

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 25 1986

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Second Brazer Building

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 25-29 State Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Boston N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Suffolk code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ 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
	☐ N/A being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial	☐ transportation
		☐ no	☐ military	☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name John D. Rehms, Trust

street & number 7 Water Street - 2nd Floor

city, town Boston N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Pemberton Square

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1980 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description

Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass.

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Second Brazer Building is a trapezoidal plan, eleven story freestanding Beaux Arts style office building of steel frame construction clad in limestone and terra cotta. Its design features a column format having a base of two stories, a transitional third floor, a five-story shaft, and an elaborate crowning cap of the upper three stories. Exterior materials are limestone for floors one through three and terra cotta for upper stories. The building covers the entire 2,669 square feet of the trapezoidal parcel. Its height is 125 feet, which was the maximum allowed by building codes in 1896.

The terra cotta cladding is fashioned in a rusticated wall surface pattern from fourth through ninth stories, and smooth-faced masonry pattern at floors ten through eleven.

Fenestration patterns are identical on the State Street., Devonshire, and south Quaker Lane facades. The rusticated limestone base is articulated by three wide bays, round arched at the second story and embellished by ornamental keystones, while floors three through eight are divided into six bays. Two slender metal colonettes and one horizontal member further break up the units within the arched openings. A slightly paired arrangement of the upper story bays added subtle vertical emphasis to the building when seen from a distance. Viewed closely, however, the Renaissance-inspired masonry and terra cotta patterns have a decided horizontality. Windows on the ninth floor are arched. Window units are one over one, double hung wood sash.

Rounded corner bays are found at the northeast and northwest corners. The northwest contains a classically enframed street-level entry. Wreathed medallions are centered above the second-story corner windows, carved with the initial "B". Street-level openings contain large windows or entrances, generally fit with contemporary metal and glass units.

Additional ornamental accents are provided by the wave-patterned running mold above the third floor, and banded leaf molding above the eighth, and festoons and elaborate keystones over the ninth-floor windows. Decorative roundels with terra cotta medallions in colors of green, turquoise, and gold further embellish this level.

Crowning the building, the tenth and eleventh floors are treated as a unit, forming an ornamental cap. Pilasters separate three elaborately embellished tripartite window groupings on each principal elevation. Each group includes Beaux Arts classicism in its central wreathed oval windows, pilasters, and cornices. A wide decorative entablature with dentil molding and iron cresting crowns the building. The heavily ornamented entablature above the eleventh floor oval windows includes terra cotta eagles, while the cresting is decorated with jagged shell forms and floral motifs.

Continued

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Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass.

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The eastern elevation, which faces onto narrow Quaker Lane, is treated as a rear facade, containing an irregular fenestration pattern. At ground level, (from south to north) there is a large window, a classically enframed door, a small window (framed down), another large window, and a single-door entry. Attached to the building at the small window is a glass and metal enclosure. Two large round-arched windows are located on the second story above the first story large window openings, while smaller rectangular windows are above remaining first story openings. From the third through ninth level to the top, the pattern of windows is 2-1-1-2-1. A metal fire escape is joined to the building on this facade.

The Second Brazer Building is located in the area of the original Shawmut Peninsula. Due to its scale and the possibility of significant archeological remains of the 17th and 18th century, this property should be considered to have high archeological potential.

8. Significance

Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass.

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 1896 Builder Architect Cass Gilbert

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Second Brazer Building possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, and association. It is significant as an intact, early steel-frame skyscraper and is a fine example of the use of architectural terra cotta. It is unique as Boston's only work by Cass Gilbert, an architect of national significance in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Historically the building has been associated with the city's financial community, serving as offices for brokers, bankers, and bond sellers. As such, the Second Brazer Building meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places. In the Boston Landmarks Commission's Central Business District Preservation Study (1980) of 809 buildings, this building was evaluated to be of "Major Significance" (Group II) to the City, the Commonwealth and the New England Region.

The Second Brazer Building was one of the earliest steel-framed skyscrapers built in Boston. In 1893, Clarence Blackall designed the Winthrop Building, Boston's first steel-frame building, which was erected at 7 Water Street. The Worthington Building, just east of the Second Brazer, was put up in 1894. Both buildings still stand and possess similarities in their overall design format of well-defined base, relatively plain shaft, and elaborate cornice.

