

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received **AUG 26 1983**date entered **SEP 22 1983****1. Name**historic Lawrence Model Lodging Houses (preferred)and/or common East Canton Street Apartments**2. Location**street & number 79, 89, 99, and 109 East Canton Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Boston

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusettscode 025county Suffolkcode 025**3. Classification**

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

4. Owner of Propertyname Housing Innovations, Inc.street & number One Court Streetcity, town Boston

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts**5. Location of Legal Description**courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Suffolk County Registry of Deedsstreet & number Pemberton Squarecity, town Bostonstate Massachusetts**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Inventory of the Historichas this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate Assets of the Commonwealth; 1981.☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commissioncity, town Bostonstate Massachusetts

7. Description

Boston: Lawrence Model Lodging Houses

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 Lawrence Model Lodging Houses at 79-109 East Canton Street in the South End of Boston are located just outside the present South End National Register District and will be part of a future local South End Historic District. They consist of four buildings: The Lawrence (79 East Canton Street); the Abbott (89 East Canton Street); the Bigelow (99 East Canton Street); and the Groton (109 East Canton Street). The first three buildings, designed in 1874-5 by the same architect, are identical, and the Groton, built in 1892, differs from them only in minor details.

All four are detached brick buildings, five stories high, including attic. In scale and massing, they contrast markedly with the more typical modestly scaled, attached, swell-front townhouses found by the hundreds on the streets of the South End, although they follow the South End norm of red brick construction. In plan, the buildings are in the shape of a squarish T, with the rear half of the building slightly wider than the front. The Lawrence, the Abbott and the Bigelow were designed in a simplified vernacular variant of the French mansard style. The front elevation of each is seven bays wide with a central entrance door surrounded by a wooden frame and topped by a wooden pediment. The plain surfaces of brick arches over the windows, and panel brick detailing at the cornice with half of its height being a continuation of the brick wall and the top half a mansard. The fifth-floor windows also have rather elaborate wooden pediments. The rear elevation of each contains seven bays, although the very plain rear door in the center bay. The side elevations are four bays wide. All windows, except in the basement, are two-over-two, double hung.

The Groton differs from the other three only in its treatment of the principal entrance, which has a brick segmental arch and framing, and of the fifth floor, which is a plain brick attic story instead of the semi-mansard of the earlier buildings. The fifth-floor windows also have segmental brick arches rather than wooden pediments. The architect of the Groton was clearly updating the by then passe mansard style but only by making the most minimal changes.

Each building contains twenty apartments: two three-room and two four-room units to a floor, arranged symmetrically on either side of a central stair hall that runs through the full depth of the building, with windows at both front and rear. The stairs themselves are of considerable interest. They are completely of cast iron with a lattice type pattern on the risers. There are no other interior features of importance. Only minor remodellings have been made.

8. Significance

Location: Lawrence Model Lodging Houses

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)

Specific dates 1874-5; 1892 Builder/Architect Charles K. Kirby; William F. Goodwin

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The former Lawrence Model Lodging Houses at 79-109 East Canton Street in the South End possess integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, and association and are significant as prime examples of the history of philanthropic housing in Boston. They meet criteria A, B, and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The Lawrence Trust was established under the will of Abbott Lawrence, who left \$50,000 to three trustees to buy land and build "Model Lodging Houses...to be let to poor, temperate and industrious families...at reasonable rents." Lawrence died in 1855, and the Trustees built their first lodging house in 1862 on the corner of Harrison and Kneeland Streets. This was sold in 1873, when they purchased the East Canton Street lots from the City of Boston. 79, 89, and 99 were built in 1874-5 and 109 in 1892. The only Boston group to build such housing prior to the Lawrence Trust was the Association for Building Model Lodging Houses for the Poor, organized in 1851 but originating in a public meeting held at the Warren Street Chapel in 1846. This organization of which Lawrence was member, built a model lodging house on Osborne Place in the South Cove area in the early 1850's. The earlier lodging houses no longer stand, so that 79-109 East Canton Street appear to be the oldest such examples of philanthropic housing still extant in Boston.

Abbott Lawrence (1792-1855), best known as the junior partner in the firm of A. and A. Lawrence and founder of the textile city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, was active in philanthropic enterprises throughout his life. The interest of Lawrence and his fellow Bostonians in housing the poor ran almost exactly parallel to a similar movement in England. The first model dwellings for the working class to be built in England seem to have been the tenements built by the Birkenhead Dock Company in 1847, followed within a few years by several others in London and Glasgow. As Ambassador to the Court of St. James in 1849-52, Lawrence would have had ample opportunity to see these buildings, most of which were also published in The Builder. They came to even wider public attention in 1851 when the Model Houses built for the Prince Consort by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes were shown in the Great Exhibition. Abbott Lawrence was active in planning the American section of the Great Exhibition.

Although the Lawrence Model Lodging Houses have only modest architectural significance, the first three were designed by Charles K. Kirby, who, in 1855, won the competition for the Boston Public Library on Boylston Street in a field of two dozen entrants. He was also the architect of several commercial buildings after the fire of 1872 and of some speculatively built houses in the Back Bay. 109 East Canton Street was designed by William F. Goodwin, who practised in Boston from 1889 to 1904.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Will of Abbott Lawrence and Reports of the Trust for Building Model Lodging Houses, 1855 and later, Suffolk Registry of Probate, Docket No. 39964; Entry on Abbott Lawrence, Dictionary of American Biography; Boston Architectural Index, Boston Public Library, Fine Arts Department;

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 39,805 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name Boston South

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification The Lawrence Model Lodging Houses include assessor's parcel number ^{1213, 1214, 1215, 1216} and is bounded by East Canton St., Thorn St., the alley midway between East Canton and East Brookline Streets, and the alley running along 79 E. Canton Street.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title		
Candace Jenkins Registration Director	Cynthia Zaitzevsky + Boston Landmarks Commission	

organization	date
Massachusetts Historical Commission	February 22, 1983

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

city or town	state
Boston, MA	MASS. 02146

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. Weslowski

title Massachusetts Historical Commission, Executive Director

date 8/2/83

For NPS use only

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

for Melvyn B. Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/22/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

LAWRENCE MODEL LODGING HOUSES
Boston (South End), Massachusetts
Assessor's map 1931

1" = 100'
UTM = 19/329425/4689170



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Lawrence Model Lodging Houses
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

AUG 26 1983

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 9/27/84

Date Due: 9/22/83 - 10/10/83

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 9/22/83

☐ 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

☒ Public Acquisition

Status

Accessible

Present Use

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



#1 79 East Canton Street, front (northeast) elevation

Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, East Canton St.,
Boston, MA.

photo credit: Barry Cohen, Housing Economics, Inc.
1982

negatives: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805

view: 79 East Canton St., front
(northeast) elevation.

photo # 1 of 6



#2 - Rear elevations, 79-109 East Canton Street.

Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, East Canton St.,
Boston, MA.

photo credit: Barry Cohen, Housing Economics, Inc
1982

negatives: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805

view: 79-109 East Canton St., rear
elevations.

photo #2 of 6.



3 - 109, 99, 89 & 79 East Canton St., Boston, MA.

photo credit: Barry Cohen, Housing Economics, Inc
1982

negatives: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805

view: 109, 99, 89 and 79 East Canton St.
Boston streetscape.

photo #3 of 6.



#4 - 99 East Canton Street, Boston. Front (northeast)
elevation.

Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, East Canton St.,
Boston, MA

photo credit: Barry Cohen, Housing Economics, INC
1982

negatives: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805

view: 99 East Canton St., Boston.
Front (northeast) elevation.

photo #4 of 6.



#5 - 101 East Canton St., Boston, East (Front View)
Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, East Canton St.,
Boston, MA.

photo credit: Barry Cohen, Housing Economics, INC.
1982

negatives: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805

view: 109 East Canton St., front
(northeast) elevation.

photo #5 of 6.



6 A East Canton St.
front / northeast elevation

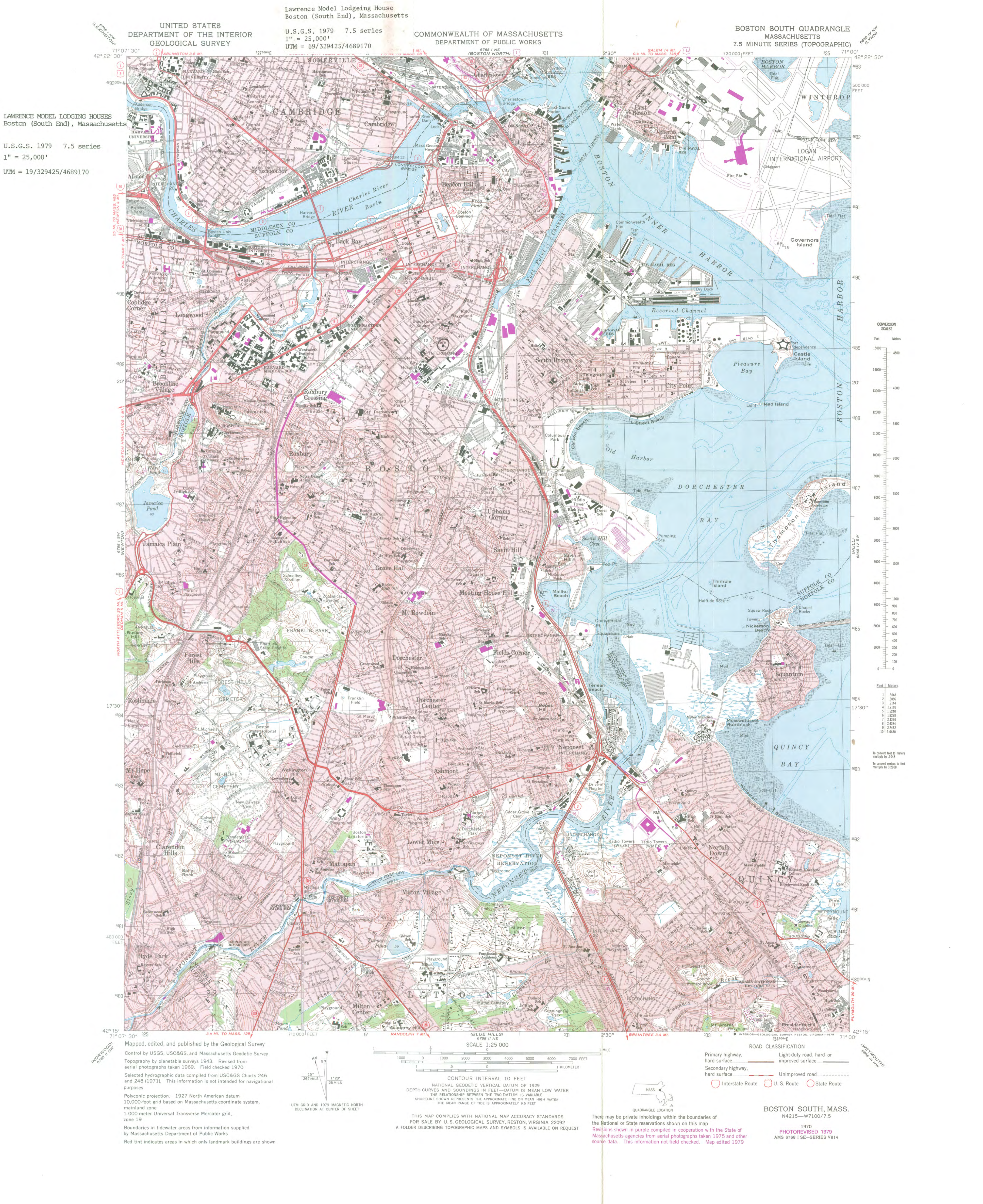
Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, East Canton St.,
Boston, MA

