

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JUN 25 1986
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Filene's Department Store

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 426 Washington St. n/a not for publication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	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a/in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Equitable Life Assurance Society

street & number 426 Washington St.

city, town Boston n/a vicinity of state Massachusetts 02108

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Pemberton Square

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description

Filene's Department Store, Boston, Mass.

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

Filene's Department Store, built 1911-1912, is a large, monumental Beaux Arts style commercial building of steel-framed construction clad in glazed terra cotta and brick. Located in the heart of Boston's Downtown Crossing retail district, its robustly ornamented principal facades face Washington and Summer Streets. This building covers over one acre and with its later additions and urban park at its northern edge, encompasses the entire block bounded by Washington, Summer, Hawley, and Franklin Streets. The building has a plan that appears rectangular, though street constrictions actually make it a parallelogram. The plan of the original building had an inset in the northeastern party wall due to abutting buildings. The building rests on a concrete foundation and rises 125 feet to the cornice. A modern (1972-73) addition at 384 Washington Street is faced in polished granite and cast concrete panels. This addition, to the north of the 1912 building, is not being nominated. Adjacent to the southern side of the 1912 building, Summer Street has been converted into a pedestrian mall with new lighting and benches.

While the Washington Street facade encompasses seven bays, that on Summer Street contains ten bays. The upper stories remain remarkably intact in their original design, but the storefront level has been modernized and the original canopies replaced. The street level originally was composed of a continuous series of large plate glass display windows and canopies having 3-light transoms above. Currently the first story contains large display windows and polished granite wall treatment, with the transom windows filled in. Angled entrances to the store are located on Washington and Summer Streets near that intersection; entry to the Washington Street MBTA subway station is on Summer Street. An entry with stairs to the store basement is located in the northern bay on the Washington Street elevation. At that Summer Street/Hawley Street corner, a storefront fast food operation is now located.

The main building has a wall treatment of light gray terra cotta, which imitates granite at the second story, corner piers, and top story, providing an overall enframing for a dark green terra cotta pier and spandrel window grid from levels three through seven. General format of the gray terra cotta is a smooth-finished course alternating with a low-relief decorative course. The green grid imitates cast metal, having engaged columns of ornamental banded reed colonettes which extend the full five-story height. Embellishment is also seen on the smaller piers and the spandrels which feature projecting lion heads and floreate spandrels. Similar spandrels also are located between windows in the corner piers at the fourth through seventh floors. All windows contained within the green grid are Chicago windows -- a central large fixed area of plate glass flanked by sash windows. Windows on the seventh story are shorter than those of the lower floors, and are decorated with ornamental soffits. Window frames are painted gray. The Chicago style format is also followed on the brick wall facing Hawley Street but with narrower central units.

Continued

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The gray terra cotta wall surface and corner pier embellishment wraps around one bay each on the north party wall and the Hawley St. facade.

Providing a visual base for the structure is the second story, with an elaborate series of five moldings and above, a wall surface enhanced by three courses of a low-relief shell and foliate pattern. Each window opening at this level is embellished by a rope-like molding, with the window sash set within deep reveals. Above the main entrance on Summer St., the second story window opening contains a metal sculpture of cherubs flanking a shield with an "F" on it and four bells below.

For the wall surface of the corner piers, courses of smooth terra cotta alternate with curvilinear ornamental courses. Windows at the third story contain elaborate classical enframements featuring arched pediments, side columns, and balustrades supported by exaggerated console brackets and flanked by cartouches.

The richly ornamented eighth story forms an elaborate crown to the building. It includes above the seventh story a variety of moldings including "F's" in circles joined by an elaborate floral garland. All windows of the eighth story have shouldered architraves and have floral patterns--which become modillions for the next level of moldings--flanked by horizontal brackets where a pediment would be. Cartouches flank all windows in the cornice, and swags link all the cartouches on the central bays. Additional top moldings, like the lower section of moldings, include cymatium, fascia, floral patterns, acanthus, and festooning. Under the eaves run pipes which, in the event of a fire, release water and form a curtain around the building. In the middle of both the Summer and Washington Street facades, between the second and third floors are large olive framed clocks affixed perpendicular to the building's surface. Beneath each is the Filene's logo.