Boston's conservative taste in architectural design of the 1890s' is reflected by the Second Brazer Building, which reveals influences of New York's American Surety Building (Bruce Price, architect; 1895). In American Architecture, 1607-1976, Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper point to the American Surety Building as "the most discussed and most influential skyscraper of the decade ... Price himself called it a "rusticated pillar."¹

The Beaux Arts style takes its name from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, which during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was unrivaled in reputation among schools of architecture. The first two Americans to attend, Richard Morris Hunt and Henry Hobson Richardson, set the example for succeeding generations of architects, particularly in the period from 1890 to 1930. By the turn of the century, the profession was dominated by men who had trained at the Ecole.

Continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

Second Brazer Building

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Boston South

Quadrangle scale 1" = 25,000'

UTM References

A

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

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Nominated property conforms to Boston assessor's parcel number 3889. See attached Assessor's Map.

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 Carol Kennedy
Boston Landmarks Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date May 1986

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

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie A. Talmage
title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date 6/12/86
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 7-24-86

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Item number

8

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1

Training at the Ecole emphasized the traditional and monumental. As explained by architectural historian William Jordy, the aim of Beaux Arts composition was to achieve "a stable harmony dependent on an emphasis on mass."² Plans were typically symmetrical, and masses were generally bounded along the ground level, sides, and cornice of a structure. The Beaux Arts aesthetic emphasized the use of traditional forms. According to Jordy, the Ecole taught that "the past provided vocabularies of form and compositional themes from which the present should learn;" in other words, that "current design should be evolutionary rather than revolutionary."³

The Second Brazer Building is among the city's finest examples of the use of architectural terra cotta, a kiln-fired clay building material which came into use in the United States after the Civil War. Its first use on a large scale was in the old Boston Museum of Fine Arts in Copley Square (1870-71) by Sturgis and Brigham.

Authors Nancy D. Berryman and Susan M. Tindall have noted the following:

Terra cotta cladding was extremely popular from the 1890s through the first third of the twentieth century. It sheathed the early skyscrapers of the Chicago School of Architecture, the set-back structures of the Art Deco Movement, the commercial buildings on neighborhood and Main Street business strips and opulent movie palaces. It was essential to the designs of architectural giants such as Adler and Sullivan; Burnham and Root; Holabird and Roche; Cass Gilbert. . . . The material was also mass produced and ornament, available from catalogues, appears on thousands of small commercial and residential buildings.⁵

The popularity of terra cotta can be attributed in part to its fireproof nature, durability and aesthetic potential. Standardized production techniques allowed architects to incorporate intricate sculptural detailing at a fraction of the cost of carved stone. Glazed (or enameled) terra cotta of the type used on the Second Brazer Building reached the height of its popularity during the period from about 1890 to 1915, after which it was gradually replaced by cast stone. Those terra cotta buildings which remain, particularly fine examples such as the Second Brazer Building, are testimony to the interdependence of design, craftsmanship, and building technology.

Continued

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Continuation sheet Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass. Item number 8

Page 2

Terra cotta was first used in this country for its natural dark reddish-brown color as ornament in conjunction with brick and brownstone, especially in the late 19th century's Queen Anne and Richardsonian Romanesque architectural styles, where the material was an integral part of the load-bearing masonry unit. In 1873 terra cotta tiles were first used in Chicago as fire-proofing for a metal frame building.⁶ Its third, and most visible use, was as an exterior surface material when anchoring systems had been devised to join terra cotta wall and decorative units to metal structural frames. As tastes in architectural design shifted toward the end of the century, influenced by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, light colored wall surfaces became popular. Terra cotta could be executed in the rich sculptural effects desired for Beaux Arts styles and in a variety of colors depending on the clays and glazes used. The Second Brazer Building's design is a reflection of the structural and aesthetic patterns made possible by these new technologies.

The architect Cass Gilbert (1858-1934) began his career in the office of McKim, Mead, and White and served for a time as Stanford White's personal assistant before opening an office of his own in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1882. He practiced with James Knox Taylor there for ten years, and later independently. In 1896 Gilbert won the competition for the Minnesota State Capitol, a design for which he is well known. Subsequently, he returned to New York where his career flourished. Among his other works are such notable large public buildings as the New York Custom House (c.1905), Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. (1933-35), and Federal Court House in New York, as well as the 66-story Woolworth Building in New York (1910-1913), which was then the world's tallest building. Gilbert served for a time as president of the American Institute of Architects and was the recipient of many professional honors. The Second Brazer Building is Gilbert's only Boston building.

Continued

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A plaque above the State Street entrance to the Second Brazer Building marks the site as the location of Boston's first meeting house, a thatched roof structure which stood there from 1632-1640. Quaker Lane, which borders the building on its south and east facades, is a remnant of the city's colonial street pattern.