.photo credit: Barry Cohen, Housing Economics, INC.
1982

negatives: Boston Landmarks Commission
Boston City Hall, Room 805

view: 89 East Canton St., front
(northeast) elevation.

photo #6 of 6.



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: June 12, 1984

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Susan Dynes

SUBJECT: Part 2 Appeal Meeting on June 25, 1984, 2:00 pm, first floor hearing room

TO: PAD, NR staffs *Adler Carol*

A Part 2 Appeal meeting has been set for the Lawrence, the Abbott, the Bigelow and the Groton, four apartment buildings, now converted to Section 8 housing.

addresses: the Lawrence, 79 East Canton Street, Boston, Massachusetts
the Abbott, 89 East Canton Street, Boston, Massachusetts
the Bigelow, 99 East Canton Street, Boston, Massachusetts
the Groton, 109 East Canton Street, Boston, Massachusetts

Denial Issues: Removal of Historic Interior fabric; to much lesser degree, removal of historic slate and replacement with asphalt shingles and less than perfect window replacements.

Owern and consultants will attend.

Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

★U.S. Government Printing Office: 1977-241-539/2449

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 7-76)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
5010-111



UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE:

6/14/84

REPLY TO
ATTN OF:

S. Dynes

SUBJECT:

NK nom & article on 79, 89, 99 & 109 E. Canton St

TO:

Bruce MacDougal

Here is the stuff I promised

- Copies of Enjoy. Note nomination
written by developer's consultant
Copies here, too, of applications - for your info.



Buy U.S. Savings Bonds Regularly on the Payroll Savings Plan

U.S. Government Printing Office: 1977-241-830/3448

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
(REV. 7-76)
GSA FPMR (41 CFR) 101-11.6
5010-111

Property: Lawrence Model Lodging Houses
79 89 99 & 109 East Canton Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Owner: Housing Innovations, Incorporated (HII)
One Court Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Attending Meeting: Denis Blackett, President, HII
Thomas Welch, Vice President, HII
Al Middleton, HII
Representative of the tenants' association
David Gaw, Boston Architectural Team
Sally Oldham, Langelier Historic Properties
Bill MacRostie, Langelier Historic Properties
Joseph Orfant, Massachusetts Historical Commission

Part 1: A row of four five-story brick apartment houses, three built in 1875, the fourth in 1892. Simply detailed, they are prime and early examples of philanthropic housing in Boston. The buildings are located just outside the South End Historic District.

Part 2: Rehabilitation of all four buildings for low-income (Section 8) housing began in October 1982 and was completed in December 1983.

1/12/83 Application received by SHPO
10/21/83 Additional information received by SHPO
11/3/83 Application received by MARO with recommendation from state to certify
12/30/83 MARO gives project conditional preliminary approval
4/30/84 Additional information received by MARO
5/24/84 Project denied final certification by MARO
6/8/84 Request for appeal received verbally; letter received 6/21/84

Denial Issues: Violation of Standards 2, 5 & 9 by radically altering the interior character in replacing all interior finishes, and some partition framing and locations. Violation of Standard 6 by replacing the slate on the mansard roofs with gray asphalt shingles which do not match the slate in appearance, and the 2/2 wooden windows (without evidence of need) with new aluminum units whose details are not identical in appearance to the originals.

MARO comments: 1) The significance of the interiors of these buildings is on a par with the importance of the exteriors. 2) Contradictory information was given the Region on the reasons for drastic interior changes. 3) Latter two issues (above) contribute to the negative value of the rehabilitation in a cumulative sense only.

SHPO Comments: Unqualified recommendation of project; however, questioned interior alterations at beginning of review.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL LAND SERVICE

MICHIGAN REGION
140 SOUTH 7TH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106

MAIL ROOM (202-244-1111)

E. Canton Street Associates
One Court Street
Boston, MA 02108

MAY 24 1984

Dear Sir/Madam:

PROPERTY:

The Lawrence, 79 East Canton Street
The Abbott, 89 East Canton Street
The Sigelow, 99 East Canton Street
The Groton, 109 East Canton Street
Boston, MA

CONTROL NUMBER:

MA-84-0468
MA-84-0469
MA-84-0470
MA-84-0471

TAXPAYER'S IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 04-271-4604

We have reviewed the "Historic Preservation Certification Application - Part 2" for the above property and have found that the rehabilitation does not conform with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation." The completed rehabilitation does not conform with the following Standards:

STANDARD NO. 2

The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.

STANDARD NO. 5

Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.

STANDARD NO. 6

Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

STANDARD NO. 9

Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.

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The rehabilitation work had begun when the application was submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office and was essentially completed when the application was received by the National Park Service. Thus, there was no real opportunity for any preliminary advice to be given by our office to enable the project to meet the Secretary's Standards.

The significance of these individually listed buildings is clear as prime and early examples of philanthropic housing in Boston. The four, detached, five-story, brick buildings were described in the National Register nomination as having good integrity with only minor remodelings. The buildings were cited primarily for their social significance as model tenement housing in the mid-late nineteenth century, and the plan arrangement was noted in the nomination. Therefore, the importance of the interiors of these living quarters is on a par with the importance of the exteriors.

Photographs of the exterior and interior of the buildings prior to this rehabilitation show historic fabric existing in a variety of conditions. A few windows were missing, the brick was dirty, and the interior wood trim and floorplans were intact and in decent condition. On the interior, only the plaster walls were in obvious irretrievable disrepair.

During rehabilitation of these buildings, the interior character of each building was completely and radically altered by the removal of all visible historic fabric and the total replacement of all surfaces with modern materials including dropped ceilings, a textured plaster finish, carpet, electric baseboard heating units, and no trim other than small window sills. Removed were historic door and window trim, doors, chair rails, dados, baseboards, transoms, and cornices. These actions violated Standards 2, 5, and 9. Some reasons given for these changes are contradictory to other information in the application documentation, and all offer insufficient justification for such a radical change to the historic character. The reasons range from a purported necessity for reconfiguration of interior door and window sizes, for plan changes for marketing purposes, for energy conservation measures, for structural instability correction, and for the deteriorated condition of fabric. For instance, change in window size is given as a reason for not retaining window trim, yet in a different section of the application, the windows are planned to be replaced to match the existing, and photographs of the finished work show that the replacement windows are the same size as the original. Similarly, the need for changes in floorplans is not born out in the drawings submitted. The rehabilitation floorplans, while altered slightly, appear to have basically the same arrangement as the pre-existing; the few changes that were made seem to be for the convenience of a slightly different relationship between rooms. These plan changes are neither justified in themselves for the most part, nor are they adequate justification for removal of all historic trim. The photographic documentation submitted supports none of the claims for total deterioration of trim. Other possible alternatives to correct the apparent structural and energy-conservation problems and to retain the interior character seem not to have been considered and utilized.

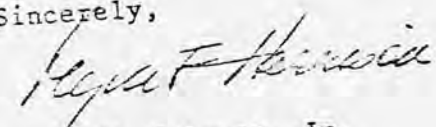
In addition, the amount of new exterior replacement fabric further eroded the historic integrity of the buildings, although not drastically altering the character. All wooden windows were removed, without evidence of need. The replacement windows duplicated the 2/2 configuration of the originals, the metal material and details are not identical to the original wood windows' appearance and are not as appropriate as they might have been. Also, the slate material of the mansard roof on three of the four buildings was replaced with grey asphalt shingles that do not match the appearance of the original material. These aspects of the rehabilitation contribute to the negative value of the rehabilitation and, in a cumulative sense only, violate Standards 2 and 6.

This project therefore does not qualify as a "certified rehabilitation" for purposes of § 2124 of the Tax Reform Act of 1976, §§ 701 (f) and 315 of the Revenue Act of 1978, nor §§ 212 and 214 of the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, and is exempt from the historic preservation provisions of the Act which apply to "certified rehabilitations."

We have enclosed a copy of the U.S. Department of the Interior's regulations that outline in Section 1208.10 the process for appealing this decision. Should you wish to enter an appeal, please comment by letter to the Chief Hearing Officer, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, Washington, DC 20240, addressing the concerns raised in our letter and including any additional factors related to the project that you feel deserve consideration.

Should you have any questions regarding our review of your application, or the appeals process, please feel free to contact Cynthia MacLeod of this office at (215) 597-5129.