On Hawley St., the southern cornermost bay is also faced with light grey terra cotta, while the remaining buff brick portion of the wall is divided into 6 bays. On the east is a buff brick section used for shipping and receiving, connecting the main building to the former Jones, McDuffee and Stratton building at Franklin and Hawley Streets, now the Men's Annex.

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The northeastern party wall is of red brick, except for the Washington corner bay that is dressed in terra cotta above the fifth floor.

A variety of window types are found throughout the building. Windows in the corner piers from the second through seventh floors are wide, double-hung one over one sash. Windows on the eighth floor are single broad, horizontal format alternating with oxeye windows. The rectangular units are now filled with glass blocks. On the north brick party wall which rises above the modern three story addition, there are small double hung windows of four over four vertical lights arranged in an irregular pattern. The original windows are generally intact, although a few have been filled with air vents or air conditioners. The actual window sash is painted gray. All windows, except those on the party wall, are recessed within deep reveals.

Adjacent to the 1912 building is a 3-story modern addition (1972-3) at 384 Washington St., faced in polished granite and cast concrete panels.

Although the area in which Filene's Department Store is located holds archaeological potential, the scale of the building is too large to anticipate any significant archaeological materials surviving.

8. Significance

Filene's Department Store, Boston, Mass.

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1911-1912 **Builder/Architect** Daniel H. Burnham & Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Filene's Department Store is significant as one of the city's best examples of early 20th century Beaux Arts Commercial architecture, and as the last major work of the nationally influential architect Daniel H. Burnham. Built in 1912, Filene's is one of a series of major department stores throughout the world designed by Burnham, and has been the home since its construction of one of Boston's oldest and largest department stores. Filene's was a leader and pioneer in merchandising, labor, and distribution practices during the great age of department stores in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the Boston Landmarks Commission's Central Business District Preservation Study (1980) of 809 buildings, this building was evaluated to be of "Major Significance" (Group II) to the City, the Commonwealth and the New England Region. The 1912 building possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, and association; as such it meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

On March 16, 1912, the cornerstone was laid for the new Filene's location, and the store opened on September 3 of that year. The building was considered "modern" in its day because of the use of a window grid system which expressed the structure, allowed for maximum light and air, and as noted in Brickbuilder (Sept. 1912) "indicate (d) frankly the nature of the work for which it has been built." Burnham used the sharp contrast between the gray and olive green terra cotta to emphasize the space allotted to windows and light. To this "modern" framework he added a richness of traditional Beaux Arts classical detailing, which has survived intact except at the storefront level. Wells Brothers and Co. of New York were contractors for this work of D. H. Burnham and Co. of Chicago.

Architect Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912) is known as the designer (with John Root) of buildings such as the Rookery, Montauk, Reliance and Monadnock Buildings in Chicago and New York's Fuller ("Flatiron") Building (constructed after Root's death in 1891), all pioneering works in the development of the technology or the aesthetic of the new "tall office buildings." Burnham was also one of the promoters of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and is considered one of the earliest City Planning experts. The prominent Boston architectural firm of Parker, Thomas, and Rice was brought in as consulting architects to appease public outcry at the designation of an out-of-town architect.

RECORDED
INDEXED

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Boston South

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A	1 9	3 3 0 2 6 5	4 6 9 1 0 4 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
---	--	--	--

D			
---	--	--	--

E			
---	--	--	--

F			
---	--	--	--

G			
---	--	--	--

H			
---	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated property includes all of assessor's parcel number 4584. See attached Assessor's Map.

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

state	n/a	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Kennedy
Boston Landmarks Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date May 1985

street & number 80 Boylston St. telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

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 Valerie A. Talmage

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date 6/12/86
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

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

entered in the
National Register

date 7-24-86

for William Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Filene's Department Store, Boston, Mass.
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Modifications were made to Burnham's original design before construction. In order to reduce costs, Filene's eliminated towers that would have been visible throughout the city, a high parapet, the continuation of the terra cotta completely across the Hawley Street facade, some ornamental terra cotta and iron work, a fancy sidewalk, a fur vault, a soda fountain, window floral boxes, and pneumatic tubes.