John Brazer of Boston acquired land here in the 1820's from several heirs of Thomas Dawes. He was listed in City Directories of the 1820's as "merchant, 13 Franklin St." Isaiah Rogers, a prominent Boston architect, designed a three-story granite commercial building for this site in 1842. Known as Brazer's Building, this was a restrained Greek Revival/Boston Granite structure replaced by the present building. The (first) Brazer's Building contained offices of insurance companies, lawyers, and real estate agents. Alexander S. Porter, identified with real estate deals of great magnitude, had offices there.

After Brazer's death, the property passed to his daughter Sarah L. (wife of John Brooks). The property was transferred to subsequent Brazer heirs, including the next generation, John Brazer Brooks and Alice Brazer Norris (nee Brooks).

The Brazer Building Trust was formed in May of 1896 for the purpose of purchasing the old Brazer building, erecting and managing a new building. Total capital was \$625,000 represented by 6,250 shares at \$100 each. Trustees were Thomas H. Russell of Boston, Moses Williams of Brookline, and Arthur H. Russell of Winchester. Initial subscribers included the Municipal Real Estate Trust (Trustees Samuel Wells, James M. Codman, Jr.; Henry Parkman, Moses Williams) (\$250,000); Sadie L. Brooks (\$5,000); Fannie E. Russell (\$500); Alice L. Mathews (\$7500); Arthur H. Russell as guardian of Louis de Relgram Cole (\$1,000); Alex S. Porter (\$1,000); Alice Brazer Norris of Milwaukee (Thomas H. Russell as Trustee) (\$200,000).

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Continuation sheet Second Brazer Building, Boston, Massachusetts
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Contractor for the Second Brazer Building was the George A. Fuller Company, and its terra cotta was supplied by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company, both of Chicago.

Located in the midst of the city's late 19th century financial district, the Second Brazer Building was early associated with Boston's financial community. Original plans indicate first floor space devoted to banking purposes, with upper story offices. Early tenants included brokers, bankers and bond traders. City Directory research indicates the following as tenants in 1899: E.A. Corbett, William Frederick Hill, Cameron and Noyes and Elwood S. Gatch and Company. Several of these men were members of the Boston Stock Exchange, located nearby at 53 State Street (which had been completed in 1891).

This area of Boston continues in use today as the city's financial center. The first floor space of the Second Brazer Building is now occupied by the Provident Savings Bank, a liquor store, and a snack bar, while the upper stories provide office space. The structure is currently undergoing rehabilitation work of masonry stabilization and planning for comprehensive exterior restoration.

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Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass.

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date entered

NOTES

1. Whiffen, Marcus and Frederick Koeper. American Architecture, 1607 - 1976, p. 264.
2. Jordy, William H. American Buildings and Their Architects, p. 279.
3. Jordy, Ibid.
4. Margaret Henderson Floyd. "A Terra Cotta Cornerstone for Copley Square", Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians. Vol. 32, May 1973, p. 83ff.
5. Berryman, Nancy D. and Susan M. Tindall, Terra Cotta, Preservation of an Historic Building Material, pp. 2-3.
6. Whiffen and Koeper. op cit., p. 242.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
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Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass.

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date entered

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Continued

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Continuation sheet Second Brazer Building, Boston, Mass. Item number 10