Sincerely,


James W. Coleman, Jr.
Regional Director

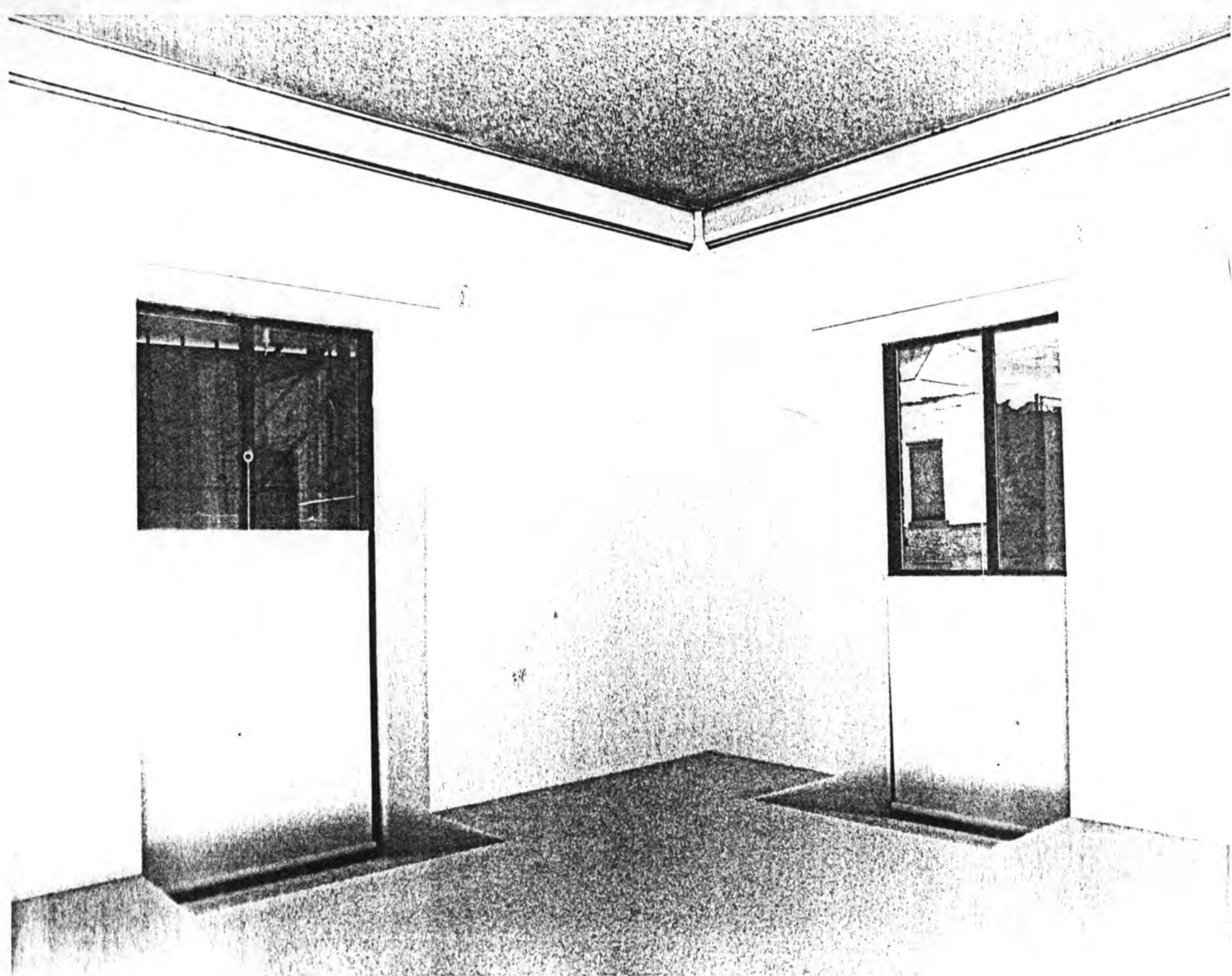
Enclosure

cc: TPS/WASO
MA SHPO

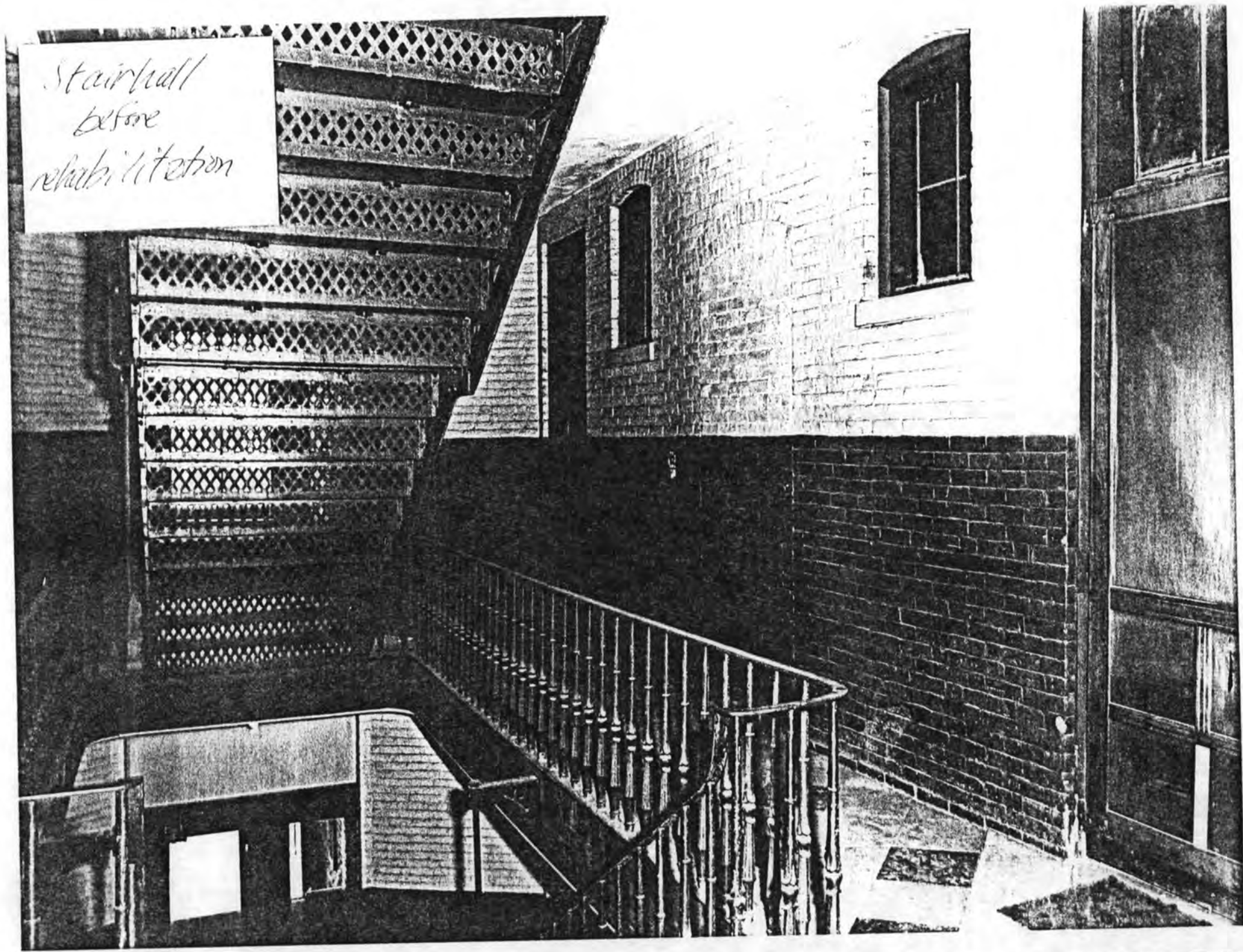
(Part 2 Denial)

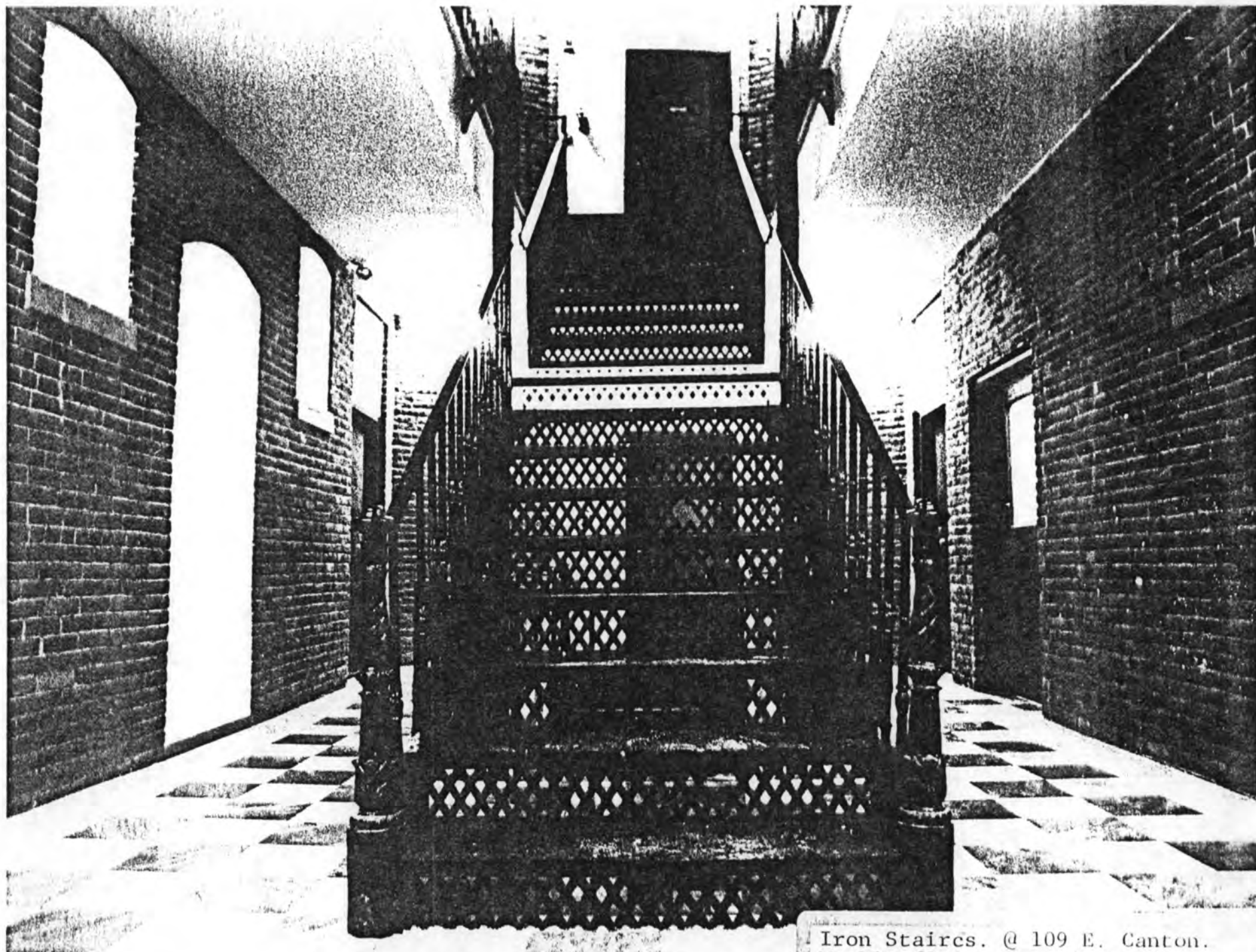






Stairhall
before
rehabilitation





Iron Stairs. @ 109 E. Canton.
Marble floors were installed as
were originally used.