Filene's retained many unique features, however, in the final construction, most notably the direct access of the basement to the subway and the inclusion of store display windows along the concourse joining basement and subway. First floor plate glass store windows were almost continuous and the canopy had a glass roof. The storefront level and canopy were extensively altered according to the design of the architect David C. Abrahams in 1951.

According to the Brickbuilder, the 1912 store had a novel interior layout involving "specialty shops designed after the manner of Parisian booths" rather than aisles. The store was at that time a co-operative with a profit-sharing membership of 2,000 employees. The building had roof recreation fields, an assembly hall, hospital, library, baths, and men's smoking room.

William Filene, a Prussian immigrant, opened his first Boston shop in 1849. In later years, Filene operated from a number of locations, including Boston, Salem, Lynn, New York, and Bath (Maine), selling women's clothing or fancy goods such as gloves, ribbons, buttons, furs and laces. By 1881 the enterprise was concentrated on its Boston stores. Filene's sons Lincoln and Edward A. joined the concern, in management and merchandising respectively. They inherited equal portions of the store upon William Filene's death in 1901. The store grew steadily, absorbing the R.H. White Co. department store in 1929 and becoming part of Federated Department Stores.

Good labor relations were enhanced by the employees' elected Board of Arbitration, which settled internal disputes and elected members to sit on the Filene's Board. Members determined working hours, holidays and benefits, while management reserved the right to veto. Benefits included a cafeteria, paid holidays, free medical care and health clinic, a savings and loan, legal aid, a ticket agency, library, and newspaper. Educational and training programs were also offered. In 1903, the store instituted a profit sharing plan for employees. Other notable labor practices were the adoption of a forty-hour work week and implementation of a retirement income plan for executives and nonexecutives.

Continued

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date entered

William Filene's Sons Company leased a building at Washington and Winter Streets in 1907 which led in 1909 to the opening of the store's Automatic Bargain Basement, Filene's most widely-known merchandising technique. E.A. Filene conceived of the idea as a clearinghouse for distressed merchandise, bankruptcy lots and remainders which might hamper normal flows of distribution. Service was minimal, and all sales were for cash. Each item was tagged with a price at least 10 per cent lower than the competition and the date on which it was first offered for sale. Twelve selling days later, any unsold articles were automatically reduced by 25 per cent. Another 25 per cent was subtracted after six more selling days, and this technique repeated until any items unsold after thirty days were donated to charity. It was 10 years before the Basement showed a profit, but since then has showed continuing success.

By 1910, when Filene's opened a Paris office, it was evident that new space would be needed in Boston. Sales volume had increased from \$1 million in 1902 to \$4 1/2 million. The Filenes wanted a large selling space that was designed as a store and allowed for future expansion. They also wanted to take advantage of traffic from the new Washington St. subway station by connecting it to the store basement.

In 1916, Lincoln Filene organized a Retail Research Association of eighteen leading department stores to study problems of marketing and operations. From this in 1921 grew the Associated Merchandising Corporation, a cooperative purchasing affiliate. Several members of the A.M.C., including Filene's, Abraham and Strauss, F. & R. Lazarus, Bloomingdales, I. Magnin, and Sanger Harris formed Federated Department Stores in 1929 as a holding company to distribute risk over a wide geographical area. Eventually, each store became a division of the larger corporation.

In the 1920's, Filene's purchased the building at 33-39 Franklin Street. This 1905, pier and spandrel commercial building was designed by the firm Parker and Rice. It was originally occupied by the Jones, McDuffee and Stratton Company who sold crockery, china, glass, pottery, lamps and gifts, and occupied all ten floors.

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date entered

In 1935 the entire store was air-conditioned, the first store to be so in New England. Filene's became a pioneer in the development of branch stores (which often started as summer or college shops) and the shopping center with ample parking.

In 1951 a new building was built on Hawley St. and the first floor of the main building was altered. In 1972, six buildings adjoining the 1912 building to the north were demolished and a modern addition replaced them.

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Filene's Dartment Store, Boston, Mass. Item number 10

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Brickbuilder. "The New Filene Store." Vol. 21; September, 1912. p. 247-250 (discussion, exterior illustration and plans).

