



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 80000460

Date Listed: 12/9/1980

Property Name: Liberty Tree Historic District

Multiple Name: Boston Theater MRA

County: Suffolk

State: Massachusetts

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

12/5/2017
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR is issued at the request of the Massachusetts state historic preservation office to make a technical change to the nomination to clarify the boundary of the historic district. The National Register of Historic Places Registration form is amended to clarify that the boundary of the Liberty Tree Historic District extends beyond the front facades of the buildings out to the curbs of the streets.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

FORM A - AREA SURVEY

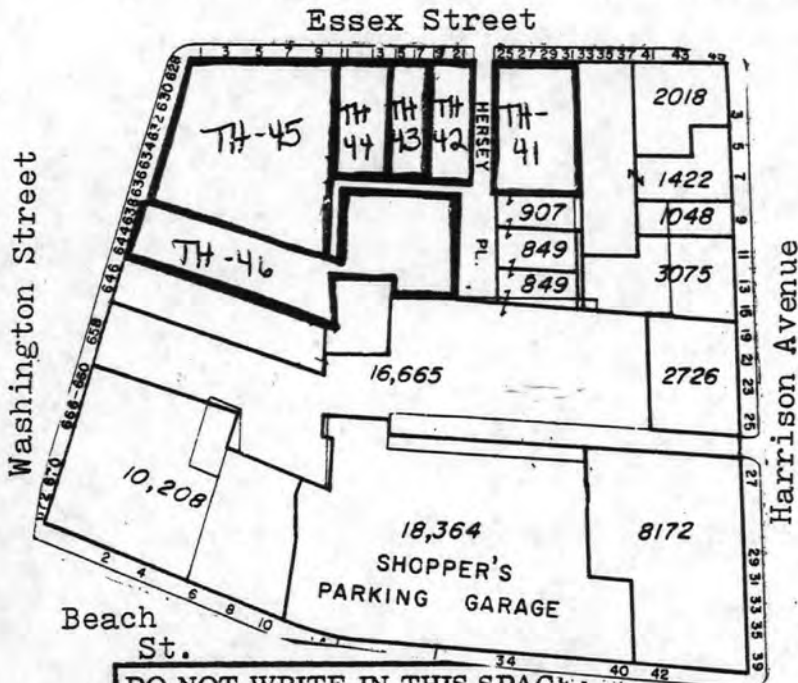
**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston**

Form numbers in this area	Area no.
TH-41 to TH-46	D

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form
Photo number _____

1. Town Boston (CBD-Theatre)
Name of area (if any) Liberty Tree *District*
3. General date or period 1850-1900
4. Is area uniform (explain):
in style? no (mid-to-late 19th c. style)
in condition? no (fair to poor condition)
in type of ownership? yes (private)
in use? yes (commercial)

5. Map. Use space below to draw a general map of the area involved. Indicate any historic properties for which individual reports are completed on Forms B thru F, using corresponding numbers. Show street names (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. Indicate with an "x" existing houses not inventoried on Form B.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant _____
MHC Photo no. _____

6. Recorded by Pamela Fox
Organization Boston Landmarks Commission
Date June, 1979

(over)

NOV 7 1980

DEC 9 1980

7. Historical data. Explain the historical/architectural importance of this area.

8. Bibliography and/or references such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.

1. Boston Evening Transcript, Feb. 19, 1850 (reprinted in part in the Drumlin, newsletter of the City Conservation League, Jan. 1978) (on the Liberty Tree Block)

RECEIVED NOV 7 1980

DATE ENTERED

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

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliographical ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

Liberty Tree Area Form

The Liberty Tree district consists of six buildings clustered around the corner of Washington and Essex Streets at the northern edge of Boston's "adult entertainment zone". The area is significant historically as the location of the famous Liberty Tree and architecturally as a small-scale ensemble of mid-to-late 19th century commercial buildings, many of individual distinction.

