The mill was shut down in the late 1850's. Landfill commenced from Arlington Street, and progressed steadily westward, with the City always realizing substantial profits from sales of fill rights. Landowners in the Gravelly Point area and to the south, on what is now Massachusetts Avenue, expected that in due time their land would be contiguous with the emerging Back Bay residential neighborhood. When the Back Bay grid was conceived and laid out, it was assumed that the street pattern would eventually grow to adjoin Brookline. However, the many railroad tracks built across the Basin at the time of the Back Bay landfill impeded this growth.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 3.25

Quadrangle name Boston South

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A

1	9
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3	2	7	8	5	0
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4	6	9	0	1	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

1	9
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3	2	7	7	8	0
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4	6	9	0	1	4	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	9
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3	2	7	7	3	0
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4	6	8	9	9	4	0
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D

1	9
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3	2	7	7	8	0
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4	6	8	9	8	3	0
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E

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3	2	7	8	0	0
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4	6	8	9	9	2	0
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F

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G

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Preservation Planning Director by Nancy Withersall
Boston Landmarks Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date _____

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Patricia L. Wasilowski

title

date 5/22/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

Patricia L. Wasilowski
Keeper of the National Register

date 9/4/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 6/4/84

date entered

Continuation sheet Fenway/Boylston St. District Item number 8

Page 1

With the South End landfill project completed and the Back Bay growing steadily westward toward Gravelly Point, the city officials, in 1875, created a three-man Park Commission to develop a park system for the city and to solve the problem of the drainage of the Full Basin. The Fens area at this time represented the boundary between Boston and Brookline. Not only did it drain these areas, but it drained Roxbury and Dorchester as well. The Muddy River and Stony Brook emptied into the Marsh before moving to the Charles River tidal basin.

In 1878, the Park Commission asked Frederick Law Olmsted, then at work implementing his design for Franklin Park, to review various proposals that had been developed to solve the problems created by the marshy, odorous site. Olmsted rejected the proposals, believing they failed both to solve the drainage problem and to create a public park. His own solution for the area he was to name the "Back Bay Fens" did both. From 1881 to 1885, the tidal gates were constructed, a sewage interceptor buried in the Boston side of the Fens basin to provide run-off for Stony Brook, the path of the Muddy River altered, and the land filled in around the conduit and subtly and naturalistically reshaped to create a public park. The Back Bay Fens became a jewel in the coordinated park system envisioned by Olmsted.

In the 1895 Boston Park Guide, Sylvester Baxter described the Fens as "primarily an engineering work designed to effect a drainage and sanitation improvement". He continued,

To give the desirable landscape aspect to the scene, a strikingly original but beautifully simple design was adopted, in simulation of the characteristic salt-marsh scenery of the New England Coast--a brackish creek, meandering amidst fens with bosky banks. This landscape was. . . so natural . . . so resemblant to the scenes that once existed in the near neighborhood, that it gives the impression that, by some fortunate accident, a typical landscape of this character had been preserved for its exceptional charm in the midst of the city growing up around it. 1

The westward movement of the growing city brought new buildings to the area. Following the great fire of 1872, many of the institutions once located in downtown Boston began to look to this new Fens area for accomodation. Land was sold at public auction to developers and speculators and turned into the The East and West Fens, largely consisting of adjoining apartment or hotel complexes. The present day Hemenway Street, is on the site of the Cross Dam built across the Full Basin of Back Bay in 1818. The street (projected as an avenue to the Brookline town line as early as 1855) was built in 1878, as was Westland Avenue. In 1879, according to Olmsted's plan for the Back Bay Fens, The Fenway was designed as a raised roadway to skirt the eastern edge of the Fens. Hitchcock refers to it as, "the first parkway approach to an American city."² Westland Avenue was proposed as a major entrance to the park. In 1888, Boylston Street was extended from Exeter Street to The Fenway.

By the late 1880's, there were numerous horsecar railroad lines travelling within the Fenway/Kenmore area. Almost all these transportation lines merged into the West End Street Railway Company in 1887, and by 1889 it began their first electric car line operating beteen Boston and Brookline. By 1892, residents near the Fens could travel to and from downtown Boston via

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received *6/4/84*

date entered

Continuation sheet *Fenway/Boylston St. District* Item number 8

Page 2

lines on the principal streets including one on Boylston Street from Park Street to Massachusetts Avenue.