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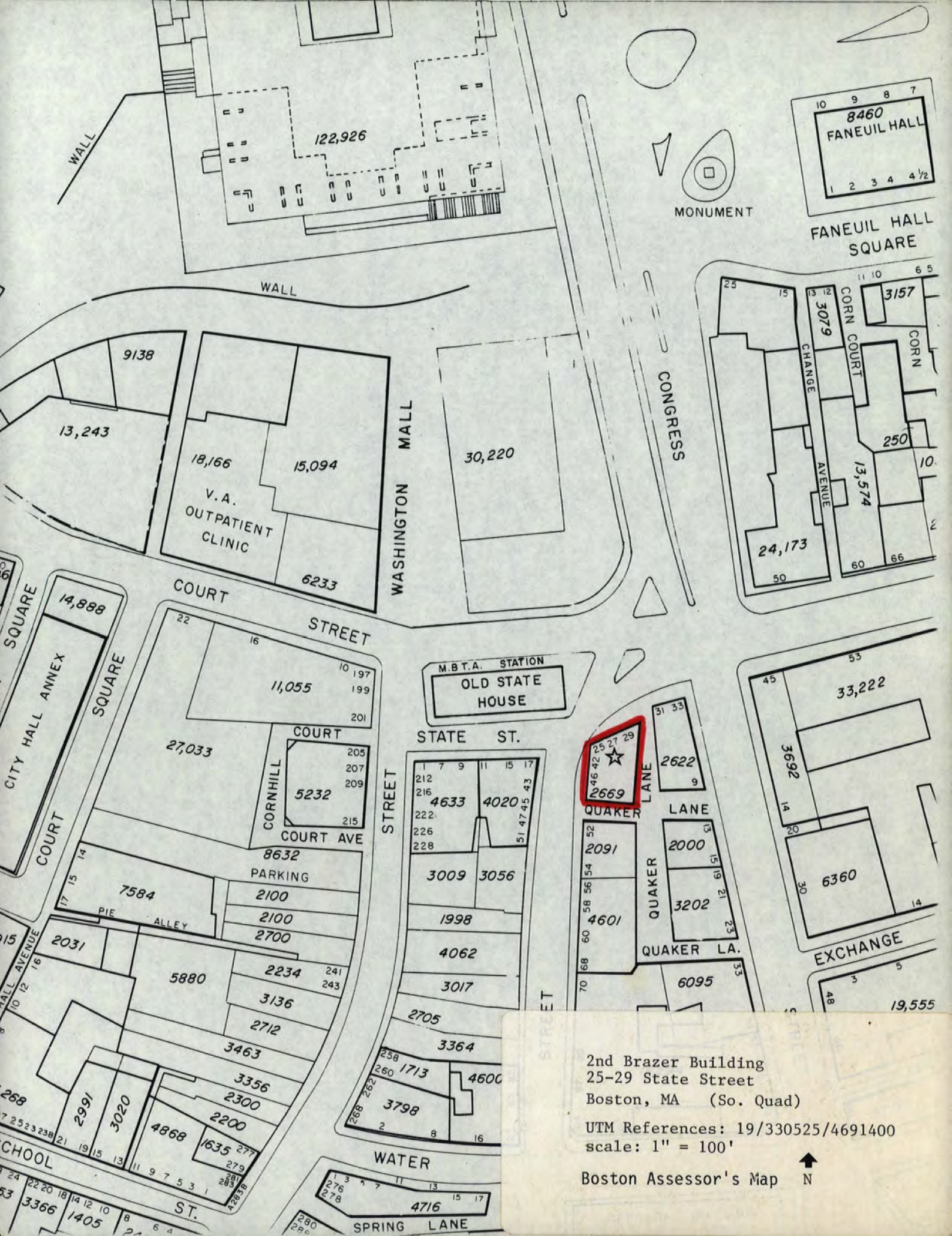
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"Terra Cotta's Comeback", Historic Preservation, March/April 1982, 40-46.

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Gratitude is expressed to Dierdre Savage for collecting, researching and preparing material for this Study Report.



2nd Brazer Building
25-29 State Street
Boston, MA (So. Quad)

UTM References: 19/330525/4691400
scale: 1" = 100'

Boston Assessor's Map  N

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Second Brazer Building
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

JUN 25 1986

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87

Date Due: 7/24/86 - 8/2/86

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 7-24-86

Entered in the _____ RETURN _____

National Register _____ REJECT _____

Federal Agency: _____

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

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

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	
	☐ unaltered	
	☐ altered	

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: _____



L. BAN OF GREECE

The President

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Second Brazer Building
25-29 State St., 42-46 Devonshire St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1985
Negative on file at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 1 of 2
Northeast oblique view; camera facing
southwest



FEDERAL WINE

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

BOSTON SOUTH QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

2nd Brazer Building
25-29 State Street
Boston, MA (So. Quad)

UTM References: 19/330525/4691400
scale: 1" = 25,000'