The corner of Washington and Essex Streets, known as Hanover Square before 1765, was the site of the Liberty Tree Tavern and the magnificent American elm known as the Liberty Tree. The tree and tavern were favorite gathering places for the Sons of Liberty, a group of patriots organized in 1765 to protest the Stamp Act. During the pre-Revolutionary War period, demonstrations against British rule were commonly held here, and the tree became a symbol of liberty and focal point of Boston's early struggles against tyranny.

The Liberty Tree is commemorated by a finely carved relief plaque on the Washington Street facade of the brick commercial building erected on the site in 1850. Called the Liberty Tree Block (TH-45), this building was owned by wealthy Bostonian David Sears and housed small shops on the ground floor and elegant public halls above.

The Liberty Tree Block and adjacent buildings also reflect the commercial development of the area during the mid-to-late 19th century period. Shops were still small and the upper floors of commercial buildings at 11-13 and 15-17 Essex Street (TH-44 and TH-43) were used as residences. Because Washington Street was for many years the only land route out of Boston, hotels and taverns were also located here. One of these was the 1824 Lafayette Hotel at 644 Washington Street (TH-46), named in honor of Lafayette's visit to Boston that year. It was remodelled in the early 1860's by philanthropist Robert Bent Brigham into Brigham's Hotel and remodelled again in the late 19th or early 20th century, at which time the present Adamesque facade was erected. The area includes another hotel, the Essex at 25-31 Essex Street (TH-41), probably erected in 1881. By that date, railroads with terminals in the nearby South Cove area were bringing even more travelers into the area.

The Liberty Tree Block (TH-45) is architecturally significant as a prominent corner building which serves as a visual focus for the area. The building itself is an unusual example of the transition from the Greek Revival to Italianate style in commercial architecture. 11-13 Essex Street (TH-44) probably dating from 1871, is highly significant as the only commercial building in the Boston Central Business District with a wooden facade. The thin wooden piers are chamfered in imitation of the more expensive cast iron storefronts popular at that date. 15-17 and 25-31 Essex Street (TH-43 and TH-41) are among the survey area's best surviving examples of High Victorian Gothic commercial architecture. 640-644 Washington Street (TH-46) is the best example of the Federal Revival style in the survey area and features fine details such as Flemish bond brick, iron balconies and splayed slate lintels.

NOV 7 1980

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

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliographical ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE

Area D: Liberty Tree District
Acreage: 3/5ths of an acre
UTM Reference #: 19/330080/4690710

Boundary Justification: The district is bounded by Essex Street on the north and Washington Street on the west. The southern boundary was drawn between #644 and #646 Washington because #644 was considered to be of comparable architectural quality to the rest of the district and #646, #648 and #660-672 were considered to be of lesser architectural quality. The eastern boundary is defined by a vacant lot and a heavily altered building of no architectural or historical significance.

List of Structures: (all considered to contribute to the district):

- TH-41 25-31 Essex Street - (Essex Hotel) (c. 1881) 5-story stone High Victorian Gothic building with scalloped slate mansard roof, probably built as a hotel.
- TH-42 19-21 Essex Street - (post 1928 facade) 3-story Greek Revival bowfront hidden by 20th century concrete Gothic-style facade.
- TH-43 15-17 Essex Street - (1875) 4-story polychrome stone High Victorian Gothic mercantile building which housed sewing machine company for many years.
- TH-44 11-13 Essex Street - (c. 1871) 3-story commercial building with wooden facade carved to imitate cast iron construction, built by wealthy merchant David Sears, probably for a kitchen supply company.
- TH-45 628-636 Washington Street - (Liberty Tree Block) (1850) 4-story brick Greek Revival/Italianate commercial building with plaque marking site of historic Liberty Tree.
- TH-46 640-644 Washington Street - (Lafayette Hotel) (1824, late 19th or early 20th century facade) 4½-story brick Federal Revival facade with slate Mansard roof. Unclear whether earlier hotel was totally rebuilt at turn-of-the-century or whether only the facade was remodelled.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets, Section 9

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property see individual and area forms