Boston City Directories.

Boston Tercentenary Committee. Fifty Years of Boston. 1932. pp. 190-191.

Architectural Club Yearbook. 1911 (p. 229) and 1912 (no page #) (ext. illus.)

Suffolk County Deeds.

City of Boston. Building Department documents.

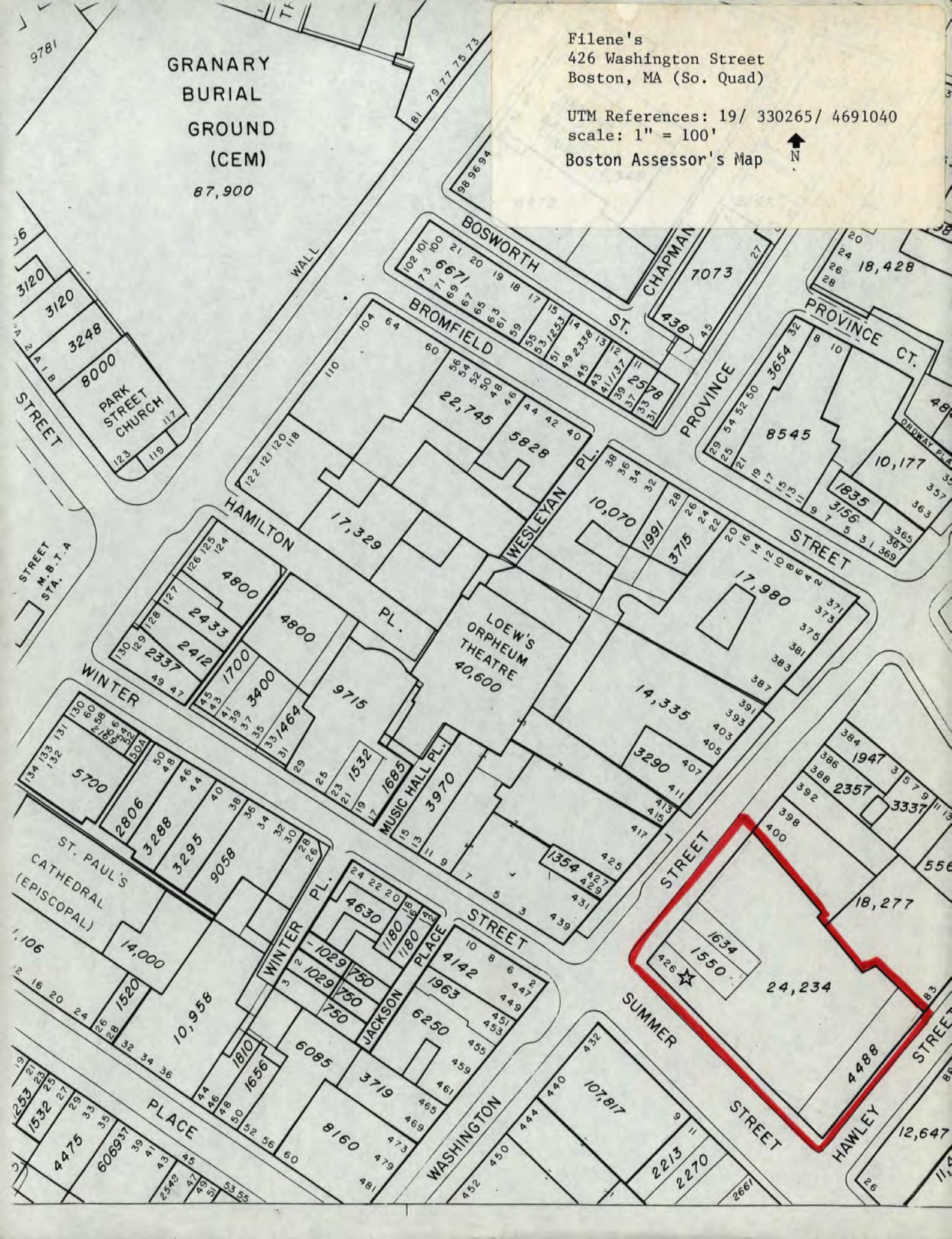
Boston Landmarks Commission. Central Business District Preservation Study. Prepared by Pamela W. Fox and Mickail Koch. Building Inventory form. 1980.