Unique market pressures were brought to bear on the newly created land due to its proximity to both the Back Bay (NR 1975, LHD 1966) and the South End (NR 1973, LHD 1984). As the reputation of the Back Bay was ascending with each new block of fine houses, the neighborhood directly south of the Fens--the South End--declined. The so-called flight from the South End was hastened by unscrupulous land speculators, a credit crunch, and a financial panic. What had started in the 1840's as the city's newest fashionable district was, by the 1890's, a hodgepodge use of roominghouses and tenements.

Sandwiched between the Back Bay and the South End, the Fens region reflected the primarily residential land use of both neighborhoods but was unique in drawing many cultural and educational institutions seeking room for expansion in new locations on undeveloped land. Once the Harvard Bridge to Cambridge, now known as the Massachusetts Avenue bridge, was completed in 1891 and brought cross-town traffic through the area, the lots on Massachusetts and Huntington Avenues were quickly developed. The Christian Science Church was built in 1894, and many institutions soon followed. Two of the earliest institutions in the new area located in The Fenway/Boylston Street District.

The Massachusetts Historical Society moved in 1897 from Tremont Street to the corner of Boylston Street and The Fenway, land they had purchased in 1892. Swiftly following was the Boston Medical Library which built on neighboring lots and opened in 1900. Members stated the site was, "the only one worthy of the dignity of the profession, and that a handsome building there will bring us notice, money and a reputation."³

Although substantial houses were built on reclaimed land north of the Fens, along Bay State Road (LL 1979), residential development of this scale did not predominate in the Fenway area. Rather, open land proved more attractive to speculative land developers, who raised four and five-story apartment buildings. The Fenway/Boylston Street District reflects this type of development as well, in six lots purchased and developed by the Fenway Land Company.

As Whitehill relates, the Fens region never developed as the elegant residential area it was envisioned to be, due to changing social and economic patterns which made large single-family townhouses unfeasible. Nevertheless, several substantial townhouse residences clustered on The Fenway between Boylston Street and Westland Avenue were built by accomplished architects commissioned by well-to-do Bostonians, most of whom moved from the Back Bay to live on The Fenway.

Because of its location between prominent thoroughfares and its site facing the Back Bay Fens, The Fenway/Boylston Street District represents the three building types and land uses for which the neighborhood is known.

The Fenway/Boylston Street District is largely intact, with building modifications limited to fenestration and doorways, fire escapes, and an added story on one building. The block stands as a harmonious unit: brick buildings faced with stone or stone terra-cotta trim which reflect the sweep of The Fenway. The buildings are three or four stories in height and are designed with similar horizontal markings and symmetrical arrangements. A granite curb marks the boundary of the grass lawn of most buildings which have a uniform setback from the street.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 6/14/84

date entered

Continuation sheet of Fenway/Boylston St. District number 8

Page 3

The district developed approximately from south to north, with earlier buildings of the 1890's contrasting in style, color, material, and texture from the later buildings of the first decade of this century. Although built at a time when the revival of classical styles, motifs and colors were increasingly prevalent, the early buildings in the District reflect the popularity of the Queen Anne bowfront brick townhouse, here executed with red sandstone and granite as texturally rich complements to the brown and orange brick.

The transition from the late Queen Anne bowfronts to the flat-fronted light brick and white limestone facades of the Neo-Classical Revival-style buildings is apparent in mid-block. The District serves as an interesting essay in the variety of responses to the use of classical language popular at the turn of the century. Classical ornament as interpreted by Samuel McIntyre and Charles Bulfinch, as well as by architects working in the contemporary Renaissance and Beaux-Arts Revival styles, signifies the architectural importance of the block.

The four large corner structures are significant as representing the cultural institutions locating along the Fens and the emergence of the grand apartment hotel block form there. The first to be constructed was the 1897-99 Massachusetts Historical Society (map, photo #2) (NHL-1966), designed by the prominent Boston firm of Wheelwright and Haven. Architects of commercial, institutional, and residential buildings, they also designed the Cambridge Bridge (now known as the Longfellow Bridge, NR 1978, Charles River Basin HD) as well as the Park Street Subway Station (NHL 1966). The firm is well-represented in the Fenway, for in addition to the Historical Society building, the firm built Horticultural Hall (1901) (NR-1975), The New England Conservatory of Music (1902) (NR-1980), Jordan Hall, and the Boston Opera House (1909-demolished 1958). Although the Massachusetts Historical Society Building now seems the epitome of the large institutional structure set within the context of an urban site, it was a solitary building at the time of its construction.