June 20, 1984

HII CORPORATION

One Market Plaza
Suite 2407
San Francisco, CA 94105
415 543-4251

Dr. Ernest Connally
Chief Appeals Officer
National Park Service
1100 L Street, N.W., Room 5111
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: 79, 89, 99, 109 East Canton Street
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Connally:

As provided under Department of the Interior regulations 36 CFR Part 67.10, HII Corporation hereby appeals the May 24, 1984 decision of the Mid-Atlantic regional office of the National Park Service to deny rehabilitation certification for the projects referenced above. Both in this letter and during the appeal meeting we have scheduled with you for June 25, 1984, we would like to set forth our view of the historical significance and architectural character of the buildings in question as well as fully explain our decision-making during the planning stages of the project. In doing so, we will 1) reiterate certain information provided in our initial Part 2 certification application; 2) clarify some apparent misunderstandings which are reflected in the regional office's May 24th letter; and 3) provide certain new information about various aspects of the project.

As stated in our nomination which was accepted by the National Park Service and led to the listing of the East Canton Street buildings in the National Register, they are primarily significant in a historical and social sense as important early examples of philanthropic housing in Boston. Their construction in 1874-75 and 1892 was funded by the estate of Abbott Lawrence (best known for founding the textile city of Lawrence, Massachusetts) and directly paralleled a similar philanthropic housing movement in England which occurred during the same period. The National Register nomination states, and we believe as well, that the buildings possess only modest architectural significance. As outlined in our nomination,

June 20, 1984

Dr. Ernest Connally

what limited architectural significance the buildings possess primarily surrounds their modestly ornamented exterior appearance. The only significant interior features mentioned are the unusual cast iron central stairways, and only passing reference is made to the original floor plans of the apartment units themselves. No significance whatever is attributed to the stock wood trim contained within the apartments. As a result, we do not believe that the regional office's conclusion that "the importance of the interiors of these living quarters is on a par with the importance of the exteriors" is supported by the documentation contained in the National Register nomination nor by any objective assessment of the significance of the buildings' original wood trim. Moreover, the most striking interior features of the buildings--their entry halls with central cast iron staircases--have been preserved intact.

We believe that the rehabilitation undertaken on the four East Canton Street buildings for HUD Section 8 housing was sensitive to their significant exterior and interior features. The only exterior alterations consisted of window replacements with 2-over-2 double hung sash and roof replacements on three of the four buildings (both treatments undertaken due to the deteriorated condition of the original features). We believe, and the regional office of the National Park Service concurred in its December 30, 1983 letter granting conditional preliminary approval of the project, that the exterior work, including these minor changes, conforms with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

On the interiors, we maintained the original hall and stair plan intact, and meticulously restored the original cast iron stairways which serve strikingly as the architectural focal point on every floor of each building. This was accomplished despite significant structural deficiencies in the stairs discovered by our structural engineer. He urged the demolition and replacement, or at least substantial modification, of the stairs. We did not accept this proposal, and struggled to achieve a solution that would substantially retain the appearance of the stairs. We believe this has been successfully accomplished.

The project also maintained the existing floor plans of the apartment units nearly intact with only minor alterations made as a result of the needs imposed by efficient space utilization.

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For reasons set forth below, the project did require the removal of original wood trim within the apartment units themselves. It was our view during the planning stages, however, that the non-significant and stock nature of this trim allowed us some flexibility in removing the trim in order to meet the energy code, HUD Minimum Property Standards, and structural requirements imposed on the project.

The decision to remove interior trim as part of our project on the East Canton Street buildings took into account the following factors:

- 1) The Massachusetts energy code, as well as HUD Minimum Property Standards, required us to achieve an R19 insulation rating on the perimeter walls of each building. The existing masonry walls consisted of three wythes of brick with 1" x 3" furring, wood lath and plaster. Since the 1" x 3" furring is laid flat, there was not sufficient void within the wall to add any insulation material. Our architects determined that the most feasible method of insulation was to construct a 2" x 4" furring system containing 3 5/8" of fiberglass batting.
- 2) When we acquired the four buildings, each of them contained two continuous wood stud bearing walls five stories in height, which in every case were overstressed and suffering from structural damage. In order to provide necessary structural reinforcement, all existing plaster and trim was removed from these walls and plywood was applied to create a structural box beam.
- 3) HUD Minimum Property Standards require that no lead-based paint be present within 4' of the floor. The trim in all four buildings had many layers of lead-based paint.
- 4) HUD Minimum Property Standards require minimum door widths within dwelling units to be at least 2'-8". Door widths within apartment units in all four of the East Canton Street buildings were 2'-5".
- 5) HUD Elderly Minimum Property Standards required us to install elevators in all four buildings. The slight plan change that was necessitated by new elevator lobbies on each floor required us to relocate walls in certain units and, in turn, to remove trim from those walls.

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- 6) Our architects estimate that 35% of the wood trim was not salvageable at the time the project started.

The combined effect of all these factors led us to the conclusion that retention of wood trim as part of the project would involve a difficult and costly process of removal, stripping, patching and reapplication and in some cases replication to save or imitate features which we believed were not architecturally or historically significant.

In early 1982, well before our certification applications were filed and construction was under way, we provided the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) a complete set of drawings for the project. At that time, knowing that we planned to apply for tax certification, Joseph Orfant raised the issue of wood trim removal as a potential problem area with regard to certification. But based upon our justification for this treatment as outlined above as well as his knowledge of other projects which had been approved by the National Park Service, he indicated to us that he believed our project would be approved as designed. Other issues raised by Mr. Orfant at the same time (e.g., retention of the original exterior fire escapes in their original configuration and window replacement pane configuration) were resolved satisfactorily and in general involved our compliance with his requests and additional cost to the project.

With this initial response from MHC we started the project late in 1982 on a fast-track basis and concurrently got the certification process under way. The fast-track was necessary because the project which had approximately fifty-five occupied units was facing the prospect of a New England winter without an operable heating system. By way of background, the City of Boston had acquired title to the properties in 1979 through a foreclosure of a tax lien against a private owner. The existing tenants successfully protested the City's attempt to sell the property to the highest bidder, the normal next step in the City's foreclosure process and one that would have certainly led to the displacement of all the existing tenants. Under considerable community pressure the City instituted a competition among interested developers who would commit to maintain the property as moderate income housing. HII was given tentative developer status with the existing tenants as co-developers and HII assumed management responsibility in August of 1980.

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The major mechanical systems had not been maintained properly by the previous owner and required replacement. Due to a complete failure of the existing steam boiler during the winter of 1981-82, HII contracted to have a steam boiler trucked to the site to provide a barely minimal level of heat for the tenants. However, this partial solution would have been inadequate for another heating season, in as much as the existing distribution component of the heating system failed at the end of the 1981-82 winter. Thus, it was necessary to replace the entire system (source & distribution) and that necessitated a closing on the construction loan and a start of the rehabilitation as soon as feasible prior to the start of the 1982-83 winter season.

In January, 1983, we filed our Part 2 certification application with MHC, and in March 1983 Mr. Orfant requested additional information on the exact composition of the masonry cleaning solution to be used on the buildings. We spent the next several months telephoning and writing back and forth between our cleaning contractor (who was unwilling or unable to divulge the exact solution of the proprietary cleaning products used) and MHC to obtain the necessary information. In October, 1983, we were finally able to provide Mr. Orfant with sufficient information, and our application was forwarded to the National Park Service in Philadelphia. In December 1983, as part of our conditional approval, we received an inquiry about certain project elements from NPS and responded shortly thereafter with a number of letters explaining our justification for interior trim removal and roof replacements. On May 24, 1984, the project was denied certification by NPS.

In the interest of providing equitable and consistent treatment in the review of this project, especially when viewed within the context of the approval by NPS over the past few years in Massachusetts and elsewhere of numerous projects involving removal of interior trim, we believe our work on these buildings merits certification. While we acknowledge that the project was under way by the time our certification application was submitted to MHC, we had received a reading on the issue of interior trim from Mr. Orfant well before work began. Our decision to undertake the removal of interior trim was based on compelling construction-related factors which have been outlined in this letter. More importantly, however, our decision on this element of the project was based upon what we believe were sound assessments of the significant features and character-defining elements of the building.

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Before closing, I would like to address a number of specific issues raised in the regional office's May 24th letter in order to correct what I believe are significant misunderstandings of fact surrounding our project.

The letter states in the fourth paragraph of the second page that during the rehabilitation "the interior character of each building was completely and radically altered by the removal of all visible historic fabric...". This statement goes on to suggest that it deals only with the issue of removal of wood trim and lowering of ceilings within apartment units. What it does not address, however, is the substantial retention of fabric and contribution to the interior architectural character of these buildings which is represented by our restoring the central stairways and maintaining the interior floor plans essentially intact. As stated at the beginning of this letter, we believe that these stairways are the only significant features and primary character-defining elements on the interiors of the buildings.

We have not, to my knowledge, as indicated near the bottom of page two, claimed that the wood trim had suffered "total deterioration." As outlined earlier, we estimate that 35% of the trim was unsalvageable and considered that factor as only one of several reasons for deciding to remove the trim.

We agree with the assessment made in the letter that our work on the exterior of the buildings does not drastically alter their character. And, given that the December 30, 1983 conditional approval letter we received from the regional office made no mention of window or roof replacements, we assume it was the regional office's view at that time that these two treatments met the Secretary's Standards. We do not believe, therefore, that these treatments should have been at issue in the regional office's denial, nor should they be at issue in this appeal.