CONVERSION
SCALES

Feet Meters

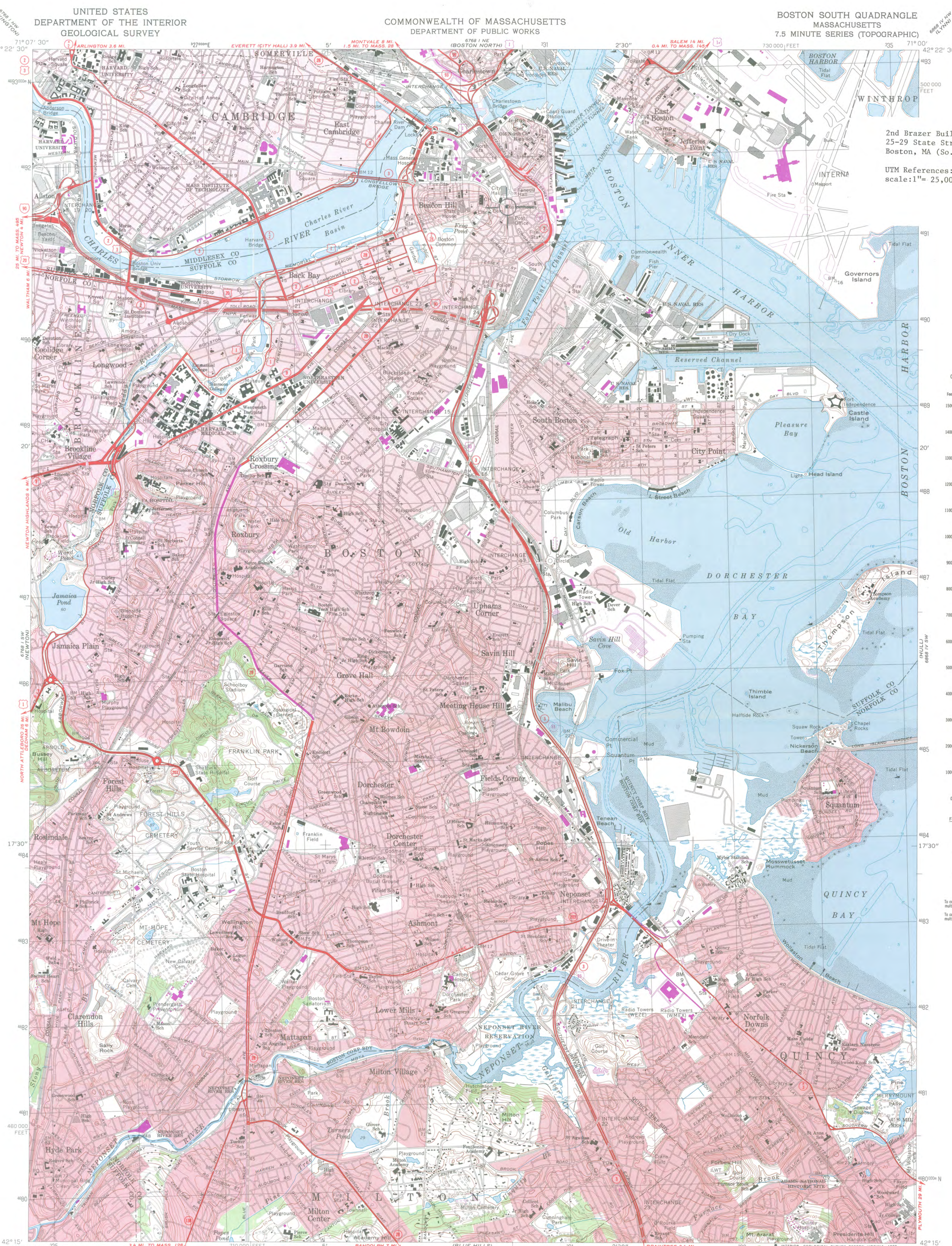


Feet Meters

1	3048
2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

To convert feet to meters
multiply by .3048

To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey

Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from

aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970

Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 246

and 248 (1971). This information is not intended for navigational

purposes

Polycyclic projection. 1927 North American datum

10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,

mainland zone

1 000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,

zone 19

Boundaries in tidalwater areas from information supplied

by Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

SCALE 1:25 000

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET

NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUM IS VARIABLE

SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE ON MEAN HIGH WATER

THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9.5 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of

the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of

Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other

source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Light-duty road, hard or improved surface

Unimproved road

Interstate Route

U.S. Route

State Route

BOSTON SOUTH, MASS.

N4215—W7100/7.5

1970

PHOTOREVISED 1979

AMS 6768 1 SE—SERIES V814

Second Brazer Building
25-29 State St., 42-46 Devonshire St.
Boston, Massachusetts

Carol Kennedy, 1985
Negative on file at Boston Landmarks
Commission

Photograph number 2 of 2
Northwest oblique view; camera facing
southeast



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Valerie A. Talmage
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

June 12, 1986

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

Dear Ms. Shull:

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Sarah Zimmerman

Sarah Zimmerman
Director of Preservation Planning

/sjz
enc.

JUN 25 1986