The Boston Medical Library, at 18 The Fenway, (map #3) was completed in 1900, on land owned by the Library since 1891. Adjacent to the Massachusetts Historical Society, the six-bay structure was built by the prominent firm of Shaw and Hunnewell. The firm designed residences, primarily in the Back Bay, as well as office and public buildings, university buildings at Harvard and Wellesley Colleges, and the Ear and Eye Hospital.

Four years after the Massachusetts Historical Society opened its doors, construction began on its neighbor, the Carleton Chambers Bostonian Hotel (map #1, photo #1). A copy of London's Carleton Hotel, the Boston version was designed by Arthur H. Bowditch of beige brick, white limestone, and tan terracotta used enthusiastically at every opening and bay division. Its interior was designed on "the European Plan" with furnished and unfurnished rooms and suites.

At 56 The Fenway, at the opposite end of the block, stands the Henry Bigelow Williams House (map #21, photo #5), built from 1904 to 1906 for the socially prominent attorney. The exterior of the Beaux-Arts mansion is similar in material and design to the Carleton Hotel, although more subdued. Designed by

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 6/4/84

date entered

Continuation sheet 22 Fenway/Boylston St. District item number 8

Page 4

Guy Lowell, who was at work on nearby buildings for the Museum of Fine Arts (1907) and Simmons College (1905-1907), the building is sited on a large grassy and tree-shaded lot on The Fenway where it curves to join Westland Avenue and Hemenway Street. Williams, who lived in the luxurious top floor suite, shared his building with tenants who lived in self-contained apartments on the lower floors. A chapel with a pipe organ is also contained in the house. After Williams' death, his widow sold the house in 1914 to Ralph H. White, a successful Boston merchant who owned one of the largest downtown department stores. In 1923, 6 years after the death of White, it became the Girls Trade School of the City of Boston - an early adaptive reuse. In 1973 the Fenway Little City Hall replaced the school. Despite its resemblance in style and scale to the Carleton Chambers, its development as a luxurious private apartment block remains unique in Boston. With the completion of the Williams House, the block was largely intact.

The earliest residences in the district were spurred by development on Westland Avenue. The buildings from 40-50 The Fenway, (maps #13-18, photo #4) designed by Alfred L. Darrow on lots developed by the Fenway Land Company, were begun in 1892. Retaining the general characteristics of the late Queen Anne bowfront residences, they nevertheless reflect the influence of Colonial Revival-style vocabulary. Unlike the majority of the early buildings in the surrounding neighborhood, these buildings, the first on The Fenway, were designed as single-family dwellings. The S. Endicott Peabody family lived at 40 The Fenway, and Dr. and Mrs. Russell Sturgis, Jr., lived at 44 The Fenway.

To the north are 36 and 38 The Fenway, (maps #11,12) built in 1894 by Albert C. Fernald, also as single-family dwellings. Little is known about the architect, but the buildings are significant in showing the adoption of the Colonial Revival style as most up-to-date.

By 1895, the residences at 52 and 54 The Fenway (maps #19,20, photo #4) were under construction. More elegant in material and reflecting the more refined textures and colors of the new style, the buildings still retain the look of earlier Queen Anne homes of the Back Bay. They were designed by Hartwell and Richardson, best known for their Richardsonian Romanesque design for the First Spiritualist Temple (now the Exeter Street Theater), built in the Back Bay in 1884.

Alexander Longfellow, who assisted in the office of H.H. Richardson for four years, and designed the Cambridge City Hall, buildings at Radcliffe, and the Dudley and City Square MBTA stations, designed the houses at 28 and 30 The Fenway (maps #7,8, photo #3) in 1895 for Mrs. Stephen Van Renssalaer Thayer and her son and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. S.V.R. Thayer, Jr. Built by a well-known Boston architect for a prominent family, the homes appeared in the editorial pages of the American Architect and Building News.⁴ This house represents the conscious adoption of pure classical design for the fashionable family houses in the block.

The firm of Dabney and Hayward designed 32 the Fenway (map #9) in 1899. Known for their "slow-burning construction" technique, they also built the Exchange Club and Brookline House.