In summary, we believe that we made a sound assessment in the planning stages of our project on the East Canton Street buildings--with guidance from the Massachusetts Historical Commission--of their historical and architectural significance and character and that this assessment was concurred in by the Park Service in their nomination process. That assessment led us to the conclusion that the interior trim within the apartment units was

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not significant, and that its removal would not compromise the architectural or historic character of the buildings. We believe that our work on the exterior of the buildings, as well as restoration of the central stair halls and the nearly complete retention of the original apartment plans, is fully consistent with the Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation. It is based upon this belief that we ask you to overturn the May 24, 1984 decision of the regional office and issue rehabilitation certification for the project.

Sincerely,

HII CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "DABlackett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "D" and "A".

Denis A. Blackett
President

DAB:dm

MEETING REPORT

OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

PROJECT: *Lawrence Model Lodging House - ^{Part II} appeal follow-ups*

LOCATION OF MEETING: *Connally's office* DATE: *6/27/84*

STAFF MEMBER: *Giosuena* DIVISION: *NR*

PARTICIPANT: ORGANIZATION: PHONE:

<i>Dr. Connally</i>	}	<i>PAD</i>
<i>Lee Nelson</i>		
<i>Ward Ford</i>		
<i>Susan Dwyer</i>		
<i>Beth Giosuena</i>		<i>NR</i>

REPORT:

Decision: *overtune region's denial*
certify rehab

Discussion: *treatment of individual unit is atrocious, and*
this fact should be cited in our letter

BUT - overall character of the building has been
retained. The major character-defining
features ^{of these bldgs} are the exteriors, the central staircases
and the stairs themselves, and the interior
plans of the bldgs. All have been retained.

Windows + roof slate are not issues - region
knew of these originally and did not make
them part of the conditions for approval.

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Housing Boston's Poor: The First Philanthropic Experiments

CYNTHIA ZAITZEVSKY Brookline, Massachusetts

Although the English movement of the mid-19th century to provide better housing for the working classes has received much attention, there has been little published on corresponding activities in the United States. This paper deals with the movement that began in Boston in 1846 and with two groups of buildings: the "model lodging houses" initiated by Charles Eliot Norton and Abbot Lawrence in the early 1850s and constructed from 1855 to 1892. Views, plans, descriptions, and attributions are provided when possible for the four earliest buildings, all of which were demolished before 1875, and current photographs and complete documentation for the four that still stand. Extensive use is made of published and unpublished statements by Norton, Lawrence, and others involved in the movement, as well as of newspaper accounts. The Boston movement and the buildings it produced are related to their parallels in England and, as far as can be ascertained, in New York, which appears to be the only other American city involved in the very earliest phase of the model housing movement.

HISTORIANS HAVE KNOWN for some time of Robert Treat Paine's developments in Boston in which "substantial workingmen" could purchase modest houses.¹ That there was an earlier movement in the city to build model rental housing for less substantial workers has not been adequately recognized.² A particu-

larly fascinating aspect of the earlier movement is its close relationship, in both theory and practice, with similar activities in England.³

The movement originated in 1846, when a public meeting was held at the Warren Street Chapel in the South Cove, one of the poorest neighborhoods of Boston, to discuss housing conditions in this and other crowded parts of the city. A committee formed to look into the matter of providing better tenements for the poor published a detailed report the same year.⁴

Before the mid-19th century, Boston had been relatively free from overcrowding and extreme poverty. It had even escaped the great cholera epidemic that spread from Europe in 1832 to almost every large city in the United States. The situation changed suddenly in the mid-1840s, due largely to the Irish potato famine of 1845-1850. By 1855 more than 50,000 Irish immigrants, most of them impoverished, had settled in Boston—only slightly less than the entire number of residents, mostly native born, in 1825 (59,277). Before the fillings of the South End and Back Bay and the annexations of adjoining towns, all of which occurred in the third quarter of the century, the city was ill equipped to handle such an abrupt surge in population. There were no build-

sation by David M. Culver, "Tenement House Reform in Boston, 1846-1898," Boston University, Department of History, 1972, is very useful for the social history of Boston housing but has little information about architectural solutions.

The early model housing movement in Boston and other American cities, as well as in England and Europe, is related to but distinct from such company towns and planned communities as New Lanark, Scotland; Lowell, Massachusetts; and Mulhouse, France. In the movement under discussion here, improved housing for workers was not associated with a specific industry or occupation and was built in the most impoverished sections of existing cities.

3. The English movement has been studied thoroughly: see Nikolaus Pevsner, "Early Working Class Housing," in *Studies in Art, Architecture and Design*, 2 vols. New York, 1968, II, 18-37; John Nelson Tarn, *Working-class Housing in 19th-century Britain*, Architectural Association Paper Number 7 London, 1971; John Nelson Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, Cambridge, England, 1973.

4. Stephen H. Perkins et al., *Report of the Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor*, Boston, 1846.

This article is dedicated with much gratitude and affection to John Coolidge on his 70th birthday.

Some of the research presented here was first done to prepare a National Register nomination for the Lawrence Model Lodging Houses on East Canton Street. I should like to thank Housing Innovations, Inc., for permission to publish this material and the photographs credited to them. I am also grateful to James F. O'Gorman for numerous helpful leads in the course of my research on the Norton Model Lodging Houses.

1. Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs: The Process of Growth in Boston (1870-1900)*, Cambridge, Mass., 1962, 2d ed., 1978, 101-106. Paine's developments were mostly in the Roxbury and Dorchester sections of Boston and dated from 1874 to 1891.

2. David Handlin in *The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915*, Boston, 1979, 252-266, discusses chiefly the history of the Boston Cooperative Building Company, begun in 1871. A doctoral dis-



Fig. 1. Charles Eliot Norton as a young man, ca. 1850. Daguerreotype (Charles Eliot Norton Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University).

ings designed for multiple-family occupancy and few remodeled as such. More prosperous Bostonians left older neighborhoods, such as the North End and Fort Hill, leaving the poor with crowded and makeshift quarters. Houses designed for one family frequently had to accommodate one family to a room, at exploitative rents. Ventilation and living space were inadequate and toilet and bathing facilities often entirely lacking.⁵

The similar crowded condition of London and the northern industrial cities of Britain had been a matter of concern for some time, especially since the 1842 publication of the *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Classes*, written in large part by Edwin Chadwick.⁶ Glasgow and Liverpool were also ripe for sanitary and housing reform, for these west coast cities, like Boston, had been suddenly inundated with Irish immigrants in the mid-1840s. In 1844, the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes (hereafter, S.I.C.L.C.) was formed,

5. Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation*, rev. ed., enlarged, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, 1-24, 38-53, 101-115; Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866*, Chicago, Ill., 1962, 37; Perkins et al., *Report*, 3-16.

6. (Edwin Chadwick), *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, edited and with an introduction by M. W. Flinn, Edinburgh, 1965, reprint of 1842 edition.

absorbing an earlier group founded in 1827 as the Labourer's Friend; and another organization, the Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes, had been established in 1841. The first was primarily a benevolent society and the second a commercially based group, but one with philanthropic goals and a limited rate of profit.⁷

By 1846 there were three English examples of model, multiple-family, working-class housing for the Boston committee to study. The first to be actually constructed was apparently the Birkenhead Dock Company's complex of four-story buildings for 324 families in Birkenhead near Liverpool, designed by Charles Evans Lang. The next was a model building for families and widows just completed by the S.I.C.L.C. on Bagnigge Wells Road, London. The Metropolitan Association was shortly to erect another complex on Old St. Pancras Road in London.⁸ The Boston committee sent away for plans of all three. They also submitted a plan of their own, unfortunately not illustrated or described in much detail, for buildings in Boston, which were to have a total of 80 tenements of two or three rooms apiece. The committee did not indicate if they had consulted an architect for this plan. In addition, they included a plan for a large complex of 192 tenements that a similar group in New York hoped to build.⁹

Although the committee recommended immediate action, no permanent organization was formed and no model buildings were erected for several more years. Instead, the first model working-class homes in Boston—among the first in the United States—resulted from the enterprise of a young man who was only 19 and a senior at Harvard College when the committee met. This was Charles Eliot Norton (Fig. 1), son of the Unitarian clergyman and Harvard professor Andrews Norton. Later, the younger Norton was to become Professor of Fine Arts at Harvard, but, at this stage in his life, he seemed set for a mercantile career. After graduating from college in August 1846, he entered the counting house of Bullard and Lee, East India merchants in Boston. At the same time, he organized an evening school for working men and boys in Cambridge and wrote articles on a

7. Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 5; Tarn, *Working-class Housing*, 5-6. The S.I.C.L.C. continued publishing the parent society's periodical, the *Labourer's Friend*. The most important figure in the S.I.C.L.C. was the humanitarian reformer, Lord Ashley, later the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.

8. Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 4-5, 16-17, 22-23. The Bagnigge Wells Road buildings were designed by Henry Roberts and those on Old St. Pancras Road by W. B. Moffatt.

9. Perkins et al., *Report*, 23-27. A letter from Dr. J. Smythe Rogers quoted in the *Report* (20) indicates that the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor had prepared their plan by expanding the one sent to them by the Boston committee. Like the 1846 Boston plan, the early plan by the New York Association was never realized. See Robert H. Bremner, "The Big Flat: History of a New York Tenement House," *American Historical Review*, LXIV, 1958, 54.

wide variety of subjects for the *North American Review*. From 1849 to 1851, he traveled to India for Bullard and Lee, returning via the Suez Canal with extended stops in Italy, France, and England.¹⁰

The first indication of Norton's interest in housing was an article that appeared in the *North American Review* in April 1852.¹¹ Norton discussed five publications, three of which were issued by the S.I.C.L.C., including a book by the Society's honorary architect, Henry Roberts. By this time, the S.I.C.L.C. had built seven model houses, and Norton included a plan and two views of the model houses for families on Streatham Street in Bloomsbury, designed by Roberts and still standing today (Figs. 2 and 3).¹² He recommended that the government take a more active role in regulating the sanitary condition of dwellings and, referring to the 1846 report, urged that a benevolent society similar to the S.I.C.L.C. be established in Boston. Norton did not advocate outright charity, stressing instead that model dwellings should demonstrate that safe and convenient accommodations could be provided at rents that the working poor could afford but that would still bring a reasonable return to the investor. Such "five percent philanthropy," as it was called, was also the goal of the S.I.C.L.C. and the Metropolitan Association.