Quadrangle name Boston South

Quadrangle scale 1"=25,000'

UMT References

A 19 329940 4690650
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The southern boundary of the Theatre Area starts at a point on Washington St., 520' south of the intersection of Kneeland & Washington. From this point it runs due west along an arbitrary straight line to a point on Charles St. South 442' south of Stuart Street. From thence it follows Charles St. South one block north to the intersection of Stuart St.,

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Registration Director by Pamela Fox
Boston Landmarks Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston, state MA 02108

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Patricia W. Weslowki date 10/20/80

title date

For HCERS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John W. Ray Luce date 12/9/80
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Patrick Andrews date 12/4/80
Chief of Registration



Essex

LIQUOR
Co.

Essex LIQUORS

473-1175

NORMANDY

PH. 5-1000

CELL. 10-1000

P

G

Boston, MA
Historic Resources of the Boston
Theatre Area

Pamela Fox, April & May, 1979 DEC 9 1980
Negative at Boston Landmarks Commis-
sion, Boston, MA

Photo #3 of 15, Liberty Treet District
11-31 Essex St.

T# ■, 44, 43, 42, 41

NOV 7 1980

Liberty Tree District, 11-31 Essex St, Boston MA



Boston, MA DEC 9 1980
Historic Resources of the Boston
Theatre Area

Pamela Fox, April & May, 1979
Negative at Boston Landmarks Commis-
sion, Boston, MA

Photo #6 of 15, Liberty Tree Block
(Bldg.) (Liberty Tree District), 628-
636 Washington St. TH45

NOV 7 1980

Liberty Tree Block
628-636 Washington St, Boston MA



Cannery's

FAMOUS ZOO

DISCO DANCE

ROOMS

Palmetto

RESERVE YOUR SEAT NOW
OPEN ALL NIGHT LONG
SEE THE NEW SHOW - FREE

T

T
P

BUY
14.3
MKS

ROOM

Boston, MA

Historic Resources of the Boston
Theatre Area

DEC 9 1980

Pamela Fox, April & May, 1979

Negative at Boston Landmarks Commis-
sion, Boston, MA

Photo #7 of 15, Liberty Tree District,
628-644 Washington St.

NOV 7 1980

Liberty Tree District, 628-644 Washington St, Boston MA



Liberty Tree District

Boston Theater MRA

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000272

Property Boston Theatre Multiple Resource Area

DUE
1/7/81

State MA, Suffolk Working Number H. 7. 80. 2781

TECHNICAL

CONTROL

Photos 11
Maps 4-13

This multiple resource area is significant for the quality of its architecture and for its association with the development of the important Boston music industry and growth of the theater/movie house industry. The district's and individual buildings achieved significance between c. 1890 and the 1930's - contained in this M.R.A. are significant groups of late 19th/early 20th cent. commercial buildings, the center of the music industry (especially piano manufacturing) and examples of every kind of theater that developed in Boston in this period. This is a good multiple resource nomination - they have included all the required categories of information.

HISTORIAN

accept
Patrick Andrews
12/4/80

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____
Federal Register Entry 2.2.82

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered DEC 9 1980



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

March 9, 2005

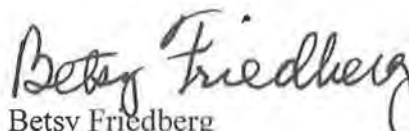
Ms. Carol Shull
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th Floor
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Technical clarification, Boston Theatre MRA

Dear Ms. Shull:

This request is regarding a technical clarification for the boundaries of the four districts within the Boston Theatre Multiple Resource Area (12/9/1980), Boston (Suffolk), MA; the Beach-Knapp Historic District; the Liberty Tree Historic District; the Piano Row Historic District; and the West Street Historic District. In keeping with current National Park Service practices, please note that the boundaries of the National Register districts should extend beyond the front facades of the buildings out to the curbs of the streets. Thank you for making this technical adjustment.

Sincerely,


Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Cc: Roysin Billett, Boston Landmarks Commission