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Continuation sheet -- Fenway/Boylston St. District number 8

Page 5

Two of the three adjacent townhouses by Robert S. Peabody also were completed in 1900. Robert Swain Peabody of the Peabody and Stearns firm, was perhaps the premier architect in Boston in that period, and the fact that he chose to design and build his home at 22 the Fenway (map #4, photo #3) lends importance to the District. A description and photograph of his home appeared in the American Architect and Building News. 5 In the year that he built his house, he was President of the American Institute of Architects and widely respected as a designer, writer and authority on Georgian architecture. Chosen to represent Boston in the august body of architects which gathered to design the 1893 World Columbian Exposition buildings in Chicago, Peabody was responsible for the Machinery Exhibition Building and the Massachusetts Building. He built the Exchange Building at 53 State Street, Boston, in which he and his partner, John Goddard Stearns, had their offices. He was the architect of the Boston and Providence Railroad Station, and university, school, and residential buildings.

For his own residence, he designed a brick and limestone townhouse, similar in material and color to the Boston Medical Library, with a large central Palladian window motif. Next door, at 24 the Fenway, (map #5, photo #3,7) he built a brick residence reminiscent of Federal townhouses on Beacon Hill. The owner was Moorfield Storey, a prominent lawyer, who had his offices in the Exchange Building. At the time he commissioned the house, he was president of the HBA. In addition to arguing decisive cases before the Supreme Court on issues such as "grandfather" clauses and segregation cases, Storey was an ardent anti-imperialist, supporter of Native Americans, and later president of the NAACP. He devoted much of his time to writing and lecturing for these causes.

Two years later the third Peabody-designed townhouse was completed. Built at 26 The Fenway (map #6, photo #3) for Miss Fanny Foster, the house, which incorporates a limestone facade and classical ornament around the windows and door, is the most severely Neo-Classical of Peabody's work on The Fenway.

The firm of Charles Brigham, Charles Coveney, and Henry Brisbee, best known as architects of churches, built on the last vacant lot at 34 The Fenway, (map #10) in the District in 1910. The most overtly Colonial Revival in style, material, and color, the home was owned by Charles L. Austin, who made many trips around the world on business for the firm of Augustine Hedro and Co., the largest house of import in the Orient.

Complementing the architectural ensemble of the district in classical style and material are the Johnson Memorial Gates, (map #22, photo #6) designed by Guy Lowell in 1901 and constructed in 1902. Located at the crossing of Westland Avenue and Hemenway Street, the gates serve as the entrance to The Fenway and the Back Bay Fens. Classically inspired in form and ornament, the limestone pylons built under the direction of Lowell fulfilled Olmsted's intention that Westland Avenue be the demarcation of the park's boundaries. Given by Ellen Cheney Johnson in memory of her husband, Jesse Johnson, as a public fountain for animals, the gates are a formal work of landscape and architecture and, as such, are an appropriate inclusion in the District.

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Continuation sheet 1 Fenway/Boylston St. District item number 8

Page 6

Lowell returned from study at The Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1899 to establish and practice in Boston. A noted expert in landscape design, he taught the subject at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He served on the Metropolitan District board which oversaw the maintenance of the Back Bay Fens.

The buildings in the district are still largely residential, although in a different ownership form from the original single family form. Fraternity houses, condominiums, and rental apartments occupy a number of structures; educational institutions such as music schools (Berklee School of Music and the Boston Conservatory) occupy others. The Massachusetts Historical Society remains the only original occupant. The Williams Block is currently vacant and will be developed as smaller residential units.

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Continuation sheet of Fenway/Boylston St. District Item number 9

Page 1

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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FOOTNOTES

1. Sylvester Baxter, Boston Park Guide, 1895; quoted in "The Fenway".
2. Hitchcock, p. 21.
3. Whitehill, 183
4. American Architect and Building News, vol. 75, February 8, 1902, pl.1363, p.47
5. Ibid, vol. 71, January 19, 1901, pl.1308, p.23.

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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date entered

Continuation sheet The Fenway/Boylston St. District Item number 10

Page 1

Verbal Boundary: Description and Justification

Beginning at the northeast corner of the District, at the southwestern corner of the intersection of Boylston and Hemenway Streets and running southwesterly along the western curb line of Hemenway Street; thence turning at a right angle and running westerly along the back lot line of 1150 - 1136 Boylston Street; then turning at a right angle and running southwesterly along the back lot lines of the properties from 15 to 65 Hemenway Street**; thence turning at a right angle and running easterly along the side lot line of 67 Hemenway Street; thence turning at a right angle and running southwesterly to include both sides of the Johnson Memorial Gates; thence turning at right angles and running northeasterly and after the Gates turning and running first southwesterly and then northeasterly along the eastern curbline of The Fenway; continuing in this direction until The Fenway's intersection with Boylston Street; thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction along the southern curb line of Boylston Street until the point of origin.