Norton took immediate steps to start such an organization. By the end of 1852, he had interested several other people and printed a circular that appeared in local newspapers.¹³ By the following spring, a sufficient amount of money had been raised, and, in September 1853, Norton, his brother-in-law and employer William S. Bullard, and Jonathan Ingersoll Bowditch purchased a lot on Osborn Place at Pleasant Street (later Broadway), not far from the Warren Street Chapel. (Osborn Place no longer exists; it was part of the South Cove section of Boston, located between today's neighborhoods of Bay Village and Chinatown.) In 1854 the Society was incorporated by the state legislature



The Model Houses for Families in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury.

Fig. 2. Henry Roberts, Model Homes for Families, Streatham Street, Bloomsbury, London, 1850. View (*North American Review*, April 1852).

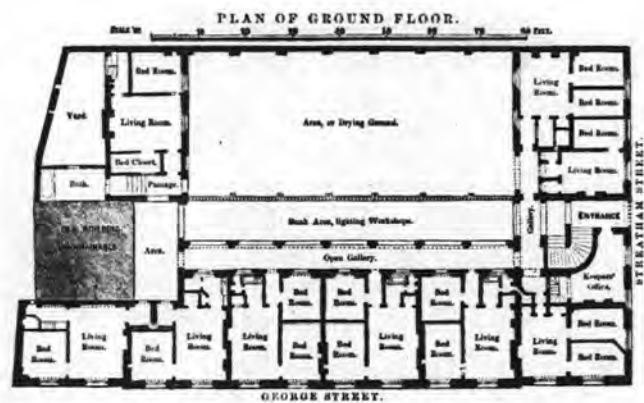


Fig. 3. Roberts, Model Homes for Families, Streatham Street. Plan (*North American Review*, April 1852).

under the name of the Model Lodging House Association. Construction of two buildings began in May 1854, and they were ready for occupancy by January 1855.¹⁴

14. Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Liber 651, fol. 162 and Liber 675, fol. 232; *Boston Evening Transcript*, 2 May 1854 and 2 January 1855; Vanderbilt, *Norton*, 41-43. For Bowditch, see (A. P. Peabody), "Sketch of the Life of Jonathan Ingersoll Bowditch," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, xvi, 1889, 435-437. Bowditch was the brother of Dr. Henry I. Bowditch, who had been a co-author of the 1846 Report and who was later a founder of the Boston Cooperative Building Company.

"Lodging house" during this period in England was generally synonymous with "rooming house." Norton and the other early Boston housing reformers frequently used the term to describe buildings with self-contained flats of several rooms for families. Possibly, for them, "tenement house" had negative connotations and "apartment house" had not yet become common usage.

10. Kermit Vanderbilt, *Charles Eliot Norton: Apostle of Culture in a Democracy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1959, 26-37. For Norton and philanthropic housing, see also Robert B. Shaffer, "Charles Eliot Norton and Architecture," Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, Department of Fine Arts, 1951, 56-72.

11. (Charles Eliot Norton), "Dwellings and Schools for the Poor," *North American Review*, LXXIV, no. 155, April 1852, 464-489.

12. Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 18-20. James Stevens Curl, *Model Housing and Healthy Nations: The Life and Work of Henry Roberts (1803-1876) Architect* is scheduled to be published by Phillimore and Co., Chichester, England.

13. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 9 December 1852; Journal of Charles Eliot Norton and Charles Eliot Guild, Entry of 31 January 1853, Charles Eliot Norton Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. The circular describes a plan very different from those Norton eventually used; it was to have been one building for 36 families, 12 or more single men, and a superintendent. Rather than self-contained units, as finally constructed, the building was to have a common kitchen and dining room, as well as a reading room. No architect is mentioned.



Fig. 4. Benjamin F. Dwight and Charles K. Kirby, Model Lodging Houses, Osborn Place, Boston, 1855, demolished ca. 1870 (*Boston Almanac*, 1855).

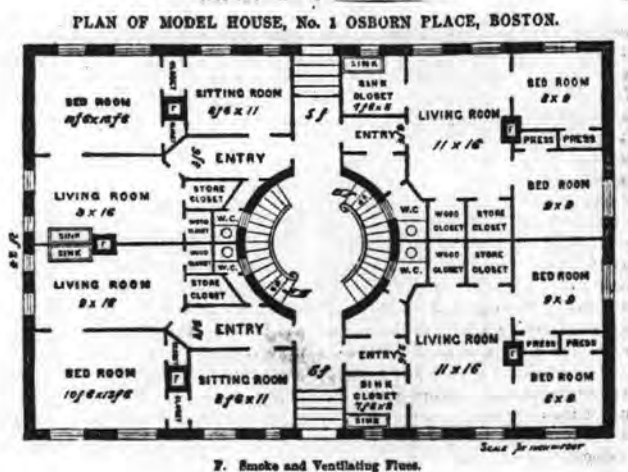


Fig. 5. No. 1 Osborn Place. Plan (*Atlantic Monthly*, June 1860).

The Osborn Place buildings no longer stand, and there are no old photographs of them in Boston archives. Their exterior appearance is known only from a rather crude sketch in the *Boston Almanac* of 1855 (Fig. 4) and their plans from an article written by Norton in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1860 (Figs. 5 and 6).¹⁵ A short description in the *Almanac* also reveals that one building

15. *Boston Almanac*, 1855, 46-47; (Charles Eliot Norton), "Model Lodging-Houses in Boston," *Atlantic Monthly*, v, no. 6, June 1860, 673-680. The *Atlantic* article, like the one in the *North American Review*, was unsigned, and Norton did not indicate his own role in the project.

PLAN OF ONE-HALF OF MODEL HOUSE, No. 3 OSBORN PLACE, BOSTON.

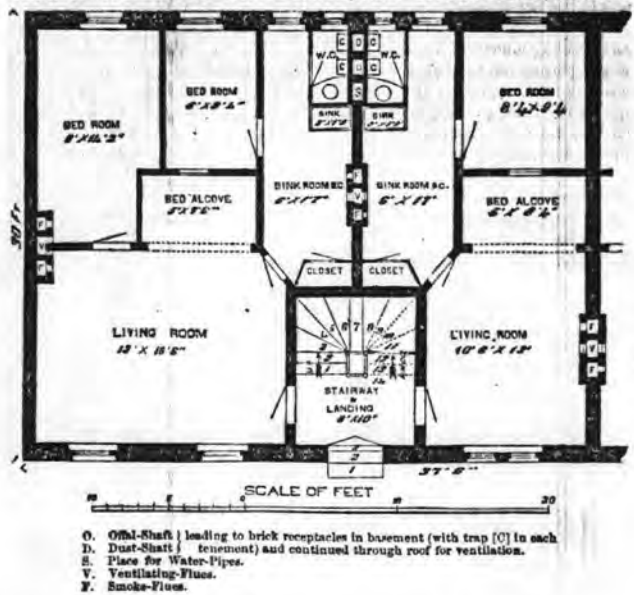


Fig. 6. No. 3 Osborn Place. Plan (*Atlantic Monthly*, June 1860).

was designed by Benjamin F. Dwight and the other by Charles F. Kirby but does not indicate which was which.

Norton's choice of these two young and rather obscure architects is something of a puzzle. He had consulted Hammatt Billings about the project in 1852, when Billings was designing a house for him in Newport.¹⁶ The Boston City Directory of 1854 lists three dozen architects practicing in the city, including, besides Billings, Dwight, and Kirby, Gridley J. F. Bryant, Edward C. Cabot, and Arthur Gilman. Both Dwight and Kirby were just starting their careers. Dwight, who died in 1893, had worked for Arthur Gilman and, as recently as 1852, for the English-born architect George Snell, assisting Snell with the Boston Music Hall in that year. He later designed numerous commercial buildings and theaters in Boston, as well as country houses.¹⁷ Kirby is listed as an architect in the Boston Directory from 1852 to 1882, and the Osborn Place lodging house is his earliest known commis-

16. Hammatt Billings to Charles Eliot Norton, 11 March 1852, Norton Papers, Houghton Library. Billings probably redrew the views of the Streatham Street building from which the engravings in Norton's *North American Review* article were made by the firm of Baker and Smith. Billings also illustrated this and another English model lodging house in Harriet Beecher Stowe's account of her 1853 European tour, when she was shown several of the S.I.C.L.C.'s buildings. See Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Sunny Memories of Foreign Lands*, Boston, 1854, II, 110-122. There is no record that Stowe, who at that time lived in Andover, Massachusetts, was involved with the Osborn Place buildings, but it is probably safe to assume that she had read Norton's 1852 article.

17. Obituary in the *American Architect and Building News*, XLII, no. 929 (14 October 1893), 13; Boston Architectural Index, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library.

sion. In 1855 he won the competition for the first Boston Public Library building on Boylston Street in a field of two dozen entrants. He designed several commercial buildings in downtown Boston after the fire of 1872 and a number of speculatively built houses in the Back Bay.¹⁸

On the exterior, the buildings were straightforwardly utilitarian: brick, five stories high, the flat roofs outfitted with guardrails and clotheslines. No. 1 Osborn Place had a slightly more elaborate exterior treatment than the severely plain double house at Nos. 2 and 3 Osborn Place. Norton described the lodging houses as "substantial and not unornamental"—praise indeed from a man who later roundly condemned nearly all architecture of his own era.¹⁹

Inside, the individual units were spartan but adequate. Four different layouts were available, based on varying English models. Most units had a living room, which would have been equipped with a stove, two or three bedrooms, a scullery or sink room, and a water closet. Some of the apartments in No. 1 Osborn Place had the comparative luxury of a separate sitting room, and this building also had rooms for bathing in the basement.