Gorman, Babette. All About Filene's and the People who Made it Grow. Boston: Filene's, 1980.

GRANARY
BURIAL
GROUND
(CEM)
87,900

Filene's
426 Washington Street
Boston, MA (So. Quad)

UTM References: 19/ 330265/ 4691040
scale: 1" = 100'
Boston Assessor's Map



86001909

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Filene's Department Store
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

JUN 25 1986

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87

Date Due: 7/24/86 - 8/9/86

Action: ACCEPT 7-24-86

_____ RETURN

_____ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- 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

2100's Government Store
 Suffolk County
 MASSACHUSETTS

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: _____



Filene's Department Store
426 Washington St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Pamela Fox, 1980
Negative filed at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 1 of 6
Southern oblique view of Summer St. facade;
camera facing north



Filene's Department Store
426 Washington St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1980
Negative filed at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 2 of 6
Oblique view of northwestern (Washington
St.) elevation; camera facing northeast



Basement

Filene's Department Store
426 Washington St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1980
Negative filed at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 3 of 6
Oblique view of southeastern (Hawley St.)
elevation; camera facing northeast



Filene's Department Store
426 Washington St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1980
Negative filed at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 4 of 6
Oblique view of southeastern (Hawley St.)
elevation; camera facing southwest



Filene's

Filene's

Filene's Department Store
426 Washington St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1980
Negative filed at Boston Landmarks
Commission

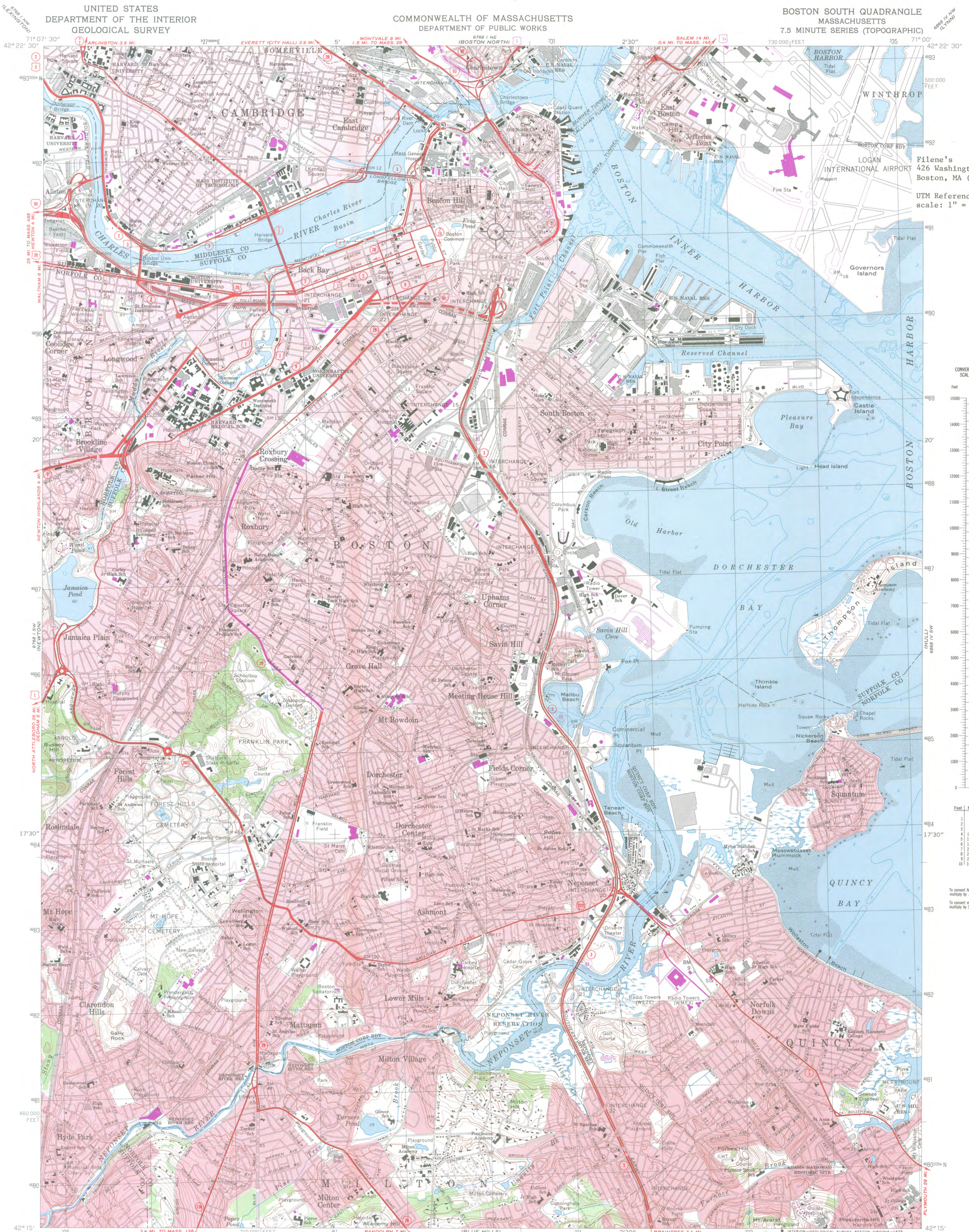
Photograph number 5 of 6
Northern oblique view (Washington St. on
right); camera facing south