** The east side of the block, facing Hemenway Street, consists of houses later in date and historically distinct from those facing The Fenway, and is not included in the District.

DISTRICT DATA SHEET

ASSESSORS

PARCEL/

MAP#HISTORIC NAMESTREET ADDRESS

DATE OF

CONSTRUCTIONSTYLE

1755	Carleton Chambers/Bostonian Hotel	1136-1150 Boylston St.	1901 begun	Beaux-Arts
1754	Massachusstts Historical Society	1154 Boylston St.	1892-1897	Non-Classical Revival
1795	Boston Medical Library	8 The Fenway	1891-1900	Renaissance Revival
1794	Robert S. Peabody House	22 The Fenway	1900	Neo-Classical Revival
1793	Moorfield House	24 The Fenway	1900	Federal Revival
1792	Fanny Foster House	26 The Fenway	1902	Neo-Classical Revival
1791	S. Van R. Thayer House	28 The Fenway	1898	Colonial Revival
1790	S. Van R. Thayer, Jr. House	30 The Fenway	1895	Colonial Revival
1789		32 The Fenway	1899	Colonial Revival
1788	Charles Austin House	34 The Fenway	1910	Colonial Revival
1787		36 The Fenway	1894	Colonial Revival
1786		38 The Fenway	1894	Colonial Revival
1785	S. Endicott Peabody House	40 The Fenway	1892	Queen Anne
1784		42 The Fenway	1892	Queen Anne
1783	Russell Sturgis H. House	44 The Fenway	1892	Queen Anne
1782		46 The Fenway	1892	Queen Anne
1781		48 The Fenway	1892	Queen Anne
1780		50 The Fenway	1892	Queen Anne
1779		52 The Fenway	1895	Queen Anne
1778		54 The Fenway	1895	Queen Anne
1777	Henry Bigelow Williams House	56 The Fenway	1904-1906	Beaux-Arts
n/#	Memorial Gates	Westland Ave.		Neo-Classical

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Fenway-Boylston Street District
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Working No. JUN 4 1984

Fed. Reg. Date: _____

Date Due: 7-5-84 / 7-19-84

Action: ☐ ACCEPT
☒ RETURN 6-21-84
☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ☒ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- ☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

- ☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period **Areas of Significance** Check and justify below

Please fill in blanks

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed

Melrose Byers

Date

6/21/84

Phone:

202-343-9553

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Fenway-Boylston Street District
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 6.4.84

Fed. Reg. Date: 2.5.85

Date Due: 10/5/84

Entered in the Action: ACCEPT 9-4-84
National Register RETURN
REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- ☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

- ☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved

date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Photo #1

The Fenway/Boylston Street District
Boston, Massachusetts

View from east of 1136-1150 Boylston St.

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 805, Boston City Hall



Photo #2

The Fenway/Boylston Street District

Boston, Massachusetts

View from north of 1154 Boylston St.

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 805, Boston City Hall



Photo #3

The Fenway/Boylston Street District
Boston, Massachusetts

View from north of 22 - 30 The Fenway

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 805, Boston City Hall



Photo #4

The Fenway/Boylston Street District
Boston, Massachusetts

View from west of 44 - 54 The Fenway

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 805, Boston City Hall



Photo #5

The Fenway/Boylston Street District
Boston, Massachusetts

View from south of 56 The Fenway

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805



Photo #6

The Fenway/Boylston Street District
Boston, Massachusetts

View from northeast of Johnson Memorial Gates

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 805, Boston City Hall



Photo #7

24 The Fenway
The Fenway/ Boylston Street District
Boston, Massachusetts

Doorway of 24 The Fenway

credit: Nancy Witherall, 1983

negative: Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 805, Boston City Hall



Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 246
and 248 (1971). This information is not intended for navigational
purposes

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Boundaries in tidal areas from information supplied
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1979 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:25 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODEIC VERTICAL DATUM IF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM 8 MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE ON MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9 FEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U.S. Route
State Route

BOSTON SOUTH, MASS.
N4215—W7100/7.5
1970
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6768 I SE—SERIES Y814