Each building had a different type of plan. Nos. 2 and 3 had small enclosed stairways but through ventilation in each apartment. No. 1, with its symmetrical plan and circular staircase of cast iron, was clearly derived from an unexecuted English design. This was a project for a "college for working men," drawn by John Claudius Loudon in 1818, published for the first time in 1832 and, in slightly simpler form, in one of the first issues of the *Builder* in 1843 (Fig. 7).²⁰ Norton's architect deviated from the Loudon plan by reducing the number of apartments per floor from eight to four and by including a hallway running the full depth of the building. Writing five years later, Norton was unable to decide which of the two Osborn Place plans was more effective.²¹

To judge from an effusive but undoubtedly sincere letter in the *Transcript*, the tenants liked their new quarters.²² Rents were paid promptly, and there was a long waiting list for apartments. The trustees provided a resident superintendent and a circulating

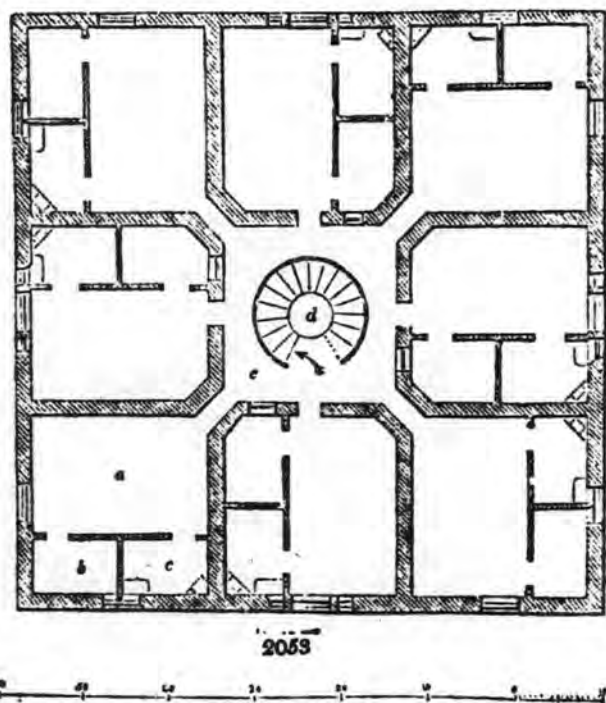


Fig. 7. John Claudius Loudon. College for Working Men (project). Plan (*Builder*, 25 February 1843).

library and made frequent personal visits.²³ The Boston City Directory lists carpenters, painters, blacksmiths, and a cigar maker among the occupants, most of them, according to Norton, American born. The buildings were successful financially, returning a profit of 6%. Sometime between 1855 and 1860, a third building was constructed on Osborn Place, which included a shop and nine tenements of a "somewhat superior character."²⁴ No record survives of its appearance. In 1860 Norton considered that the Association's work was virtually done: "Great improvements have been made in the old lodging houses throughout the city; & many builders have adopted our plans more or less fully in erecting new houses."²⁵

The story of the Osborn Place model lodging houses has an interesting Anglo-American postscript. In 1850 and again from 1855 to 1857, Norton traveled in Europe meeting, among others,

18. Bainbridge Bunting, *Houses of Boston's Back Bay*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, 157; Boston Architectural Index, Fine Arts Department, Boston Public Library.

19. Several instances are given in Vanderbilt, Norton, 134-135. The quotation is from (Norton), "Model Lodging-Houses," 678.

20. *Mechanics Magazine*, xvi, no. 443 (4 February 1832), 321-323; *Builder*, 1, no. 3 (25 February 1843), 32. The *Builder* version was also published in the Supplement to the fifth edition of J. C. Loudon, *An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture*, London, 1844, 1139-1140.

21. (Norton), "Model Lodging-Houses," 678.

22. "A Model Letter from a Model House," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 6 January 1855, 2.

23. Charles F. Barnard, quoted in "Abbott Lawrence," *American Journal of Education*, Henry Barnard, ed. 1, 1856, 212-213. Charles F. Barnard was minister of the Warren Street Chapel.

24. Boston City Directory, 1860; (Norton), "Model Lodging Houses," 678.

25. Charles Eliot Norton to Elizabeth Gaskell, 7 February 1860. In Jane Whitehill, ed., *Letters of Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Eliot Norton, 1855-1865*, London, 1932, 48. (The original letters are in the Norton Papers.) An editorial in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* of 5 September 1864 (2) also refers to 50 buildings copied from Osborn Place, but, as in Norton's comment, these buildings are not identified.



Fig. 8. Abbott Lawrence. Engraving from a painting by Alonzo Chapel. The painting was done in 1862 from an undated photograph owned by the Lawrence family (Boston Athenaeum).

John Ruskin, with whom he established a long friendship, and Elizabeth Gaskell, novelist and biographer of Charlotte Brontë. Mrs. Gaskell and her husband, the Unitarian minister William Gaskell, lived in the industrial city of Manchester, and she had written vividly about the living conditions of its workers in her first novel, *Mary Barton* (1848). Norton and Mrs. Gaskell corresponded until the latter's death in 1865, and Norton named one of his daughters after her.²⁶

In 1860 Thurston Holland, a young cousin of Mrs. Gaskell, decided to build a model house in London with a group of his friends. Curiously, instead of contacting the S.I.C.L.C., Mrs. Gaskell wrote to Norton: "I want you . . . as soon as you conveniently can to send me all manner of information . . . about your *blocks* of dwellings for working men. You know what I mean; for I don't know what you call them in America—great conglomerate sets of rooms in one vast building,—erected according to laws of health . . . etc.; in fact, every experience on your side of the water about lodging the working-people well, economically and healthily."²⁷

26. Vanderbilt, *Norton*, 35–37, 51–70; Whitehill, *Letters*, vii–xxix.

27. Gaskell to Norton, 19 January 1860, in Whitehill, *Letters*, 44.

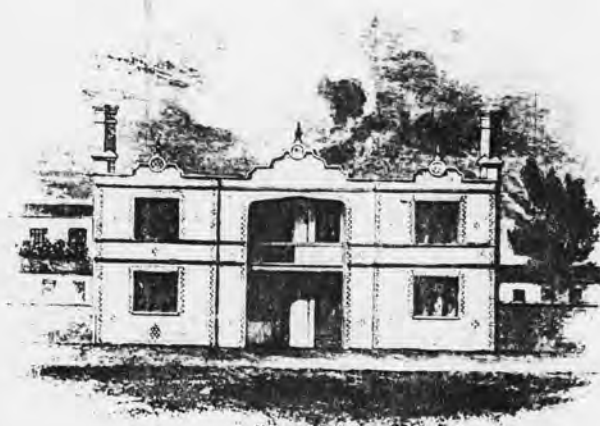
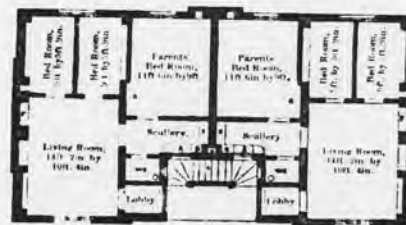


Fig. 9. Henry Roberts, Model Houses for Families erected by the S.I.C.L.C. for HRH Prince Albert at the Great Exhibition of 1851, demolished. Elevation (S.I.C.L.C., *Plan and Suggestions for Dwellings Adapted to the Working Classes*, 1851).



A. Sink, with Cool Box under.
B. Plate Rack over entrance to front shaft, D.
C. West Hall, ventilated through India brick.
D. Staircase of stone, with front plate under.
E. Cupboard warmed from back of fireplace.
F. Living Room, 14 ft. 2 in. by 10 ft. 4 in.
G. Living Room, 14 ft. 2 in. by 10 ft. 4 in.

Scale of 0 10 20 30 40 feet

Fig. 10. Henry Roberts, Model Houses at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Plan (S.I.C.L.C., *Plan and Suggestions . . .*).

Norton sent her a copy of his *North American Review* article and reduced plans of the two buildings, and described them in some detail.²⁸ Mrs. Gaskell replied that his letters were ". . . so clear; so useful; and the little plan made *me* even (who am very stupid about architectural plans in general,) quite understand No. 1, and No. 2."²⁹ She also visited the Streatham Street buildings but didn't like them and felt that their apartments were less complete than those in the Osborn Place buildings. Eventually, Thurston Holland and his friends decided to buy 19 houses in Drury Lane and turn them into model lodging houses rather than build new ones.³⁰

In one of his letters to Mrs. Gaskell, Norton remarked that "Mr. Abbott Lawrence (whom you remember in England) left by will \$50,000 for the erection of Model Houses. . . it is probable

28. Norton to Gaskell, 7 February and 6 March 1860, in Whitehill, *Letters*, 45–51.

29. Gaskell to Norton, 5 April 1860, in Whitehill, *Letters*, 52.

30. Gaskell to Norton, 16 April 1861, in Whitehill, *Letters*, 81.



Fig. 11. Charles K. Kirby and William F. Goodwin, Lawrence Model Lodging Houses, 79–109 East Canton Street, Boston, 1874–1875, 1891–1892 (Photograph by Barry Cohen, 1982, for Housing Innovations, Inc.).

that it will be paid over this year by his executors, and the work which he desired be at once begun.”³¹

Abbott Lawrence (Fig. 8), best known as the junior partner in the firm of Amos and Abbott Lawrence and founder, in 1845, of the textile city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, was active in public and philanthropic enterprises throughout his life. For two years in the 1830s, he was a member of Congress, and, from 1849 to 1852, he was Ambassador to the Court of Saint James. He was responsible for planning the American section of the Great Exhibition of 1851, which was paid for by another American merchant resident in London, George Peabody.³²

It was through the Great Exhibition that the model housing movement came to international attention. The S.I.C.L.C. wished to be represented by a building rather than by plans, and the Society obtained both official approval and financial backing from the Prince Consort to build a model cottage in Hyde Park (Figs. 9 and 10). This building was only two stories high, with two apartments on each floor, but Roberts designed it so that it could be extended both vertically and horizontally.³³ In view of

the widespread influence of this plan, it is surprising that Norton's architects rejected it, preferring, apparently, to search back issues of the *Builder*.

Lawrence returned to Boston in 1852, where he subscribed to Norton's Association.³⁴ In 1855 he died at the age of 62. The \$50,000 he left to build model lodging houses in Boston was his largest philanthropic bequest with the exception of an equal amount to the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University, which he had founded in 1847. The trustees of the fund were his son James Lawrence, J. Ingersoll Bowditch, who was also a trustee of the Model Lodging House Association, and George H. Kuhn. The houses were to be let to “poor, temperate, and industrious families” at reasonable rents and were to be built “with especial reference to the comfort and health of the occupants and the proper ventilation and cleanliness of their tenements.”³⁵ Half the profit from the buildings each year was to be given to charitable institutions and the other half reinvested until additional houses could be built. One biographer indicates that Lawrence himself “arranged the plan” of his projected model houses only two weeks before his death.³⁶

31. Norton to Gaskell, 7 February 1860, in Whitehill, *Letters*, 48.

32. Entry on Abbott Lawrence, *Dictionary of American Biography*, New York, 1936, vi, 44–46; Hamilton A. Hill, *Memoir of Abbott Lawrence*, Boston, 1883; “Abbott Lawrence,” *American Journal of Education*, 1, 1856, 205–215.

33. Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 20–21.

34. “Abbott Lawrence,” *American Journal of Education*, 212.

35. Will of Abbott Lawrence, Suffolk County Registry of Probate.

36. William H. Prescott, Esq., *Memoir of the Honorable Abbott Lawrence*, prepared for the National Portrait Gallery, 1856, 46.



Fig. 12. Charles K. Kirby, 99 East Canton Street (The Bigelow), 1874–1875 (Photograph by Barry Cohen, 1982, for Housing Innovations, Inc.).

In 1860 the Lawrence trustees bought a lot of land in Kneeland Place (now Monsignor Shea Road) near Harrison Avenue in the same general neighborhood as Osborn Place.³⁷ As in the case of the third Osborn Place building, there are no photographs or plans of the Kneeland Place model lodging house and no mention of its architect. However, detailed descriptions exist that show it followed very closely the English and Osborn Place prototypes. Its only exterior innovation was the then fashionable mansard roof; it was brick and five stories high, including mansard. The plan was very similar to No. 1 Osborn Place, with a large central hall that also served as a common area for tenants and iron staircases leading to four apartments on each floor. Each apartment had a living room, three small bedrooms, and a scullery. The building returned a profit of close to 9%, considerably more than the Osborn Place houses.³⁸

The Lawrence trustees had planned to build additional houses at Kneeland Place, but, in 1873, they sold the property to the Archdiocese of Boston, which built a church (Saint James, by P. C. Keeley) on the site.³⁹ By this time, Norton's group had given up the Osborn Place site, and the group built no further model lodging houses.⁴⁰ The only other comparable organization, the



Fig. 13. 99 East Canton Street. Stair Hall (Photograph by Barry Cohen, 1982, for Housing Innovations, Inc.).

Boston Cooperative Building Company, founded only a few years before, was in the middle of its first venture: the rehabilitation of an existing tenement.⁴¹ Rather than continuing to build in town, the Lawrence trustees purchased several lots on East Canton Street on the fringes of the newly filled South End and eventually built four model lodging houses, all of which still stand (Fig. 11).⁴²

The first three buildings, 79–99 East Canton Street, are identical and were designed by Charles K. Kirby in 1874–1875 (Fig. 12).⁴³ They are strikingly similar to No. 1 Osborn Place, making it virtually certain that Kirby, rather than Dwight, was the architect of that building. Kirby's architectural solutions were conservative. The model dwellings in London built by the S.I.C.L.C., the Metropolitan Association, and, after 1864, by the Peabody Trust generally consisted of large blocks or several connected blocks of buildings, frequently with an interior court.⁴⁴ While

150 were demolished, and the others were moved to higher foundations. See Walter Muir Whitehill, *Boston: A Topographical History*, Cambridge, Mass., 2d ed., enlarged 1968, 139. Norton was out of the country at the time, and, during his absence, Martin Brimmer took charge of the Osborn Place buildings (Charles Eliot Norton, Biographical Notes dictated to his daughter in 1908, Norton Papers).

41. Handlin, *The American Home*, 255–256.

42. Suffolk County, Registry of Probate, Will and Trust of Abbott Lawrence.

43. Suffolk County, Registry of Probate, Will and Trust of Abbott Lawrence.

44. The Peabody Trust buildings, all of which were designed by Henry Darbishire, are described and illustrated in Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 44–50. The East Canton Street buildings have a strong but probably coincidental resemblance to the later Peabody Trust complexes. Darbishire and Kirby must have arrived independently at similar solutions, for the chronology does not support a direct influence. The East Canton Street buildings are obviously derived from No. 1 Osborn Place, completed in 1855, but the first Peabody Estate (an uncharacteristically

37. Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Liber 786, fol. 60.

38. *Boston Daily Advertiser*, clipping dated September 1864 in the Norton papers; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor, *First Annual Report*, 1870, 178–179.

39. Suffolk County Registry of Deeds, Liber 1145, fol. 38.

40. It appears that the Osborn Place buildings were either demolished or drastically altered about 1870, when the City of Boston took the property by eminent domain in order to regrade 32 acres in the Suffolk Street district. Of the approximately 750 buildings in this district, about



Fig. 15. William F. Goodwin, 109 East Canton Street (The Groton), 1891-1892 (Photograph by Barry Cohen, 1982, for Housing Innovations, Inc.).

plans, making no interior alterations. On the exterior (Fig. 15), he updated the by then passé mansard style but only by making the most minimal changes: the semimansard became a plain brick attic story, and the entrance and fifth-floor windows have simple brick attic arches rather than the wooden pediments of 79-99 East Canton Street.

The Lawrence model lodging houses served their purpose well into the 20th century, but in 1940 they were sold to a private owner. Although the buildings remained basically sound, they deteriorated considerably over the next 30 years. In 1979 they were acquired by the City of Boston for nonpayment of taxes. By this time, the South End was going through a period of renewal, and there was much interest in the buildings. Through the combined efforts of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and a tenants' organization, the City secured HUD Section 8 funding for subsidized rentals and designated Housing Innovations, Inc., a Boston-based development and management firm, as developer of the property.⁴⁷ In addition, the buildings were judged eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and, consequently, for benefits under the Tax Reform Act of 1976. A sympathetic plan has been made by the Boston Architectural Team, which will rehabilitate the buildings without significantly altering them.

* * *

The first phase of the model lodging house movement in Boston,

47. Grace Stougaard, "Improved Dwelling Enterprises in Boston" (Boston: Boston Housing Association, 1932), np, unpublished report at the Frances Loeb Library, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University; Suffolk County Registry of Probate, Will and Trust of Abbott Lawrence, Decree in Equity, 20 November 1940; "B.R.A. Report," *South End News*, 5 July 1980.

although it produced only eight buildings and two projects, is significant for several reasons. It was exceptionally early in date, following the founding of the S.I.C.L.C. and other English organizations by only a few years. The Osborn Place buildings were the first of their type in Boston and, according to Norton, were the first successful venture in philanthropic housing in the United States.⁴⁸

They also demonstrate that the struggle to achieve improved working-class housing was a movement of international proportions, although England took the lead. The urgency of the situation seems to have led to a more rapid exchange of ideas and plans than was generally the case with high-style architecture. Norton and Lawrence were especially well placed to serve as conduits of Anglo-American interchange, but they were the first of many, and the influence went both ways. In 1862 the American financier George Peabody, who had lived for many years in England, established a trust that eventually built more model housing in London than any other organization.⁴⁹ A few years later, Norton's friend John Ruskin financed Octavia Hill in a venture that stressed the landlord/tenant relationship rather than architectural improvements. Numerous Octavia Hill Societies were started in this country in the 1880s and 1890s.⁵⁰ Similarly, Henry Ingersoll Bowditch of the Boston Cooperative Building Company was influenced by both Sidney Waterlow of the Peabody Trust and Octavia Hill.⁵¹ But the exchange was not limited to the United States. The pages of the *Labourer's Friend* and the *Builder* show that Europe was equally active; similar organizations and projects were underway in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and many other countries.

More problematical is the question of the actual impact of so much well-meant effort. Many criticisms have been leveled at the reformers: their buildings were too few; the apartments were too small; the neighborhoods where they were built were not necessarily improved; and—the most frequent charge—they did not address the needs of the most impoverished levels of society but only the working poor.

The English and American reformers did not imagine that they could solve the desperate housing problems of the day by building in volume. The aim of Norton's group, which was clearly patterned after the S.I.C.L.C., was to set an example: to show that safe and adequate dwellings could bring sufficient return to investors and, additionally, to demonstrate varying architectural

48. (Norton), "Model Lodging-Houses," 679.

49. Franklin Parker, *George Peabody: A Biography*, Nashville, Tenn., 1971, 103-109.

50. Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy*, 72-73; Robert H. Bremner, "'An Iron Scepter Twined with Roses': The Octavia Hill System of Housing Management," *Social Service Review*, xxxix, no. 2, June 1965, 222-231.

51. Handlin, *The American Home*, 254.

prototypes. Some of the later commercial or cooperative building companies in London and Boston built on a larger scale, but there was also an "exemplary" aspect to their work in that they hoped to encourage similar enterprises.

By middle-class standards, the apartments were cramped, but they offered the maximum space and privacy consistent with low rents and far more than the makeshift quarters the tenants had left. In terms of mechanical equipment and sanitary facilities, they were better than many middle-class dwellings. Similarly, the model buildings were purposely located in working-class neighborhoods and were intended to be tenement buildings. But they were to be the best of their kind: well planned, comfortable, and hygienic.

Norton, Lawrence, and most of their English and American counterparts did not build for the poorest of the poor, because the only way they could have done so would have been through outright charity. They hoped to work through existing financial and governmental institutions by stimulating private investment and more rigorous municipal surveillance. They reasoned that, by providing for the working poor, more space would be made

available for the destitute, and the general level of housing would gradually improve.⁵² Although to us this decision may seem conservative and even somewhat hypocritical, it appears to have been wise. Two experiments in housing the very poor—the Workmen's Home in New York and the Boston Cooperative Building Company's rehabilitation of the notorious "Crystal Palace"—ultimately failed.⁵³

The Norton and Lawrence model lodging houses were conceived by two distinguished Bostonians, one at the beginning and the other at the end of his career. Adapting British prototypes, young local architects produced remarkably successful plans. These modest buildings, hidden on side streets in parts of Boston since greatly altered, have enormous social significance. In a humanitarian movement that later spread to almost every city in the country, they were the first solid achievements.

52. Perkins et al. in *Report*, 29–32, and Norton in "Dwellings and Schools for the Poor," 469–473, express this commonly held point of view.

53. (Norton), "Model Lodging-Houses," 679; Bremner, "The Big Flat," 56–62; Handlin, *The American Home*, 254–256.