Filene's Department Store
426 Washington St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1980
Negative filed at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 6 of 6
Oblique view of northeast (Frankliln St.)
facade; camera facing south



File's
426 Washington Street
Boston, MA (So. Quad)

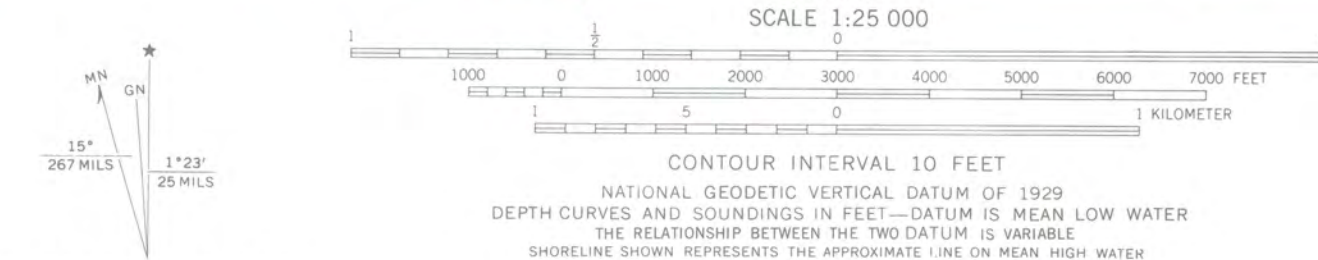
UTM References: 19/330265/4691040
scale: 1" = 25,000'

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
1000	304.8
2000	609.6
3000	914.4
4000	1219.2
5000	1524.0
6000	1828.8
7000	2133.6
8000	2438.4
9000	2743.2
10000	3048.0

To convert feet to meters multiply by 3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, 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 tidewater areas from information supplied by Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

BOSTON SOUTH, MASS.
N4215-W7100/7.5
1970
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6768 I SE-SERIES V814



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Valerie A. Talmage

Executive Director

State Historic Preservation Officer

June 12, 1986

Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Dept. of Interior, NPS
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find fifteen nomination forms for properties in Boston and Richmond, Massachusetts. Eleven of the Boston properties are being submitted for Determinations of Eligibility due to owner objection. The remaining properties are being submitted for nomination to the National Register.

Owner objections have been received for the Appleton, Auchmuty, Federal Reserve, 20-30 Bromfield, Hemenway, National Shawmut Bank, Parker House, Phoenix, Richardson, Sears Block and Crescent, and Tremont Temple buildings.

All of the properties have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

Sarah Zimmerman

Sarah Zimmerman
Director of Preservation Planning

/sjz
enc.

JUN 25 1986